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The Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring

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Introduction

In this short introduction we aim to explore the nature of coaching and mentoring as tools for individual and organizational change. We will also consider the developing notion of coaching psychology and what this means for mentoring. Finally, we will briefly set out for the reader what follows in this edited title.

What is Coaching?

The issue of a definition in coaching is one which has been actively explored in the literature, in a way which is not found in mentoring. A host of papers have considered the question, some focusing on reviewing previous definitions, others offering new definitions. This activity reflects the immature nature of the domain and the desire to delineate boundaries and mark out territory for coaching being a different and distinctive intervention to other organizational interventions such as mentoring, careers counseling, appraisals, and feedback. The reality, in our view, is that coaching has many similarities and overlaps with many of these interventions.

Tobias (1996) suggested a more extreme position, arguing that executive coaching was really a repackaging of activities and techniques borrowed from other disciplines such as counseling, psychology, learning, and consulting. This position, however, is not typical, and most writers have suggested that coaching is different and distinctive, while having areas of overlap with many other interventions.

Several papers have reviewed and debated the nature of coaching and its boundaries with counselling (Bachkirova and Cox, 2004; Passmore, 2007), as well as the emerging domain of coaching psychology (Sperry, 2008; Stewart *et al.*, 2008). However, after a decade of debate, there is as yet no agreed standard definition of coaching. This diversity

may reflect both the multiple applications of the approach, with multiple clients and multiple environments, and more importantly a lack of a single body to pull together diverse strands and establish a single overarching definition.

Key early writers such as Whitmore (1992) and Whitworth *et al.* (1998) provide definitions that have informed the course of the debate. One of the most frequently quoted definitions is Whitmore's. He suggests that: "Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximise their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them" (Whitmore, 1992, p. 10). Here Whitmore draws on the work of Gallwey's *Inner Game* (1986). Gallwey notes in his own writing the critical nature of the self in enhancing personal performance; the "opponent within one's own head is more formidable than the one on the other side of the net." Whitmore's response to overcome the self, is to use the self as a tool for reflection, raising self-awareness and through this personal responsibility for success or failure.

Whitworth places a stronger focus on the relational aspects of coaching, which are fostered by the coach. She notes coaching is, "a form of conversation with unspoken ground rules of certain qualities that must be present: respect, openness, compassion, and rigour, our commitment to speaking the truth" (Whitworth *et al.*, 1998).

Both definitions are simple and widely drawn. In this sense it may be argued that they fail to delineate coaching from many of the other interventions identified above, although their wide embracing nature makes them attractive. In short these may be considered "big tent" definitions of coaching.

Other writers have attempted to be more specific in defining the nature of coaching, with the objective of more clearly establishing boundaries with other interventions. Grant and Stober (2001) in their largely Australian edited textbook of evidenced based coaching offer a definition: "A collaborative and egalitarian relationship between a coach, who is not necessarily a domain-specific specialist, and Client, which involves a systematic process that focuses on collaborative goal setting to construct solutions and employ goal attainment process with the aim of fostering the on-going self-directed learning and personal growth of the Client" (Grant and Stober, 2006, p. 2). This view of coaching can be contrasted with other definitions in edited texts.

Peltier (2001) in his US edited textbook of executive coaching psychology suggested that those trying to define coaching often start by stating what coaching is not: "Coaching is specifically not therapy." After a review of systems and consulting psychology, Peltier offers his own definition of coaching: "Someone from outside an organisation uses psychological skills to help a person develop into a more effective leader. These skills are applied to specific present moment work problems in a way that enables this person to incorporate them into his or her permanent management or leadership repertoire" (Peltier, 2001, p. xx). Peltier's definition reflects his background in psychology, combined with a desire to encourage the development of a stronger evidenced-base approach. This contrasts with earlier writers, such as Whitworth, who highlighted the strong intuitive nature of coaching.

As a comparison with another popular UK edited title Cox and her colleagues (Cox *et al.*, 2010) offer a "workman-like" definition: "Coaching can be seen as a human development process that involves structured, focused interaction and the use of appropriate strategies, tools, and techniques to promote desirable and sustained change for the benefit of the coachee and potentially other stakeholder" (Cox *et al.*, 2010). However, in the following debate they acknowledge that coaching is difficult to define. They note that definitions often seek to define coaching through reference to its ultimate purpose (what's it for), the type of clients (who uses the service), or the process (how is it

done). They note that many definitions offer little fresh insight, as their broad and all encompassing natures fail to distinguish them from other human development interventions.

For a more organizational perspective, Kilburg suggested that coaching needed to offer both individual and organizational benefits. He suggested the following definition of coaching:

Helping a relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. (Kilburg, 2000, p. 142)

Kilburg's definition mixes psychological practice with organizational consulting and has become a standard definition, frequently quoted alongside Whitmore's catchy definition, offering a contrast for readers in peer reviewed papers between the simple and more complex.

In reflecting on the research and publications over the past decade, Passmore and Fillery-Travis (2011) have attempted to offer a broad definition of coaching, which captures the three elements, "how, what and who for" highlighted by Cox and colleagues in their discussion about definitions. Passmore and Fillery-Travis suggest coaching is: "A Socratic based future focused dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (coachee/client), where the facilitator uses open questions, summaries and reflections which are aimed at stimulating the self-awareness and personal responsibility of the participant."

Passmore and Fillery-Travis suggested that the "who for" can be vaguely defined as a "participant", that is someone actively and voluntarily participating in the activity. The "how" of the process are the common techniques which underpin all coaching interventions, from cognitive behavioral to solution focus, and motivational interviewing to GROW. The outcome in this definition, too, is vaguely stated and is not goal focused, although this is included, but is instead rooted in Whitmore's view that in essence coaching is about self-awareness and personal responsibility.

In this definition the writers suggest, in using the term "Socratic dialogue", that the coachee already has within them the answer to the question, and thus the role of the coach is not socio-educational as it might be within approaches such as CBT, but is primarily facilitative.

What is Coaching Psychology?

Alongside the debate about the nature of coaching, a new debate has emerged with the growing popularization in the United Kingdom, Australia, and Europe of coaching psychology. Writers have suggested that coaching psychology is different from coaching, and by implication psychologically trained practitioners operate in a different way to coaching. Some of the coaching writers have alluded to psychological principles, while not making an explicit coaching psychology definition, for example Peltier (2001).

The coaching psychology movement has emerged from two corners – in Australia from the work of Anthony Grant, who's doctoral thesis examined the emerging phenomena

of coaching in 2001 and led to the creation of the Coaching Psychology Unit at Sydney University, with Michael Cavanagh in 2001. This unit was later supported by the emergence of an Australian Psychology Society's Interest Group in Coaching Psychology. Second, the work of a small group of coaching psychology practitioners in the UK, led by Stephen Palmer, but including Alison Whybrow, Pauline Willis, and Jonathan Passmore, who in 2002 formed the Coaching Psychology Forum. The forum led to the development of the British Psychology Society's Special Interest Group in coaching psychology. Over the following years, coaching psychology groups have emerged across the world.

In parallel with its growth in popularity, there is discussion as to whether coaching psychology or coaching psychologists are distinctive and if so in what way are they distinctive to others who practice coaching. At the heart of this is the question: "What is coaching psychology?" Grant and Palmer (2002) defined coaching psychology as: "Coaching psychology is for enhancing performance in work and personal life domains with normal, non-clinical populations, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established therapeutic approaches."

This definition implies that coaching psychology is distinctive from coaching. Further, this definition of coaching psychology makes clear that the intervention is one targeted at "normal" and "non-clinical" populations. While this may have been true in 2002, the spread of coaching has taken coaching into new areas, including health (Anstiss and Passmore, in press) and education (Van Nieuwerburgh, in press). Coaching psychologists now work with non-adult populations in schools, with clinical populations in hospitals and with a wide range of individuals in care settings. Second, Grant and Palmer's original definition suggests that coaching psychology must draw on models grounded in therapeutic approaches. This definition thus limited coaching psychology and restricted the development of this emerging approach. In response to these, and other points, Palmer and Grant updated their definition. A revised version of the definition for coaching psychology offered by the writers is: "Coaching Psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches" (adapted from Grant and Palmer, 2002).

While this deals with many of the concerns expressed about the original definition, some writers (including ourselves) have been concerned about creating an artificial distinction between coaching practice and coaching psychology practice, without evidence to support such a distinction. In fact research by Passmore *et al.* (2010) has suggested that there is little evidence to support differences in practice, at least within the UK coaching population – when comparing chartered psychologists with the practices of coaches from other professional coaching bodies. A US survey, on which the UK survey was based, did find some small differences in practice, but these were tiny in comparison to the areas of commonality between coaching practitioners and coaching psychologists (Bono *et al.*, 2009). In short, coaching practitioners and coaching psychology practitioners appear to use similar behaviors within their coaching practice.

This is not to say that there is not a distinction between evidenced-based coaching practice and some of the practices adopted by coaches who Sherman and Freas (2004) might have included within their "wild west" of coaching when they highlighted concerns about a lack of training, regulation, and maturity in organizations in appointing professional practitioners. In fact many of these concerns still exist today. Coaching still has zero barriers to entry, there is no regulation of coaches and there are frequent examples of poor quality coach commissioning by organizations, reflecting the immature nature of the market.

Given this evidence, an alternative approach to coaching psychology is to consider it as the study of coaching practice as opposed to a distinctive aspect of coaching practice itself. Passmore (2010) has offered the following definition: “Coaching psychology is the scientific study of behaviour, cognitive and emotion within coaching practice to deepen our understanding and enhance our practice within coaching.”

This approach to coaching psychology mirrors the definitions used for health, occupational, and other psychology disciplines and reflects a view that psychology is the scientific study of practice as opposed to the practice itself – which maybe evidenced based or not. Coaching psychology can study both and identify areas of excellence and areas of concern. We would argue that all coaching practice should be evidenced based and that while this is not the case at present, coaches should be asserting their voice to protect their domain from spurious practices, which in the long term will have a detrimental impact on the reputation of coaching.

This book has adopted this definition of coaching psychology. Coaching psychology is concerned with the study, critical review, and sharing of evidenced-based coaching practice, as opposed to a distinct or separate way of undertaking coaching with clients.

One issue not explored in this discussion is the lack of recognition around group and team coaching, as well as virtual coaching. The research on team coaching is at a lower level of maturity than one-to-one coaching, but there is a developing literature within the realm of team effectiveness (Mathieu *et al.*, 2008). Specifically, Wageman (1997, 2001) has made a substantial contribution, culminating in the publication of a theory of team coaching with Hackman (Hackman and Wageman, 2005). In addition, there is a small literature on virtual coaching. We have included both issues within this publication.

What is Mentoring?

The complexity of the debate on definition within coaching has been matched in mentoring. Jacobi (1991) identified 15 different definitions of mentoring across the education, psychological, and management literature. Other researchers have made similar observations, noting the diversity in defining this organizational intervention (Burke, 1984; Merriam, 1983). As with coaching, the debate on definitions has created a challenge in trying to clarify the issue of impact and also the distinctive practices within mentoring that contribute to successful outcomes.

Given mentoring researchers longer history, over the past three decades, the topic has broadened and developed, allowing the emergence of both greater clarity on definitions and acceptance of diversity of practice depending on the mentoring goal and the client.

Within organizational mentoring, there is broad agreement about the nature of the topic. As Ragins and Kram (2007) note, the term “mentoring” is popularly used to denote a relationship between an older, more experienced mentor and a younger, less experienced protégé for the purposes of supporting the career development of the protégé. The mentor may not work in the same organization as the protégé, but is likely to work in the same sector or bring a deep understanding of the issues and challenges faced by the protégé.

Eby *et al.* (2007) offer the following definition, which we have used for this publication: “Workplace mentoring involves a relationship between a less experienced individual (protégé) and a more experienced person (the mentor), where the purpose is the personal and professional growth of the protégé ... and where the mentor may be a peer at work, a supervisor someone else within the organization, but outside the protégé’s chain of

command” (Eby *et al.*, p. 16). What is of interest, since the seminal work by Kram (1985) and the emergence of a mentoring research agenda, is that there has been no discussion about “mentoring psychology” as a distinct or separate area of practice or research. We would hold the view that coaching and mentoring share many qualities and as coaching has looked to counseling, coaching should over the coming decade also look to mentoring research for insights into the design of mentoring/coaching programs and how coaching can contribute to individual development. Given this belief we have asked leading mentoring researchers to share their insights from three decades of work.

The Developing Research Agenda for Coaching and Mentoring

Our hope is that this title will be a useful resource for postgraduate researchers, students, and academics alike, looking for a comprehensive review of the literature as a starting point for their own research and for scholar-practitioners to gain a full understanding of the depth and scope of the literature in their area of interest, with the objective of enhancing evidence-based practice and stimulating further research.

The book is structured using four sections focused on coaching, mentoring, theories and models, and a final section on issues in coaching and mentoring. We recognize this is only one of a number of ways we could have clustered these chapters. Together these sections combine what are the most important questions, conceptual frameworks, and practices related to the coaching and mentoring fields.

The first section comprises nine chapters devoted to coaching in general. The aim of this section is to present the state of the art about coaching issues that have been studied from a psychological perspective. A set of scholars, researchers, and professionals in the area of coaching discuss different concepts considered relevant for a better understanding of coaching science and practice.

Chapter 2 of this volume explores the efficacy of coaching. In this chapter Anthony Grant discusses two main questions, about organizational coaching efficacy and cost effectiveness. The author offers processes for answering these questions, which includes the discussion and definition of other main aspects, such as, the meaning of coaching, the nature of coaching-related evidence, the measurement of coaching effectiveness, and effective methodologies for assessing coaching outcomes. Grant also presents some broad delineations of coaching and the possible future directions for the measurement of coaching efficacy.

In Chapter 3 Robert Lee discusses the role of contracting in coaching, balancing individual and organizational issues. Lee reviews the literature regarding contracting as used in the field of executive coaching to provide insight into methods for establishing productive expectations among the multiple parties involved in an executive coaching engagement. Along the chapter all aspects related to contracting are discussed, underlying the notion that good contracts among all parties are a requirement for good coaching.

The development of meaning and identity within coaching is the focus of Chapter 4. This chapter explores how issues of meaning and identity relate to coaching individuals and groups. The authors argue that meaning and identity are foundational to all coaching practice and that these topics become involved at some point in all coaching. Such issues arise for both individuals and groups at key times of change and transition: when there are endings and/or new beginnings; when a person or team seems “stuck”, or unable to move forward.

The importance of ethics is highlighted in Chapter 5, where Rodney Lowman discusses whether coaching is (or has the potential) to become a separate and distinct profession. The chapter moves on to consider the nature of ethics and its application by three bodies: the American Psychological Association (APA), the Canadian Psychological Association (ACA), and the British Psychology Society (BPS). Finally, the chapter offers a review of the small but growing list of papers which have explored coaching ethics.

In a more internal perspective, Bowman and colleagues present the neuroscience of coaching in Chapter 6. They provide an overview of some of the emerging science from neuro-psychology and raise questions about the implications for coaching practice. They argue that while neuroscience may be a new field, it has potential to be a useful ally for those engaged in personal development.

Mindfulness in coaching is the focus of Chapter 7. In this chapter Michael Cavanagh and Gordon Spence seek to answer several main questions about mindfulness as a construct or as an intervention. The authors examine the conceptual and definitional issues related to mindfulness, and present a model to assist in clarifying these. They also consider the potential mechanisms by which mindfulness may have its beneficial effects in coaching, presenting a theoretical model of these mechanisms. Cavanagh and Spence show the important contributions that mindfulness makes to coaching efficacy at the level of the coach, the coachee and the coaching relationship itself.

Coaching is also discussed from a developmental perspective. In line with this, Tatiana Bachkirova discusses developmental coaching in Chapter 8, presenting a new theory and framework for practice. She discusses two potential perspectives on developmental coaching, namely developmental coaching and practical approaches based on adult development theories. Bachkirova offers a new approach to developmental coaching based on re-conceptualization of the self that leads to facilitating change in coaching.

Gender issues in business coaching, is considered by Sunny Stout-Rostron in Chapter 9. This chapter reviews the contemporary literature relevant to gender as it affects organizational and institutional coaching. The author explores gender diversity and gender coaching, discussing the definition of gender; the challenges which gender presents; the wider research on the gender debate and coaching as a solution to build organizations.

Finally, and as the last chapter of this first section, Alison Carter and Peter Hawkins focus on team coaching. The two authors critically review the team literature and explore its relevance for coaching in group and team settings.

Section II of the book focuses on mentoring, with four chapters from leading authors around the world. The first chapter of this section – Chapter 11 – relates to designing mentoring schemes. Lis Merrick and Paul Stokes critically examine the design of mentoring schemes and programs, drawing out the lessons for future practice in relation to issues concerning the different modes of mentoring, in particular electronic and mutual mentoring.

Kath Kram and Chloe Tong provide a comprehensive review of the literature relating to the efficacy of mentoring in Chapter 12. The chapter introduces the reader to the various benefits of mentoring, exploring the benefits of traditional mentoring relationships for the individual partners, the protégé, and the mentor, and the benefits to the organization. The difficulties with the mentoring literature to date are discussed, followed by the variations on traditional mentoring relationships and their unique benefits. The authors highlight the need to consider the changes in contemporary organizational contexts.

In Chapter 13, Robert Garvey and Gunnela Westlander explore the issue of training mentors. The chapter considers the behaviors in mentoring that bring positive

outcomes. The authors discuss the main issues related to mentoring, with a particular emphasis on mentor education and curriculum for mentors. They highlight the need for training, recognizing the underlying complexity of these processes and the dynamic nature of organizational environments, where successful behaviors in the previous year can spell disaster in the following year.

Finally in this section, in Chapter 14, Rowena Ortiz-Walters and Lucy Gilson discuss mentoring programs for under-represented groups. They highlight the fact that although companies around the world and across industries are implementing mentoring programs to provide career, leadership, and personal development for employees, the employees have limited access to mentoring. For this, the authors argue that research and broader understanding is greatly needed.

Section III of this title focuses on theories and models with implications for coaching. Leading authors present different psychological theories and models, drawing on their expertise and previous publications. They offer insights into the origins of each model, its research and theoretical framework, and finally its application within coaching. In total, eight chapters on models are presented.

In the first chapter of this section – Chapter 15 of the book – entitled “Humanistic and Person-centered Approaches,” Jane Brodie Gregory and Paul Levy discuss how to provide structure and clarity to the notion of humanistic coaching, including techniques that can be incorporated into its practice. Some contributions from other psychological areas are discussed, namely the contribution from positive psychology, showing how coaches can maximize human potential of their clients throughout the practice of humanistic coaching.

Next, in Chapter 16, Sabine Dembkowski and Fiona Eldridge consider behavioral coaching. In this chapter the authors explore the influence and impact of behaviorism on developing effective executive coaching practice. For the authors, behavioral-based coaching is one of the most popular coaching models, although coaches and aspiring coaches are unaware of the theoretical basis of the models they learn about and apply, and of the consequences for their practice. This chapter aims to redress this balance.

Cognitive behavioral approaches are the focus of Chapter 17 authored by Stephen Palmer and Helen Williams. The authors review the historical development of the cognitive behavioral approach, detailing its philosophical routes and theoretical foundations, summarize the research evidence for the approach, detail the development of CBC in coaching and offer some examples of how the concept has been applied by coaching practitioners through new models and tools.

Tim Anstiss and Jonathan Passmore discuss, in Chapter 18, the motivational interviewing approach. After reviewing the origins, theory, and practice of motivational interviewing with clinical populations, the authors suggest that the approach has equal value with non-clinical clients where readiness to change is a challenge. They suggest that while the research with non-clinical populations is less extensive the approach will offer significant benefits in helping individuals prepare for change.

Michael Diamond in Chapter 19 presents psychodynamic executive coaching, aiming to explain the three major perspectives that underline this kind of coaching. Each of these theories illuminates different dimensions that executive coaches encounter relative to leadership, groups, and organizational dynamics. Along the chapter, the author shows how psychodynamic approaches to executive coaching offer consultants a better understanding and consideration of the impact of psychological reality on organizational roles and working relationships; and how it is intended to help leaders and executives by engaging them in authentic and reflective dialogue.

From another point of view, Juliann Spoth, Sarah Toman, Robin Leichtman, and Julie Allen, in Chapter 20, present how gestalt approach can create a unique approach to coaching. Along their chapter on gestalt coaching the authors explore gestalt theoretical approaches and their applications to coaching, with an emphasis also on gestalt coaching methods, that enables gestalt coaches to work at a deeper level and bring about powerful shifts.

In Chapter 21, Reinhard Stellar discusses the characteristics and potentialities of narrative approaches for coaching, showing how narrative coaching is representative of the new wave – or third generation – of coaching practice. The chapter is aimed to present coaching as a narrative-collaborative practice, an approach that is based on phenomenology, social constructionism, and narrative theory. Seeing narrative coaching as a collaborative practice, the author highlights how it leads to reflecting on the relationship between coach and coachee(s) in a new way. Stellar underlines the contribution of using coaching as a narrative-collaborative practice to the development of social capital.

Finally in Chapter 22, the last in the Third section, Teresa Freire discusses how coaching can benefit from the science of positive psychology, specifically in relation to questions regarding work, life, and organizations. The author presents the main concepts and approaches that justify the intersection of positive psychology and coaching in terms of research, methodologies, and practices, contributing to the definition of the positive coaching psychology field.

In the final section in this book, related to issues in coaching and mentoring, four chapters are presented. These explore issues of equal consideration for both coaching and mentoring such as evaluation, emotions, relationship, cross-cultural perspectives, and virtual working.

Chapter 23, by Siegfried Greif, deals with conducting organizational based evaluations of coaching and mentoring programs. This chapter highlights the main issue related to the evaluation of the effects of coaching and mentoring programs in organizations. Therefore, the primary aim of this chapter is to inform the reader about evaluation models and methods that meet high standards of quality and can be recommended for use in program evaluation studies.

In Chapter 24 Kate Hefferon focuses on the area of emotion research and its role in coaching and mentoring, from both the coach/mentor and client perspective, with special emphasis on the importance of happiness in the development of fulfilled individuals.

In Chapter 25, Geoffrey Abbott, Kate Gilbert, and Philippe Rosinski explore the role of cross-cultural themes in coaching and mentoring. They consider the differences of each and their cultural fit, as well as reviewing different models which may be helpful in deepening our understanding of culture within coaching and mentoring within organizations.

In the final chapter of the book *Niloofar Ghods* and *Camala Boyce* explore virtual coaching and mentoring. Virtual work involves working with those who are not co-located in the same space or are working with technology (i.e. telephone, email, text) as a replacement for face-to-face interactions. The authors note the particular challenges such media bring, and share the growing research in this area of practice.

Conclusion

In this title we have taken a strongly academic approach to coaching, which contrast with other popular texts such as Peltier (2001, 2010), Passmore (2006, 2010), Palmer and Whybrow (2007), Cox *et al.* (2010), and Wildflower and Brennan (2011), which each offer

a stronger practitioner focus. Our aim has been to offer an edited title, with leading international writers and critical literature reviews across a wide area of both coaching and mentoring, and through this to encourage stronger cross-fertilization between these areas of research, as well as to encouraging researchers to draw on the wider psychological (research-based) literature to inform further research and practice. We believe the development of evidenced based practice through high quality research is vital if coaching and mentoring are to achieve their full potential as tools to support individuals at work reaching their full potential.

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