

When I first met Lena, she had the title, budget, and team that should have given her leverage. Yet projects stalled unless she intervened personally. Her peers sidestepped her roadmap because she had not built the currency to influence decisions when she was not in the room. Six months later, she had the same title and the same budget, but a different center of gravity. The CTO asked for her counsel before board meetings. A skeptical product VP became an ally who sponsored her initiatives. Nothing magical happened, just a steady cadence of coaching conversations, deliberate practice, and a system for how she showed up with other human beings at work.

Influence is not a mystical trait you either have or do not. It is the cumulative effect of clear thinking, consistent behavior, and relationships that can hold tension without breaking. Career coaching for leaders takes those building blocks and turns them into a daily practice.

What leaders mean when they say they want more influence

When executives say they want more influence, they usually want one of four things: better access to decision makers, traction for strategic bets, fewer political landmines, or a team that multiplies their intent. Titles and reporting lines only get you so far. Influence moves with trust, follow-through, and the felt experience of people leaving a meeting with you more focused and capable than when they walked in.

Coaching addresses influence at two levels. The outer game is what you do: shape narratives, run meetings, negotiate resources, and align incentives. The inner game is how you are: your reactions under stress, the stories you tell yourself about power, and whether your emotions leak into the room in ways that help or hinder your goals. Strong leadership works on both.

Coaching versus therapy, and how they can work together

Good coaching is future oriented. It focuses on goals, experiments, and feedback loops. Good therapy helps you heal, integrate past experiences, and reduce suffering. The boundary matters.

Leaders often carry anxiety and low mood that bleed into their work. If a client reports persistent rumination, sleep disruption, panic symptoms, or numbness that lasts several weeks, I encourage a consult for anxiety therapy or depression therapy alongside coaching. It is not a failure to bring in a therapist, it is an act of leadership to assemble the right support.

Some therapeutic approaches offer tools that translate well into a leadership context. CBT therapy, for example, gives leaders a way to test thoughts against evidence. A VP who believes, They never listen to operations, can gather specific counterexamples, reframe the belief, and plan a more effective ask. Emotionally focused work, including ideas from EFT therapy, helps leaders name and regulate what is happening inside so they can engage others without defensiveness. I have seen founders in conflict use techniques from couples therapy to de-escalate cofounder fights. Principles from Relational Life Therapy, which emphasizes accountability and boundaries in intimate relationships, map cleanly to professional dyads such as CEO and COO. None of this replaces therapy, but borrowing language for emotions and patterns can make coaching more grounded.

A responsible coach knows when to refer. If trauma is driving reactions, or if symptoms meet clinical thresholds, a therapist should lead that portion of the work while coaching continues on **Depression therapy** performance and organizational outcomes with clear boundaries.

The pillars of influence you can actually train

Influence looks soft until you operationalize it.

Start with clarity. If you cannot articulate your strategy in words a busy executive can repeat, you will not get airtime. Clarity is not only for top-level goals. It includes assumptions, constraints, and what you are explicitly not doing. I ask clients to write their strategy as a one-page memo that could survive if found on a printer. No slides. No jargon. If the memo is not crisp, we are not ready to lobby for resources.

Next comes credibility. Credibility is earned with accurate forecasts, respectful disputes, and doing what you say by the date you promise. People keep score, even if they never mention it. A leader who is usually right and quick to repair when wrong can push harder without triggering resistance.

Then, connection. This is the part many leaders avoid because it feels soft or manipulative. Done well, it is neither. Connection is a disciplined practice of understanding stakeholders' incentives, stories, and fears. It is knowing why the general counsel cares about a particular clause and acknowledging it unprompted. It is walking the warehouse floor before changing a process that will affect shift handoffs. It is texting **Couples therapy** a peer after a tough board meeting to check in, not to pitch.

Finally, cadence. Influence compounds through rhythm. Weekly one-on-ones that are never skipped, monthly reviews that surface elephants in the room, quarterly offsites that make real decisions, and an annual narrative that ties the whole thing together. When a leader sets and keeps a cadence, people start to operate with fewer surprises. That reduces friction and increases trust.

A 90-day influence plan you can start this quarter

Leaders love shiny frameworks that never survive contact with their calendars. The first 90 days of influence work should fit on a single page. Here is a checklist I use with clients who want a concrete start.

- Build a live stakeholder map with power, interest, and your current relationship health. Revisit it every two weeks.
- Write a one-page narrative for your top initiative, including trade-offs and explicit non-goals. Share it with three skeptics and revise.
- Schedule recurring one-on-ones with your critical peers, not only your direct reports. Keep them. Send short recaps with commitments.
- Instrument your credibility. Track forecast accuracy for two key metrics and report your hit rate openly.
- Choose one behavior to practice under stress, such as pausing for three breaths before responding. Ask a trusted colleague to spot you.

Each item seems simple. Together, they alter how people experience you. Within a quarter, peers start to anticipate clarity and consistency. That is the beginning of influence.

Techniques that look small but move the needle

Role play is awkward, and it works. I record leaders dry-running their high-stakes conversations, then we watch together. Most people do not realize how quickly they start defending their idea when challenged. Pausing the video at minute two and asking, What were you feeling here, creates the space to choose a different move in the real conversation.

Shadowing brings data you cannot get from self-report. Sitting quietly in a staff meeting, I note patterns: who interrupts whom, how quickly the leader rescues a flailing direct, how long it takes to get from problem to decision. Small changes, like tolerating ten more seconds of silence, can surface better thinking.

Decision journals train judgment. For bets over a set threshold, the leader writes the thesis, alternatives considered, risks, and a confidence range. Ninety days later, they review. This brutal honesty improves future calls and tells your peers you take responsibility not only for outcomes, but for the quality of decisions at the time they are made.

The inner game: emotions as data, not dictators

Leaders are paid to make sense when others cannot. That does not mean suppressing emotions. It means using them as input. Picture a tense budget debate. Your stomach tightens as the CFO questions your assumptions. If you default to fight, you talk faster, stack evidence, and lose the room. If you default to flight, you punt the conversation and lose momentum.

Borrow a page from CBT therapy and label the thought before it drives you. For example, I am predicting catastrophic failure if we cut this by 12 percent. Is that accurate, or is there a middle ground? From EFT therapy, use naming to regulate: I am feeling threat, not because of the numbers, but because the challenge touches my identity as the person who keeps quality high. When you can notice that in real time, you can say, Give me a minute to check my assumptions, and then look at the model again. The room trusts you more, not less.

When leaders struggle with persistent dread, agitation, or flatness that does not lift, that is not a coaching exercise, it is a signal to bring in anxiety therapy or depression therapy. The fastest path to influence is a regulated nervous system. No playbook works if your sleep is broken and your mind is foggy.

Conversations that increase your surface area for luck

Influence grows with the number and quality of conversations you have with people who matter to your mission. Schedule regular time with sponsors you do not report to. If you are a VP of engineering, that may be the head of sales or the COO. Use 20 minutes to ask about their current constraints and offer one concrete way your team can reduce friction. Log the commitment and follow through within a week. Do this for a quarter, then invite them to review your roadmap as a coauthor, not a critic.

With your team, coach instead of telling when the stakes allow. Asking, What options do you see, what would you try first, trains judgment and earns you time back. You still give direction when safety or strategy requires it, but you do not reflexively supply answers. Over a six month span, directs who are coached start to anticipate your standards and bring tighter proposals.

Three clients, three different paths to influence

A senior product leader in a consumer company had a pattern of overcommitting features to sales. Her credibility suffered. We measured her forecast miss rate, which sat at 38 percent for the prior two quarters. She started a decision journal for every material promise and added a seven-day cooling period before locking external commitments. Two quarters later, her miss rate fell to 12 percent. Her peers began to use her process, which quietly repositioned her as a standard setter.

A hospital operations director could not get surgeons to adopt a new scheduling protocol. Her approach had been to push compliance and cite policy. Shadowing revealed that OR nurses felt blamed in daily huddles. We redesigned the huddle: the director opened with a 90-second data snapshot, then invited one surgeon and one nurse each week to share a story about when the protocol helped or hurt. The stories shifted the social contract.

Within three months, adoption rose from 45 to 76 percent. The director had the same authority, but far more pull.

A first-time CEO of a 120-person tech firm kept losing his temper when timelines slipped. He saw himself as direct, his team experienced volatility. We practiced an interruption script: When you see me speed up and get sharp, name it. In exchange, I will pause, take a beat, and ask a question before I respond. He asked three directs to hold him to it. Over eight weeks, his team recorded five incidents where he de-escalated in real time. People started to bring him earlier warnings. That single change improved forecasting accuracy by 15 points because the team did not hide risk.

Navigating edges and trade-offs

Influence is not the same as agreement. If you optimize for being liked, you will avoid necessary conflict and your credibility will erode when reality intrudes. If you optimize for winning every argument, your wins will shrink because people learn to wait you out or work around you.



There are moments to push hard and moments to widen the circle. During turnarounds with a short cash runway, speed and direction matter more than unanimity. In expansive growth cycles with many plausible bets, collaborative debate raises the quality of decisions. Hybrid and global teams add layers. You may need to influence across cultures where direct disagreement feels rude. That requires questions that surface dissent without cornering people. For example, On a spectrum from safe to risky, where do you place this approach, and what would move it down one notch?

Managing up has its own texture. If your boss is scattered, you become the organizer who sends crisp recaps with two decisions and three open questions. If your boss is conflict avoidant, you structure choices so that not choosing has visible cost. These are not manipulations, they are adaptations that let your recommendations land with different personalities.

When your work life and home life collide

Founders who are spouses, co-CEOs who act like siblings, executives whose partners carry more of the domestic load, all bring relational patterns from home into work and back again. Couples therapy can be a surprisingly pragmatic adjunct for leaders whose influence suffers because of recurring fights with a cofounder or emotional spillover from home stress.

Relational Life Therapy emphasizes knowing your relational stance under stress, taking responsibility without collapsing into shame, and setting workable boundaries. Those skills are leadership skills in disguise. I have seen a co-CEO pair use the time-out technique from therapy during a board prep session when voices rose. They

paused for ten minutes, named the cycle they were in, and returned with a shared ask. The board noticed the difference and, more important, the pair avoided a spiral that would have poisoned the week.

Coaching should respect privacy and refer personal issues to therapists. At the same time, a coach can help leaders design boundaries that protect their influence at work. For example, no late-night Slack when upset, a 24-hour rule before escalating a conflict, or a pre-commitment to have thorny conversations over video, not text.

Scripts that change the room

Influence shifts when you change the first 30 seconds.

When proposing a controversial shift: I am proposing we reduce scope by 20 percent in Q3, keep quality targets, and reallocate two squads to the risk work we keep deferring. Here are the trade-offs, and here is where I want your challenge. This signals ownership, transparency, and respect.

When you need a peer's support: I know security reviews slow down launch velocity by about 10 percent. I also know a breach would cost us months. I want to co-design a fast lane with you. What constraints matter most, and what can we hold lightly? You align with their aims before prescribing a fix.

When your boss keeps reprioritizing: I am tracking six top priorities across our org. If we add this seventh, one of these moves down. Which outcome is safest to delay, and what risk do you accept if we do? You frame choices instead of absorbing chaos.

Building a coaching culture to multiply your own influence

Leaders who coach their directs create a force multiplier. Coaching does not mean never telling. It means you allocate more conversations to building judgment, not just moving tasks. Over time, directs internalize your standards and carry your intent into rooms you do not attend.

Anchor this with a simple rhythm. In weekly one-on-ones, split time between current work and capability. Ask, What did you learn this week that changes how you will approach the next problem, and what will you try differently. In team meetings, rotate who presents a thorny decision with alternatives and a recommended choice. Praise the quality of reasoning, not only the outcome.

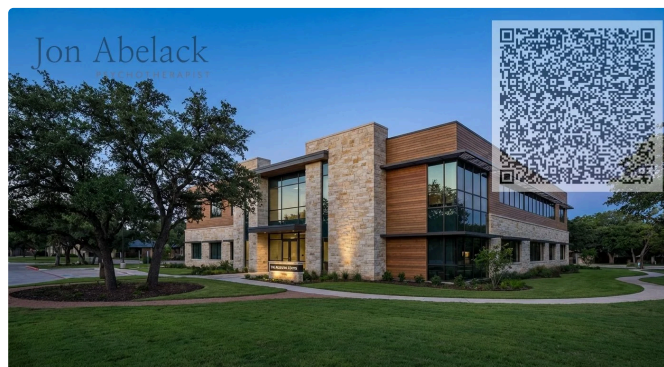
The side effect is cultural. People start to disagree without drama. They write tighter documents. They bring risk earlier. These are the conditions where influence thrives, because influence relies on shared mental models more than on positional power.

Measuring influence so it is not hand-wavy

If you cannot measure it, you cannot coach it. Influence is not a single metric, but there are signals you can track over quarters, not days.

- Forecast accuracy for key commitments, with a target confidence range.
- Response rate and engagement from cross-functional peers to your requests within agreed SLAs.
- Sponsorship breadth, measured by how many senior leaders proactively include you in upstream conversations.
- Decision latency in your scope, from identified issue to clear decision and owner.
- Sentiment deltas in pulse surveys on trust and clarity for your org.

None of these prove causation on their own. Together, they form a picture. When they improve while outcomes improve, your influence is likely rising.



Jon Abelack, Psychotherapist
4FVG+C3 New Canaan, Connecticut, USA

Choosing a coach who can help you move people and systems

Chemistry matters. So do methods and boundaries. Ask a prospective coach how they structure engagements, what data they gather, and how they handle confidentiality. If a coach only offers pep talks, keep looking. If they only dig into your childhood without tying insights to actions at work, that belongs in therapy, not coaching. The best coaching relationships include experiments, practice between sessions, and accountability for both of you.

Check track records carefully. I look for patterns like clients who stayed longer in roles by choice, widened scope without title changes, or shipped pivotal programs. References that speak to those concrete shifts beat glossy testimonials.

If you suspect clinical issues are in play, ask the coach how they coordinate with therapists. A coach who resists collaboration is a risk. On the other hand, a coach who speaks fluently about when to refer to anxiety therapy, depression therapy, or similar care without overstepping is a safer bet.

The first quiet steps you can take this week

You do not need a formal engagement to start building influence. Choose one meeting *Counselor* you run. Shorten it by 15 minutes. Send a one-paragraph pre-read with the decision you want, the two real alternatives, and the trade-offs. In the meeting, ask the quietest person for their view first. At the end, name the decision, the owner, and the date. Follow up with a three-sentence recap. Do this four times and watch what happens.

Build a personal inventory. In the next heated moment, take one breath before you respond. Name, internally, what you feel and what story you are telling yourself. You can borrow language from CBT therapy to check the story, or from EFT therapy to sit with the feeling. Then choose your move on purpose.

Map your stakeholders. Over coffee, ask one peer what would make their quarter a success and what gets in the way. Offer one specific action your team can take this month to help. Deliver it fast.

Influence accumulates. It does not require theatrics or political gamesmanship. It asks for clarity, steadiness, and respect for how people make sense of their work. Career coaching gives you the structure and feedback to practice those traits when it counts. Over time, rooms change when you walk in. Decisions tilt your way because you have earned trust. And perhaps the real tell, the work moves forward when you are not there to push it.

Jon Abelack, Psychotherapist

Name: Jon Abelack, Psychotherapist

Address: 180 Bridle Path Lane, New Canaan, CT 06840

Phone: (978) 312-7718

Website: <https://www.jon-abelack-psychotherapist.com/>

Email: jonabelacklcsww@gmail.com

Hours:

Sunday: Closed

Monday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Tuesday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Wednesday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Thursday: 7:00 AM – 9:30 PM

Friday: 11:00 AM – 5:00 PM

Saturday: Closed

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Jon Abelack Psychotherapist provides psychotherapy in New Canaan, Connecticut, with support for individuals and couples seeking practical, thoughtful care.

The practice highlights work and career stress, relationships, couples counseling, anxiety, depression, and peak performance coaching as key areas of focus.

Clients can meet in person in New Canaan, while virtual therapy is also available across Connecticut and New York.

This practice may be a good fit for adults who feel stretched thin by work pressure, relationship challenges, burnout, or major life decisions.

The office is located at 180 Bridle Path Lane in New Canaan, giving local clients a clear in-town option for counseling and psychotherapy services.

People searching for a psychotherapist in New Canaan may appreciate the blend of therapy and coaching-oriented support described on the website.

To get in touch, call 978.312.7718 or visit <https://www.jon-abelack-psychotherapist.com/> to schedule a free 15-minute consultation.

For map-based directions, a public Google Maps listing is also available for the New Canaan office location.

Popular Questions About Jon Abelack Psychotherapist

What does Jon Abelack Psychotherapist help with?

The practice focuses on psychotherapy related to work and career stress, couples counseling and relationships, anxiety, depression, and peak performance coaching.

Where is Jon Abelack Psychotherapist located?

The office is located at 180 Bridle Path Lane, New Canaan, CT 06840.

Does Jon Abelack offer in-person or online therapy?

Yes. The website says sessions are offered in person in New Canaan and virtually across Connecticut and New York.

Who does the practice work with?

The site describes work with both individuals and couples, especially people dealing with stress, communication issues, burnout, relationship concerns, and major life or career decisions.

What therapy approaches are mentioned on the website?

The site lists Cognitive Behavioral Therapy, Emotionally Focused Therapy, Gestalt Therapy, and Solution-Focused Therapy.

Does Jon Abelack offer a consultation?

Yes. The website invites visitors to schedule a free 15-minute consultation.

What is the cancellation policy?

The FAQ says cancellations must be made within 24 hours of a scheduled appointment or the session must be paid in full, with exceptions for emergency situations.

How can I contact Jon Abelack Psychotherapist?

Call 978.312.7718, email jonwabelacklcsw@gmail.com, or visit <https://www.jon-abelack-psychotherapist.com/>.

Landmarks Near New Canaan, CT

Waveny Park – A major New Canaan park and event area that works well as a recognizable reference point for local coverage.

The Glass House – One of New Canaan's best-known architectural destinations and a helpful landmark for visitors familiar with the town's design history.

Grace Farms – A widely recognized New Canaan destination with architecture, nature, and community programming that many local residents know well.

New Canaan Nature Center – A practical local landmark for families and residents looking to orient themselves within town.

New Canaan Museum & Historical Society – A central cultural reference point near downtown New Canaan and useful for local page context.

New Canaan Train Station – A practical wayfinding landmark for clients traveling into town from surrounding Fairfield County communities.

If your page mentions New Canaan service coverage, landmarks like these can help visitors quickly place your office within the local area.