

KWIRKEEZ



BUILDING YOUR IDEAL SELF? TRY KWIRKEEZ

Which parts of your coaching identity are your key strengths, and which are still evolving? To answer that question, **Michelle Lucas** and **Paul Sanbar** offer Kwirkeez – a creative approach to exploring our professional signature or brand.

Michelle initially worked with a children's card game called Misfits. The cards created 12 comical characters, each formed of five pieces – a hat, a face, a body and two legs (which are not always the same). While the original game was one of strategy, she developed an icebreaker to help graduates think about career choices. The exercise generated some surprisingly deep insight about their sense of self, and over time Michelle integrated the exercise into her supervision work, using it as an introductory exercise when forming new supervision groups, where coaches can get to know one another in a unique way.

As we began to do more virtual work, we considered how we could work with the characters online, using a digital whiteboard. This is how we came to collaborate together and how Paul's first whiteboard came to be. A few more iterations and facilitated sessions later, we realised that we had something great and that the characters could use an update to make them more inclusive. We went to find a cartoonist who could bring our ideas to life. The result is a set of 12 Kwirkeez. The name felt apt: we are encouraging participants to consider the 'quirks' that make them, them.

WHEN ARE KWIRKEEZ USEFUL?

As supervisors, we often support coaches in their accreditation process. One element that people can find tricky is explaining their coaching approach. The same is often true for crafting a statement for the top of a coaching bio. People get stuck. Kwirkeez offer a way

of looking at this challenge differently: the creative nature of the set can free up our thinking and help people articulate what they know more easily.

Once the basic method is understood and a person has a sense of their 'usual' Kwirkee, it can also be useful to experiment with it, holding a particular client in mind. For example, when they have experienced a difficulty with a client, which parts of their Kwirkee went AWOL? Which new parts arrived?

It can also be useful for longer-term development. Again, with their original Kwirkee in mind, which parts seem core and which parts are still evolving? Which parts are calling for more attention?

HOW DO YOU USE KWIRKEEZ?

Access to the Kwirkeez is gained via Paul's coach/supervisor Mural micro-trainings, where participants get access to two templates to use with their own clients – the Kwirkeez can be one of those templates. While sharing, facilitating and administering the whiteboard requires some training, the only requirement for the participant is that they can drag and drop elements on to the whiteboard.

While each facilitator may approach this in their own way, a typical exercise might go along the following lines:

- Step 1: Think of yourself when you are at your best and working with a client.

- Step 2: Survey all the different Kwirkeez and notice which pieces you are drawn to – which might help say something about you at your best?
- Step 3: Drag and drop the pieces to create a Kwirkee of your 'best self'.
- Step 4: Talk about your Kwirkee!

If exploring a difficult case, then add in the next steps:

- Step 5: When you think about how you were with this particular client, which pieces were the same and which pieces were different?
- Step 6: Change the Kwirkee to illustrate how you were when with this client (using drag and drop).
- Step 7: Talk about your Kwirkee now.

If exploring coach development, after steps 1-4 add in the following:

- Step A: Create a second Kwirkee about the kind of coach you hope to be in 12/18/24 months' time (using drag and drop).
- Step B: Which pieces do you notice are constant? Which pieces need to be replaced or added?
- Step C: Talk through what you could do (or not do) to help with that developmental shift.

WHAT ARE PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES OF USING KWIRKEEZ?

'The greater range of Kwirkeez characters brings diversity into the mix for those looking at their identity through a range of lenses including race, gender, fashion style, occupation and so on. It enables people like me to see characters like me. The flexibility of the 'drag and drop' process worked well for me in that there was no order set by the facilitator or system. As well as giving plenty of reflection time to make my choice and explore, I also found it curious considering my reasons for not choosing something.'

'During the Kwirkeez workshop I had double insights or realisations. I discovered things about myself when I was designing what I would look like as my best coaching self, and then had even more insights when explaining/describing why I chose what I did.'

'I can see this being useful at three levels – personal, professional and practice. Kwirkeez enable people to consider who they want to be, what qualities they want to be known for and how they might better support themselves in shining a light on those qualities.'

'I have a passion for working with the neurodiverse. I can see this tool being instrumental in helping some non- and not-so-verbal people express themselves and then discover things about themselves that will help them be more effective. It will be a great starting point for many future conversations.'

SOME HAZARDS TO AVOID

The biggest 'watch out' when facilitating this as an exercise is to remember to stay neutral. We often have our own interpretation of a particular piece, and yet the more we work with the characters the more and different interpretations we notice people assigning to them. So, avoid making any assumptions and stay open to what your client sees.

The biggest technical watch out is to get comfortable with managing the Mural technology before you attempt the exercise. If you are anxious about working with Mural it will limit the energy you have for the dialogue. Practising with colleagues and friends and getting comfortable with the technology will help create a more spacious atmosphere for your client.

WANT TO KNOW MORE?

Please feel free to contact either Michelle or Paul directly with any questions:

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ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Michelle is an accredited master executive coach and accredited coach supervisor with the AC. She believes that playfulness can bring deep insight with clients. Her value comes through combining two potentially conflicting elements. Firstly, the belief that we each have the resources within us that we need, and secondly that sometimes others can see what we cannot see for ourselves. She is an author with Routledge. The original Misfits exercise can be found in *101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments*.



An Ingenuity + Executive Coach, coaching supervisor and hands-on visual thinking facilitator, Paul's life and career has been dedicated to effecting positive change through purposeful play, storytelling and powerful conversations. A certified LEGO Serious Play methods coach and member of the MURAL Consultant Network, Paul coaches and supports individuals, groups and teams to think and reflect not only with words but also with their eyes and hands, putting their imagination to work in both tactile and technological ways.