

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE 32

# Coaching Perspectives

THE ASSOCIATION FOR COACHING  
GLOBAL MAGAZINE



## Coaching global dimensions

---

- Dr Siphokazi Joy Ntetha on the value of ubuntu-inspired leadership
- Christian van Nieuwerburgh: 'We need to expand our idea of what coaching is'
- Philippe Rosinski's Deep Dive into diversity and inclusion 3.0
- Intercultural coaching, linguistic inclusion and compassionate resilience



ADVANCING COACHING IN BUSINESS AND SOCIETY, WORLDWIDE

ISSN 2632-9735 (PRINT)

# How to 'be' a Coach Supervisor: A Certificate in Executive Coaching Supervision

NEW

Explore dimensions of coaching supervision, and learn how to model good supervisory practice, with this three-day, accredited, introductory programme.

**Beginning 22nd March 2022**

**CCE**  
ICF CONTINUING  
COACH EDUCATION  
ICF

Coach Consultancy | Coaching | Coach Training

T: +44 (0) 20 7127 5125

[www.aoec.com](http://www.aoec.com)



Taaka Awori



Stanley Arumugam

The Covid pandemic has redefined human life in an unprecedented manner. The globally changing context has invited coaching practitioners to re-imagine coaching philosophies, approaches, tools and techniques. The world speaks of Covid as the great equaliser, with no one country being exempt. The pandemic also highlighted the social inequities of a resource-rich Global North and a Global South, in access to vaccines and medical facilities.

It is in this dynamic global context that we share the rich diversity of perspectives in this issue of *Coaching Perspectives*. Coaching has the potential to bridge resource gaps and could be the equaliser in talent development. At the same time, we know that coaching is accessible to only a privileged few. This social justice issue underpins the philosophical enquiries in articles related to social transformation. **Jeffrey Wotherspoon** describes how a tailored coaching programme for young Black men in prison can facilitate transformational conversations in the justice system. Globally, we are also seeing stark divisions that could benefit from the type of healing that **Keith Merron** describes as he outlines how transformational coaching can enable clients to gain 'global consciousness'.

Supporting our clients to be more inclusive continues to be a key aspect of coaching in an increasingly interconnected world; but it is always fascinating to see how this plays out in different geographies. **Leah DeJenu** and **Marilyn O'Hearne** share their experience of intercultural coaching in Ethiopia, while **Dr Akshay Kumar** and **Dr Niru Kumar** in India describe how they have used 360 diagnostics, group training and coaching to support leaders to become more inclusive.

During the pandemic, many people all over the world have had to grapple with massive change and the immensity of loss, both collectively and personally. The significance of spirituality as a

coping resource and its meaning-making capacity is integrated into several articles in this edition. Each of them brings to the fore the myriad of ways in which the spiritual is experienced and expressed globally and invites us as coaches to lean into this diversity. **Susan Kahn** shares how coaches can use the Kabbalah, an ancient Jewish tradition to bring the transcendent into coaching. In the second part of **Christian van Nieuwerburgh's** interview with deputy editor James Bridgeman, Christian describes the Ershad model of coaching, rooted in Islamic beliefs, that he developed with Muslim coach Raja'a Allaho.

Even as we celebrate the breadth of coaching as it is practised in different geographies and spaces, we are reminded of common angst that comes from simply being human. The power of coaching to support clients in addressing these common challenges is illustrated in **Sonia Mayor's** piece on impostor syndrome and its relation to organisational culture. **Lion Goodman** shares a process for identifying and changing a client's limiting beliefs.

As African coaches ourselves, we are witnessing coaching growing and evolving to respond to the unique and diverse needs of our continent. This gives us a glimpse at the potential of the global dimensions of coaching. It is exciting and inspiring. Recently, South Africa and the world lost an icon of human rights, compassion, spirituality and leadership in the being of Archbishop Desmond Tutu. The 'Arch', as he was fondly known, reminded us of our collective consciousness and capability as human beings, through the African notion of ubuntu. Coaching, in a globally disparate world, can be one of the tools of social, economic, spiritual and political transformation.

**Taaka Awori and Stanley Arumugam**  
Guest editors

# CONTENTS

JANUARY 2022 | ISSUE 32

## COACHING LEADERSHIP

- The value of ubuntu-inspired leadership** 6  
Dr Siphokazi Joy Ntetha
- The elephant and the mouse** 10  
Dr Akshay Kumar and Dr Niru Kumar
- The coaching industry takes to the global stage** 14  
Priya Tandon

## COACHING IMPACT

- Impostor syndrome: it's not just about you!** 16  
Sonia Mayor
- From prison to the boardroom** 18  
Jeffrey Wotherspoon

## DEEP DIVE

- Diversity and inclusion 3.0** 22  
Philippe Rosinski

## COACHING IN CONTEXT

- Lessons learned from intercultural coaching** 28  
Leah Dejenu and Marilyn O'Hearne
- The Kabbalah in coaching** 30  
Susan Kahn
- Reflections from the DACH region** 32  
Frida Bruhn and Geoffrey Matthews

## INTERVIEW

- James Bridgeman speaks to Christian van Nieuwerburgh** 34

## EMERGING TRENDS

- Spirituality begins with knowing oneself** 38  
Judith Cardenas and Bernard Rochon
- Diversity and inclusion, but better** 40  
Eileen Lee Lavergne
- Compassionate resilience: a meeting of elite sport and coaching mindsets** 42  
Laurence Cassøe Halsted

## THE WORKSHOP

- How to identify your clients' limiting beliefs** 44  
Lion Goodman
- The coach's marketing journey** 46  
Simon Batchelar and Frances Khalastchi
- Goal-setting with clients** 48  
Dr Badri Bajaj

## COLUMNS

- Crying in coaching** 49  
Marie Faire
- How transformational coaching helps heal the world** 50  
Keith Merron

## RESEARCH

- Linguistic inclusion in international teams** 52  
Dr Alex Morgan

## COACHING EXCELLENCE

- What type of coaching credentials consumer are you?** 54  
Daniel Doherty, Hannah Cleaton-Roberts, Kat Hutchings and Jeremy Lazarus
- Supervision as a universal investment** 58  
Banu Uzkut Onuk

## REVIEWS

- Leadership Coaching in China** 61  
Reviewed by Clare Manning
- The Coaches' Handbook, by Jonathan Passmore** 62  
Reviewed by Sue Stockdale

### Editorial team

**Executive editor:** Hetty Einzig  
editor@associationforcoaching.com  
**Deputy editor:** James Bridgeman  
james@associationforcoaching.com  
**Deputy editor:** Clare Manning  
clare@associationforcoaching.com  
**Production editor:** Cameron Harvey-Piper  
cameron@associationforcoaching.com  
**Design:** www.martinwilliamsondesign.com  
**Photographer:** Fabio Grassi www.fabiograssi.com

### Editorial board

Hetty Einzig - Executive editor, Coaching Perspectives, Coaching, leadership and training consultant, and author  
Katherine Tulpa - CEO, AC, Co-founder and CEO, Wisdom8  
Philippe Rosinski - MD, Rosinski & Company  
Stanley Arumugam - Independent consultant and coaching psychologist, Johannesburg, South Africa  
Geoffrey Abbott - Director, Executive Coaching Programs, Graduate School of Business, Queensland University of Technology  
Taaka Awori - Managing director, Busara Africa

Sherry Harsch-Porter - Porter Bay Insight  
Martha Miser - Aduro Consulting LLC

### Commissioning editors

Stanley Arumugam - Africa  
Taaka Awori - Africa  
Angela Wright - North America  
Sarah Tennyson - North America  
Michael Cullen - Canada

### Membership

The AC is an inclusive body for the coaching profession, not just coaches. There is full array of membership types on offer, including for coaches, providers of coaching and coach training, academic institutions, not-for-profits and large global organisations or corporates that are building coaching cultures. Each type of membership offers its own type of benefits and services. Further details are available here at [bit.ly/ACmembership](http://bit.ly/ACmembership)

**For membership enquiries:** members@associationforcoaching.com

### AC membership includes discounts for:

**Coaching at Work**  
AC members receive 20% discount on the Coaching at Work printed magazine subscription or 10% on a digital subscription.

**People Alchemy**  
An easy-to-use online resource providing practical advice, from subject matter experts on over 130 management topics.

### Association for Coaching Supervisors

An association dedicated to promoting the understanding and use of coaching supervision amongst coaches, mentors and organisations.

### Professional Indemnity Insurance

AC members receive preferential rates from the following organisations:

**Howden Professionals** - covers UK and ROI members only.



### Getting involved in the AC

We are always happy to hear from people who are interested in volunteering. To find out more please visit [bit.ly/ACinvolve](http://bit.ly/ACinvolve)

### Share your thoughts with us

Follow us on Twitter @ACoaching and join in the coaching conversations!

### Interested in contributing?

If you'd like to discuss submitting an article or review, please get in touch with us at [editor@associationforcoaching.com](mailto:editor@associationforcoaching.com). We welcome your ideas, submissions and feedback.

### Association for Coaching

Golden Cross House  
8 Duncannon Street  
London WC2N 4JF UK  
[enquiries@associationforcoaching.com](mailto:enquiries@associationforcoaching.com)  
Tel: +44 (0) 333 006 2676  
[www.associationforcoaching.com](http://www.associationforcoaching.com)

**Oxygen** - covers UK, Ireland and most of Europe though the pricing for this will be different.  
[www.oxygeninsurance.com](http://www.oxygeninsurance.com)

### Towergate Professional Risks

**Westminster Indemnity Ltd** - covers worldwide excluding US and Canada  
*Inclusion of these offers does not imply endorsement by the AC. Members should satisfy themselves about the goods/services on offer.*

**The views and opinions expressed in this magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the policy, position or view of the Association for Coaching or its members, nor the Coaching Perspectives editorial board or team**

Published by the Association for Coaching

*whole, and what happens to the whole, happens to the individual.’<sup>v</sup>*

Similarly in the USA, Henry Mintzberg and colleagues, in their article *Beyond Selfishness*, emphasise the importance of community; they argue that organisations are essentially communities of human beings rather than of human resources, and proposes the term ‘communityship’ to describe how leadership should be about building community through a sense of engaged management and care.<sup>vi</sup>

The behavioural application of the ubuntu philosophy is characterised by five values: dignity, respect, solidarity, compassion and thriving. These values acknowledge the socio-economic, political and ecological landscape where the human is situated, and offer coaches a starting point for fostering ubuntu-inspired leadership. When the human is seen in context, we learn that how people lead is suffused with values, language, beliefs, rituals and artefacts.<sup>vii</sup> Thus, amidst the magnitude of disruption to work, workers and the workforce, a responsible leader also appreciates compounding contextual issues such as: displaying care to the people in their business; rewiring cultures to give people a sense of safety and belonging; rebuilding resilience in teams; driving innovation through cultures that leverage equality, diversity and inclusion; achieving shared prosperity in the rise of the sharing economy; and instilling hope in society as a key success indicators in order to make business useful to society, and humans useful to business.

**Facilitating an *indaba* as a leadership meta-skill:** *Indaba* is a system of inclusive dialogues to hear the concerns of all community stakeholders. CEO ‘town halls’ and other one-way communications are useful for informing staff of the state of the business, but fall short in getting feedback from the community. Coaches can help leaders learn the skill to hold space (facilitate) for more ‘democratic’ conversations, to better understand the context. This can help teams generate transparency and trust, and shared understanding of current realities, learning together through collective sense-making and sense-giving (which is particularly useful during systemic disruptions).

## 2. UBUNTU FUNDAMENTAL TWO: THE HUMAN SEEKS MEANINGFUL RELATIONSHIPS AND MEANINGFUL CONNECTION

This fundamental puts a spotlight on fostering symbiotic relationships and connecting and engaging towards collective goals, drawing our attention to the rules of engagement and how the leader relates within the community. An ex-colleagues at Deloitte further argue that:

*‘... leading a social enterprise is about recognising that, while businesses must generate a profit and deliver a return to shareholders, they must do so while also improving the lot of workers, customers and the communities in which we live.’*

From the Global North to the Global South, organisations have been challenged with intensifying economic, social and political macro pressures to reinvent themselves. The global upheaval brought about by the current pandemic is alone a poignant illustration of how business and society are intricately linked. This synergy is understood by organisations that operate as ‘social enterprises’ to drive a mission that combines revenue growth and profit-making with the need to respect and support their environment and stakeholders. Through this lens, business leaders are challenged with the added responsibility to engage with work differently and manage what are usually seen as competing priorities: business and society.

Deloitte’s 2021 Global Human Capital Trends report argues that the organisations that will thrive in the future are those that tell a greater story of our humanness.<sup>i</sup> This article offers a leadership coaching approach inspired by *ubuntu*, which can be useful in coaching business leaders with a mindset that appreciates our human interconnectedness – even in business. Ubuntu offers a worldview, philosophy, human quality and norm for fostering a more humane way of leading. It is often explained through the aphorism ‘I am because we are’: in other words, this means a person is a person through other persons.

The late Archbishop Desmond Mpilo Tutu further explained that, at a deeper level, this implies that my humanity is bound up inextricably with yours: when I dehumanise you, I inexorably dehumanise myself.<sup>ii</sup> Tutu, a Nobel Peace Prize winner for his leadership role in the opposition to apartheid in South Africa, will be remembered as one of the greatest advocates and writers of ubuntu. This philosophy is not exclusive to Africa: it has been in our social fabric for centuries helping society thrive. Ubuntu offers a powerful frame of reference and a way of talking about the interdependence of social actors within the leadership practice that bridges the ‘individual’ and the ‘collective’.<sup>iii</sup> This mindset essentially shares the responsibility for reinventing businesses to reflect the interests of all the humans associated with them. This article discusses three fundamentals of how ubuntu can strengthen the coaching discourse to support business leaders.

## 1. UBUNTU FUNDAMENTAL ONE: THE HUMAN IS ALWAYS IN CONTEXT

Ubuntu as a philosophy and way of life has held society together through its beliefs and practices, which have consequently put the person at the centre of all things.<sup>iv</sup> It is the acknowledgement of a deeper sense of interdependence and the adoption of a mindset where success is the achievement of harmony amongst all living things, including our planet. An ubuntu context is clarified by John Mbiti, one of the seminal authors:

*‘An individual within a community that has ubuntu is fully conscious of their own being, responsibilities, and privileges in relation to other people and the greater whole. There is an awareness that what happens to the individual, happens to the*

# THE VALUE OF UBUNTU-INSPIRED LEADERSHIP

Dr Siphokazi Joy Ntetha shares her rich experience of ubuntu-inspired leadership and invites us to consider how coaches can encourage leaders to consider a frame for shared heroism – for the benefit of society and the planet at large.

Building and maintaining symbiotic relationships is at the heart of ubuntu. It is the acknowledgment that we must live together in mutual interdependence. Leading the ubuntu way acknowledges that leaders do not lead alone, but as part of a larger network of relationships of influence. This challenges the common conception that leadership is something done by the leader to the follower – who is helpless and unable to influence. It gives back agency to all actors and requires everyone to play a role in making meaningful contributions together. This has the potential to scale our collective contribution to the world in an interconnected way.

*Ubuntu is often explained through the aphorism 'I am because we are', which means a person is a person through other persons.*

**Being of service as an espoused leadership competence:** In the era of the pandemic and subsequent disruptions, author and Harvard programme director Eric McNutty argues that there is still room for business leaders to play a more positive role in shaping life after the pandemic, and that 'rising to the part of hero requires intentional choices to put some measure of self-interest aside in order to contribute to a greater good.'<sup>viii</sup> When coaches draw on driving competencies of servant leadership, the mental shift is less on the self as the hero who needs to have all the solutions, but rather on the self as a responsible human being who wants to make a positive contribution in unison with others. Deep listening, respect for others, empathy, healing, stewardship, empowerment and building community are some of the shared competencies between servant and ubuntu-inspired leadership that coaches can highlight.<sup>ix</sup> Ubuntu acknowledges that leadership can occur outside of formal leadership structures, through unbounded organising among people who identify with each other. The coaching emphasis is then less on building individual heroes that come to save us, and more on finding the responsible leader within each of us to serve towards collective goals.

### 3. UBUNTU FUNDAMENTAL THREE: AS THE HUMAN SHARES LEADERSHIP, SHE DISTRIBUTES POWER AND SHARES OWNERSHIP

In essence, ubuntu is about sharing leadership. The activist and scholar Mary Parker Follett, in her book *The Creative Experience*, as early as 1924 wrote:

*'Leadership is not defined by the exercise of power but by the capacity to increase the sense of power among those led.'*

*The most essential work of the leader is to create more leaders.'*<sup>x</sup>

This is a post-heroic view of leadership arguing that leadership is best conceived as a group quality: a set of functions to be carried by the collective, as opposed to a fixed title exclusive to the select few at the top. A leadership study done in the Global South echoed this and argued that leadership is most useful when it: (a) is a responsibility that all people, at any level in the community, can hold; (b) operates with greater self-awareness; (c) is an inherently relational process; and (d) is in the service of the community.<sup>iii</sup> I have worked with client organisations that drive programs and initiatives such as 'The titleless leaders' and 'Leading from every chair' in an attempt to embed this view in how they do business. This becomes an opportunity to also invite more diversity in leadership, where organisations can be intentional about including more women, young people, introverts and so on – people who traditionally have been excluded from the leadership practice.

Deepening self-regulation as a leadership art: Ubuntu requires leaders to be more self-regulating in the context of co-leading – a more fluid practice where the typical leader can be led by the typical follower. By de-monopolising leadership, we increase the sources and voices of influence in organisations beyond just one leader. Sharing leadership supports the wider network of influence for improved connection and engagement, requiring the titled leader to acknowledge the presence of other leadership actors, and the need to empower as a part of their leadership. Self-regulation is part of emotional intelligence. A case study I conducted among business leaders in South Africa found that the act of sharing leadership has the tendency to help leaders self-regulate. Given established power structures, titled leaders still have the responsibility to initiate sharing leadership through various behaviours.

Empirical data suggests that coaches can focus on helping co-leaders by:

- Fostering discursive environments that make it safe for others to lead;
- Relinquishing one's role as ultimate decision maker, and trusting others to make the right decision;
- Providing the necessary resources and 'sponsorship' for others to lead;
- Embedding rich feedback loops within the system;
- Approaching leadership as a learning opportunity that involves being kind to mistakes and failures.<sup>xi</sup>

*Leading the ubuntu way acknowledges that leaders do not lead alone, but as part of a larger network of relationships of influence.*



As we navigate the complexities between business and society, and the fundamental threat of true collectivism, I leave you with this personal reflection that I came to in 2018 after studying ubuntu for three years, and one which still rings true for me today:

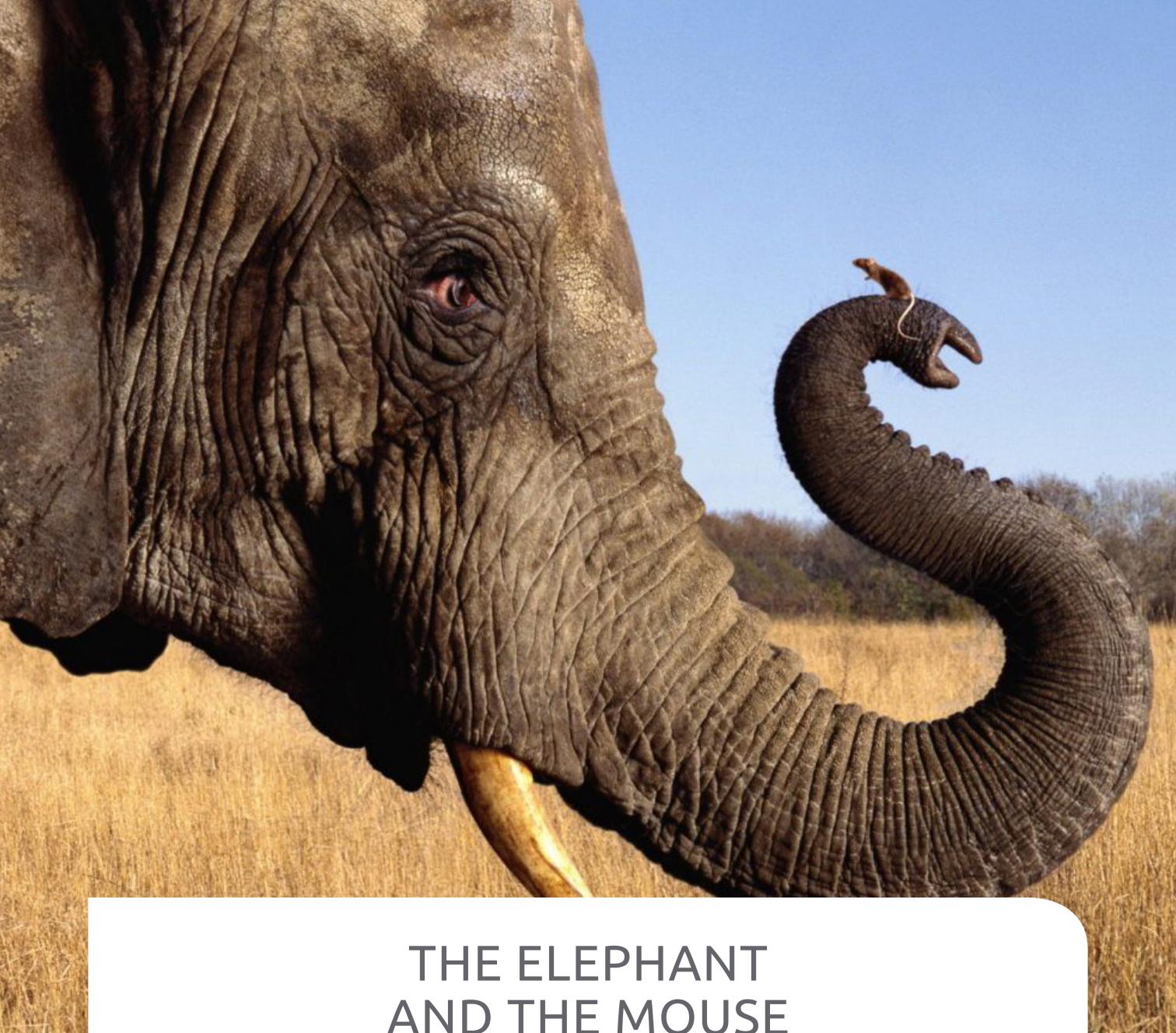
The world needs heroes, a multiplicity of them. In the 'I am because we are' ubuntu philosophy, the 'I' of the individual leader is still relevant, hence the importance of individual leadership coaching. However the 'I' matters in relation to the wellbeing of the collective, and the planet. The greatest challenge for coaches is to use ubuntu as a powerful frame for shared heroism to find a more positive place in the world of business – to go beyond self-interest and control, and towards believing in and supporting others' potential to lead and share the responsibility of making meaningful contributions to society at large.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Siphokazi Joy Ntetha is an award-winning psychologist on a mission to humanise business and other spaces she cares about. She is currently the chief visionary and healer at The Nomalanga Tribe, a healing start-up organisation focused on helping leaders invest human energy to work in a more regenerative manner towards collective and holistic wellbeing. Her scholar-practitioner approach to her work comes from her previous experience as a management consultant, Fulbright Scholar and her role as chief of staff to two Deloitte consulting CEOs. Siphokazi has a deep passion for contributing towards a brighter future for Africa, her people and beyond.

- i. deloitte.com/us/en/insights/focus/human-capital-trends.html
- ii. Tutu, D, M (1999). *No future without forgiveness*. Doubleday.
- iii. Bolden, R., & Kirk, P. (2009). 'African leadership: Surfacing new understandings through leadership development.' *International Journal of Cross Cultural Management*, 9(1), 69-86. doi:10.1177/1470595808101156
- iv. Nzimakwe, T.I. (2014). *Practising Ubuntu and leadership for good governance: the South African and continental dialogue*.
- v. Mbiti, J. S. (1989). *African Religions and Philosophy*, 2nd edition, Heinemann, Oxford
- vi. Mintzberg, H., Simons, R., & Basu, K. (2002). *Beyond Selfishness*. MIT Sloan Management Review, 44(1), 67. Retrieved from sloanreview.mit.edu/article/beyond-selfishness/
- vii. Mangaliso, M. P. (2001). 'Building competitive advantage from Ubuntu: Management lessons from South Africa'. *The Academy of Management Executive*, 15(3), 23-33. doi:10.5465/ame.2001.5229453
- viii. McNutty, E/ (2020). 'Leading through Covid-19'. *MIT Sloan Management Review*. Retrieved from sloanreview.mit.edu/article/leading-through-covid-19/
- ix. Brubaker, T. A. (2013). 'Servant leadership, ubuntu, and leader effectiveness in Rwanda'. *Emerging Leadership Journeys*, 6(1), 114-147.
- x. Follett, M. P. (1924). *The Creative Experience*. New York Longmans, Green and Co.
- xi. Ntetha, S. J. (2018). *A small business case study of focused and distributed leadership hybridity in South Africa*. Theses and Dissertations. 1023.



## THE ELEPHANT AND THE MOUSE

Dr Akshay Kumar and Dr Niru Kumar invite us to consider the interactions between dominant and non-dominant groups, in order to help leaders and their workforces embrace wellbeing and inclusion in a transformational, holistic way.

Imagine a room with a mouse and an elephant in it. If you are the elephant in the room, how much do you need to know about the mouse to survive? Not much. Your massive foot can trample the mouse with one step. However, if you are the mouse in the room, how much do you need to know about the elephant? Just about everything. You need to be able to predict its movements, know its habits and anticipate its rituals if you wish to survive, thrive and not

be trampled by one accidental step. The elephant knows almost nothing about the mouse, while the mouse survives by knowing everything about the elephant.

Herein we suggest, lies the dynamics between the dominant and non-dominant groups in the workplace. Dominant groups include those who usually enjoy more economic and social advantages in

society. They set the status quo, the rules and parameters for what is considered normal. This confers a great deal of privilege on the dominant group. In the workplace, there are norms and ways of being that come naturally to the dominant group, yet for a diverse team to truly thrive the dominant group must become aware that their experiences are not everyone's reality. They must be able to foster an environment where the non-dominant groups can thrive too. If we do not consciously include, almost inevitably we unconsciously exclude.

One of the positive fallouts of the Covid-19 pandemic has been that topics like empathy, authenticity and psychological safety have come right to the forefront of workplace discussions. Increasingly they are seen as key leadership competencies. If we really go to the heart of the matter, they are the exact values that will lead to inclusion and emotional wellbeing in the workplace: something that has been starkly missing in the past.

All over the world, the corporate has been a very alluring force, and especially in India. It provided glamour, even luxury, which had not been witnessed by the country's average population. But behind the metallic glitter was cutthroat competition, a mad race for deliverables, lack of boundaries between work and life, and harsh judgements. This eventually led to immense psychological stress and burnout; and it not only affected the professional but also the personal lives of people. Measures were needed.

One of the biggest factors leading to such stress in the workplace is where people are unable to be themselves at work because of the fear of judgements and are forced to fit in at the cost of comfort and authenticity. Inclusion has become a buzzword in the business world, with more and more organisations realising its business value; but are things really changing at the ground level?

There is robust data available on why inclusive strategies in organisations make business sense. Non-profit group Catalyst states that organisations that have higher gender diversity and policies that focus on inclusion have lower levels of employee turnover.<sup>1</sup> However, despite a lot of talk in the area, the actual results seem grim. According to the recent World Economic Forum Report, India has slipped 28 places to rank 140th among 156 countries in in the global gender gap category, becoming the third-worst performer in South Asia.<sup>2</sup> Not just in India but the world over the gender gap is widening.<sup>3</sup> Global social movements, such as Black Lives Matter in the United States or the Article 377 LGBTQ Rights movements in India to name a couple, are evidence of people wanting to break the shackles of stereotypical biases and move towards a more equitable world.

The pandemic has brought out the raw self of people, and some good and not so good aspects. A risk to survival brings about the tendencies of polarisation; that is human nature. People will gravitate towards groups of the same. Neuro-imaging research shows that the brain notices difference very fast, and triggers the

fight-or-flight response in its presence.<sup>4</sup> In normal times, this is buffered and managed, but in stressful times this comes to the forefront very easily. This polarisation crisis led to a frenzy in business organisations to start thinking about inclusion, empathy and wellbeing in ways that were never thought of before.

### THE WAY AHEAD

Taking insights from myself and my team's rich experience and robust data of consulting and coaching 20,000 people working in top 100 multinational organisations, across sectors, here is a well-chalked-out strategy. Two streams of initiatives could go in parallel. The first is to sensitise and equip leaders to be empathetic, authentic people who are not afraid to fail or let others fail, creating an environment of psychological safety. Second, is to develop the resilience in the workforce to manage, navigate and support each other in adversity.

To further strengthen these initiatives, 360 diagnostics are critical, in order to be able to collect the data on where we are now and where are we headed. Historically this will be a great service to humanity: to collect, interpret and leverage this data. It is the data that will show the present generation and many generations to come what to build upon, and what worked and what didn't work during these times of hardship.

A 360 diagnostic tool defines and measures the behaviours and competencies of an inclusive leader: someone who is comfortable and confident to manage diverse teams, creates a sense of inclusion and leverages the full benefits diversity has to offer. The primary objective of this tool is to assist in the leader's professional development by building their capability as an inclusive leader in alignment with their organisation's commitment to embed an inclusive workplace culture.

Alongside group training sessions, one-to-one coaching sessions are carried out for each leader individually. Based on the 360 assessments, the leaders are gently nudged towards areas that might need improvement and encouraged for what they are already doing well.

The coaching sessions would include aspects relating to instilling psychological safety, navigating unconscious biases, engaging in courageous conversations, flexibility, displaying allyship behaviours and so on. The objectives of these sessions are to gently probe the individual's mindset and then to gently guide the person in a more productive direction. In contrast to those carried out in some Western countries, these one-to-one coaching sessions, especially in an Indian context, are a little more directive and involve active participation by the coach. This is because of the organisational mandate to steer individuals towards a more inclusive management style to align with the organisational values.

Individuals are coached towards the goal of developing them as inclusive leaders who create an environment where everybody feels safe to 'be themselves' and express their point of view. Furthermore, they are encouraged to influence key people around them and visibly advocate for fairness. They are coached to feel comfortable and authentic for who they are by being true to their own unique identity and perspectives, and to encourage others to do the same. They are made aware of the benefits of working in a diverse

*If we do not consciously include, almost inevitably we unconsciously exclude.*

environment and are encouraged to communicate the same to their teams. Leaders are then coached into developing interpersonal skills to effectively communicate and engage with diverse sets of people – and especially those who are different to them. Finally, a one-to-one coaching session around navigating unconscious biases is carried out, aimed first at identifying the coachee's own biases and then pinning down strategies of how to manage biases effectively at an organisational level, in turn creating a healthy, inclusive and comfortable working environment where every single person feels at home.

Different training is required at different levels. The first and the most critical level is the top leadership, because that's where the culture starts cascading down. The leadership training could involve two aspects: tools and tips for the leaders to manage their own emotions (after all, they are in positions where the VUCA world affects them directly and if their emotion rocks then the whole organisation rocks with them). The second part is to develop competencies such as empathy and inclusion, to help them manage the emotions of their employees. Manager training could be conducted along similar lines, and frontline training would be focused more on understanding people's realities on the ground and helping people navigate unconscious biases, and personal and professional challenges.

We suggest that the secret of making diversity and wellbeing initiatives successful is to not simply conduct sporadic sensitisation sessions but to equip people with authentic inclusive competencies, and by creating psychological safety at work with immersive training journeys. In this way we make not only the workplace but the whole of society a more efficient and comfortable place to live.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Akshay Kumar is a senior lecturer and module leader at the University of East London, and a director and senior consultant at Ask Insights, consulting in the space of D&I to leading organisations including Google, Amazon, PepsiCo and Coca-Cola. Akshay is a licensed clinical psychologist, a senior fellow (higher education and research) of the Indian Council of Medical Research and a member editor of *Delhi Psychiatry Journal*. He has multiple prominent research collaborations, international keynotes and journal publications to his name.

A pioneer in the field of diversity and inclusion, Dr Niru Kumar is the founder and CEO of Ask Insights, a woman-owned D&I consulting firm. Niru offers her expertise in diversity strategy, talent management, assessments and analytics. She has provided consulting to more than 50 leading global organisations and is currently running leadership projects for companies such as Unilever and the World Health Organization. In 2021 she was a Padma Shri Awardee (India's highest civilian honour) for her work in the field of diversity and inclusion.

- i. *Quick Take: Why Diversity and Inclusion Matter*. Catalyst Publishing. Retrieved from: [catalyst.org/whydiversityandinclusionmatter](https://catalyst.org/whydiversityandinclusionmatter)
- ii. World Economic Forum (2021). *Global Gender Gap Report 2021*. WEF Publishing. Retrieved from: [weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021](https://weforum.org/reports/global-gender-gap-report-2021)
- iii. United Nations (2020). *UN 75, 2020 and Beyond – Shaping our Future Together*. UN Publishing.
- iv. Zak., J.P. (2017). 'The Neuroscience of Trust'. *Harvard Business Review*. HBR Publishing. Retrieved from: [hbr.org/2017/01/the-neuroscience-of-trust](https://hbr.org/2017/01/the-neuroscience-of-trust)

# Too Much

*When it's just too much  
Pause – take time out*

*When it's too much  
Take a deep breath*

*When it's too much  
Say a silent prayer*

*When it's too much  
Ask someone for help*

*When it's too much  
Know it's OK to say  
I can't cope  
I can't do this*

*When it's too much  
Know that this will pass  
Know that you are more  
That you are not alone  
When it's too much*

**Stanley Arumugam**  
14 July 2021

## THE COACHING INDUSTRY TAKES TO THE GLOBAL STAGE

**Priya Tandon**, a member of the AC USA East Coast, shares her thoughts on the position of the coaching industry on a global stage, and the importance of coaches recognising and celebrating differences as they coach their clients from a variety of cultures.

The map of the world without boundaries made possible by technology, the internet and social media have given rise to a global culture where coaching is not only more accessible but also approachable, relatable and welcomed. As coaches, we are in a global arena where clients come from global cultures and backgrounds.

First off, let us attempt to define 'global dimension'. It explores the similarities, differences and connections between people and places worldwide. Three main dimensions exist – economic, social and

environmental. As coaches, we may look closely into observations and reflections on how globalisation has had an impact on human behaviour, emerging patterns and challenges; for example, with increased movement of people from rural to urban areas, there may be family disruptions at the root of things for a client. The impacts of globalisation on individuals and on organisations' work cultures and ethics cannot be ignored as our cultures blend and spill into each other's lives. The need for coaching as an industry rises.

The global dimension has raised the bar for the coaching industry. The changing global perception where a coach is a significant contributor to an individual's or an organisation's success has started to dominate work and home culture. Coaching is now perceived as an investment in personal and professional development, rather than a luxury. The impact of the global dimension is directly visible in the changing lives of many people. With the benefits also come challenges to the coaching industry. Coaches may increasingly have to rethink, transform and be flexible with their niche to adapt to the changing demands. For example, a career coach may have to consider adding an 'overseas move expert' to their niche, or a relationship coach may have to understand the cultural dynamics that exist for a client before reflective inquiries may begin.

### AN UPWARD TREND

Coaching's increasing prominence around the world and in global cultures is clear. The following statistics demonstrate the growing prominence of the coaching industry.<sup>i</sup>

1. According to the ICF and PwC, coaching is the second-fastest industry in the world.
2. The number of certified coach practitioners worldwide is estimated to be around 71,000, an increase of 33% on the 2015 estimate.
3. The prevalence of coaching has risen by 38% in the last eight years, from 117 countries in 2012 to 161 countries in 2020.
4. Latin America and the Caribbean region showed the most growth in numbers of coaches between 2015 and 2019, with a 174% increase. Eastern Europe was in second place at 40%.
5. The global market size of the coaching industry is over \$15 billion.
6. There are an estimated 4.38 million coaches globally.

To add to the trends established over the last decade, the world has undergone various dramatic changes due to the Covid-19 pandemic, and the coaching industry has been affected as well. The economic and emotional stress on a global level caused by the Covid-19 pandemic is predicted to contribute to an increased need for coaching services. The demand for online coaching services is predicted to increase in the upcoming years.<sup>ii</sup>

Effective coaching is all about building trust, showing appropriate empathy and having reflective conversations that nudge the client towards their growth and development. However, understanding differences as part of the global dimension is vital to celebrating the differences we inherit from our cultures and traditions. Understanding others and celebrating them comes from a deep acknowledgement and acceptance of differences at an individual or a global level. We are a multicultural society where interdependence is more prevalent socially and economically than we think. Coming together to celebrate differences is the way to progress in this globalised world.

Coaching, through mindful questioning techniques and design of accountable action steps, can move past differences to bring together individuals on their own terms. Diversity coaching is one niche that is geared towards uniting and celebrating differences in the workplace.

As coaches, we educate ourselves on a client's culture, ethnic background and perspectives to understand how and where the culture may impede their personal or professional development. However, we should not ever be eager to box a client under the label of a 'culture'. Everyone wants to be heard and grow, and coaches can go beyond what they see on the surface to observe the influence a certain tradition or culture may or may not have on an individual. With education, acknowledgement and acceptance, coaches can encourage their clients to grow while celebrating their differences. Listening for differences and cultural complexities helps coaches to ask questions in words that are empowering and respectful for a coachee.

*'It is not our differences that divide us. It is our inability to recognize and celebrate those differences.'*  
— **Audre Lorde**, writer and civil rights activist

The application of effective coaching as a successful tool is beyond man-made borders and differences. As coaches, we serve humanity. We aim to help people raise themselves and unite in their progress – whether that be personal, professional, spiritual or economic.

I imagine the coaching industry will continue to show an upward trend of growth and collaboration in the foreseeable future.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Priya Tandon is a life-vision and enhancement coach emphasising self-actualisation, authentic human connections, and personal and professional transformative sustainable success. Her clientele is segmented from the business world, from parents to individuals looking to build and enhance relationships with themselves and others. She has a Bachelor of Psychology (Honours), is a certified yoga teacher, and a certified life coach from the Jay Shetty Coaching School. She can be reached at [priya@axoneum.com](mailto:priya@axoneum.com).

i. Blackbyrn, S. '84 Key Life Coaching Statistics for 2022'. [coachfoundation.com](http://coachfoundation.com)

ii. *Covid-19 and the Coaching Industry*. (2020). Commissioned by the ICF and undertaken by PwC.

# IMPOSTOR SYNDROME: IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT YOU!

Sonia Mayor invites us to widen the frame to consider how organisational culture may contribute to individuals' impostor feelings, and offers some thoughts on effective steps for leaders to take.

'Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous?' Actually, who are you not to be? Your playing small does not serve the world.

Impostor syndrome is the psychological term used to describe feelings of doubt and inadequacy in the workplace despite being successful, even highly achieving, in your role. Those struggling with impostor syndrome can get locked in a cycle of questioning their abilities, downplaying their achievements and constantly fearing being exposed as incompetent.

According to the *International Journal of Behavioural Science*, more than 70% of the population experiences impostor syndrome – feeling that their success may be accidental, coincidental or even fraudulent.

The impostor phenomenon (later referred to as syndrome) was first coined by psychologists Pauline Rose Clance and Suzanne Imes in 1978, and while initial research indicated that mainly women were affected, more recent studies suggest that men are just as susceptible. In fact, a 2014 study found that impostor syndrome was the top fear of CEOs worldwide, with 60% saying it negatively impacted their ability to lead confidently.<sup>i</sup>

Impostor syndrome can manifest in the workplace in a myriad of ways, including a reluctance to ask for help, 'quick-fix solutions', poor decision-making, defensiveness, risk aversion, perfectionism, lack of honest conversations and overworking to the point of burnout.

The generally adopted approach to tackling impostor syndrome is for work to take place with the individual in an attempt to change their mindset with the intention of lessening, eradicating or developing 'tools' to address the feelings they are experiencing.

Despite its prevalence, it is not established why people experience impostor syndrome. By framing feelings of inadequacy as personal flaws that need to be worked on, it absolves an exploration of the role of the wider context and culture in creating those feelings in individuals. If it affects so many of us, what could be the underlying values and beliefs that allow it to flourish and what might it be revealing about workplace culture?

Culture is one factor that influences how we think and behave. Is impostor syndrome symptomatic of individualistic cultures that celebrate the heroic soloist leader and promote the idea that organisations are run by charismatic, uniquely gifted geniuses? Individualistic cultures prize things such as autonomy, independence and self-sufficiency. Being dependent upon others is often considered shameful, weak or embarrassing. People often place a greater emphasis on standing out and being unique. In such cultures, people are considered 'good' if they are strong, self-reliant, assertive and independent.

The feelings 'I don't deserve to be here' or 'I'm not as smart or as competent as they think I am' are common experiences cited by sufferers of impostor syndrome. I wonder if these feelings are fuelled by emphasis on the idea that people should be able to solve problems quickly or accomplish goals on their own without relying on assistance from others. People are often expected to 'pull themselves up by their bootstraps' when they encounter setbacks.

The causes of today's problems are complex; there are no simple answers and no one individual can possibly know what to do. The myth that our individual talent and effort can fix everything and make problems go away is still a belief held by many. In fact,

many disciplines, from biology to neuroscience to the study of social networks, are now dispelling the illusion that we exist as competitive independent entities, revealing instead that our survival depends upon forming strong bonds with each other and working collaboratively in groups. We flourish when we are in environments where we are met with compassion, empathy and love.

The latest developments in neurobiological research have also revealed that our emotions are contagious, and that how others feel has a huge impact on how we behave and feel ourselves. This has serious implications for organisations, as we know that leaders have a tremendous effect on workplace culture. These findings urge us to nurture our emotional lives, create safe environments and foster healthy connections.

Interestingly, according to recent findings from Basima Tewfik, assistant professor of work and organization studies at MIT Sloan, the behaviours that 'impostors' exhibit in an attempt to compensate for their self-doubt can actually make them good at their jobs. So, in Tewfik's words, it seems 'impostor syndrome isn't "always good" or "always bad"; it's a much more complex phenomenon than it's been represented to be.'<sup>ii</sup>

Tewfik found that, despite their self-doubt, the workers experiencing impostor thoughts were actually rated more interpersonally effective than their non-impostor peers; managers described them as better collaborators who worked well with colleagues.

So, does some of the answer to overcoming impostor thoughts lie not in 'fixing' individuals but in creating stronger team cultures where everyone feels at home and that their contributions count?

The mindset and values in such teams are being dependable, generous and helpful to others. Group goals and cooperation are prioritised. People are more likely to turn to one another for support during difficult times and might even sacrifice their own comfort for the greater good of everyone else.

In innovative organisations, teams are formed according to the expertise that the job demands and the skills that the individual seeks to develop, instead of assumed expertise based on role or pecking orders. Everyone matters, instead of rank indicating importance. Respect flows from capability, not position, and leadership is more fluid. In these cultures, leaders openly acknowledge that they don't have all the answers. This doesn't make them a fraud; on the contrary, it helps them define and solve problems more efficiently, creatively and collaboratively.

## STEPS TO REDUCE IMPOSTORISM AT WORK

Given that impostorism largely affects how individuals perceive their accomplishments in the workplace, how could a team-based approach reduce these feelings?

- As a leader-coach, you can play an important role in surfacing impostor thinking – by bringing employees out from a place of shame and engaging in meaningful conversations about how impostorism may be manifesting in your workplace. You will create more inclusive working environments where belonging, fairness and equity are central to all that you do.
- Uncover the organisational mindset(s) and reframe it: mindsets people have about what they can and cannot do influence

workplace behaviours. Workplace culture also has a profound effect on shaping the beliefs and values that underpin how people approach their work. Every cue, from how performance reviews are conducted to what behaviours are valued, sends a signal about the 'right way' to think and behave. To shift to a new set of behaviours, organisations need to grasp the cues they send and the collective mindset they create. Then they can reframe and address those underlying mindsets to achieve new behaviours.<sup>iii</sup>

- Create safe spaces for honest conversations where people are encouraged to speak up, share their ideas and challenge the status quo. When team members feel safe at work, it's easier for them to participate in team meetings, solve problems, collaborate on projects and engage with others. Members of great teams trust one another and they are comfortable being vulnerable with each other about their weaknesses, mistakes, fears and behaviours.<sup>iv</sup>
- Reward team efforts and build a culture with shared goals, recognising interdependence as a key to success. Tap into everyone's creativity by valuing the unique skills of people and look at how they each contribute to the common good. Appreciation is a prime attribute of successful leaders. Teams thrive when individuals feel understood, validated and connected to one another.
- Work with people to develop relevant measures of progress to make their achievements visible. Shift the focus from 'I don't deserve to be here' to what qualities and skills are required to make a difference. Offer unequivocal support and provide regular feedback to people on how they are doing, what they have accomplished and how far they have journeyed as a team.

By adopting these approaches, organisations can address the contextual roots of individuals' impostor feelings and offer more structural and effective solutions.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sonia provides facilitation, leadership and supervisory support with an approach that embraces systemic psychotherapy, restorative practice and compassionate inquiry. She supports individuals, teams and organisations to adapt to change by combining her knowledge and experience in workforce reform, trauma-informed care and social justice. She works as an independent trainer in the UK, working across the public and private sector on reflective practice and bridging differences. She is a visiting lecturer and teaches on a number of leadership programmes.

- Jones, R. (2015). 'What CEOs are afraid of'. *Harvard Business Review*.
- ideas.wharton.upenn.edu/research/imposter-syndrome-unexpected-benefits
- time.com/5312483/how-to-deal-with-impostor-syndrome
- Lencioni, P. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. John Wiley & Sons, (2002).



Andy Aitchison

## FROM PRISON TO THE BOARDROOM

How does a coaching programme for young Black men in prison help to facilitate transformational conversations in the justice system? Spark Inside has the answers. Coach [Jeffrey Wotherspoon](#) explains how the lessons learned from the programme could benefit other organisations.

Most people will never know what it's like to be in prison. Fear is the overriding feeling for anyone when they go inside – whether they live or work behind the walls. Over the years I've noticed this feeling of fear is revisited whenever a young man walks into Spark Inside's coaching workshop, known as 'Hero's Journey'. It's the fear of the unknown; they're coming towards the end of their prison sentence, they're enrolled on a workshop with people they may not know and they're unsure what is expected of them. Their guard is up.

I see them come into the room with their 'fierce prison guy' persona. However, by the end they leave with smiles on their faces, hugging each other, keen to make a positive change in their life. Most subsequently sign up for one-to-one coaching sessions to make the transformation happen.

So coaching works in prisons. But a specific tailored programme for young Black men in prisons works better. It is a no-brainer.

Why do I say that? For eight years I have been coaching young men in prison. Every visit, I see the reality of overrepresentation in our prisons of people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. Young Black people are nine times more likely to be imprisoned in England and Wales than young white people. Nine times! This is a shocking disproportionality. Black people and those from minority ethnic backgrounds make up around 16% of the population of England and Wales, yet they form over a quarter (27%) of the prison population.

Numerous official reports (the Lammy review<sup>i</sup>, the Parliamentary Justice Select Committee<sup>ii</sup>, Chief Inspector of Prisons<sup>iii</sup>) have

highlighted the terrible state of mental health and wellbeing in UK prisons, exacerbated by the toll of severe regime restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic. Member of parliament David Lammy highlighted that young Black men's needs in particular were unmet, damaging trust and hindering rehabilitation.

Identifying similar gaps, last year Spark Inside introduced a tailored coaching programme called Hero's Journey.<sup>iv</sup> Young Black men with lived experience of the UK justice system co-designed it.

I am a Black man, who has grown up in the same communities as the young Black men I work with in prison. We have had some similar lived experiences. So, I write from my observations of working with the young men as well as my personal experience.

During the group workshops, I and other specially trained professional life coaches provide a safe space, supporting young Black men to address what it means for them to be a young Black man in the UK today. We facilitate deeper thinking about how their Black identity has influenced their experiences and attitudes about their place in society.

An important dynamic of the programme is that black male coaches facilitate the workshops and deliver the subsequent one-to-one coaching session. This matters. From the young person's perspective it's fundamental they feel the coach can relate to, or at least understand, their experience. Young people tell me this is the primary reason they choose me as their coach instead of a white counterpart. When a coach understands someone's lived experience they don't feel judged, and therefore feel safe to open up.

This isn't to say that people of other ethnicities shouldn't work with young Black men or are unable to work with them effectively. The

truth is there are pros and cons to coaches of any race working with young Black men. It's important to have a balance.

My focus here, however, is about the specific needs around race, equity and inclusion that can be met by a tailored programme for young Black men, delivered by Black men.

Another reason it's important to have black male facilitators for this tailored programme is that we serve as positive role models, which is an unintended benefit. Thinking specifically about the demographic of the young men I meet in prisons, a significant proportion of them have absent or abusive fathers. Generally, Black male representation in their lives is disproportionately negative.

Too many of the young people I work with say to me: 'This is the first time I've had a conversation like this.' Often it's their first opportunity to think and talk about their life and what they want from it.

I've come to view it as an unfortunate disadvantage that over 95% of the young men I work with in prisons, when initially meeting them, are motivated by limited 'legitimate' career options. Becoming a footballer or a rapper are the major ones. After meeting me, occasionally they say a coach or support worker in prison. Many consider construction or driving jobs, however seldom are they driven by a passion for these vocations.

Growing up as a child, I remember my mum encouraging me to become a doctor or lawyer. Perhaps she was trying to make it a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, even though I was younger than 10 years old, I knew neither career was for me. Reflecting on this later later in life, I realised it was because, in my eyes, the lawyers were white, and the doctors were Asian. In my eyes these were not professions for a Black man.

I had created a story in my mind that I had limited career options, which also had an impact on my self-esteem.

### A NEW MASCULINITY

This leads neatly into how a tailored coaching programme for Black men in prison addresses toxic masculinity.

It plays out in two ways: firstly, in the views young men have of themselves and what is expected of them as young, Black and male. Many have absorbed the idea that money, violence and intimidation offer 'street credibility' and status, which serve as important currencies in prison. These narratives come from multiple sources, primarily the media. The pressure of toxic masculinity has an impact on the mental health of these young men.

In October 2021, Spark Inside launched an investigation into young men's mental health in prisons. As part of the project, a public opinion poll discovered a high level of public awareness of the interplay between race and mental wellbeing – more than 80% of people think that experiences of racism impact a young person's mental health and wellbeing.<sup>v</sup>

The second way in which toxic masculinity plays out is how society views young Black men. Almost half of those surveyed (48%) thought that young Black men are generally treated worse by society than other young men of different ethnic backgrounds. Being subjected to microaggressions takes its toll. Being seen as a threat, followed in retail stores and hearing comments such as 'you look



Andy Aitchison

**Many have absorbed the idea that money, violence and intimidation offer 'street credibility' and status, which serve as important currencies in prison.**

like a criminal' or 'you look like gangster' can cause a young Black man to feel they have limited options in life.

Positive role models challenge toxic masculinity and provide hope that things can be different. In the safe space of our sessions, young men share and learn openly, modelling a different side of masculinity. Humility allows them the possibilities of a new identity.

How does this prison-based work relate to the boardroom and the professional working world? Outside of coaching men in prisons, I also deliver leadership and executive coaching, consultancy and training in a number of topics. I have a few specialist areas I work in, one of which is equity, diversity and inclusion.

Recently, I ran a focus group for an organisation, because 73% of their Black staff reported that they didn't feel they could be themselves at work. My experience has shown me that inclusion is what organisations find most challenging to make happen. Inclusion is sometimes referred to as belonging; so, in essence, 73% of Black people in that organisation didn't feel like they belonged. There is plenty of research about how stereotyping and discrimination adversely affect performance, staff turnover and sickness.<sup>vi</sup>

I asked the focus group: 'What would help you to feel like you could be yourselves at work?' The key theme was representation. Primarily, lack of representation in senior management ultimately made them feel like being themselves could have consequences that a) could hamper their career progression or b) would mean that they wouldn't be supported if race-related issues were to arise.

This mirrors the experience of young Black men caught in the criminal justice system who often lack the role models to consider careers outside of football and music. And then when they meet me, new options open up.

A recent article in the *Independent* newspaper states that 42% of Black employees in the UK have at some point left their job due to lack of diversity.<sup>vii</sup> Those Black employees are likely to live in Black communities among family and friends and talk about how they feel at work. So, sadly, young Black men in those homes will not aspire to work in similar roles. An unintended, and altogether avoidable, cycle.

So what lessons as a coach can I share with other colleagues and HR professionals?

For a start, language matters. There needs to be a cultural shift in the language of diversity and inclusion. Rather than striving for a cultural 'fit', every workplace should value the 'cultural add'. This is a gamechanger, as it places a positive value on diversity.

I encourage companies to consider the need for *equity* when trying to establish *equality*. Treating everyone the same, although often done with good intention, won't always mean an equal experience. Equity means the necessary tools are provided so equality is possible.

Companies would do well to recognise when particular groups need support to have the 'same experience', or when the same experience for all groups makes it difficult for some groups. Take a car park at a supermarket, for instance. Equality allows people to park wherever they want; nevertheless, there are a number of bays reserved for parents with young children or customers with disabilities. Those reserved bays make the customer shopping experience less challenging for those groups.

A practical example in the workplace would be offering tailored programmes to support the experience of minority groups. This could include reverse mentoring programmes for better understanding, career booster workshops for ethnic minorities, or having a diverse pool of external facilitators and coaches to work with staff.

Tailoring support and coaching for equity works not just in prisons but in the boardroom and beyond. It supports people from diverse backgrounds to belong. After all – hope, not fear, is what brings out the best in all of us.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jeffrey is an executive, leadership and life coach, international trainer and conflict resolution specialist with a BSc (Hons) in Psychology. He is head coach for Spark Inside and works with a range of other charities. He is a trustee for two charities and is on the advisory board for Culture at Work – a leading global coaching company that offers coach training to senior executives worldwide. Jeffrey's background is in youth work, with extensive experience in the criminal justice system.

- i. [gov.uk/government/organisations/lammy-review](https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/lammy-review)
- ii. [committees.parliament.uk/committee/102/justice-committee/news/157821/justice-committee-calls-for-root-and-branch-reform-of-prison-mental-health-support](https://committees.parliament.uk/committee/102/justice-committee/news/157821/justice-committee-calls-for-root-and-branch-reform-of-prison-mental-health-support)
- iii. [justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/02/What-happens-to-prisoners-in-a-pandemic.pdf](https://justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/hmiprisoners/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2021/02/What-happens-to-prisoners-in-a-pandemic.pdf)
- iv. For more information, visit [sparkinside.org/our-work/individual-change](https://sparkinside.org/our-work/individual-change)
- v. [sparkinside.org/campaign/being-well-being-equal](https://sparkinside.org/campaign/being-well-being-equal)
- vi. [www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070524.beilock.pdf](https://www-news.uchicago.edu/releases/07/pdf/070524.beilock.pdf)
- vii. [independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/black-employees-workplace-racism-research-b1937680.html](https://independent.co.uk/news/uk/home-news/black-employees-workplace-racism-research-b1937680.html)



## Spring into action and make 2022 the year of accreditation!

### Individual & Team Coaching Accreditation

Now's the time to start working on your Individual AC Coach Accreditation application. Simply register free for the AC webinar series "Accelerate your Coach Accreditation" led by Jeannette Marshall, the AC's Director of Accreditation, to jump-start your journey. We'll guide you all the way to help you make it a reality!

*Our Team Coaching Accreditation is currently under development, so watch this space for more on this exciting development soon!*

**When:** Friday 4th & 25th February, plus Friday 11th & 25th March 2022

**Where:** Online

To sign up, please go to: [associationforcoaching.com/event/ACCoachAccreditation\\_WS](https://associationforcoaching.com/event/ACCoachAccreditation_WS)

### AC Coach Training Accreditation

Make 2022 the year you go above and beyond by aligning your course with coaching mastery - have your course accredited by the Association for Coaching.

Offering four levels of accreditation – from Foundation to Master's level – our Coach Training Accreditation helps showcase that your high-quality programmes meet the AC's Coaching Competencies criteria.

For more information please visit: [associationforcoaching.com/CTALevels](https://associationforcoaching.com/CTALevels)

*Applications are welcomed from AC Organizational members*

### Contribute to the future of Coach Supervision

If you're a coaching supervisor, please join our lively Supervision Special Interest Group. AC members from all parts of the world meet quarterly.

For more information please contact Margaret Barr at: [supervisionadmin@associationforcoaching.com](mailto:supervisionadmin@associationforcoaching.com)

### Benefit from Group Supervision Experience Calls

One of the many benefits of your AC Membership is our Group Supervision Experience Calls, which take place on the third Thursday of each month. Experience supervision in a group setting, connect with other AC Members and benefit from a highly-experienced Supervisor hosting each call.

To sign up, please go to: [associationforcoaching.com/events](https://associationforcoaching.com/events) and filter by the "Group Supervision Experience Calls" category

To discover more about all of the AC's Accreditation offerings, please head to our website: [associationforcoaching.com/accreditation](https://associationforcoaching.com/accreditation)

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION 3.0

In this edition's Deep Dive, Philippe Rosinski argues that intercultural coaching can work across three levels of diversity and inclusion to enable individuals, teams and organisations to flourish and grow.

# DEEP DIVE!

Promoting diversity and inclusion (D&I) is increasingly perceived as a societal imperative and many organisations are putting in place D&I policies and practices.

However, an important difficulty with the concept of diversity is that various things exist under this headline (Harrison and Klein, 2007; Meyer, 2017). Likewise, D&I can be understood at different levels.

When most organisations talk about D&I, they are really referring to what I would label D&I 1.0. As necessary as these efforts are, a lot more could be achieved through diversity and inclusion programmes. Augmenting D&I 1.0 with D&I 2.0 and then D&I 3.0 represents a formidable yet still underused opportunity to boost creativity, flourishing and unity, for greater impact.

## D&I 1.0: EXTERNAL (OR VISIBLE) DIVERSITY

Combating prejudice and discrimination against certain groups of people, and promoting equal opportunity constitutes the primary goal of D&I 1.0.

**Social psychology** is particularly helpful to understand how the social context shapes individual attitudes and behaviours, and can give rise to phenomena such as polarisation, exclusion and racism.

Social categories turn out to be much blurrier than we think (Herbes-Sommers et al., 2003; Thomas, 2005; Plous, 2020). Who is a Black person? Someone with 1/8th Black ancestry? 1/16th? Any Black ancestry? All-Black ancestry? There is not a unique answer. Still, the ambiguity does not prevent people from thinking in terms of 'us' versus 'them'.

Henri Tajfel showed that it is easy to trigger 'ingroup bias' (or 'ingroup favouritism') even when the groups are constituted randomly: those in our group constitute the 'ingroup' and those outside are the 'outgroup' (Tajfel, 1970).

Stereotyping is a common tendency, which is about minimising differences in the outgroup (i.e., 'outgroup homogeneity bias') and exaggerating differences between the outgroup and our ingroup (Wilder, 1986).

As Gordon Allport argued (1954), there is a slippery slope: this categorical thinking gives rise to prejudice, which is a 'preconceived negative judgment of a group and its individual members'. While prejudice is a negative attitude, it often leads to discrimination, which is an 'unjustified negative behaviour toward a group of people' (Myers and Twenge, 2019).

Racism typically involves prejudice and discrimination vis-à-vis certain people, viewed as belonging to a different 'race'. Racist acts can be characterised not only by their severity but also by the authors' drives: rage and hatred, blind obedience (i.e., following orders), bystander effect/diffusion of responsibility (i.e., not intervening). Social psychology research (e.g., Milgram, 1974; Latané and Darley, 1970) has revealed that we are more prone to blind obedience and diffusion of responsibility than we think.

Once we become aware of these dynamics, we don't need to fall prey to the detrimental phenomena and can learn instead

to act responsibly and humanely. We can promote inclusion, which amounts to making our ingroup larger, possibly to embrace all humanity.

What is more, Mahzarin Banaji has shown with her Implicit Association Test (Banaji and Greenwald, 2013) that our biases may be unconscious, operating like 'blindspots in our minds'. We may be unconsciously prejudiced against certain people without being consciously aware of it. Raising awareness is key again and it is also a matter of 'feeding our brain the right stuff': information and images of what reality is like in all its nuances, beyond limiting stereotypes (Plous, 2020).

**Anthropology and traditional interculturalism** are also very helpful here to describe cultural differences among nationalities and other groups. Geert Hofstede (2001) has, among others, compared cultural characteristics between various countries. Other researchers have contrasted different generations (e.g., Generation X, Generation Y, Baby Boomers). The intention is to become mindful of differences; to avoid judging people solely by our standards but strive instead to understand their worldview. We promote inclusion by welcoming and integrating people from different cultures.

D&I 1.0 is concerned with hiring/gathering people from various groups (e.g., avoiding leaving out minorities) as well as with promoting mutual understanding and respect. This is done notably by facilitating genuine human encounters between people from diverse backgrounds.

The case for D&I 1.0 is not solely a matter of ethics. It is not only about striving for equality, or even for equity: 'treating everyone justly according to their circumstances', which involves 'addressing imbalance' (Milken Institute School of Public Health, 2020). Attracting and retaining talent has become a challenge after the Covid pandemic. This phenomenon has been referred to as the 'Great Resignation' (Cook, 2021) and the 'Great Attrition' (De Smet et al., 2021). Aaron De Smet and his colleagues report: 'The top three factors employees cited as reasons for quitting were that they didn't feel valued by their organisations (54%) or their managers (52%) or because they didn't feel a sense of belonging at work (51%)'. Notably, employees who classified themselves as non-White or multiracial were more likely than their White counterparts to say that they had left because they didn't feel they belonged at their companies' (De Smet et al., 2021). In a time of great resignation/attrition, organisations can ill afford to shun the talents of diverse groups of people.

D&I 1.0 is still much needed and constitutes the majority of D&I initiatives. To institutionalise D&I 1.0 in an effective and sustainable fashion, education in social psychology and in anthropology is essential. Hopefully these disciplines will become part of coaches' and managers' educational curricula, but in the meantime the knowledge is already freely available for anyone ready to make the effort to acquire it.

## CASE STUDY

I was invited to coach an international executive team (primarily European). The team was composed of 11 members representing six different nationalities. Although there were more men than women (eight versus three respectively), the regional director of the company and several other senior executives were women. In this team, D&I 1.0 seemed quite natural. However, this is not to say that the company as a whole was immune from racism. Building on the momentum of the Black Lives Matter movement, the company took new measures, notably hiring and empowering more local managers in various continents.

## D&I 2.0: INTERNAL (OR COGNITIVE) DIVERSITY

At this stage, the categorical thinking that potentially gives rise to stereotyping and discrimination is avoided. Beyond demographics, D&I 2.0 focuses on diverse mental models.

Cass Sunstein has shown that diversity 'in terms of ideas and perspectives, not necessarily along demographic lines' (i.e., cognitive diversity) allows the promotion of creativity and innovation (2015).

**Intercultural coaching** (Rosinski, 2003) is meant to do this in practice, by unleashing the power that resides in cultural diversity, regardless of its demographic origin. The Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) assessment (Rosinski, 2018) facilitates the understanding of salient cultural characteristics (such as time management approaches, organisational arrangements, communication patterns, modes of thinking, etc.) for individuals, teams and organisations. It also offers a concrete way to leverage cultural differences.

Inclusion at this level is about the synthesis of cultural differences ('and' versus 'or') to promote unity in diversity. People don't only feel welcomed and respected. They have the sense that their different viewpoints are seen as opportunities rather than as threats. They feel they belong and can thrive, in the interests of all parties and stakeholders.

## CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

This team was quite heterogeneous regarding preferences for direct and indirect communication. The COF assessment revealed that the full spectrum was represented with members preferring direct communication (clarity matters most when delivering a difficult message, at the risk of offending or hurting) and indirect communication (sensitivity matters most, at the risk of misunderstanding). Furthermore, over 60% of the team scored unfavourably on the ability to communicate directly and close to 50% scored unfavourably for indirect communication.

In the preliminary one-on-one interviews I had with members of the team, some complained that certain members were too direct, which they perceived as aggressive. Others, upset by colleagues, would passively accept the situation without confronting their peers through fear of alienating them.

Using the COF team histograms allowed team members to reframe issues that had become personal into a cultural misunderstanding

and offered them a path to bridge the gap: leveraging direct and indirect communication patterns can be achieved when you are clear on the content and sensitive in the form. For example, one member with a clear orientation for indirect communication mustered the courage to speak up to confront colleagues, when necessary, while another member with a clear orientation for direct communication made an effort to soften their tone. The team achieved D&I 2.0 by taking the best of both cultural perspectives while sacrificing neither.

Unattended internal diversity regarding direct and indirect communication had been a source of misunderstanding, frustration and conflict. When leveraged, it became a source of creativity. The open and constructive exchange of ideas was now possible because team members had learned to be mindful of differences and to speak both candidly and tactfully.

## D&I 3.0: IMPLICIT (OR HIDDEN) DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity may be external (visible differences such as ethnicity, gender or age) and internal (cultural preferences regarding time management, communication, thinking, organising and so on). This dichotomy is related to the known surface-level/deep-level diversity distinction (Meyer, 2017) and to the associated D&I 1.0 and D&I 2.0 approaches described above.

This distinction is useful in that it allows us to describe and then enlarge our inner territory. By expanding our worldview, we access new external choices and become more effective. The separation is apparently an illusion, however, and reality is not that simple. It is more interconnected and complex than we think. In line with the holographic/complexity/organic paradigm (Bohm, 1980; Talbot, 1991; Morin, 2005; Rosinski, 2010) that transcends the still-prevalent mechanistic worldview without excluding it, I have proposed a complementary dichotomy (2019): cultural diversity is explicit (manifested) or implicit (hidden but nevertheless potentially available). In other words, for example, a team might come across as relatively homogeneous and would not be considered diverse under the usual definitions (referring to visible characteristics or to internal/cognitive diversity). However, from a holographic standpoint – which accounts for notions such as Carl Jung's collective unconscious as well as coaching's belief in the vast, yet largely untapped, human potential – this apparent homogeneous team would be still considered diverse and heterogeneous, albeit in an implicit, enfolded sense.

Inclusion at the 3.0 level is about tapping into our unconscious diversity potential and leveraging it, individually and collectively. I have shown how this concept can be put into practice when coaching teams in order to remove cultural blindspots and access teams' hidden cultural potential (Rosinski, 2019).

## CASE STUDY (CONTINUED)

Despite being made up of various nationalities and comprising other demographic differences, the team was rather homogeneous with respect to the hierarchy-equality cultural dimension. The COF assessment showed that the dominant culture was glaringly equalitarian (73% favouring equality –

46% clearly and 27% mildly – and 27% neutral, with no one favouring hierarchy). The ability for hierarchy was also low, with over 60% of responses unfavourable (versus just 9% for equality).

The team leader was no exception. During the interviews, his leadership style was consistently described as 'laissez-faire', even if those specific words were not used. This worked well for the most senior members in the team, who felt fully empowered and unencumbered by unnecessary interventionism. Others appreciated the freedom to take the initiative. However, some complained about the leader's lack of guidance, his aversion to decisively settle conflicts and his insufficient confrontation with those who were not doing what they were supposed to.

I shared this feedback during the individual coaching with the team leader prior to the team retreat. He became aware of the necessity to flexibly adjust his leadership style in various situations: to venture outside his 'equalitarian' cultural preference to embrace a more 'hierarchical' directive approach at times.

During the team retreat, team members confronted their views on a particular topic. As a team coach, I often try to reconcile the various viewpoints. However, in this case, I realised that I was not going to be able to do so. It would have to be either one option or the other. I turned to the team leader and asked for his decision. He firmly announced his decision, and this was the end of the discussion. These behaviours were very unusual for the team, where endless debates had been the norm. Thanks to their new awareness of their individual and collective cultural profiles, and because they had come to realise the pitfalls of overlooking the hierarchical orientation, the team was able to move outside its comfort zone and to tap into its hidden hierarchical orientation. The team leader did so by being decisive, and the team members by accepting his decision without rebellion.

More generally, team members decided to alternate leadership and follower roles, learning to both take charge in the team and accept that others would do the same at other times. They started to hold themselves and each other more accountable for their actions. In sum, the team became more effective by leveraging equality (democratic) and hierarchy (directive).

D&I 3.0 refers to situations where the team appears to be homogeneous in how its members tend to handle certain situations. Diversity is hidden, thus still potentially available, rather than non-existent. One of the intercultural coach's key roles is precisely to unfold this implicit diversity.

The sad reality is that many people still view their cultural identity as a static concept and see their current cultural views as inevitable manifestations of their identity – declaring, for example, 'I speak directly because I am American', or conversely, 'I speak indirectly because I am Japanese'. Taken to an extreme, this inflexible view is at the heart of various forms of fanaticism, with deleterious impact.

In his acerbic essay on religion, originally published in *Parerga and Paralipomena* in 1851 (Schopenhauer, 2004), Arthur Schopenhauer offers this striking dialogue:

**Philethes** *How can genuine philosophical effort, sincere search after truth, the noblest calling of the noblest men, be let and hindered more completely than by a conventional system of metaphysics enjoying a State monopoly, the principles of which are impressed into every head in earliest youth, so earnestly, so deeply, and so firmly, that, unless the mind is miraculously elastic, they remain indelible. In this way the groundwork of all healthy reason is once for all deranged; that is to say, the capacity for original thought and unbiased judgment, which is weak enough in itself, is, in regard to those subjects to which it might be applied, forever paralyzed and ruined.*

**Demopheles** *Which means, I suppose, that people have arrived at a conviction which they won't give up in order to embrace yours instead.*

**Philethes** *Ah! if it were only a conviction based on insight. Then one could bring arguments to bear, and the battle would be fought with equal weapons. But religions admittedly appeal, not to conviction as the result of argument, but to belief as demanded by revelation. And as the capacity for believing is strongest in childhood... If, in early childhood, certain fundamental views and doctrines are paraded with unusual solemnity, and an air of the greatest earnestness never before visible in anything else; if, at the same time, the possibility of a doubt about them be completely passed over, or touched upon only to indicate that doubt is the first step to eternal perdition, the resulting impression will be so deep that, as a rule, that is, in almost every case, doubt about them will be almost as impossible as doubt about one's own existence. Hardly one in ten thousand will have the strength of mind to ask himself seriously and earnestly – is that true?*

These days, cultural conditioning often still appears hard to overcome and this phenomenon is certainly not limited to religion. However, the challenge is not as insurmountable as Schopenhauer believed.

Neuroscientific findings have confirmed that our brains do have remarkable plasticity (Hebb, 1949; Bliss and Lomo, 1973; Gazzaniga et al., 2019; McKay and Smith, 2021). Mental agility is widely available rather than being restricted to an elite. It is easy to understand that, had we been born with our same genes in a different cultural context, we would have learned other cultural habits. It is liberating to realise that we can still do so! We can learn from various cultural traditions, with a mind that is both open and critical.

Likewise, the potential for direct and indirect communications, or directive and consensual leadership, has been present all along, even if only one of the preferences has been activated in us for each cultural dimension. Cultural habits can be unlearned, relearned and most of all continuously enriched by enlarging our cultural repertoire (e.g., communicating both directly and indirectly, combining hierarchy and equality). In D&I 2.0, the underused cultural potential is revealed by engaging with colleagues with opposite cultural preferences. In D&I 3.0, it is brought to light by acquiring knowledge about the existence and

the merits of contrasting cultural preferences, even if these are not explicitly present in the team.

### COMBINING D&I 1.0, 2.0 AND 3.0

Successive levels of D&I go together with increased complexity. Mastering D&I at the previous level is needed to effectively work at the next level. For example, if prejudice and discrimination still exist, it is unlikely that different viewpoints will be accepted, let alone celebrated. Combatting prejudice and discrimination (D&I 1.0) will pave the way for this acceptance but will usually be insufficient to promote creativity and innovation. The reverse is not true though: in my experience, D&I 2.0 and D&I 3.0 interventions also have a positive impact at the D&I 1.0 level. It is not by chance that a transgender participant chose one of our sessions to come out. Even though we had not explicitly addressed the theme of sexual orientation, we had promoted a safe climate of deep inclusion. However, this was possible because we were working from a foundation of existing implicit acceptance of diversity and readiness to be inclusive.

Intercultural coaching applies to all forms of diversity. Systematically weaving a cultural perspective into coaching represents a formidable opportunity to deploy the human potential in its rich cultural diversity, even when these cultural differences are still latent rather than unfolded.

In practice, intercultural coaching for D&I combines D&I 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0 as appropriate and necessary in the situation. Interventions can draw from a range of disciplines and be tailored to clients' unique contexts. Intercultural coaching allows us to be more ambitious in what we can all expect from D&I programmes, by unleashing the full richness of diversity.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Philippe Rosinski is the best-selling author of the seminal books *Coaching Across Cultures* and *Global Coaching*, and a world authority in executive coaching, team coaching and global leadership development. The principal of Rosinski & Company, he is also a professor at BBT University in Tokyo and intervenes at HEC Paris, at Henley Business School and at the University of Cambridge. Philippe has received numerous awards including the Thinkers50 Marshall Goldsmith Leading Global Coaches Award, and has been listed among the Global Gurus Coaching Top 30.

[philrosinski.com](http://philrosinski.com)

### REFERENCES

- Allport, G. (1954). *The nature of prejudice*. Cambridge, MA: Addison-Wesley.
- Banaji, M., & Greenwald, A. (2013). *Blindspot: Hidden biases of good people*. New York: Delacorte Press.
- Bliss, T., & Lomo, T. (1973). Long-lasting Potentiation of Synaptic Transmission in the Dentate Area of the Anaesthetized Rabbit following Simulation of the Perforant Path. *The Journal of Physiology*, 232, 331-356.
- Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order*. London-Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul (edition Routledge Classics 2002), 1980.
- Cook, I. (2021). Who is Driving the Great Resignation? *Harvard Business Review*, September.
- De Smet, A., Dowling, B., Mugayar-Baldocchi, M., & Schaninger, B. (2021). 'Great Attrition' or 'Great Attraction'? The choice is yours. *McKinsey Quarterly*, September.
- Gazzaniga, M., Ivry, R., & Mangun, G. (2019). *Cognitive Neuroscience: The Biology of the Mind*. New York: WW Norton & Co.
- Harrison, D., & Klein, K. (2007). What's the difference? Diversity constructs as separation, variety, or disparity in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 32, 1199-1228.
- Hebb, D. (1949). *The Organization of Behavior: A Neuropsychological Theory*. New York: John Wiley & Sons.
- Herbes-Sommers, C., Strain, T., & Smith, L. (Directors). (2003). *Race: The Power of an Illusion* [Film].
- Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences, 2d ed.*, Sage Publications.
- Klein, K. (2017). Does Gender Diversity on Boards Really Boost Company Performance? *Knowledge@Wharton*, 18 May.
- Latané, B., & Darley, J. (1970). *The unresponsive bystander: Why doesn't he help?* New York: Appleton-Century Crofts.
- McKay, S., & Smith, S. (2021). Towards a Neuroscience-Informed Coaching Practice: Opportunities and Limitations. In W.-A. Smith, I. Boniwell, & S. Green, *Positive Psychology Coaching in the Workplace* (pp. 399-416). Cham, Switzerland: Springer Nature Switzerland AG.
- Meyer, B. (2017). Team Diversity - A Review of the Literature. In E. Salas, R. Rico, & J. Passmore, *The Wiley Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Team Working and Collaborative Processes* (pp. 151-175). John Wiley & Sons.
- Milgram, S. (1974). *Obedience to authority*. New York: Harper and Row.
- Milken Institute School of Public Health. (2020, November 5). *Equity vs. Equality: What's the Difference?* Accessed via <https://onlinepublichealth.gwu.edu/resources/equity-vs-equality/>
- Morin, Edgar. *Introduction à la Pensée Complexe*. Paris: Editions du Seuil, 2005.
- Myers, D., & Twenge, J. (2019). *Social Psychology 13th ed.* New York: Mc Graw Hill.
- Plous, S. (2020). *Social Psychology*. Coursera.
- Rosinski, P. (2003). *Coaching Across Cultures*. London and Yarmouth, ME: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Rosinski, P. (2010). *Global Coaching*. London and Boston, MA: Nicholas Brealey Publishing.
- Rosinski, P. (2018). *The Cultural Orientations Framework (COF) - new version*. <https://www.cofassessment.com/>
- Rosinski, P. (2019). Delivering value through cross-cultural team coaching. In J. Passmore, B. Underhill, & M. Goldsmith, *Mastering Executive Coaching* (pp. 130-159). Abingdon, United Kingdom: Routledge.
- Schopenhauer, A. (2004). Religion: A Dialogue. In *The Essays of Arthur Schopenhauer (originally published in "Parerga and Paralipomena" in 1851)*. The Project Gutenberg eBook.
- Sunstein, C., & Hastie, R. (2015). *Wiser - Getting beyond groupthink to make groups smarter*. Boston: Harvard Business School Publishing.
- Tajfel, H. (1970). Experiments in intergroup discrimination. *Scientific American*, 223(5), 96-102.
- Talbot, Michael. *The Holographic Universe*. London: HarperCollins Publishers, 1991.
- Thomas, A. (Director). (2005). *Middle Sexes: Defining He and She* [Film].
- Wilder, D. (1986). Social categorization: Implications for creation and reduction of intergroup bias. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 19, 291-355.

# Climate Biodiversity Coaching

Jackie Arnold, Coach and Supervisor

Lydia Stevens, Executive & Leadership Coach

Wednesdays, 20 April to 11 May 2022

The 2021 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change Report gave us all a code-red for humanity.

Like all other service providers, coaching is now asking what is needed to prepare the profession for the future.

In this webinar series, we will explore the topic of climate change and biodiversity coaching and how your practice can best serve humanity and the planet at this critical time.

Join us to reflect on our impact on businesses, leadership, communities, and future generations.

Learn more and register here:

[associationforcoaching.com/event/ClimateBiodiversityCoaching\\_WS](http://associationforcoaching.com/event/ClimateBiodiversityCoaching_WS)



# Braver Marketing for Coaches

Frances Khalastchi & Simon Batchelar, Marketing Mentors

Thursdays, 24 March to 9 June 2022

Many coaches feel uncomfortable and anxious marketing their business and frustrated with how 'unnatural' marketing can feel.

We have designed this AC Signature Programme to change the marketing conversation and empower you to use the skills you have developed in your coaching practice to do "good marketing".

Frances Khalastchi and Simon Batchelar champion ethical marketing according to the pledge of The Ethical Move. They believe we can do more good in the world by understanding marketing and sales through a human, empathetic and mindful lens.

Join us for a ten-webinar marketing programme to learn about self-awareness, mindful practice, storytelling, and the "hero's journey" model.

Learn more and register here:

[associationforcoaching.com/event/BraverMarketing\\_SP](http://associationforcoaching.com/event/BraverMarketing_SP)



# LESSONS LEARNED FROM INTERCULTURAL COACHING

Two coaches with the EthicalCoach organisation, **Leah Dejenu** and **Marilyn O’Hearne**, share their experiences of co-coaching together across cultures in Ethiopia.

In our intercultural, diverse world, approaching coaching with what we call ACHE at EthicalCoach – awareness, curiosity, humility and empathy – contributes to positive results. This includes staying curious as coaches, being aware of our own culture and how that impacts the lens with which we see the people we are coaching and working with, and staying humble.

Working with a team leader that also exemplified the ACHE approach was one of the most eye-opening and rewarding experiences we had in co-coaching NGO teams in Ethiopia for EthicalCoach over two years. Their self-awareness, humility and openness to feedback, their curiosity and application of learning, their commitment and dedication to the team coaching process and partnership, contributed to an engaged and developing team, with transformative results.

Despite the pandemic and organisational changes occurring, their level of flexibility, understanding and vulnerability transcended cultural norms and barriers and allowed us as coaches to support this team successfully. This was in sharp contrast to another team leader who was not as clear on or dedicated to coaching, and we found it challenging to engage and schedule with them. We found it crucial to have a written, signed agreement with clearly laid-out expectations, including a cancellation policy, especially when coaching is newer to the culture.

While awareness of our own culture is important, we don’t want to look at everything through our own cultural lens – believing that we’re right and everyone else is wrong. For coaches looking to establish trust and safety, it is so important to demonstrate unconditional positive regard. This includes seeing our clients, whomever they are and whatever culture they come from, as creative, resourceful and whole, and co-creating our coaching culture and partnership.

Empathy is having some understanding of what an experience is like for another person. Putting this into action around direct communication, which is hugely different across cultures, Marilyn recommends coaches start with a conversation: ‘This is my culture. Tell me about your culture. How do we want our culture to be, as coach and client partners? How direct will we be with each other?’ Communication has a huge cultural variation. We are all somewhere along the indirect-to-direct continuum. Marilyn’s co-coaching and coaching agreements include: ‘If I were to unintentionally cross a line with you, if I were to say something that offended you, or didn’t land right with you, how would we address that?’ We applied this with both NGO teams in our work in Ethiopia. Ethiopian culture tends to be more hierarchical and less direct than Western ones. We found that both teams wanted direct communication, but at times found it challenging to practise.

Although we are generationally and ethnically different, we are both women raised in North America, and agreed to communicate directly. Curiosity helped our process and collaboration flow flawlessly, contributing to recognising the value each person brings. Despite our differing years of experience, this was an opportunity for us to learn from each other by identifying our strengths and openly communicating our areas of improvement. Removing a hierarchical approach in our collaboration helped foster a trusting, open and compatible space, translating into our coaching styles and sessions, as well as providing a model for the teams we co-coached.

We are thankful that we are a naturally good fit, each bringing ideas and sharing the responsibilities of facilitating our NGO leadership coaching summit breakout sessions and team coaching. We invested time in not only preparing but also debriefing our sessions,

## WHAT IS ETHICALCOACH?

EthicalCoach, the philanthropic arm of WBECS, connects world-class coaches to leaders in the non-profit sector. Our goal is to help them multiply their impact over the long term. To us, good coaching means stronger communities, healthier families and better access to justice. Our coaches work with leaders to maximise their personal and professional potential, with the following program design:

1. An initial meeting to identify key issues and establish coaching guidelines and focus.
2. Six months of coaching appointments, approximately one hour in length each, twice a month.
3. A final wrap-up meeting to summarise accomplishments and agree on strategies going forward.

including check-ins with our participants as well as each other. Trust was easily established as we intentionally co-designed our co-coaching partnership and culture. It was helpful having Leah ‘on the ground’ in Ethiopia and meeting with the team in person while Marilyn joined via Zoom from the USA.

Leah and Marilyn’s only encounter before meeting each other in person in Addis Ababa just days before the EthicalCoach summit was at the Breaking Free from Bias programme Marilyn facilitated for the EthicalCoach international and local coaching teams. That programme, along with the cultural briefings the international coaching team received, helped illuminate cultural differences such as time orientation and approaches to hierarchy/equality. It encouraged and provided a process for identifying and managing bias and assumptions.

There has been so much emphasis on identifying biases that the next step, managing them, is sometimes neglected. Marilyn invites coaches and leaders, as she did in our programme, to first pause and take a few deep breaths. That moves us from operating at the unconscious level, where we are the vast majority of the time, to a more conscious state. The next step is to consider the person that we’ll be working with, and do a self-check. Based on their multiple identities – age, ethnicity, culture, gender and so on – what are the assumptions or biases I might be carrying about them? How will I shift those assumptions and biases?

Using the team that we found challenging to engage with, for example, we could have judged them as rude and inconsiderate for scheduling and then cancelling at the last minute with little explanation. We explored an alternative explanation: that their commitment was lagging, whether from misunderstanding and/or changes taking place in their organisation, and felt too embarrassed to communicate this directly.

From our experience, we realised the importance of trust-building not only among team members but with us as their coaches. As someone from an Ethiopian background, Leah knows that self-expression and self-advocacy can be placed on the back burner, which means that honest and genuine communication can get overlooked, especially in team dynamics. The concept of ‘saving

the peace’, in the hope of not offending your manager or colleague, is a common trait. Through trust-building and restating our team agreements (which included confidentiality and curiosity), our teams understood the importance of providing a safe space for others to exchange thoughts, ideas, encouraging words and criticism.

We noticed and celebrated a shift in how our team members approached the concept of criticism: ‘areas of improvement’. This form of criticism in Leah’s Ethiopian culture has negative connotations and may be the only expected form of feedback. This may create a rift between the leader and team members. It can result in the recipients’ negative self-talk. Our teams managed to destigmatise (‘debias’) their perspective of feedback and approach it from a lens of support. It also resulted in expressing gratitude for the team members’ contributions to the organisation and contributed to greater team satisfaction in our follow-up team assessment.

We are thankful for the opportunity to partner as co-coaches through EthicalCoach, contributing to fruitful intercultural exchanges and building the coaching community in Ethiopia and beyond, supporting NGO leaders. Our role went beyond supporting our respective NGOs; we learned about many of the team members and their personal narratives, and the importance of creating a safe and trusting space to facilitate vulnerability and candour. We appreciate how coaching can support not only team and organisational change, but also positive culture shifts nationally, including Ethiopia’s advancement of women leaders.

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



With over 10 years of experience in the complex arenas of intercultural collaboration, community advocacy engagement and talents project management, Leah Dejenu has demonstrated her commitment to building solid and equitable relationships and communication both within the public and non-profit sectors. Her work includes organising the first Black youth conference in western Canada, assisting with a federally funded research project targeted towards minority groups. Now based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, Leah applies her experience as a project manager, coach and consultant for organisations such as the British Council, Challenges Worldwide, Adelphi and local start-ups and SMEs.

Marilyn O’Hearne, MA, MCC, partners with clients to step confidently into success in our rapidly changing, uncertain, culturally complex world with expanded capacity, deep transformation and fresh perspectives. Her vision is to unlock potential so all can live in prosperity and peace. She’s a globally experienced, culturally intelligent executive, leadership, team and mentor coach; coaching supervisor, working in 40+ countries since 1998; author of *Breaking Free from Bias*; contributor to *Law & Ethics in Coaching*; and an ICF Circle of Distinction Award honouree.

## THE KABBALAH IN COACHING

**Susan Kahn** explores concepts of similarity and difference, the broken and whole self, the place for the transcendent in coaching and what the Kabbalah can offer coaches in this regard.

We are all so very different. There is so much that potentially divides us: our family of origin, our gender identity, our sexuality, our ability and disability, our religion or our absence of religion, our material comfort or our financial struggles, our professional identity or our absence of a professional identity, whether we are parents, or whether we care for parents, our mental health, our physical health, whether we are loved or longing for love, whether we are bereaved or heartbroken or full of joy. Whether we are the helper or the helped.

And yet are we all so very different? There is so much that potentially unites us: we all have families that can be problematic, we have all faced challenges and disappointment, we have all at times done things we regret, we have most likely loved and hated, had challenges with our minds and bodies. Despite the myriad of differences, there is much that we share. The unity that shows, to paraphrase Shakespeare, 'if you prick us, we all bleed'.

In coaching we encounter it all: we might deal with a presenting issue surrounding leadership, progression, insecurity or ambition, yet we are interested in and invested in the whole. At the heart of our clients is a spiritual identity that might not be acknowledged overtly but is present in the relationship. We might not refer to spirituality in coaching, preferring consciousness, values or identity, yet I suggest it is part of us.

Recognising the broader context of coaching work is welcomed and understood as a vital part of our work. Although coaching work is often conducted in a dyad, there are always other factors at play – cultural values, organisational issues, authority relationships, stakeholder perspectives and client demands – much more than just the presence of the coach and the client. But what of the more transcendent in coaching?

Meditation, breath work, acknowledging inner voices, mindfulness, being present – these might all form part of the way a coach works with a client. Is this so different from a shaman or an energy healer who works with their clients to reach a place of spiritual wisdom?

So, what might spiritual-mystical traditions offer the coaching relationship? The influence of psychotherapy on coaching is broadly accepted. The notion that coaching is only future-focused is a

*'I go out to seek You and find You  
coming towards me'  
— Yehuda Halevi*

limiting belief: many psychodynamic coaches use history, early relationships and past challenges to inform their coaching work. In exploring spirituality I am drawing on psychoanalysis and its particular relationship with an expression of spirituality: Kabbalah and the way infinity interweaves with the everyday.

This seems a profoundly similar state to a coaching client being in a state of openness to explore the areas where they are blocked, to examine the possibilities of a situation and to contemplate an alternative way of looking at the issues that are causing them to feel 'stuck'.

Michael Eigen, a scholar of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, is accomplished at connecting psychoanalysis with other methodologies: he has written specifically about the link between Jewish mystical teachings and psychoanalytical theory. He identified the connection between the work of Wilfred Bion<sup>1</sup> and the mystical. In conversation with Bion, Eigen discovered that he used Kabbalah as a framework for his psychoanalytic work.<sup>i</sup>

Bion is most well-known for his contribution to group work, but in his later thinking he became particularly interested in the transcendental, aligning psychoanalytic ideas with mystical thinking. Ideas about infinity, love, longing, the broken self and the world of the soul.

### WEAVING THE THREADS TOGETHER

One of the themes that connects Kabbalah, psychoanalysis and indeed some approaches in coaching is the recognition that we are broken and paradoxically whole at the same time. The notion of our conscious selves and the hidden self, the split self – generous, good and kind as well as mean-spirited, envious and malicious. We occupy and own both sets of qualities. Indeed, in our coaching work we can help clients to confront their whole selves, the self they choose to show the world and the less savoury aspects of themselves that they might choose to keep hidden. Or we might encounter the reverse, those suffering with extreme impostor syndrome who fail to see their strengths and contributions.

At the heart of Kabbalah is the notion that everything grows out of love. The idea of love being part of the coaching relationship is neither new nor is it broadly accepted, particularly among solutions-focused practitioners. For some, the notion of love in a work context or professional setting is inappropriate. It is something for home, for loved ones and for those with whom we share our personal lives. The work of leadership coach Yetunde Hoffman has gone a long way towards demystifying the engagement with the 'L' word in the workplace.<sup>ii</sup> However or wherever you choose to consider love, it produces a deep reaction, emotionally and physically. The demarcation of love as an aspect of only our private lives could be at the heart of some client challenges. People often turn to coaching when they are stuck. Perhaps they are suffering, or broken in some way and in need of restoring, understanding themselves or their situation better, finding clarity. Kabbalah seeks to offer a sense of healing, touching the brokenness in our needy core. It does not strive to offer clean solutions or answers but to encourage reflection, curiosity and questioning.

Famous Kabbalistic practitioners are known for their loving ways, devotion and awareness – surely qualities we would hope to experience in those who are holding us in the coaching relationship. There is also a sense in Kabbalah of our limiting self in an enormous,

unknowable world. Bion encouraged us to imagine the client in front of us as someone we don't know. To not presume and to meet them with openness. This is what he came to describe as 'O', or the absolute truth, the moment of analytic truth. Bion might say that we are too quick to claim omnipotence or omnipresence, creating powerful fantasies and potential destruction. We can draw back to a sense of 'not knowing' in order ultimately to discover and uncover. This seems hugely relevant in examining coaching on the global stage.

In working with other cultures we are forced to adopt a truly curious stance, to observe, to witness and to question. To move away from a patriarchal sense of 'knowing best' and to examine difference without judgement, indeed with love.

### WHAT IS KABBALAH?

Kabbalah is an ancient Jewish tradition. It uses esoteric methods to make mystical interpretations of the bible. Kabbalah is complex, with many books, explanations, meditations and tracts reaching back over 2,000 years. Many are aware of elements of Kabbalah, but few would claim to be scholars, yet elements of Kabbalistic teaching can resonate powerfully. Kabbalah encourages less ego-centred thought and more other-centred thinking. It is more about losing ourselves than finding ourselves. The translation of Kabbalah is 'that which is received'. At its core is the message that one must be receptive in order to receive, essentially opening ourselves up to be able to absorb or grasp ideas, to raise our consciousness to the point that our view of reality is changed.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Susan Kahn is a coaching psychologist, fellow of the Association of Business Psychologists and a mediator. She is programme director for Coaching Psychology at Birkbeck, University of London, and works as an executive coach and facilitator.

1. Wilfred Ruprecht Bion (1897-1979) was an influential British psychoanalyst and a decorated soldier known for his work with group relations. He later went on to work with theories that relate to Kabbalistic thinking. He offers us an understanding of containment, crucial to coaching and all helping relationships and by his famous urgings to remain neutral and open to what a client might bring to any group or consultation.
- i. Eigen, M (2012). *Kabbalah & Psychoanalysis*. Karnac, London
- ii. Hoffman, Y Y (2020). *Beyond Engagement*. Authors Place Press

# REFLECTIONS FROM THE DACH REGION

Frida Bruhn and Geoffrey Matthews present an update on the work of the AC DACH regional office, operating in central Europe, and share their thoughts on the topic of coaching the global dimension.

DACH (referring to Germany, Austria and Switzerland)<sup>1</sup> is one of the AC's newest regions, having launched in 2021. Stretching from the Baltic Sea to the Alps, it sits at the heart of Europe. Between them, the three countries have a population of 100 million people, with over 80% of them in Germany. While they share the German language in common, each country has a significant foreign population, ranging from 13% in Germany to 25% in Switzerland, which is reflected in the diverse mix of locals and expats who make up the AC DACH community.

Each of the countries has its own distinctive features – for example, Switzerland has three further national languages, notably French, which is used by just under a quarter of the population. While the largest international coaching bodies have a presence in all three countries, Germany is unusual in having over 20 different coaching associations. Finally, unlike in the other DACH countries, being a life coach (*Lebens- und Sozialberater*) is a regulated profession in Austria, and such coaches are expected to a certified counsellor or therapist.

Coaching is well-established in DACH, with the first practitioners appearing in Germany in the mid-1970s, although the majority of coaches there still spend less than a third of their time actually delivering coaching.<sup>ii</sup> Today, across the DACH region one can see several common trends. One is the growing number of people entering the coaching field, partly driven by people reorienting to new independent careers, and partly in response to growing demand in areas such as life and wellness coaching, which have become even more in demand since the Covid-19 pandemic.

Leadership coaching also remains important and the use of team coaching is growing, both trends driven by the challenges faced by organisations undergoing constant change and operating in an increasingly virtual environment. Coaching in DACH has seen its own digital transformation, with a strong shift to online coaching in response to the pandemic. But the continued impact of technology can also be seen by the growth of German start-up CoachHub, which launched in 2018 and which, by connecting business clients and coaches via its digital platform, is already proving to be a global leader in this space.

One year on from its foundation, the AC DACH region is already offering regular online activities for members, including a monthly

online community café – a digital *Kaffeeklatsch* – that helps coaches to keep in touch and exchange experiences during these turbulent times. The regional office has also held a programme of speaker events and has recently introduced virtual co-coaching sessions. For 2022, the aim is to launch podcasts and to develop offerings in German and French as well. With a thriving coaching market, AC DACH provides the opportunity for coaches to connect with colleagues across the region and be part of a leading global professional body. With more people starting up coaching practices, the quality and experience of the services they provide may vary, and the AC aims to provide a forum for professional exchange and growth, encouraging excellence through thought leadership, and for providing accreditation that enables members to differentiate themselves when talking to potential clients.

## THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSITY

For me, coaching means being very attuned to the diversity of the clients with whom we work. There are strong Anglo-Saxon roots to modern-day coaching, but this comes with certain assumptions about the role of the individual and their free will that are not always shared by other cultures. For me, this has been reinforced having been brought up by parents of different nationalities (Danish and English), and now by living in the multicultural city of Geneva in Switzerland, which itself is a country that has a further four national languages. The members of the AC DACH leadership team come from various very different backgrounds, which I feel is one of its strengths, but it means that – when coaching in a multinational context – I'm very aware that this requires sensitivity around identity, culture and language, as even the simplest word may have very different meanings for people.

Geoffrey Matthews

## INCREASINGLY REFLECTING GLOBAL CONCERNS

People are thinking more about future global problems, whether they relate to climate change, consequences of the pandemic or changing working conditions. An increasing number of world citizens are becoming interested in their wellbeing, healing and even spiritual awakening. The flourishing sector of mindset and transformational coaching has grown immensely during the pandemic. The relationship towards time has changed for many, and in turn influences people's career decisions. Personal fulfilment becomes more critical than financial reward. There is a need for coaching to help address time management and effectiveness; to develop better habits and growth mindsets; and to help people gain confidence and have more meaningful life experiences. Positive intelligence – a mindfulness practice – is trending for a reason, which is that the effects are so powerful. The word 'spiritual' is not for everybody, but the techniques, tools and practices are becoming more mainstream, in a good way, and are helping individuals to heal. Ultimately, hopefully, they are contributing towards healing the planet.

Frida Bruhn

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Frida Bruhn is responsible for organisational development for AC DACH. She is a Jay Shetty certified life and success coach. Frida lives in Leverkusen, Germany, and works with her international clients mostly online.

[www.fridabruhn.com](http://www.fridabruhn.com)

Geoffrey Matthews is the AC DACH regional chair and is an accredited AC executive coach. Based in Geneva, Switzerland, Geoff works as an independent career coach and strategic HR consultant.

[www.geoffreymatthewsconsulting.com](http://www.geoffreymatthewsconsulting.com)

1. D for Deutschland; A for Austria; and CH for Switzerland (Confoederatio Helvetica)
- i. Passmore, J., Brown, H., Greif, S., Rauen, C. et al. 2018. *Coaching in Germany: Executive Report 2018*. Henley. Henley Business School.



## Leader Coach Accreditation and Membership

Join our global community of members who are applying a Leader Coach mindset across their organization.

**Did You Know?** The Association for Coaching (AC) are the only global coaching body to offer a Leader Coach Membership and Accreditation scheme for individuals who are pioneering the Leader Coach approach in their organization.

Get the best out of your organization's talent and build team performance to enable growth and future success by applying the Leader Coach approach.

"Coaching is one way to strengthen culture. Leader Coaches create culture"

Jen Kidby, Director of Talent and Leadership Development, Grant Thornton Canada

To find out more about our Leader Coach Membership and Accreditation scheme contact: [accreditationoffice@associationforcoaching.com](mailto:accreditationoffice@associationforcoaching.com)

**‘We have a choice. We can either say that “this” is what coaching is, and restrict it, or take a broader vision’**

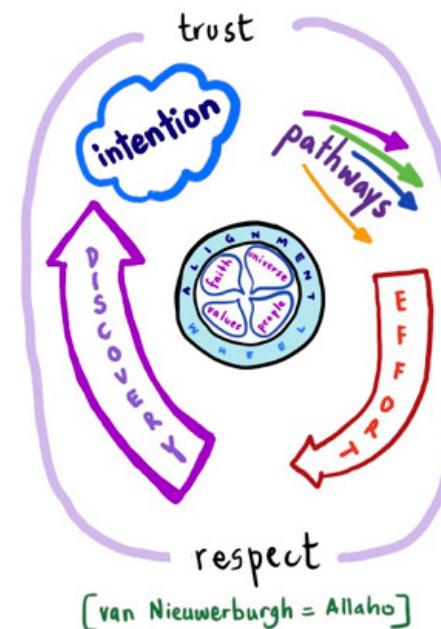
**In part two of our interview, deputy editor James Bridgeman speaks to Christian van Nieuwerburgh about his work with Muslim coach Raja’a Allaho to align Western models of coaching with Islamic perspectives in the creation of their Ershad model. What does this mean for individuals, organisations and coaches across the globe in a post-pandemic landscape?**

**ABOUT PROFESSOR CHRISTIAN VAN NIEUWERBURGH**

Prof Christian van Nieuwerburgh is a professor of coaching and positive psychology at the Centre for Positive Psychology and Health at the Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland, and global director for Growth Coaching International, a coach training provider for the educator sector. He is an academic, researcher, executive coach and consultant interested in the integration of coaching and positive psychology in educational and health settings. He has published widely in the sector, regularly speaks at global conferences, and has given presentations and delivered training in Europe, the US, South America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australia.

**In the first part of our interview, you mentioned a cultural disparity around the word ‘optimal’. What does your work coaching within Islamic culture teach us about coaching for optimal performance?**

The short coaching framework, Ershad coaching, that I developed with my dear colleague Raja’a Allaho was a huge learning experience for me. My main contribution was to honour the principles of coaching, to bring the coaching lens. My colleague’s primary contribution was to bring a perspective about coaching people who wish to live their lives according to their faith. Our challenge was: how do we respect and honour both perspectives?



I was reluctant to compromise on what I thought coaching was. With hindsight, I think I was probably not flexible enough. Going into conversations with Raja’a, I thought: ‘I have to protect something about coaching in these conversations.’

It turned out that we were exploring the use of coaching in a particular context. We started by acknowledging that the client has a right to say: ‘This is my worldview and I would like to be coached within my worldview’.

I just love that the model we developed is highly attuned to relationships. It’s a systemic model that emerged from the Islamic perspective: the worldview is the system. The coaching framework we designed helps individuals to ensure that their values and principles are aligned with their context, so I do think that we have developed a model that encourages us to be respectful of our ecosystem.

The Ershad model has two major components. One is a conversational process, like many other coaching frameworks, but I think the real contribution is what we call the Alignment Wheel, which is part of the process. It’s not an optional piece: it’s making sure that a person’s behaviours are aligned with their intention. It’s so simple to say that, isn’t it? But I think that is a real and present challenge many of us are facing: often we’re doing things that aren’t really in alignment with some of our deeply held values and beliefs. There are other levels of alignment, too. As it’s a faith-based model,

*‘If we feel more aligned, we’re more likely to experience higher levels of wellbeing, purpose and meaning. Ultimately, it will allow us to live better lives.’*

there is alignment with God, but there’s also alignment with the universe. There’s alignment with important relationships, and then there’s alignment with one’s deeply held values and principles.



This could easily be adopted by Western coaching models simply by asking these questions when considering the options that a client has proposed: how well are they aligned with their values? How well do they align with what important people in their life would like or think? My proposition is that if we feel more aligned, we’re more likely to experience higher levels of wellbeing, purpose and meaning. Ultimately, it will allow us to live better lives.

**To what extent has coaching for alignment through Islamic coaching influenced your coaching more broadly?**

When we were writing the book, Raja’a would say to me, ‘Christian, this book isn’t for Muslims,’ and I would say, ‘No, it actually is, that’s why we’re writing it. It’s called *Coaching in Islamic Culture*.’ What she was alluding to is that while it comes from the wisdom of a particular faith, it applies more broadly. That is always her message. Most of the models and the processes we use in coaching are based on Western theories and philosophies. Raja’a was saying she didn’t want the Ershad framework to be seen as limited to practising Muslims, which was my lens at first.

Many positive psychology theories align very well with faith-based teachings. In the Ershad framework, the first conversational stage is called discovery – and of course appreciative inquiry starts with discovery – but there’s something else in our discovery stage which is about building a relationship. Unusually I think for Western

models, we would expect the coach to share a bit about their own background after hearing from the client, so there would be a two-way dialogue, the purpose of which is to build relationship.

In our shared framework we also talk about pathways, which aligns very nicely with Hope Theory and the idea of agency. You could say the Ershad framework is an example of a coaching framework that includes positive psychology concepts within it.

Ershad has really made me question some of our assumptions around coaching. I would say coaching is often too individualistic. I think, if we're not careful, coaching could add to some of the societal, organisational and individual challenges we're facing because of its very narrow focus. We ask clients: 'What is it you want and what are you going to do?' That's empowering, but that may not lead to optimal outcomes. It's almost saying: 'Forget about everybody else, what is it you want? What can you uniquely do?' Then, the coachee is just going to worry about themselves, right? I've become more aware of the individualistic nature of some forms of coaching and I think this can be unhelpful in the long term.

*'Coaching is conversational, it's relational. It's about intentionally supporting another person, and it's about helping them to achieve things and enhance their wellbeing.'*

Another assumption is our obsession with goals, and that may be partly to do with the Western focus on winning. Executive coaching had got to the stage where it might have been encouraging the achievement of goals at almost any cost – that's something we need to be alert to. What we learned by working on Ershad, rolling it out and doing some research, is that by raising the client's awareness to this concept of alignment, it's much more likely they're going to be able to sustain the changes that they've made.

If a client is in respectful dialogue with the people around them, or the organisation, then it's better for their wellbeing: they are achieving objectives or outcomes that are important to them, in a way that aligns with important values that they have but is also respectful of the context they're in.

The third assumption is a red flag for me, which is how judgemental we can be as coaches, especially with a positive psychology lens. To what extent is somebody who is a devout believer of any faith better served by being coached by somebody of the same faith? In some way at least, they're not going to be judged on their faith; is that better? Is it actually possible? I'm thinking both ways here. For a non-believer, are they better served by being coached by somebody else who has that worldview? And is it possible?

This is a big question. Is it possible for somebody in this scenario, who doesn't have that worldview, to be truly non-judgemental about that and without any tendency to try to navigate the person

in one way or another? The most important thing is to create psychological safety so that the person does not feel judged, and therefore it's so important that the coach can be truly non-judgemental about things that are important for the coachee.

**It's often stated that coaching is Western-dominated. Is that starting to change and, if so, what is the future for coaching across cultures?**

Are things getting better? Yes, I do think so. Hopefully with some humility I can suggest that the University of East London, UK, has played a very important role in bringing the non-WEIRD (Western, educated, industrialised, rich and democratic) perspective. There have been calls for more than a decade now to move away from just looking at so-called WEIRD research. In the last five years there have been probably been 40 or 50 articles from UEL that are about the application of coaching in various contexts. I've also been grateful for the response the Ershad framework has received: the most frequent positive feedback has been that it applies outside the Islamic context too, which is what Raja'a was trying to tell me right from the beginning – so that openness is encouraging.

There's now the *Middle East Journal of Positive Psychology*, so that's a welcome development. A former UEL student, Sylvia King, has been quite active in asking the question: 'Do we need an indigenous coaching psychology for the Middle East?' Of course, that's looking at one specific context, but my question would be: 'Do we need indigenous coaching psychologies?' When asking questions, we have to be ready for any answer, so I'm open to 'No' – but I think we should stay curious about this.

This brings me back to what I said earlier: I think if we're too defensive about what coaching is then it's not going to work in some contexts. We've come to some kind of consensus to say yes, it should be one-to-one, or it shouldn't; it should be directive or non-directive. These are decisions that we've come to: they weren't handed down to us, nothing has been irreversibly decided.

In some cultural contexts, the way we've defined coaching is not likely to be successful: if we've insisted on the nature of the relationship; on hierarchical or non-hierarchical arrangements; or whether you can or cannot share advice.

We have a choice. We can either say that 'this' is what coaching is, and restrict it – in which case we just have to accept this as a Western-developed, Western-designed conversational intervention, and in that case it should probably be limited to those areas where we hold true to the values that created this model. Or, we need to take a broader vision of what coaching is.

The broader vision that's growing in my mind is that coaching is conversational – it's relational. It's about intentionally supporting another person, and it's about helping them to achieve things and enhance their wellbeing. If we're broad about it, I think it's more likely that in different places we can say: 'Yeah, that's what is needed in our cultural context.'

In the West we have to be very alert to imposing our views, imposing our ways of thinking. We have a track record of doing that. If we can bring the principle of humility to the way we work, we're much more likely to be able to design something that is accepted and useful globally.

i. Snyder, C. R. (2002). *Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind*. *Psychological Inquiry*, 13(4), 249–275. [www.jstor.org/stable/1448867](http://www.jstor.org/stable/1448867)



## UK Virtual Masterclass: Access the True Power of Coaching with Julie Starr

The Association for Coaching (AC) is excited to welcome Julie Starr - expert and thought leader in the field of coaching and mentoring and author of *The Coaching Manual* - to speak at our UK Virtual Masterclass Event on 25 February 2022 at 10:00 GMT/ 11:00 CET.

Julie will use simple theory to frame principles and practice to help you increase your impact and master and hone your craft.



To secure your place, please visit:  
[associationforcoaching.com/events/EventDetails](http://associationforcoaching.com/events/EventDetails)



## Co-Coaching

Practise your coaching with fellow peers in one of the Association for Coaching's (AC) Co-Coaching Forums. It's a fantastic opportunity to be coached, to coach others, observe, and receive feedback as part of your ongoing reflective journal.

Co-Coaching Forums are an AC membership benefit and attendance contributes towards your CPD.



To explore Co-Coaching and to find your nearest Co-Coaching Forum visit:  
[associationforcoaching.com/page/CoCoaching](http://associationforcoaching.com/page/CoCoaching)



## UK Virtual Masterclass: Challenging Coaching

The AC is delighted to welcome John Blakey and Ian Day to speak at our UK Virtual Masterclass on 4 March 2022 at 09:00 GMT / 10:00 CET

Ten years after publishing their groundbreaking book, *Challenging Coaching: Going Beyond Traditional Coaching to Face the FACTS*, John and Ian reunite to discuss Challenging Coaching, the FACTS model and highlight why this is relevant.



To secure your place, please visit:  
[associationforcoaching.com/events/EventDetails](http://associationforcoaching.com/events/EventDetails)



## SPIRITUALITY BEGINS WITH KNOWING ONESELF, AND EXPANDS GLOBALLY

Coaches **Judith Cardenas** and **Bernard Rochon** examine self-knowledge as an ongoing practice of ‘taking stock’ and how the quintessence of spirituality can reach across borders.

‘Know thyself’ was etched over the entrance of Apollo’s temple in Delphi and became a favourite topic of debate for Socrates and philosophers after him. Shakespeare’s Polonius in *Hamlet* gave the famous counsel: ‘This above all: to thine own self be true.’ No better words spoken by a coach! And a genuine coach will begin their career with this wise counsel, to ‘know oneself’.

Spirituality has long been part of our human wondering about who we are. Countless books and monographs have been written about spirituality, a topic that is referenced as philosophy, psychology, religion and simply self-help. It is connected to mindfulness, meditation, law of attraction, yoga, wellbeing, health, visualisation, brain waves, Reiki, self-help, success and so on. Many propose spirituality as finding one’s meaning and purpose in life, much like Viktor Frankl’s thoughts in his book *Man’s Search for Meaning*, based on his concentration camp experience during the Holocaust; he reached out to the world with his logotherapy.

To be a spirituality coach, the dedicated coach would best begin with the thoughts of spiritual leaders like Carl Jung, who broke from Freud’s ideas to promote his concepts of individuation, by which each person processes their unique self through conscious and unconscious elements, as well as connecting with others within the collective unconscious.

Assumed in Jung’s collective unconscious is the concept of sharing with others the deep human elements across cultures and borders. In Wendy Wilson’s paper *Coaching with a Global Mindset*, she uses Robert Kegan’s five stages of consciousness to state ‘that the shift to each developing level of consciousness is in itself a transformative process, eventually leading to the development of a globally minded “systems” way of thinking... and they advocate the development of cultural self-awareness as a prerequisite to the development of a global mindset.’<sup>i</sup>

Considering today’s context, with nations across the globe suffering horrific climate events like floods and drought that have displaced people into migrants desperate for humane living conditions, Wilson reminds coaches in a cross-cultural setting that they must ‘reinvent’ themselves: ‘knowing who you are and where you belong is your identity and when you understand where you come from, then you can choose what to keep and what to leave behind.’

Andrea Roth, a second author and coach contributor to the *International Journal of Evidence-based Coaching*, cautions in her conclusion:

*‘For coaching practice, I suggest that the focus on national culture does not say much about the individual. Even if coaches identify*

*culturally rooted behaviors or expectations among their clients, they should be aware that they are not referring to culture as a set, real, objective “thing” in the coaching room, but that it is their own perception and interpretation that defines something as cultural. I suggest that coaches should reflect on how their assumptions about specific cultures, and the use of culture as a frame for understanding the client’s behavior might impinge on their coaching practice to avoid the pitfall of cultural stereotyping.’<sup>ii</sup>*

Another important source of insight into spirituality is the work of child psychiatrist Dr Daniel Siegel, who defines the mind ‘as an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information.’<sup>iii</sup> This is a tightly packed concept of how the mind is the spiritual power regulating the energy of the brain’s thinking process with the informational input of our relationships; this is the three-dimensional unity of the regulating mind organising the activity of the brain along with our interpersonal relations that generate our connection to the world. His 2010 book, *Mind, A Journey to the Heart of Being Human*, is a masterful study in the spiritual mystery of our humanness and search for self.

Siegel expresses the openness of the systems of the mind through our social connections with other informational resources available by communication. He underlines how ‘I’ and ‘me’ become ‘we’ and ‘us’ through our social minds:

*‘Being human is more than being a brain at the helm of an isolated ship lost at sea. We are fully embedded in our social world and fully embodied beyond the solo skull. This embodied and embedded reality means we are truly open systems. There is no boundary within which we can feel we are completely in charge. There is no programmer to whom we can turn for solace that all will be well. Even when we fully embrace the most rigorous of scientific beliefs and most cherished of religious beliefs, this view urges us to embrace our humanity filled with humility.’<sup>iii</sup>*

An author rich in the elaboration of spirituality is self-discovery guru Deepak Chopra. In this 21-day meditation, *Renew Yourself: Body, Mind, & Spirit*, he defines spirituality in terms of silent awareness. ‘We connect the spirit in the inside of the silent mind and then be mindful during the outside experiences of daily life.’<sup>iv</sup> Chopra explains how spirituality is our real self:

*‘The real self, which we experience in meditation, is always complete, whole, and fulfilled. This fulfillment of ever-present awareness is always available to us in the background of every experience we have. We do not need to chase the objects of our desire to be fulfilled – rather, we only need to be present in the now... The soul is the core of who we are, the source from which we derive meaning, purpose, strength, and renewal. Truth and life are the connection of the life of mind with body... Spiritual evolution happens in the silence of the soul, the refined level of the heart. This gives us a foundation for our spiritual development... When we live in the present awareness, our spirit automatically heals the conditioned mind and reveals itself as inherently valuable.’*

Chopra confirms what ancient philosophers debated from time immemorial: ‘Only pure awareness can know and experience the nature of consciousness. This is what self-realization means: the true self knowing itself.’

Being a spirituality coach is uniquely different from other kinds of coaching. Spirituality is intimately connected to one’s personal

experience of life as ‘something that is bigger than me’. Many spiritual mentors, shamans or gurus often separated themselves from others to personally experience a spiritual life beyond themselves, with some such as Guatama Buddha and his followers spending years in solitude and meditation.

An authentic coach of spirituality will have experienced the solitude of meditation and searching for the personal meaning of being human. This is done through genuine self-reflection and being mentored by an expert in spirituality. It can be a frightful experience to delve into the deep, inner search of self-knowledge without the assuring companion of a guide through the hidden, inner wandering of the human mind. Being a coach of spirituality carries a serious and personal responsibility to walk with another person through the journey of self-discovery, no matter with whom in the wide world of human variety.

This above all: to thine own self be true – and then you are ready to share.

### ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Judith is an innovation and performance strategist with more than 22 years of experience in learning and performance, corporate training and consulting. Judith is professionally trained in the area of neuro-coaching and the application of neuroscience, and in organisational psychology into the field of coaching and performance improvement. She currently provides training, consulting and coaching for organisations such as the US Navy, US Coast Guard and US Air Force, as well as a number of private clients.

Dr Bernard Rochon is a dedicated educator, trainer and executive coach. He has a keen interest in creating tools and techniques that maximise individual performance and success. Bernard received his doctorate in Ministry from Austin Presbyterian Seminary, adding to his two master’s degrees, in the areas of education and psychology. He also holds the designation of registered corporate coach and has more than 30 years of experience in higher education, corporate training and non-profit leadership. He has completed various postdoctoral training, including ROI Professional and The Neuroscience of Coaching.

- i. Wilson, W. (2013). ‘Coaching with a Global Mindset.’ *International Journal of Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Vol. 11, No. 2, August 2013.
- ii. Roth, A. (2017). ‘Coaching a client with a different cultural background – does it matter?’. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Special Issue No. 11, June 2017.
- iii. Siegel, D. (2010). *Mind, A Journey to the Heart of Being Human*. Norton, New York, NY.
- iv. Chopra, D. (2020). *Renew Yourself: Body, Mind, & Spirit*.

# DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION, BUT BETTER

Drawing on her experiences of growing up in a divided Malaysia, **Eileen Lee Lavergne** calls for a rethink of D&I – one that aims to make inclusion a healthy reality for organisations rather than a tick-box exercise.

We can't turn the corner of an organisation today without considering diversity and inclusion (D&I). The #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter movements have highlighted how damaging discrimination and blatant entitlement can be. This emphasis on D&I is a good thing. As a society we are more mindful than we have ever been about what it means to be human.

D&I is also being recognised as good for business. McKinsey reported as much as 48% difference in performance between the most and least gender-diverse companies, and 36% difference in outperformance by those more ethnically and culturally diverse.

So are we making progress? No doubt, but as to what extent, it's likely not far enough.

## WHERE DOES D&I STAND?

D&I management hires have been on the rise, according to ZoomInfo (June 2020), but that is predominantly through the lens of corporate America. Europe's D&I progress is a mixed bag according to PWC's benchmarking survey.<sup>i</sup> As for the rest of the world, there's no clarity about awareness or willingness, much less intent. McKinsey estimates that \$8 billion is spent on D&I training a year globally, but with little in the way of tangible results.<sup>ii</sup>

This is not surprising, considering how complex tackling D&I is. Notwithstanding that complexity, I believe big contributing factors are hype and measures that focus on demographics in reaction to external forces. This, in turn, produces weak foundations for D&I. In the PWC benchmarking survey, only 19% of respondents said their primary D&I objective was for business results, while no more than 14% of D&I leaders are peers to the C-Suite.

This obsession with optics over results leads organisations to resort to affirmative action policies of blanket quotas to force representation. At best, D&I becomes a cosmetic change. At worse, it sets a dangerous path towards reverse discrimination and unwanted precedents.

I have a very personal perspective on this, for I am a living consequence of a reversed affirmative action policy, one put in place decades ago.

## D&I ENGINEERING: THE MALAYSIAN TRAVESTY

I grew up in multiethnic and multicultural Malaysia. To all extents, it's a success story of harmony in diversity. From a tender age, I was conditioned to be tolerant to differences. As an adult, I believed this upbringing made me highly adaptable and resilient, especially as my travels, studies and work took me around the globe. It did, to some degree – but not because of affirmative action.

Having lived and worked overseas for over two decades, these experiences play back now to challenge my memory and naivety. The diversity I revelled in seems quite hollow today. I am recognised simply as a Chinese female. It didn't matter that I'm a second-generation Malaysian with Peranakan ancestry whose roots in the land date back centuries. Like so many of my 'kind', I am in truth an 'outcast' of D&I engineering.

I was not yet two when my parents lived through bloody civil unrest as racial riots swept the country in 1969. Armed forces opened fire on ordinary citizens for how they looked. Emergency lockdown was declared. Parliament was suspended for two years, and an election was robbed of fair outcomes. Racial tensions had been mounting following emancipation from British rule in 1957, due to historical segregation and manipulation. The impoverishment of the rural Malay majority made things worse.

The NEP (National Economic Policy), adopted in 1971, was meant to correct the economic imbalance. The deeper reason, however, was a consolidation of 'Malay supremacy'. Preferential treatments, enforced with quotas, subsidies and legislation, were introduced in every aspect of life: education, public service, company shareholders, public tenders, housing schemes, military and so on. Fifty years later, they have become normalised, validating the sentiment of entitlement of one group and religion over others. It has created an environment ripe for cronyism and nepotism among an elite few, and led to the impoverishment, rather than the enrichment, of rural populations – Malays included. Worst of all, it continues to deepen racial divisions and groupthink in a never-ending vicious cycle. It is also draining the nation of its greatest minds and talent, many who are educated overseas – Malays included.

My generation grew up in the shadow of our parents' trauma and mistrust from that day. Unwittingly, we became accomplices to keeping the illusion of harmonious diversity at the cost of truly understanding our differences, and of valuing our unique complementarities as strengths.

I don't share this lightly, or to be insensitive to the struggles of certain groups that have been marginalised all their lives. I say this to call for deeper mindfulness, because making cosmetic changes does every one of us a huge disservice.

## DIVERSITY WITH INCLUSION

So how do we 'do' healthy D&I – and sustainably? There's no easy answer, but my suggestion to organisational leaders is to pay equal attention and weight to inclusion – the dimension that, as the EMCC defines, 'puts the concept and practice of diversity into action'. Consider these principles when you design your inclusion strategies to complement policies for correcting diversity imbalances.

1. D&I is a social construct that is learnt, conditioned and embedded through social interactions with others. Racism festers because of validated fears and mirrored ignorance. D&I flourishes when differences are brought to the fore to be recognised, valued and built upon. What will it take to bring radically different people together to get used to dealing with each other? How are we addressing D&I when certain social labels instantly exclude all others? A Reuters poll showed that two-thirds of Americans were surrounded exclusively by people like them.<sup>iii</sup> In British Malaya, the different races had very little contact with each other, and never lived or managed themselves as a community.
2. Embracing D&I is a systemic and social change process. It cannot be handled like an add-on function or implemented through one-way instruction and top-down policies. Hiring someone who represents a minority group to lead the charge without other impetus is just setting that person and the transition up for failure. Who is in the best position to place D&I at the forefront of an organisational change agenda and who else needs to be included to keep the process honest and transparent? What complementary skills and knowledge will counterbalance influence, and help with new behaviors or accelerate re-accluturation?
3. D&I imbalances are historically ingrained with local context. Although blanket measures to right those imbalances send a strong message to the whole organisation and its stakeholders, the real work of inclusion must meet people where they are. ake the EU's 2012 legislation for increasing women on public-listed company boards. Although numbers have more than doubled since 2011, the European Commission's report of 2016 observed that most improvements happened in countries such as France, which took 'legislative action and/or had an intensive public debate on the issue'. The proportion of public-listed French companies with women on boards has surpassed the 40% requirement, and is in fact the highest in the world at 45%. This hints at the criticality of public dialogue more than the affirmative action itself. What open dialogue needs to happen in organisations in a similar?
4. D&I creates emotional connections. Countless studies over many decades have provided the logical reasoning for D&I.

It's not more data but inspiration; a greater purpose, coupled with answering the call to innovation and tapping into compassionate values, that is key. Has the purpose of your D&I been challenged and picked apart sufficiently, incorporating inner and outer dissident voices? Will the 'why' for D&I hold the connections together in times of stress and crisis? Who and what will sustain the worthwhile links at every level?

## STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE TO DO BETTER, NOT MORE

Recently, a friend who interviewed for a job discovered he had been rejected because he was not a person of colour, the 'right' gender and he was certainly on the wrong side of 50. Some might suggest it's the time of comeuppance, but I think this is simply righting wrongs with more wrongs.

For a long time, inclusion without diversity has built systems of presumed entitlement and groupthink. Today, we risk creating optical illusions through our obsession with visible diversity that distract from the required inclusion of tough conversations and tangible reconciliation for us to be the best we can be, individually and collectively.

Ask the millions among the Malaysian diaspora if they feel attached to their birth country and you'll find the results telling. How can we? Our differences became the reason for ostracising us from our birthright. Engagement, empowerment and co-ownership aren't guaranteed by diversity alone, but by striking a better balance between diversity and inclusion.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Founder of Ellagora change practices, Eileen Lee Lavergne challenges organisational changemakers to think, lead and win differently in generating new growth. She has interchangeably assumed corporate and operational roles with tech startups and multi-national corporations, including Cisco, where she worked on ICT innovation for socioeconomic development in emerging markets. Eileen serves on the board of TheChange Leaders, and is both EMCC- and ICF-accredited. She is a postgraduate of HEC Paris and Oxford SBS, and of the University of Westminster.

- i. [pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/global-diversity-and-inclusion-survey/european-report.pdf](https://www.pwc.com/gx/en/services/people-organisation/global-diversity-and-inclusion-survey/european-report.pdf). PwC: Global D&I Data. Accessed 06/09/2021.
- ii. [shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/fall2020/pages/a-new-approach-to-diversity-and-inclusion.aspx](https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/fall2020/pages/a-new-approach-to-diversity-and-inclusion.aspx)
- iii. [reuters.com/article/us-usa-poll-race-idUSBRE97704320130808](https://www.reuters.com/article/us-usa-poll-race-idUSBRE97704320130808)

# COMPASSIONATE RESILIENCE: A MEETING OF ELITE SPORT AND COACHING MINDSETS

Laurence Cassø Halsted introduces the concept of compassionate resilience, and shows us how we can apply ideas from elite sport to the way we manage and coach our teams in the workplace.

The world of high-performance sport has entered a period of reckoning. The traditional approach, centred around a result-focused, win-at-all-costs culture, has led to shockingly frequent cases of abuse and inhumane treatment of athletes. British gymnast and Olympic bronze medallist Amy Tinkler said that she would give her medal back if it meant she didn't have to go through the brutal system that led her to it. There is something very wrong with the culture of sport when medals and results are valued far above the health and growth of the athletes.

The effects of this approach are plain for all to see – burnout, dropout and a high prevalence of mental health issues among elite athletes. The toll on the athletes, and in many cases also the coaches, is elite sport's enduring shame, but it also represents a huge inhibitor on achieving the potential within the system. When one athlete drops out of their sport early due to overtraining or lack of support, their years of development and the impact of their continued engagement are suddenly lost. The results they could have achieved are no longer on the cards. Their impact on those around them and those that come after them is immediately lost. The unique personal growth that accompanies a long career in sport is sadly cut short.

The same trends are evident in the business world, where ambitions are high and performance and results matter most. Stress-related illness and sick leave is at an all-time high. Companies are struggling to motivate and hold onto their top talent. Younger generations are arriving with different expectations of their working conditions. They are impatient to make an impact in the world and are driven more by connection to a higher purpose than by the traditional remunerations. In both sport and business, traditional notions of mental toughness and resilience are being shown to lack substance. Those athletes and employees who do attempt to 'push on through' in the face of increasing stress and pressure end up suffering consequences.

The problem is that our definitions of mental toughness and resilience are no longer fit for purpose. Our understanding of the psychology of performance and of dealing with pressure has deepened. We have a host of new ideas about how to develop people, and how to create environments that encourage thriving rather than just surviving.

## INTRODUCING COMPASSIONATE RESILIENCE

There is a paradigm shift coming in elite sport, centred around the creation of just these kinds of psychologically informed environments. An understanding of motivational theory and positive and performance psychology provides the foundation for cultures where people are supported rather than brutalised. Teams that are adopting this approach

are opening up a whole new world of performance gains, as athletes and coaches are trained to focus more on the process than the results, encouraged to be true to themselves, supported through the inevitable turbulence of a career in elite sport and motivated to stay longer in their sport. The concept of resilience, too, is being reconsidered. Through my experiences as an Olympic athlete and then supporting others at the highest levels of sport, I have come to an understanding of an idea that can best be described as *compassionate resilience*. This concept is founded on what are often regarded as 'softer' skills which, when put under the microscope, turn out to be the toughest of all.

There is a Buddhist parable that illustrates this nicely. The zen master asks his pupils what is tougher, the brick wall or the blanket? His pupils respond: the brick wall, of course. The master replies: 'And what happens to the wall when I throw a stone at it? It will chip. What happens when I throw a stone against the blanket? It absorbs the blow without damage.' The hardened mindset can withstand some stress but each blow will chip away at it, leaving it ever more unstable and, over time, liable to collapse. The more pliable mindset can absorb blow after blow without suffering substantial damage.

So what are the building blocks of this more pliable mindset that can lead to resilience of a deeper kind? Among them are self-compassion, mindfulness, gratitude and living by your values. This foundation of resilience represents our best understanding of psychology combined with wisdom from the ancient philosophies.

Self-compassion – treating yourself with warmth, kindness and forgiveness as you would do a close friend or family member – has been proven to mitigate the severity of post-traumatic stress disorder in military veterans. It has also been shown that self-compassionate people are more likely to pick themselves up and try again after experiencing failure. Self-compassion offers a deep sense of identity and self-worth from a place of security and acceptance, allowing for all the inadequacies and failures that come with being human.

Mindfulness is, simply put, being aware of your experience in the present moment without attaching judgement to it. It is the starting point for treating yourself with compassion in times of suffering and for not being swept away in destructive emotion or rumination. In a performance context, the practice of mindfulness is invaluable for developing greater focus and emotional control, which are at the core of dealing effectively with pressure.

Mindfulness meditation has long been an integral part of the mental training of top sports teams and athletes, such as the legendary Chicago Bulls team of the 80s and men's tennis player and world number one Novak Djokovic. Psychologist Viktor Frankl, in *Man's Search for Meaning*, writes: 'Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response.

In our response lies our growth and our freedom.' Mindfulness is the practice by which we can more skilfully navigate that space between stimulus and response.

Gratitude is an emotion, but also a thought that can be practised and a behaviour that can be expressed. It is a mental skill that can be trained over time and has been shown to be a buffer against stress, to decrease levels of depression, and to enhance feelings of social connectedness and positive emotions. On the physiological side, gratitude can have benefits to the cardiovascular system and to sleep, and has even been linked to greater neuroplasticity in the brain.

It is not about just thinking positively, but rather gaining a sense of perspective that can help you view challenging circumstances differently and in a way that helps you learn from them rather than be struck down by them. Australian researcher and author Kerry Howells has shown us how gratitude is also the antidote to resentment, the most toxic of emotions. Gratitude is a profound concept that can help us deal with the biggest hardships in life, heal broken relationships and live a more fulfilled life.

Living by your values and with integrity is advice that has been expounded ever since the time of the ancient Roman and Greek philosophers. A building with integrity can withstand the storm: similarly a person who builds their character on a foundation of integrity, being true to themselves and what they value in life, will be better equipped to weather the storms of life. It is a simple yet profound exercise to explore what your values are and how you can live and breathe them in your daily existence. They can help guide you in decision-making and bring a sense of inner stability and security. A lived sense of integrity means you will have clearer boundaries and will not so easily be drawn outside of them to behave in ways you later regret.

## PUTTING IT INTO ACTION

Pulling this all together, we can begin to grasp the enormous potential impact of this new, more humane approach to developing resilient people and teams. This approach turns out to be the most impactful, helping people access deeper reserves of self-worth and to connect more meaningfully with others and with their sense of purpose in the world. In sport we are seeing teams and athletes using this approach to perform far beyond expectations – from the all-dominant New Zealand All Blacks rugby union team cultivating a powerful sense of belonging and purpose, to British tennis player Emma Raducanu prioritising her mental health to pull out of Wimbledon only to come back and pull off one of the greatest achievements ever witnessed in sport in winning the US Open from qualifying, on debut.

Businesses and leaders who are committed to high performance should take note. The traditional results-focused approach is being shown up as severely lacking in the world of elite sport, and the same goes for the workplace. A new frontier of performance gains lies in the unleashing of human flourishing. This work, however, cannot be done in a single day. It requires greater time and energy commitment from all parties, and that means true appreciation and prioritisation from an organisation's leadership. Those who are willing to commit to this path will reap the benefits: a more resilient workforce that suffers less from stress and can do better, more creative work, and one that has higher motivation, greater retention of talent and an overall spike in performance for both individuals and teams.

For those now wondering how they might get started down this path, let's use the two sporting examples above as inspiration. Evoking the legendary culture of the All Blacks, you may start by

considering how the onboarding process in your business can make people feel like they truly belong there. Can you show them, in vivid language, how their contribution will connect to achieving the higher purpose of the organisation?

*The traditional results-focused approach is being shown up as severely lacking in the world of elite sport, and the same goes for the workplace.*

Turning to the remarkable example set by Emma Raducanu, perhaps you can be on the lookout for those moments when giving your team or an individual employee a break might be the step back they need in order to make a big leap forward later. In sport we are abundantly aware of the importance of rest and recovering, and of the threat of overtraining. How do you plan recuperation into the schedules of your employees?

Raducanu showed us that a teenager competing at only her second major could come through qualifying and win every set on the way to outright victory by embracing her love of the sport and focusing on each shot, each rally, one at a time. If you want your team or business to reach higher than ever before, consider how to unleash more of their intrinsic enjoyment of the work they do and especially how to get every team member focused on the process of their performance, with little care for the result.

I'm sure that all sounds near impossible for many reading this but, then again, true high performance is reserved for those willing to try and to fail.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Laurence Cassø Halsted is a two-time Olympic fencer who competed for Team GB in the London 2012 and Rio 2016 Olympic Games. After retiring as an athlete, he became the performance director for a national governing body as well as director of mentoring at non-profit The True Athlete Project. He is now bringing the cutting-edge approaches that he learned from his experiences in sport into the business sphere as a performance consultant and coach.

[laurencehalsted.com](http://laurencehalsted.com)

[linkedin.com/in/laurence-cass%C3%B8e-halsted-195974a3/](https://www.linkedin.com/in/laurence-cass%C3%B8e-halsted-195974a3/)

## THE WORKSHOP

Welcome to the section where we put models, programmes and techniques to the test.

# HOW TO IDENTIFY YOUR CLIENTS' LIMITING BELIEFS

**Lion Goodman** reminds us of the power of limiting beliefs and explores different ways we can support clients to identify and change these for the better.

Coaches can see the powerful negative role that limiting beliefs play in our clients' lives. We see the impact it has in their low self-esteem, repeating patterns of thought and behaviour, and in their limited vision.

How can we identify the real cause of the problem? How did they acquire those negative beliefs and patterns in the first place? And how can we help our clients clear them out of the way?

There are many behavioural symptoms at the surface that point to underlying limiting beliefs: procrastination, distractions, quitting, avoidance of doing what needs to be done, holding back, eliminating good options, and negative inner voices that berate or criticise the client from the inside.

To identify the beliefs that are beneath the symptom, we can begin by determining the cause of the resistance to taking action. For example, ask your clients: 'When you think about marketing yourself, and you get ready to take action, what feeling comes up?' Invite them to sit with that feeling for a moment, and feel it in their body. It helps to be willing to feel it, even if it isn't comfortable – willingness to feel a feeling is a key element in resolving it. Then ask them to describe the sensation, however they can, such as its shape, size,

location, colour, pressure and temperature. Get them to be as detailed as they can.

By directing your client's attention to the feeling underneath the resistance, you're getting closer to the subconscious driver of the behaviour. The next step is to engage the sensation in a dialogue: 'Imagine that this sensation is an old friend who has come to visit, bringing you an important message. Welcome this sensation, even if it's uncomfortable, and invite it in for a cup of tea.' A welcoming stance takes off even more resistance. 'Now ask it: What message do you have for me? It might answer in words, or feelings, or pictures, or memories. Just relax and listen closely. Whatever message you get, and whatever form it comes in, is fine.'

The message is a direct communication from the subconscious mind, which has come in the form of the sensation of resistance to the task. Often, it's delivered as a belief, such as 'I'm incapable,' 'It's too hard,' 'I'm not worthy,' or 'I don't know how'. This informs you as to the direction to take. If it points to a lack of skill, you can help your client gain that skill with study and practice. Remind your client that we all start out as beginners when learning a new skill. It's not helpful to compare ourselves to those with years of practice.

If the process has pointed to a core belief about the self, you may need an effective technology for clearing beliefs, such as NLP or perhaps hypnotherapy. Once you have helped your client remove the blockage, they can begin moving towards their goal, without resistance, easily and naturally. They will, of course, run into other blockers, barriers and resistance. Help them understand that this is part of the process of manifesting anything – our old beliefs jump up and reassert themselves because they were designed to keep us safe, small and the same. Any forward movement will stimulate them to pop up, and the client simply needs a toolset for clearing them whenever they do.

In most cases of resistance, the cause is a subconscious belief lying deep beneath the surface. This is where our personality was built, the patterns of our behaviour were put into place, and our views of ourselves, others and the world were shaped.

We've been taught that this territory is owned and managed by psychologists, psychotherapists and mental health professionals. 'Focus on the present and the future,' we are taught. 'Don't enter the past – those are psychological waters. Leave that to the licensed professionals.'

The problem is, of course, that unless we can facilitate shifts at the causal level, in the depth of the psyche, we are left powerless to evoke deep change in our clients' lives. All we can do is attempt to manage their behaviour from the outside, with planning, motivation, cajoling and convincing. Why not alter the pattern from the inside, where it's sourced?

Real change is rare. Yet this is why clients tend to come to us – for deep and profound transformation in who they are, what they can accomplish, how they relate to others and how they show up in the world. Working with your client's beliefs need not tread on psychotherapeutic territory. It is a coaching methodology.

Used here, the term 'beliefs' is not a commitment to an idea, but rather the infrastructure of the human mind – in the same way that neurons form the infrastructure of the brain. Beliefs are the building blocks of the psyche – the views we hold of who we are, what we are capable of and what we are supposed to do. Our beliefs – tens of thousands of them – accumulate throughout our lifetime. Most of them are indoctrinated into us by parents, teachers and friends. Sometimes, we form our own beliefs when we draw conclusions from our experiences and circumstances.

Our beliefs act like coloured lenses in front of our eyes, shaping what we can and cannot see. They drive our automatic behaviours and reactions to others. They shape, in large part, the circumstances we find ourselves in. Most importantly, they create our limitations and our possibilities. When your client expresses dissatisfaction about something in their personal or professional life, that unhappiness is based on their beliefs about themselves and the situation. When you look beneath the surface of the 'presenting problem' and point to the cause, deep in their belief structure, you can help the client shift their viewpoint, and thus the possibilities that lie before them. This is true empowerment.

To delete a belief permanently, the methodology must affect not only the conscious mind but also the subconscious mind and the superconscious mind (the higher self). It should reach into unconscious patterns, and also into the distant past, to release inherited family, cultural and societal patterns.

A coach who can evoke change at the deepest levels of their clients' programming is a powerful agent of change. Once you discover your client's core beliefs, you can employ any belief-change technique that is both effective and permanent.

Underlying beliefs can be uncovered by asking powerful questions that dive down, layer by layer, into the subconscious programmes at the core of that particular behaviour or pattern:

- **What do you want to change, and why?** Their answer will point to their beliefs about themselves, their issue and their circumstances.
- **What beliefs are you aware of underneath this issue?** Many people are already aware of the beliefs that guide them.
- **What are the thoughts you keep having about this?** Our inner voices are often a reflection of our core wounds and beliefs. For example, the inner voice that says, 'Don't bother – you're just going to fail again,' is a direct expression of the belief 'I am a failure'.
- **What is it that makes you feel that way?** Beliefs are at the core of negative feelings. For example, fear is associated with the belief 'I can't handle it'. Anger can be created by the belief 'I'm out of control,' or 'I'm being controlled'. Ambivalence points to two or more conflicting beliefs, such as 'I should do that,' and 'I don't want to do that'.
- **When did you first believe that about yourself?** And what were the circumstances that brought you to that conclusion? This can reveal early childhood programming or trauma that is the real root of the negative self-belief.
- **What would you rather believe?** This question opens up new possibilities, showing the client that they may actually have a choice about what they believe.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lion Goodman, PCC, is CEO of the Clear Beliefs Institute. He is the creator of the Clear Beliefs Method, which he has taught to hundreds of coaches, therapists and change agents worldwide through the ICF-accredited and AC-approved Clear Beliefs Coach Training. This methodology is a synthesis of his 45 years of research into psychology, neurology, cognitive sciences, philosophy, linguistics and numerous spiritual traditions. He received a BA in Consciousness Studies in 1975. His first career was in executive search and executive coaching. He provides live online courses as well as individual coaching and healing for coaches, therapists and change agents around the world.

# THE COACH'S MARKETING JOURNEY

Frances Khalastchi and Simon Batchelar share their model to help coaches create a unique marketing journey for themselves and their business.

Coaching is a unique service, with some unique marketing challenges – not least a general lack of understanding of what coaching is. Unsurprisingly, coaches can feel frustrated, overwhelmed and ultimately disillusioned when faced with marketing their services.

With a shift in perspective, instead of feeling daunted by marketing coaches can get excited by it, making it a painless part of their daily practice.

Leveraging over 40 years of marketing experience, learning and knowledge, we have created the Coach's Marketing Journey. Unlike other marketing systems, with their emphasis on tactics and chasing vanity metrics, the Coaches's Marketing Journey is a more ethical and rewarding way to attract better clients, build a bolder offer, and become braver with your pricing, planning and purpose.

The Marketing Journey is a six-stage approach designed specifically for coaches. The secret lies in a change of marketing focus: from conversions to conversations.

## 1. MINDSET

Starting with the right mindset makes everything else easier. Get clear on your values, boundaries and unique impact on others. This is the foundation for defining who you are as a coach and whom you really want to work with. It's the key to avoiding the trap of comparing yourself to others. Explore what your value is, and to whom, and you will become more confident in talking about your coaching to others.

Clarity on who you are and what you bring to the table also empowers you to define what success looks and feels like for you, so you can build the coaching business you want.

## 2. CLIENT

Who is your ideal client? What defines them? Is it their work, their attitudes, their goals? Whatever their defining features, knowing your ideal client enables you to identify your coaching 'niche'. Without a niche, you risk marketing yourself to people who might have no interest in what you do or the outcomes, insights and feelings you can guide them to. Narrowing down your target audience means you can start having really meaningful conversations. Most coaches can talk at great length about what they do but not so much about whom they do it for.

What you need to embrace is: 'I am not for everyone, and that's ok.'

## 3. STORY

When one of your ideal clients is deciding whether they want to work with you, they want to know who you are, what you do and why you do it. To answer them, you need to tell a story that answers the three questions the potential client is asking themselves:

- Who does this coach work with, and do I fit that description?
- What can this coach do for me, and is this what I am looking for?
- Why should I trust them to guide me?

Your story needs to combine empathy and authority to show potential clients why you're the guide who will make them the hero of the story.

## 4. PRODUCT

Coaches usually see themselves more as service providers than product-sellers, but here 'product' signifies the whole package: what you do, how you do it and whom you do it for. The key is to offer what your target audience wants to buy, and not just what you want to sell – a trap many coaches fall into.

By understanding who your ideal client is, including their needs and wants, you can design a product that is exactly what they're looking for. With an understanding of your own needs and boundaries (mindset) you will also design a product that serves you too.

When you design a product that is the perfect fit for your client you can be braver with your price. You don't have to be bigger or better than anyone else to stand out. Your story, presented with empathy and authority, will build the trust your client needs to say yes with confidence.

## 5. CONTENT

We do not believe that you need to churn out endless content to attract clients. We believe that once you find your voice, embrace your authority and get creative, overcoming any fears about putting yourself out there, you can (and will) enjoy producing and repurposing good material that invites conversation and engagement from an audience that is right for you.

Content can include social media posts, blog articles, podcasts, videos on YouTube and so on. Formats and platforms vary, but what all your content should have in common is that it educates, entertains and engages with the aim of building trust. It shows your ideal client that you're the guide they've been looking for, and that you have a map that they want to follow.

Content builds confidence in you, establishes your authority, and opens up authentic and meaningful conversations that allow the client to make an informed decision about working with you.

## 6. JOURNEY

This final stage brings all the previous stages together. You build a journey for people to embark on, and the destination is them becoming a client. You use content to signpost the way from where they are to where they need and want to be, while showing them how you can guide them there.

The good news is that taking potential clients on this six-stage journey requires exactly the skills that you have as a coach: reflection, building rapport, listening and responding – all utilised with a clear destination in mind and always done so acting as a guide to the client.

*Frances and Simon are running a one-off AC member benefit webinar, Changing the Marketing Conversation, on 10 February 2022 and are also hosting a signature course for AC Members from 24 February to 9 June. Both will allow AC members to take a deeper dive into the content of this article, gaining insights, tips and tools for moving forward with a more intentional, purposeful and enjoyable marketing practice. Find out more on the AC website.*

## ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Frances Khalastchi and Simon Batchelar are the founders of Better Bolder Braver. Frances has 20 years of experience in corporate, charity, start-up and government communications. She has created brand partnerships, launched products, designed websites and trained many people along the way. Simon has run an online marketing agency for 20 years, and in that time transformed the marketing of over 400 small businesses. Their longest-standing client has tripled their turnover to over £5 million, and they have taken another client from starting a blog in a coffee shop to talking on the TED stage.

# IS THAT WHAT YOU REALLY WANT?

Dr Badri Bajaj reflects on the importance of goal-setting with clients on a continuous, detailed and reflective basis throughout the cycle of a coaching commission.

In a coaching session, I invited my client Maria\* to share a goal she would like to achieve in the session. She shared one concerning maintaining her weight, and then she shared the context around this goal. Maria told me that she was on a diet once or twice a year, but she remained anxious about the diet plan and the weight-loss process. I asked a question about the relationship between losing weight and anxiety. Maria told me that she had never thought about it, and after a brief reflection she shared that anxiety and losing weight were two different things. So I asked her to reconfirm the goal of the coaching session. The actual weight issue was not her issue any more. Her concern was with the anxiety of having to keep an eye on her weight and diet all the time. She redefined the goal of the session: finding ways to release the anxiety she feels about maintaining her weight.

The learning from this initial part of the coaching session was that the coach should support the client in defining and reconfirming the goal of the coaching session. If a coach is not partnering with the client in this way, or if the goal is not reconfirmed, an outcome may indeed be achieved in the session but it might not be the outcome that the client really wanted to achieve.

According to Michael Bungay Stanier, in this context people don't share real challenges or problems at the beginning of conversations.<sup>i</sup> We need to be curious and keep asking questions until we reach the point where the other person is happy and satisfied with the challenge they want to handle or the goal they want to achieve.

Sometimes a client shares the goal of the session from a conscious state of mind and, in elaborating around that goal, they get in touch with the subconscious or unconscious mind and become aware of the real need, challenge and goal to be achieved. Many personality psychologists advocate that getting in touch with the unconscious mind may help clients reach new insights and move towards achieving their goals.<sup>ii</sup>

In cognitive psychology, a lot of emphasis is put on 'well-defined problems'. Kathleen Galotti writes that well-defined problems have a clear goal (you know immediately if you have reached the solution), present a small set of information to start from, and often present a set of rules or guidelines to abide by while you are working toward a solution.<sup>iii</sup> A well-defined problem or a goal will empower clients to suggest what they need to address in the coaching session. A well-defined goal will also help clients determine the measures of success for what they want to achieve in the session.

A well-defined goal will lead to rising levels of positive affect in the client, making them more creative, better able to find solutions and more likely to seek support from others. Higher levels of positive affect are also associated with the overall performance of an individual – they help the client move towards higher performance both in the session and after it. Well-defined goals and real motivation are closely associated; if the client is not in touch with the real goal, they may miss connecting with the real motivation.

Renowned goal-setting scholars Edwin Locke and Gary Latham emphasised the importance of setting specific goals.<sup>iv</sup> Sometimes the client identifies too broad a goal, and therefore asking questions to help them identify a more specific goal becomes very important for the success of the session. Sometimes the client shares a goal that requires actions

and a change in thinking after the session, and achievement of that goal may take a few weeks or months. In that case, encouraging the client to review the initial goal and set a revised smaller goal for that particular session enables the client to feel confident of achieving their goals.

Therefore the most important part of any coaching conversation may be partnering with the client to define and reconfirm the goal of the coaching session. In my experience, sessions are not as effective when insufficient time has been spent on this aspect.

Sometimes, the coach notices that the conversation is moving towards something other than the defined goal of the session. In that case, the coach may share this observation with the client: are they trying to achieve the goal defined at the beginning of the session or do they wish to achieve something else? I have had clients change the goal of the session after reflections and conversations around the initial goal. The coach needs to be present and show this flexibility in the coaching session.

When a coach partners with their client in defining the real goal of a session, the client gets the best return on the money, time, attention and energy invested in a coaching engagement.

\*Name has been changed

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Badri Bajaj is a leading expert in coaching, wellbeing and leadership. He has more than 20 years of experience in research, writing, teaching, training and coaching. He has conducted training for a variety of organisations, universities and B-schools. He has published articles in reputed peer-reviewed journals, newspapers and magazines. He is a faculty member with Jaypee Institute of Information Technology, Noida, India. His work on mindfulness, emotional intelligence and wellbeing has been featured in media in many countries. He is the president of ICF Delhi NCR Chapter.

- i. Stanier, M. B. (2020). *The advice trap: Be humble, stay curious & change the way you lead forever*. Box of Crayons Press.
- ii. Schultz, D. P., & Schultz, S. E. (2016). *Theories of personality*. Cengage Learning.
- iii. Galotti, K. M. (2017). *Cognitive psychology in and out of the laboratory*. Sage Publications.
- iv. Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (Eds.). (2013). *New developments in goal setting and task performance*. Routledge.



## 'HAVE A GOOD CRY – IT WILL MAKE YOU FEEL BETTER.'

Marie Faire tackles another of our prevailing misconceptions, reflecting on the truth about tears and inviting us to get comfortable when clients cry in sessions.

Many people – particularly in Western cultures, and including coaches – are uncomfortable with tears, whether their own or other people's. Too often I have been aware of the rush to try to cheer people up, beckon them to look at the bright side of life and to 'be strong'.

Over the years, when my clients have cried I would feel and demonstrate genuine compassion and empathy; at the same time, inside, I would also be saying to myself, 'great'. I've always had the intuition, belief and felt sense that tears are better out than in.

Having recently experienced a lot of grief, I found myself saying to Paul one day: 'I can't cry anymore, I am exhausted'. Amongst the sobs, he correctly advised me that I could, and most certainly would, cry lots more. In a moment of humour and frustration I said: 'Anyway, what on Earth is crying about? Why do we leak out of our eyes? Why not any other orifice? Why?'

He didn't know. Neither did I.

I am guessing that, if you are still reading, you don't know either.

So I set off to find out. What I discovered, I think, is truly amazing, and it is something that everyone needs to know.

Firstly there are different types of tears; here we are exploring crying as an emotional response to pain.

As you may know already, our brain makes very little distinction between physical pain and emotional pain. A broken leg and broken heart are registered in the same regions of our brain and generate pretty much the same neurobiological response.

In pain, we produce a cocktail of biochemicals, including the hormone cortisol. It is a survival strategy to numb the pain and to prompt us into action, to get away from whatever is causing us pain.

Too much cortisol is not good news. So when the adrenaline- and cortisol-fuelled response subsides, we cry to get rid of the excess cortisol: it is literally in our tears.

It gets even better: the act of crying triggers the limbic brain to promote the production of oxytocin and endorphins – which make us feel better. If someone has ever instructed you to have a good cry when you were sad in order to feel better, they were correct.

*A broken leg and broken heart are registered in the same regions of our brain and generate pretty much the same neurobiological response.*

So when people around you – clients, friends, colleagues, complete strangers for that matter – are in significant pain, not only is it ok for them to cry, but they need to.

Consider the implications for the men who have been told that 'big boys don't cry,' and for the women who fight back their tears for fear of being dismissed as 'weak' and 'over-emotional'. All that cortisol stays in their system: they remain in a stressed state for much longer than otherwise, leading to poor decision-making as well as inflammation that may contribute to heart disease and cancer.

So much more research needs to be done. Wouldn't it be good to know the correlation between our ease of crying and our long-term health?

When a client next cries and apologises for doing so (which most people do when they cry), while offering them a tissue also encourage them to let the tears flow.

You now have the rationale for why tears really are better out than in.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Marie is an AC-accredited master executive coach and coaching supervisor, and co-founder of the Beyond Partnership. She runs AC-accredited coach and coaching supervisor programmes.

[www.thebeyondpartnership.co.uk](http://www.thebeyondpartnership.co.uk)

[marie@thebeyondpartnership.co.uk](mailto:marie@thebeyondpartnership.co.uk)



# HOW TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING HELPS HEAL THE WORLD

**Keith Merron's** latest column explores how moving clients through levels of adult development can lead to a more global, collectivist and ecological worldview.

The purpose of transformational coaching is to expand clients' consciousness. Expanding consciousness in this context simply means they become more self-aware; as clients make decisions, they can see more variables and look further into the future, such that their decisions are wiser and more sustainable.

In transformational coaching, what we do is, in effect, help clients develop through three clear stages, the last of which is a global consciousness. It is this consciousness and only this consciousness that can help heal and maybe even save the world. To understand this, we must first understand what we mean by 'development'.

To begin, human beings act towards things and experiences based on their perceived meanings. The act of writing, for example, is not just the act of putting thoughts on paper. Depending on the circumstances and reasons for writing, as well as the writer's own tastes, preferences and abilities, writing can mean very different things to different people (or different things to the same people under different circumstances). The totality of our ways of making meaning becomes our worldview.

While the notion that our worldview shapes how we see things is ancient and well-accepted, what is relatively new to social science is the notion that our worldview can mature over time in a distinct progression of stages that correspond to other aspects of human development. Just as Jean Piaget discovered that children pass through distinct and definable stages of cognitive and emotional development, adults have the potential to do the same, although many people get stuck at certain stages and never progress further. These stages have now been defined and described by many adult development researchers and, while there may be some nuances between the theories, what all development theories have in common is decreeing that the order in which the stages unfold is predictable – a finding backed up by a large and growing body of empirical research.

With each step in human growth, a new and relatively structured stage of development or worldview emerges. Each new worldview operates as a new way of constructing and understanding the world – it represents a new inner experience of the world, and results in a new way of expressing one's feelings and ideas. Moving from

one stage of development to the next represents, by definition, a more complete understanding of the world than the prior stages. For example, related research has shown that individuals at higher stages of development often have greater cognitive abilities and conceptual complexity, and they tend to view the world in less dogmatic and stereotypical ways.<sup>ii</sup> Also, as people move up the stages developmentally, they become increasingly able to: (1) accept responsibility for the consequences of their actions; (2) empathise with others who hold conflicting views; and (3) tolerate higher levels of stress and ambiguity.<sup>iii</sup> Finally, people at higher stages are more attuned to their inner feelings and the outside environment, and they perceive social reality more accurately than people at lower stages.

***With each step in human growth, a new and relatively structured stage of development or worldview emerges. Each new worldview represents a new inner experience, and results in a new way of expressing one's feelings and ideas.***

Therefore, as adults develop from a developmental theory perspective, they become more effective. My own doctoral research confirmed this, as has a whole body of research, especially that of William Torbert. There is now a new and powerful stream of understanding based on this, called integral theory.

The natural stages of development can be summarised as three distinct sets. The first set of developmental stages represents a



person who believes the world is objective and that they are too. In the objective stage, one sees the world as if it is in black and white. If the person grows beyond these stages, they start to recognise that all human beings are subjective. They understand that people make meaning differently depending on their subjective viewpoint. When they progress even more, they are able to see others and the world as a whole from a global standpoint. In this view, they have the ability to respect different cultures, are naturally inclusive, and care about the long-term wellbeing of all people and the planet.

If we accept this view of the progression of adult development, then our job as agents of transformation is to help our clients progress developmentally. We do more than just help them become more skilful or effective. We recognise that the primary factor in our success is not only what we do, but how we think and how our thinking affects what we do. Every time you or I, as coaches, help a client take a different and more expansive or more mature perspective, we are stretching them to see wider and further – to consider more and more meaningfully the variables in their actions and decisions.

As we help clients become more awake, self-aware, expansive and compassionate, we are, in effect, encouraging their developmental unfolding. The net effect of our efforts is to cultivate the highest level of development, or a global worldview. From this global worldview, people naturally care about the wellbeing of all people and the planet in which we are contained. In so doing, we make the world a better place.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Keith is the founder and managing partner of Leadership Pathways, a consulting and leadership development firm dedicated to helping organisations achieve high performance and industry leadership. He has more than 37 years of experience of assisting executives and managers. He received his doctorate from Harvard University, where his studies spanned human and organisational development. He has published numerous professional journal articles and is the author of six books on human and organisational change, including *The Art of Transformational Coaching*. Twice yearly he offers a workshop to coaches on the subject. Learn more at [artoftransformationalcoaching.com](http://artoftransformationalcoaching.com).

- i. Harvey, O.J., Hunt, D.E., and Schroder, H.M., *Conceptual Systems and Personality Organization*, New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1961.
- ii. McCrae, R. and Costa, P., "Openness to Experience and Ego Level in Loevinger's Sentence Completion Test: Dispositional Contributions to Developmental Models of Personality", *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, vol. 39, no. 6, pp. 1179-1190, 1980.
- iii. Bartunek, J., Gordon, J., and Weathersby, R., "Developing 'Complicated' Understanding in Administration", *Academy of Management Review*, vol. 8, no. 2, pp. 273-84, 1983.

# You belong.

## LINGUISTIC INCLUSION IN INTERNATIONAL TEAMS

Alex Morgan shares the key insights from her doctoral research into how to help all members of international teams feel included in small talk, rapport-building and business discussions.

In my previous role as a director of an English language school for senior managers, I would ask my clients: 'Who are the most difficult people to understand in an English-speaking international team?' The answer was usually native speakers<sup>1</sup>; meaning the British, Americans, Australians, Canadians, South Africans, New Zealanders and so on. Intrigued by the underlying reasons for this, I made it the subject of my doctoral inquiry and sought to answer the question: 'How do I help native speakers communicate better in international teams?' My research participants were multinational, and often multilingual, members of international teams where English was the shared language. With their help, I established the ingredients of inclusion in international teams. This article focuses on just one area of my findings, that of linguistic inclusion. In an English-speaking team, this effectively means: how can the English language be modified by all users to be more inclusive?

To understand more deeply what is meant by linguistic inclusion, first consider the opposite: what does it feel like to be excluded from a team, not to belong, on the basis of language use or language skills? Consider a couple of my international coaching clients:

'Andrei' is a C-suite executive from an international manufacturing company. He is Russian and speaks Russian and German fluently. His English is of intermediate level, quite adequate for most of his business needs. Feeling confident with his English, he enrolls for an executive MBA at one of the best British business schools. On the first day, he is excited about the programme and thrilled to meet his classmates, most of whom are British or other fluent English speakers. During the lessons he copes well: the lecturers are reasonably easy to understand and speak clearly, and he is familiar with most of the business jargon used. However, in the teamwork

sessions, he finds his teammates speak very quickly, use words he's never heard before, make jokes he doesn't understand and build rapport easily with each other.

At first, he is just entertained by watching them, feeling happy that he has the chance to improve his language skills by sharing time with them. Unfortunately, that positive feeling only lasts until the evening. The group are informally gathered around the fire, having drinks. One of his group sidles up to him and says: 'Andrei, you're not really a team player are you? You don't say anything, you don't contribute, you just watch us and let us make the decisions; you need to be a better team player.' Andrei reported that he felt devastated, hurt that he would be judged in this way, angry that his need to sit back, watch and listen had been misunderstood.<sup>1</sup> He immediately felt like an outsider.

'Sara' is Spanish and has advanced-level English, having already spent two years living in Britain. She has just started a new job working for an international tech company. While she is highly competent in English, she is struggling to understand the 'banter' that takes place at the beginning of some meetings. There is an 'in-group', as she describes them – all British – who crack jokes with each other and also make what she calls 'pub talk' about football and other subjects she can't relate to. Also, in the meetings, her manager and others use 'strange phrases' that she's never heard anyone use in any other English-speaking context before. She thinks they are idioms or colloquialisms that are specific perhaps to this area of Britain, or their generation, or sometimes 'company speak' that is particular to this tech company. Either way, she says she has never felt so 'out of the group' in any job before.

### LINGUISTIC INCLUSION QUICK WINS

My research confirmed that Andrei's and Sara's experiences are not unusual, and so, together with advice from my research participants, I identified some key behaviours to adopt or avoid in order to be more linguistically inclusive in international teams. Quick wins include:

- 1. Avoid idiom or colloquialism.** Phrases like 'up to our eyeballs', 'put it on the back burner', 'throw in the towel', 'out on a limb' and hundreds of others can be picked up by English learners over time. However, there are so many idioms in the English language that it is impossible to know them all. In addition, when you are taught a language, you tend to get taught idioms that were in common use 10 or more years ago, when the textbook was written, and not those that are used currently. The most inclusive choice is to not use them at all, rather using plain language: replace 'I'm over the moon' with 'I'm delighted'.
- 2. Be respectful of different language levels.** Unfortunately, these days, many meetings are not followed up with minutes or notes. However, by reverting back to note/minute-taking, you will help the colleagues who didn't catch everything in the meeting. They can check their understanding after the meeting in their own time and at their own pace. In highly visual presentations, where the words are not on the slides, hand out supplementary notes covering the main themes and ideas from each slide. In video calls, agree an etiquette around taking turns to avoid interruptions and talking over one another, which can be very difficult to understand.
- 3. Build in checking time.** Some colleagues may need time built in to team meetings to check, understanding or to translate. Ensure meetings include clarification time, time for questions and moments for checking understanding.
- 4. Be culturally flexible when rapport-building.** Much humour and small talk is centred around culturally specific experiences (sport, TV, music, comedy). Yet a joke from an old British TV programme is unlikely to be relatable to a colleague brought up in another country. Small talk itself can also be linguistically challenging. Instead, ask questions about your colleague's own interests and build from there.
- 5. Be clear and direct.** While some cultures favour indirect communication (i.e., it is considered more polite to allow for 'reading between the lines' in conversation or instruction), it is often more comfortable to favour a polite but direct request. Instead of, 'It might be wise to speak to Anna before you send that out', you could say, 'It's important that Anna sees it before you send it'.
- 6. Do not confuse personality with language confidence.** A colleague who is less confident with their English skills may appear a quieter and less active team member. Do not assume this represents their natural personality type. Give your colleague a chance to shine by including them in activities and conversations.
- 7. Repeat rather than rephrase.** When a colleague doesn't catch what we've said, some strange gremlin often kicks in and makes us reformulate the sentence entirely differently. My research participants explained that this is hugely frustrating. They would

prefer to hear the same sentence again so that they can fill in their gaps in understanding the second time around. If you change the sentence entirely, they have to start their understanding all over again. So, don't rephrase, just repeat!

These seven points are easy to action and help colleagues feel included. They can be shared with coaching clients who are new to working internationally, or have unresolved communication issues in their international team.<sup>ii</sup>

For more information, or advice regarding coaching internationally, please contact Alexandra at [Alexandra.Morgan@dmu.ac.uk](mailto:Alexandra.Morgan@dmu.ac.uk) or [Alex@abbeycommunication.com](mailto:Alex@abbeycommunication.com).

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Alexandra Morgan's consultancy and research focuses on improving communication in international teams. Her coaching clients include managers and leaders who are either working in multilingual and multicultural teams for the first time, or have encountered new communication difficulties in established teams. Her background includes HR and leadership development roles, as well as running a language training company. Her passion is leveraging diversity and fostering inclusion, and she has recently hosted the Diversity and Inclusion podcast series for the Association for Coaching.

- <sup>1</sup> While still frequently used in a language learning context, the term 'native speaker' can be seen as anachronistic, and can be replaced with L1 if preferred. See Dewaele, J.-M., 2017. Why the Dichotomy 'L1 Versus LX User' is Better than 'Native Versus Non-native Speaker. Applied Linguistics, Volume Forum, pp. 1-6.
- <sup>ii</sup> **For further information on the emotional toll of speaking a foreign language:** Aichorn, N. & Puck, J., 2017. "I just don't feel comfortable speaking English": Foreign Language anxiety as a catalyst for spoken-language barriers in MNCs. International Business Review, Volume 26, pp. 749-763.  
Tenzer, H. & Pudelko, M., 2015. Leading across language barriers: Managing language-induced emotions in multinational teams. The Leadership Quarterly, 26(4), pp. 606-625.  
Tenzer, H., Pudelko, M. & Harzing, A.-W., 2014. The impact of language barriers on trust formation in multinational teams. Journal of International Business, 45(5), pp. 508-535.
- <sup>ii</sup> **For further information regarding language use and relationships in international teams:** Harzing, A.-W. & Feeley, A. J., 2008. The language barrier and its implications for HQ-subsidary relationships. Cross Cultural Management: An International Journal, 15(1), pp. 49-61.  
Harzing, A.-W., Koester, K. & Magner, U., 2011. Babel in business; The language barrier and its solutions in the HQ-subsidary relationship. Journal of World Business, Volume 46, pp. 279-287.  
Cohen, L. & Kassis-Henderson, J., 2012. Language use in establishing rapport and building relations: implications for international teams and management education. Management et L'avenir, Volume 55, pp. 185-207.  
Neeley, T. B., 2013. Language Matters: Status Loss and Achieved Status Distinctions in Global Organizations. Organization Science, 24(2), pp. 476-497.

# WHAT TYPE OF COACHING CREDENTIAL CONSUMER ARE YOU?

Daniel Doherty surveys the ever-growing credentials landscape and invites us to reflect on the coach training and accreditation market with an informed eye, ready to make decisions that will serve us and our clients well.

*'Do I need to join the scramble for credentials?'*

*'If so, which credentials?'*

*'At what price? And from which professional body?'*

Such questions have been posed to me repeatedly over the past 15 years, when tutoring coaching in business schools or running the Critical Coaching Group (CCG) in the UK. These questions have been posed not only by those new to the field, but also by coaches with considerable experience. And I have no simple answer to such questions without discovering more about the inquirer and their perceived need for qualification. I decided, in 2012, to survey CCG members and other coaches to inquire more deeply into credential consuming patterns, and how they shift over time. This survey identified seven principal types of potential consumers at the pre-purchase stage:

1. **Enthusiasts** are highly enamoured of the good that coaching can do in the world, and are keen to get on with the process of being credentialed in order to enable them to be the best they could possibly be, as quickly as possible.
2. **Compliers** want to do the right thing. They often worry that because they have come into coaching from a non-business background that they will be somehow 'found out' by clients, or by established professionals and their constituent bodies.
3. **Susceptibles** are influenced by the claims made by credential providers, with extravagant promises made for high earnings post-accreditation. Susceptibles may have been tempted to go on a 'free' taster day, and have signed up while under pressure to close the sale. They may have been made redundant, or in receipt of a financial pay-off, and are looking to invest in a new career without having reality-checked the coaching market.
4. **Pragmatists** are relatively unconcerned about the competing merits of the various credentials on offer. They wish to take the most direct line between the starting point and qualification, while minimising the time and financial investment required.
5. **Procrastinators** tend to delay their purchase in the face of the multiple and conflicting arrays of credentials on offer. They will not make a move until they know that their money is safely invested – or else at the point where the market or the government demands that they comply.
6. **Agnostics** already have a well-established coaching business and have never felt the need to be credentialed. They are cynical of attempts to persuade coaches to invest in what they often

Concerns regarding 'impostor syndrome' or of being 'not good enough' are often prevalent among this grouping.

describe as 'pyramid schemes' whose covert goal is to make training providers and coaching gurus rich at the expense of insecure entrants to the market.

7. **Ideologues** push against the professionalising of coaching, which they contend runs in the face of the inclusive and emancipatory origins of coaching. They worry that much of the contemporary research into coaching is driven by market forces and subject to confirmation bias. They are concerned that business schools, in their wish to climb aboard the coaching provision bandwagon, are prey to alliances with predatory providers and a variety of unregulated professional bodies.

## SHIFTING ATTITUDES, SIX YEARS ON

Recent shifts in the credentialing landscape over the past six years encouraged me to run the same survey, with broadly the same population, in 2020, where many of the respondents are now well into the **post-purchase stage**. This is what I found.

**Enthusiasts** began their credentialing journey with high hopes, believing that they had made a good purchasing decision. Evidence suggests that while many enthusiasts had their original optimism reinforced, others confessed to background doubts regarding the efficacy of their decision – but were still pleased to have the badge. Some have gone to collect further badges, while others have been dismayed to see the never-ending mountain range of credential horizons stretching ahead, beyond base camp.

The **compliers** followed the credentialing process sedulously. Having secured accreditation, some compliers argue for further tightening of regulation and standards. Many have graduated to serve in formal professional roles where they assess the 'licence to operate' of fellow coaches. They express strong support for the need for compulsory supervision, while many have gone on to qualify and practise as supervisors and craft supervisor training offerings.

The **pragmatists**, content to have secured the badge, now do the minimum to maintain that badge. Some are not that happy with the renewal merry-go-round – with its increasing ramping-up of requirement for CPD and supervision – some to the extent that, having established their business, they are considering relinquishing their badge.

The **susceptibles**, more than other groups, became disillusioned at an early stage by the commoditised nature of their provider's learning provision. As few of the promises of business growth ever eventuated, susceptibles became subject to deep levels of buyer's remorse. Business school offerings were not immune to such degrees of disillusionment among susceptibles.

The **procrastinators** continue to equivocate, beyond the concession of gaining token membership of a professional body. When they see others making purchasing mistakes, they feel smug, turning their prevarication into a virtue. Some feel mild existential anxiety around their lack of credentials, but not enough to propel action.

The **agnostics** are further cemented in their suspicions that the drive to professionalisation, far from being in service of enhancing coaching quality, is clandestinely designed to create pyramided cartels. Their clients continue to take them as they find them and to recommend them on, which is the primary source of their business development.

The **ideologues** witness further evidence of the increasing damage that professionalisation and marketisation do to the original emancipatory thrust of coaching, as the drive towards 'neo-feudalism' gains speed. They have a feeling that they are becoming an endangered species on the coaching landscape, even among business school colleagues.

Across all these categories, respondents reported that while professional bodies and training providers strongly imply that clients may ask for evidence of membership of a professional body, and of a minimum level of training, there is very little evidence from these respondents' experiences to suggest that clients require such; there is also no evidence that clients' purchasing decisions are overly swayed by prospective coaches displaying a long string of credentials.

While there have been sporadic calls among the major coaching bodies for unified, global regulation of the coaching field, nothing substantive has so far come of this. The much-heralded Global Code of Ethics (GCoE) has derogated into a code of conduct that does not include all the major professional bodies as signatories – nor is there any evidence that these bodies are inclined to police each other's conformance to the GCoE. There is no evidence of external governmental regulation of coaching practice; the bodies say they are quite content with internal self-regulation.

In 2010 the major professional bodies typically offered two accreditations: one for individuals and one for providers. By 2021 they each offer upwards of nine such awards in areas such as coaching supervision, team coaching, programme management and much more. In the hypercompetitive market for members, the professional bodies are engaging in a credentials 'arms race'. This escalation of award types has led to a corresponding growth in credential training among competing training providers for each of these emergent categories.

While the professional bodies may claim that this growth is demand-driven, there is strong evidence of supply push. Beyond the self-styled professional bodies, there is a profusion of additional providers making claims for their alternative trainings – claims for marketability that go far beyond the intrinsic learning gained.

The ultimate market for the professional bodies and their satellited providers is now coaches. Bob Garvey suggests that 'coaching training is the new Wild West, not coaching itself'. The strings of credentials that many providers display are designed to both impress and to incite an appetite for the same among coaches. It is instructive to scan the profiles of officers and ambassadors of professional bodies and providers for evidence of the array of credential claims.

## WHAT ADVICE WOULD I OFFER TO A COACH TODAY?

For **enthusiasts**, **compliers** and **susceptibles**, I would urge that they shop around before they take the credentialing plunge. I would suggest that they concentrate on business growth by organic means before investing in glossy programmes or accreditations that promise visibility in the market. I would advise seeking out a mentor who knows the field well, and to network with peers who are on the path. To this end, joining a professional body is one way into building alliances and seeking support, without needing to start

credentialling until you are sure that the path you choose is one best suited to your needs. Above all, it is important to claim agency for personal developmental decisions, rather than to feel pressured by illusory regulations and persuasive salespeople's inflated claims into premature purchase.

For **procrastinators**, choosing not to participate remains an option and will continue into the foreseeable future. **Agnostics** and **idealogues** need no further encouragement to remain on the margins, but they might be attracted to act in a mentoring role to new entrants who are feeling their way into a compressed market and who need voices of caution and critical perspective as much as those of unmitigated encouragement.

For those of an **entrepreneurial** inclination, it is unlikely that coaching individual clients will feed that commercial appetite. Entrepreneurs concentrate on building a distinct brand; creating products that are novel and on trend; and building alliances with professional bodies and celebrity coaches. All of this serves to grow the business, which is likely to have at its heart coach training and supervision as opposed to direct coaching of clients alone.

Personal disclosure: last year I gained master-level renewal and accreditation from two of the major professional bodies, and I am participating in two 'advanced' coach trainings.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Daniel has practised large systems coaching work for the past 40 years, in both commercial and higher education contexts. Since 2006, he has led the Critical Coaching Research Group. The longevity of this group reflects its willingness to ask questions of the profession others might back away from. Daniel is a lead member of the AC Research Group, and in 2021 led the well-received AC signature programme 'Crafting your Coaching Story', encouraging creative writing and narrative practice among coaches.

[www.criticalcoaching.com](http://www.criticalcoaching.com)  
[linkedin.com/in/daniel-doherty-8865a510](https://www.linkedin.com/in/daniel-doherty-8865a510)

# THE VALUE OF ACCREDITATION: A MULTI-FACETED VIEW

We asked three AC-accredited coaches to consider how the accreditation process had affected their development and their coaching practice. Four key themes emerged...

## CREDIBILITY

I knew very early on in my coaching journey that, if I wanted to be an executive coach, I was going to need an accreditation. My first step was to speak to friends and coaching professionals who were all fairly unequivocal in their advice: I needed to become accredited with one of the recognised coaching organisations. This made sense to me – I wanted to learn, to acquire skills and to have a recognised standard against which those were measured so that I felt qualified and so that I could look my clients in the eye and know that I had something real and solid to offer them.

### Hannah Cleaton-Roberts

It can feel like everywhere you look you see a new coach. As people transform their own lives, they catch the bug and want to help other people create positive change. The volume of coaches emerging is

exciting and will be a huge benefit to society, but it can also create a challenge for clients to work out whether a particular coach is the right coach for them. Accreditation tells potential clients that a coach has signed up to a set of ethics that puts their wellbeing and success at the heart of what we do; we've completed training and a significant number of coaching hours building our craft; and that we're committed to the continuous improvement of our practice through supervision, reflection and CPD.

This is a marker of quality and commitment, which can encourage people to reach out and start a conversation about coaching. There's no requirement to be accredited to practise as a coach, so those that invest their energy and resources in it are choosing to make it part of their identity. I think that means something. Whether accreditation was explicitly a factor when clients have chosen to hire me or not, being accredited influenced how I showed up. Sharing

these professional standards with clients can help them to feel safe and confident. Safety leads to trust, rapport and an environment where transformation can happen.

### Kat Hutchings

Given that coaching is currently an unregulated profession, and that anyone can call themselves a 'coach', one of the main benefits of becoming accredited is that it provides a high degree of credibility with, and reassurance for, current and prospective clients. In the week that I wrote this article, I spoke to a prospective client: when I asked whether he needed any evidence about my competence, he said, 'No, I've seen your qualifications'.

### Jeremy Lazarus

## IDENTITY

For me, the AC accreditation process wasn't onerous, but it forced me to focus on who I really was as a coach. It showed me the vast array of disciplines that were waiting to be explored. It encouraged me to find my style and my voice.

### Hannah Cleaton Roberts

The accreditation process helped me to turn inwards, look at who I am and how my beliefs, ideas and experience shape how clients experience my coaching and the results they create. It was an invitation to notice how different training has influenced my style and framework. It challenged me to reflect on areas I'd like to shift and further develop.

### Kat Hutchings

The two accreditation processes I went through required me to take a step back and reflect on what I do as a coach, why I do it and how I could become even better as a coach. Linked to this, I received written feedback from the assessors regarding my strengths and developmental areas.

### Jeremy Lazarus

## GROWTH

Accreditation set me on a journey of rigorous reflective practice and self-awareness, setting a path for continual learning.

### Hannah Cleaton-Roberts

I dislike being put in a box and I don't want to be the same as everyone else, making me nervous about accreditation 'criteria'. But instead of finding the accreditation process restrictive, I found it expansive. The AC encourages coaches to identify and share their personal coaching approach. This isn't about scoring points for referencing specific research or coaching models – it's about showing understanding of the tools and techniques that work for you and that can create impact with clients.

### Kat Hutchings

Because I wanted to maintain my accreditation, I made sure I did sufficient CPD and coach supervision. I would have done these anyway, but it helped focus my mind.

### Jeremy Lazarus

## RELATIONSHIPS

Becoming accredited brought me something else too. I was stepping from a career in which I was established, well-known and well-networked into one where I was starting out on my own in what someone described to me as a potentially lonely job (after all, it's you and your clients). From my course I built new friendships and incredibly enriching relationships with my cohort, mentors and supervisors. From there I have begun to build a network through my work, and through the AC training programmes and webinars. I belong to an organisation, and there is a path for me through it, from which new opportunities and vistas open endlessly as I walk. I am not an outsider. I am a coach.

### Hannah Cleaton-Roberts

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Hannah Cleaton-Roberts is an executive coach working with emerging leaders, supporting them in navigating the workplace so that they can flourish and thrive. She is an AC-accredited foundation executive coach. With a background as a partner in a professional services firm, she is also a chartered accountant with the ICAEW.

[hcleatonroberts@btinternet.com](mailto:hcleatonroberts@btinternet.com)



Kat Hutchings is a leadership and career coach working with experienced leaders at key transition moments to elevate their leadership impact and help them make bold career decisions. She is an AC-accredited professional executive coach and assessor, and a master NLP practitioner. Connect with her on LinkedIn or at [www.katthecoach.com](http://www.katthecoach.com).



Jeremy Lazarus is an AC-accredited master executive coach, NLP master trainer and an ILM-approved coach trainer. He has been a member of the AC assessment team since February 2013 and has been coaching professionally since 1999. He can be reached via [www.thelazarus.com](http://www.thelazarus.com) or [linkedin.com/in/jeremy-lazarus](https://www.linkedin.com/in/jeremy-lazarus).

# SUPERVISION AS A UNIVERSAL INVESTMENT

**Banu Uzku Onuk** reflects on the need for supervision for all coaches – whether just out of training or with decades of experience behind them. She invites us to consider the far-reaching impact of investing in supervision.

As coaches we guide clients without advice, raise their awareness and encourage them to go beyond the boundaries they have set for themselves, all in order to realise their potential. In this professional relationship, the coach knows that the client already has the solutions for the problems that they bring to the session. The coach sees the client as complete and perfect. As professionals, coaches follow relevant publications to develop themselves, attend academic courses, read books that contribute to their professional development, keep their knowledge up-to-date, practise, and thus continuously invest in themselves.

Undertaking supervision is important because coaches may not be able to notice their own repeated mistakes or may be unaware of their prejudices. It may be that they often get stuck in front of clients that have similar problems. If coaches have stopped at a certain point on their development path, they may extend the coaching process unnecessarily by asking unsuitable questions. They may even damage the process. Thanks to supervision, the improvement of our professional and personal awareness may continue in a much smoother and healthier fashion.

According to my observations, successful coaches have two common practices. The first one is to ask for clients' permission to record their coaching sessions from time to time and then listen to these voice recordings. This allows the coaches to hear their previously unnoticed mistakes and understand how they can improve their sessions. It is also important for tracking progress. The second practice of successful coaches is to get supervision from more experienced coaches. Supervision can be seen as the transfer of knowledge and insight from an experienced coach to a relatively less-tenured colleague. The supervisor understands the difficulties experienced by newer coaches, and imparts potential solutions to these difficulties while analysing the cases of the supervisee. When I look at my 10-year interview record, I realise that my development was significantly faster during the times I was receiving supervisory support. According to research by the CIPD, 88% of coaches have seen an improvement of coaching ability through supervision, and 86% feel it offers a guarantee of coaching quality.<sup>1</sup>

According to my experience, one fifth of people participating in coaching education take the courses for themselves, one fifth to improve their relationship with their partners, one fifth to improve their relationship with their child, one fifth to develop in an existing professional career, and the remainder in order to become a professional coach. Successful coaches come out of those who want to be a professional coach and who receive supervision.

Accepting supervision is necessary and can be easier for coaches in the early days of their profession, and coaches should consider

supervision as a continuation of their training and an investment in their development. An experienced coach may struggle in getting supervision because of the misconception that they are already sufficiently developed. The most important obstacle in the development of a coach is their own ego. They are frustrated by becoming aware of their mistakes, their missing skills and are afraid that these shortcomings will be visible to others. However, an experienced coach who has overcome the problem of self-trust and is open to development can take supervision with courage.

The coaching profession aims to reach the heart and spirit in order to contribute to the development and self-awareness of the client. Because of that, an investment in supervision is one made in humanity rather than merely in the coach themselves.

This article was written in the hope that the number of courageous coaches open to self-development will continue to grow.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Banu Uzku Onuk was vice chair of the AC in Turkey for five years and is now head of finance. She is an AC master coach, AC supervisor and a specialist in the Coaching Proficiency Exam in Turkey. She worked for 14 years as a manager of an industrial engineering department before changing career and setting up her own company. She has received international social responsibility awards and contributed to the opening of many new social responsibility departments in universities. Banu is a holistic life coach, executive family coach and coach master instructor who specialises in successfully synthesising modern knowledge with eternal wisdom. She is the founding member of the European Women's Management Development Turkey, writes for a magazine and is author of three books.

[isikperisi@gmail.com](mailto:isikperisi@gmail.com)

i. Learning and Development Survey, CIPD (2009).

# Festival 0500

*A Songthrush  
Has arrived  
For the first time  
Taking his pleasure  
In a dawn roof concert  
Outside my window*

*Sprung open  
For crisp Spring air  
His throat  
Full of it, liquid  
Breathtaking  
Golden raunch.*

*No two lines  
The same  
Repeated once  
And then gone  
Generously, freely  
Given to the morning*

*And anyone there  
How many  
Are listening  
Bleary but ecstatic  
To nature's virtuosos  
Festival oh 5 oh ohh?*

*I'm heartened too  
By the spadgers  
Pudgy, bossy  
Dull even  
But happy returnees  
Like the Thrush*

*What was it  
That brought them  
Back from gone?  
More hedges?  
Or the orchids' welcome  
On a scruffy lawn?*

*Is it my early sorties  
Imitating wild boar  
Digging out brambles  
Too close to the house  
For Pa's liking  
And leaving the sod turned?*

*We'll never know  
But it feels good  
To have you back  
Where you belong  
Small Wildings possible  
For us all.*

*The Festival continues  
Raucous, delirious  
Off its tiny minds  
On clean air  
Will we open ours  
In time?*

**Alister Scott**  
21 April 2021



## Looking to Accelerate your Team Coaching Practice?

### Become certified in PROPHET (Predictive Role Profiling for High-Performing Teams) virtually

A leading-edge business tool awarded Registered Test status by the **British Psychological Society** (BPS) and endorsed by the **Association for Coaching** (AC).

# PROPHET

Predictive Role Profiling for High-Performing Executive Teams

#### Next dates:

Thursday 17 March 2022

Timings: 8:00 – 16:00 (GMT)/9:00 – 17:00 (CET)/12:00 – 20:00 (GST)

Thursday 23 June 2022

Timings: 7:00 – 15:00 (PST)/ 9:00 – 17:00 (CST)/ 10:00 – 18:00 (EST)

#### What is unique about PROPHET?

- PROPHET was developed for business and teams **first** which was then validated as a psychometric, written in straightforward language.
- Helps Executive and Team Coaches to work with their clients at a more Systemic level.
- Is quick, straightforward to debrief, and offers practical insight, so that coaches spend more time facilitating the conversations that matter most.
- Used across leading global organizations, government, and privately owned businesses.

#### Benefits to organisations

- Provides CEOs and HR with useful business analytics, to be used as an integral part of enterprise-wide Talent, OD and Transformation programmes.
- Provides newly formed or recently changed teams to work together quickly to align on the vision and strategy.
- Supports an organisation's inclusion agenda, underpinned by a framework that values difference.
- Is a great enabler to increase collaboration and build stronger relationships across the business.

*"PROPHET is a hugely insightful tool that offers valuable insights for any executive team who need to get themselves aligned and work together more cohesively. Really enjoyed the PROPHET Practitioner Accreditation Course - thank you!"*  
Gillian Jones-Williams, Emerge

Contact [prophet@wisdom8.com](mailto:prophet@wisdom8.com) for a brochure, sample reports and course dates.

Quote 'ACPROPHET2022' to get the special member's rate.



# BOOK REVIEWS

## LEADERSHIP COACHING IN CHINA

*Deputy editor Clare Manning enjoys this illuminating insight into coaching development across the world's most populous country.*

This book shines a light on the place where Western coaching meets Eastern coaching and invites us to engage in the evolution of our profession. It is a moving tribute to Dr William H Mobley, who is respected and celebrated as a pioneer coach in China.

It highlights the importance of understanding Chinese culture and the way different organisational cultures have developed in state-owned, private-owned and foreign-funded companies. It shows us how to adapt and how to be flexible with approaches to meet the needs of our clients depending on the local culture they work within.

It is a celebration of the development of the Chinese economy over the last decade and it illuminates the role coaching played as part of that journey. It also calls for us to look to the future and see what is required of coaching moving forwards, in order to expand leadership development across the country.

It moves effortlessly from the systemic, macro lens to the micro lens of tools and techniques. It switches between an academic approach, exploring models and case studies, and a more informal style of conversations and letters. Different voices bounce off the page in a way which is very much in keeping with the overall inclusive theme of the book, inviting us to see the 80% similarity between us all and to embrace the 20% difference.

It will appeal to those who want to work with Chinese companies or with Chinese individuals working in companies across the world. It is also an important, timely read for all of us who are interested in being part of the development of coaching on a global stage and joining in the conversation about a new 'ambi' approach to coaching across cultures.

Title: *Leadership Coaching in China*  
Editors: Marjorie Woo, Tom Payne, James Warner and Jeff Hasenfratz  
Publisher: Fielding University Press  
Publication date: March 2021  
Paperback price: £18  
ISBN: 978-1638486992



#### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Clare Manning is an experienced coach, supervisor, mediator, trainer and facilitator. She has been working in the field for over a decade and specialises in leadership development, intercultural communication and wellbeing. She previously worked as an international leader in higher education for many years, which included working in China to develop student recruitment and educational partnerships.

[linkedin.com/in/claremanning](https://www.linkedin.com/in/claremanning)

## THE COACHES' HANDBOOK

*This wide-ranging tome is a welcome reference text for students of coaching and seasoned practitioners alike, says Sue Stockdale.*

On venturing into a supermarket these days, a shopper can be faced with an almost overwhelming amount of choice from the vast array of products available – and therefore decision making can become difficult.

I felt a similar feeling of overwhelm when opening this book, not because of its physically weighty academic feel, but because of not knowing which contribution to read first. It is indeed a handbook and covers the equivalent of 'soup to nuts' in addressing all aspects of coaching.

The editor has done a wonderful job of bringing together contributions from a diverse list of people and the contents page reads like a 'who's who' of the coaching industry today.

For an individual that is new to coaching, there is certainly no shortage of evidence-based examples to refer to or to cite for any academic writings; however, I do fear that what is missing is some early guidance to help the reader navigate through the myriad of sections and approaches. Ironically in Section 4, on 'Coaching Approaches', I had the option to read about 14 different coaching approaches, including the well-known GROW model, gestalt coaching and systemic team coaching, before reaching the final contribution – which is helpfully titled 'Developing an integrated approach to coaching' and perhaps what I could have done with being reminded of at the outset.

There are lots of case study examples to refer to that enrich the points being made in each section. However, despite what may seem like criticism in my earlier comment because there is so much detail, this could be viewed in a completely different manner and is testament to the way that the coaching profession has evolved over the last few decades. No longer is it acceptable for any person entering the world of coaching to 'just' call themselves a coach. Differentiation is what's de rigueur these days, and the seven sections in this handbook clearly explain to the reader what best practice in coaching is and how these approaches can be applied to one's own portfolio of skills, so that one can clearly define what they do.

The text is printed in small font with plenty of referencing, so for any students of coaching or academics it's likely this handbook will find its way to your bookshelf. I for one expect that it will become a 'go-to' text that I will dip into time and time again, and always find the answer to the question I want to explore.

*Title: The Coaches' Handbook: The Complete Practitioner Guide for Professional Coaches*

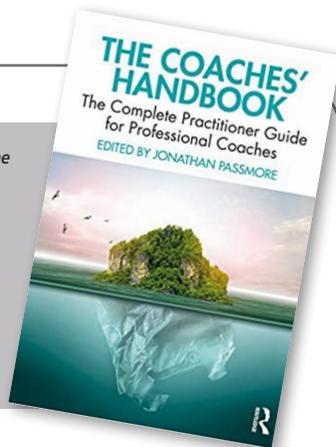
*Editor: Jonathan Passmore*

*Publisher: Routledge*

*Publication date: October 2020*

*Paperback price: £31*

*ISBN: 978-0367546199*



### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Sue Stockdale has been in the coaching profession for over 20 years. She is a master executive coach and coaching supervisor, and hosted the Coaching in the Workplace series on the Association for Coaching podcast channel.

## February

### Tuesday 22nd February

Virtual  
Coaching Clients on the Autistic Spectrum  
*Gillian Higgin*

### Friday 25th February

Virtual  
Access the True Power of Coaching  
*Julie Starr*

## March

### Friday 4th March

Virtual  
Challenging Coaching – 10th Anniversary Event  
*John Blakey and Ian Day*

### Wednesday 16th March

Virtual  
How to Turn Webinars and Speaking Opportunities into a Stream of New Client  
*Lisa Farr*

### Thursday 24th March

Virtual  
What Does Diversity & Inclusion Look Like For You As A Coach, Really?  
*Ashana Crichton*

## April

### Wednesday 26th April

Virtual  
Tuning in: How Mindfulness Practice Can Support Your Coaching Practice  
*Farah Govani*

### Friday 29th April

Virtual  
Smart Self-Care For Coaches  
*Dr Natalie Lancer*

**TO BOOK, PLEASE VISIT OUR EVENTS CALENDAR**  
[www.associationforcoaching.com/events/event\\_list.asp](http://www.associationforcoaching.com/events/event_list.asp)

 [events@associationforcoaching.com](mailto:events@associationforcoaching.com)

 +44 (0) 333 006 2676

 [www.associationforcoaching.com/events](http://www.associationforcoaching.com/events)

# Are you maximizing the benefits of your AC membership?

## Did You Know?

In 2021 the AC issued over **8,000 certificates** to delegates who attended our Digital Learning **Member Benefit webinars**.

## Did You Know?

AC Members can **submit articles** to our Coaching Perspectives magazine and Philosophy of Coaching journal. They can also submit blog posts, guides, **recommended reading and research**.

## Did You Know?

The AC's **weekly podcast** connects with thought leaders, coaches, and academics worldwide and has published over **70 episodes**.

## Did You Know?

The AC is creating more offerings to enhance its membership packages in 2022, including a Leader Coach Accreditation scheme

## Did You Know?

In 2021, the AC welcomed a total of **5,100 attendees** to our **live and virtual events**, held across the world.

## Did You Know?

The AC offers its members access to a wealth of **courses, tools and publications** through our academic, profiling and publishing partners.



**The Association for Coaching® (AC)** established in 2002, is a leading independent and not-for-profit professional body dedicated to excellence, mastery and ethics in coaching, worldwide. With members in over 80 countries, our vibrant, diverse community is made up of professional coaches, leader coaches, mentors, training providers, educators, coach supervisors and organizations building coaching cultures. Our vision is to advance the science and practice of coaching and promote a coach approach to leadership so that coaching ‘ripples’ out in business and society as a key enabler for performance, responsibility and fulfilment.

[www.associationforcoaching.com](http://www.associationforcoaching.com)

*Advancing coaching in business and society, worldwide*