



carol@carolrossandassociates.com | www.carolrossandassociates.com | 303.666.0580

### **Make 'Em Cry**

I realized today that coaching is about witnessing a client's humanity. People are surprised in the course of coaching when tears well up in their eyes—sometimes from joy, sometimes from pain. They are embarrassed. They apologize for crying. I say, "No apologies needed."

This experience has unfolded repeatedly during sample coaching sessions. I love it when these strangers cry. It tells me that the conversation we are having is real, that the person has stumbled upon something deeply important to them. I have helped someone to find their own aliveness. Sometimes for the first time in years.

I was saddened recently when I heard a client from a sample session talk about how she has taken anti-depressants to stop from crying so much, to be more even keel. If we had been made to be more even keel, humans would have rudders. Instead, we are made to be roller coasters, to experience and move through the highs and lows of life, to feel the gulp in our throats and the wind in our faces. It's when the roller coaster car gets stranded at either the top or the bottom, that emotions get a bad rap. Modern medicine's solution to ensure we don't get stuck again is to straighten out the roller coaster into a tame toddler ride in the carnival midway.

My sister once volunteered to be coached as part of a coaching demonstration. Half way through the coaching, she burst into tears, with this beautiful wide smile and words of how proud she was of me, her little sister. The person coaching her (not me) was flustered, not expecting such an intense emotion. I found myself to be curious, wanting to explore those tears even more. It didn't matter that I was the cause of the tears. I wanted to see even more of my sister's humanity come out, so that the smooth exterior of gracious glances and antiseptic words could give way to the rough edges of authenticity.

I like to think that every sample session should be about making the client cry. When that happens, the full power of coaching is not only seen, but felt. I've had strangers cry because they realized what they yearn for in their life, or they are awestruck by their own brilliance, or they finally heard their inner voice, or they discovered what it is that makes them happy.

Our gift as coaches is the ability to strip away those defenses so that the tears can be shed. Our privilege is the witnessing of those tears. Make 'em cry.

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University have served her well, it's been her life and work experiences that have moved her to do her best work. She is certified by The Coaches Training Institute and credentialed by the International Coach Federation.