

# Neil's Wheel

[www.neilswheel.org](http://www.neilswheel.org)

## Guidance on using the wheel by Neil Scotton

### There is no 'one way'

Neil's Wheel has been designed to be used by anyone. You can use it just by yourself or with an experienced coach/thought partner.

- Use your own style and standards so that it works for you and feels right.
- Feel free to stop, start, meander in whatever way works for you.
- Notice if there is anything you feel like avoiding. That may well be ok. It may also be a way you are telling yourself that there is something important to explore here, and to stop avoiding it.

### 'Know Thyself'

This applies to everyone working with the wheel.

- The wheel seems to be exceptional in revealing people's 'map of the world'; their passions, drivers, values, beliefs etc. And similarly, their biases and prejudices. This can be true for you, whether you are working on your own wheel, or supporting someone else with theirs. So, if you are working with another person, agree how you will call each other out on that. It's important that everyone owns 'their stuff', and that the space to do this work in is safe enough to enable you to 'be real' and comfortable with what's arising, whether that itself is comfortable or not.
- For this reason, we suggest that the first time you work with the wheel, you work with someone who ideally has experience and training with this catalyst for conversations, and who certainly is serious about their own personal development, and so who won't derail your experience, or be daunted by it.
- Encourage yourself to get beyond your normal 'script' to find something you don't already know – or perhaps didn't know you knew.

### Consider working with an experienced coach/thought partner

- If you choose to work with someone else, they can ask the great questions, support you and challenge you in the way you find useful. They can help you gain deeper insights into your own thinking and experiences, invite new perspectives and much more. This catalyst for conversations can be the basis of the coaching, or a support to any coaching conversation or assignment.
- If you do decide to work with a coach/thought partner, it's important that you discuss and agree how you will work together. Do not skimp in this area. Ensure your coach knows what you want and don't want in how you will work together. Discuss what to do if strong feelings emerge. Think about what you want. Know that if they are a professional that they will welcome you asking for what you want (they can't always guarantee to give it to you, but they will always discuss it). Contracting is vital – time, roles, expectations... This can be an opportunity to explore each other's beliefs, passions and frustrations.

- Before each session give yourself some time to prepare. Spend time thinking, reflecting, researching, imagining in advance. Do not put yourself under pressure. And know you can just turn up in the conversation and see what emerges in the moment.
- Ensure your coach gives you the space to think and feel and express yourself in the way that you want.

### Checklist for coaches and clients

- Have we both seen the 'How to use Neil's Wheel' video and explored the additional resources? **The '5 Freedoms'** and **'Four Mantras'** are particularly important.
- Are we going to use this in a single session; at the beginning, middle and end of a series of sessions; as the focus for a series of sessions?
- Are we open to 'beyond now, beyond self' thinking'? This means a) having concern for what is happening socially, environmentally and economically locally and globally, and with that in mind b) looking at the impact, consequences and legacy of the work together immediately and as far as future generations, and both its direct effect and ripple out into the world through the people and places it will affect.
- For the coach: Are you clear on your own preferences, biases, passionate causes and other factors that may show up? Have you used Neil's Wheel yourself, as client, with your own professional coach/thought partner? How will you 'own' this?
- Have we clearly discussed and agreed the coach's role in using this tool? Experience so far is that best results are when the coach predominantly uses a pure coaching approach – clean language, highly curious, non-directive, supportive, challenging (in a pre-agreed way) and spacious.

## The 4 Mantras & 5 Freedoms

### 4 Mantras

As more and more people use the Wheel globally, and provide their feedback, we are deepening our learning about what leads to a great experience with Neil's Wheel. And what doesn't. So for all you coaches, here is a gift gained from professional colleagues' feedback so far – 4 Mantra's to guide you as you work with the Wheel:

1. ***"There's no 'One Way' "*** : Offer the gift of the 5 Freedoms to your client. Remember that a session doesn't have to include all the segments. And (with clear contracting of course) be open to bringing and integrating your own style and practices, and invite the client to fully access theirs – perhaps you like somatic techniques? Or coaching in nature? Or...
2. ***"Let the Wheel do the work"*** : The nature of the Wheel, together with the 5 Freedoms, allows the client many ways to engage, express and explore. Practice and play with doing "No more, and no less, than is necessary" (as my Tai Chi instructor names it). Many coaches report this is a lot less than they expect, and they find that in trying to help their client they can actually get in the way. If you're not silent for significant parts of the conversation you're probably doing too much.
3. ***"Coach the Person" (The Wheel is the catalyst for the conversation)*** : This is just like the coaching adage 'Coach the person, not the problem'. It can be easy to think that you have to guide the client around the Wheel. And it can be easy to get involved with the content. The feedback is that the best sessions come from the coach focussing very much on the client; their words, expressions, metaphors, body language, patterns, beliefs, strengths and the

like. And letting go of direction and content (even if it matters a lot to you), instead simply letting the Wheel be the catalyst for further discovery, connection and conversation.

4. ***“Recognise and own your own stuff”*** : In working with the Wheel, the client conversation can bring up strong thoughts, beliefs and experiences for yourself. For example, we hear of coaches recognising internal struggles when the client is not talking about things the coach feels they ought to be talking about, or where the client sees things very differently. The advice is to be very self-aware of what thoughts and feelings are coming up for you, potentially moment by moment, and have your own professional way of dealing with them. In the moment, this may be about learning to let go, or maintaining curiosity, or naming what’s happening for you, or really embedding in self a belief about the value of diversity of thought and perspective. After the conversation this could be about reflective practices, peer conversations and supervision. We’ve had many conversations about this. The bottom line is that if you think you don’t have an agenda, look deeper. There’s one or several. We certainly all have values. And they will show up. Awareness enables responsiveness.

## 5 Freedoms

There are 5 Freedoms that should always be available to someone working with their Neil’s Wheel. Together, they ensure the conversation is always honouring someone’s thinking, reality, preferences and agenda. The 5 Freedoms are:

1. ***Freedom for people to explore their own interpretation of segment descriptors***
2. ***Freedom for people to choose which ‘parts of self’ to bring to the conversation***
3. ***Freedom for people to express their thoughts and feelings in their own way (words, scores, pictures etc)***
4. ***Freedom for people to choose what they want to put in the ‘Blank’ space***
5. ***Freedom for people to choose their journey as they explore their Wheel – where to start, where next, where to finish for the moment***

And there is nuance:

1. *The dotted lines embracing Financial, Human and Environment are a reminder to specifically look ‘beyond self’ for those three segments. The invitation could be for them to consider what is happening from close in to local to regional to national to global, maybe to ‘as seen from space’, and explore what in some way connects with them. This is one of the very, very few places to be in any way directive. Experience says this about a gentle invitation, with the intent to increase self-awareness and self-expression. The client remains in choice. Whatever happens in response to the invitation is fertile territory for further curiosity and conversation if the client wishes.*
2. *If contracted and agreed, it can help to offer other possible interpretations or perspectives on the segments – always as an offer to expand awareness and choice, never as a directive to lead thinking.*