



Meyler Campbell

Graduation 2015
Reflective Essays

Meyler Campbell

Foreword

Congratulations to the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Graduates 2015 on your Graduation Essays, here brought together so you have a small but we hope exciting taste of the richness and diversity you in the Class of 2015 have to offer each other!

As you will recall, there are three reasons why the Programme culminates in this way:

1. to consolidate your learning; the Essay provides an opportunity to pause and reflect on the development in your coaching, and your business applications of it;
2. to encourage you to develop and explore your own unique approach to the subject; and
3. to contribute to the wider community. Everyone accepted onto the Programme brings to it considerable expertise in a fascinating range of areas including business leadership, HR and academia. You have fresh and interesting things to say, and this is one of your opportunities to say it.

A few comments: first, people have spoken very freely, so please respect the absolute confidentiality of this set of Essays, sharing none of it in whole or in part outside the community, without explicit permission from the author. Second, I am struck again by the variety within the community and your experience – thank you for your myriad gifts.

It's been a good year, and I do hope you will all have as much pleasure reading the Essays, representing the tip of the iceberg of the insights of this latest group to join the burgeoning Meyler Campbell community, as I have.

With warm regards to you all, and with my congratulations to you and to your world-class Faculty on all your hard work.

Sincerely,

Professor Mary Watts
Programme Director

Contents

	Page
<i>"Learning through personal change", Kath Abrahams</i>	5
<i>"Coaching in Business: Beyond Business Coaching", Duncan Aldred</i>	8
<i>"Motivation, Mindfulness and Mindset", John Baldry</i>	11
<i>"Do you have the energy for coaching?", Elpie Bannister</i>	14
<i>"Coaching Odysseus", Antonin Besse</i>	18
<i>"Listen up!", Natasha Browne</i>	22
<i>"Why is change sometimes easy and sometimes hard?", Lynne Burdon</i>	25
<i>"Can a lawyer change his spots? The role of a coach in supporting a lawyer through change", Julia Clarke</i>	30
<i>"The Authentic Leader and the Non-Directive Coach – Poles Apart or Two Sides of the Same Coin?", Willie Crawshaw</i>	33
<i>"Coaching for confidence", Claudia Danser</i>	36
<i>"Stumbling blocks to Stepping Stones.", Frank Douglas</i>	40
<i>"The Hero's Journey", Martin Firstbrook</i>	42
<i>"The Private Equity Industry – a coaching opportunity", Paul Fletcher</i>	48
<i>"Thinking and other essential equipment for the twenty first century", David French</i>	51
<i>"Is the quality of the client/coach relationship the key factor in effective business coaching?", Douglas French</i>	55
<i>"Turning Vision into Action", Amanda Pelham Green</i>	59
<i>"Coaching for change: The unlearning imperative", Christian Greiser</i>	62
<i>"Coaching - Unleashing The Potential Within", Simmy Grover</i>	66
<i>"The Power of Silence in Coaching - a Reflective Essay", Christopher Hay</i>	70
<i>"Anxiety: 'The Handmaiden of Contemporary Ambition'", Richard Hilliard</i>	73
<i>"Time to move on from Myers-Briggs", Tim Johns</i>	77
<i>"My Approach to Coaching Women", Kate Jones</i>	80
<i>"Conversion", Nigel Jones</i>	84
<i>"Developing self-awareness as a coach aided by the FIRO-B instrument", Betsy Kendall</i>	86
<i>"Coaching across cultures", Nicole Lanitis</i>	89

<i>"Selfless Confidence and Reflective Learning in Community", Janet Larson</i>	92
<i>"The Choice to Bring NLP into my Coaching Practice", Sue Leeson</i>	97
<i>"A perfect storm: unintended consequences of coaching for the coach", Chris McGolpin</i>	100
<i>"The Dark Side of Flow", James Muston</i>	104
<i>"A Mindful Goal", Annelise Pesa</i>	107
<i>"The Most Important Day in Your Life?", Nick Phillis</i>	110
<i>"Coaching and Yoga", Luca Regano</i>	113
<i>"Coaching Women – Self-Confidence", Kim Reid</i>	116
<i>"Thinking Space", Bridget Salmon</i>	119
<i>"Coaching leaders through Character Development", Ivan Schofield</i>	122
<i>"'Changing isn't easy' – Why unlocking senior executive potential is easier said than done", Jonathan Skan</i>	126
<i>"There's coaching...and then there's business coaching", Aki Stamatis</i>	129
<i>"Team Coach – A Journey", Geoff Tompsett</i>	132
<i>"Why Good Business Coaching Can Advance the Cause of Communication Leadership", Emilio Galli Zugaro</i>	135

Graduation Essay: Learning through personal change

Kath Abrahams

I have chosen to explore my learning and development through my own recent experience of change; how I dealt with and learned from the issues it raised for me; what coaching support I particularly valued; and how it has helped me on my journey to become a better leader and coach.

Introduction/Context

In the autumn of 2014, my role as Director at a national charity was made redundant. This resulted from a merger, and decisions to create a leadership team for the new charity with a set of narrower, functional director roles. This was a major personal setback as I was wholeheartedly in support of the merger and had very much planned to be part of the future leadership team. The experience was highly challenging, not least because decisions about the new charity's structure were made several months before the charities formally merged. As a result, although I knew in the autumn that I would be moving on, I continued to lead my team and remained at the charity until the following February.

However, despite its difficult nature, the experience has given me valuable insight to draw from in my leadership and coaching, for which I am genuinely grateful. I have set out some of the key themes below.

Leading with authenticity

Much has been written about the value and importance of authentic leadership and I wanted to maintain my own authenticity, despite the fact that this presented some challenges for me. I am in no doubt that behaving in congruence with who we really are, and with our values, allows us to build meaningful and genuine relationships with colleagues, based on trust, which help an organisation operate more effectively.

In the Harvard Business Review article, *Discovering your Authentic Leadership*, written by Bill George and others in 2007, the authors share research findings, based on interviews with 125 leaders from a wide range of sectors and backgrounds, which sought to understand how people become and remain authentic leaders. Those interviewed were chosen for their existing reputation in this area. Interestingly, there were no universal traits, characteristics or skills, which emerged from the research. What did seem clear, however, was that the leadership of those interviewed resulted from their own life experience, and developed as they experienced and learned from the twists and turns of life. Their experiences helped them understand who they really were and what was important to them. This allowed them to discover the purpose of their leadership and they learned that being authentic made them more effective.

The research has helped consolidate my view that my own experiences are continuously shaping me, and my approach to work and life. In one way this particular experience gives me the chance to revisit my own values, and remind myself what is important to me. And then of course it becomes an important part of the fabric of who I am and how I choose to lead and coach.

I find this idea particularly liberating – I am not, and will never be “the finished article” either professionally or personally. And nor will any of my clients. So in many ways I think my role as a coach is to bring my whole authentic developing self, relaxed about who that is, and give my clients the time and space to do the same, accompanying them on part of their journey to understand their own values and priorities, and the unique strengths they bring to their work.

The challenge of showing vulnerability

Which leads me neatly on to my next theme. When it comes to showing vulnerability, I suppose you would describe me as being “in development”. Working with my own excellent coach, I’ve come to understand both professionally and personally, what a richness of environment results from a willingness to show vulnerability. I’ve also seen the positive results it has brought to my leadership in the past.

Going through the merger, I was reminded of the work of Dr Brené Brown, Research Professor at the University of Houston Graduate School of Social Work. Dr Brown has done research over many years into the associated areas of vulnerability and shame. She has found a strong correlation between people’s sense of self worth and their ability to feel well-connected with others. She found that very often, those with a strong sense of self worth, also have the courage to be imperfect. In addition, they are compassionate towards others as a result, which in turn helps them connect well with other people.

I find her thoughts on vulnerability in connection with leadership particularly helpful. She reminds us that the idea of vulnerability as a weakness is a myth. To lead well, you need to be able to show yourself as human and therefore fallible and to be able to harness your vulnerability to assist your organisation to make progress. She makes the helpful distinction between being vulnerable and being without boundaries, and highlights the importance of having someone with whom you can share exactly how challenging a situation is – in my case a coach of course!

In his article *The Power of Vulnerability in Contemporary Leadership*, Kerry Bunker describes the requirement for leaders both to understand the complex impact that a significant development like a merger, or downsizing, has on them and others, and to provide authentic leadership to help colleagues move forward through that change.

His research is based on his own findings at the Centre for Creative Leadership where he helped companies recover from the effects of downsizing in the 1990s. Through the programmes he ran, his experience showed him that a critical element of effective leadership through change involves being able to deal with its emotional and psychological effects. In order to do this, he suggests we must invest time and energy in understanding and accepting vulnerability both in ourselves and others.

With the support of my coach, I was able to see an opportunity to harness my vulnerability in a purposeful way to support and lead other colleagues through a difficult situation. I also had the space to share and process with her in an unexpurgated fashion, allowing me to emerge ready to be calmly and appropriately open and honest about my own challenge and thereby giving colleagues permission to share their own vulnerability with me.

Building my ego strength

Much of the work I did with my coach during this period, focused on helping me to build my sense of self-respect, or my ego strength as she described it. In the article “*Discovering your Authentic Leadership*” the authors talk about the importance of integrating your life by staying grounded.

My own experience has certainly shown me the value of this and helped me focus on building resilience and reducing stress levels at a challenging time. My coach encouraged me to continue to refuel by doing the things I’d always done like walking out in the woods, and spending quality time with my children. I’m sure that my renewed joy of crochet at this point in my life was based on a subconscious understanding that this would have a therapeutic and calming effect!

This theme has found a place in my formal and informal coaching sessions with colleagues and others – trying to give people permission and encouragement to find space to focus on the things we sometimes neglect in times of stress, but which of course become even more important to maintain.

Conclusion

When I look back at what I can take from the past year, I essentially condense it down to three key learnings:

- The real me is the right me, warts and all, always learning and always growing.
- Allowing people to see the real me is an essential part of who I am as a leader and as a coach.
- Looking after myself, nurturing the real me in simple ways, is critical to my ability to live, lead and coach well.

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Kath Abrahams

Kath has a strong track record in senior marketing and fundraising positions across a range of not for profit organisations. She brings a wealth of experience in leadership, change management and developing collaborative high performing cultures. She is particularly interested in supporting women to achieve their full potential in leadership positions and in enabling people to find their own authentic leadership voice.

Coaching in Business: Beyond Business Coaching

Duncan Aldred

I got more than I bargained for when I enrolled on the Meyler Campbell business coaching programme. I read about a broad and enthralling academic subject, I debated in tutorials; and I was introduced to new skills. I sharpened and tested those skills in practice coaching sessions and became more effective as I built my confidence, thinking less about myself and more about my clients. But my attempt to narrow my interest into a specialist theme for my future coaching efforts has not yet reached a conclusion. Indeed, I've found a further valuable use for coaching skills where I wasn't even looking for one, as I shall explain.

From April last year, I have been immersed in the world of business coaching.

I brought with me my background as a litigator (my "day job" as a partner at a law firm in the City of London) and my training and experience as a mediator. Believe it or not, soft skills are called for in litigation: if you think about it, you can't have a really sensible row with someone unless you listen to them first. Other experience helped me prepare for coaching: managing part of my firm, selling my firm's services to clients, and life in a family. As well as experience, there were useful training courses to help on the first two of those.

My talented Tutor, Ann, was my guide into this new world, and she jolted me out of my narrow business furrow, first by introducing me to two fascinating and different people. Let's call them Claudia and Emilio. We examined together our personality types and were honest with ourselves and each other about where we are most at home. We helped each other to learn to listen. LISTEN. We identified and celebrated our differences (between a television producer, a global head of communications and a simple litigator, there were a number); and we engaged in a super-charged book club, echoing or challenging what we'd read from Meyler Campbell's list and, in some cases, agreeing how grateful we were to our course designers for pointing us towards the bits we really needed to know and sparing us acres more jargon. The topic of coaching lends itself easily to jargon.

All of this was fascinating; but it was changing-room talk, compared with the real deal that was waiting for us out on the pitch, the rite of passage that was practice coaching.

Before we were allowed out in public, we had to be drilled in the art of the non-directive. For all of us, this was like being handed a magic key. But it was a key that we had to be taught, by a patient teacher, how to use. We had read about the children with the marshmallows¹, and this "non-directive" thing made sense along the same lines: telling is so much easier than asking and really listening, but the infinitely greater reward comes from not choosing the easy way out. More about this later.

To stick with my football analogy (analogies can be very helpful in coaching), we had several kick-about amongst ourselves before we got out onto the coaching pitch. The atmosphere in our tutorials was important, and for our attempts at coaching each other to work, we had to keep a clear focus and trust each other. And a sense of humour helps in most situations. I am grateful to my colleagues for their indulgence.

But how would I possibly find any real people to practise upon, would I really be able to help, and where would I find my specialist niche?

¹ [The Stanford marshmallow experiment, led by Walter Mischel, first carried out in 1970 and written about (for example) in 1972 in the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology: "Cognitive and attentional mechanisms in delay of gratification"]

I have been privileged to hone my coaching skills with ten practice clients. I have analysed how I came by those very varied clients, I have thought through the topics that we have worked on together and I have tried to reflect on where I've been able, armed with the non-directive magic key, to help make a difference.

First, finding the practice clients. My wonderful fellow tutees made introductions for me. Bare-faced networking. Flattering for the process, those first clients recommended me to others. Maybe it was just so they could share the pain and form a support group, but I hope not and, in any event, it was a huge leg-up for me. I spoke to two clients of my firm who had positive experience of coaching and were keen to take free coaching hours for the benefit of members of their staff; and I found a couple of volunteers direct, one a lawyer and one a co-ordinator of a CSR programme that I know.

Second, was I able to help? My honest answer is that yes, I was in the room when some really useful help happened. But I have a strong sense that it was that Key, and the other tools, like Listening, that did the trick, and that the role of the trainee coach who was juggling them was less central to events. My job was to take the right tool out of the bag at the right time, to deploy it with care and not to drop it clanging to the floor.

I am keenly aware that my coaching experience is still small. But what a difference I've felt between Session One and Session Forty! May 2014 saw me on the Number 11 bus, en route to The Travellers Club in Pall Mall for my first meeting as a coach. I tried to plot questions that I might ask; I felt the stab of panic that came with the thought that I might run out of ideas, leave a yawning silence and reveal myself as a novice with no credibility. By January 2015, my approach has changed. I'm more relaxed. I wouldn't dream of trying to plot a session in advance, and I'm not shaken if I try a tack that doesn't work. I'm happy to pick up one spanner and, if that doesn't work, try another instead. I might invite the client to imagine himself in the shoes of someone whose judgement he respects and ask what that person might advise. The client might play this game with a smile, and we can make great use of what comes next, or my invitation might be met with a very straight face, in which case we simply move on. No panic.

Most importantly, it's no longer about me and my doubts, it's all about the person I'm coaching.

So what's my specialist niche?

In my 60 hours with practice clients, I have worked, with some degree of success, with fascinating, enthusiastic people facing diverse challenges. *Transition to a new role* has come up quite a lot, but so have *thinking & planning*, *re-energising*, *negotiating obstacles* and *confidence-building*. And, to be selfish for a minute, I've enjoyed it all. It would be easier to identify my niche if I'd found any of it a bore, but it's not been like that. In fact, rather than removing from my list areas of coaching that I haven't enjoyed, I find myself adding an extra one. This takes coaching beyond the boundaries of my one-on-one coaching sessions and brings it squarely into the centre of my business world. And it also brings me back to the point to which I said I'd return.

Switch to my day job. Imagine you're a lawyer. You're advising on a dispute and, with one of the twists and turns that make the work so interesting, suddenly there has to be a trip abroad to negotiate a settlement. Serious and urgent. Two words to get the pulse racing. So serious and so urgent, in fact, that we still have to go, even though there are only Economy seats on our flight at this short notice. Before we travel, I have a job to do with the clients. We have to be a single team with a single purpose. We've got to be clear about what we're trying to achieve and we've got to catch the 'plane home with no regrets. I have to make sure it works.

Before April last year, I'd have called it a "briefing". I'd have told the clients about our opponents; I'd have told them what I thought we should say; I'd have told them what we shouldn't say and what we should look out for. But now, that doesn't feel right. What's my objective? Is it to say some words to the clients so that I've covered all the ground, or is to get the best outcome from the meeting we're travelling to? And if it's really the performance of the team I'm after, do I tell them, or do I ask them, and Listen? I find myself asking for permission, and opening the bag of tools...

Duncan Aldred

Duncan is a solicitor and a partner at CMS in London, where he has led the firm's Banking Litigation team for over 20 years. He is an accredited mediator. Duncan is inspired by the power of coaching techniques that can unlock potential in individuals from hugely differing backgrounds. He has experienced great success working with bankers and lawyers but also with senior executives from other fields of business, from the worlds of luxury goods, education, and even comedy writing!

Motivation, Mindfulness and Mindset

Helping Clients Achieve Change

John Baldry

Little did I know when I started the Elements coaching course at the end of 2013 what a journey it would involve. Eighteen months later, nearing the end of the Business Coach conversion course, my journey has involved a course at Birkbeck on positive psychology, a love of (possibly addiction to) TED talks, numerous books on coaching, psychology and social health, and courses on mindfulness based stress reduction (MBSR) and mindful self-compassion (MSC).

Looking back, I think there was rather a heavy dose of 'mesearch' (as psychologists call research into our own issues) going on, but, whatever the reason, I became fascinated by why people really struggled with achieving what they wanted to achieve. I was curious as to both why that was, and what we as coaches could do to help clients to achieve their goals without unnecessary pain.

This essay therefore starts from the (undoubtedly true) proposition that many clients find it hard to change, or they find it emotionally painful, and that this is true even though they consciously want to achieve change.

In part, this essay is also a reaction to recent theories espousing action before thinking, most notably Herminia Ibarra's books (2004, 2015) *Working Identity* and *Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader*. Whilst I agree that much learning, especially adult learning, is experiential, and it's a truism that we only achieve things through action, I subscribe to Nancy Kline's (1999) view that the quality of our action depends on the quality of our thinking, and sometimes more will be necessary than less. As with much in life, there is a balance to be had.

I first started thinking of this problem as one of motivation, and began by looking at the research by Ryan & Deci (1985, 2000). They divide the elements of motivation as *autonomy*, *relatedness* and *competence*. The theory is that a person's intrinsic motivation (the most powerful form of motivation) is catalysed when the conditions exist under which it can be expressed, those three conditions being fundamental. The opposite is also true – if one or more of the conditions is missing, this can hinder motivation and prevent action.

Autonomy is the belief that one's actions are self-determined. There is a correlation between autonomy and self-efficacy (which can be defined as the belief in one's ability to do something). So if we can create more of a feeling of autonomy for clients, we might be able to create more self-efficacy, and ultimately more change. There is a relationship between mastery (or competence) and autonomy, and mastery has been shown to increase motivation (see Jane McGonigal's (2012) TED Talk for an approach based on gaming) but my starting point is making it easier for clients to act, where they find action unusually hard or stressful.

Autonomy is often thought about in coaching as being about conscious choice. Human beings like doing what they want to do, and they don't much like doing what they are told to do (interestingly, even if there is part of them that wants to do it). This is one reason why non-directive coaching is so powerful – it is in the client's control. It is also why "remedial" coaching can be particularly difficult.

The deeper aspect of autonomy which has become clear to me is the power of the internal conversations clients have when faced with potential action, and this underlies Nancy Kline's work, for example. How we view ourselves in relation to the proposed action, or the events we think might flow from it is, in my view, fundamental to whether we are likely to do it.

I am a subscriber to Carl Rogers' (1951) theories and their application to coaching. Rogers recognised that learning was affected by threats to the sense of self. His view was that learning was most effective (i.e. occurs more readily) when the sense of self was more flexible. In coaching, I

would equate learning to change. The more fixed our sense of self, the more stressful change will be, and the less likely it is to happen. How can we help clients in this situation ?

My fundamental answer to this question is mindset. If we can work with clients to change the way they view change, and view themselves in relation to change, I believe it will be easier for them to effect it.

This is intended to be more than a self-awareness exercise for the client. It is about looking at the client's relationship with change and its consequences rather than understanding particular behaviours or their source. It could be described as enabling expression of the true self through an increase in autonomy.

Two theories I came across in this area have influenced me greatly. One is the work of Carol Dweck (2008) on mindset, and the other is the work on stress by Kelly McGonigal (2015), both from Stanford. In addition, my two 8 week courses on MBSR (with Michael Chaskalson) and MSC (with Gayle Creasey) have increased my learning and changed my approach.

I challenge anyone to watch Carol Dweck's (2014) TED talk and not be moved. She took children in underperforming schools in some of the poorest areas of the United States and taught them in a different way. After a year, the children were outperforming children at some of the best and wealthiest schools. She did this by teaching them that they weren't stuck with where they were, but that they had the ability to learn and grow. Dweck also worked with Martin Seligman (2011) of the University of Pennsylvania on the positive education programme with transformative results.

What's the theory behind Dweck's achievements ? The key, I think, is enabling a more flexible sense of self. We are not attached to what we think we "are" but rather, willing to explore what we might become. We have all grown up with things we believe define us, whether it is intelligence, our social status, or our abilities. We tell ourselves these stories, and they limit us. In Nancy Kline's language, they are limiting beliefs. In Carol Dweck's theory, we have a fixed mindset.

Dweck says we may have a fixed mindset in relation to certain of our attributes, in certain situations, or it may be our default position. It is a broader concept than that of Kline's limiting beliefs, but is similar to the extent it gives rise to a lack of flexibility of thinking. If we can change our mindset to a growth mindset, we will be more open to exploration, knowing that our core values and ability to grow are what really matter. I believe that understanding this can help clients to change their mindset.

Some clients, and this may be more true for those with introverted characteristics (see Susan Cain (2012), for some research), have a very stressful reaction to change. They may become afraid that the stress itself will cause them harm, and this can be doubly paralyzing. Kelly McGonigal suggests that acute stress is only bad for you if you believe it is. She looked at research which took people with extreme fears of public speaking where the researchers explained to them what was happening with their bodies, and that they were having a normal reaction to stress. This made a radical difference to their performance. Moreover, their neurochemistry changed to a healthier balance – the nature of their stress changed.

Lastly, where do mindfulness and mindful self-compassion fit in ? Well, here too, the neuroscience suggests that mindfulness changes the brain's reaction to stress (Williams & Penman, 2011). It does not remove the stress, and indeed, research shows that it allows higher variance in emotion, but the base-line level of stress is lower (and the base-line level of happiness higher). This can increase both focus and motivation.

Mindful self-compassion is slightly different. Chris Germer (2009) and Kristin Neff (2011) are at the forefront of the research here. Although MSC is based on mindfulness, it focuses much more on the relationship a person has with themselves. As an extremely self-critical person, as many of our clients are, I have found that there is a temptation to set high expectations and then beat myself up

for not achieving them. Criticism is not motivating (Seligman, 2011), whether it comes from others or yourself. Mindful self-compassion aims to replace the criticism with encouragement, which is motivating. Mindful self-compassion therefore has a direct link to motivation, and encouraging change.

So in conclusion, if you have a client who is struggling with change, or finds it unusually stressful, think about how they are viewing their relationship to change and stress, and how they are motivating themselves. You can help your client by normalising their experience, helping them understand how they react to change and to adopt a growth mindset, and teaching them to be self-encouraging rather than self-critical. Using these techniques may just provide the breakthrough which enables them to act more easily and effectively. And that, for them, will be the beginning of change.

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John Baldry

John trained as a Barrister, and spent 20 years practising as a tax lawyer in magic circle and US firms, advising major corporations on some of the largest and most complex international transactions. Before returning to the Bar in 2014 he helped establish the London office of Boston based firm Ropes & Gray. In his coaching life, John is interested in the psychology of coaching and of leadership, and in coaching to promote diversity of thinking and healthy organizations. He has a number of clients who are in transition.

Do you have the energy for coaching?

Elpie Bannister

The connection between energy for a task and the impact this has on the outcome is something I clearly recognise. The theoretical models we explored during the Business Coach Program reinforced this, and this essay explores the connection further by examining a small sample of my experience with practice clients.

Essentially, I believe organisations are 'groups of people trying to get stuff done'. To ensure success a business must harness the collective energy of these people. If organisations enable the pre-conditions of Flow¹, they create an energy-rich environment in which individuals buzz whilst undertaking interesting and meaningful work aligned to business strategy. If people are aware of what drains or boosts their energy, this can also lead to more positive outcomes. Coaching can build self-awareness and the concept of 'Corporate Athlete'² introduces the importance of exploring the *physical, emotional, mental and spiritual* dimensions of self. It suggests individuals can create rituals to embed positive behaviours which boost and maintain energy. Elements of the 'Big Five of Coaching',³ such as insightful questioning and acute listening in a non-directive style can help identify what is draining or boosting energy and enable creativity around changes in behaviour to achieve peak performance.

With this in mind, I will now consider the question '*Do you have the energy for coaching?*' from both the perspective of the coach and client.

Does the coach have the energy for coaching?

The person-centred approach⁴, introduced by Rogers, describes the coaching relationship as an active partnership, in which the coach is aligned in thought, feeling and behaviour. The coach must be fully present and authentic. I believe the coach's energy levels impact this and therefore the quality of the client experience. Self-management (before, during and after coaching sessions) is key to maintaining energy levels.

The self-as-instrument⁵ concept outlines the importance of owning and refining our instrumentality. This resonates with me; however I previously felt self-maintenance was self-indulgent and one should be able to cope without it. My increased appreciation of the importance of presence encouraged me to re-think this. I recognise that an energised Elpie lays an energy-rich foundation for everything else. Therefore I now allow time for reflection and recharge my intellectual and emotional energy through mindfulness techniques. I ensure I take regular time off to relax and recuperate, and have coaching supervision to develop and maintain my self-awareness and coaching knowledge.

The quality of service I provide is impacted by my approach to the Corporate Athlete,⁶ which suggests a holistic view to align mind, body and spirit enables individuals to achieve peak performance under pressure. I fully believe Kline's⁷ assertion that *"everything we do depends for its quality on the thinking we do first. Our thinking depends on the quality of our attention for each other"*. I have noticed that when I am not taking a holistic view to my self-care, it is more difficult for me to focus and the quality of the thinking environment in the coaching sessions I conduct is

¹ Csikszentmihalyi, M (1990) Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience, New York: Harper & Row (extracted from Scoular, A (2011) The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching, London: FT Prentice Hall)

² The Making of a Corporate Athlete by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz (HBR Jan 2001) <https://hbr.org/2001/01/the-making-of-a-corporate-athlete>

³ Scoular, A (2011) The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching, London: FT Prentice Hall

⁴ Peltier, B (2010) The Psychology of Executive Coaching - theory and application 2nd Ed. New York: Routledge

⁵ The Self as Instrument - a cornerstone for OD. Mee-Yan Cheung-Judge (First published in OD Practitioner, 33(3), 2001) OD Practitioner Vol.44 No.2 2012 <http://c.ymcdn.com/sites/www.odnetwork.org/resource/resmgr/odp/odp-v44.no2-cheung-judge.pdf>

⁶ The Making of a Corporate Athlete by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz (HBR Jan 2001) <https://hbr.org/2001/01/the-making-of-a-corporate-athlete>

⁷ Kline, N (1999) Time to Think - Listening to Ignite the Human Mind. London: Cassell Illustrated

compromised. It requires more energy to focus acute attention on my client and this creates a sense of urgency within me which is counter-productive to the condition of ease that Kline suggests is required to enable creative thinking.

Does the client have the energy for coaching?

Change can be difficult as results are not immediately apparent. It can require persistence and the creation of rituals to compound the desired behaviour. I believe coaching can help individuals move through the range of behaviours outlined below (which Juan Coto⁸ introduced me to), however they need to proactively engage in the process. Do they see a need to change? Are they ready to act? Have they been 'encouraged' to participate in the program of coaching or did they proactively and positively seek out the development opportunity?

Responsible (and have energy to change)	Passive (putting the energy into other things)
I get on with it I seek solutions I own it I acknowledge reality	I work harder and harder I wait and hope I blame, whine and complain I am unaware or unconscious

'Up the Mood Elevator' (2013)

These considerations are referenced in Prochaska's stages of change model⁹

Precontemplation: change is not yet on the radar

Contemplation: there is ambivalence

Preparation: decided to change, but still uncertain

Action: taking steps to change

Maintenance: may need to continue for life (or Exit - job done)

Relapse: can occur any time, is normal, and can be expected

I believe the client's level of energy and readiness for change can impact the outcome of the separate coaching sessions and the success of the overall coaching program.

Did my practice clients have the energy for coaching?

I will now examine the coaching programs I experienced with three of my practice clients over the past six months. The table below highlights some differences.

Practice Client	Number of sessions	Frequency of sessions	Stage of Change (<i>Prochaska</i>)	Passive or Responsible (<i>Up the Mood Elevator</i>)
A	3 out of 6	Slow start, 7-8wks in between sessions 1, 2 and 3. 14wks between session 3 and 4 (yet to take place - keeps being rescheduled)	Precontemplation, through to Contemplation	Passive
B	6 out of 6	Monthly for first 4, but then every two months	Action, to Maintenance to Relapse to Action	Responsible

⁸ Coto, J (2014) The Corporate Athlete: coaching to build resilience and maximise peak performance. Meyler Campbell Annual Lecture 2014

⁹ Prochaska, J.O et al (2006) Changing for Good, New York: Collins and Green (extracted from Scoular, A (2011) The Financial Times Guide to Business Coaching, London: FT Prentice Hall)

C	6 out of 6	Monthly	Action to Maintenance	Responsible
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Client A was hesitant from the outset, had lots of questions about process and seemed concerned with assessment. I found it difficult to establish a natural rhythm to the discussion and the level of rapport was not as high as with other clients. I noticed some interesting dynamics between the client and their line-manager during our initial multi-way meeting. The pace and frequency of the sessions was slower than other clients and I was questioning my client's readiness for coaching. Comments from feedback forms included:

*It was good being challenged to question assumptions and develop a line of thought further.
Nice to have someone to talk to.
Getting me to think of answers myself was interesting.*

Client B was engaged in the process. This was a private client, however the focus was on business and the line-manager was clearly supportive. Great progress was made initially, however we both noticed our energy levels were lower during a particular session. I was particularly tired at that point and the client was switching contexts at work and concerned about a personal issue. The client also 'relapsed', which was useful to explore as we identified ways to maintain their previously positive behavioural change. The time between sessions was longer for the last couple of sessions, which perhaps aligned with their need to refocus. Comments from feedback forms included:

*Coming out with clear actions and a structured plan ahead was very cathartic.
The focus was probably made worse because I was in the middle of a work day and context changed straight after the meeting, while also worrying about my roof!
This was an excellent session. Full of energy, focus and interesting discussion. I felt I got a lot out of this session.
It was clear you were listening carefully and were analysing as you went along, asking additional questions to move the discussion along at a nice pace.
I didn't do any homework this time, so this did mean that we had less to pick up on specifically, but actually I think the fact that I didn't meant we had something else rather important to discuss – i.e. analysing what did happen and the subsequent discussion on the "taking a breather" step to leave room for growth without burnout
Worth pointing out also that the energy and focus was very good again – very easy to just take this and other points for granted.*

Client C was very engaged and had high levels of energy for self-development. Our initial multi-way meeting showed good support from their line-manager and the multi-way review at the end emphasised very positive outcomes. The pace and frequency of the sessions, despite travel logistics and other demands on the client's time, was very consistent. Comments from feedback forms demonstrate their high level of energy for the coaching program:

*I left the session feeling really inspired to work with Elpie over the next 6 months, knowing that ultimately it would be me helping myself. It's a really empowering process.
I really appreciate the way you get me to think through things so I would love to focus on how I can do more of this myself, without needing your prompt!
Feel like a spark has been lit and as a result I am continually strengthening the part of my role which was previously weaker
I recognise not just what I have achieved, but also my behaviour which has made it happen. I enjoyed talking about ways I can sustain the success
Whilst I am sad to see the end of the formal relationship, it is incredible how confident I feel to take this aspect of my development forward 'alone'*

Coaching ensures the individual takes responsibility for any actions to achieve the goals they identify. Whitmore stated that '*building awareness and responsibility is the essence of good coaching*'¹⁰ - this emphasises the importance of client energy levels. Do they have the energy to take responsibility to drive through the change they want to see? As we can see from Client C, coaching can build sustainable momentum around behaviour change. Individuals become self-sufficient and through greater self-awareness are able to push themselves further. Client B was clearly energised at the start, however required another boost of energy to overcome the 'relapse'. Our final session focused on how to sustain the change, and whilst frustrating for the client, the relapse provided a great opportunity to explore what might get in the way of continued success. Client A is intriguing - I believe the client is passive and unwilling to engage in exploring what they could do to drive a different outcome. The coaching sessions have been focused on enabling them to recognise the need for change, however there is a hesitancy to move beyond this, despite my attempts to explore further.

I have focussed more on the client's perspective, however, as previously stated I believe the energy levels of both client and coach have an impact on the quality of the coaching sessions and therefore the level of success achieved.

So, I ask the question again..... Do you have the energy for coaching?

Elpie Bannister

Elpie founded *boundless solutions* to utilise her blend of experience and expertise as a catalyst to enable clients to be boundless. Combining coaching with a pragmatic approach, Elpie works with clients to drive competitive advantage through building individual and organisational agility and resilience. Underpinned by various qualifications and many years' experience at ARM, Farrer&Co and Analysys, Elpie has expertise in Talent Management, Leadership Development, M&A and Organisation Effectiveness. www.boundless-solutions.co.uk

¹⁰ Whitmore, J (2009) Coaching for Performance - GROWing human potential and performance 4th Ed, London: Nicholas Brealey Publishing

Coaching Odysseus

Antonin Besse

"Tell me, Muse, the story of that resourceful man who was driven to wander far and wide after sacking the holy citadel of Troy."

Opening lines of Homer's *Odyssey*¹

Introduction

Imagine coaching Odysseus after the fall of Troy. Your brief from his sponsor, Athena, is to prepare him for the journey that lies ahead. If you get it right, you will be known in Olympus as a coach among gods. If not – well, let's just say that you may need transition coaching for the journey beyond the Styx.

Athena's assignment is not so different from coaching a senior business leader or professional service firm partner transitioning to life beyond a successful career. After all, he or she may consider him or herself a demi-god, and may even have participated in the modern equivalent of sacking Troy in the run-up to the financial crisis. But that is not the coach's concern.

So, how might you go about it? In this brief paper, I'll offer some answers by sharing practical thoughts drawn from my own journey, both personal and as a coach.

Benefits

It is easy to see the benefits of pre-retirement coaching on a personal level. But what of the business case?

In organisations, particularly partnerships, where senior partner equity absorbs the lion's share of profits, it makes sense to 'book-end' by giving junior partners access to equity as late as possible, and encouraging senior partners to move on at a relatively early age. By dissipating the fear and angst around the idea of retirement, a coaching programme can ensure that fewer partners 'hang on' as late as possible.

Also, by supporting transitioning partners, a firm is more likely to create happy, successful alumni. This is good for reputation and business. And a good pre retirement coaching programme will help keep retiring partners energised and productive until the end, help fluidify the client handover process and avoid the demoralising 'elephant's graveyard' syndrome.

Journey

In transition coaching, the journey analogy can be helpful.² A journey is something to plan, and look forward to. The idea of a journey conjures possibilities: adventure, discovery, challenge, fulfilment and joy. It also helps dispel the fantasy that successful transitions are about jumping quickly to a final destination.

¹ Homer, *The Odyssey*, translation by E.V. Rieu and D.C.H. Rieu, introduction by Peter Jones, Penguin Classics 2003

² James Hollis, *Finding Meaning in the Second Half of Life*, Gotham Books 2006; see in particular the Introduction (The Dark Wood) which references the start of Dante's journey in *The Inferno*. I particularly recommend this book on the subject of pre-retirement coaching

What is the point of the journey? There are at least as many points as there are humans on this planet, of course. My very personal answer is finding purpose, and living that purpose with excellence, serenity and balance. More on this later.

Preparation

Like any project, a successful journey involves both planning and managing expectations.³

Managing expectations

When coaching transition clients, I like to start by asking them about the personal qualities that they believe they have, and those that they believe they need, to navigate the next few years. This will often reveal significant differences between expectation and reality.

I have imagined inventing the temporal tweet, a method of delivering a 140-character message to the past. If I were to send one four years back in time about managing expectations for the road ahead, here's what it would say:

"#PackingList : Sense of what matters, patience, resilience, humility. Ability to risk, engage, listen, learn, let go, look and move ahead with purpose. Read up on Kübler-Ross⁴."

I confess that I understood none of those things at the time.

Planning the journey will also involve the coach and client working together to explore the following.

Values, needs, priorities and drivers

Helping clients achieve clarity on the truths that guide them, their values and strengths, their relational, financial and material resources and needs, and their priorities and sources of energy, is the essential piece in any successful transition coaching relationship. There are many useful tools to help in this exercise. One of my favourites is Professor Steve Peter's 'Stone of Life'.⁵ Psychometric tools also have their place, as do feedback exercises involving colleagues, friends and family.

What should percolate naturally out of this exploration is an understanding of purpose, which I take to mean the direction in which the client wishes to focus her finite energy resources. There may be more than one direction of course. My rule of thumb is that to invest in more than two professional activities with excellence may be stretching things a little when combined with a full investment in family and social life plus a hobby or two. However, as an 'Ibarista', I believe that experimenting with lots of activities at the early stages of transition should be encouraged.⁶

Identity

I find it helpful to dissociate the question of identity from work. Here's what I mean. The classic dinner party question, "And what do you do, exactly?" has always made me uncomfortable, because the person asking is judging you by your 'cover'. Underneath all our covers lies the complicated set of values, needs, priorities and drivers that makes us do what we do. So my response is always : "Wouldn't you rather know what I love ?". The answer to that question is a huge part of what we are.

³ Mary Walton, *The Deming Management Method*, Putnam 1998

⁴ Dr Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, *On Death and Dying*, 1997

⁵ Prof Steve Peters, *The Chimp Paradox* Vermilion/Ebury Publishing 2012, Part 1 Chapter 4

⁶ Herminia Ibarra, *Working Identity*, Harvard Business Press, 2004, Chapter 5

What we actually do may be different from what we love doing, or from what we want to do. Doing what others expect of us as opposed to giving ourselves permission to live our own purpose is, I believe, one of the causes of impostor syndrome.

There are certainly many other issues bound up with personal and working identity. At the risk of ignoring others of equal importance, allow me to single out status, 'tribe' and self-worth for special mention.

Status

Any transition from a highflying, financially rewarding career is going to involve loss of status and power. This, and some of the rewards and trappings of that status and power, will be more important to some than to others. The hard reality is that the further a client transitions from his core market and skill set, the further down the reputational and competence ladder he will be, and the greater the consequent loss of recognition and power. In addition, there will no longer be the same pressure of work to keep the ego inflated, the mind off other worries and to fill the days with an often artificial sense of purpose.

All these things (and others) can lead to a drastic sapping of self-worth. Understanding this in advance will 'normalise' it and help clients to deal with the feelings that result. It is part of the expectation management process, mentioned above, that should be integrated into transition coaching programmes, alongside an understanding of the Prochaska and Kübler-Ross models.

Tribe

Leaving a work environment can mean more than loss of status and power. It can mean the loss of one's 'tribe', which can be devastating to identity and self-worth. This is another important factor which a coach might help a client to understand early on. It may help guide clients with strong 'relatedness' needs towards activities involving others, or with a strong supportive community.

Fears

Clients contemplating retirement will tend to be fearful. The fears will vary, and may include fear of the void, isolation, loss of status, loss of self-worth, money, anxiety about reconnecting with family, terror at preparing a CV, having to sell oneself and networking. Sometimes there will be a fear of handing over existing clients, or fear that manifests itself in denial over the need to plan for post retirement life.

All these fears and anxieties can in some measure be dealt with through coaching that at the very least 'outs' them, and then works on ways to deal with them. Some of them stem from limiting assumptions, and my starting point with these is Nancy Kline's 'Incisive Questions' approach.⁷ There are of course as many other 'favourite' approaches as there are coaches out there.

Readiness to embark

Clients will not always be raring to embark on the transition. I find it helpful to gauge the client's readiness using the Prochaska⁸ model.

⁷ Nancy Kline, *Time to Think*, Cassell, 1999, Part 1 Chapter 4

⁸ James O. Prochaska, John C. Norcross and Carlo C. Diclemente, *Changing for Good*, 1994

Positives

I'd like to end on some positive notes, some thoughts about what good coaching and a well-prepared journey can bring.

The potential autonomy that comes with 'retirement' creates choice. A good transition coaching relationship can identify that choice. It can also develop and anchor a strong sense of values and purpose. It can liberate and focus the client's energies and resourcefulness, which through creative coaching can be fashioned into a viable plan of action. The coach will help the client give herself permission to exercise her choice and live her purpose by experimenting, failing, then succeeding and building a sense of achievement through small wins.

And the coach (without telling of course!) can also help the client discover the following practical tips about a successful journey:

Eat well. Sleep well. Exercise well. Practice yoga and mindfulness. Learn hungrily. Experiment. Build new skills. Reach out to people, and network systematically. Manage your time. Manage your energy. Ask for feedback from everyone, friends and family included. Write your story : it tells who you are. Use a coach. And if your current organisation offers or is willing to pay for training, use that opportunity.

Bon voyage.

Antonin Besse

Tony's career as an international lawyer gives him a front-row insight into the coaching needs of the legal and financial services profession. He's been described variously as reflective, compassionate, mischievous, charming, creative, caring, astute, focused and curious, with a natural ability to empathise and create trust and respect. Tony is French. His other interests include cabinetmaking, cosmology and quantum physics, career preparation for young adults and training lawyers.

Listen up!

Natasha Browne

Having completed the Business Coach Programme, the area in which I feel I have developed most is my listening skills. This essay is a reflection of the learning I have been through that has brought about this improvement.

Like many others, the first book I read when embarking on the Programme was "Business Coaching", by Meyler Campbell's very own Anne Scoular. Early on she notes:

"In the 1960's Carl Rogers pointed out that just being deeply listened to is enough for many people to resolve their problems – without any intervention."

Perfect I thought, I am a great listener, I can mirror body language, paraphrase back what I have heard to check understanding etc; after all I am an experienced HR professional. However, as I read on, it became clear that I was falling into a common trap. I was, as Scoular describes it, "listening to respond".

I have always believed that our role as HR Managers is to impart advice and guidance; this is how our worth is determined. Thus any interaction with the client makes us feel as though we need to ensure the words coming out of our mouths are intelligent, insightful and discerning and will make the individual leave with a sense that we have solved their problem for them. In taking this approach it is easy to fall into the trap of listening to respond, that is, as the other person is speaking one is already distracted by thinking about what the answer to their issue may be, what profound piece of advice one can give them, and how important it is to do this as quickly as possible to demonstrate one has understood.

Nancy Kline's insights in her book "Time to Think" would suggest that "listening to respond" comes from the common assumption that the best help we can be to people is to help them to do their thinking for them, to give them our ideas, to tell them what to think – which matches my long held belief about what the role of HR Manager is. As a result we end up interrupting. Kline provides us with a good challenge when she asks us what we are assuming when we interrupt someone – to which the answers include:

- My idea is better than theirs
- I know what they are about to say
- Interrupting will save time
- They don't need to finish their thought as mine is an improvement

On first consideration, these assumptions do not seem a problem because of the belief that I am the expert who knows my client and is there to solve their problems or answer their queries as quickly and efficiently as possible.

However, this was put to the test for me early on in my coaching training by a manager in one of my client areas. He came to see me to talk about the frustrations he was having with the leadership team. I decided to actively use my newly learned coaching skills and test out the GROW model of coaching. We got to the "goal" fairly quickly – he wanted to attend the upcoming leadership team away day, to which none of the managers had been invited. The "reality" of the situation was that, as a result of not being invited, he felt it undervalued them as a management team and it was causing discontent and bad feeling amongst other managers and himself. I then took over on the "options" point and told him I would speak to the head of department and get the managers invited. The "will" part was sorted as I knew I would do it and so was in control of it. I did as I had promised and the managers attended the away day. I was very proud of my contribution in spite of having strayed from some of the basic coaching principles. However, a week after having attended

the away day I met with the same manager only to discover he was still as discontented as he had been before all my efforts.

Having just covered them on the Programme, I decided to practice what Scouler calls “listening to understand skills”. I let him do most of the talking, sitting on my hands to prevent myself from interrupting (it works – I do not know why!), batting away the random thoughts and helpful nuggets of advice that came into my head and tried to really understand what the issue was. At the end of this session it was clear that the away day had never been the issue, it was the fact that people at the manager level did not feel they had a voice and that their views were not valued by the leadership team – not something that was going to be solved by me and definitely not by attending an away day (and particularly not by building a bridge over a stream with pipe cleaners!) By listening to respond I had completely missed the real issue. Had I listened to understand in the first place, as well as not jumping in to solve the problem myself, I would probably have saved a great deal of time, effort and money.

Thus undertaking the Business Coach Programme has challenged my thinking considerably. Firstly by having to accept the premise that the individual has the answer to their own problems already, and that our role as coaches is to facilitate this thinking. Secondly, but just as importantly, that listening is a real skill in and of itself and that, when done well, on its own can have a profound effect on an individual.

Kline believes that the human mind works best when

“it can hear itself, notice its inconsistencies, be reminded of its quality and take its time.”

She then goes on to say that

“The quality of a person’s attention determines the quality of other people’s thinking. Giving good attention to people makes them more intelligent. Poor attention makes them stumble over their words and seem stupid. Your attention, your listening is that important.”

In her book “Time to Think” she then transfers these concepts into the work place and talks of the importance of giving everyone clear space and time to think; she calls this creating a “Thinking Environment”. Having read Susan Cain’s “Quiet”, I was already thinking about the impact our culture of valuing extroversion over introversion was having on the quality of output in my team meetings and was aware that we could be missing out on insight and valuable contribution from some of my more introverted colleagues. I have a team of six with two very dominating characters who do tend to do all of the talking and group decisions that are made tend to be based on their views. I was therefore keen to implement Nancy Kline’s “Thinking Environment” format in our weekly meetings.

We now approach at least one question/topic a week in this way. Everyone is given a turn to speak, there is agreement that whilst others are talking we will give our full attention to them, not interrupt and will be mindful of our facial expressions and body language to ensure we are being encouraging. Ultimately we are trying to listen to understand rather than thinking what our response is going to be. I have been surprised at the results. The thinking within the team is actually far more diverse than I had first suspected. I would have always said in the past that my strongest performers were those who came up with the ideas and spoke out at meetings, whereas now it is clear that, given space and time to think there are others with equally strong ideas and very valid views. It is also encouraging those more verbose individuals to slow down a little and think more deeply. It is evident that, because everyone knows they will get their turn to speak and give their view they are less likely to interrupt and are listening more intently. They are also, therefore more cognisant of the views of others. The simple fact of knowing that they are not going to be interrupted and are being listened to gives the speaker more space and time to think and the confidence to say exactly what they mean.

Thus the Business Coach Programme has not only given me some valuable tools and skills, it has also changed my view on my role. Whilst there is a time and a place to give advice and provide input to finding solutions, I have a more important role in facilitating the thinking of those around me, both in my own team and in that of my clients. I can do this much more successfully by sitting on my hands to stop myself interrupting, ensuring my facial expression is one of encouragement, forgetting about what my response should be and listening so that I understand.

References:

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Natasha Browne

Natasha is Head of HR for Support Services at Allen & Overy with responsibility for strategy, resourcing, staff development and employee relations. Natasha graduated in American Studies from Liverpool Hope University and spent her early career at Andersen as an HR generalist. She has been at Allen & Overy since 2003, and coaches support staff, fee earners and directors.

Why is change sometimes easy and sometimes so hard?

Lynne Burdon

The purpose of coaching is surely to help a client identify and make desired changes. The client will have already made the easy changes – so coaching needs to be able to help clients make the difficult ones.

This essay is about a real client (me!) and my struggle to make peace with food. I think most of us face similar challenges, long standing patterns of behaviour with many failed attempts at change.

As a coach I want to be able to help my clients make small and lifelong changes that will lead them to their goals.

I believe I have extraordinary drive, determination and willpower. I have had great success in many areas of my life. Yet for 50 years I have failed to reach and maintain a target weight. How can it be so hard? I know exactly what to do. Why do I struggle to make the changes?

I have noticed some clear patterns:

- I eat more and drink more alcohol when I am overwhelmed at work and I don't sleep well.
- I use alcohol to 'relax' after work with colleagues often over-indulging.
- I 'ease' social situations with a glass of wine – it 'helps' the conversation.
- When I have reached target weight in the past it has been for a big physical challenge eg 3 peaks. When the event is over the weight creeps back on.

So what have I learned during this coaching journey?

1. **Some brain science.**

This has been my most amazing 'ah ha' - being able to explain behaviours by understanding the structure and chemical reactions in the brain.

Some huge over simplifications here but:

- a. We have three brains (Wax, 2013)
 - i. Reptilian brain which just cares about survival – mate, kill, eat.
 - ii. Mammalian or Limbic brain (aka 'the Chimp' (Peters, 2012) 'the Elephant' (Heath, 2010)). The Amygdala resides here – with our fight, fight or freeze mechanism (FFF).
 - iii. Human brain - where we do logical and creative thinking in the Prefrontal Cortex (PFC). We can only access this area when the other brains are satisfied.
This is where the Anterior Cingulate Cortex (ACC) resides – where information is gathered and decisions made.
The Basal Ganglia is also in this area – it uses memories and translates them into motivation and action.

b. The brain chemicals – 3 important ones for me:

- i. Dopamine – my drug of choice!
The 'chase is better than the kill' hormone which explains why I am always seeking more. Why I can never have enough pairs of shoes and why I can never earn enough money. The Basal Ganglia wants more and more Dopamine – it is indeed addictive.
- ii. Serotonin
The feel good hormone which also regulates sleep and appetite. If I don't take time to celebrate my achievements I won't get enough Serotonin.
- iii. Cortisol
Necessary for physically scary moments to trigger FFF but unfortunately also switched on by stress and overwhelm. Constantly high Cortisol levels are not good and keep me out of the PFC and prevent me from making logical choices with long term goals in mind.

So I need to make sure I am not under threat. Stress and overwhelm have to be eliminated. I need to be vigilant with my diary - to make sure I don't agree to do too much - so that overwhelm isn't my normal state of living and thus Cortisol levels can rise and fall normally.

Can I change my focus from 'should' to 'want'? 'Should' is a word of threat. Failure to meet a 'should' implies letting someone down which is not good for my ACC. When I have an overactive ACC I can't make good decisions in my PFC.

I need to get my Dopamine on my side. Can I find a way to get it focused on striving to a target weight? I have a wall chart and I am giving myself a gold star every day I stick to the plan!

2. Willpower is a limited resource

I have been fascinated by the research on willpower being a limited resource. (Dean, 2013) and also the fact that like a muscle it can be strengthened with repetition.

This explains why I have been able to achieve my weight goal as part of a big time limited challenge eg 3 peaks. But immediately after that challenge I go back to the old habits.

Willpower might work for losing weight but it is not going to work for lifelong maintenance.

Can I work on reframing food choices as 'choice'? If I feel I am on a diet (I don't like it but I will do it) that needs willpower but if I reframe it as I have freewill here (I am exercising a choice – I chose to do this) that should not need willpower.

3. The thing is not the thing.

I don't think I would ever have discovered this without the help of my amazing coach Dax Moy. This truly demonstrated to me the power of the coach to notice patterns the client cannot see. I asked him to work with me through the exercises in Immunity to Change (Kegan, 2009) to identify my hidden competing objectives and my big assumptions.

We discovered some huge competing objectives – which were completely different to the ones I had come up with on my own.

- a. I seek to please others rather than myself. I worry what others are thinking.
- b. I seek connection with others – to be part of the gang– this is what my Dopamine is really seeking.
- c. I seek recognition from others whilst not recognising myself.

And I make assumptions that

- d. Alcohol is necessary for social situations – it helps ease the stressful situation.
- e. Limiting food and drink is inconsistent with being part of the gang (and this is why group physical activities are different – losing weight for these will keep me in the gang).
- f. Others don't think I am fun unless I drink alcohol.
- g. Working hard will make others value me.

This is a huge breakthrough for me – much of what I do is around wanting to be 'respected in my tribe'. Much of my eating and drinking is to be social – to build connections – to be part of the gang.

In brain science terms the need to be accepted in the tribe (Limbic brain) is overriding a goal to be slim (Human brain). I need to find ways to eat and drink less without putting socialising at risk. Can I get the same social recognition and connection in a different way? I could do more public speaking that gets great instant recognition.

4. Numbing

On reading Brene Brown (Brown, 2012) I recognise many of my behaviours as 'numbing'. One of our many tools in our vulnerability armoury. I numb by 'busyism', eating comfort food, drinking alcohol and shopping.

What am I numbing from? A fear of not being good enough or successful enough to be accepted by my tribe? Brene has 'got' me – she says we numb the pain that comes from feeling inadequate. The problem for me is that my numbing behaviours are making me fat!

A lot of my numbing is of the 'running to mummy' variety – fired and wired from birth – looking for breast feeding, cuddling. Food and drink is my metaphor for 'connection'. I will need to work hard to strengthen alternative neural pathways and look for other ways to satisfy this need.

5. Habits

I am convinced that the basis of any permanent change is a change in daily habits. The stuff we do every day without thinking.

Steve Peters (Peters, 2012) explains why. He talks about the role of the Parietal Lobe of the brain which he calls 'the Computer' which works much faster than any other part of the brain. If there is an appropriate habit in our Computer we will execute the program without any conscious thought at all.

He divides stored habits into three types

- Autopilots are helpful habits eg cleaning teeth twice a day
- Gremlins are unhelpful habits that can be changed relatively easily
- Goblins are unhelpful habits which are hardwired from very early years of life. We can't remove them - only contain them.

It was only on a re-read of this book that I noticed the power and application to me of the first example of a Goblin. I have parents who pushed for achievement. I absolutely believe that "It is what you achieve in life that will make you worthy". If I can't change that I am going to need to find ways to contain it! The Chimp (the Limbic brain) helps the Goblin – the troop drive of the Chimp means we must be accepted. Therefore we want to impress others – hence we constantly worry about what other people think.

The way to change unhelpful habits is discussed by Charles Duhigg (Duhigg, 2012). Habits work on a cycle of *cue - routine - reward*. Duhigg suggests making the change easy by keeping the cue and the reward but changing the routine.

What gets fired together gets wired together ie repetition is what builds these habits. However the power of neuroplasticity means we can make changes to what is fired and wired together and Duhigg tells us how to do this.

I need to identify habits that don't serve me – keep the cue and the reward and change the routine. Eg my habit after a day is to walk into the house and go straight to the fridge and pour myself a glass of Sancerre. The reward is that lovely first sip. Can I change this to walking directly to the kettle and making a cup of herbal tea?

On my journey thinking about me I have discovered some huge insights, factual scientific reasons why I behave as I do. From this I have been able to develop new strategies for losing and maintaining weight. Will they work – well the evidence will be constantly on show for all to see.

How will I apply these lessons to the people that I coach? I see behaviour patterns that are not serving my clients at work (and usually the same patterns at home too). I have a client who avoids conflict. I have a client who does not find talking to women easy. I have a client who gets 'grumpy' when others do not behave as he wants.

I am sure what I have learnt will help me work with these clients to make desired and permanent changes and thus goal achievement.

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Lynne Burdon

Lynne has been managing partner of two firms of solicitors Bolt Burdon and Bolt Burdon Kemp for nearly 30 years. Her focus is now working with senior lawyers as coach and mentor to help them perform at their peak. Lynne believes that success at work comes with clarity and focus and that work is important and should be fun. As a coach her aim is to help her clients identify and implement desired change. www.lynniburdon.com

Can a lawyer change his spots? The role of the coach in supporting a lawyer through change

Julia Clarke

My essay is born from my reflections on why there remains scepticism as to the value of coaching in many law firms; why many lawyers may naturally be resistant to change; and what I have found I need to bring to the relationship, as a coach, to counter that scepticism and help the lawyer bring about meaningful change.

My lawyer colleagues (and I cannot exclude myself from most of my observations!) are universally driven by a high need for achievement. We need to be right all of the time (clients quite rightly expect that) and our training and career progression rely on achieving complete mastery in our field.

Add to that a myopic focus on tasks above relationships and you begin to understand the psychology of the "deal junkies" chasing their next fix. Even for those not so addicted, this combination of mastery with task focus leads many of us to become immersed in "busyness" above reflection. And now let's add one more toxic ingredient to the mix: measurement by the billable hour which still holds the trump card even in those firms beginning to move towards a more balanced scorecard.

I am wary of painting a gloomier picture but some of the cognitive distortions which Martin Seligman and others tell us affect our decisions are particularly prevalent in lawyers; none more than "bad trumps good". Tell a lawyer, trained to spot errors and loopholes in arguments and documents, that he has scored 8.5 out of 10 in his feedback, and he will think only of the 1.5 which challenges his need to reach 10 every time. Perfection is the enemy of growth and innovation and yet is what lawyers expect from themselves. It is no surprise that meaningful forward looking feedback is difficult in a law firm; though the irony is that none is more hungry for acknowledgement, recognition and feedback than your typical "insecure overachiever".

Does any of this matter? The lawyers I am describing are phenomenally successful and the attributes I have described have fuelled their success and the success of their firms. But yes, it matters. Partners also run complex businesses where motivating their teams, collaboration across business matrix structures and building empathy and trust with clients is fundamental. Many would prefer to avoid the murky grey waters of management (where there is no clear right or wrong). Add to that the almost seismic shifts in the legal landscape which many agree are beginning to shake the profession, until now largely unchanged in its structure for decades at least, and the case for adaptability and change is clear. A lawyer driven by mastery and who has been trained to be right all the time, will be reluctant to risk doing something new and different which, by definition he will not perfect at first attempt. Professor Tom DeLong of Harvard Business School, writes powerfully of the process required to stop expending your energies on doing the wrong things well as you make a career transition and the need to "do the right things poorly" before you can expect to do the right things well.¹ For those brave enough to try, it is likely to be a journey pitted with anxieties.

For coaches this sounds like a match made in heaven: a population who should be crying out for coaches to help them navigate such choppy waters. For most lawyers change is firmly on the agenda: for many at both a personal and organisational level. My theory is that many lawyers are nevertheless sceptical of coaching, not just because the industry is unregulated and the business case does not always come with hard factual evidence – though that certainly presents real hurdles. But also because, as lawyers, we want results and we want them quickly. Perhaps the issue is that we value deals and clients over personal growth. In a time-poor culture, deep intellectual thought is reserved for the more complex client matters with little mental energy left for self reflection. With

¹ Tom DeLong: "Flying Without a Net"

meaningful feedback hard to come by, it is unsurprising that high levels of self awareness, a necessary pre-cursor to change, is not the norm.

Against this backdrop of the lawyer mindset and a shifting landscape, I believe helping lawyers change is an important part of our coaching relationship. Sometimes the change required is evident and comes, for example, from transitioning to a new role as partners. In other cases, change may not be explicitly on the agenda but is an integral part of personal growth. My interest is to identify how I, as an internal coach, can help lawyers overcome their natural resistance to change and what follows are my reflections so far.

Critically important is to build a relationship of trust and to create a place of safety where the client can bring to the coaching space, not just the next task on her "to do list" but the issues which really count. This won't happen, in my experience, in the first meeting. For the reasons I have explained, a lawyer will not naturally expose any sign of vulnerability quickly or easily and the coach needs to be patient. Taking the time to listen, support and engage with the client, perhaps on a range of more "transactional" coaching assignments (which themselves can be very valuable, even if not transformational) may first be necessary.

Having established that trust, some clients will begin to make a shift if the coach can help him become more self-aware. While partners do now receive upward and peer-to-peer feedback, I find that powerful questions and deep listening can lead to the most powerful insights coming from the client. A good coach will help uncover limiting assumptions and test competing assumptions which may be supporting unhelpful patterns of thought and behaviour. By gently holding the mirror up to the client, insights and learning can follow. For one client, for example, it was helpful simply to understand that his reluctance to negotiate hard on fee arrangements came from a desire to be liked by the client and a fear that taking a hard stance might damage that relationship.

Only now might you be presented with an agenda for change. At this stage, a reminder of the Prochaska model² can be helpful to me as a coach to determine the client's real readiness to change. I also find that the Gleicher change model is a particularly useful tool, where the product of:



must be greater than the difficulty of change.

It is particularly important in my experience with lawyers to probe deeply the level of dissatisfaction with the current state. Lawyers are driven by autonomy: if the dissatisfaction isn't driven by intrinsic motivation, it is unlikely to stick. Questions on each aspect of the equation can help unblock certain barriers to change and help the client see where he is heading and how he will get there. One of my practice clients, for example, felt he should raise his profile. Envisioning a future state where this means more cross referrals and then planning where to start led to an important mental shift.

Critically now the coach must help the client to bridge the "knowing-doing" gap. Self awareness and reflection play their part in change but Herminia Ibarra makes the case clearly for acting your way into new leadership behaviours.³ Lawyers, more than most for all the reasons I have suggested, will need support and encouragement from the coach to gain the confidence to take that first step in the journey of change.

Finally, a coach can help the client sustain the change by following up after that first step has been taken. A coach's role now will be to prompt the necessary reflection and evaluation which will nurture continuous learning; equally to act as an accountability partner to motivate and encourage the client to sustain the change by creating new habits.

² Prochaska: Pre-Contemplation; Contemplation; Preparation; Action; Maintenance

³ Herminia Ibarra: "Act Like a Leader, Think Like a Leader"

My most rewarding practice coaching assignments have been where my client has had the courage to start doing the "right things poorly" and where I have had the privilege to support them until they feel they are doing the "right things well". This has been most evident with clients in transition eg a new partner delegating more to the associate so that he can take on the partner role in the deal etc. I hope I have helped other practice clients by providing a non-judgemental thinking space allowing them to work through the challenges and make the most of the opportunities which they are presented with. But, if coaching remains at that level of sparring partner and sounding board, is the coach offering any more than a mentor would offer? If we are to counter the scepticism as to the value of coaching, I would suggest our challenge as coaches is to help our lawyer clients overcome their fear of failure and to support them through meaningful change.

Julia Clarke

Julia is a partner at Clifford Chance, one of the leading international law firms. She spent the first half of her career as a corporate lawyer acting mainly for private equity clients and, since 2006 has been global head of learning and development. Julia is excited about using what she has learnt on the programme to develop the firm's coaching strategy and culture and to coach partners and directors within the firm.

The Authentic Leader and the Non-Directive Coach – Poles Apart or Two Sides of the Same Coin?

Willie Crawshaw

I took early retirement from Heineken, one of the world's leading brewers, in 2011, having started my career 25 years previously with Scottish & Newcastle plc. At the time of my retirement I had accumulated considerable management and leadership experience but no qualifications. I like to think that I was valued and respected for my contribution to the leadership of the business. I was even referred to by some of my peers – who I now know were not speaking from a position of relative expertise – as “a great coach”.

As I emerged from the comfort of institutional corporate life I decided that I would become a full-time coach. It would be easy; hadn't I spent most of my career learning to coach and wasn't I feted throughout S&N and subsequently Heineken as a great manager because of my coaching skills? What more could there be to learn? Plenty, as it turned out

My breakthrough as a leader within S&N came shortly after I was introduced to the notion of authentic leadership by a particularly charismatic CEO for whom I was working at the time.

“Authentic leaders demonstrate a passion for their purpose, practice their values consistently and lead with their hearts as well as their heads. They establish long-term, meaningful relationships and have the self-discipline to get results. They know who they are.” Bill George – Authentic Leadership, Rediscovering the Secrets to Creating Lasting Value 2003

In short, or as my CEO put it more succinctly “Just be yourself”.

Having learned a little of Carl Rogers' approach to coaching during the course of the BCP I have gradually identified some parallels between his philosophy and the principles of authentic leadership which I had found so meaningful during my working career. Bruce Peltier (The Psychology of Executive Coaching) provides a rather helpful synopsis of Rogers' thinking. Rogers maintains three behaviours that coaches (actually, Rogers uses the word “therapists” but, for now, let's treat the two as interchangeable) should deploy in order to create a climate in which clients / acorns can grow. These are:-

- congruence (or genuineness)
- unconditional positive regard
- accurate empathetic understanding

Peltier believes congruence to be the most significant; he describes the need for the coach to be real, genuine, integrated and authentic and to put aside what he calls “facades”. I take “facades” in this context to mean those imposed models of leadership and behaviour that insecure CEOs and leaders often feel obliged to adopt. Both Rogers and Peltier seem to be enthusiastic evangelists of the “Just be yourself” school of leadership and they urge us coaches to be ourselves also. This involves a degree of self-disclosure which can feel uncomfortable. But my experience of discovering authentic leadership in business reminds me that there is no more powerful way to build trust between a manager and his team. Clearly the same can apply to the forging of real trust between coach and client. Once a Rogerian degree of trust is established in the coach / client relationship the conditions in which growth can take place are in considerable part complete. Furthermore, once the client sees the coach indulging in self-disclosure to create authenticity / congruence / genuineness might he not make the connection that it could work for him too?

When we coach using non-directive principles we acknowledge the fundamental sense of what George describes. Adopting a Rogerian approach we coaches trust that our clients have sound values and good hearts; we know they are capable – or they wouldn't be working with coaches, would they? Our job as (non-directive) coaches is to draw out solutions, to entice the client to articulate what he or she already knows to be the right thing to do. In considerable part, we do this by being ourselves – deploying occasional Rogerian self-disclosure – and by covertly inviting our clients to do the same. By asking non-directive questions (What have you considered? What are your options? What else? What else?) we are soliciting elements of our client's narrative, the same narrative that forms a foundation stone of his or her own authentic leadership. In other words, the non-directive coach is saying – albeit implicitly – “be yourself and the right answers will come to you”.

One of Rogers' key assumptions is that people are essentially trustworthy; they have the ability to direct and correct themselves without external intervention. Rogers uses the acorn analogy; provide the acorn with appropriate nurturing conditions and it will automatically grow. This is fine in principle but does rather depend on the presence of those “nurturing conditions”. I think great managers understand this and work tirelessly to provide their teams with the best possible environment in which to do what they do best. This is servant leadership.

“A servant-leader focuses primarily on the growth and well-being of people and the communities to which they belong. While traditional leadership generally involves the accumulation and exercise of power by one at the top of the pyramid, servant leadership is different. The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible.” Robert K. Greenleaf – The Servant as Leader 1970

Disciples of servant leadership – which I certainly was during my working career – know that, given the right environment, teams will perform and develop just as acorns will grow. A problem only arises when the proponent of servant leadership embarks, as I did, on a second career learning non-directive coaching. Leaders in business occupy the privileged position of being able to adjust the environmental conditions and of being able to select the best acorns for their teams. Coaches have to work with what they are given. My mistake was to assume that I could continue to do what I had done before by improving the client's environment to help him or her become a better acorn. Typically my inner servant leader would be thinking and asking “what can I do to help fix this problem for you?” I didn't realise that I needed to make one small but exceedingly difficult adjustment by changing the question to “what can you do to fix this problem for you?”

Greenleaf's definition of servant leadership is *almost* a workable definition of business coaching. Coaches would certainly recognise the desire to help clients to develop and perform. I stress *almost* because, whilst they are close, servant leadership and coaching do not really overlap. The servant leader is, by definition, directive; he is constantly doing stuff and fixing things, driven on by his perfectly laudable desire to make things better. It has taken me some considerable time and a degree of anguish to realise that as I learned to coach I needed to understand that if it was always me that found the solutions to the problems I hadn't necessarily helped my client. When a manager says to his direct report “I know how to resolve this issue for you” the direct report rejoices and redoubles his efforts to deliver for the business knowing that his boss will remove the barriers to progress. Manager and direct report can meet later in the week for a cup of coffee to discuss the barrier removed so that the learning opportunity is not missed. When the coach declares to his client “I know how to resolve this issue for you” the client's response is less enthusiastic; go on then, you fix it, I'll just go back to my desk later and carry on as before. When coach and client meet a month later the barrier may have disappeared but so has the learning opportunity. As a coach, I may forever find that I have to resist the urge to exclaim “I know how to fix your issue! I've seen it a hundred times before!” For a fully institutionalised corporate monkey such as myself it is completely counter intuitive to deliberately avoid fixing things for others. I may never get used to it.

As I was discovering early in the BCP that my style of servant leadership would not seamlessly re-emerge as non-directive coaching I was simultaneously encouraged on revisiting Maslow's famous hierarchy of human needs. What Maslow describes as the self-actualising leader, who wants to lead in order to make a difference for others, resonates with my own view of the business world. Having developed over time my own brand of authenticity and servant leadership within corporate life, I need to find the means to give back to others. Coaching is proving to be an opportunity to do this; I just need to keep separating my deeply engrained servant leadership from my embryonic non-directive skills.

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John Whitmore – Coaching for Performance; Chapter 13 "Motivation and Self-Belief" for a summary of Maslow's Hierarchy of Human Needs

Willie Crawshay

Willie spent 30 years in the international alcoholic drinks sector and in doing so learned the skills of management and corporate survival that he now deploys as he coaches CEOs and their teams who may face similar challenges. Willie also coaches in the independent and academy sectors of education where he helps head teachers to cope with "The Loneliness of Command" by developing their management and communication capabilities.

Coaching For Confidence

Claudia Danser

Confidence, or rather the lack of it, is a recurring issue that clients bring to business coaching, regardless of age, experience, seniority or sector.

It is particularly fascinating since these clients tend to be extremely talented executives, highly skilled and having achieved great success in their career. Moreover, their outward display of confidence suggests they possess it inwardly.

But appearances can be deceptive. You quickly understand the importance of not making assumptions and of going deeper, beyond the surface.

Underneath, real confidence is a 'belief in oneself and one's own powers, judgment or abilities'¹ and a fundamental 'feeling of self-assurance'².

Many of my clients, once we've established a warm, strong rapport, soon reveal their lack of confidence and profess that increasing it is one of their main goals. Strikingly, this is particularly an issue for female talent. Each of my female practice clients raised it, whether it was stated at the outset as one of their key overall objectives or it emerged subsequently as their self-awareness increased during our sessions.

These are impressive women. Most ostensibly exude confidence. However, they do not wholeheartedly possess it. Kay and Shipman, authors of *The Confidence Code*, have gathered evidence showing that women are indeed less self-assured than men and that to succeed, confidence matters as much as competence³.

Women's competence is clearer now than ever: from girls achieving better grades in the classroom to global studies proving that companies with women in large numbers and in senior roles outperform their competitors in terms of profitability.

However, 'competence does not equal confidence'⁴ and both are required for talent to excel.

In HBR's 2014 review of the best performing CEOs, only 2% are women. If it is not a lack of competence, then we should take a closer look at lack of confidence, as my practice clients suggest.

For women, it is partly due to biology (including the impact that having children has on their career) and partly upbringing. At school, 'good girls' who quietly work hard, achieve excellent marks and behave perfectly, are praised and rewarded. Girls who strongly assert themselves however, earn the epithet of bossy, with all of its negative connotations.

It is unsurprising then that high-achieving women often aspire - and hold themselves up - to these standards of excellence from early education. They feel truly confident only when they are perfect or excel. Many experience Impostor Syndrome, including Facebook's COO Sheryl Sandberg, one of Time's 100 in 2012⁵, who revealed 'There are still days I wake up feeling like a fraud, not sure I should be where I am'⁶.

This lack of confidence, coupled with a reluctance to assert oneself, often hinders women at work, which is a very different playground to the one at school.

But this is not just a female issue. It also affects men. However, women tend to talk about it more openly and feel it more acutely⁷. Also, men don't let it hold them back as often as women do.

My recent conversations with HR Directors corroborate HP's previous discovery illustrating this: women don't consider themselves as ready - and don't put themselves forward as much - for promotion as men. Women tend to think they must fulfil the criteria of a new job 100% (ie perfectly) before applying, whereas men apply fulfilling only 60%. Many men possess an honest over self-confidence, genuinely believing they are good enough and this comes across. Often, this is as relevant, if not more so, than actual competence.

Given the importance of confidence for professional success, it is understandable that a significant majority of my practice clients, in fact three quarters, wish to work on it.

And confidence is not just an issue that clients bring to coaching. It is also an issue coaches bring to coaching. More personally, it is an issue I brought to coaching and have worked on.

Initially, my lack of confidence in my coaching abilities interfered with my practice.

I desire to be truly brilliant, to excel and be the best that I can be to enable my clients to be the best that they can be.

While this aim and this commitment to my clients' progress - supporting and challenging them so they achieve powerful insights, improved results and ultimately their own goals - are positive in many ways, my inner self-questioning voice can be counter-productive. Thinking in sessions 'Am I really good enough?'...'Am I as talented as my client is?'....'Am I as impactful as a more experienced coach?'...interfered with my ability to listen. To truly, deeply listen.

And I realised that this ability to listen, born of genuine curiosity about people and the verbal and non-verbal ways in which they communicate, is one of my strengths, along with my intuition and emotional intelligence. Self-doubt only interfered with these strengths, diminishing rather than enhancing them.

Positive Psychology and Seligman's *Flourish* advocate that the way to achieve true brilliance is to build on your strengths. So that is what I have done and continue to do.

Gradually, through my practice, not only have my clients learnt more about themselves, their strengths and how to improve their confidence and performance, so have I.

I have learnt to quieten my self-flagellating inner critic (self 1 or the chimp in Gallwey's⁸ and Peters's⁹ respective language). I've learnt not to over prepare nor to over analyse my possible shortcomings, as I did originally.

Instead, I focus on my authentic strengths: connecting and building great rapport as well as creating a calm, safe space where clients de-stress, open up and do their best thinking. I trust my ability to listen well and use an eclectic intuitive approach within the GROW model, selecting what I believe works best for the benefit of my client.

Aware of my predisposition to over prepare for greater self-assurance, I took Rogers's¹⁰ advice to channel this more effectively into more hours of client practice (instead of more hours of preparation). My coaching has become richer and provides more evidence from which to learn, as I observe recurring themes and test hypotheses. My belief in my own judgment, views and skills has increased from the additional 100 hours 'doing it' as well as from experiencing a broader range of issues, individuals and contexts.

I also accept the positive feedback I receive and know that if the coaching delivers great results for my clients, then that is all that matters.

Through understanding how the above approaches have worked for me, I have helped clients achieve similar confidence breakthroughs in parallel.

While everyone is different and what works for one will not necessarily work for another, I have been impressed with the clear impact consistently achieved with my clients by using a Positive Psychology framework combined with Kline's Thinking EnvironmentTM.

A supportive environment of ease and encouragement while attentively listening with respect and genuine interest, lets the client know they matter and what they have to say is valuable. This increases confidence plus enables quality and creative thinking, which further increases the client's belief in their own cognitive powers.

Incisive questions allow the client to remove limiting assumptions, adopt a more positive mindset and find their own solutions (in a manner reminiscent of a quote variously attributed to Maimonides¹¹). Clients learn from their own experiences, firstly from what works well, then what doesn't and the difference between them. They visibly delight in the realisation that they have the answers themselves. Consequently, self-assurance grows as coaching pulls out the best from within them.

Positive Psychology enabled one client to understand her strengths, achieve 'flow'¹², more and use this to take her next career step. It allowed another to appreciate her talents, realise she deserves her position and see how to confidently communicate as an equal and influence other senior management. Acknowledging their inner critic and flipping the 'worst case scenario' assumption, empowered others to see more positive potential outcomes as well as improve presentations and interactions with colleagues. Reversing our natural focus from negative to positive and appreciating what went well, increases self-belief (with one woman's jumping from 5 to a sustainable 9) as well as courage and motivation to change.

By setting clear future goals, focusing on strengths and creating an enabling environment for people to flourish, they have.

In a virtuous circle, clients improve their confidence, performance and success at work.

As a result, I have huge confidence in the coaching process that I am so passionate about.

My own increased confidence means I worry less about myself and my abilities. I can 'get myself out of the way' more, be truly present and listen deeply to my clients. I focus on serving them to perform at their best.

I also feel increasingly confident about my purpose: to enable talented individuals to fulfil their potential and be the best they can be. And now I know that this is how I can be the best that I can be.

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- 4 'You just have to take a look at George W Bush' Carol Kauffman quipped astutely in our conversation in December 2014
- 5 In 2012 she was named in the [Time 100](#), an annual list of the 100 most influential people in the world according to [Time](#) magazine.
- 6 'Lean In' by Sheryl Sandberg

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- 12 An eclectic approach advocated in 'Coaching Skills' by Jenny Rogers
TM Nancy Kline trademark, 'A Time to Think'

Claudia Danser

Before becoming an Executive Coach, Claudia spent 16 years in the media. She held senior roles at major international companies including BBC Worldwide, Warner Bros and Shine Group, where she was a Managing Director. Claudia now coaches senior leaders and high potentials. She enables them to take their performance and career to the next level. Clients say they find her 'powerful', 'insightful' and 'energising'. They value her fresh-yet-experienced perspective and the clarity, challenge and calm she offers.

Stumbling blocks to Stepping Stones

Frank Douglas

My Reflective Essay is meant to convey an understanding of my 'back story,' my professional success and life experiences that speak to the insights that have been crystallized through the Meyler Campbell programme.

My story begins where any sane and reasonable person would never wish theirs to begin - in Jackson, Mississippi (USA). Mississippi then and now has the lowest per capita income, reading levels and segregated/integrated population in America. My family, like many in the 1950's migrated to the North for employment opportunities. However, our landing was not much better: the South Bronx of New York City. The South Bronx was one of the most crime ridden, violent, gang controlled and poor areas in America. For 17 years of my life my family and I lived there in estate housing. We then moved to Queens to be the first family to segregate the (white) middle class neighborhood of Rosedale.

While my starting point in life was highly handicapped, I persevered to become 'head boy' equivalent of my senior school, worked my way through college and recently considered amongst one of the 'Most Influential HR Directors,' in the UK.

All of the above might be interesting, you say but what has it to do with 'coaching.' It is because while I never had a formal/personal coach – I had people who believed in me, who provided me the positive feedback, and encouragement needed to overcome an undesirable starting point.

It is this background that has provided me with the reflection on how and why I came to Meyler Campbell. In short, it was to make a difference, for the better, in people's lives. Through the tutorial, my colleagues and tutors (more on them latter) – I hope I am now prepared to help others in a more formal way than I have been helped.

In particular, a major impression was left on me by the reading of *The Wisdom of teams*. It is through those insights that I have realized that my profession, Human Resources, is headed to extinction unless it changes.

Most of us have heard of those highly trained Special Forces troops that include the SAS, Seal Team Six, amongst others. They operate outside 'normal' military channels and are used for quick response and solutions. With CEOs becoming ever more demanding, it is now time for HR to create its own Seal Team Six.

I have had the privilege of working for four world-class, industry-leading companies in four different countries. The industries have been highly diverse: paper manufacturing, professional services, oil & gas and telecommunications.

Nonetheless, it typically took me less than 30 minutes to understand the HR structure in each company. While that familiarity was comforting, it also pointed up the fact that the HR structure has barely changed in the last 20 years. In fact, many companies already had the 'Ulrich' model before it was even branded as such.

Yet the external business environment, technology and employee demographics (and demands) have changed radically in the last 15 years. In many ways, the external world is at version 5.0 but HR is still at version 1.5!

The principal reason for this is that HR is still organized around functions (Reward, Talent, etc.) and inputs (Compensation, L&D, Recruitment). However, the business requires integrated, multi-disciplined solutions. Retention and Engagement, for example, arise from a multi-disciplined approach and cannot be solved by looking at reward or recruitment, for example, in isolation. In short, HR is not organized to provide integrated solutions.

To close the gap between business world version 5.0 and HR version 1.5, we need to create highly trained, multi-disciplined project (SWAT) teams whose members understand the interplay between, for example, recruitment, performance management and reward. They will understand how EPS and/or EBITDA are impacted by improved human capital approaches. They will also have knowledge of IT systems, financial processes, data analytics and customer satisfaction. They will not take 6-9 months to analyze, study and recommend changes. Instead, these teams will go in, fix the problem and implement a new solution in less than 30 days.

As with a traditional army, we need HR specialists. However, we also need to start training and utilizing our best and brightest as a specialised solution-driven, rapid response team. A major part of our workload is project based. We need to lift projects outside of the 'business as usual' model and create a centre of excellence for HR projects/solutions/fixes. Until we reorganize around output (solutions) and not input (functions), the gap between speed of change in the business and that of HR may increase even further.

This new approach requires not only a new structure but also a radically new way of training HR professionals. Indeed, this approach may redefine what a HR professional 'looks like', something that has not happened in over 20 years. Hence, HR Seal Team Six is looking for "A Few Good People" who are *Ready to Lead, Ready to Follow and who Never Quit*.

The Wisdom of Teams and the Time to Think have provided me the insights to go forth and challenge my own profession as well as to be the best coach I can be.

However, my journey on the programme has not been easy. Ironically, it is the Meyler Campbell programme that caused my business to jump-start and for me to delay my required submissions. Nevertheless, without the insights and encouragement from Isabel Witte – I would have struggled to finish the tutorial programme.

If Isabel had a challenge, then Mary Watts clearly had angered the heavens to be given me as challenge to get over the finish line. If that does happen, then her patience, encouragement and never losing her belief cannot be underestimated.

To Mary, Isabel, Anne and Claire no matter what the outcome – thanks. You have all embodied the ability to 'turn stumbling blocks into stepping stones.'

Frank Douglas

Frank is the CEO and Founder of Caerus Executive, a talent and HR strategy business. Prior to this he was Global Human Resources Director for Misys, a technology company. He has also held Group HRD roles at both Transport for London and Scottish and Newcastle. In 2011, Frank was included in the list of the top 30 most influential HR Directors in the UK. He is also a Non-Executive Director of the CIPD.

The Hero's Journey

Martin Firstbrook

"The cave you fear to enter holds the treasure you seek" Joseph Campbell

Introduction

A question that often creeps into coaching discussion and writing is where the line is drawn between coaching and deeper exploration (often in the form of therapeutic concepts and methods). As Anne Scoular points out:

The boundaries with counselling and therapy, or 'what do I do if a client strays into territory I'm not trained to deal with', are among the worries most people bring into coach training. (Scoular, 2011: Loc 982)

More generally, the tone within coaching books is one of caution when entering territory with clients that is considered to be outside of the typical boundaries of business coaching, which is a view that I understand and, to some degree, support. However, I am also of the view that this mind-set may lead one to determine that methods drawn from depth psychology are intrinsically dangerous within the coaching context and must therefore be avoided at all costs. I believe such an approach would be a great loss to our clients, as the following discussion will explore.

Digging Deep for Change that Sticks

"I believe psychoanalytic method and theory is a necessary sub-structure for any such "higher" or growth psychology." Abraham Maslow

My earliest experiences of coaching were framed in a psychodynamic context and the coaching that has had most significant impact on my own development has also been from the field of depth psychology. Those coaching experiences allowed me to understand, for example, why some people and situations trigger a particular response within me and, through that awareness, greater choice of action became available to me. That internal shift was swiftly followed by better performance and a sense of increased purpose and potential as judged by me and by those around me. As a result of those experiences, I have always questioned whether other approaches to coaching were 'skating over the surface' or whether it was possible to delve deep enough through typical coaching methods to support significant unfolding of potential.

Through my studies with Meyler Campbell and the Psychosynthesis Trust, I am increasingly of the view that our clients may need look to into the darker reaches of themselves as part of the process of eliciting long lasting change. As a result of this view, it is my proposal that coaches should seek to develop an understanding of themselves and others from a depth psychology perspective in order to effectively facilitate change that sticks.

Whilst this proposal may be hinting heavily towards a formal study of therapeutic concepts and methods, which may well be valuable, that is not necessarily the case. It is plain to see that many of the ideas presented through the Meyler Campbell programme are already drawn from depth psychology influences. In support of this view, in her book 'Executive Coaching, A Psychodynamic Approach', Catherine Sandler states:

I do not believe that executive coaches need to be trained in psychotherapy to draw on the psychodynamic model in their practice. The main requirement is self-awareness and maturity which can be acquired through many therapeutic and developmental routes. (Sandler, 2011:13)

It may also be useful to point out to developing coaches that a large proportion of the skills and techniques used by coaches are already drawn from a therapeutic background. Perhaps there is nothing to fear after all? As Michael Bader, a Psychotherapist writes in the magazine Psychology Today:

They [coaches] usually offer up a similar story about how coaching and therapy differ. They (coaches) apparently work with the future; I (therapists) work with the past. They work to make healthy clients better; I work with pathology and illness. They work with the conscious mind; I work with the unconscious mind.....the list can and does go on and on. What these coaches are describing are actually false distinctions that don't make a difference.

So, if it is to be believed that coaches can, and perhaps should, place more reliance on depth psychology and its methods, it would be reasonable to enquire as to its efficacy. Drawing from Jon Stokes 'Psychology Distilled' presentation on Freud and Psychodynamic Theory, the table below shows the effect sizes of various different clinical approaches. (Stokes, 2015)

Whilst this data is presumably based largely on individuals seeking clinical treatment, rather than the 'healthy' population within a coaching context, it is a helpful indicator of the power of therapeutic approaches to change.

Table 1
Illustrative Effect Sizes From Meta-Analyses of Treatment Outcome Studies

Treatment type and reference	Description	Effect size	N of studies or meta-analyses
General psychotherapy			
Smith et al. (1980)	Various therapies and disorders	0.85	475 studies
Lipsey & Wilson (1993)	Various therapies and disorders	0.75 ^a	18 meta-analyses
Robinson et al. (1990)	Various therapies for depression	0.73	37 studies
CBT and related therapies			
Lipsey & Wilson (1993)	CBT and behavior therapy, various disorders	0.62 ^b	23 meta-analyses
Haby et al. (2006)	CBT for depression, panic, and generalized anxiety	0.68	33 studies
Churchill et al. (2001)	CBT for depression	1.0	20 studies
Cuijpers et al. (2007)	Behavioral activation for depression	0.87	16 studies
Ost (2008)	Dialectical behavior therapy, primarily for borderline personality disorder	0.58	13 studies
Antidepressant medication			
Turner et al. (2008)	FDA-registered studies of antidepressants approved between 1987 and 2004	0.31	74 studies
Moncrieff et al. (2004)	Tricyclic antidepressants versus active placebo	0.17	9 studies
Psychodynamic therapy			
Abbass et al. (2006)	Various disorders, general symptom improvement	0.97	12 studies
Leichsenring et al. (2004)	Various disorders, change in target problems	1.17	7 studies
Anderson & Lambert (1995)	Various disorders and outcomes	0.85	9 studies
Abbass et al. (2009)	Somatic disorders, change in general psychiatric symptoms	0.69	8 studies
Messer & Abbass (in press)	Personality disorders, general symptom improvement	0.91	7 studies
Leichsenring & Leibling (2003)	Personality disorders, pretreatment to posttreatment	1.46 ^c	14 studies
Leichsenring & Rabung (2008)	Long-term psychodynamic therapy vs. shorter term therapies for complex mental disorders, overall outcome	1.8	7 studies
de Maat et al. (2009)	Long-term psychoanalytic therapy, pretreatment to posttreatment	0.78 ^c	10 studies

^a Median effect size across 18 meta-analyses (from Lipsey & Wilson, 1993, Table 1.1). ^b Median effect size across 23 meta-analyses (from Lipsey & Wilson, 1993, Table 1.2). ^c Pretreatment to posttreatment (within-group) comparison.

This is all well and good of course, but one might ask what coaches can do in practice (without training to be a psychotherapist) to embrace these concepts within coaching?

Unconsciously Talking About the Unconscious

"We have first to penetrate courageously into the pit of our lower unconscious in order to discover the dark forces that ensnare and menace us...." Robert Assagioli

Outlined below are three diagrams, one showing an adaptation of Joseph Campbell's 'Hero's Journey' (Campbell, 1949:23), which was built on Jung's earlier work (figure 1), one depicting Freud's concepts of the unconscious (figure 2) and finally the coaches much loved ice-berg diagram (figure 3). What is striking about these diagrams is the similarity of all three (not just the ice-bergs!). The split between conscious and unconscious matches the 'ordinary world' and 'extraordinary world' split shown in the hero's journey diagram. Similarly, the levels of unconscious that typically form the coaches map – values, beliefs, assumptions etc. are clearly manifestations of the same unconscious that Freud speaks of in his own language.

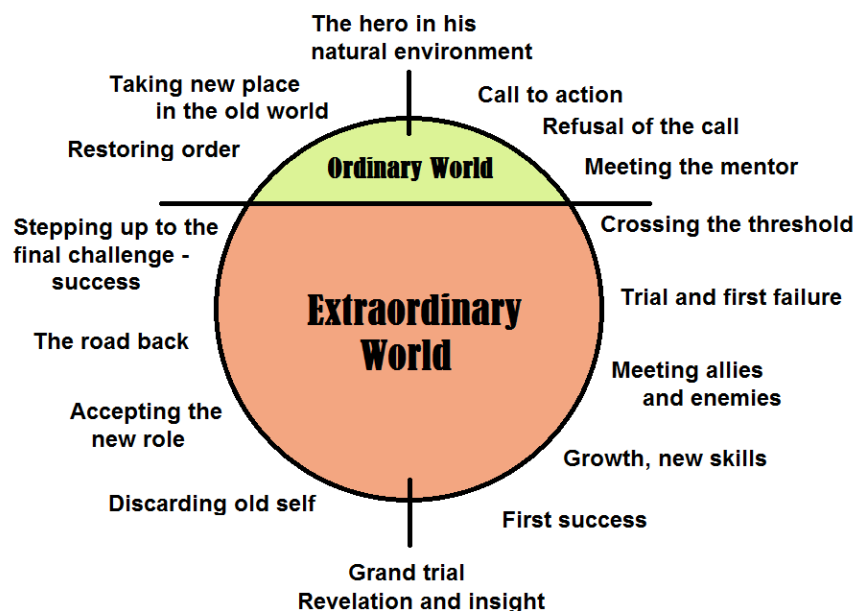


Figure 1 – Hero's Journey

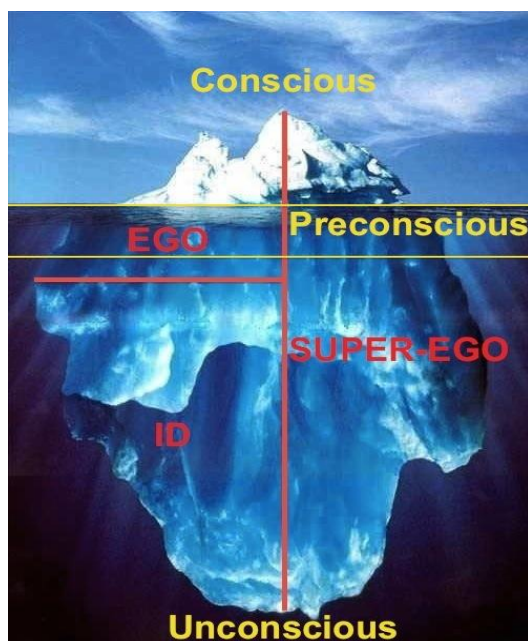


Figure 2 – Freuds Map of the Unconscious

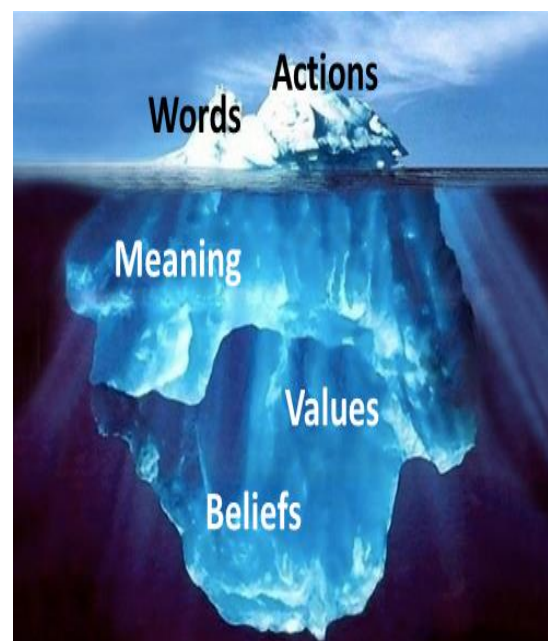


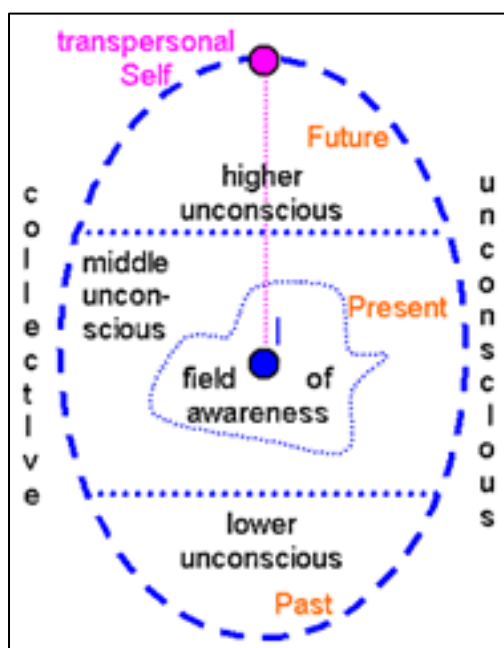
Figure 3 – A Coaching Map of the Unconscious

It seems that, whichever way you look, coaches and therapists are already talking about the same or similar concepts. Different tools and approaches may be used to explore this territory, but often there is significant overlap between coaching practice and therapeutic practice.

A further depiction of the unconscious is the egg diagram (figure 4) proposed by Roberto Assagioli (Assagioli, 1965:15), a contemporary of Freud and Jung. This is an interesting depiction of the unconscious because, unlike some other models of the unconscious, it includes concepts of both lower and higher unconscious. Assagioli felt the latter was missing from Freud's approach, focusing as it did entirely on the lower unconscious. Assagioli saw exploration of purpose (a common coaching focus) as emerging from the higher unconscious and therefore something that cannot be readily accessed by the conscious mind. It is my experience and understanding that coaches often use visualisations to explore purpose, which was originally a therapeutic approach. Again, the tools used by therapists are already available and used by many coaches.

Awareness and Choice – The Terrain of Coaches and Therapists

"All of us are the product of our past and the past is the lens through which we can understand the present and shape the future" Manfred Kets De Vries



It seems that Roberto Assagioli also pointed the way for coaches and therapists alike when he stated:

"We are dominated by everything with which our self becomes identified. We can dominate and control everything from which we disidentify ourselves" (Assagioli, 1965:19)

Assagioli's model, the egg diagram, depicting the 'field of awareness' is also helpful as it allows us to consider how we might explore and include different aspects of the unconscious in order to expand the field of awareness and thereby increase our choice.

Figure 4 – Psychosynthesis Egg Diagram

It is intriguing that where some depth psychology starts is also where some mainstream coaching begins. With echoes of Assagioli, Sir John Whitmore, in his classic book *Coaching for Performance*, states:

I am able to control only that of which I am aware. That of which I am unaware controls me. AWARENESS empowers me. (Whitmore, 1992:34)

Similarly, writing on the subject of choice, Jenny Rogers states:

Essentially, coaching is about the client becoming aware of, staying aware of, and being in control of, their own power. (Rogers, 2004:50)

There does then appear to be a relatively common view between therapeutic and coaching philosophies e.g. that a significant element of the work is about increasing our clients awareness, which ultimately gives them choice of action. If we are to increase our client's awareness, we must presumably help them bring what is currently out of their awareness into their awareness. Whilst GROW and other core coaching approaches can achieve this to some extent, it is my view that other methods and approaches must be incorporated into the coaching process in order to give our client the means and confidence to 'cross the threshold' and explore the 'extraordinary world' that lies within them.

Conclusion

It is hopefully self-evident that the unconscious cannot normally be accessed by the conscious mind. Therefore, if we are to increase the size of what Assagioli calls the 'field of awareness' or increase the sense of 'choice' described by Jenny Rogers, one is left with concluding that some exploration of the unconscious may be essential for many of our clients to achieve that end.

Whilst there will always be those that feel there is no place for depth work within the corporate world, I would hold that workplaces are systems that function through human interaction like anywhere else. It could be argued that workplaces are often the most intense manifestations of human interaction for many people. As a result, I would argue that lasting change that leads to peak performance within a corporate context requires that our clients have a deep personal understanding and awareness, which may only be possible through approaches borrowed from a depth psychology context. Facing some demons may be a pre-requisite for lasting change; the question is whether coaches have the maps and tools to support such a journey.

Luckily, coaching abounds with different approaches, many of which have at their core a desire to explore beneath the skin of the presenting issue, some of which draw heavily from therapeutic practice. Listening with presence, Incisive Questions from Time to Think (Kline, 1999), purpose visioning from Co-Active Coaching (Kimsey-House et al, 2011), many of the concepts within The Chimp Paradox (Steve Peters, 2011), psychological journaling, perceptual positions etc. Many of these approaches provide different means of accessing the unconscious or creating awareness, often using the same methods as therapists. The line between coaching and therapy is thin indeed and, as hopefully is now clear, there is nothing to fear in exploring therapeutic skills and approaches further. Taking this path may ultimately require some depth work for ourselves but, as for our clients, we are all on the hero's journey.

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Martin is currently HR Director for M&G Investments, the fund management arm of the Prudential Group. He has significant experience working with and coaching senior executives, primarily within financial services. Martin is currently training in the field of Psychosynthesis psychotherapy and, where relevant, seeks to integrate elements of that approach into his coaching practice. However he is coaching, Martin seeks to bring a sense of joint exploration and experimentation to the process, along with a good dose of humour.

The Private Equity Industry – a coaching opportunity

Paul Fletcher

From a small boutique segment of the financial community the 'Private Equity' industry has grown in the last 20 years to be a truly significant, important and influential part of the economic fabric in many parts of the world. It is estimated that over 40% of the British retail industry are companies owned by private equity firms; globally the industry invests approximately \$25bln per annum. It is reasonable to expect that the leadership of these firms operates to the same standard that we expect to see in more traditional and more visible publicly quoted businesses. There are several reasons why coaching has made limited inroads into this industry and yet the need for intervention is high.

In the UK alone there are more than 500 private equity firms. Nearly all of these firms are partnerships. Partnerships by their nature create a set of dynamics in terms of economics, length of service, entrance and exit terms, and personal obligations that set them apart from normal company structures.

The key essence of the industry that these partnerships operate within is that it manages capital for a fee (revenue) and a share in the potential upside return (carry) in the investments when sold. The capital (from institutional investors, family offices, endowments, sovereign wealth funds) is most typically committed to the PE firm for a period of ten years. At the heart of the decision that an investor will make when making a commitment is a belief that the PE firm will produce investment returns consistent with the past. They spend a huge amount of time and effort establishing comfort or otherwise with the individuals and the whole team at the PE firm. They endeavour to isolate who exactly are the 'star' investors and to ensure that there are sufficient legal (keyman) and economic provision to provide continuity for the life of the fund. There is a clear and unambiguous alignment of interest between investors and PE Fund Managers that star performers should be the centre of management focus in terms of motivation and retention.

The long term nature of PE funds and the need to provide continuity and stability creates an environment where sharp, cliff like changes in the membership of the partnership give rise to concern and uncertainty. The ideal picture of any change in team should be one of gentle curves where the shape of the team changes imperceptibly over time.

An important characteristic of the industry is its relative youth, where most firms are still run by the first generation of Partners and indeed dominated by the original founding partners. These are 'proprietorships' as opposed to the relatively few 'institutional' like partnerships. The success of the first generation of leaders masks the challenge of succession. There is little evidence that there has been the attention and focus on developing leadership and management talent in the next generation. Indeed the relationship between founders and the next generation is characterised by dependency. Dependency to make the major strategic decisions, to manage key relationships, to be the final investment decision maker, to manage organisation design etc. There is a challenge to pass on leadership to individuals who have had no other experience than operating in such an environment.

The structure of the industry creates its own challenges in terms of developing high quality management and leadership skills in addition to providing stand out investment professionals. It is rare for management skills to be found in a star investment professional. The 'star' will have spent his entire professional life being encouraged to be an 'individual contributor'. He will, of course, always work with a deal team but yet the value system of all firms will be to maximise the special individual skills within a small team. There will be little personal growth in terms of increasing management complexity over time, exposure to broader strategic issues and leadership generally. However, the success of these firms lies in having a senior group that indeed does have these skills. The irony is that the investment professionals who have made a career out of backing management

teams in their investee companies very often do not recognise that they have glaring gaps in their own capabilities.

This is a significant area of opportunity for coaching. The step change for a partner in a PE firm to be a business head in a multi-asset firm or regional head or indeed the CEO is an unusually big step given the industry's structure.

Specifically, the industry faces wholesale generational change in the next 5-20 years. This is disruptive in the best of firms but is likely to be more so in partnerships where firm succession is not well practiced and has the potential to upset the delicate balance of the eco-system that has worked out a status quo to accommodate the often fragile egos of the stars and sets store by team stability. It is likely that the most successful outcomes of leadership change will come with thoughtful long range planning, engagement with the top team, culminating in a robust and trusted process. Coaching the incumbent CEO, and indeed potentially his senior team, can be a positive impetus to this transition process.

The extension of this is of course coaching the potential candidate(s). As I described earlier there is unlikely to have been an effective 'apprenticeship' for the top job so outside help maybe of considerable impact both before and after such a transition.

Given the high stakes in terms of ensuring stability, continuity and yet achieving leadership change it is, I believe, inevitable that the leadership of PE firms will reach out for any tools that can assist them.

The closer to the industry with a working understanding of its specific characteristics the more likely it is that a coach will be selected and succeed. Understanding the dynamics at work in a partnership and understanding the star culture are keys to personal credibility. Once engaged coaches will no doubt be surprised, that for a group whose core competence it is to monitor and evaluate other management teams, how lacking in self-awareness senior PE professionals may be. The introduction of a coach may well engender the opportunity for a genuinely insightful 360° review. Partners openly and honestly giving each other feedback is a rare occurrence. Keeping each other happy dominates their thinking. For a group quite used to being 'aggressive' in pursuit of professional success they are very often conflict averse. Indeed aggression can be seen as a way of avoiding conflict or more specifically a means by which the core underlying issues within the partnership can be avoided.

The coach may well seek to use a psychometric tool. A preferred one is Birkman (<https://www.birkman.com/services/the-birkman-method/>) which gives feedback as a comprehensive narrative. Taken together the establishment of the 'reality' is critical to moving forward. Given the real interdependence between partners for their collective success I believe 'ad-hoc' coaching assignments within PE firms where the contract will be with one individual will be sub-optimal. Far better to be tasked with providing coaching to the 'CEO and his top team' whilst this maybe a mix of team intervention and direct one:one coaching the opportunity exists for a holistic intervention that could yield significant results.

If the door is not open to such a broad based relationship then there still remains significant opportunity. Competitive pressures are increasing as the industry matures. Beyond the early phase where first mover advantage conferred a strong strategic position the leadership of all PE firms must grapple with the uncomfortable reality that there will be winners and losers and the underpinning to that outcome will lie in the managerial and strategic leadership competence of the most senior Partners.

To summarise: Coaching is not widespread within the PE industry. The need however is significant and there is a major opportunity for coaches to have a material impact working with individuals and teams who are faced with the very different challenges of team and firm leadership in addition to their competence of being skilled investors.

Paul Fletcher

Paul is currently Chairman of Actis, a Private Equity firm and has previously held senior positions in the banking sector. He works with individuals and also with the senior teams in private equity firms. He brings wide ranging business experience with a particular emphasis on maximizing the potential of the leadership team in partnerships, coaching through the leadership succession cycle and assisting star individual contributors evolve to firm wide leaders.

Thinking, and other essential equipment for the twenty first century

David French

'In all we do our purpose should be the search for truth, not support of opinions.'
Ibn Al-Haytham, 11th century Arab, Muslim, polymath and philosopher

This short essay sets out, first, to locate in the wheel of my life what I have learned through training and practising as an executive coach; and, second, to propose a framework for coaching *outcomes* as a means to focus the *inputs* of the coach. This is a work in progress in a wheel which, if the past is a guide to the future, has yet some turning to do.

I argue that the ability to think for oneself, with its attendant abilities to question, challenge, debate and search for truth, is not only a cornerstone and an outcome of good coaching - particularly for those of us who have come under the strong influence of Nancy Kline¹. It is also an essential skill for the twenty first century, being the principal means by which every individual may hope to arrive at a set of values, the compass by which they can navigate an ever more complex world.

I seek to locate this argument in the world of the coach through the work of cognitive scientist Guy Claxton, influential in challenging educational orthodoxy, and his Learning-Power Dispositions². I return to this below.

I developed my own thinking about the power of thinking through working in the Arab region, having in 2011 co-founded the Alexandria Trust after six years working on political development in the region. We took as our mission to contribute to restoring world class education to a region which once led the world in the advance of civilization; and as our focus the human and social sciences as a powerful route to developing the faculties of critical thinking, creative reflection and independence of mind. As Ismail Serageldin³, director of the new Library of Alexandria, said to us, 'Our human societies need more than knowledge, they need wisdom. That requires time, reflection and the patina of experience.'

But many of us, regardless of culture, opportunity or temperament, reach adulthood and even positions of senior responsibility socialised through education systems which breed the habits of endurance better than they engender the excitement of learning and adaptable inner resources; and so, Claxton argues, with less than developed abilities to navigate those demanding moments which constitute the fork in the road between failure and continuing success in a career trajectory. Claxton offers four essential dispositions, four Rs learned through education, as the best armoury for achievement in adult life: resilience, resourcefulness, reflectiveness and reciprocity.

Many of those who come to coaching, as every coach knows, need help in at least one of these dispositions. Whereas Claxton built his reputation on a passion to cultivate a 'love of learning', and while he presents the development of all these dispositions as essentially a cognitive process, for the goal-focused coach they equally offer a potential framework of coaching outcomes at least as coherent as any I have so far found.

So, with the intention to shape such a framework in my own coaching practice, I now consider each disposition from this perspective, offering illustrative references to test its validity.

Resilience A very current but variously defined term in coaching, Coto⁴ sees resilience as 'the ability to manage thoughts and emotions to obtain and maintain peak performance in a very demanding

¹ Kline, N. *Time to Think: Listening to ignite the human mind*, Cassell 1999

² Claxton, G. and Chambers, M. *The Learning Powered School: Pioneering 21st Century Education*, TLO 2011

³ Serageldin, I. *Reflections on Education*, The Alexandria Trust 2013

⁴ Coto, J. *The Corporate Athlete: Coaching to build resilience and maximise peak performance*, Meyler Campbell annual lecture 2014

environment'. For the aspiring or senior executive for whom such an environment will be or become habitual, resilience constitutes the ability to confront and navigate the difficult, unpleasant, uncertain or dangerous moments in a career, with all their attendant consequences: the ability, as Kipling⁵ put it, to 'meet with Triumph and Disaster and treat those two impostors just the same'.

The fast developing world of positive psychology offers much of value in this area. The work of Seligman⁶ and Csikszentmihalyi⁷ came to focus on the capacity to resist and overcome adversity. The latter's work on 'flow', notably the link he identifies between peak performance and activities which are intrinsically motivating, hints at the alignment of flow and values.

Others go further. Style⁸, for whom values are 'the way we prioritise what we need', lists no less than 369 of them. She uses the ancient philosophical concept of *telos* to illustrate the integration of skills and abilities with our growth in character and social reputation in the same purposeful direction.

Kauffman⁹ is even more explicit, locating transcendence at the top of her PERFECT pyramid to emphasise that 'performance is enhanced when goals are ... linked to what the person deeply values'.

Helping clients to develop and maintain a coherent set of core values and beliefs underpins their ability to perform with resilience, particularly at those moments of greatest challenge.

Resourcefulness, for Claxton, embodies the cognitive aspects of learning, developed to provide a powerful set of tools for achievement: the ability to think on one's feet or 'flounder intelligently', persist with difficulty, manage one's attention in the face of competition, develop a sceptical approach to knowledge, question and check knowledge claims, see connections between disparate events and experiences, build curiosity, explore possibilities; indeed, to deepen values.

Coaching is often described as an opportunity to do some really effective thinking. Steve Jobs¹⁰: 'That's been one of my mantras - focus and simplicity. Simple can be harder than complex: you have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains.'

While MBTI and other instruments offer assessment tools which are nowhere more relevant than in relation to cognitive aptitudes, in the world of coaching for clear and clean thinking Nancy Kline commands the stage with her simple - though by no means easy - 10 point Thinking Environment. Distinctively, Kline identifies the features of that environment which need to be present to release the power of clear thinking.

Gallwey¹¹ points to the necessity to unthink bad habits in any search for peak performance; while Kahneman¹² examines the hazards of over-reliance on cognitive behaviour alone and the limitations of human rationality. We need other qualities as well.

Reflectiveness, that precious handmaid of cognitive enquiry and the heartland of the non-directive coach, encourages the ability to slow down, digest, distill, pull out the essential features of an issue; but also, crucially, to stand back and listen to feelings as much as to reason; to look at strategic direction, work out the route map and the complications one may expect to encounter; as well as to

⁵ Kipling, R. *If in Rewards and Fairies*, 1910

⁶ Seligman, M. *Authentic Happiness: Using the new positive psychology to realise your potential for lasting fulfilment*, Free Press 2002

⁷ Csikszentmihalyi, M. *Flow: The psychology of optimal experience*, Harper Perennial 2008

⁸ Style, C. *Brilliant Positive Psychology*, Pearson 2011

⁹ Kauffman, C. *Coaching, An international review of theory, research and practice*, 2010, op.cit. Scoular, A, in *Business Coaching*, Financial Times/Prentice Hall 2011

¹⁰ Jobs, S. *There's sanity returning*, interview with Business Week 1998

¹¹ Gallwey, T. *The Inner Game of Tennis*, Pan Books 1974

¹² Kahneman, D. *Thinking, Fast and Slow*, Penguin 2011

monitor and review and, most of all, develop a keen self-awareness which will help to guide and regulate one's own emotional responses and behaviour.

Coaching practice and literature offer ample scope for the development of reflective abilities in action conscious senior leaders.

When it comes to reflection for strategic development, however, the literature seems curiously light. Dawson¹³ draws attention to the challenge commonly facing CEOs whose primary function is to develop and uphold a clear vision for the organisation while having insufficient time to reflect and retain clarity on the essentials. From this perspective the coach can help the CEO to reflect on where and how they can add most value, clarify and act on their weak points, mobilise the resources of their senior team, focus away from non-essential activities.

Reciprocity speaks to the world beyond self and into the senior executive's key relationships with management teams, the wider range of colleagues, customers and stakeholders. The concept of reciprocity itself signals the benefits of generosity and trust in relationships in creating a happy, productive working environment with all that entails in better performance.

The coaching literature is rich on relational skills, team building and the importance of communication. Style, for example, refers to the six qualities of recognition, friendship, positive structure, teamwork, trust and generosity as keys to improving relatedness at work. And the model of co-active coaching¹⁴ reminds us that the relationship between two principals - in this case coach and client - is the most powerful predictor of added value.

Among resources, the FIRO-B instrument¹⁵ provides an invaluable starting point in enabling the coach to raise a client's awareness of their relational preferences, needs and impact on others.

So, in conclusion, these four Rs provide a valuable means to organize and focus coaching practice from the perspective of desired outcomes: a set of qualities which, developed and balanced through coaching, offer the senior executive client a powerful route to peak performance.

But there is yet something else, transcending such analysis. Gallwey in his short epilogue¹⁶ speaks of 'the search for the goal of the inner game', a power within each of us which is 'finally capable of stilling the mind'. The great Dag Hammarskjöld¹⁷ calls this 'the point of rest at the centre of our being where all things are at rest in the same way'. Until we reach that point where the wheel comes to rest, in Eliot's¹⁸ words:

'We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.'

¹³ Dawson, H. *Developing Bifocal Vision* in Coffee, E. *10 Things that Keep CEOs Awake*, McGraw Hill 2002

¹⁴ Kimsey-House, H. et al *Co-Active Coaching: Changing business, transforming lives*, Nicholas Brealey Publishing 2011

¹⁵ Waterman, J. and Rogers, J. *Introduction to the FIRO-B Instrument*, OPP 2000

¹⁶ ... which is also the most moving essay I have read in the whole of my coaching journey so far.

¹⁷ Hammarskjöld, D. *Markings*, Faber and Faber 1964

¹⁸ Eliot, T.S. *Little Gidding* in *The Four Quartets*, Faber and Faber 1944

David French

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Is the quality of the client/coach relationship the key factor in effective business coaching?

Douglas French

Introduction

The principal objective of all coaches is to coach as effectively as possible, and to help their clients realize their potential, achieve their goals, make changes, clarify choices, develop new skills and so on.

Novice coaches (like myself) are often particularly concerned about the mechanics of coaching – what is the best coaching model or technique(s) to adopt; what are the crucial incisive questions to pose? One of the reasons that early coaching sessions tend not to “flow” particularly well is partly, I suspect, because the coach is worrying about , and focusing unduly upon, these mechanics.

There is undoubtedly a large number of coaching approaches, styles, schools, tools and models. These range from the very structured questioning style of the GROW approach to the supportive but almost complete silence of Nancy Kline’s “Time to Think” method. Other coaching approaches include solutions focused, co- active, relational, visualization/NLP and experiential.

My experience of coaching, being coached and observing coaching sessions is that there is not necessarily a single “right ” approach/ model/school of coaching. It seems to me that, in the hands of capable and experienced business coaches, all approaches can be effective.

If my observations and experience are correct and it is the case that different business coaching models can be (equally) effective, this prompts the question: what, then, is the key factor(s) or crucial ingredient(s) in effective coaching?

I have sought the answer to this question from some of the (as yet relatively limited) research that has been done on coaching , and also from the (more extensive) research in the related area of psychotherapy.

What does the academic research on psychotherapy tell us?

Psychotherapy has been around for many more years than executive coaching , and it has been the subject of many more research studies. Their findings are summarized in B. E Wompold’s book “The Great Psychotherapy Debate” as follows:-

1. Psychotherapy is highly effective – ie it is as effective as treatment with drugs.
2. None of the main psychotherapy approaches enjoys enhanced effectiveness compared with the others.
3. There are, however, specific “active ingredients ” which are common to all professional approaches.

These “common factors ” are summarized by Anne Scoular (in “Business Coaching”) as follows:-

- a) Client factors – ie the client’s personal strengths and resources and the strength of his/ her support network. This element is estimated to account for up to 40 % of the (successful) outcome
- b) Relationship factors (caring, empathy, warmth, acceptance and attractiveness (!) of the therapist) account for 30% of the outcome
- c) Placebo, hope and expectations – ie the client’s expectation and hope that there will be a positive outcome and assessment of the credibility of the therapy in question (15%)

d) Model/ technique factors (ie the particular type of therapy used) accounts for only 15% of the outcome.

In other words, of the factors under the control of the therapist, the most important factor is the relationship between client and therapist.

Interestingly, Anne Scoular is clearly somewhat skeptical about the relevance of this research to executive coaching, pointing out – quite rightly – that business coaching is not therapy and that the nature of the clients and their respective issues are different. To the extent that she does acknowledge its possible relevance she fails, in my view, to take full account of the point that the therapist / client relationship is more important than the particular approach adopted by the therapist.

Let us then turn to the (admittedly more limited) scientific research into coaching.

What does the academic research into Business Coaching tell us?

Research into coaching is more limited (in particular the kind of research described by Anne Scoular as “parsimonious, theoretically sound [and] accurate to 0.05% “). However, there has been a number of interesting research projects. A couple of studies seem to me to be particularly relevant.

In Duckworth and de Haan’s 2012 study of 156 client /coach pairs participating in contracted external executive coaching, a number of factors were analysed to examine their impact on coaching outcomes.

The study found that the strength of the coaching relationship (also described as the “working alliance”) – *as measured by the client* – was the principal factor in predicting successful coaching outcomes. Client self – efficacy and perceived coach behaviours were also predictive of successful outcomes.

It is also worth noting that, in relation to coach behaviours, the findings supported the general principle of coaching, namely that asking questions and helping clients make their own discoveries (ie *a non directive approach*) is more effective than providing instruction, advice and information. The study did not specifically seek to identify any impact of different coaching models, but it seemed to confirm that various coaching techniques and behaviours predicted outcome broadly equally.

Another relevant study was Boyce, Jackson and Neil’s 2010 research which sought to evaluate the impact on coaching outcomes of “matching” coaches with clients based on “commonality” (similarities in background , education , interests etc) , “compatibility “ (behavioural preferences, personality) and “credibility” (coach’s capability and experience being of relevance to the client)

The conclusion was that compatibility and credibility could, to some degree, provide a foundation or starting point on which to build and develop the kind of relationship that leads to successful coaching outcomes. However, the study acknowledged that such matching does not appear to be an absolutely necessary condition given that, ultimately, it is the coaching process itself which generates the rapport, trust and commitment which are central to successful outcomes.

As acknowledged above, academic research (particularly of the most rigorous kind) on coaching is still in its infancy, and further studies need to be done before definitive conclusions can be reached.

That said, however, the findings of the studies referred to above would seem to be broadly consistent with those of the psychotherapy studies in stressing the importance of the client/coach relationship or working alliance to successful outcomes.

Implications for coaches – in particular novice coaches (like myself)

Of course, it will not come as a great surprise to the vast majority of coaches that establishing a strong working relationship with a client is important. What may be somewhat surprising however to some (as it was to me) is that the research seems to suggest that it is *the* most important factor in effective coaching.

Does this mean that a novice coach (like myself) should forget about seeking to master the “tools of the trade” and not bother aiming to become “fluent” in different coaching models and approaches? The answer to that question – in my view – is most definitely not, for a couple of reasons:-

- a) The only way that I can move from “conscious incompetence” to “conscious competence” and (hopefully) to “unconscious competence” is by continuing to develop knowledge and experience of, and expertise in, the different coaching approaches.
- b) In my (admittedly relatively limited) experience, I’m not, in any event, wholly convinced that all coaching models work equally well in all cases. For example, I have found that the generative and supportive silence of the Time to Think approach seems to be more helpful than the very structured questioning approach of GROW for clients grappling with issues of transition and identity.

The key message for me from these studies, however, is that I do need to pay at least as much attention to establishing a strong working relationship with my clients as I do to mastering other aspects of the work.

A strong client/coach relationship/ working alliance is likely to include some or all of the following features: rapport, equality, reciprocity, empathy trust, an unconditional positive regard for the client and a belief in the client’s abilities to achieve the outcome he / she is seeking. Although not essential there may also be some merit in my seeking to work with clients with whom there is a good “match”. Developing my ability to listen (at all “levels”) and developing my ability to pay close attention to all the information – spoken and unspoken- that the client (and my own internal reactions to the client) provide will be important. Given that the research also tells me that it is the *client’s* perception rather than my perception of the relationship that is key it may also be worthwhile my expressly exploring our relationship /working alliance at appropriate moments in the coaching work.

Conclusion

Many different approaches and coaching models can be effective. It is therefore important that I continue to build my knowledge of, and expertise in, different models in order to be able to adapt my approach to different clients and different client issues. Equally importantly, however, I need to ensure (insofar as possible) that at the heart of each of my coaching assignments there is a strong client/ coach relationship.

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2010 Building Successful Leadership Coaching Relationships: Examining Impact of Matching Criteria in a Leadership Coaching Programme by Boyce L A, Jackson RJ and Neal LJ

Douglas French

Douglas brings more than 30 years commercial and business experience to his coaching practice. Formerly a partner with Clifford Chance (where he held a number of leadership positions), he is now enjoying life after the law. His understanding of, and empathy with, the kind of challenges his clients are facing allows him to focus on - and particularly enjoy - working with high-achieving professionals at transition points in their careers.

Turning Vision into Action

Creating the Future

Amanda Pelham Green

"Until one is committed there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back, always ineffectiveness. Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation) there is one elementary truth, the ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans: the moment one definitely commits oneself, then providence moves too."¹

"Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it. Boldness has genius, magic and power in it. Begin it now!"²

This is my mantra for life, a 'knowing' from experience that I bring to the coaching conversation. I have probably been coaching and mentoring since I was 17; it is a way of life for me, a connection to my purpose: if everyone were doing what they were called to do, would not this world be a better place? When I am working with my clients I find myself in a state of Flow.³ That is, until I began this course when everything fell apart.

The GROW model was hell. The fact that this was the only model I knew made no difference for the intuitive coach in me who applied it only loosely. I used to think that coaching was about taking action, backed up by my own innate, driven ability to get things done. I now know that an equally important outcome is learning⁴ and can work at a deeper level to contribute to the cycle of action and learning to enable change.

Clients come to coaching because they want change; often, they don't know where it is they want to go, they just want something to shift. Soren Kierkegaard describes the state well, *"To venture causes anxiety, but not to venture is to lose one's self."* Under these circumstances I see my role as enabling clients to create a compelling vision, increasing their self-awareness and encouraging them to take action towards achieving their goals.

But what is the commitment that W N Murray describes? How do I encourage clients to find it and act upon it? How can I best help create the future they define for themselves?

Vision is my starting point. Peltier says that *"Vision becomes incrementally more important the higher one goes in an organization. At the top, it is essential."*⁵ Previously, I relied on NLP techniques such as visualisation (not good if the client is not visual) and walking a time-line, along with the tried and tested eulogy question and, in extremis, a list of what the client did not want and finding the positive opposite. For embedding, I would often encourage the client to write down this desired future in the present tense. On many occasions, the results were not compelling enough to drive effective action. Deepak Chopra shatters the myth that success is the result of hard work, exacting plans and driving ambition⁶ and confirms what Viktor Frankl and Homer's Odysseus teach us, that if meaning and purpose can be found, then nothing can stop us taking action.

So, with this insight, I now set about helping my clients find meaning and purpose if they are willing to delve deeper, something for which before I had few tools.

¹ W N Murray, The Scottish Himalayan Expedition. For completeness, the quotation continues: *"All sorts of things occur to help one that would otherwise never have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favour all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance which no man could have dreamed would have come his way."*

² Loosely translated from a couplet by J W v Goethe

³ As described by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi in Flow, published by Rider

⁴ *"Learning is not simply a by-product of action; it is an equal and complementary force."* Co-Active Coaching, Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl and Whitworth, 3rd edition, p. 13

⁵ The Psychology of Executive Coaching, Bruce Peltier, Second Edition, p. 27

⁶ The Seven Spiritual Laws of Success – A practical guide to the fulfilment of your dreams by Deepak Chopra

I found David Royston-Lee's approach interesting,⁷ the idea of being purpose focused rather than goal focused, coupled with two particular tools: the 'good at/bad at' matrix and the other a lifeline exercise eliciting high points and themes. Along with an exercise to identify values, this was effective with a client struggling to decide whether or not to stay in his role or resign. Having identified a key value of integrity it became obvious that he could no longer stay; his relief on resigning, even into the unknown, was palpable.

Another way to encourage commitment is to discover and access a client's internal motivators rather than just the extrinsic. For example, as one client described his desire to become the Managing Partner of a national firm and was struggling to find a way to give a unique message, what lay behind it was his wish to nurse an old-fashioned partnership towards a future that wasn't just focused on financial gain; it was about adding more meaning and depth.

I have also learnt that the technique of visualisation is not always the best way to motivate behaviour or action. As Kappes and Oettingen argue in an article⁸, *"Positive fantasies that idealize the future are found to be inversely related to achievement over time: the more positively the fantasies are experienced, the less effort do people invest in realizing these fantasies, and the lower is their success in achieving them"*. This revelation was a shock to my NLP technique; I am now much more circumspect about using this methodology unless I can tie it in with a robust look at reality and internal/external obstacles that might exist. This is backed up by Passarelli who describes it as the importance of "rubbing up against reality".⁹ I look forward to exploring Oettingen's four-step process WOOP¹⁰ and adding this to my coaching tools.

With my own Vision Quest¹¹ and working with an adaptation¹² of Joseph Campbell's The Hero's Journey in mind, I sometimes ask clients to tell a story. This methodology works well and gives a good structure for a call to action, especially for clients who are creative and hate to read or write. One client produced a business plan on a mood board with photographs, drawings and key words punctuated by (moveable!) dates on yellow stickies; I learnt to set aside my very task focused approach and step back from being directive. Joseph Jaworski reminds: it is *"important to focus on the result and not get attached to any particular process for achieving the result."*¹³

Now faced with the challenge of action, in the past I led clients to a diarised, SMART 'to do' list; surely everything would happen? However, I have learnt that positive results are more hopeful if one can find multiple ways to reach goals.¹⁴ The taking of the first step is crucial, even if it turns out to be the 'wrong' one. Ibarra backs this up, "it is in the doing and testing, not just the thinking, that the journey unfolds and clarity is achieved."¹⁵

I have learnt to mix measures of success with well formed outcomes, embedding the objectives and improving the likelihood of action. Other methods include intention setting (a mindful approach), working through Covey's important/urgent matrix¹⁶ (this proved successful whilst discussing early wins in the first 90 days), using perceptual positions, future pacing, working with realised/unrealised strengths¹⁷ (which has given more choice and increased learning) along with encouragement to play

⁷ David Royston-Lee, Coaching Fishbowl, Meyler Campbell event 5th March 2015

⁸ Journal of Experimental Social Psychology 2011, p. 719, 'Positive fantasies about idealized futures sap energy' by Heather Barry Kappes, Ph.D. and Gabriele Oettingen, Ph.D.

⁹ ICPA Webinar, Vision Based Coaching, Optimizing the Mind Body for Leader Development, by Angela Passarelli Ph.D, 26th March 2015

¹⁰ Wish, Outcome, Obstacle Plan. Rethinking Positive Thinking: Inside the New Science of Motivation by Gabriele Oettingen, PH.D. (2014)

¹¹ http://www.rbanet.co.za/p_vision.html also described by Elle Harrison in her book 'Wild Courage'

¹² Adapted by Joseph Jaworski from Joseph Campbell, The Hero with a Thousand Faces, as described on p. 89 of Synchronicity, The Inner Path of Leadership, published by Berrett Koehler

¹³ Synchronicity, The Inner Path of Leadership by Joseph Jaworski, published by Berrett Koehler, p. 124

¹⁴ ICPA Webinar, Coaching Science in Motion: Translating Self-Determination Theory into Coaching Practice, Margaret Moore, MBA and Jeff Hull Ph.D., 19th May 2014

¹⁵ Working Identity by Herminia Ibarra

¹⁶ Stephen R Covey, The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People

¹⁷ Realise2 strengths-based assessment, www.cappeu.com

and act 'as if'. The effectiveness of this last idea is backed up by Stephen Fear, "I start every relationship as if it is going to last for the rest of my life."¹⁸

However, having understood the imperative of learning and of distinguishing the difference between an end goal and a performance goal,¹⁹ it is Nancy Kline's Thinking Environment²⁰ coupled with the incisive question that has assisted my clients most in changing mindsets. As Peter Senge says²¹ about the deeper nature of commitment, *"When we operate in a state of mind in which we realise we are part of the unfolding, we cannot not be committed...This is a commitment of being, not a commitment of doing."*

As I follow this quest to improve my ability to bring about lasting, empowering change I realise that whatever tools I have and however much I have yet to learn, often it is the power of listening, of giving full attention and being utterly present that is enough. The journey begins.

Amanda Pelham Green

Amanda is a business coach and the Founding Director of Odyssey Mentor Limited. Her business background includes 12 years' experience in small and entrepreneurial businesses, having launched three, acquired one and sold one. She has successful experience in the City as the COO of an international executive search firm and has been described as an 'expert at turning vision into action.' She is a Master Practitioner in NLP with a speciality in working with executives in transition, either seeking to improve performance, change roles or define a meaningful future for their business or themselves. Amanda has a specific expertise in helping develop clarity of direction and inspiring people to action; she brings considerable commercial experience to her coaching and a joy of building businesses.

¹⁸ Stephen Fear, "My First Million" by Natalie Graham quoted in The Financial Times, 21st March, 2015

¹⁹ "The end goal may provide the inspiration, but the performance goal defines the specification." Coaching for Performance by John Whitmore, fourth edition, Ch. 7, pg. 59.

²⁰ Time to Think by Nancy Kline

²¹ Synchronicity, The Inner Path of Leadership by Joseph Jaworski, Foreword by Peter Senge pg 12

Coaching for change: The unlearning imperative

Christian Greiser

Introduction

Reflecting on my coaching practice in the context of the Meyler Campbell Business Coach program and my related experience in my work as a consultant, I have observed a recurring pattern: Succeeding at the next level in career development requires not only learning new skills, but also actively unlearning past behaviors that don't suit the new role. Because these behaviors will have typically been the ingredients for past success, this process is often counterintuitive for leaders, especially for senior leaders. Coaching helps to create awareness and to facilitate unlearning.

The unlearning imperative

Today more than ever, leaders need to be adaptive to succeed. The business environment is changing fast and constantly. There is the higher speed of information and innovation, aging population and talent shortage, emphasis on corporate social responsibility, intensified global and local competition, coexistence of low- and high-growth-rate markets, and increasing importance of virtual teams - in short: There is much higher uncertainty, and change is becoming the "new normal". With it come new adaptive requirements for leaders and executives such as a diverse, global perspective instead of sound local knowledge, multi-industry exposure instead of a single company experience, or versatility across diverse roles instead of linear career paths. As a consequence, lateral and vertical career moves happen more frequently.

Not all leaders flourish in this highly dynamic environment. According to a recent study by the Center for Creative Leadership¹, approximately 40 percent of executives in new leadership positions fail within their first 18 months on the job, and even more of them fail to live up to the expectations of those who hired or promoted them. The reason can be directly linked to inadequate learning patterns in the new environment. However, while the notion of learning is widely connected with acquiring new skills and expertise, good learning practice actively takes unlearning into account, too. In a way, unlearning can be described as a process of "creative destruction". Executives need to break out of familiar patterns that don't work in the changed environment. But questioning models that were successful in the past and perhaps even contributed to career advancement can seem counterintuitive, and overcoming the inertia of past behaviors can be a painful task. It is the "what got you here won't get you there" dilemma described by Marshall Goldsmith in his book of the same title².

The need for unlearning in executive development has also been highlighted by Witherspoon and White in their booklet *Four Essential Ways That Coaching Can Help Executives*³. Initiating and sustaining this type of personal change often requires an external impulse through coaching. Change is at the heart of coaching. Prochaska's six stages of change⁴ model can be applied to support the unlearning process:

1. *Precontemplation*—raising awareness about old patterns that don't work anymore
2. *Contemplation*—managing the ambivalence of giving up past success models
3. *Preparation*—setting goals and generating commitment
4. *Action*—stopping old behavior, managing potential discomfort
5. *Maintenance*—managing personal crises, avoiding fallback into old behavior patterns
6. *Termination*—old patterns have been unlearned, it would take energy to recall them

¹ Center for Creative Leadership, Riddle, D. (2009) Executive Integration

² Goldsmith, M., Reiter, M. (2008) What Got You Here Won't Get You There

³ Witherspoon, R., White, R. (1997) Four Essential Ways That Coaching Can Help Executives, in Peltier, B. (2010) The Psychology of Executive Coaching

⁴ Prochaska et al. (1992), in Peltier, B. (2010) The Psychology of Executive Coaching

Two types of career change require particular unlearning effort and should be facilitated by coaching:

- Fast-track vertical career moves
- Lateral career moves

Coaching and unlearning in practice: Fast-track vertical career moves

Today many companies offer fast career tracks for high potentials, such as faster promotion to the next level or even the opportunity "skip a chair". This practice is a means of not only attracting top talent, but also of testing future leaders early on and injecting fresh thinking into executive ranks. Typically these "fast trackers" have excelled in their past positions and have demonstrated that they're able to learn on the fly. However, on most career tracks there are turning points where the "rules of the race" change fundamentally. At these points, a successful habit of the past might suddenly turn into a liability going forward. If fast-moving high potentials don't recognize this shift, they might risk getting off-track. The coach acts as a guide by raising awareness that a critical turning point might have been reached. He facilitates unlearning by helping to encourage executives to leave outmoded success patterns and to experiment with more appropriate styles.

Here is an example from my own coaching and consulting experience. A newly promoted sector manager in an engineering company was struggling in his new role. The performance of his unit was declining and his employees were getting more and more discouraged. We started our coaching by exploring how he had excelled in the past. In his previous role, he had been a successful key account manager, known not only for his detailed client and product knowledge, but especially for his ability to deal with difficult problems. Now he felt that something was holding him back. Our coaching revealed that he hadn't made the step to sector manager mentally and was still trying to excel in areas that were no longer part of his scope of duties. He focused on day-to-day issues, giving them top priority and trying to solve them himself. That created a lot of confusion in the team, discouraged his employees in charge of the problem, and disgruntled many clients by slowing down the process, as he was making himself a bottleneck. Stopping this habit took a lot of courage and created some discomfort initially, since he solely defined himself by "fighting at the front". We agreed to hardwire the unlearning process with a "to-DON'T list", which reminded him of his goal on a daily basis. Our coaching helped him to give up his outdated mental model of personal success and to take on a fresh perspective as a leader. This allowed him to free up much-needed time to work on the real leadership tasks crucial for business performance.

Coaching and unlearning in practice: Lateral career moves

Lateral career moves provide a different type of challenge. There are various reasons for lateral moves, such looking for new career opportunities or having been made redundant. Lateral moves always involve some risk because one enters uncharted waters. This is particularly important for high performers. In his book *Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance*⁵, Boris Groysberg shows that many of the stars and high potentials who excelled at their former company suffer an immediate and lasting decline in performance after moving. Their earlier excellence seems to have depended on their former companies' resources, colleagues, networks, and culture. In order to succeed in their next role, it is essential that they reflect on the key ingredients of past success and unlearn and replace past success patterns that largely depended on proprietary elements of their former company. Depending on the type of lateral career move, the required unlearning and mental shift can be tremendous. Just moving to a different employer but basically staying in the same role will be easier than a transition of identity, as described by Hermina Ibarra in *Working Identity*⁶.

⁵ Groysberg, B. (2010) *Chasing Stars: The Myth of Talent and the Portability of Performance*

⁶ Ibarra, H. (2003) *Working Identity*

In lateral career moves, coaching helps in navigating gamut from exploring new career opportunities to successfully integrating into the new company and culture. All process steps typically require significant unlearning, e.g., giving up outdated mental models of career destiny or changing behavior patterns that don't work in the new environment. Different coaches may be involved at different ends of the process. Some companies pay particular attention to properly integrating new talents and actively support in onboarding with in-house or external coaching. This is understandable—having often spent a significant amount of money finding the candidate, these companies want to see a quick and lasting return on their investment.

Here is another example from my own coaching and consulting experience that highlights the need for unlearning in lateral career moves. A new employee in a management consultancy who had been hired from a large industrial corporation was having difficulty integrating into the company culture. His first performance review disclosed some significant development deficits, especially with regard to communication skills and lack of business drive. Compared to his peers, many of which had been hired directly as graduates, he seemed to learn at a much slower speed. While he had been hired mainly for his in-depth experience in a particular industry sector, he was unable to translate his expertise and former experience in his daily work as a consultant. In our coaching conversation we slowly but surely explored what was holding him back. Eventually we were able to unearth the problem: He was limiting himself by still mentally applying the organizational model of his former employer. This had been characterized by a hierarchical structure and formal culture. In order to succeed, employees were expected to follow direction given by their superiors and to strictly stay within their area of responsibility, almost like a silo. However, in his new environment at the consultancy, employees were expected to think laterally and to take initiative. In our coaching sessions, the old mental model was removed step-by-step and gradually replaced with a model that reflected the values and culture of his new environment.

As shown in the examples, the ability to unlearn is crucial for successful career development. If a leader struggles, but doesn't recognize the need for unlearning early enough, he or she will typically do more of the same, just at a much higher speed. This could ultimately culminate in a personal crisis. A coach should be aware of this pattern and raise awareness by asking the coachee to deliberately reflect on past behavior patterns. This reflection can already be an eye-opening experience.

Outlook

Because we have entered the digital age, the speed of change will continue to increase. New business models and job profiles are proliferating. According to a survey of Future Workplace⁷, 91 percent of millennials, the generation born between 1977 and 1997, is expected to have 15 to 20 jobs over the course of their working lives. In this "new world", leadership success models will expire at an even faster rate and individual adaptability will become the crucial career success factor. Leaders will need to be able to embrace global uncertainty, chart a clear course, exercise influence and authority by networking, and—most importantly—to self-correct quickly. Learning and unlearning will be imperative to success. Executive coaches need to be prepared to effectively support in this process. They need to be able to speak the language of the "old and new worlds", and build bridges between the two and even ask some uncomfortable questions, if necessary. They will act as a catalyst for change and help leaders to see unlearning as an opportunity to take on a fresh, new perspective. There is no better competitive advantage a leader can have.

⁷ Future Workplace (2012) Multiple Generations @ Work, Forbes online
(<http://www.forbes.com/sites/jeannemeister/2012/08/14/job-hopping-is-the-new-normal-for-millennials-three-ways-to-prevent-a-human-resource-nightmare/>)

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Christian Greiser

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Coaching – Unleashing The Potential Within

Simmy Grover

Introduction

Coaching is a powerful tool and this essay is a reflection of what I have learnt whilst trying to harness this tool and better my skills, in order to aid others in realising the potential within them. Although a number of texts (Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2015; Theeboom, Beersma, & Vianen, 2014) describe the effective influence and positive impact that coaching has on an individual's behaviour and performance, experiencing those changes and witnessing the effectiveness of coaching in practice is incomparable. Even initial practice sessions with clients had immense moments of clarity, achievement and change. This in combination with first-hand feedback has provided me with invaluable learning that has become cemented in my coaching principles.

I have decided to use snippets from coaching sessions and, where possible, I will explore whether neuroimaging techniques can provide some insight as to why some coaching techniques are so useful. While a number of neuroimaging studies have investigated the impact of cognitive behavioural therapy and other interventions on mental health issues (e.g. Patricia Ribeiro Porto et al., 2009) none have examined the impact of coaching on the brain and very few have examined the impact of talking therapies on healthy individuals.

The Power Within People

There is one underlying theme that my techniques and tools rely upon: "people are infinitely resourceful" (J. Rogers, 2012, p.21). Although this is a quote from an early text in our Meyler Campbell reading list, it is an assumption that I have carried for a number of years; it drove me to leave financial services, pursue psychology and unsurprisingly led me to coaching. Fortuitously, during my first chemistry session with a potential practice client, who was struggling with a recent promotion to manager, I was asked, "Can anyone be a good manager or are some people just not built for that?" Earlier in the meeting he had mentioned, "I don't feel like I can manage people" and "I am not management material". I answered his question with a simple "yes" and went on to explain: "I truly believe people have the potential to do anything that they desire and my job is to facilitate that process."

Although his question may have been a reflection of his self-doubt during a difficult time it cemented the importance of this very simple belief. It is clear this belief is the backbone to a number of different models in coaching. It potentially originated from Carl Roger's person-centered approach (C. R. Rogers, 1951), where the role of the coach/therapist is to create a climate in which the client can develop. The ability to develop or change is within the client and the role of the coach is to cultivate that growth (Peltier, 2011). Additionally, it is a key element of the co-active coaching model: "people are naturally creative, resourceful and whole" (Kimsey-House, Kimsey-House, Sandahl, & Whitworth, 2011, p.3). Furthermore, it is echoed in Nancy Kline's components of an effective Thinking Environment (1999, p.39): "Usually the brain that contains the problem also contains the solution – often the best one."

What Neuroscience Can Tell Us About Coaching

One of my practice clients told me at the end of our first session that until now she had never experienced telling someone what she wanted in her future without that person judging her. She wanted to be successful in the workplace and have a good family life but whenever she spoke to her friends or family she felt like they thought she was expecting too much from her

future: “she wasn’t allowed to have it all”. Her feedback was surprising as well as saddening as I believe everyone is entitled to non-judgemental attention when describing his or her own desires.

In the majority of situations, judgement equates to criticism; judgement is an evaluation of what has been said, it may be a good or bad evaluation but it is essentially conveying information about the value of what the client has said and this could potentially undermine the client’s thought process. Neuroimaging studies have investigated the impact of criticism on the functional connectivity in an individual’s brain. One such study (Servaas et al., 2013), utilising fMRI (functional magnetic resonance imaging) found that areas of the brain associated with the processing of emotions and social thinking showed higher activity while participants were criticised compared to when they were at rest. The authors propose that these brain regions are activated during criticism in order for participants to interpret what is underlying the criticism in order to understand how they can then adapt their behaviour: the participants become more externally orientated.

From this one could hypothesise, that externally orientated clients, as opposed to internally orientated, are more likely to be dedicating brain power to deciphering and responding to their coach’s evaluation rather than exploring their own internal thoughts and desires. Furthermore, a review of physiological studies (Dickerson & Kemeny, 2004) found that evaluation by others leads to an elevated level of the stress hormone cortisol; again a rather undesired reaction for a coaching client. So non-judgemental attention not only relaxes a client but also keeps them internally focused.

Moving on to another well-known coaching technique, the GROW (Goal, Reality, Options & Will) model. After a few sessions with a client, after asking what she wanted to achieve in that session the client stated her goal, discussed the current situation, what she had already tried and then began reeling options that could help solve the issue. This was not at all surprising, we had gone through the GROW model a number of times, but her sophistication related to her awareness of her emotions and behaviour was inspiring, especially considering where she started from: she previously asked how she could remove or stop her emotions. Our sessions and her hard work had resulted in her having a better understanding of what information her emotions were conveying, which led to acceptance of those emotions. Our coaching sessions and the structure administered by the GROW model was analogous to a physical personal training session, albeit with less sweat!

Neuroimaging studies support the notion that training, which can improve thinking and reasoning skills, can be investigated using fMRI. One such control group study (Kwon, Lee, Shin, & Jeong, 2008) found that hypothesis generation training led to changes in brain activation patterns in parallel with the increase in the hypothesis generation skills. Their results showed increase brain activity in certain areas associated with working memory and inferential processing but decreases in other parts of the brains. Essentially, the trained participants’ brains became more efficient when generating hypothesis when compared to the untrained participants. Hypothesis generation is a specific task, however, and is not identical to implementing the GROW model. Likewise, coaching is not regimented training and one session can differ from the next. However, the findings in this neuroimaging study (Kwon et al., 2008) and many others like it begin to show how coaching might work on a neural level and what potentially might make it more effective.

Finally, in a particularly poignant session with a client, she talked about a verbal altercation with an individual that had reduced her to tears. The client, who is a strong, self-reliant individual, was also overcome with emotion when reflecting on the conflict. During the session I did my best to empathise with the client’s situation; trying to understand what she must have felt during the incident and how she was feeling now and reflect my understanding of the situation

back to her. Empathy is a core component of coaching regardless of how emotionally charged the situation is. It is also another constituent of the Carl Roger's person-centered approach (C. R. Rogers, 1951).

Paraphrasing is a specific aspect of empathy that is used immensely in coaching, mediation and conflict resolution. It is also a simple technique that is indispensable in my own coaching practice. In one novel neuroimaging study (Seehausen et al., 2014) they investigated the impact of paraphrasing on participants discussing a current experience of social conflict. The study found that paraphrasing resulted in participants feeling like they were understood and induced positive emotions. The opposite was true for the un-empathetic intervention in which the interviewer conveyed she did not understand or could not relate to the participant's situation. The fMRI data showed that different parts of the social cognitive network of the brain were activated for paraphrasing when compared to the un-empathetic response. Although it may seem obvious that showing empathy to our clients and understanding their situations is beneficial during coaching, this study provides an evidence base as to why the use of empathy is so effective.

In summary, this essay reflects some aspects of what I believe makes coaching an effective developmental intervention: the belief in the power of people to help themselves, non-judgmental attention and empathy, and structure that facilitates change. Furthermore, there is a wealth of information in the space of neuroimaging and neurophysiology that has yet to be applied to organisational coaching, which highlights that there is a lot still yet to learn about how and why coaching works.

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Simmy Grover

After a successful career in financial services, Simmy decided to delve into the world of human behaviour. She is currently completing her PhD at UCL under the supervision of Professor Adrian Furnham. The focus of her research includes emotional intelligence, IQ, personality traits and their impact on performance in the workplace. Furthermore, she is investigating the effectiveness of developmental interventions, such as mentoring, coaching and training, in improving individual, team and organisational performance.

The Power of Silence in Coaching - a Reflective Essay

Christopher Hay

"Silence is a source of great strength." Lao Tzu

When searching for a topic to discuss I was unsure what to choose, and then in a moment of silent reflection, I thought about what event had moved my coachees forward. I determined that it was a moment (or moments) of silence that had proceeded those "aha's". My question then is 'What occurred and why did that silence bring them to an epiphany?'

In my coaching I have tried to utilize a simple process, something like a "Thinking Environment" offered by Nancy Kline. I have focused upon Thinking, Attention, Incisive Questions and Listening, and some other skills such as TGROW. I have found that coachees respond differently, few of them have ever been listened too as much and asked so few questions; not by there manager, boss or partner. However, despite my incomplete process and apprentice level coaching, all of them have reported that they have made a breakthrough and have progressed. I believe they have all had breakthrough moments in our session, which happened in a moment of silence. Perhaps they were just small "aha's" and not "eureka", but still certainly a step forward in raised awareness, inner knowledge or something relevant or significant to them, and the silence appeared to be a catalyst.

Here are a couple of my own examples;-

Coachee X. He came to me via his CEO, who wanted him to gain skills (diplomacy, networking, softer skills). Coachee X explained he wanted clarity on where his career path. After a few questions and a few "and what else" from me he had a pause into silence, and I what I observed as deeper thinking, and he then had a break through. He decided that he and the CEO were not working together and he had to leave. I could see the relief on his face and how much happier and he appeared. We finished off the session and he left keen to tell the CEO of his decision. Later that day texted me "I feel "de-burdened" started talk with CEO today...."

Coachee Z. He came to me via the CEO who wanted him to gain confidence, directness and toughness. The coachee was very quiet at first and we danced around at the first session. At the second session we discussed what held him back, after some few minutes of silence he stated what had held him back (it was a particular event in his early life) and then said he was moving on. I think he had identified an issue, named it and moved forward.

After these silent moments of reflection, the coachees appeared to have a breakthrough. In both these examples we had a silence that allowed the coachee to stop, to think and to process, and to realize what action needed to be taken. I believe that it was the space that enabled them to think out the problem. I am sure that all coaches believe that Listening, Questioning and Attention are key when coaching and that it is a combination of these factors that allows a coachee to break free, but I wonder if the power of silence is essential to the coaching relationship.

Perhaps more importantly for the coach, why is it that we can have this clear thinking and thought processing in a session when we adopt silence? Is it that our brains are more able to deal with certain processing when we are silent?

Research from the Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) suggests that when we are silent and thinking, our brain waves change, as compared to the normal brain wave activity.

I wondered if it is a change in our pattern of brainwaves that allows us to have greater access to our mental capabilities; if there is an optimum state where we could have access to "conscious-unconscious processing" and if we could we train ourselves to alter our brain waves on demand?

Research at NTNU and other research organisations have shown that we have a number of usual brain wave patterns and that when we are silent these patterns change. A normal set of brain waves contains Delta, Theta, Alpha, Beta and Gamma and they all have different functions and work in patterns depending on what we are doing, thinking or sleeping.

Research from a number of Universities including NTNU, University of Sydney, Stanford University and University of Wisconsin-Madison have all indicated the changes happens to our brainwaves when we are silent (meditative). Generally, in silence, the brain waves in our conscious state (Beta) reduce and our deeper thinking brain waves (Gamma) increase.

There is also data to suggest that humans can alter brain waves consciously. In the research carried out by Richard Davidson of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and reported in the Stanford's Huntington Outreach Project for Education Journal, a number of Buddhist monks were tested and they were able to, at will, quieten their minds and change their brain-wave patterns. A quote from the Stanford article.

"Synchronizations of neural firing at high frequencies (gamma waves) are thought to play a crucial role in integrating scattered neural processes into a highly ordered cognitive act such as memory and in inducing synaptic changes. In other words, when nerve cells are firing with a high level of synchronicity (as they were in the monks' brains), brain cells are able to communicate with each other much more readily and the entire brain is able to function more efficiently."

This research stated that Monks experienced in meditation could change their brain wave patterns at will.

If we believe that getting better "brainwave" patterns helps us think more clearly, then research suggests that it be possible to modify our brain waves. This is known as "Neuroplasticity" and it maybe possible to alter our brain waves using meditation and other specific brain training processes. One of the most well known exponents of Neuroplasticity is Norman Doidge (The Brain That Changes Itself). While he states that we can change our brains, he accepts that it is almost impossible to verify and prove what and how this all happens. Researchers at The Norwegian University of Science and Technology (NTNU) published a paper in 2010, which did find that, during silence, Alpha waves would be higher in the posterior of the brain and Theta waves would be higher in the front of the brain. Beta waves reduced and Delta waves were low. In addition, they found that during meditation the effect was greater.

Therefore is it reasonable to believe that during silence we have an opportunity to "think differently" and we can get greater access to our conscious-unconscious brain. It is probably this that allows us to access better processing and for the coachee to make the breakthrough.

Supporting this perspective is research from Dartmouth College New Hampshire where Neuroimaging studies by Malia F. Mason and co-workers suggest "that the normal resting state of the brain is a silent current of thoughts, images and memories that is not induced by sensory input or intentional reasoning". Furthermore Øyvind Ellingsen NTNU also stated that "Spontaneous wandering of the mind is something you become more aware of and familiar with when you meditate," and that "This default activity of the brain is often underestimated. It probably represents a kind of mental processing that connects various experiences and emotional residues, puts them into perspective and lays them to rest"

In Neuropsychology for Coaches (Brown and Brown 2012) they also recommend silence as a technique for different thinking and quotes Nancy Kline as a key proponent of this method. A quote from the book (Page 74) "silence lets the amygdala settle down to as much of a resting state as they ever allow for themselves and then opens up the actively resting mind". Part of what Brown and Brown suggest is brain training to keep the "brain tuned into that state of generative awareness for achieving maximum effect".

While none of this research is conclusive, it indicates that the silence we experience can be linked to a change in brain wave activity.

Perhaps the "breakthroughs" of thinking that I experienced during my coaching practice was related to a change in the thinking or maybe a change in the patterns of brain waves. It is unclear, but I would like to think that the coachees were responsible for this deeper level of thought. In addition, I think the evidence suggests that coachees can change the way their brainwaves work and move them into a state that allows them to think more clearly.

So, what does this mean for coaches or even coaching? I think it means we need to learn more about how the brain works and how work with it to improve mental clarity and associated breakthrough thinking. At a practical level perhaps we can plan for silence during a coaching session, allowing the coachee to remain in silence and stillness. Perhaps they will be more able to think and move to the next level.

"Learn to get in touch with the silence within yourself, and know that everything in life has purpose. There are no mistakes, no coincidences, all events are blessings given to us to learn from."
Elisabeth Kubler-Ross

Christopher Hay

Christopher is the co-founder of Fluid Coaching and a highly experienced senior executive bringing a wealth of business knowledge to the coaching role. He has held senior leadership positions in leading IT companies, including Oracle, EMC, Bull and Honeywell as well as several tech startups. *"I believe in an holistic approach, with physical wellness, self-awareness and mental agility all being key to every individual's ability to access and fulfill their potential."*

Anxiety: 'The Handmaiden of Contemporary Ambition'¹

Richard Hilliard

This essay offers some thoughts on what the BCP has enabled me to learn about the value of coaching where the client is suffering from the mental and physical effects of anxiety. I survived an episode of crippling anxiety myself many years ago, when apparently well set on the road to a really fulfilling and successful career; my personal experience and full recovery form the basis of how I have helped others since.

At a foundational level, particularly inspirational have been Bruce Peltier², whose dauntingly academic work is also a mine of good sense ('Talking about things is better than not talking about them, or ignoring them, or pretending they are OK or hoping they will get better'), Nancy Kline³, whose 'Thinking Environment' really has ignited this human mind and Herminia Ibarra⁴, whose thoughts on self-knowledge are extraordinarily perceptive.

The levels of 'risk and reward' hormones⁵ that help drive high achievers forward are stimulated by a relentlessly demanding working environment. However, if mental and physical warning signs are ignored and the accelerator continues to be pressed to the floor, this hormonal mechanism that powers successful careers can also deliver the potential for dis-ease and disaster.

For example, the positive influence of heightened awareness can become the negative influence of anxiety. Healthy reflection becomes unhealthy self-absorption, we may lose our natural sense of self-preservation and put ourselves thoughtlessly, or deliberately, at risk. We may withdraw into ourselves and lose all the benefits of sharing thoughts and feelings with those around us. Early warning signs can span a wide range of physical, cognitive, emotional and behavioural symptoms – from headaches to tearfulness, from bowel problems to loss of short-term memory, from social withdrawal to alcohol dependency – and vary hugely in seriousness and impact. They may even lead to Freudenberger's 'burn-out' – 'the extinction of motivation or incentive, especially where one's devotion to a cause or relationship fails to produce the desired results'.⁶ If not recognised in time, the consequences may necessitate medical or psychological intervention, something which employers may well regard with suspicion.

People may seek coaching specifically to deal with these problems. In this case the cause of the symptoms needs to be identified, whether internal (such as unhelpful core beliefs) or external (organisational). But coaching may also indirectly help the client who is seeking coaching for a variety of other reasons, such as to improve effectiveness, to achieve work related goals, or to improve communication skills. When the client improves in the area targeted by the coaching, it is quite possible that they will become more able to moderate their response.

Of course, those who work in environments in which they must be seen to be operating at maximum effectiveness all the time also become expert in disguising any signs which might be interpreted as 'not being up to the job'. The strain of concealing the symptoms adds to the feeling of inhabiting a parallel universe, of having lost touch with reality, which is so often reported⁷.

¹ Alain de Botton, *Status Anxiety*, Hamish Hamilton, 2004.

² Bruce Peltier, *The Psychology of Executive Coaching*, 2009.

³ Nancy Kline, *Time to Think: Listening to ignite the human mind*, Cassell 1999, and *More Time to Think: A Way of Being in the World*, Cassell 2009.

⁴ Herminia Ibarra, *Working Identity: Unconventional Strategies for Reinventing Your Career*, Harvard Business School Press, 2003.

⁵ Martin Zuckerman, 'Sensation Seeking: The Balance between Risk and Reward', in Lewis Lipsitt & Leonard Mitnik, (eds.), *Self-regulatory Behavior and Risk Taking: Causes & Consequences* (Anlex Publishing Corporation, 1991) pp. 143-153.

⁶ Herbert Freudenberger, 'Burnout: Occupational Hazard of the Child Care Worker', *Child Care Quarterly* (Summer), (1976), pp.26 – 95.

⁷ Heather Menzies, *No Time: Stress and the Crisis of Modern Life*, Douglas & McIntyre, 2005.

Even if the client has agreed that something is not quite right and a coach has been engaged, they may continue to conceal the underlying problem or may even have convinced themselves by that time that it is something their natural resilience alone will enable them to cope with. If this position is maintained, the likelihood of a successful outcome to coaching encounters is seriously diminished. In these circumstances I have found that Kernberg's RADIO indicators for evaluating airline pilots' mental state can be useful in helping to identify what may lie beneath the surface:⁸

Reality testing (does the person show any degree of delusion?)

Affect management (do they show stable and appropriate emotions?)

Defences (does the person freeze in response to probing?)

Identity, sense of (does the person seem to have a realistic sense of who they are?)

Object relations (does the person appear to have mature relationships with others?).

Clients who have asked for (or agreed to) coaching have taken the first important step in acknowledging that something needs attention, even if they may not know exactly what it is or at the time be prepared to share it⁹. The challenge for the coach therefore is to pick up the signals and help them develop the level of resilience they need to find a way forward.

At a practical level, a 360° review of the client may reveal behavioural concerns such as a withdrawal from colleagues or an excessively alcohol-based tendency to socialise; there may be unexplained absences or unnecessarily long hours at work or emotional and cognitive issues such as mood swings or diminished decision-making ability. What is important is for the 360° review to reveal patterns of untypical rather than typically unusual behaviour.

With the results of the 360° review in mind, the coach can look out for other signs, such as the cancellation of coaching sessions at very short notice without a convincing explanation, an unexplained loss of focus during a session or a clearly expressed wish to bring the session to a premature close. It may well be that the client feels the coach is getting too close for comfort and asks for the programme to be abandoned, in which case it is likely that the programme will fail unless the coach can find an appropriate way of showing that they are getting to the heart of the problem and that continuing is very much in the client's best interest.

In the event that the coach has spotted something that indicates that there may be such an underlying problem, asking the right questions ("How do you feel when such-and-such happens?" "What is it like not to be in control?" or even a simple "What sort of thing keeps you awake at night?") may encourage the client to start revealing what is really going on. If that is the case, the process of recovery has begun.

Unfortunately, however, the physical symptoms of anxiety, and particularly the chronic hyperventilation associated with anxiety, are shared by more serious, and some life-threatening, conditions. If the client offers to share symptoms with the coach and they give rise to concern, a decision has to be made about whether professional help is to be sought. If the symptoms are even slightly concerning and have not already been shared with a doctor then it is the duty of the coach to recommend that they are. In most cases a doctor will give the all clear and coaching can resume, but then there should be a clear suggestion that the physical symptoms should be addressed by recognised self-help methods as the best starting point for dealing with the anxiety¹⁰. This will include reflection on physical fitness, lifestyle and work/life balance, all of which have a profound influence on mental health and wellbeing.

⁸ J.F. Clarkin, K.N. Levy, M.F. Lenzenweger & O.F. Kernberg, 'Evaluating three treatments for borderline personality disorder: a multiwave study', *American Journal of Psychiatry*, 164, (2007), pp.922-928

⁹ J.O. Prochaska, J.C. Norcross, and DiClemente, C.C., *Changing for Good*, Collins 2006.

¹⁰ Jane Madders, *Stress and Relaxation Handbook*, Vermilion 1979.

Once the physical symptoms have been identified as non-threatening, the coach can start to help the client recognise the underlying causes. First and foremost is the need to introduce the client to the idea of constructive self-awareness. Failure to realise that the full solution of the problem will require a degree of reflection on all aspects of their lives, not just their interaction with the work environment, may prove a barrier to a successful coaching outcome which is designed to help the client regain and enhance their natural resilience.

Positive psychologists such as Seligman¹¹, Csikszentmihalyi¹² and Style¹³ suggest that an understanding of the meaning, purpose and value of people's working lives is at the heart of achieving maximum effectiveness. For some, particularly those who are not naturally reflective, this requires an unwanted degree of introspection. In this case the coach may feel the need to move the process forward by asking a series of questions, such as "Where are you going with what you're doing?" "How much value do you place on what you're doing?" "What are the rewards of what you're doing, other than status and money?" "How are you impacting on those around you?" Taking the time to reflect and give honest answers to these questions will go a long way towards helping clients who are determined to regain lost balance and effectiveness.

One final point. We ask so much of our leaders nowadays, and they ask so much of themselves, that the incidence of problems such as those I have outlined above is noticeably on the increase. As coaches we are taught to listen in such a way as to encourage our clients to share their innermost thoughts, fears and aspirations; never has this service been more needed by those whose drive and achievements help to shape our future.

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Richard Hilliard

Richard is a partner in Hilliard French Associates, having stepped down as Chairman of the City of London-based business he founded in 2005. His coaching practice focuses on helping executives and others facing challenging times develop the resilience necessary to survive and thrive. He works with the London Business School, the Moller Institute in Cambridge and Henley Business School and he has a particular interest in the impact of anxiety on successful careers.

Time to move on from Myers-Briggs

Tim Johns

My relationship with Myers-Briggs has undergone a transformation. Since my first exposure to it over 15 years ago, I have gone from being a true believer to sceptic, and from sceptic to seeing it as irrelevant. Jung himself said that every individual is an exception to the rule and that sticking labels on people was "...nothing but a childish parlour game." However, I've stopped seeing it as irrelevant and now think of it as dangerous. It is often seriously misused and is, in my view, potentially harming the coaching profession.

I had taken similar tests before Myers-Briggs, but they had only given me a name. Myers-Briggs was a revelation. It gave me a whole new understanding of who I was and how I thought. It seemed to confirm my status as a rare and special maverick, fundamentally different from the run-of-the-mill mortals who tended to work in businesses. It took on a sort of self-fulfilling prophecy: I needn't be concerned with my inability to concentrate, or to be bored with detail. My personality (brain wiring?) didn't need to worry with the minutiae of life; my destiny was to bigger and better things. I now understood, and perhaps had an excuse for, my inability to ever open a bank statement. I exaggerate, of course, but nevertheless I wore my four letters with pride.

Scepticism came later. The first chink in the armour appeared when I started to work globally. As I travelled and spent more time working with groups in different countries I found that I was less able to recognise distinct M-B types behaviours in other people. More importantly, I realised that these types were of little use in understanding either behaviours or attitudes. This was especially the case in the Middle East and Asia. Culture and custom seemed to be the key drivers. Inclinations, temperament, perspectives, and mind sets all seemed to be hugely influenced by the context in which people were operating.

The second revelation came when I re-took the test a decade or so after my first attempt. My results were similar but different. They were similar enough in that my four letters hadn't changed but they were significantly different in the weightings. Most strikingly, I seemed to have gone from being an out-and-out extrovert to a closet introvert. At this point, I merely filed the information away, stopped evangelising about Myers-Briggs, and became a sceptic. And then I started coaching. It quickly became apparent that for nearly all coaches in nearly all circumstances, Myers-Briggs is an essential service.

The reality is, however, that Myers-Briggs is not a scientific test. To be scientific it has to be replicable over time. It isn't. In fact, research shows that as much as 50% of people find that they have different results after retaking the tests. It also has to be the same across the world. It isn't. And it has to be based on scientific research based on controlled experiments and data. Again, it isn't. In fact, even Jung himself warned that his personality types were no more than approximate tendencies that he'd observed rather than scientifically tested classifications. By contrast, the speed of light is based on consistently repeatable tests, provable data, is replicable over time, and is the same in different parts of the world. The speed of light, therefore, is a scientific fact.

Myers-Briggs also uses false binaries. Real data shows that most people are not "either" "or" but show characteristics of both. As Jung said: "There is no such thing as a pure extrovert or a pure introvert. Such a man would be in the lunatic asylum." The fact is that most people are in or around the middle of the bell curve; few are on the extremes. Dan Pink, in *To Sell is Human*, says that we are basically ambiverts. Yet the labelling is absolute. In discussing the standard error of measurement, David Pittenger said: "...the differences between the two-letter categories are not as sharp and clear cut as it would appear. Because the MBTI uses an absolute classification scheme for people, it is possible for people with relatively similar scores to be labelled with much different personalities." (1)

The test claims that it measures how people perceive the world and make decisions. Yet it does not explore how the key drivers of such attitudes and behaviours are formed. There is no distinction for gender or age, yet our observation of workplace behaviours would suggest that there can be fundamental differences along these lines. There is no attempt to understand values or beliefs; and yet a belief in, for instance, destiny or God can hugely influence decision making.

Psychology and other disciplines including behavioural economics, are finding the unconscious to be a fascinating area for research. Freud, it seems, is making a comeback. Humans tend to make a significant number of decisions without understanding why. This is not the same as the SvN, TvF, and JvP distinction. The self-scoring method of Myers-Briggs means that the results are what the person taking the test likes to think is the case rather than the reality. Decision making is far more complex and is subject to a greater degree of both unconscious and external factors than can be covered in a 93-question test. Social norms, corporate culture, and even day-to-day events greatly influence how we think and process information whether we are consciously aware of it or not. In organisations, peer pressure, group behaviour and flow, and emotional contagion and the need for a sense of belonging and conformity can all play a significant role, regardless of anybody's particular four letter score. [Solomon Asch's famous 1951 experiment, on the length of a line, is a great example of the unconscious need to conform on our behaviour].

It is never entirely fair to criticise a movement merely because of the uses to which it has been put. There are many die-hard Marxists who complain bitterly that the revolutions in Russia and China, for instance, don't reflect the true thinking of communists and that we shouldn't judge Marxism by what was done in his name. Similarly, Myers-Briggs enthusiasts will say that only properly trained and paid-up members of the club can be relied upon to interpret effectively the true implications of any one person's results. The reality is somewhat different. Companies are hiring for specific behaviour traits. Recruiters ask for people's type and write it down in ink. Organisations are creating teams that reflect the whole spread of characteristics. People are being promoted on the basis of their scores. This is all madness and the coaching industry must stop being complicit in such nonsense. IQ, EQ, experience, values, attitudes, global views, are all, for instance, what makes someone the right person for the right role at the right time. It is a curious blend of hard and soft, tangible and intangible attributes that allow different people to make different contributions at different times. Type casting is of no value whatever.

The real reason that I feel that Myers-Briggs is dangerous for the coaching industry is not so much that it is unscientific but because of what it forces coaches to do. Coaches who use Myers-Briggs tend to judge their clients. They may not do so pejoratively, but by seeing them as a type they make certain assumptions. In fact, many turn to a reference book which indicates how to "coach" the various types of person. No ambiguity, no uncertainty, merely a four letter approach to painting by numbers. True coaching is about listening and questioning to find the true person, and helping that true person to be comfortable in owning who they are. It is about helping them to understand their values and motivations. It is about challenging their assumptions and helping them to reframe their context and their place in it. Clients today live complex lives with pressures from many competing areas. The coaches role is to help clients understand those competing pressures and to find a pathway that enables them to navigate their way through that ambiguity. Self-knowledge is critical, but self-knowledge is a journey. It cannot be something that is arrived at after having merely taken a 15-minute test.

All tools can be both helpful and unhelpful. Coaches need to be aware that Myers-Briggs has the potential to make them both judgemental and closed. Listening and questioning can only be effective if they come from a place with no assumptions. Real change comes from the client finding out who they really are and how they can make sense of and thrive in their place in the world. Coaches need to work on helping to uncover the roots rather than focus on the leaves and branches. Telling people how they think and process information can close down more than it opens. True self-awareness comes from challenging one's own thoughts, values and assumptions, and in learning to be comfortable with who you are. Labelling should not form part of that process.

As Carl Jung said himself in *The Undiscovered Self*: "There can be no self-knowledge based on theoretical assumptions." (2)



Further reading:

<http://bit.ly/1HH48eq> (1)
<http://amzn.to/1psZrtq> (2)
<http://read.bi/1HH45iR>
<http://bit.ly/1qctoTH>
<http://huff.to/1iDjHEM>
<http://bit.ly/1z24LOf>
<http://bit.ly/1btigvk>
<http://bit.ly/1HldlVm>
<http://bit.ly/1EFAeYT>

Tim Johns

Tim is a communications expert and business coach specialising in leadership communication and behavioural change. In a career spanning over 25 years Tim held senior communication roles with a number of major blue-chip organisations including Unilever, BT and Sainsbury's. Tim's approach combines coaching with his communications expertise and change consultancy to give clients the confidence to see and do things differently.

My Approach to Coaching Women

Kate Jones

I am passionate about enabling women to fulfill their potential. From my experience of leading at a senior level in global financial organizations, I have seen firsthand that women lead differently and face different challenges to men in the workplace.

As highlighted by Milgram in 1963, the context in which we operate has a greater impact than we might think. Therefore I first consider the current landscape for women in business and then describe how this context shapes my approach to coaching women.

Landscape for women in business

Much has been written about the benefits of greater diversity within business. McKinsey (2007) identified that companies with three or more women in senior management functions outperformed their sector on nine management effectiveness criteria and demonstrated stronger financial performance.

Despite these benefits and the fact that women are entering the workforce on an equal footing to their male counterparts, the proportion of women still reduces as seniority increases (McKinsey 2011).

So why is this still happening?

The analogy of a glass ceiling has been used extensively but the cause of the loss of women at senior levels in the workforce is more complex. Eagly suggests that gender bias occurs consistently throughout the levels of an organization. Peltier summarises that "the absence of women at the highest levels represents an accumulation of restricting forces throughout a woman's career".

I now consider these restricting forces.

Stereotypes and prejudice

The business world is very aware of gender bias, however unconscious bias is still ingrained in society's belief system. Commonly-held prejudices include the beliefs that women do not work well together, women are too emotional, and women are riskier hires because they are likely to discard their careers after becoming mothers.

Women bear more family responsibilities

A study of Harvard graduates revealed that 77% believed prioritising family over work is the primary barrier to women's career advancement.

Different studies I reviewed disagreed about whether the rhetoric was true that women opt out of the workplace to look after children. However, I did find consistent evidence that women remain at the centre of family life and continue to bear a greater responsibility for organising family life, child care and care for the elderly (Eagly, Ely and McKinsey (2007)).

Lack of visibility

"Serious career effectiveness requires visibility". Peltier

Visibility comes through promoting achievements and being assertive about articulating ambition. Women can lack this critical visibility as a result of having poorer networks and doing less self-promotion.

Women might make it more difficult to gain recognition by minimizing their personal contribution using “we” rather than “I”.

Lack of female role models

All aspiring leaders need role models. Role models provide an important way to observe different communication and leadership techniques to inform our own authentic style. A lack of senior women provides fewer opportunities for junior women to see women leaders in action.

Feminine leadership style

Finally, it is important to consider women and men’s leadership styles. The historical culture in business has been dominated by men with a traditional hierarchical leadership style and the perception that the qualities needed for leadership are those naturally found in men. Ibarra reflects how “The ideal leader, like the ideal man, is decisive, assertive, and independent”.

However technology and global competition are forcing new ways of doing business, fostering creativity and valuing people skills. This lends itself to a more connective, influencing style of leadership which is more associated with feminine qualities. This is good news for women as mimicking male qualities has generally not been successful. Women raising their voice in meetings or openly disagreeing with colleagues can be viewed as arrogant or abrasive whereas men exhibiting these same characteristics are regarded as self-confident and assertive.

The challenge for women is therefore how to stay true to their authentic leadership style and succeed in the current business environment. Armed with this understanding of the current context in which women operate, I now consider my own approach to coaching.

My approach to coaching women

Gender diversification is a hot topic. Providing the opportunities for women to lead via quotas, or establishing structured mentoring programmes are positive drivers of change but they are not enough. I believe coaching can play a vital role to support women in fulfilling their leadership potential.

My framework for coaching women has three components.

1. Understand the reality
2. Identify purpose
3. Get in the driving seat

1. Understand the reality

In the first section I highlighted how the environment in which women live and work, coupled with a naturally less self-promoting style, may be limiting career progression. The impact of the fundamental attribution error is important to consider. Clients may entirely blame the company for their perceived lack of career progression taking no personal accountability.

To enable effective change to take place, I help clients better understand the organisational context through sharing literature or discussing the concepts raised in this essay. I then sensitively explore with them how they may be personally contributing to their current work situation. I have found it effective to explore a client's limiting beliefs such as not believing they are appropriately qualified. This unlocks specific areas in which to target change.

2. Identify purpose

By focusing on strengths and purpose, I support clients in considering who they want to be without reference to what they 'should' do. This is especially important for women given the lack of role models and unconscious bias noted above.

As a leader, I have met men and women who have never reflected on their strengths and what they really want to achieve. I believe strengths based tools can help clients understand what makes them thrive. I intend to use the Realise 2 tool which shines a light on those strengths that are being overused and, importantly, those that remain untapped.

Csikszentmihalyi identified that flow occurs when we have an appropriate match between challenge and skill. I use this concept to help clients recognize activities that energize them and those that drain them. For clients who are also juggling family responsibilities, I believe this ability to manage energy is crucial.

Alongside a greater awareness of strengths, I use Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs and self-actualization concepts to begin a conversation with a client on life purpose. I have found it works well to set reflections on life purpose as homework questions. If a client is able to progress their thinking on purpose, it provides a useful way to validate whether goals and actions identified in coaching sessions align with this broader purpose.

3. Get in the driving seat

With a better understanding of the landscape and with a clear destination in mind, I help clients get in the driving seat of their career through developing their network and taking action.

As noted previously, visibility is critical to success. Women, in particular, can believe that doing a good job is enough and recognition and promotion will stem from that. It isn't.

I help clients create a strategy to expand their network, targeting those who can help them grow, people who have different perspectives and people who can help make things happen. Some clients have been sceptical of networking as it feels like a box-ticking exercise or they are concerned at being perceived as over ambitious by their peers. I help clients challenge and reposition this view. This enables them to see networking as part of the action plan to reach their purpose, increase their visibility and confidently demonstrate their value.

I suggest to clients that they identify a sponsor. Sponsors with the right influence have an important role to play given the paradox that women who promote themselves can be perceived as aggressive and selfish, but those that don't are perceived as unambitious.

It is all too easy to get caught up in day to day tasks but real change needs action. I share techniques with clients to enable them to create space to think strategically, within and outside of coaching sessions. I then use the simple but powerful GROW model to help clients develop practical actions to step towards authentic goals.

Conclusion

Reflecting on this exploration into female leadership styles and gender biases, I believe women need to understand that biases continue to exist in business. It is also imperative that women develop a greater awareness of the limitations that we impose on ourselves. Change can then take place.

I truly believe coaching can enable women to develop their authentic leadership style, take control and get in the driving seat of their careers and I can't wait to work with more inspiring women!

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Kate Jones

With over 15 years' experience in senior financial services roles, Kate now works as a consultant with senior leaders of asset management organisations. She brings to her clients the value of her real world experience of leading at a high level within global organisations. Kate coaches individuals to develop an authentic leadership style, is a trusted sounding board for senior leaders and helps organisations maximise the effectiveness of female talent.

Conversion

Nigel Jones

I signed up for the Meyler-Campbell Business Coaching course as a means to an end - to obtain a formal qualification from a well-respected organisation so that I could tick the relevant box in pitching to clients when I start devoting more time to coaching than lawyering. But I got so much more out of it. In essence, a change in my attitude to life, perhaps best summarised in Kline's mantra: "To take time to think is to gain time to live." Where was I before the course, where am I now, and what caused this change?

I had already met Anne Scoular and been impressed by her enthusiasm, drive and commitment to the field. I had also done some informal training and, as part of my firm's internal coaching panel, helped a number of colleagues work through their challenges and find ways to realise their potential. I knew the basics of the GROW model and had applied it many times. I had experienced the wonderful motivation of seeing coachees seeing the light, realising that they knew the answer to the question that had been troubling them, but had been unable to see it for want of looking. And I had benefitted from coaching myself, as I had taken on new roles in the firm over the years. Those experiences had whetted my appetite to do more, already realising how motivating and mutually beneficial business coaching relationships can be. But I had not spent time reading, debating or reflecting on the underlying philosophy and techniques which are key to the success of non-directive coaching. Indeed I did not really even know what that term meant.

And now? I am a convert. Coaching is without doubt the most motivating activity I have experienced in my long professional career – higher in the pecking order than winning pitches or legal battles, seeing deals I've worked on hit the headlines, or persuading highly-talented people join our organisation. I was going to add "seeing former colleagues achieve great things in their careers". But looking back, part of that in itself involved an element of coaching – in some cases by me – so it is not an appropriate comparator.

I am also much better informed about the theory, the philosophy and the techniques – the tricks of the trade as it were – and the importance of putting them in context and trusting one's intuition rather than sticking to the rules at all times. As others have said: "There are no rules but you need to know them all!"; a phrase which, however ambiguous and illogical, is one with which I am now entirely comfortable. I also have a much better understanding of how to listen actively, a much improved ability to remember without taking notes, and am more confident in deciding when to allow coachees to "vent" and when to intervene to bring some focus to the discussion. And I have clarity on what I need to do to consolidate coaching within my organisation while I remain here and, in due course, work with people outside the organisation when I decide to include coaching in my income-generating activities.

So what was it about the course that caused this change in attitude? Once again, the short answer is "everything", and that would accurately reflect my view that it is the mix of reading, discussing (with the tutor alone in telephone tutorials and with the tutor and fellow students in the tutorials), practice coaching and enforced reflection (through the requirement to submit written feedback on all these activities) that is key. Of all of these activities, I think I learned most from the practice coaching, in the observed coaching in tutorials (from which, as coachee, I benefitted enormously in working through challenges I was facing at various points) and, most of all, the sessions with practice coachees – all combined with the opportunities to reflect back in the reports to our tutor and in my discussions with him and my co-tutees in our telephone and in-person tutorials.

My fellow tutees and I were initially sceptical about our ability to find real people who would be willing to be guinea pigs for us to learn. The reassurance and encouragement from our tutor rapidly allayed those concerns. I was privileged to work with a fantastic group of people, all senior in their respective fields (none of which, deliberately, involved law) and very different personalities and

challenges to work through. The list of positive experiences from these sessions is too long to recite here. But some of the highlights include the gratitude they all expressed so regularly for “the advice I had given”, when I knew I had not given any, but instead helped them to work things out for themselves; enabling one tutee, in the space of a single session, to move from “a black hole” where she was unable to see any positive way forward, to her seeing light at the end of the tunnel and enthusiastically listing the actions she would be taking immediately to achieve the goals she had set for herself; and picking up a level of discomfort in one coachee who initially said he had nothing to discuss, but, when gently probed, identified the discomfort, found the underlying cause and, by the end of the session, had worked out how he was going to address it.

I also picked up many practical tips from these sessions, including in the formal feedback. They include checking whether people like using whiteboards; not always using the “score out of 10” approach, which some dislike; considering varying the venue for sessions, whilst ensuring confidentiality is maintained; and realising the value coaches can provide of being “merely” an active listener – not following any given approach (GROW or any other) when you sense that what the coachee really needs is simply to “vent” or to say out loud what is on their mind. In one session, I also had an opportunity to practice encouraging a coachee to consider counselling – one of the more challenging experiences, but one from which I learned a great deal, and the coachee subsequently told me had benefitted him. Above all, I gained in confidence and competence, including in trusting my instinct and doing what I believed was right for the coachee, whether I’d tried it before or was confident in how it worked, so long as I believed it would meet the key test of doing no harm.

The course does not, nor can it, teach its students everything there is to know about business coaching. And there is much I still want to know more about and practise – Kline’s incisive questions, visualisation, and use of the tiger koan being among them. However it does, or at least has for me, make students better, more confident, well-informed and experienced coaches. It has also made me think differently, and more positively, about life in general. I have no hesitation in recommending it to anyone interested in achieving either outcome, and who is willing and able to invest the time and energy required to get the most out of it.

Nigel Jones

Nigel coaches senior people in the legal, charitable and corporate sectors to help them improve their impact and achieve their potential. He is a scientist turned lawyer, with a long and distinguished career at Linklaters. His roles there include founding and leading its healthcare sector and championing its health & wellbeing activities. His external activities include NED/Trustee roles in the charitable, corporate and social entrepreneur sectors.

Developing self awareness as a coach aided by the FIRO®-B instrument

Betsy Kendall

The foundations of excellent coaching are built on of a solid commitment from the coach to continuously build their self awareness. It is as important, if not more important than coaching technique.

- Without awareness we cannot be understand how we are in relationship with our clients: we will not fully appreciate the impact we make on them and we will be less able to adapt and manage ourselves as we coach.
- When a coach is aware of their own biases, pre-occupations and defence mechanisms they have a chance of putting these to one side and being fully present and client centered in the coaching session. Without this, the material in the coach's unawareness will create a distorting lens.
- Self awareness allows a coach recognise how they naturally approach situations and helps them see which aspects of coaching they excel at, which they over-do and which they tend to neglect. This in turn, it the first step towards the coach increasing their repertoire of coaching styles: adapting when they judge this will be more effective.

There are many ways for the coach to increase their level of self awareness. Here I discuss how coaches can better use the FIRO-B to prompt self exploration. Too often FIRO is understood by coaches only at a superficial level: here I explore not only the benefit of superficial analysis but also the power of Schutz underlying theory in aiding a coach's self understanding. I will illustrate this using my own FIRO profile.

FIRO is unique in the world of psychometrics: it was created specifically to enable exploration of interactions between two or more people, to look at interpersonal compatibility or lack of it. It is therefore tremendously helpful when both coach and coachee have taken the instrument. Whilst the coach may decide not share their own FIRO profile with their client, the coach should reflect on the combination of the profiles, even at a superficial, score by score level: where are they compatible, where are they not, where the coach may need to adapt their style initially or from time to time.

My own FIRO profile and that of a clients illustrates the usefulness of FIRO brings raising awareness.

My profile	Inclusion	Control	Affection
Expressed	2	7	3
Wanted	3	3	4

My client	Inclusion	Control	Affection
Expressed	6	8	1
Wanted	6	2	5

FIRO helped me to anticipate our lack of compatibility in Inclusion and help me understand why, after the first session he gave me feedback that he perceived my quiet and private style as detached and distant. In the next session one of the ways I dialled up my Expressed Inclusion was by disclosing some information about myself and by being more expressive and animated.

In relation to Control our scores are very similar, both to enjoy taking the lead and neither liking to accept direction or ask for help. As with other coaching clients I need to be aware to avoid leading questions to get clients the solution I already have in mind. With this client I also learnt that it was important for me to show confidence and assertiveness in my areas of expertise, whilst also actively

acknowledging my client's competence in theirs. Our affection scores helped me see that my client was cautious about opening up and would prefer I take the first step in developing an open and trusting personal relationship. Whilst I am selective about expressing affection, I adapt my behaviour to be genuinely warm more quickly than I might do in a non-coaching environment. This was instrumental in helping my client to respond with openness over time.

Going deeper

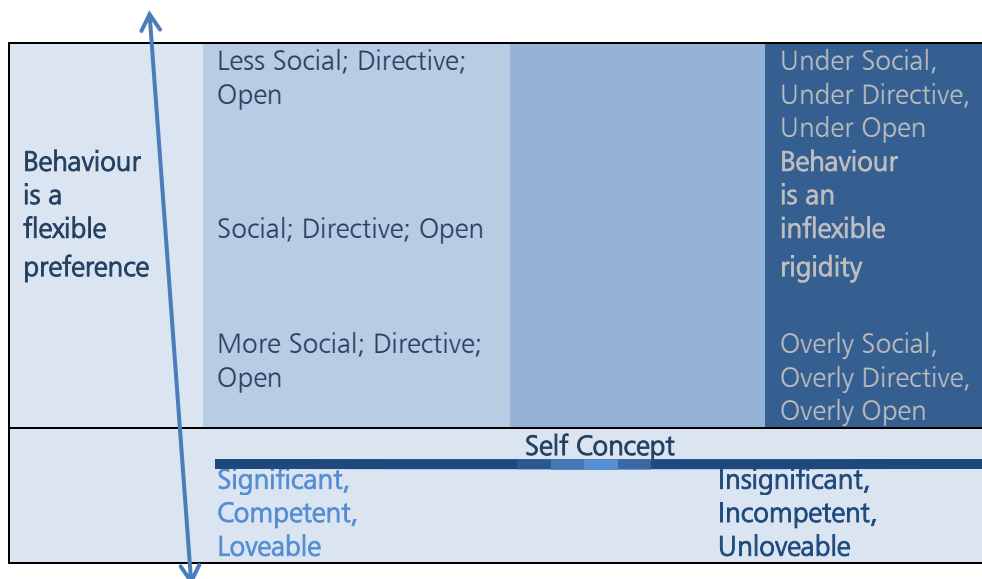
When I wrote the first FIRO-B qualifying programme in mid 1990's, FIRO was used extensively in the UK but almost exclusively at the behavioural level. Frustrated by this, the training I developed for OPP sought to open new practitioners' eyes to the power of working with the FIRO at depth.

At the core of each interpersonal area are aspects of self concept and I have learnt a great deal about myself that has helped me be more effective and satisfied, by reflecting on these and on the degree to which my behaviours reflect flexible preferences that I can adapt change versus rigidities of that restrict me. This reflection has helped me identify some of the roots of my beliefs about my own Significance, Competence and Loveability to some degree, address and improve these.

Interpersonal Need Area	Inclusion / Involvement The degree of prominence a person wants	Control / Influence The extent of dominance a person seeks	Affection / Connection The degree of closeness a person seeks
At the level of behaviour	Has to do with forming new relationships and associating with people	Has to do with decision making and influence between people in established relationships	Has to do with emotional feelings of warmth between people in established relationships
Self Concept	Significance	Competence	Loveability

It is important to recognise that each aspect of Self Concept is a continuum: most coaches, like their clients, sit somewhere between the extremes. There is another continuum that reflects the degree to which we choose to be unaware of our self concept. To be acutely aware that one is, say Incompetent, is a painful and disabling thought to carry around. Therefore, we often choose to be unaware of our self concept. Schutz proposed that we can only maintain unawareness by deploying defence mechanisms which distort our perceptions including how others treat us and what is going on in the coaching relationship. Being unaware of our self concept also results in "rigidity" in our behaviour. The notion of "rigidity" is key to Schutz's theory and to the power of FIRO-B. A person is rigid when they behave in a certain way regardless of whether it is appropriate to the situation. For instance, a person who has chosen to be unaware of their belief that they are Incompetent may maintain unawareness by rigidly striving to be in charge all the time, trying to prove to themselves that they are not incompetent. Conversely others with the same sense of incompetence rigidly avoid taking control, fearing that if they were to do so they would expose their incompetence.

Whilst not explicit in Schutz work, my experience in working with FIRO leads me to the view that just as there is a self concept continuum there is also a mirroring continuum between rigid and flexible behaviour. With a healthy self concept, even extreme FIRO-B scores e.g. 0, 0 can be a preference that the coach can flex around when the situation requires it. With a poor self concept, the difference is that they will find it extremely hard to adapt their behaviour without experiencing a great deal of anxiety. With a self concept somewhere between the extremes (where most coaches and clients will sit) behaviour will be somewhat flexible, the individual needs a safe (coaching or supervision) environment, in which to practice the new behaviours and managing the anxiety this causes.



My reflections on myself concept are that I have a good enough sense of being Loveable. I had a stable childhood and have had a number close relationships through my life in which I've shown warmth and openness. My Expressed Affection score has changed over the years of taking the instrument and I believe in coaching I can authentically dial it up or down, but my Wanted Affection score is always between 4 and 6. I see my Wanted Affection score affects the "colour" of all of my other FIRO scores and is more influential than my mid-score might suggest: I know that I like to be liked and I am aware that I dislike conflict and tend to avoid it. A result, in my coaching I know I need to be alert to avoiding tough and uncomfortable questions.

I believe I have a reasonably but not perfect sense of being Competent. I am the first of my immediate family to go to university and going to the University of Oxford be very aware of how much more intellectually able and better educated many others are. I am aware I regularly find ways prove my competence and I have always worked hard to be good at what I do. I reflect that I need to be careful not to assume that if my client is not successful in making the changes they want, that that is because I have done a bad technical job. Figures provided on the minor role of technique in the success of coaching have been salutary.

I think my sense of my own Significance is the weakest. I have a tendency to think that people won't find what I have to say that interesting. For instance, I dislike networking intensely: fundamentally I fear that people will not notice or remember me. Despite this, I learnt early in life to play the hostess role and I continue to do this in work and socially. This is not networking: I like to introduce people who have something in common, get them started on a conversation, then duck out myself. I am sure they will find each other much more interesting than either of them will find me. A benefit is that I listen well and am much more interested in listening than in talking in coaching. I need to be careful however, that my feelings about myself don't get in the way of my ability to form relationships. Being aware helps me avoid distorting what is happening in coaching sessions.

In summary: without self awareness coaches severely limit their ability to be effective with their clients.

Betsy Kendall

Betsy is COO and Head of Professional Services at OPP Ltd. She has been instrumental in building OPP's strong professional reputation, and its revenues. She is a Chartered Psychologist and a specialist in the assessment and development of people at work. She is a world leader in her knowledge of the MBTI, FIRO and 16PF instruments. She has a special interest in coaching leaders at key transition points in their lives.

Coaching across cultures

Nicole Lanitis

1. Background

Some things are second nature. Some are so close you don't recognize what they are, or that other people don't share your outlook, or that they make their own, successful way in the world, not seeing what is clear to you – and you don't see what they see. There are times when you realise that you work and live alongside people you think you understand, only to find that all that is given as true is not quite so. And this is where coaching across cultures comes into its own.

My own interest in this area falls from growing up in Cyprus, living most of my adult life in England, and a spell in California. Growing up at a crossroads of Europe and the Middle East is like riding two horse at once: it gave me an almost intuitive understanding of two very different worlds. I was confident that I was wired to understand most other cultures. Then I moved to California with my husband for his work, and there I felt keenly the sense of two nations divided by a common language. How much more complicated, difficult, and confusing is it for people who move across more divergent cultures? How challenging for executives who are expected to hit the ground running in a new role in an unknown culture? Can coaching help – and what are the considerations for a coach working across cultures?

2. Why cross-cultural coaching: a look at Professor Maznevski's work on issues in global leadership

Reading around the subject, I was drawn by the work of Martha Maznevski, Professor of Organisational Behaviour and International Management at IMD, on the complexities of managing in a global environment¹. Globalization, she says, creates an enormous feeling of complexity for managers which is not about the number of countries they manage; instead, complexity is to do with

- Ambiguity – a lot of information is available but managers don't necessarily know what it means
- Interdependence – everything is connected to everything else
- Diversity - of workforce, customer base, competitor strategies, suppliers, and many other business considerations that a global manager has to handle on a daily basis
- Unpredictable fast change

I find this a useful framework for thinking about the contribution of cross-cultural coaching. For leaders to survive and thrive in a global environment, they need to manage complexity; they can manage complexity by managing its constituent parts; and cross-cultural coaching can have an impact, in my view, in the management of diversity. The importance of diversity is that - as shown in Maznevski's work - diverse teams have the potential to outperform homogeneous teams **if** the diversity is recognized and harnessed to create new ideas and ways of working. She also writes:

Of all the types of diversity faced by global leaders, cultural diversity is both the most mysterious and the most exciting. To lead well in the complexity of globalization, leaders need high levels of cultural intelligence.

Maznevski offers an excellent definition of cultural intelligence: the ability to look at both the business requirements and the cultural aspects of a situation, and manage for business results in a way that works for both the business and the culture.

¹ IMD on FT.com <http://www.imd.org/news/IMD-on-FT-dot-com.cfm>; <http://video.ft.com/62063400001/IMD-Leading-people-globally/Management>

From the above, cultural intelligence emerges as a highly desirable quality in a global leader. A number of the learnings from the Meyler Campbell coaching programme can support individuals to recognize it in themselves, and to develop their skills in many ways, including:

- Challenging assumptions - of the business and of the cultural aspects of a work situation
- Raising awareness – of a individual's outlook, beliefs, understanding, impact of their actions
- GROW – is the G about the business or the local culture? What are the Realities of a situation? Do the Options serve the business or the culture – or both?
- Supporting individuals through a time of great change – personal, at work and at home if they have moved countries with their families for a new role
- Kline's Thinking Environment – a space to think deeply about the issues that a person regards as universally true, and whether they really are so

So, returning to where I started this essay, coaching across cultures is of special interest to me because it challenges ways of being that you consider to be universal truths. It can open up new ways of seeing situations that facilitate your working life in a global environment, and can expand and enrich your life on a bigger canvas.

3. Areas to consider when coaching across cultures

Here I look at some of the areas where, based on experience and conversations working with colleagues in other countries, I think a coach needs to be particularly sensitive when working across cultures. Fons Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner in their book "Riding the Waves of Culture"², based on their research and extensive experience of working in different cultures, go into more detail on some of these subjects.

Contracting. In the UK and northern Europe a 6-month coaching engagement cycle is normally acceptable, but this might not work in southern Europe. Cancellation notice of 24/48 hours is the norm in the UK, whereas in countries like Spain or Greece such a request would not be acceptable to clients.

Humour. One of the hardest things to translate. In particular, the degree to which irony is used varies enormously from one culture to another. In Denmark and Greece irony is used very heavily, in the UK quite freely, in the US you would have to do a lot of explaining if you've been ironic – best avoided.

Language. When people speak another language fluently they often project a different identity in that language. As a coach you might find that you modify your coaching in a different language. At the same time a client's projection can vary if he/she is coached in one language and works in another. The subtleties of a language can disappear when coaching in a language that is foreign to coach or client.

Body language. Body language can be a constraint or a powerful tool in any context. The effects are magnified when coach and client are from different cultures. How does different body language affect coaching? Do you alter our habits to mirror those of your client's culture? What is the effect of not modifying your movements?

Using Skype. By precluding any physical communication, Skype eliminates many of the signals that can enrich a coaching session and add to awareness on both sides. Conversely, Skype can be advantageous because it removes interferences that can be a distraction in a coaching session. Skype undoubtedly enables coaching to take place where otherwise it might not – but what is the impact on a coaching session, especially across cultures?

² Riding the Waves of Culture – Understanding Diversity in Global Business by Frans Trompenaars and Charles Hampden-Turner

Hierarchy. In some cultures (e.g. Japanese) this is clear-cut, in others it is less obvious. In the UK you can contradict your boss (within reason) if your contribution is valid; in Spain you would never do so. As a coach you would need to be aware of your client's reality and understand any rules that would govern the coaching sessions.

Formality. Being formal doesn't always go hand in hand with being reserved – in Spain, for example, people are relaxed and easy going, but remain very formal. As an outsider it's easy to confuse friendliness with informality.

Saving Face. Coaching can be an admission of weakness in your client's culture – is it easier to coach in English for this reason?

Feedback. Robust feedback is welcome in some cultures (e.g. Germany, Denmark) along with more provocative, challenging coaching. In others a coach has to tread a more careful line between truth and tact.

Assessment tools and consequent use of data. Do methodologies need to be tailored to different cultures? Are there forms of assessment that don't work in certain cultures – e.g. how valuable is 360 in hierarchical cultures? The readiness to share data varies too – for example in the US people are open about their MBTI profiles, in the UK less so, in France and Germany this would be regarded as private information that is not disclosed.

Diversity. Diversity of sex or ethnicity will determine what is possible in the context of some cultures. For example in the Gulf states, the most senior posts will be offered to nationals; when coaching expat professionals the coach has to work within this framework, and clients would need to be comfortable with this reality.

4. Further work

I chose to write this piece from personal experience more than academic research. For anyone wishing to do further work on the subject it seems there is plenty of space. The more accessible writings I came across are about cross-cultural leadership and managing in a diverse environment – not about coaching specifically. Felix Brodbeck's research *Cultural variation of leadership prototypes across 22 European countries*³ is a rich piece of work looking at leadership attributes and how they are valued (or not) across different European countries. This would be an important reference for anyone coaching into a culture they are not already familiar with.

Acknowledgements

My thanks to Janet Larsen, Teresa Ramos and Mark Pearson, colleagues in the Meyler Campbell community, for conversations on the practical implications of coaching across cultures; and to Anne Scoular and Eyal Pavell for advice on writings on the subject.

Nicole Lanitis

Nicole's professional background is in headhunting, recruiting NEDs and senior executives, and the Department for Transport, where she worked on major infrastructure and privatisation projects. Outside work she has been actively involved with the literacy charity First Story. Nicole speaks Greek and has lived in Cyprus, the US (Silicon Valley) and the UK. She holds a degree in PPE from Oxford University and an MBA from London Business School.

³ Felix C. Brodbeck and others Cultural variation of leadership prototypes across 22 European countries *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, [Volume 73, Issue 1](#), pages 1–29, March 2000

Selfless Confidence and Reflective Learning in Community

Janet Larsen

My goals upon entering the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Programme were to gain confidence in my credibility as a business coach, to acquire the practical knowledge to establish myself as an independent practitioner in the business of business coaching, and to hone my craft.

The reality was that with experience of conducting 1-1 therapy in clinical settings, a stint working with Graham Alexander's firm many years ago, and 'spot' coaching in the asset management sector ever since, coaching was not new to me and I knew that the coaching conversation was a place I enjoyed being.

While my syndicate was being formed, I avidly attended every event that Meyler Campbell hosted, learning everything I could from 'the community'. The atmosphere was always positively thrumming with expectant energy. Speaking with other bright-eyed budding coaches, it quickly emerged that the seeking of confidence was a common theme, though for these kingpins of business and industry, this seemed to centre on their level of knowledge about psychological science and its application, and some trepidation about those 1-1 conversations. To my bafflement they often exclaimed, "What are *you* doing here?" while I just wanted to do obeisance to their lives of hands-on experience at the helm of enterprise. We were on different journeys, exorcising different ghosts. For all of us though, I thought, the ultimate measure of our success was going to lie somewhere else altogether, in the lives and beings of our practice clients, our guinea pigs.

My practice clients on the programme were a rich source of experiential learning. Right on cue they brought Ibarra, Kline, Clifton, Prochaska, Shaw & Linnecar right off the page. My clients taught me a great deal about coaching, about clients and about myself as a coach. They also taught me that no matter their manifest professional success, no matter the presenting issues, the second order issues that come up again and again and again are: developing their emotional selves, their interpersonal world and their self-confidence.

The colloquial term 'self-confidence' is slightly vague, alluding to a person's trust in a wider range of her own resources or strengths. Psychologists use the term 'self-efficacy' to denote a *behaviour-specific* construct. Curiously, in the 600 pages of Character Strengths and Virtues, a handbook presenting a theoretical framework for scientific research and practice in positive psychology (Peterson & Seligman, 2004), self-confidence doesn't get a look-in and self-efficacy has but a supporting role for 'Persistence', one of the character strengths that define the virtue 'Courage'. The notion, and the evidence, being that an optimistic explanatory style leads to persistence leads to experiences of mastery which, according to social learning theory (Bandura, 1977) can lead to a sense of self-efficacy.

In his model of social learning, Bandura suggests that self-efficacy can be developed through four main sources, as per the diagram below.

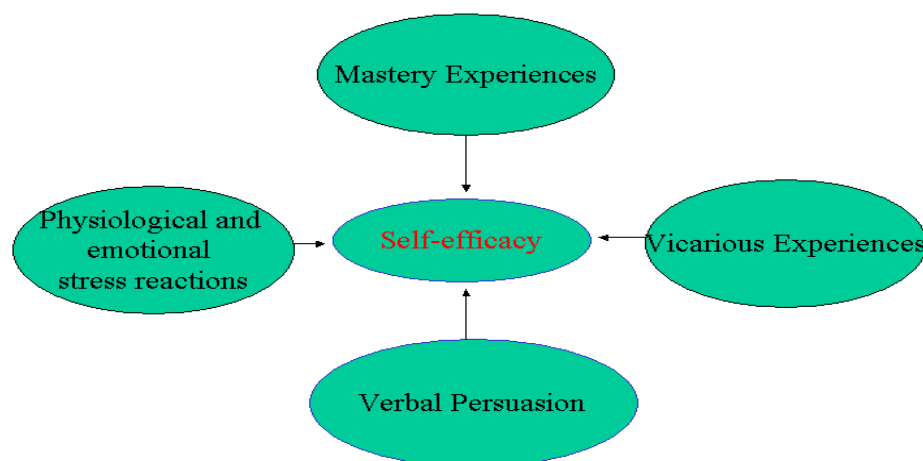


Figure 1: Bandura's Self-Efficacy Model (1977)

These map nicely onto the reflective practice component of the Meyler Campbell programme. Mastery experiences come from performing the coaching; vicarious experiences come from watching fishbowls and coaching triads, from sharing and comparing with other members of the community; verbal 'persuasion' also comes from members of the community, supervision and feedback from clients and observers. Physiological feedback (emotional arousal) well, that comes from us!

It is a well-known precept amongst stage performers that the day you don't feel nervous before going on stage is the day to quit the stage. Those nerves serve to narrow the focus of our minds on the task at hand and this can enhance performance, but unless we manage our minds, self-limiting beliefs about our abilities can give rise to critical self-talk, causing physiological and psychological interference (Gallwey, 1986).

A study conducted by Annie Kimblin (2009) investigated experienced coaches' encounters with Inner Game interference and found that they deployed two main coping strategies.

During a coaching session, when they noticed Self 1 'separating' them from the client, these experienced coaches used techniques to "ease their cognitive-emotional and somatic anxiety state" and refocus firmly on the client. The techniques seem akin to the practice of mindfulness: relaxing, noticing, accepting, re-focusing (Dunkley & Stanton, 2014).

If Self 1 does intrude, psychologist Paul Gilbert, founder of compassion-focused therapy, advises us to listen carefully to the tone of voice we address ourselves with inside our heads and ask ourselves who else we would dream of speaking to with such callous harshness. We can be kind and respectful also to ourselves.

Outside of coaching sessions, the experienced coaches in Kimblin's study deployed proactive strategies to build resilience and reduce vulnerability to Inner Game interference; these entailed planning and preparation, and building awareness.

My Self 1 creates a template crib sheet for sessions. As often as not though, the client wants to go somewhere else than I might have expected. Also, once I have the living, breathing, pulsating client in front of me, I de-centre, Self 2 tunes-in to the client and I never look at the template. Once we hitch our minds together in hot pursuit of a solution, idea or deeper understanding, the interference melts away. A state of flow allows a kind of ‘wisdom in the moment’ to take over, including an effortless “surfacing of stored knowledge” (Kauffman, 2010).

I may not refer much to my ‘crib sheets’ during coaching sessions, but in preparing them, I reflect on client feedback, reading, observation, supervision and other learning. According to researchers in adult learning (Boud, 1985; Boyd & Fales, 1983; Jarvis, 1992; Kolb, 1984; Reid, 1993; all cited in McClure, 2013), reflective practice maximises learning from experience and raises awareness. It involves taking a meta-perspective to review experience and leads to new conceptual perspective or understanding in such a way that we are cognitively/affectively changed.

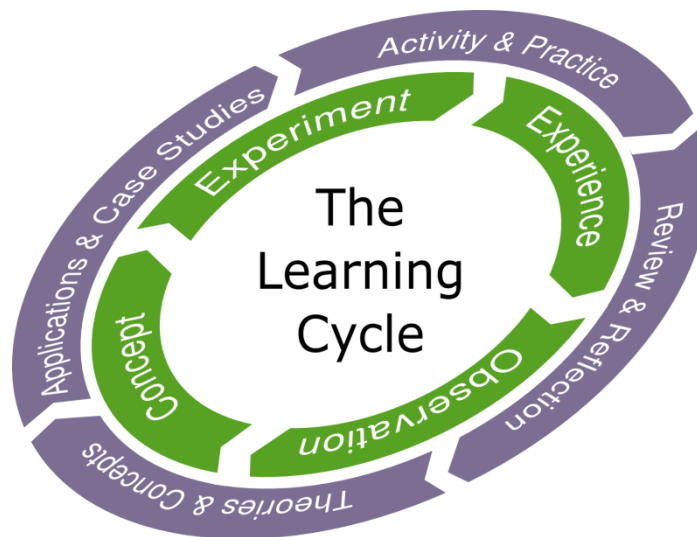


Figure 2: Kolb's Learning Cycle (1984)

The first step in the process is the description of the incident. I have found it invaluable to do a ‘brain dump’ ASAP - never mind punctuation, full sentences or spelling, just get the ‘facts’ of who said and did what down - preferably while commuting from the session, because memories are not what we think they are and never were (Chabris & Simons, 2011) and because I don’t write many notes during the session; I find it changes the dynamic, disrupts the flow, and can be the difference between level II and level III listening (Rogers, 2012). Keep the eyes on the client! (Kline, 1999)

Later, but while memory is still reasonably fresh, I review the notes and try to describe what I think was going on in the session, identifying where there might have been other options, not to take myself to task in Self 1 fashion but because I believe this will raise my awareness and improve my flexibility in future sessions. At this point I often perceive things I had not consciously considered in the heat of the session.

While wisdom-related performance is facilitated if we have time to reflect afterwards, and this first meta-perspective ‘cut’ can be done alone, researchers believe there is a limit to the perspective each of us can achieve unaided, and others emphasise the value of dialogue (Boud, 1985; Errington & Robertson, 1998). Peterson & Seligman (2004) cite experimental evidence suggesting the importance of a collective (interpersonal) approach to the cultivation of ‘Perspective’, which is one of the character strengths that define the virtue ‘Wisdom’.

Peterson & Seligman (2004) suggest that a deliberate intervention for cultivating perspective and wisdom is “encouragement of the student to reflect on truth and value as they have meaning for oneself” and to do so by “a Socratic method to model perspective.” Apart from being a nice definition of coaching, this corresponds to what Julie Hay (2007) calls the formative purpose of supervision; developing the skills, theoretical knowledge, personal attributes and self-awareness of the coach. Hay believes a valuable alternative to super-vision is inter-vision, e.g. cultivating a meta-perspective together with peers.

Both supervision and intervision can provide the following four important conditions which researcher Larry Daloz (2000, cited in McClure 2013) believes facilitates development:

1. The presence of other
2. Reflective discourse
3. A mentoring community
4. Opportunities for committed action

As I transition into life after ‘The Programme’ I would like to form a group of what Hay calls “reflection-colleagues” so that we may make the most of the social learning a community can provide. I would like to experiment using the list of reflective questions assembled by Patricia McClure in *Reflection on Practice* (2013) and Carol Kauffman’s P.E.R.F.E.C.T. model (2010) to describe and review coaching sessions and to generate future possible options. An item on my template for recording coaching sessions will be “what the client taught me about coaching and about me as a coach.” In order to combat Kimblin’s 4th source of interference, in effect, worrying about what is in box 2 of the Johari window (Luft & Ingham, 1955), I will give my clients every opportunity at the end of, after and in between sessions to provide feedback.

While immersed in the Meyler Campbell programme, sharpening our saws to perfection (Covey, 1989), it can be sobering if paradoxical to remind ourselves that it is not about the coach. During a session, it isn’t. However, we are the very tools of our trade and we owe it to our clients to learn as long as we coach. What is more, I know that I feel at my most selflessly confident when I am learning – the humility that is requisite for learning feels like both a safe and a powerful place to be. I hope to create such a space in community with like-minded coaches, that we may continue to raise our awareness and take responsibility, as John Whitmore would exhort us (2009).

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Janet Larsen

Trained as an academic and practicing psychologist, Janet conducted research in the field of meta-cognition and pursued her clinical interest in depression and suicide in a variety of settings before transitioning to the commercial world - via Graham Alexander's coaching organisation - and has the last 16 years worked in the asset management sector as a consultant, coach and psychologist. Janet is based in London and works internationally.

The Choice to Bring NLP into my Coaching Practice

Sue Leeson

Four years ago I attended a NLP taster day hosted by Judith Lowe of PPD Learning. As a Director of a leading global retailer, I had benefited from pockets of coaching over the years and was keen to develop new skills. I found NLP inspirational. Today, armed with a Master Practitioner qualification and Generative Coaching training, I enjoy applying NLP philosophy and techniques at work. I coach rather than “direct” my team and aim daily to bring out the best in them – creating a positive field of creativity and accomplishment. The results show in the quality of the work, in team retention and through positive feedback.

Training to be an executive coach, I apply NLP throughout my coaching practice and see its positive effect in session and in feedback – helping my client’s towards greater self-awareness and goal achievement in reasonable time-frames.

The objective of my essay is to explore which aspects of NLP have become the cornerstones for my coaching practice and why. In addition, I share some NLP approaches that I find particularly useful - illustrating how I have applied them

As Sue Knight summarises: *“In essence, NLP is the study of our thinking, behaviour and language patterns to help us build sets of strategies for everything we do.”*

Applying NLP, I can guide my clients from a to b with minimum backstory. It enables me to focus on the patterns the client is running rather than the actual content. It also provides me with a positive ethos on how to approach the coaching alliance. NLP technique gives me an elegant way to connect with a client and to guide them out of content - into transforming how they internally process and externally behave. This, in turn, opens up choice. It differs from some other coaching models in that it focuses on the “whole person” and the patterns they run rather than more cognitive approaches. By highlighting the structure of the client’s experience and unpacking that, NLP can work at a deeper level.

My Coaching Cornerstones

These three NLP principles form the centre of my coaching practice.

- We each create our own map of reality, complete with our own distortions, deletions and generalisations. Reality becomes our own subjective experience. Each person has the ability to expand his or her map and increase choice.
- We each have the resources we need to be at our best. It’s then a question of setting congruent goals and generating access to those resources to achieve the goals.
- The locus of control rests with the client – it’s about focussing on what he or she can control and taking ownership of that.

These principles remind me that everyone thinks differently. It’s the client’s agenda and map that is relevant; that the coach’s role is non-directive; that each client can tap into their own resources to develop options; and that each client is responsible for the change he or she wishes to make.

NLP approaches I apply within my coaching practice

John Grinder and Richard Bandler developed NLP through **modelling** the language patterns of leading therapists: Milton Erickson, Virginia Satir and Fritz Perls among others. Their work attempted to break down the structure of experience so that it could be replicated through identifying the patterns and then applying them. In order to do this, the modeller must remain

clean, without agenda – as far as possible.

I find modelling to be a useful starting point. It offers the chance to break down the client's experience into its component parts. If, for example, a client is afraid of public speaking – building a model to understand how they are "being afraid" can be very useful: what are the cues? Are they running inner dialogue? What are they feeling? What choices does this give them in the moment? - unpacking a behaviour in this way can illuminate new choices for the client.

"Until you make the unconscious conscious, it will direct your life and you will call it fate." Carl G Jung.

State Management is NLP's equivalent of Emotional Intelligence. It provides the client with techniques to manage emotional state before, during and after an activity. Whilst it's a useful tool to take someone from a negative state to a positive state – I find it particularly helpful in moving client's into a more resourceful state – helping them to tap into their creativity and other resources in a more generative way. I also combine this with Anchoring so the client has a way back in after the coaching session. In fact, using Anchoring, the client can practice changing state literally at the drop of a pin (or whatever cue you develop with the client!).

Case study: I worked with a colleague who had a fear of presenting. Each time he become very nervous, started listening to his inner saboteur. We worked on mapping across a time when he spoke confidently to a time when he was nervous – using visualisation and illuminating the differences in the experience through VAK (what could he see, hear, feel etc.). For him, it was about highlighting the open gestures, the relaxed breathing, the confident self-belief – anchoring it and then transporting it across to the big scary sea of blank faces that he was visualising himself speaking to. I asked him to practice this over and over again through role-play. This gave him a powerful way to experience speaking confidently through imagination – it showed him how he could approach his feared scenario – it gave him choices. He has made visible progress and the positive feedback has spurred him on.

NLP is well known for its **Timelines** model. Timelines are a way of laying out a client's experience using space as a marker, useful for understanding how much focus someone gives to the future, the present and the past – providing the client with a physical opportunity to separate out their experience and to put the past behind them if needs be. Are they stuck in the past? Do they have a limited view of the future? Do they have prioritisation issues as they lump work together into an overloaded present? What does their experience of time do to their spectrum of choice?

Case study: One client I worked with was struggling with planning and prioritisation – by mapping out his subjective experience, the client could see how his limited view of the future led him to bucket all work into a "do it now" frame. By opening up their long-term view – quite literally by mapping it out on the floor, he was able to physically sort the workload to create a critical path with tasks distributed over time. This "mapping" raised awareness of the behaviour and gave the client instant choices on how to plan work and expand the time-frame he had been operating in. By walking the timeline, the client could "try this one for size", giving him a sense of ownership and control.

Finally, I have found using the **Perceptual Positions** model effective for relationship challenges - to explore how the other person may be feeling (in second position) and even take a meta view of the interaction between us and someone else –to get a higher-level view of the situation. Raising awareness here can open up choice for the client – enabling exploration into other resources the client could tap into to improve the relationship and get a better outcome. Like role-play, the Perceptual Positions model gives us the chance to mentally envisage other ways of being in the relationship and often it's the meta-position view that can provide the real breakthrough.

Case study: I was having difficulty dealing with a fellow Director and it was affecting the team. I used the Perceptual Positions model to self-coach and, from a meta position, observed myself interacting with him and how he was then responding to me. I could step from my shoes to his and using third position, observe "us". I could then explore his point of view - this was illuminating! I could experience how "difficult" I was being in the relationship, by looking through his eyes. It also gave me permission to consider some alternative choices – humour was the answer to this one. So, bringing a more "playful" self into the relationship brought many positive benefits for both us and for business performance.

Conclusion

The combination of the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Programme and my NLP training has given me access to many psychological theories and models. This particular combination allows me to apply a more emotive structure to performance improvement that business courses do not overtly tackle. Whilst many courses equip business leaders to assess the tangible aspects of performance but few provide insight into underlying root causes where more human issues are involved. With NLP insight, a positive ethos and a tool-kit of models and technique from many walks of applied psychology, I now feel I have choice in my coaching style – choice to work flexibly with my clients at a deep and effective level.

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The Inner Game of Tennis – W. Timothy Gallwey
Time to Think – Nancy Kline
The Psychology of Executive Coaching – Bruce Peltier

Sue Leeson

With 25 years of leadership experience within the retail and media sectors, Sue understands the pressures of working with challenging daily targets and long-term growth goals. Recognising the critical importance of strong leaders, Sue trained in NLP and Business Coaching to drive her own leadership skills and those of her team. She now adds coaching per se to her professional portfolio. Through her platform, Claragrace, she coaches across a variety of sectors, helping leaders to optimise their contribution, with purpose.

A perfect storm: unintended consequences of coaching for the coach

Chris McGolpin

Background and context

The following (in italics) is the personal case I wrote for my employer, Schroders, to justify attending the Business Coach Programme. It sets the important context for this reflective essay.

I have done a lot of thinking on where I am with my role, my team and my development. I have solicited and listened to feedback and assessed my strengths and weaknesses. In simple terms; what do I need to do better to deliver successfully for our business and be a more effective leader and business operator?

I spend a lot of time trying to lead and get the best from my team and others, encouraging them to change and do things that are outside their comfort zone in order to deliver a number of near and long-term initiatives and priorities set by me and others. I absorb a significant amount of physical, emotional and intellectual energy doing this. Part of this is down to my personal DNA, it will never change and makes me what and who I am. However, in order to be more effective and develop those around me I need to find a better way of encouraging them to take more initiative; think for themselves, self solve problems and use me more as coach than instructor.

Whilst I coach and guide and have been trained in the GROW⁽¹⁾ coaching model I feel I need to be more effective in how I encourage others to identify and resolve their business / personal performance issues. I listen, but not well enough. I also proffer opinions and options too quickly when I should be trying to coach others into developing their own; taking more responsibility and accountability and getting the growth benefit from these. The more I can achieve this level of outcome the better my team performance, morale and contribution to our business.

I therefore need to do two things better; listen, allow and encourage others to talk and think for themselves. I summary, coach more effectively. I have taken counsel and input from Louise Hoskins, Head of Learning and Development, in terms of my needs and internal / external learning and development opportunities. I am proposing the following, which she is familiar with and has completed.

- Attendance at Time to Think foundation course run by Nancy Kline
- Secondly take the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Programme

Quite unconnected to the business case above, but happening in parallel and highly relevant, I also started to take up meditation to give me space to think and slow down from a busy work schedule and relentlessly busy mind.

Reflecting at the end of the Business Coach Programme, I now see that this was all part of a 'perfect storm' learning experience that has been profoundly different than I had originally anticipated. Consequently the benefits I have gained fall into two distinct categories; those that were anticipated and those that were unanticipated. This paper is focused on the latter and represents a list of additional benefits I feel future delegates might wish to be aware of.

What I learnt

Little in life is smooth, perfect and beautifully sequential. Everything is rather messy, things emerging and surfacing in very unplanned ways – like an imperfect storm. What follows is not a precise chronological recap of what I gleaned and learned. It is simply a reflection of what emerged for me personally as a consequence of many things; course content, exercises, interactions with tutors and

delegates, coaching practice clients, course reading, further reading off syllabus on people performance and change management, interaction with people in my team at Schroders, discussions and interaction with my wife and friends, deep private reflections and thoughts.

To describe how it came to be a profoundly different learning and personal experience than I thought I have identified 9 personal unanticipated insights from the Business Coach Programme that carry real value for me personally.

Learning 1: Mentoring is not coaching

Obvious some may say! And to me now so obvious too. Professional business people don't know what coaching is and how to do it. It's not mentoring which is the prevailing misunderstanding. That is why everyone was on the course, of course; to learn what it is and how to do it. Knowing the difference between mentoring, which I have done a lot of, and coaching, which I am now doing more of is a key insight for me. It was recently reaffirmed by a book I read by Seth Godin called *Linchpin*⁽²⁾. He differentiates between those that are cogs and those that are linchpins. Cogs want to be told what to do and given a map. Linchpins want to be helped to work it out for themselves, be artful and expressful. Those that want to be Linchpins require coaching.

Learning 2: It helps you solve your problems too

The process of tutorials and the necessity to do practice coaching provided a trusted environment to share some of my issues and get some proper coaching. This was totally unanticipated but invaluable as it helped me get out of a big hole I was digging in 2014. It helped me think clearer and ultimately solve it. What could be better advocacy for the value of coaching than experiencing the benefits yourself.

Learning 3: Those strength things matter too

In Management Consulting I learnt a lot about feedback and was an active practitioner. I used the tool 'stop, start and continue' to great effect. The continue bit was something I realise I focused less on. I am now aware through the use of *Realise2*⁽³⁾ that finding time to help people consider their strengths is an additional method to coaching and people development, and one that is far more positive for the receiver. I have been able to integrate this approach into my career development discussions with team members and have also used it with a practice client to help understand personal brand.

Learning 4: It's simple but fundamental – Johari Window⁽⁴⁾ tells it all

Everyone has blind spots. The coach and the client. To be effective you need to address this in so many personal and professional situations. When you know this you recognise that it is important to stop making assumptions, think about what you don't know and the value and necessity to build empathy with others to encourage their willingness and confidence to disclose. There is not a week of my personal and professional life that I don't stop myself and use this framework to think and reflect before I act. The result is that I am more thoughtful, rush less into things and simply make better calls.

This has proved particularly helpful in my sessions with practice clients who I have little personal or organisational history with. Knowing I may have gaps in information and encouraging them tactfully to disclose has helped me navigate away from making erroneous assumptions.

Learning 5: Greater personal positivity and well being for the coach

Spending time with and investing in others and their issues is value adding to the coach. It helps you see things differently, focus on others rather than yourself, encourages patience, understanding and empathy, forces you to break old habits such as tail chasing someone else's thoughts and focus on

listening. A number of practice clients have apologised for taking up my time or asking for more sessions and my response has always been to reflect back the value I get as coach. Helping others is a wonderful thing to do, it is worth the investment of time many times over.

Learning 6: Others bring value too

I am not small minded enough to be unaware of the value others in the group bring too. However, the generosity of giving knowledge – insight, frameworks, book and academic references has been invaluable. I have always been a curious person and avid reader of business, personal development and change material but I have expanded significantly my reference set now. It has ignited further my desire to know more and get better. It was never this rich an experience at University or doing my MBA at Warwick.

Learning 7: I now know more about me

Quite a profound moment arrived when I started to see that the very tools and techniques I was learning about and applying in tutorials for use with coaching clients were indeed tools that I could apply to myself. It gave me the opportunity to pursue a parallel activity of finding out more about myself and led to some important development work on my personal brand – value, contribution and strengths. It has worked so well I have created a framework I am using on a practice client – and it is working!

Learning 8: Being in the moment and letting people think for themselves

What's round the corner in the heads of people is quite possibly something I never thought of until I started to think about the dynamics of coaching and extended my reading into areas of metaphors and clean questioning. I am now much more aware that people need to be given time to express and communicate uninterrupted. When they are done they will tell you. As Nancy Kline⁽⁵⁾ says, 'you have never quite arrived until you have spoken'.

Learning 9: The hidden track

As a huge music lover, there are those rare CDs where the artist has decided to secrete a track buried in the CD beyond the final track. You only find it if the CD keeps running and you are around when it gets there and starts playing. Only the obsessively curious types would go searching for these tracks. Although curious I am not that curious. If the course was a CD then my hidden track is this – everything associated with this course and beyond has provided me with a profound comfort and confidence with who I am, how I help others and what I have become.

Conclusion

I am unsure if what I have experienced is unusual compared to other course graduates. I guess it does not matter as this is an essay of deep personal reflection. All I know is that I have landed somewhere different than I planned. Beyond being a competent coach, which was my goal, I feel a more complete, content and anchored individual personally and professionally. This was undoubtedly an unintended consequence of the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Programme. For those of you about to embark on this course I would encourage you to look out for your unintended consequences. This is where you will find deep additional value from your investment.

As for the original objectives set out in the business case to Schroders. The Business Coaching Programme has definitely helped me become a better leader and achieved the intended consequences. However, there is a twist. I feel I am now a different leader to the one I had imagined I would become as a result of this course. I am more compassionate, understanding and less presumptuous. I now deploy a greater capacity to step back and think about the other person and their context before I act. Whilst I never had a bad team dynamic with my managers, 360 degree

feedback tells me they see a difference and value the greater levels of empathy, trust and care I make more evident. Who says you cannot teach an old dog new tricks!

References:

Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership, John Whitmore, 26th Nov 2010.

Linchpin: Are You Indispensable? How to drive your career and create a remarkable future, by Seth Godin, 4th Feb 2010.

Realise2: A strengths profiler tool used to unlock the potential of individuals, teams and organisations. Captures strengths into 4 different categories that determines how you should use them.

Marshal – use them appropriately for your situation and context.

Moderate – use them in moderation and only when you need to.

Minimise – use them as little as possible and only where necessary.

Maximise – find opportunities to use them more.

Johari Window: The Johari window is a technique created in 1955 by two American psychologists, Joseph Luft (1916–2014) and Harrington Ingham (1914–1995), used to help people better understand their relationship with self and others. It is used primarily in self-help groups and corporate settings as a heuristic exercise.

Time to Think: Listening to Ignite the Human Mind, Nancy Kline, 1st Jan 1999.

Chris McGolpin

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The Dark Side of Flow

James Muston

Introduction

Most coaches will be familiar with the 'light side' of flow. Flow moments, and the values and drivers that can be derived from them, provide a useful benchmark for career decisions or coaching goals¹. They also provide an indication of performance contexts – the situations where an executive performs optimally and is happiest. Flow preconditions can be used as a diagnostic tool for establishing what might be preventing an executive from operating at their best and helping them to get back to that level².

In all of these situations, flow is used as a vehicle for attaining another end, such as discovering what really matters to the client or increasing performance in the work place. It is a given that the client wishes to engage with flow and that he or she has control over the decision to do so.

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi's 'Flow, The Psychology of Optimal Experience'³ contains numerous observations by climbers on the positive aspects of flow and it was from a climber's perspective that I first started thinking about the coaching implications of the darker aspects of being 'in the zone'.

Flow and Rock Climbing

Rock climbing is a 'flowy' type of activity which is why Csikszentmihalyi interviewed hundreds of climbers in his initial research on the subject. Within the multiple disciplines that make up the sport of rock climbing, there is one that is more likely to lead to flow than the rest: solo climbing or soloing.

Soloing is climbing without a rope or any other equipment. When one is ascending a challenging piece of rock a long way above the ground without a rope, goals become unusually clear, boundaries uncrossable and feedback instantaneous. Falling is not an option. Flow is pretty much guaranteed.

The biggest problem with soloing is not that it is dangerous. The biggest problem is that the flow 'buzz' one gets from the experience is highly addictive. If the solo climber wishes to keep recapturing that flow sensation, the high challenge/high skill balance requires him or her to keep climbing harder and harder climbs. Succumb to the lure of that sensation and you are on a one-way journey to self-destruction.

Flow Addiction

What does all this mean for coaching executives?

Just as climbers can get addicted to climbing-related flow, workers can get addicted to work-related flow.

The first thing to note here is that 'addiction' to flow is not just a figure of speech, but may be a case of genuine dependence on the state⁴. The neurochemicals released by the brain during flow are addictive⁵.

¹ 'Coaching Skills. A Handbook', Jenny Rogers – Open University Press, 2012

² 'FT Guide to Business Coaching', Anne Scoular, Financial Times Prentice Hall, 2011

³ 'Flow – The Psychology of Optimal Experience', Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi – Harper Perennial Modern Classics, 2008 Edition

⁴ 'The Dark Side of Flow: A Qualitative Study of Dependence in Big Wave Surfing', The Sport Psychologist, 2009, 23, 170-185, Human Kinetics, Inc.

⁵ 'The Rise of Superman', Steven Kotler – New Harvest, 2014

But how do you tell the difference between a workaholic and someone addicted to flow? One way is to look at the conditions of flow. If the sensations the executive is experiencing are linked to flow – intense concentration that shuts out all distraction; timelessness; a sense of serenity, intrinsic motivation, inner clarity etc. – one is dealing with a ‘flowaholic’, not a workaholic.

The second thing to be aware of as a coach working with possible flow addiction is the different way that flow manifests itself on the ‘dark side’: flow is no longer the vehicle to attain a separate end but has become an end in itself – attaining flow is the goal. The challenge for the coach is to help the client disengage from flow or to prepare him or her for disengagement and the client may have no, or limited, control over their ability to do so.

Signs that things are not quite as they should be include:

- repeated references in a coaching session to addiction-type language – “high’, ‘buzz’, ‘fix’, ‘drug’ etc. ;
- inability to answer the question: ‘what would you do if you could not [work on M&A deals; trade derivatives; build a business etc.]?’
- receiving the answer ‘none’ or ‘not much’ to the question: ‘how much control do you feel you have over the situation?’ when dealing with a suspected case of flow addiction;
- repeated failure to execute an ‘action agreed’ from a coaching session despite unequivocal enthusiasm for the idea during the session.

Scenarios of Flow Addiction

There are two obvious scenarios where one may encounter the dark side of flow when working with executives:

Career coaching: – specifically transition; third stage (retirement) and redundancy. Executives who lose their source of flow may be suffering from withdrawal symptoms such as fatigue, anxiety, inability to concentrate (the reverse outcomes of flow). As an example, professionals such as lawyers and bankers often get their ‘buzz’ from ‘doing deals’. The classic progression from ‘deal doer’ to ‘manager’ can take the professional away from the source of what he or she enjoys most.

At the extreme end of the spectrum, a senior trader may have experienced uninterrupted flow during market hours day after day for many years. Promotion off the floor or unexpected redundancy could lead to the sudden loss of that daily flow sensation.

Working with an executive before they transition, retire or are made redundant, the challenge for the coach may be to deal with the future loss of flow – effectively to minimize the chances of withdrawal but also to prepare for it. If the executive is anxious about the change – “what lies behind that concern?”

Work/Life balance: signs of flow dependence in this area would include: working for longer or harder than intended (potential burnout); withdrawal symptoms, as above, when away from work; preferring work over social and family activities; turning up for work when sick or injured; and unsuccessful attempts made to reduce the time at work.

The executive who repeatedly fails to return home at a reasonable time to see the family despite setting that as a goal and agreeing to do so in a session would be a case in point.

Suggestions for Working with Flow Addiction

As with most coaching situations, raising awareness is perhaps the most valuable first step. If some of the signs or symptoms discussed above come up during a session, the simplest approach may be to write down the nine conditions of flow and then explain the light and dark sides. In my experience, most executives intuitively understand flow when they see it outlined in front of them.

Awareness of flow together with questioning by the coach may enable coach and client to isolate specific areas of work that are linked to addictive flow, for example, the thrill of making the pitch or negotiating the deal.

In transition, third stage and redundancy coaching, finding new sources of flow may be helpful. Questions around the flow pre-conditions, for example: what and how hard are the challenges of the new situation? What are the goals? How immediate/frequent is the feedback? and so on may enable the executive to benchmark the new situation against the old or existing one and identify the missing components he or she needs to get back into flow.

Another option worth considering for all situations is a flow exercise to identify key, non-addictive flow moments across an executive's life using the conditions of flow as the starting point. Such moments could be used to give the executive an idea of themes and motivators – intrinsic and extrinsic - that may help them reinvent themselves, in the case of transition or third stage, and understand what is going wrong, in the case of work/life balance.

Rehabilitation in work/life balance sessions could involve gradually reducing participation in the flow-inducing activity to a reasonable level - actions agreed may need to be in small incremental steps to help the executive through the withdrawal period with appropriate support and accountability as each step is taken in the right direction.

Conclusion

As a coach, one's natural inclination is to align oneself with the 'light side', to focus on the positive, and to believe in the 'boundless potential' of clients. Some of my most enjoyable sessions have involved using flow to unlock that potential. But one's enthusiasm for the light should perhaps be tempered by an awareness of the realities of the dark.

As Csikszentmihalyi says, walking this line between light and dark "involves learning to distinguish the useful and the harmful forms of flow, and then making the most of the former while placing limits on the latter"³.

James Muston

James works as an executive coach in Asia where he has been based since 1993. He has spent 23 years working with senior investment bankers, originally as a lawyer with Linklaters, then as a headhunter and now as a coach. He works mostly in Hong Kong, Singapore and mainland China.

A Mindful Goal

Annelise Pesa

Unsurprisingly, during my BCP¹ a vast amount of time and focus was spent on the subject of goals. Whilst I learned more in depth the importance of goal setting and reaching goals, during my BCP I came across certain hurdles that made me question the subject matter, such as a devastating personal experience, my attempts to achieve mindfulness, and client sessions which evolved in unexpected ways.

Goal setting is the cornerstone of coaching and the focus of any aspiring as well as seasoned coach. "If you don't have a clear goal, you don't have a coaching session"². Or in our American colleagues' words "Setting goals is the first step to turn the invisible into visible".³

Goal is the leading piece in the GROW model, the theme which defines the beginning of a coaching session and the end of it, and it's distinctively clear also in the middle of it, so that Reality, Options and Will are all measured up, discussed, pondered, silenced and reflected with the Goal in the background.

Although to the untrained eye, goal setting may look like a relatively easy task, it's incredibly challenging to "nail" it, and this holds true, in my opinion, for both overall goals and the individual goal alike.⁴ I will never forget at our tutorials how I struggled, at times, to sharpen my own goals, if coached, and to guide the coachee, with kind determination, once again to redefine what it was they really (really) wanted for that specific session that they could act upon.

As the months passed by, my thinking on Goal evolved with the content of the tutorials, the book reading and the reflection time, the various Meyler Campbell's seminars and by coaching clients.

However as the coaching session developed, I came across the glass ceiling of Goal: after reaching them at times clients were apparently unmoved or would not enjoy the accomplishment.

One such client was an incredibly successful and committed lawyer. Her focus was to improve the relationship with her boss, and be nominated as the person responsible for the London branch of this continental legal firm.

As our coaching session unfolded, she had the offer to be head of the London office and her boss started to demonstrate a more co-operative attitude, yet she seemed to have lost interest in what she obtained. Subsequently she expressed the desire to go on a humanitarian mission or at least to be employed for a work experience in a country which was socially underdeveloped.

To my surprise and with an incredible twist of luck, she soon had an offer from the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs for a posting in a North African country. After the initial elation, I heard the dreaded sentence that she wasn't really sure she wanted to go. Apparently as soon as she reached a goal she then lost interest. I was very much perplexed to say the least.

I started to question whether she was concentrated so much on the future that she was not really living the present.

I wondered: Is setting goals an avoidance strategy not to live fully in the present?

¹ Business Coaching Programme

² Business Coaching by Anne Scoular, pg 70

³ Phrase by Tony Robbins

⁴ Overall goals are those the clients wants to reach as a results of the coaching programme, and they dictate the form and the structure of the individual goals which session after session will be discussed defined and reached thus contributing to the obtainment of the overall goal.

In “The Antidote: Happiness for People Who Can’t Stand Positive Thinking” a fascinating look at how our conventional approaches to happiness and success tend to backfire on us, the author Oliver Burkeman writes “What motivates our investment in goals and planning for the future, much of the time, isn’t any sober recognition of the virtues of preparation and looking ahead. Rather, it’s something much more emotional: how deeply uncomfortable we are made by feelings of uncertainty. Faced with the anxiety of not knowing what the future holds, we invest ever more fiercely in our preferred vision of that future — not because it will help us achieve it, but because it helps rid us of feelings of uncertainty in the present.”

This concept of presence is rooted in Eastern notions of mindfulness — the ability to go through life with crystalline awareness and fully inhabit our experience — largely popularized in the West by British philosopher and writer Alan Watts much earlier than the more famous Eckart Tolle. In the volume *The Wisdom of Insecurity: A Message for an Age of Anxiety* written more than 60 years ago Watts argues that the root of our human frustration and daily anxiety is our tendency to live for the future, which is an abstraction.

He argues that we possess “primary consciousness,” the basic mind which knows reality rather than ideas about it, and does not know the future. It lives completely in the present, and perceives nothing more than what is at this moment. The “ingenious brain” however, looks at that part of present experience called memory, and by studying it is able to make predictions. These predictions are, relatively, so accurate and reliable that the future assumes a high degree of reality — so high that the present loses its value.

I experienced first-hand how being in the present with “primary consciousness” may be an uncomfortable experience as it involves feeling negative emotions.

During my BCP I experienced a considerable personal challenge, one of the biggest a person can face in their life. In a state of emotional turmoil, I felt shuttered and lost. I needed an anchor in a life storm.

In the past I had attempted to practice Sahaja yoga, a form of meditation, but I struggled to maintain the practice. I felt I needed to give it another go so I started practicing transcendental meditation, with the hope of feeling calmer and less governed by worries and fears. Initially feeling such emotions was painful, it’s not easy to rest in uncertainty especially when there are high risks at stake, but with time I did start experiencing being subtly more accepting of those feelings and in that very moment, slightly detached from what could happen in the future, at least for some time.

It’s not that those emotions, feelings or thoughts had disappeared forever it’s just that I grasped a place underneath them even for a few minutes, that gave me a bit of respite if not a sense of peace.

Yet even during such times, I could not discharge the power of goal setting. Yes, I did contemplate quitting the BCP. However, it was soon apparent that having goals (attendance to the tutorials, coaching clients, book reviews and so on) provided a sense of normality in the middle of the extraordinary. Coupled with my meditation practice, it made me feel stronger, more determined to react and eventually feeling better.

There is something inherently human, about striving for something, about wanting to do better, and having a sense of purpose in life is vital⁵.

It became apparent that Mindfulness and Goals are interlinked in more than one way.⁶

⁵ Get some headspace, by Andy Puddicombe pg 27

⁶ Although meditation practice is, in the view of many, the best way to reach an optimum state of mindfulness, there are many ways to be mindful.

Mindfulness helps decision-makers to reach conclusions and there's growing evidence the positive influence goes much further, impacting the way decisions are identified, made, implemented and assessed.⁷

Authentic/intrinsic goals are those deriving from a very mindful process of identifying values and drivers⁸, which can be helped through the work of a coach with deep listening⁹. Deep Listening, is in its own right, an exquisitely mindful activity and a gateway to accessing a coach intuition which in turn facilitates subtle steering of the coaching process.

Another coaching tool, which is intrinsically mindful, is visualisation. Such techniques can in fact influence a goal outcome¹⁰.

And again, the experience of optimum performance, the best an individual can achieve, even beyond what they thought possible is the product of being in the Flow¹¹ or being in the zone. Those moments are a sort of spontaneous meditation and are the most evident proof that striving for goals allows us to reach new heights in our senses, and a heightened awareness.

As I am writing this essay my client is finally enjoying her experience abroad, she is being more mindful and grateful of her incredible opportunity and for the time being not worried about what is next. She obviously requires another (of course mindful) coaching session.

Annelise Pesa

Annelise has enjoyed an international career as a banking and finance lawyer with Clifford Chance, Linklaters and Alliance and Morgan Stanley spanning 20 years. A professional athlete in her youth, Annelise holds a Master in Banking and Finance Law from the University of London and is a NLP practitioner. She draws from her background, qualifications and interest in psychology to coach professionals to reach their authentic goals, maximise productivity and resilience.

⁷ Close analysis of the latest mindfulness research, with Jochen Reb, Associate Professor of Organisational Behaviour at Singapore Management University suggests that mindfulness techniques can have a positive effect on all our widely-recognised stages of the decision-making process and goal setting

⁸ Coaching Skills, by Jenny Rogers, pg 151

⁹ Co-active Coaching by Kimsey-House, pg 38

¹⁰ Juan Coto and Mary Watts' lecture on Visualisation and Rehearsal (June 2014)

¹¹ Flow: the Psychology of Optimal Experience by Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

The Most Important Day in Your Life?

Nick Phillis

My entire life has centred around having a positive impact on those around me, helping others to flourish and be successful. Over the last nearly eleven years I have been in a privileged position of leading the community of a boys' boarding house within a leading independent school. The house was not in a good place when I took charge: my goal was to create an atmosphere where people could be themselves and make the very best of all their abilities. Ten years on, the house has a wonderful reputation and parents have been kind in their comments about the personal progress their sons have made.

One Easter, two years ago, sitting in Durban beside the Indian Ocean, one of America's highest achieving NFL (American football) coaches brought into sharp focus what it was I loved doing, having a positive impact.¹ I then realised that within just over two years my opportunity to do that within the boarding environment would come to an end as my term of office drew to a close.

My style in bringing out the best in others has always been a questioning approach, trying where possible to help them see that they have the answers, they know what they want to achieve and have all the resources needed to achieve it. After a series of conversations it became clear to me that I had been coaching all my life. But what to do after my time in the house came to an end? After yet more conversations the question became 'can I take my experience and skills and transfer them to the business world.' After a year of coaching (as part of the Meyler Campbell BCP) a variety of people from a head of HR global functions in a company employing 80,000, to helping an aspiring CEO with his first 100 days on the board, to an independent school head, I realised the skills were totally transferable.

But I soon began to realise that as important as the skills were, it was not they that were the only key, but the philosophy behind them, a philosophy that brought relevance and authenticity to the skills that helped people move forward.

Whilst reading a book by Jenny Rogers² I came across a phrase which succinctly summed up my approach over the past ten years – she spoke of the importance of the synchronicity of 'the being and doing selves.' The being self is the core of who we are, the inner personality, the sum total of the experiences, attitudes and values that make us up. The doing self is our career, the roles we take, the relationships we build and on a smaller time scale, the tasks we do. It is this that influences my coaching and it has influenced my approach as housemaster. When the two come together, when they are in sync, it is more likely that that most craved for state of 'Flow' that Csikszentmihalyi describes will occur. And when people are in that 'zone' achievement, happiness, contentment and fulfilment are more likely to happen; high performance, confidence, perspective and self-awareness will also characterise our lives. When this synchronicity happens we are more truly being ourselves and it is from that position that we flourish.

Jack Green took part in the London 2012 Olympics. The previous year, at the age of 19, he had become one of the youngest ever under 23 European athletic champions and was expecting great things from the Olympics. He hit a hurdle in the semi-final, crashing out. Fuelled by anger he ran the leg of his life in the 4 x 400m relay, missing out on a medal by 0.1 of a second. He was a talented athlete and could choose his sport, at one stage there was a newspaper article linking him to the Newcastle falcons and a professional rugby career. But within a few months of the Games finishing he was facing a very tough time in his life, describing it as being 'hell'. During this time Jack Green watched The Marinovich Project, a documentary about Marv and his son Todd, who Marv dedicated his life to turning into a NFL superstar. Todd became an outstanding quarterback and realised his

¹ The Mentor Leader, Tony Dungy 2011

² Coaching Skills – a handbook 2012

father's dream and played in the NFL – but at a cost: Todd's life was destroyed by substance abuse. During that documentary Todd made an interesting observation: 'just because you are good at something doesn't mean you have to do it.' Jack's comment on this is interesting: 'I'm meant to be one of the most talented athletes around. Does that mean I have to do it? In my opinion, no.' He went on to acknowledge that 'I'm not sure I ever enjoyed running.' He admitted that 'I've just been wearing a mask that I've been told to wear.'³ This is an extreme example of the dislocation between the being and doing self, where the doing self dictates what we do without regard for who we are or what matters most to us. Jack Green tried to run during this period. It is no surprise that he had run faster as a junior – these are not the circumstances for Csikszentmihalyi's flow.

It is in understanding the importance of the being self that has characterised all I have done pastorally within the boarding House. I needed to create a culture where the person mattered, where it was more common to ask 'who do you want to be?' rather than 'what do you want to do?' There are numerous examples where helping people be who they are has led to increased contentment and real achievement. I have been amazed, too, how much it has been a part of the coaching engagements over the past year. Where there has been synchronicity, or increased synchronicity, there has been progress.

This synchronicity is not arrived at quickly, and searching for it may not be the initial reason for the coaching engagement, but in many situations arriving at it brings greater effectiveness in the business context and in one's personal life. In a recent coaching engagement introducing culture change emerged as the topic for coaching but as the issues surrounding this were considered it became clear that other things needed to be explored. There was a disconnect between the being self and the doing self that was having an impact on the client. Although they were being effective in their job it did not 'flow' and it was clear that they might be more effective in a slightly different role. Options were considered and a new role defined. They were much happier, the person who took on the elements of their role that did not fit was much happier and the business was more effective – a good result for all.

Where coaching fits into this search for synchronicity is the belief in the power of the individual to find their own solutions. Carl Rogers, kicking back against the rise of the all-knowing therapist who would tell clients what to do, wrote about 'a person centred approach' from the 1940s. His 'basic assumptions about people are that they are pragmatic, optimistic, and believing in unlimited potential. People are essentially trustworthy; they have vast potential for understanding themselves and resolving their own problems (Peltier on Rogers)⁴. I wonder whether Todd and Jack might have had a different experience in life if they had met Carl Rogers.

Exploring the idea of the being self with clients has increased certainty and made paths clearer which has led to increased confidence and performance. What has created the conditions for this is a level of regard for the client and pupil that puts them totally at their ease. Rogers talks of having 'an unconditional positive regard' for people. It is amazing what having such an outlook does in a coaching relationship. He goes on to say: 'if I can provide a certain type of relationship, the other person will discover within himself the capacity to use that relationship for growth and change, and personal development will occur'.⁵ It is this personal development which is so pleasing to see.

The quality of that relationship is key and stems from trust, implicit and explicit. Explicit is the idea that what you say is what you do, and that you will do the best for a person in all situations. Implicit is the empathetic connection between two people which is linked to personality, a link which can be developed. But there is more to it than the personal level, for these relationships are more powerful and more likely in an environment where trust is all pervasive. In the boarding House I have been able to influence that and so conversations happen more freely; talking to clients about creating that atmosphere in their own work place and implementing is much trickier, but something wonderful to contemplate.

³ The Sunday Times 15th December 2013

⁴ The Psychology of Executive Coaching, Peltier 2010

⁵ On Becoming a Person, Rogers 1961

Another insight that has helped hugely in building these relationships has come from Caroline Mchugh⁶. Caroline helps people be who they are, but not in any narcissistic way. She states that 'your only job is to be as good at being you as you possibly can be.' A consideration of this idea only helps build the unconditional positive regard that is so beneficial.

Once these relationships are in place then the act of bringing the being and doing self together can begin, and when that happens a whole host of positives become apparent, including contentment, motivation and resilience - and from these three, improved performance in every area of life and work.

Coaches are in a unique position to help people discover their being selves, and coaching has helped me find a way to continue to have an impact. Mark Twain once said 'The two most important days of your life are the day you were born and the day you find out why.' Helping people do the latter is a privilege.

Nick Phillis

Recently the senior housemaster at a leading public school, Nick Phillis has been in the business of coaching all his professional life. His recent clients include the global head of HR for a multi-national of over 70,000 and a director of a multi-national manufacturing company. He has an athletics half-blue from Oxford University and sat on several national hockey committees. He has worked in South Africa and was one of two who set up a charity to educate Afghan refugee girls in Pakistan. He is a keen golfer.

⁶ Never Not a Lovely Moon, Caroline McHugh 2011

Coaching and Yoga

Luca Regano

Yoga has been a transformational experience in my life.

Since I was very young, I was always fascinated by those activities that seemed to give me access to more of my capabilities. For whatever reason, I always had a sense that humans have a much bigger potential than normally expressed, and obviously this was valid for me as well.

I guess this is the reason why, after practicing a different sport every year, I arrived at martial arts, fascinated by the objective of using the techniques and the fight as a practice ground for human development. Despite practicing for a decade, this did not feel enough - in my experience, in Europe, most of the training focused on the athletic part, without taking enough care of the mind training.

After a few years of pause, I bumped into a yoga lesson on a beach and immediately felt this was all about exploring my unlimited potential, be it physical or mental and eventually spiritual.

There I started a journey through which I discovered some of my self-inflicted mental limitations. I started to become increasingly aware of my own thoughts and of the influence they have over my life. Along this path, I learned how to be calmer, clearer in my thinking, more energetic, more effective at work and, ultimately, I felt happier.

Along the way, I participated in business training that gave me experience of the skills of some great coaches and the opportunity to receive an introduction to coaching techniques from Carol Kauffman. And to start practicing.

What I found in coaching was some of the elements that I had experienced in yoga. Jenny Rogers defines the foundation stone¹ for successful coaching as the Carl Rogers definition of "unconditional positive regard". This is the same attitude that the non-judgmental acceptance of a good yoga teacher creates with students. The ability to create that space for the client to experience more of him/herself and access her/his own resourcefulness is what can be life-transforming. It is the same space into which a good yoga teacher invites the students.

In my experience, when I was able to create that space with my coaching clients, magic happened and "I learned and he learned and there was none to take credit. There was only the glimmer of a realisation that we were both participating in a wonderful process ²", in the words of Gallwey.

It therefore seemed to me that, through coaching, I could pass on to my colleagues, my team and my clients some of the benefits that yoga had brought into my life. Since then, it has been my objective to become capable to merge coaching and yoga and use them synergistically.

In my studies for the Meyler Campbell Business Coach Programme and of yoga, I have been excited to see how many points of contact there are between a discipline that is said to have started hundreds of years ago and one that has developed in the last 50.

Both approaches give an extreme importance to the raising of awareness³. This is how a good coach is able to support his client through effective questions and clean language.

It is through raised awareness that the Goal of the session becomes clear and sometimes almost solves the problem by itself.

¹ J. Rogers "Coaching Skills" p.27

² W.T.Gallwey "The Inner Game of Tennis" p.31

³ J. Whitmore "Coaching for Performance" p.34

It is through raised awareness that the coach helps the client to look at reality in an objective way, transcending the interpretations that may be limiting him in looking for solutions. It is again through raised awareness that the coach helps the client consider options that he or she would not otherwise conceive.

In my coaching experience, one of the most powerful tools has been the repetition of the client's words, which is nothing else than a tool to make her/him aware of what she/he just said and the language used. "Essentially coaching is about the client becoming aware, staying aware of and being in control of, their own power"⁴.

But what about the coach? "Success as a coach always involves high level of Self- Awareness"⁵. It is in a high state of awareness that the coach is able to notice his own thoughts, interpretations, judgements, intuitions and not be misled by them. It is in this high awareness state that the coach can access level 2 listening or, better, level 3⁶, to be able to notice the language used by the client and his/her body language.

In one particular text, there is another important common conclusion between yoga and coaching. In *The Inner Game of Tennis*, Gallwey writes a full chapter about "Quieting the Mind" as a the secret for the client to feel experiences in which there is "less thinking, calculating, judging, worrying, fearing, hoping, trying, regretting, controlling, jittering and distracting"⁷. In this condition, the client is fully aware of what is going on and therefore expands capacity to learn and perform. This is a corner stone of yoga.

In the *Yoga Sutras*, the text that is considered to have codified yoga, written by Patanjali in a period between 400 BC and 200 AD, the second aphorism describes yoga as follows:

Yoga chitta vritti nirodaha
"The restraint of the modifications of the mind-stuff is yoga"⁸
or more simply
"Yoga is calming the fluctuations of the mind"

As exciting as it is for me to find and share this points of contact, I believe that a lot of value can be found in looking at the techniques that yoga has developed to achieve such states of calm and aware mind consistently for both the coach and the client.

1. Starting with Asana, which stands for the physical practice that is what yoga is mostly known for. This practice, is meant to become an exercise in awareness itself. The increasingly complex positions can only be achieved with the correct alignment, developing awareness of the different parts of our body. Balancing effort and ease, we become aware, and therefore able to release or engage the necessary muscles.

In doing that, during a complete session of Asana, we also reach a state of raised awareness of our mind, as "mind and body are one"⁹. The connection of body and mind is experienced both ways, when the mind becomes aware of an involuntary contraction in a muscle which makes it release, but equally when a new contraction reveals a thought or an emotion which makes us aware of what otherwise could have gone unnoticed. Moreover, the practice of physical exercise is designed to leave the body in a healthier energetic condition, which is also itself a condition which enables the coach and the coachee to be present in the session.

⁴ J. Rogers "Coaching Skills" p.50

⁵ J. Rogers "Coaching Skills" p.64

⁶ J. Rogers "Coaching Skills" p.68

⁷ W.T. Gallwey "The inner Game of Tennis" p.24

⁸ Sri S. Satchidananda "The Yoga Sutras of Patanjali" s 1.2

⁹ S. Knight "NLP at work" p.55

2. Continuing with Pranayama, which is literally translated in mastery of life force, but in practice corresponds to the practice of controlling the breath. The different breathing techniques and their consistent practice have been proven to stimulate the parasympathetic nervous system, responsible for the relaxation response, balancing the sympathetic system action, which engages in a fight or flight response to external stimuli.

In doing so, it allows a more relaxed state in which to be present and aware, as opposed to anxious and stressed.

Moreover, in practicing pranayama, we become more aware of our own breathing patterns, which are strictly related to our emotional states. In doing so, our mind can become aware of that and choose, or even go as far as influencing, such states by consciously changing our breathing pattern.

3. Finally Meditation. Meditation is maybe the technique that is most commonly used to calm the mind and raise awareness. Mindfulness is becoming very popular and it can be considered a form of meditation. At the beginning, the technique is all about focusing our attention on an object (the most common being our own breathing) and observing our thoughts drift by. Even in this simple description of Meditation, it is evident that the whole exercise is in fact raising awareness on our thinking patterns. Beyond that, it is a proven technique to induce a calm state of our mind, and increasingly with practice, it makes us able to access such a state when required.

It is my experience that when practicing yoga regularly, my ability to be in a coaching session with higher awareness and a calmer mind is increased.

Wouldn't it be great to be able to switch to a deep listening state any time a new client comes into the room for a session, irrespective of what we had to deal with a minute before?

Why not take a few moments for a short meditation before a coaching practice, and some breath work?

And more, why not, when the relationship allows for it, propose a breathing exercise to the client as the beginning of a session.

This will be the field of my research going forward.

Luca Regano

Luca Regano is currently Vice President Customer Development in Unilever Portugal. Italian by birth he has developed 23 years' experience in Fast Moving Consumer Goods working in Unilever at local and European level both in Marketing and Sales. As a strong believer that business is people, he is currently coaching his team through a successful turnaround and individually coaching high potential Unilever talents from all over the world through their development.

Coaching Women – Self-Confidence

'Perception v reality'

Kim Reid

"I always did something I was a little not ready to do. I think that's how you grow. When there's that moment of 'Wow, I'm not really sure I can do this,' and you push through those moments, that's when you have a breakthrough." Marissa Mayer, CEO of Yahoo!

Introduction

In contemplating what my Meyler Campbell reflective essay should be about I considered a number of topics that have arisen over the last 12 months. I mulled over a number of them but questions that have kept cropping up and keep coming into my mind are:

- Do women really lack self-confidence?
- What makes, on the face of it, very successful women doubt themselves?
- What is the perception v the reality?
- How can women lead authentically?

During the last 12 months in setting up my MC coaching practice all my coachees have been women working in senior roles. Prior to this I have worked with both men and women. All of the women at some time or other during the work we have done together have had doubts and lack self-confidence in what they are doing and question whether they are talented enough to do the job they are doing, or the job they want to do. It may be that men also go through this on a regular basis, but I am basing my thoughts and views on my most recent coaching experiences over the last 12 months.

What is 'self-confidence'?

When we talk about 'self-confidence' what do we mean? There are a couple of interesting definitions, but in this context I will take the one of 'a feeling of trust in one's abilities, qualities and judgment' (Dictionary). In thinking about those words the two images of Self 1 and 2, referred to by Gallwey in the Inner Game of Tennis⁽¹⁾, come to mind. Self 1 is judgmental, the conscious teller, the thinking ego and maybe in transactional analysis terms the 'critical parent'. Self 2 is the doer, who has the natural abilities and potential, who in transactional analysis I would liken to the 'free child'. In observing these two at play in coaching I recall a conversation I had with one of my coachees.

Coachee 'I really want to go for this position, but I think they will probably look at me and think – what does she know, she has not got the experience to do this role, she does not understand our business, who does she think she is'!

In the dialogue that followed I explored the reality of the situation with her. I asked the following questions:

Do you have the skills to do this role?
Do you have the abilities to do this role?
Do you have the experience to have this role?

The answer to all of these questions was YES!

'Yes I do' – with a modest smile.

So my next question was

'Well then, what is holding you back?'

It was a lack of self-belief – a perception of herself that Self 1 was telling her about, when the reality was that she had already gained all the necessary skills and experience and had the natural ability to do the role, Self 2.

In recent research called Cracking the Code ⁽²⁾, carried out through the 30% Club / KPMG & YSC, one of the myths that they tested was 'Women don't get to the top because they lack confidence'. The research reality showed that risk alertness keeps women grounded in reality. 'Women are brutally self-honest about their skills and abilities when putting themselves forward for unfamiliar challenges. A forensic approach to assessing personal risk and return is a more accurate explanation than lack of confidence for women's career choices.' It is often said that men will apply for a role knowing they only have some of the required skill-set, whereas women will have all of the requisite skillset and still won't apply.

The self-limiting assumption

Another occurrence that keeps cropping up in the women I am coaching is their ability to hold a number of self-limiting assumptions.

In Nancy Kline's book Time to Think ⁽³⁾, she talks about 3 kinds of assumptions:

Facts – *'I am not the boss, he is' (objective)*

Possible-facts – *'The boss might laugh at me or think I am stupid' (partially-objective)*

Bedrock assumptions about the self and how life works – *'I am stupid' (subjective)*

The assumptions that I hear regularly are along the lines of:

'They / he won't want to listen to my idea'

'If I speak up at this meeting they might think my idea is stupid'

'I can't just go up and initiate a conversation with this person, they probably won't want to talk to me'

They are possible-facts, people might not want to listen to ideas, they might think an idea is stupid or a person might not want to talk to another person. The main point being 'MIGHT'. What are my coachees assuming of that 'might'? Also, what is the worst that can happen? Sometimes at this point just confronting what could be the worst that could happen helps unstick their assumptions and helps them move on. If it does not, we usually work on a plan to handle their worst fear and what triggers it.

I am sure men suffer too from self-limiting assumptions, but women seem to be particularly good at it!

Coaching women to lead authentically

A number of my current coachees who have either been promoted into larger leadership roles or are already in them have said with conviction that they want to find their own leadership style and above all they want to lead authentically. We then go on to explore what the word 'authentic' means for them. One of the dictionary definitions that you will find explains the word authentic to mean 'of undisputed origin and not a copy; genuine'. In a coaching context it has been really useful to determine with each of my coachees what their take on authentic is. They have used the words integrity, trust, modesty, honesty, listening, involving – but again what do these words really mean when they are translated to action? I have found a useful way of helping my clients to find their unique style is to use either a value profiling tool or qualities tool that determines values or strengths.

One of my clients did the VIA values based profiling tool and it showed that her top 5 values were honesty, judgement, curiosity, fairness and perseverance. She sometimes felt in a work situation that fairness was being compromised, not only for herself but also for others. We worked through the dynamics of each of these values, how they impacted on her behaviour, attitudes and leadership style. Honesty, being her top value, is admirable, but it could also get her into trouble, when she felt that she had to say exactly what was on her mind, even if it meant upsetting others or damaging her reputation. We talked about how she could use the value of 'judgment' to take stock and not let emotion cloud clear thinking, but instead come up with rational thoughts and views that she could voice. The values exercise really resonated with her and she has adapted her approach in leading her team and engaging with her peers.

Conclusion

In conclusion there is a clear role to play for coaches in helping women to build confidence and fulfill their potential.

A number of approaches can be taken.

Build self-confidence. by helping your coachee to understand their strengths and to play to those, rather than focusing on their perceived weaknesses. I have found a good way to do this by using a strengths profiling tool, I use Lumina Spark, and then working with my coachee to identify scenarios they will find themselves in where they can put these strengths into practice. (e.g. meeting, presentation, interview etc).

Deal with self-doubt. by testing those self-limiting assumptions. Keep asking 'what are you assuming here?' Test for reality - 'how do you know that?' Ask a 'freeing assumption' (Kline) – 'If you knew that the Board were really interested in what you had to say, how would you present this business case?'

Coach women to lead authentically. by working with your coachee to help her understand her values and how these might impact positively or negatively in the way she leads or is perceived. As mentioned above I use a values based tool such as VIA and then explored what those values meant to my client and how she might use them in her leadership role.

By deploying some of these approaches I have found that the women that I coach have gained a strong insight into themselves and have gone on to win that promotion, be recognised for the work that they are doing by being put on the succession plan and have been given great feedback on how they lead.

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Kim Reid

Kim founded Yarwood Reid & Co, an Executive Coaching and Strategic HR Consultancy. As a Coach, she works with senior executives to support them to increase their impact, resilience, effectiveness & performance. Prior to becoming a coach Kim spent 25 years in aviation & defence. She was Global Head of Leadership, Talent & Learning for British Airways, Group HRD for MBDA & a Divisional HRD at BAE Systems.

Thinking Space

Bridget Salmon

I have always listened well but do like to give advice, to feel I'm helping people. I have experienced a lot and tend to self-analyse so believe I have a lot to offer but still pride myself on considering the best option/path for the friend or colleague I'm advising. However on starting the coaching course, I was immediately struck by the strength of the non-directive approach and in particular Nancy Kline's 'thinking environment'. But over time, through working with my clients, I have come to believe that 'thinking space' is a more accurate description of what I aim for than an environment. Coaching is about giving the client space in different ways and that's how the 'magic' happens.

The SPACE I aim to give my clients can be defined as:

S	separate
P	pause
A	accept
C	contemplate
E	empower

S – separate

Coaching works because it allows clients a gap in time away from work, to stop and think through things. We are often so busy just doing what needs to be done that we don't consider whether there is a better way. By giving clients this space away from their normal work it allows them the time to properly mull through an idea or problem. One of my clients, who I worry often does not go away with any action points from our sessions, will say that she finds it hugely beneficial to be forced to think through things she normally avoids thinking about. She is experiencing the benefit of space away from work with a coach that challenges her.

P – pause

Nancy Kline is a great proponent of not interrupting others ever, not just in coaching sessions. I was inspired by this and have been trying this with friends as well as in coaching sessions. I was struck particularly by this remark from Kline, "is what I might say more valuable than what they may think", if not don't speak. So in my coaching sessions clients are given the space to talk without interruption and I'm comfortable with the space of silences while they do the thinking they need to do to come up with the best solutions. Often my clients will have what appears to be a lightbulb moment of insight or come up with a fantastic solution because I have simply allowed them to think. When clients seek my reassurance that they are not silly because the solution seems so obvious now, this is proof to me that coaching is working well, that I have enabled them to think clearly to draw out the ideas they've got in their heads.

With friends I have found that consciously not interrupting means I give them a better quality of listening because I am not thinking ahead to what I could say next. It slows down the conversation so it is more thoughtful and considerate which makes others feel valued and less stressed – they don't have to fight to get their words in.

Interrupting can be useful at certain times, e.g. if the client is rambling without thinking, but this should be done with a conscious plan for a reason and not simply for speed, to steal the spotlight, or because one is bored.

A – accept

When you accept a client's ideas and where they are at with no judgement and no agenda this gives them the space of detachment. They aren't crowded in with your ideas/advice but have the space to think up their own. I am happy to ask the difficult questions and possibly make some suggestions but am not attached to them. I have been greatly influenced by Jenny Rogers teaching on advice giving – "advice-giving leads to dependency" and that if you push advice people become defensive. I've realised that it's actually easy to be detached from my suggestions and not believe there is a 'correct' path a client should follow because each client knows themselves best, their situation and what will therefore work best for them. This is the ideal solution for them, not anything I might seek to prescribe. They may take up a suggestion I make but if the idea doesn't resonate with them they won't implement it so pointless holding onto it myself¹.

I've realised clients will only implement what they are ready to change, which is another reason to go with what they come up with and not try and push any agenda of mine. I could have the best solution in the world for them but if they are not ready to accept that and implement it I can only hurt them by pushing it. Better to back off and give them the space of detachment. This is the strength of the non-directive approach.

On one occasion I asked a client if she had any ideas on what to do about a particular issue she had raised and she asked if I did; I was very pleased to be able to honestly say I had none. I did not want her to think my challenge to her was masking an agenda of mine. I have been excited over and over by clients coming up with solutions that I would never have dreamt of but seem ideal for them and excite them. I want my clients to explore every avenue but wait to hear what they see in the space at the end.

C – contemplate

A specific space of silence which I think deserves its own section is the silence I give clients after they have had a new insight. Clients will often go quiet after something has suddenly struck them – either a revelation of their own or struck by some information I've given them. I will always wait until they speak again to give them as much space as they need to contemplate this new perspective. I believe this gives them the best chance of embedding this learning. It can be tempting, particularly if they seem to have had a breakthrough as a result of information I've shared, to carry on talking but I believe the client's best interest is served by silence and space to ponder.

E – empower

For me one of the great strengths of non-directive coaching, over training or mentoring, is how it empowers clients. As a coach I am giving them the space to come up with their own ideas and choose what they implement. They are not hemmed in by advice or feel constrained by what worked best for someone else. Clients own their solutions because they came up with them and this leads to a greater commitment to implement change². When a client can't wait to leave a session to implement a new idea I know I've done my job well.

For me visualising the space I wish to give my clients before a session helps me to prepare. I like to slow myself down so that I naturally want to pause to allow thinking and allow silence to contemplate. I consciously think about the client I am about to see and how I can empower them to come up with good thinking or action points with my full acceptance of whatever path they choose. And finally I separate them from their work so that they have the space to think.

¹ *Being attached to being right is something you do for your sake. Coaching is for the sake of the client.* Kimsey-House, Henry (2011), *Co-Active Coaching*, Nicholas Brealey

² *The value of choice and responsibility in terms of self-motivation should never be underestimated.* Whitmore, John (2009) *Coaching for Performance*, Nicholas Brealey

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Bridget Salmon

After a degree in psychology, I spent many years at Lloyd's insurance market, primarily in PR. I then moved to Hong Kong and changed career to work in the charity sector - manager of the CAB and on the board of several other charities. Having lived in several countries (originally from the US), I am experienced in transitions and cross-cultural working and like to coach others on these issues.

Coaching leaders through Character Development

Ivan Schofield

Countless books and articles have been written on leadership. A search for “Leadership” on Amazon.com yields 103,000 results! If you scan the titles and contents you might be struck by the same observation as me: that the focus of most material on the subject is about how to “do” leadership. There is very little on how to “be” a leader in the sense of character or spirit.

It is, of course, important for leaders to know what to “do” in a given situation. Coaching can help with this (not to mention the thousands of books!) but it is only part of the story.

To be effective over time, leaders need to be of good character; people whom others want to be associated with. Good leaders will always have the resourcefulness to work out what to do in any given situation. So, as coaches, we must pay attention to character development if we want to see durable and consistent improvements in our clients.

This idea has deep meaning for me as a coach. I want to coach my clients to be the kind of leader I would be proud to work for. This means many things but boils down to someone who:

- listens,
- nurtures a safe environment in which people can express themselves fearlessly,
- leads through the power of their ideas and personality rather than the power of their position,
- deals with tough situations with calm and grace,
- is able to attract and develop great people and get the most out of them
- has a sense of purpose; who doesn’t just do it for personal gain.

From my experience as a senior executive and as a coach, I have seen four character traits that all good leaders have in sufficient doses. They are: *Trustworthy, Connected, Authentic and Purposeful*.

The phrase “sufficient doses” is important because there is a great tolerance for imperfection in leadership. All of the leaders that I have admired have had opportunities to improve and that’s what made them likeable. To be imperfect is to be human and people want to follow humans not cyborgs. “Imperfect” is “just perfect”, if you like. Leadership coaching is, above all, about learning and continual improvement.

For the rest of this short paper I’ll explain what I mean by the four traits and then go on to explain some techniques for helping clients grow in these areas.

Character Trait 1: Trustworthy

Trust is one of the fundamental human emotions. In its presence we can create a safe environment in which people can express themselves without fear of being criticised, judged or attacked in some other way.

Without trust a leader can’t really lead. They may create or force compliance but interdependence, the glue that holds great teams and organisations together, cannot exist where there is an absence of trust.

Character Trait 2: Connected

Connection, or interdependence, is a fundamental human need. We are not equipped with a switch that can turn this off when we come to the work place! So, a critical role of a leader is to create the

conditions for interdependence and that starts with them being exemplary i.e. connected themselves.

Strong leaders connect effortlessly with others from 1-1 and small group interactions to much larger groups. They may have strong oration skills and use effective rhetoric but most importantly they connect at a human level. They look straight ahead, being their true selves whether they are talking to the cleaner, the receptionist, a service worker in a shop or the CEO of the company.

Some have an even greater gift. When you're with them, you feel like you are the centre of their universe. It's an incredibly powerful and flattering feeling to experience this with an authority figure.

Character Trait 3: Authentic

To be authentic is to know yourself well and act in a way that is consistent with your true self and values.

Human beings are highly and naturally perceptive on this point. They sense a lack of authenticity because it's hard to hide. If you know yourself well and fully accept who you are then you will not be not afraid to show yourself to, and connect with others.

One of the other great pieces of advice which I once received, and which I am not ashamed to give to my clients is:

"Don't be the leader that you think everyone wants you to be"

In other words, people don't want to follow a version of you that is pretending to be someone else.

Character Trait 4: Sense of Purpose

Having a sense of purpose is the pursuit of self-actualisation. Leaders who do it for the money, or for self-gratification, do not inspire loyalty in the same way as those who have a clear purpose in life, who think in terms of legacy and live by this in their day to day interactions.

In Maslow's logic there was a transpersonal component, the notion of serving society but this was more of a flavour rather than a central theme because of the behaviourist environment in which he operated. Today it is widely accepted that true self-actualisation requires a frame of reference "beyond self".

The antithesis of a self-actualised / purposeful life is that of a life governed by "affluenza", the attachment to outcomes and inevitable frustration that comes with this.

Character Traits and Performance

Focusing on these character traits creates the conditions for great leadership and therefore strong and sustainable business results. There is sadly, still a widely-held belief that, to get results, leaders need to be "tough", "competitive" or even "distant" from their teams so that they can make tough objective decisions about them.

I have generally found that "old school" leaders like this are less effective and the body of research underpinning the *Human Synergetics* Leadership Style Inventory (LSI) demonstrates this. It shows that people who demonstrate the constructive leadership styles of *Achievement Orientation*, *Self-Actualisation*, *Humanistic-Encouraging* and *Affiliation* are more likely to be happy at work, to succeed, to lead a lower-stress life and to have good people want to work for them.

Correspondingly, leaders who demonstrate more aggressive-defensive (*perfectionism, competitiveness, power orientation, opposition*) and passive-defensive (*approval, conventional, dependent, avoidance*) styles do not perform as well on these dimensions.

Coaching to develop character

Building Trust

Trust is the foundation of all relationships. I look at it in three ways.

Building trust through reciprocity

Trust is a reciprocal emotion. If John demonstrates to Jane through his actions that he trusts her then the chances are that Jane will trust John in return.

One of the most powerful ways of building trust is by showing vulnerability. This could mean publicly telling our story, showing emotions, admitting a weakness, shortcoming or failure or by simply apologising. By showing vulnerability we are demonstrating that we trust the other person and creating the conditions for reciprocity to do its work.

The power of unconditional love and trust

Trust is like love in that its power is in the unconditional nature of it.

Conditional love (or trust) is the most destructive emotion of them all, particularly when it is in the hands of a "parental figure" such as a leader. For example, the idea or perception that "I'll trust you (love you) if your results are good" can create extraordinary anxiety in individuals, not to mention (amongst many other things) "political" behaviour and backbiting as people seek to protect their feelings. If someone is on the team but there is an absence of trust then the trust needs to be repaired or the person needs to leave the team. Anything in between will lead to emotional suffering in some form or another.

The Trust Equation

A useful model to use with clients in exploring why trust may be breaking down is the Trust Equation (*Trusted Advisor Inc.*) which describes how "trust builders": Credibility (of the words we speak), Reliability (doing what we say), Intimacy (respecting confidential or personal information) and be undermined by the key trust destroyer, Self-Orientation.

Improving Connectedness

Difficulties in connecting with others can have deep psychological roots, some of which can be worked on through specialised coaching techniques such as NLP and CBT or deeper therapeutic work that I won't cover in any more detail here.

Often the most important steps in coaching is to help build awareness of current behaviours and habits. For example, a client may be hiding behind a veneer of self-doubt or may be allowing themselves to fall victim to "busyness" which distracts them from the more important business of connecting with those around them.

Beyond self-awareness, powerful techniques can be borrowed from acting or public speaking to encourage clients to create and hold a connection with their audience. Similarly, the powerful techniques developed by Nancy Kline in developing the *Thinking Environment* can be used to create this.

Improving Authenticity

The HBR Article "Discovering your Authentic Leadership" published in 2007 is a useful starting point with clients to help them reconnect with their life journey, values and motivations and then to see to what extent their behaviour and actions today are congruent with this.

One of the most powerful things a leader can do is to tell their story and relate it to what they are doing today and why. It gives real meaning to what the organisation is doing and implicitly encourages others to think about why they are really doing what they are doing.

Developing a Sense of Purpose

The first step is to explore the nature of "affluenza", the ego and how attachments to money and possessions, outcomes, past, status quo, self-image or expectations and fantasies may be undermining the client's focus on being more purposeful.

Developing a simple phrase or sentence that captures the client's life purpose is a powerful exercise. This may also translate into a Personal Brand statement for the workplace.

This process taps into a fundamental human trait, that Maslow called the self-actualising tendency. Over time, by shifting focus from outcomes and attachments to using purpose as a compass the client can find new freedom.

Summary

People want to follow leaders with good character rather than those with just good leadership skills. If our aim as coaches is to develop the autonomy and long-term success of our clients then we should focus a large part of our efforts upon this. This process is as personal for the coach as it is for the client. For me it means developing the four traits of trustworthiness, connection, authenticity and purposefulness. Other coaches may have a different view on what the traits are and how to express them. The most important thing is that it's meaningful to them and, of course, their clients.

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Ivan Schofield

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'Changing isn't easy' – Why unlocking senior executive potential is easier said than done

Jonathan Skan

It has become fashionable for large organisations to create cadres of so-called 'high potential' executives and then to focus resources upon their personal and professional development. Today, Boards and even Investors want assurance that there is adequate 'succession cover' underneath an Executive Committee, leading to ever more pressure upon business coaches to deliver.

During 2014, a colleague and I were asked to conduct assessments of twenty senior executives across a very international FTSE-30 UK plc, (average age, early forties). The aim was to clarify true levels of future potential and then to work with each individual on a plan to address areas of personal development, whilst also helping them to maximise areas of strength. Where business coaching was an appropriate support tool, we subsequently played a role in delivering this, along with other providers.

Assessing something nebulous like potential is tough for organisations to undertake on their own, particularly without external 'benchmarking'. It also not helped by an understandable reluctance to give valuable people bad news, never mind the challenge of gaining consensus on upward trajectory, in the face of different agendas. Ultimately, we concluded that only around 15% of those we evaluated were genuinely 'high potential' – the company's starting hypothesis was closer to 30%.

With the remaining 90% of the group, mostly categorised as 'medium potential', most had the capability to progress in time to Executive Committee level, but (in our view), had at least one significant behavioural development challenge that would impede them, unless they could overcome it. Whereas this came as no great surprise, we were nevertheless struck by how deep-rooted many of the issues appeared to be and thus how challenging it would be to address them, even with the help of a good coach – especially as about half of them had already worked with a coach in the last two-three years.

The challenge of getting down to the 'root causes' of these issues, prompted me to reflect upon what the Harvard academic, Bob Kegan, termed, 'Immunity to Change' in his 2009 book on the subject. In a nutshell, he concluded that achieving adaptive behavioural change is usually impossible without addressing the 'barriers' to change that he believes many of us have (sub-consciously) constructed, as a form of self-defence mechanism to combat individual fears. He calls these barriers, 'Hidden Commitments' and he believes that without tackling them and the so-called 'Big Assumptions' that underpin them, a sustainable behavioural change is almost impossible to achieve. I was initially sceptical of Kegan's theory - it is somewhat convoluted - but his approach provides a helpful 'framework' for some of the more challenging coaching assignments.

By way of an example, a development need we uncovered in around 25% of this group, was a tendency to be too accommodating. Not being able to say 'no', often coupled with a reluctance to delegate, led time and time again to someone becoming over-committed, working unsustainable hours and being unable to stand back and think more strategically, not least about their own next career step.

An unwillingness to confront people, is one issue here, but subsequent coaching conversations have also indicated that a deep fear of not being 'needed' lay at the root of this. Put simply, these people viewed being very, very busy as a vital way of proving their self-worth and without addressing this 'Hidden Commitment' (as Kegan would call it), not being able to say 'no' will continue to stop these individuals fulfilling their potential. Getting to the heart of this and delivering a measurable improvement is likely to take more than the standard six months coaching intervention we often see utilised within large companies.

We uncovered other instances where 'learnt behaviours' had become a 'roadblock' and where the 'root cause' went deep. One finance professional, for instance, was viewed as hugely capable, but also as lacking gravitas at Executive Committee level. In our coaching dialogue, she has revealed that she had spent the first 15 years of her career in a large financial services business, where she had had to blend in with a 'testosterone culture'. Although she recognises the need to adapt to a much more sophisticated environment, this has not proved easy, despite plentiful feedback – and a reasonable level of self-awareness. Getting to the 'Hidden Commitments' that lie behind this is taking time; meanwhile, the company is losing patience with the result that she is being 'pigeon-holed' into her current role, despite her talents. Were she to leave she would be very hard to replace.

This inability to learn new behaviours was also visible in another individual we evaluated, an ex-Partner from one of the major accounting firms. Although bringing technical capability, he has struggled to adapt to corporate life. The underlying issues appears to be his high need for status, coupled with a lack of ability to influence effectively across a multi-dimensional matrix, where there is ambiguity overlaid with organisational politics. Our hypothesis is that this person has a deep-rooted fear of not being 'in control' and that he will fade rapidly unless this is addressed. The organisation has left it up to him to decide whether to have an external coach and, so far, he remains unreceptive to the idea – probably because he fears it will be viewed by others as 'remedial'.

One more example of the challenge of addressing ingrained behaviours, concerns an individual, who was widely seen as being a 'poor communicator'. Our assessment revealed that her team often struggled to understand what she wanted, something not helped by her tendency to intellectualise everything and to do much of her thinking in public. Since then, our coaching dialogue has revealed that, as the only child of two academics, she grew up surrounded by intellectual debate and argument and was thus conditioned to participate in this as a means of gaining acceptance. After a number of coaching sessions, we are making some progress; she is now much more conscious of the need to rehearse what she says before major meetings and actively tries to use crisp, non-contradictory statements when influencing. That said, we have yet to get deeply enough into what is really blocking her – (in my view) a deep seated fear of not being right. It's taking time; something she's short of, given the huge demands of her role. Also, as is very common in busy environments, her boss is better at describing the problem than helping her address it.

Some of those we met, don't just need to make a behavioural change – they need to address something else first. To our surprise, a significant issue, (affecting about one quarter of those we appraised), was related to social background. Put simply, most of this sub-group were the first in their family to go to university (usually Oxbridge via a top Grammar School). A strong work ethic coupled with an obvious intellect has been enough to power their careers up to now but, to varying degrees, their trajectory had tailed off. One reason appeared to be a relative inability to identity with a role at the top of a large company, perhaps due to the lack of a family 'role-model' showing the way. Where someone's spouse shared their early background, this was even more evident. Although not short of ambition, many of these executives admitted to feeling a bit 'lost' at this particular point in their career; "I've done so much better than I expected; but what happens now...and do I want it?" was a typical sentiment. The key behavioural 'gap' here tended to be a relative lack of the sophisticated influencing skills needed at Executive Committee level and coaching will doubtless help this, but the intervention will also need to help them identify fully with bigger and more demanding roles and the lifestyles these imply.

Furthermore, this group from more modest social backgrounds, were often less willing than others to discuss areas of weakness openly – despite their obvious potential. This was often coupled with a relative lack of self-curiosity and a vague sense that 'soft skills' were much less important than simply working hard and meeting objectives. This is a significant coaching challenge, given that one of the key features of those who rise to the top of organisations is a thirst for self-insight and an ever greater understanding of personal development priorities.

Finally, in the case of two of the group we assessed, we came across one or two altogether much deeper issues. One had been badly bullied at school and another had endured a difficult family environment during his formative years. In both cases, issues (we suspect to do with self-esteem) had surfaced decades after the event, resulting in a relative inability to handle workplace conflict today. Often confrontation was avoided at all costs or, instead, dealt with 'head on' in a way that damaged peer relationships and labelled them as 'difficult' or 'emotionally volatile'. Addressing this doubtless extends well beyond 'traditional' coaching, but we found that the firm was reluctant to suggest counselling or even psychotherapy as a support tool, despite agreeing with our conclusion that it would help. This was still seen as a 'taboo area', even with the Learning and Development specialists. However, without such support, our sense is that both individuals will simply become frustrated, not least because they won't understand what's holding them back.

In conclusion then, if we assume that this group of twenty 'high potential' executives, is broadly representative of the senior talent pool across many FTSE 100 companies today, this raises concerns. The subject of 'potential' is still approached through a somewhat 'rose-tinted' lens and authentic discussions about likely career development remain relatively rare. Crucially though, many organisations do not appear to have a sophisticated enough understanding of what it really takes for someone to achieve adaptive behavioural change in the face of deeply-rooted and often opaque 'barriers'. Ever more complex and pressurised working environments make this even more challenging. Coaches need to be realistic with clients about the likely psychological 'depth' of intervention needed to make a difference and the amount of time this is likely to take.

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There's coaching ... and then there's *business* coaching

Aki Stamatis

Over my career I have become increasingly convinced of the benefits of the use of coaching and mentoring within businesses.

The belief that the success of any business is fundamentally determined by its people and their skills, ambitions and development – and yes, even their happiness – has gained much credence in this past decade of 'Emotional Intelligence' and 'Purpose'. The merits of helping people to better know and understand themselves and others, and better communicate both internally and externally, seem many and obvious to me.

Yet despite all the preaching of many business gurus many companies remain remarkably emotionally unintelligent. Why?

I suspect that for many the idea of truly releasing their people's potential is scary – a genie best left in the bottle. Coaching is too often seen as a remedial process – a fix for some failure in an individual or in line management – as opposed to its more potent use as a systematic means for a business to engage with its people. Great coaching brings out the hidden truths in people – and in businesses.

Yet equally over my career I have interviewed dozens of coaches but employed few. I have become convinced that many skilled coaches, even business coaches, often have little idea or experience of the realities of 'Business'. This is perhaps not surprising as coaching is an industry with few barriers to entry and with few universally recognised qualifications. Coaching is a broad church welcoming all – from the New Age reader of crystals to the executive-jet 'coach to stars and presidents'. It is an industry whose ROI is extremely hard to measure and where criteria for success are often vague. It must always be remembered that business coaching is at its heart a three-way relationship between coach, coachee, and the business (which is typically funding the process). Clarity of contracting is clearly paramount so that all parties are clear as to why and what is expected of them. In my view coaching still remains more qualitative than quantitative, more art than science – but for those who experience it either as coach, coachee, or business, it can be transformative.

It is this transformative power that I have wanted to bring into my own business, the Fourfront Group, through a number of initiatives designed to bring some of the skills and tools of coaching into the Group's day-to-day management. I am fascinated by the concept that many of the principles of coaching and of mentoring can be applied not only at the level of an individual but also to a business as a whole. Principles of active listening as opposed to telling, of encouragement and appreciation, of honesty and transparency, of equality, diversity, and freedom of expression are all as meaningful at a company level as at the personal.

As for the debate of whether to 'coach' or to 'mentor' ... much has been made of the differences in our Meyler Campbell training. Yet the pressures of the business world make these differences become much more subtle. Both coaching and mentoring are on the same continuum, and both use similar skills of questioning, listening, clarifying and reframing. I have come to believe that in a business context, coaching is at its most effective with a pragmatic dose of mentoring added – I think that is business coaching!

More and more is made of the influences of a positive culture and clarity of purpose on business success, particularly in a world where the new generations in the workforce demand so much more than stability and good pay. We now all live in a world of 'life slicing' and of shorter, multiple careers – a world of constant change. A key question facing all business leaders is what can be done to generate loyalty and so staff retention. This is something that has become very personal to me over the past year. Fourfront is known as a market leader, and much of that success is down to

attracting and retaining some of the best people in our industry. I see our future success as directly linked to our ability to manage the aspirations and ambitions of our talented people.

As mentioned above we have introduced a number of initiatives all involving coaching skills and tools to help with this. These include:

The Fourfront Academy – a dedicated training programme that the majority of our 230 employees attend, and which involves both generic and bespoke elements of training ranging from assertiveness skills, through to presentation skills and social media training, as well as harder-nosed elements such as negotiation skills. Coaching skills are now part of the Academy programme for all our managers, and increasingly part of our language. I hear the words ‘coaching’ and ‘mentoring’ in so many more discussions and appraisals.

Mentoring Programme – an internally run programme where we have trained a dozen senior executives as mentors and with some 40 of our most talented people as mentees. This has achieved great success with some 90% of mentees signing up again and a waiting list to join.

Women in Fourfront – our industry can be a difficult one for females. This ten-month programme includes four workshops focusing on confidence, communications, contribution, and credibility. This is supported by MBTI profiling, individual coaching sessions with external coaches, and a 360 degree feedback session.

NextGen – an initiative where our younger generations (under 30) can get together and input new ideas and fresh thinking into the Group as a whole.

Introduction of 360 degree feedback and an increasing use of MBTI profiling as part of our HR systems and appraisals.

Over the past year I have realised that I see business coaching as really about culture and change – it is at its best when acting as a catalyst. Coaching is not purely about self-awareness – it requires an active component to fulfil its transformative role so that good practice and knowledge are actually transferred. The above initiatives combined with The Fourfront Way (our values) provide vehicles for the skills embodied in coaching and mentoring to be brought into the business in both an effective and appropriate way. It is The Fourfront Way of aligning individuals and organisation.

I have also come to believe that for this power to be unleashed that coaching / mentoring needs to have strong internal champions within a business. There is a limit to what can be expected from an external coach who inevitably will have other clients and interests. It is difficult for any external coach to either give, or indeed be given, the time to ingrain themselves into a business or to get to fully understand that culture. Yet this seems to me to be a key part of the contracting piece. In our discussions with prospective coaches and training organisations I will offer them free and unlimited access to both myself and others in the business before commencing any programme, as well as providing them with an understanding of the overall business strategy of the Group. It surprises me how perfunctory an approach some coaches and indeed some businesses take to this key stage.

If the business is to truly benefit, then any external business coach needs to leave behind these champions for change. And the more senior the role models the more likely to succeed are the changes. Coaching will undoubtedly bring out uncomfortable truths and has a part to play in ‘speaking truth to power’. Senior management need to accept and embrace such conversations. I am aware that as Chairman and a business owner, my interest and belief in coaching has provided both leverage and protection to a programme that perhaps others may have had more difficulty applying. As with many other things in life, leading by example is important!

But perhaps the benefit of business coaching is more simply explained than by any complex theories. It is about the benefit of people simply taking the time to evaluate their behaviour and to consider their development. It is literally taking the time to think, and in particular to think out loud with someone who you can trust and who has your best interests in their mind.

As a business owner I understand that introducing this culture of coaching may not bring direct or immediately measurable results, but I believe that it can play a key role in building a business that is more honest, more open, more focused on developing its people and recognising their ingenuity. And that's just got to be a better business

It is just having the courage to let the genie out of the bottle!

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Aki is the chairman of the Fourfront Group, the leading workplace specialist providing consultancy, design, construction, and furniture services whose client list includes companies such as Vodafone, Virgin, Hewlett Packard & Lego. Aki is a great believer in the benefits that coaching & mentoring programmes can bring to business. He has introduced many key development and training initiatives to Fourfront that have achieved recognition both inside and outside the construction industry.

Team Coach - A Journey

Geoff Tompsett

Introduction

I have spent most of my career in the pharmaceutical industry and continuously worked with teams - functional teams, leadership teams, project teams but I think I have learnt more about the theory of team working in the last year than the previous thirty. I have often seen things go wrong in teams but I don't recall too many really successful interventions, sometimes the team will work their way out of a crisis and sometimes the team fails or disbands. My sense is that team coaching interventions are becoming a more accepted way of supporting teams.

As I worked through the Business Coach programme, I realised how much I had to learn to become a successful coach and my attention was largely drawn to 1:1 coaching. I think there are a number of reasons for this: it is the type of coaching that I had seen most often in my work; it reflects the Business Coach curriculum; and provides the essential building blocks for the coach. However, I was also enthused by the team coaching that I did come across in the programme; I think my interest was heightened because the issue of 'effective teams' was becoming a really hot topic in my day job. So, what is the day job? Well I am Head of HR for the European development organisation of a fairly large Japanese pharma company. Perhaps it would be helpful to share some context around teams within the industry, particularly development project teams.

Background

Pharmaceutical companies spend on average \$2B to bring a new medicine to market; usually more than two thirds of that spend occurs during the later stages of the 'development' process. These stages occur after a medicine has already shown the probability to have benefit to patients and then the focus moves to building evidence to show what dose has the best balance of efficacy and safety for a particular groups of patients (the indication).

Almost universally in the industry a project team is assembled to steer the potential new medicine to market. The team is cross-functional and usually multi-national - people are put together who may have had little or no interaction with each other before the project team was established. An effective project team is critical to bring the medicine to market, as quickly as possible and with the best indication possible and the stakes are high. Medicines still fail to make it to market at this late stage and others suffer delays that cost companies literally millions of pounds per day in lost sales.

Recognition of the challenge has led the industry to focus on the selection process: strong team-working, team-leadership, and collaboration skills are desired but all too often, in my experience, technical knowledge and experience are the dominant characteristics. I have also seen training interventions and 'boot camps' for project team members; however the transition from acquiring some new skills to sustainable behaviour change is not easy and is usually over-looked with a training intervention. In my experience most organisations underestimate the effort required to build a team; they tend to focus on the content and not on the purpose or the team dynamic.

Learning

I supplemented my learning around team coaching during the programme, which brought me closer to the work of Lencioni and Schutz and introduced me to Katzenbach, by picking the brains of coaches who included team coaching in their practices. So here are some of things that I have seen happen to teams and some of the ideas I now have about how a coach can help.

I think the first point to make is that very often the presented problem is not the real issue; for example 'we are having trouble with our decision making process' may actually be a symptom of lack of trust within the team or simply a lack of agreed purpose. Whatever the underlying cause may be, the fact remains that at times teams get 'stuck'; they sometimes lose their direction, their ability to take decisions and make progress. I found the chapter in the *Wisdom of Teams* (Jon R Katzenbach and Douglas K Smith, 1993), where the authors consider how teams get 'stuck' and outline approaches to getting unstuck again, really impactful.

I would be surprised if anyone in business had not had some experience of a team floundering when they lack or lose their clear sense of purpose and do not share common goals. Katzenbach and Smith talk about 'revisiting the basics' and they emphasise the importance of the team keeping the goal in sight. It is not always easy for a team to do this itself, an external facilitator can help to bring some objectivity, both actual and perceived, to the process. A coaching facilitator can draw input and concerns from all members of the project team, they are trained to listen, focus attention on each team member and use questioning to draw out the issues that may be undermining the collective purpose but also test the will or resolve of team members to commit to that purpose.

I now find it hard to consider any discussion about a team that is seen to be failing or not quite performing without thinking about the work of Patrick Lencioni (*The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable*, 2002). Lencioni's work is often at the heart of team coaching interventions; he lists five, interrelated, dysfunctions at the root of all team struggles: absence of trust; fear of conflict; lack of commitment; avoidance of accountability; inattention to results. Taking a team through the model, and facilitating a discussion on how it might relate to their team process can be a great place for a coach to start. The coach can use exercises around personal disclosure and sharing feedback about each individual's contribution to the team to build trust and encourage an atmosphere of constructive dialogue.

The third of my major reference points in the world of team coaching is William Schutz. The work of a team coach is often grounded in or adapted from Schutz's theory of Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation or FIRO (1958) and they use psychometric tools such as FIRO-B to promote the understanding of their clients.

FIRO describes individuals' preferences for satisfying three basic social needs:

- Inclusion - the degree to which we belong to the team;
- Control - our preference to have control and influence;
- Affection/Openness - our preference for warmth, disclosure and intimacy.

For each of these factors, Schutz considered to what extent we express the needs and to what extent we want to have the needs expressed to us by others. Exploring these needs with team members can be a powerful and valuable experience for the team.

I also supplemented my learning through the Business Coach programme with the Psychology Distilled lectures and the accompanying text book: *Psychology* by David Myers (2004). It was within the framework of social psychology that I developed a further understanding of two specific issues that I have seen manifest themselves in project teams: fundamental attribution errors and groupthink.

Fundamental Attribution Error (Ross, 1977) describes our tendency to ascribe behaviour to the personality of the individual and underestimate the importance of the situation in shaping that behaviour. I have often heard team members being described as 'aggressive' or 'defensive' as if this was an immutable characteristic of the individual; the accepted reality is that our behaviour is a response, we may have preferences and tendencies but we frequently overlook the role of the context and stimuli in eliciting that behaviour. The coach can help individuals and teams unpack situations and explore what is actually going on and what might be causing the observed behaviour;

they can help the team understand the importance of the situation, help develop an understanding of each other and coach team members to respond differently to the situation.

Groupthink occurs when the desire for harmony within the group, or perhaps the reluctance for disagreement and confrontation, prevents a realistic evaluation of alternatives. There are numerous famous examples throughout history and many more in everyday business. I have seen an expert project team's decisions, made after months of careful deliberation, come unravelled at the first hurdle of detached appraisal - the executive review. Individuals need the confidence to challenge the group direction without fear of repercussion or exclusion. The coach can often spot the risk of groupthink by the speed at which a decision is reached and the degree of constructive debate allowed. The coach can also support the development of the ability to challenge, can provide a degree of detached perspective, and can play 'devil's advocate' themselves or coach individuals to do so.

Conclusions:

Coaches have a skill set that is outside that normally present in a technical project team: active listening, skilful questioning and the other elements of the coaching toolkit; they also benefit from the objectivity and detachment that comes not only from their training but also their positioning, they are outside of the normal hierarchy and politics of the team.

Given the critical role of project teams in pharmaceutical development, the existing size of the investment and the risks associated with a project team not performing at their best, then I believe that there is real value in having an expert coach work routinely with their major project teams from inception to completion. The increased potential value vs. cost more than justifies the investment and will be an important support mechanism for the project lead and as well as the team. Maybe I see a great business opportunity.

Acknowledgements:

James Scouller, The Scouller Partnership.
Andy Gudgeon, AGCL Ltd.
Rose Padfield, The Padfield Partnership.

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Geoff Tompsett

Geoff is Head of HR for Daiichi Sankyo's Development organisation in Europe and has over 20 years' experience of senior management positions in the Life Sciences sector. In this time, he has coached people at all levels to navigate change and build for performance. Geoff brings a calm, empathetic style to his coaching but is consistently challenging his clients to explore new thinking and find new solutions. He is a Chartered Fellow of the CIPD.

Why Good Business Coaching Can Advance the Cause of Communicative Leadership

Emilio Galli Zugaro

In this essay I intend to explain why I think that non-directive business coaching can be a decisive tool to improve leadership in business. Beyond that, coaching can support Communicative Leadership and thereby help corporations to be granted public acceptance and a license to operate.

I have experienced non-directive coaching as a dynamic and powerful technique to improve leadership at large but specifically to put listening at the core of management and thereby allowing the interaction and communication between a company and its stakeholders to reach a more intense level and drive change within an organization. The ability of an organization to listen to its stakeholders, learn from them and make sure that their aspirations and needs are being addressed by the corporation has to be conveyed by its whole staff. This can only happen if all employees understand the company's strategy and if they behave accordingly. The staff has to interact with stakeholders in a sincere and truthful way.

But how to transform staff into these thoughtful ambassadors of the company? Changing the behavior of people is one of the most difficult tasks in management and it cannot be achieved through one single technique.

This is where excellent business coaching comes in. Providing a corporation and its leaders with the full array of coaching skills allows to address all characters, leverage diversity and match individual capabilities with the corporate goals.

In my function as head of corporate communications of a global market leader in financial services I have been engaged in actively coaching top management for the past two decades. But only the Meyler Business Coach Programme has opened my eyes on the enormous potential of the use of proper non-directive coaching to advance excellence in the corporate world and, finally, to help corporations fully earn the license to operate by their stakeholders.

As a manager, lecturer and author(*) I am engaged in advancing my profession towards a convergence of communications and leadership for the purpose of granting corporations a license to operate. I have called this "Communicative Leadership".

What exactly is Communicative Leadership about? It starts with Information, followed by Communication, Enablement, Empowerment and finally leads to Action and Change.

A good leader has to convey facts and inform staff and other stakeholders. But he also has to be able to engage in a true dialogue based on feed-back, active listening and frequent interactions. Then comes Enablement of the staff developing the skills and talents that allow them to take on an active role in shaping the corporation. The most important tools to enable staff are trainings and any kind of educational measures. This is a first area where coaching becomes an important enablement tool both for the executives of a company as well as for their staff. To forcefully drive change, middle management and staff have to be empowered. This process allows enabled stakeholders to take on a responsibility within the corporation and actively drive change, transform the input they constantly receive by listening and interacting with stakeholders into concrete action, impacting both strategy and operations of a company. Only empowered employees and managers can actively transform a company, its processes, products and services and thereby successfully cater to the needs of its stakeholders. Empowerment is not imaginable without good business coaching practice. I would go so far as to say that empowerment can only occur through a strategy of utilization of good business coaching, thus turning coaching into a mandatory tool for Empowerment and Change.

This is where good business coaching can play a fundamental role, by matching the talents, skills and goals of the individuals with those of the organization. This allows to respect and leverage the individual staff's and managers' ambitions, goals and values and to check whether they are in keeping with the organization's strategy and the other way around.

My journey through the Business Coach Programme has left a profound impact on both my own leadership as well as on my reflections on Communicative Leadership. Two examples may show this.

In a coaching conversation how to best motivate the staff, a manager told me that his energy levels were highest in the early morning. That's when he held his regular updates on strategy. The results of the employee survey, however, told him that as focused as he was in conveying the strategy, the outcome was not really satisfying. His coaching Goal was to understand why results were poor and how to improve them. Analyzing the Reality, it became clear that within his direct reports he had several single mothers, some of them only working part-time. The questioning that lead us to understand this was linked to my insistence of putting himself into the shoes of his individual staff members. "Imagine you are Sue. How do you feel at the beginning of the meeting?" He knows his staff pretty well and he could realistically relate to their life situation. I encouraged him to close his eyes and "become" every single staff member. I asked him about commuting, about the kids and he increasingly identified with their situation. It was then that it suddenly dawned on him how these meetings in the early morning put an enormous strain on his staff, i.e. because they forced them to find alternative ways to bring their kids to child-care. That's when we took a lot of time to discuss his options. He finally came up with almost twenty things that might change, some of them not really realistic, a couple pretty crazy. But he was relieved to discover that there could be many things he could do without giving in to his own findings about his energy level in the morning. He finally decided to move the meetings just by an hour. This still made him hold them at a high enough energy level for himself but allowing most of his staff and especially the single mothers, to be able to attend, focused and not any longer concerned about logistics for their kids. The results of the employee survey clearly showed the positive impact of this little change, prompted by him listening to the needs of his staff. And it showed me the power of business coaching and how to pull the best out of a client.

On the more general reflections concerning Communicative Leadership, I have enormously benefitted from learning about the GROW model, deepening the subject with the excellent readings part of the Programme and exercising it not only in the practice coaching sessions, but also in any other conversation, business meeting, mentoring session I normally have to do. So, I made it a habit during the "Reality" exploration within the GROW model to include questions on where the client's stakeholders stand, what I call "stakeholder listening questions". Prompting my clients to reflect on which constraints or potentials arise from their stakeholders motivations and mentality very often allows to address issues which appeared to be easier to handle than previously suspected by the client. The Business Coach program made me much more astute about how to ask questions. The power of an open question, together with Nancy Kline's listening techniques and the basics of NLP strongly improved my effectiveness. I discovered to have become a much better listener than I used to be. But what most struck me: I enjoy it so much! I already was a rather interested person, curious about people and their emotions. But the awareness of myself as a coach, my new questioning skills and the use of silence are starting to become a second nature and providing me with a strong sense of fulfilment.

The learnings of the Business Coach Programme have prompted me to engage the Human Resources function in my company in a discussion on the promotion of business coaching within our company. I now know: Business coaching is an integral part of Communicative Leadership and it can strongly support the strategic changes now tackled within our company. These learnings finally gave me the decisive drive to reinvent my career and resign from my present job in order to engage in business coaching on a larger scale, together with more intense writing and teaching activity as well as with strategic advisory to top managers of corporates. The Meyler-Campbell experience has energized me in a way I couldn't have fathomed and it inspired me to respond to a calling that came about in recent years and to strive for a new working identity.

*"Global Stakeholder Relationships Governance – An Infrastructure" by Toni Muzi Falconi with James E. Grunig, Emilio Galli Zugaro and Joao Duarte, Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2014

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