For counsellor-coaches and other coaching professionals

April 2020 **Issue 34**

Coaching Today

Coaching today for the leaders of tomorrow

Should we share our skills?

Contents

FEATURES

Coaching Today is the quarterly journal for counsellors and psychotherapists who are retraining and practising as coaches, as well as coaches from a diverse range of backgrounds.

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BACP House
15 St John's Business Park
Lutterworth LE17 4HB
T 01455 883300
F 01455 550243

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Editor
Diane Parker
editorial@bacpcoaching.co.uk

BACP Coaching Executive contacts
Chair: Carolyn Mumby
Coaching.Chair@bacp.co.uk

Karen Ledger
karen@kslconsulting.org.uk

Tom Andrews
Tomandrews002@gmail.com

Michèle Down
michele.down@btopenworld.com

Gill Fennings-Monkman
gill@counsellingforachange.com

Steve Page
steve.page.yorks@btinternet.com

Visit the BACP Coaching website at **www.bacp.co.uk/bacp-divisions/bacp-coaching**

Contributions
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Advertising
For rates, contact **Sonal Mistry**
T 020 3771 7200
sonal.mistry@thinkpublishing.co.uk

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REGULARS

Interested in contributing to *Coaching Today*?

Copy deadlines for the next two issues are 10 August and 9 November respectively. Drop me a line at **editorial@bacpcoaching.co.uk** with your ideas.

Editorial

Diane Parker
Editor, *Coaching Today*

What is our role as coaches, today?

I've found myself asking this question a lot lately. Perhaps it's the current political and global uncertainty, or the transition to a new decade. Maybe I'm just having my own private identity crisis? But if there's one thing that editing this journal has taught me over the years, it's that the role of coach can be fluid and changeable, and what we mean when we call ourselves a 'coach' can depend on context, client and our own training, background and approaches. I know myself, and from having had the privilege of reading your myriad contributions, that the role of coach can run the gamut from counsellor and therapist to mentor, facilitator, trainer and educator, depending on who we are working with, where and why. I know many practitioners who have come to coaching from counselling and psychotherapy, but I know others who have come from a teaching or education background, others from a leadership training and facilitation background, and still others (particularly within the creative and cultural leadership sector I came from), who offered themselves up as mentors within the industry and subsequently developed coaching skills through forward-thinking proactive programmes such as the Clore Leadership Programme,[1] developing leaders specifically for and from within the sector and equipping them with the skills they will need for great leadership – which also happen to be effective coaching skills.

> What do you feel you need more of as you continue to develop as a practitioner of coaching in 2020?

I wonder if, over the past 10 years, you have found your role as coach changing? Perhaps you have moved sectors or changed careers, gone from working in organisations to private practice, or vice versa, or have created your own unique portfolio practice? Perhaps you have recently retrained as a coach, or added coaching to your existing practice? Perhaps you have found your practice changing as a result of your own changing personal ethics, interests or passions? What has resourced you? What training or professional development has served you? What do you feel you need more of as you continue to develop as a practitioner of coaching in 2020? Please get in touch if you have a story to share, if you feel called to contribute in some way, or respond to any of the articles we are publishing here.

Finally, I want to pay a quick tribute to my colleague Sally Brown, the new editor of *Therapy Today*. Sally has been an invaluable contributor to this journal over the past few years, managing our news and research pages with aplomb, along with a number of our regular columns and features, including Meet the Member and Ask the Executive. Our loss is *Therapy Today*'s gain, and I couldn't be happier that her editorial talent is staying within the BACP family. Please join me in wishing her well and congratulating her in her new role. ■

Diane Parker
editorial@bacpcoaching.co.uk

Reference

1 www.cloreleadership.org

Message from the Chair

'Notice what is good and say it'

This quote from *Time to Think* author Nancy Kline resonates strongly with me.[1] I find that a useful early focus in a coaching programme is to look with the client at their strengths, and I usually do this using values in action resources.[2]

I start here because I know that a refreshed understanding of what matters to us and of what we already do well can help provide more self-belief, courage and leverage towards making changes. This genuine acknowledgement of a person's qualities can lead to appreciation in the other sense of the word; ie an increase in the *value* of something: in this case, their own worth and capability. Appreciation is one of the 10 components of Nancy Kline's Thinking Environment approach, and these 10 behaviours seem to act like a crucible for people to think well of and for themselves.[3]

By nature (perhaps due to being an extroverted 'feeling' type), I find it comes fairly naturally to me to verbalise appreciation, though it wasn't necessarily something encouraged in my northern upbringing 50 years ago! Warmth and support were there, but being too effusive with praise was not really 'the done thing'.

Through my Time to Think training, I saw in action that 'the human mind thinks more rigorously and creatively in a context of specific, sincere, succinct praise'.[1] We are succinct (because, if we're too verbose, people can't take it in, switch off, and become uncomfortable), sincere (we feel it in our bones if it isn't), and specific (a quality we see in the person, which is usually obvious but often not named by others).

> If we take time to appreciate, it creates the safety needed to find the courage to articulate differences of opinion [and] to have more healthy and rigorous debate

Appreciation in action

Our BACP Coaching division Executive meetings begin with a brief round, sharing something that is going well for us individually. It only takes a couple of minutes, but it means that we have all spoken ourselves into the meeting and shared something personally heartening to us, either about our work or personal lives. We enter the meeting as people, focusing on something good. It is easy to forget this stage when concentrating on a loaded agenda; lots to get through and often many invited guests, including various staff from different BACP departments. If I forget this initial round in my urgency to start the agenda, I always go back and introduce it as soon as I remember. We also end with a round of appreciation, which can be anything about the meeting, sometimes of someone in the room, their contribution, sometimes of the process or of something we have decided or achieved together. It is a good way to round off the meeting and reconnect as a group. I have seen its impact many times.

As part of my Time to Think qualifying practicum, I facilitated a day with a group of volunteer advisors in a social enterprise working with refugees. The advisors had themselves arrived in this country as refugees, from many different countries. They were consciously and positively appreciated by their team leader, and I found that they were naturally full of appreciation and warmth for themselves and each other. Consequently, I found it easy to find the words to offer my customary appreciation to them at the end. A different team, whose focus was on supporting other organisations through research, struggled more with this particular component. They had realised through the process that they almost never appreciate themselves or their achievements, other than by the measure of success of the organisations they consulted to. I really wanted to give them genuine appreciation at the end, but I found it hard; I felt unusually awkward, constrained. It put me in mind of how, when a plant has dried in a pot, and you first pour the water in, it just pours through. You need some moisture in there for it to absorb the moisture! Appreciation is not just 'nice to have'; when I am facilitating groups or conducting team coaching, I am aware that if we take time to appreciate, it creates the safety needed to find the courage to articulate differences of opinion, to say what has been unspoken, to have more healthy and rigorous debate, to go further, to the riskier edges of our thinking, to find and remove our untrue limiting assumptions. Research has shown that there is increased blood flow to the

brain when we appreciate ourselves or are appreciated by others. The HeartMath Institute has found that being in a positive emotional state will 'facilitate cognitive function and reinforce positive feelings and emotional stability. This means that learning to generate increased heart rhythm coherence, by sustaining positive emotions, not only benefits the entire body, but also profoundly affects how we perceive, think, feel, and perform.'[4]

I have also noticed how well appreciation of a client at the end of a coaching session, after the potential exposure of thinking aloud, can alleviate any concerns they may have about judgment. It can give a sense of warmth and energy which (if the appreciation is sincere, succinct and specific), helps to nurture the relationship and to build confidence.

In my last Chair's Message in our January issue, I talked about the importance of valuing our existing practice, and what is already in place as we seek to grow it, perhaps from a therapist to a coach or the other way around. A recent *Guardian* article suggested that while our 'to-do' lists can be useful, they tend to keep our focus always on what is yet to do. The author found that writing a 'have-done' list each week enables her to 'remember not just the big achievements but also the tiniest victories that might otherwise have passed me by.'[5] It is our hope that the coaching division supports you by giving you opportunities to recognise yourself and your practice. Please do consider putting yourself forward to be featured in our regular Meet the Member or Coaching in Practice columns. We know there are many of you working in fascinating ways in our division and we would like the opportunity to appreciate you. ■

Carolyn Mumby is Chair of BACP Coaching.
Coaching.Chair@bacp.co.uk

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3. Time to Think. The Thinking Environment: the ten components. [Online.] www.timetothink.com/thinking-environment/the-ten-components/
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5. Agarwal P. My daily to-do lists led to churning anxiety. 'Have-done' lists set me free. The Guardian, 3 February 2020. [Online.] www.theguardian.com/lifeandstyle/2020/feb/03/i-stopped-writing-to-do-lists-and-learned-to-enjoy-what-id-already-achieved

Farewell and thank you to Sally Brown

Appreciation can form an ending to the work or the working relationship, allowing us to put into words what we will miss about that person. Sadly for us as a division, but gladly I think for the wider membership of BACP, we said goodbye in February to Sally Brown, who is taking up the role of editor of *Therapy Today*.

Sally has been an inspiration within our Executive team. Her listening ear as a journalist is acute and she is able to turn our conversations and discussions into incredible articles and blogs. As a person, Sally is warm, always honest, quietly tenacious and completely authentic. She has huge integrity, which she demonstrates in a quiet and careful manner. Sally is such a positive person and someone who is – I want to say 'solid' but that doesn't seem the right word. Maybe 'true' is better. We often assume we will miss the extroverts whose presence is more obvious, when actually, it's often those who quietly share themselves who are missed the most.

Sally has a great range of skills and experience, but she wears this expertise lightly. She has been a crucial member of our Executive team – thoughtful, caring, generous; a quiet dynamo, who gives diligently of herself to everything and everyone she touches. Sally is abundant in emotional and professional intelligence, integrity and humility; the best gift a BACP Chair ever had, as her skill set lightened my load immeasurably. Everything she has contributed to BACP Coaching has raised the bar for our profession.

When I think of Sally, I think of light, to do with her warmth and commitment, but also the light she shines on concepts, words, issues and problems. She has a capacity to think really well through tricky situations. Sally does everything she commits to, and as the person focusing on our communications, this was a quality greatly valued by all of us. She writes with the same clarity, and shows an inspiring blend of humility and expertise and a genuine interest in the people she is interviewing, featuring and inviting us to learn from. With her as my deputy Chair, I felt that there was always someone there to support me in my role as Chair and for me to talk things through with on an immediate and reflective level. To say I will miss her is an understatement. To say I am thrilled for us and for the wider BACP membership that she is now editor of *Therapy Today*, is equally true.

BACP COACHING UPDATE

Due to Sally Brown's departure and Steve Page's long-planned retirement from the Executive in the summer, we are seeking to recruit two new members to join us. We are very keen to increase the diversity within our team and also the representation across the four nations, so members from Scotland or Northern Ireland are particularly encouraged to apply. We would love to have an applicant experienced in media and perhaps public relations, to ensure that we build on our engagement with you, our members, encouraging contributions to *Coaching Today* and our website pages.

I very much appreciate the willingness of staff from a range of BACP departments to come and think and work with us in our regular Executive meetings, and I particularly appreciate Wendy Davis, our clerk and absolutely invaluable point of liaison. She provides us with continuity and accuracy and supports our attendance at meetings and events. We are delighted to have now been joined by Jeremy Bacon as our Special Interest Lead, and you can read more from him here: **www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/advancing-the-profession/influencing-decision-makers/older-people**.

BACP Coaching **News**

Our round-up of the latest events, news and research

Covid-19 updates

BACP events cancelled

Due to the coronavirus outbreak, all BACP events have been cancelled until further notice. For an update on the situation as it evolves, and for more information, please see our events page at **www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/bacp-events/**

Resources to support you

We have gathered a range of resources to support you during the coronavirus pandemic. There are videos from our CPD hub, articles, blogs, comment and updates, as well as advice for clients. You can find information on working online, get perspectives on incident support and self-care, watch update blogs from our Chair, Natalie Bailey, our *Therapy Today* editor, Sally Brown, and see all the latest information from the Association, here: **www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/coronavirus**

You can find regularly updated FAQs on coronavirus on the BACP website. For more information, visit **www.bacp.co.uk/about-us/contact-us/faqs-about-coronavirus**

Add your voice to support our COVID-19 campaign

BACP has launched an important new campaign with BPC and UKCP to help maximise the role of counselling, therapy and coaching in supporting people through the COVID-19 crisis. While counselling has a critical role to play in helping people come to terms with changing work and family circumstances, financial insecurity, isolation, bereavement, societal breakdown and prolonged uncertainty, we're aware that many practitioners have seen funding cuts and sessions drop as social isolating measures have come into force, reducing their ability to provide this much-needed support.

Our campaign identifies three practical actions that Governments across the UK could take now to address these challenges, to help mobilise the counselling and psychotherapy workforce to tackle growing need, which we are sharing with UK Health Secretary, Matt Hancock MP, and equivalent Health and Mental Health Ministers in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

We are reaching out to all practitioners, professional bodies, membership groups and service providers across the sector and inviting you to support this campaign and add your names to our petition. Please sign and share this across your networks. Our combined voice will help us demonstrate strong support for counselling during this critical time.

Please sign up to our petition here: **https://bacp.e-activist.com/page/58143/petition/1?ea.tracking.id=vfgphtwl**

Working online

Concerns over COVID-19 mean that members are having to consider offering telephone sessions or working online. We recommend the following actions to help you gain the basic knowledge and skills necessary to practise ethically online or over the phone:

- Complete a self-audit of the competency framework (www.bacp.co.uk/ecompetences) to highlight the areas in which you need additional knowledge
- Check BACP's working online resources for content that might be relevant to the areas you have identified
- Speak with colleagues and other coaches/therapists in your network who may be able to share knowledge, expertise and recommendations for books or online CPD
- Reflect on the implications of online working with your supervisor, and check that they are comfortable supervising your online practice
- Go back to role play – practise an online session with a fellow practitioner so you can get used to the technology and they can provide feedback
- Be open with clients that you're not fully trained in working in this way and be open to client feedback on how it's working for them – explore their fears and risks
- If you're able to access training, consider looking at courses offered by ACTO-accredited providers.

This guidance is meant as an interim measure and should not be considered the same as full training. For more information, see **www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/working-online-resources**

BACP co-signatory of letter to PM

BACP has co-signed a letter to Prime Minister Boris Johnson, asking him to commit to his pledge for benefit-in-kind tax exemptions for businesses that undertake to support the mental and physical health of their employees. This forms part of our ongoing work as members of the Working Well Coalition, a campaign led by retail giant, the John Lewis Partnership.

Divisional synergies

Attending the February conference of the BACP Children, Young People and Families (CYPF) division as a representative of BACP Coaching, I found myself observing the common ground of these two BACP 'divisions'. Perhaps this is not surprising, as the focus of the conference was 'resilience', a theme in many coaching sessions. The two keynotes, speaking about early childhood parental bereavement and living with autistic spectrum conditions respectively, demonstrated humility and courage in their determination to remain true to the clients they are supporting; a strong value underpinning coaching. I also attended a workshop on the solution-focused approach, and another exploring the delicate area of 'parent-engagement' when working with children and young people, in which the presenter advocated a client-relationship approach to teasing out confidentiality boundaries, and which I found refreshing.

Between sessions, I had conversations with delegates interested to learn more about coaching and how it could fit alongside and within their counselling practice. I also caught up with Jo Holmes, BACP's Lead for CYPF. Jo encourages members to contact her if they would like to get involved in our proposed network of members with an interest and/or experience in providing coaching opportunities for children and young people. She can be contacted at jo.holmes@bacp.co.uk

Steve Page
BACP Coaching Executive member
steve.page.yorks@btinternet.com

Network groups

Would you like to connect with fellow BACP members interested in coaching? BACP is offering to support five new network groups of coach/counsellors across the country. These network groups are an excellent way to connect with peers and gain continuing professional development through invited speakers. The groups are self-organised but supported by BACP, which helps with publicity, bookings, venue and refreshment costs.

If you are interested in finding out more about setting up a network group in your area, please contact Tom Andrews at **tomandrews002@gmail.com**

BACP to chair new mental health working group

BACP is leading a new mental health working group on the Council for Work and Health, chaired by Nicola Neath, who is past-Chair of the BACP Workplace division. The development is a significant step toward achieving parity of esteem between mental and physical health at work. The group includes health leaders from the Society of Occupational Medicine, the NHS and HSE.

Read more at **www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/21-january-bacp-to-lead-new-mental-health-at-work-group**

Supporting mental health awareness in older people

At BACP, we are supporting Age UK's campaign to increase older people's awareness of common mental health problems and the value of talking therapy. Commissioned by NHS England, the campaign includes a focus on encouraging older people to discuss their emotional wellbeing and mood with their GP and for GPs to overcome reticence about referring older people to IAPT services. BACP member Deborah Coombs, who runs a counselling service for a voluntary sector organisation and works in private practice, added her voice to the campaign, telling us:

'Social prescribing is one way that this can happen, but many GPs still don't know about services that are available or only consider talking therapies at the point when medication has been rejected. In my experience, older clients engage very well with counselling, and age should never be a barrier to counselling'.

Read more at **www.bacp.co.uk/news/news-from-bacp/2020/9-january-age-should-not-be-a-barrier-to-treatment**

Working with older people

Data and research indicate that the older we get, the less likely we are to seek help to cope with life transitions. The recent appointment of Jeremy Bacon, BACP's Older People Lead, as Special Interest Lead (SIL) for the BACP Coaching division's Executive, offers new opportunities to explore the role of coaching in supporting healthy ageing.

Jeremy's primary function as SIL to the Executive is to support communication and relationships with BACP's various staff teams, but he's also very keen to hear from divisional members willing to share their experience, knowledge and learning from their work with older clients.

Find out more about BACP's work focus on older adults by visiting **www.bacp.co.uk/olderpeople** or email Jeremy directly at jeremy.bacon@bacp.co.uk

Library picture, for illustration only

BACP welcomes high-profile figures urging action on suicide in NI

Personalities and organisations from sport, the arts and the voluntary sector are among the signatories of an open letter, published in the *Belfast Telegraph*, highlighting the rate of suicide in Northern Ireland. The letter, produced by Participation and the Practice of Rights (PPR) as part of its #123GP campaign for increased funding and provision of GP practice-based counselling in Northern Ireland, urges Stormont's health minister Robin Swann to ensure no one waits longer than 28 days for a counselling appointment and calls on Mr Swann to 'declare a public health emergency' on suicide.

BACP's Deputy Head of Policy, Martin Bell, said: 'It's great to see the backing of many people from all areas of life in Northern Ireland for the vital campaign led by PPR for an immediate, systemic response to tackling suicide. We warmly welcome the return of the Assembly and are pleased to see mental health listed as a priority in the Executive's new programme.

'Improving access to psychological therapies will be critical if we are to deliver the more responsive mental health support that the people of NI most urgently need, and we look forward to working with the Minister to deliver these ambitions through the promised mental health action plan and longer-term mental health strategy.

'However, a more immediate response is required to the news of more tragic loss of life through suicide, and we urge the Executive to waste no time in putting significant investment into the nation's mental health and to support the PPR campaign's call to double funding for counselling and to ensure nobody waits longer than 28 days for an appointment.'

BACP Policy team round-up

BACP's Policy team has met with Vicki Nash, Head of Policy and Campaigns at Mind, to discuss mutual policy priorities in England and Wales, specifically around improving access to psychological therapies, children and young people and Assembly elections 2021. Further meetings were held with other stakeholders in the field, including the Royal College of Psychiatrists, the Tavistock Centre for Couples Relationships, the Albany Trust, Place2be and Mente. We attended the launch of the Working Well Campaign, which is a new and growing group of employers, MPs, charities and think tanks – together they are committed to do more to improve the health of the nation's workers. We've continued to play an active role in policy discussions, representing counselling and psychotherapy at the Talking Therapies Taskforce and also on the NHS England Sexual Assault Recovery Centres working group.

BACP Resources

CPD Hub coaching resources

BACP's CPD hub has a growing selection of online coaching video presentations and resources from experts in the field. Videos cover subjects such as couple coaching, coaching young people, coaching unpaid carers, growing your practice through creative self-reflection, ethical considerations in coaching, and many more.

To view the whole range of online resources, visit **www.bacp.co.uk/cpd/cpd-hub/coaching**

BACP Online resource: *To be met as a person at work – attachment theory in action*

In this new BACP CPD hub recording, Nicola Neath, senior staff counsellor at the University of Leeds, and past-Chair of BACP Workplace division, discusses an evolutionary framework to explore the notion 'that as a matter of course, we all work in jobs that require us to respond to the needs of others, have our own needs, and often don't create the conditions to support our own personal and psychological development'.[1]

For more information, visit **www.bacp.co.uk/cpd/cpd-hub/attachment/to-be-met-as-a-person-at-work-attachment-theory-in-action**

Reference

McCluskey U, Neath N. To be met as a person at work: the effect of early attachment experiences on work relationships. London: Routledge; 2018.

BACP resource: *Online business training*

BACP has partnered with OpenLearn, a learning platform delivered by the Open University, to offer a selection of free online business courses for members. Suitable for any practitioners wishing to develop their business skills, the courses are a guide through the basics of running a small business. They range in level from introductory to advanced, and topics include business and entrepreneurship, finance and accounting, marketing and communications, IT and technology, and many more.

For more information, visit **www.bacp.co.uk/events-and-resources/business-training**

Meet the member

Leena Seward is an executive coach and existential psychotherapist with a private practice, based in the City of London and Surrey. She is founder and CEO of Mosaic Executive Coaching, specialising in leadership coaching for SMEs (small-to-medium businesses) and corporate executives. She lives in London with her husband and two teenage children.

leena@mosaic-exco.com
www.mosaic-exco.co.uk

How would you describe your journey from therapist to coach?

My journey evolved gradually over time. After graduating in physics, I worked as an IT/business change consultant for several years. My interest in people and philosophy led me to train as an existential psychotherapist at Regent's College, London. Juggling my studies, consultancy work and raising two small children proved to be excellent preparation for setting up in private practice. As I gained experience, I realised I wanted to take the principles of therapy to the business world. I decided to train as a European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) senior coach to enhance my skill set and help establish my credibility with business professionals.

Do you have a coaching niche?

My current practice focuses on executives and business teams wishing to develop their leadership capabilities. Clients tend to contact me when promotion, a new job or organisational change has resulted in a new role. Often, they are seeking to build confidence, improve effectiveness and communication skills, reduce stress and maintain good mental health. Many clients say they value having a dual-trained coach-therapist because they feel able to bring all aspects of their lives to their coaching in a holistic way.

How has becoming a coach changed you as a person?

It has helped me understand how a well-targeted change in action, thought and behaviour can achieve positive results. I try to apply a coaching approach to myself and my own life. I am now more aware of the impact of agency, choice and personal responsibility in the shaping of one's life.

Where do you practise?

I work primarily from my city office, based near the Bank of England, and a convenient central London location for many clients. I also have some clients who prefer to see me at my home practice in Surrey. The two locations add variety to my working week and help me maintain a healthy balance between active and reflective modes.

Do you have a typical client?

Not really. While it is important to spot patterns where they exist, I prefer to start with the reality that every individual and every business is unique.

What's your biggest challenge currently?

I think my biggest and ongoing challenge is maintaining my own mental balance and wellbeing. With the demands of work, family and the pace and pressures of modern life, I find this aspect needs constant attention. My yoga practice has played a vital role in my self-care over many years, helping me to slow down and recharge. Furthermore, I have recently decided to reduce my consumption of news and social media and to increase my time spent in nature, reading and listening to music.

What do you feel most proud of having achieved?

In work terms, setting up Mosaic Executive Coaching in 2016 feels like a real achievement. I enjoy bringing together associates to work on coaching programmes for corporate clients with the chance of more interesting work than when practising alone. I have already learnt a great deal about running a business and there are always fresh, interesting opportunities to develop my skills further.

Outside work, I feel proud to be mum to my now teenage son and daughter. I regard being a parent as the most difficult, important and rewarding job there is.

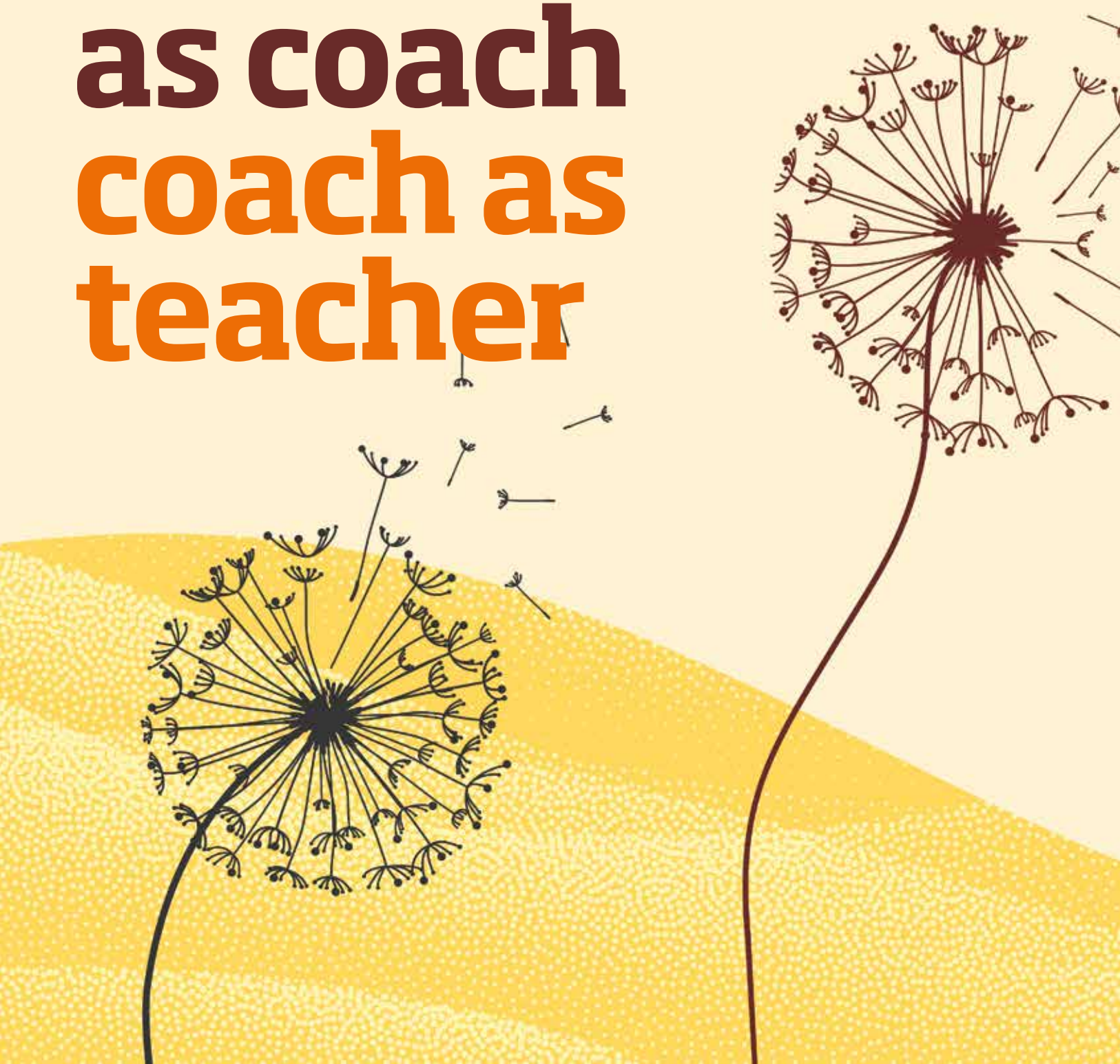
What advice would you give to therapists interested in coaching?

To approach your coaching training with a genuinely open mind and to be prepared to 'unlearn' things you will have learnt in therapy but which will not be helpful to transfer to a coaching space. One key attitudinal shift I found very helpful is that, in coaching, you are primarily relating to the functioning, able and healthy part of the client, rather than focusing on and trying to 'fix' the pathological aspects. Coaching is, in essence, a positive encounter with a purpose and objective set by the client, while navigating any dysfunction that may be met along the way.

What do you value most about being a member of BACP Coaching?

I value reading and hearing about common experiences and problems faced by other coaches. Our work, especially individual coaching, can be quite isolating, and being part of a larger professional body and staying connected to colleagues is very important. It also helps me stay abreast of the latest trends and research findings, which helps me to stay relevant and aware of new developments that may benefit my clients. ■

Leader as coach coach as teacher



Should we be sharing our coaching skills with our clients? **Phil Renshaw** and **Jenny Robinson** propose that leadership coaches today must face up to a new challenge.

Most of us consider coaching to be a privilege, and with that privilege comes the responsibility to behave honourably with our clients. After all, those of us who coach leaders and managers in organisations often find ourselves working with people who hold powerful positions, and listening to deeply held hopes and fears that are unlikely to have been expressed to many others, maybe even to no one else at all. We might hear of behind-the-scenes power struggles or great acts of humility or hubris. Given this, we have to be sensitive to issues of ethics, trust and confidence.[1]
We propose that there is another sensitivity we need to attune to: that is, consciously and wilfully giving away our skill set. As this might initially scream of turkeys voting for Christmas, our aim here is to explain why we should do this and how it might be done.

Most training courses with any of the professional coaching bodies or associations will cover the issue of managing dependence; that is, managing clients who continue to lean on us as their coach for longer than is healthy or necessary.[2] The debate around dependence generally centres on how long an engagement should be and how we build in our own exit, leaving a client better equipped to work through their own issues, perhaps with the possibility of returning to coaching at some point in the future. These are necessary issues for us to hold in the foreground of our client contracting. Clearly, the responsibility sits with us, the coaches, to broach these issues, especially given that clients often have limited experience of the appropriate parameters for coaching.

In addition to this ethical question of managing dependence, we want to raise the possibility that we need to 'teach' our clients too. The idea of teaching may at first appear to be in conflict with coaching, but we are arguing that we might teach, not in the manner of a teacher, but in the manner of a coach – consistent with the normal ethos and ethics of coaching. This is because the skills we develop and hone as a coach are exactly the skills that most leaders need.[3] These are not skills that should be divorced from leadership, nor should their existence in the workplace rely solely on the provision of external professional coaches.[4] And those in need of these skills cannot wait until the next time they see an external coach – rather they are needed in the moment, 'on the go'. We work with →

coaching in at least two distinct ways: we coach managers and leaders in the traditional sense, at all levels of responsibility and in a wide range of contexts; and we also train business people in the skills of coaching to support their leadership capabilities. It is through these two related, and yet often disconnected, activities, we've come to the view that simply coaching to answer the needs or desires of the coachee (and their line manager) is insufficient. We need to coach our clients to learn to coach as well.

Our logic for this position is supported in several ways. First, despite the increasing supply of qualified coaches, it is untenable for organisations to be able to afford external support for all those who would benefit from coaching – given that, logically, everyone can benefit from coaching. Second, we see busy leaders outsourcing some of their 'people development' conversations to coaches – and yet they would be far more effective doing it themselves. Third, there is a danger that unskilled leaders may be using coaching for remedial conversations that they are uncomfortable having themselves. How many of us have found ourselves discussing, in our own supervision, how the person who would benefit the most from our coaching would appear to be the coachee's boss, only we're restricted to coaching the coachee? These situations may be good business for us as coaches, but they are not good for the long-term success of the organisation in question and, as such, are fundamentally questionable from an ethical standpoint.

Great leaders coach

Instead, we argue that great leaders coach. This is a premise gaining traction with many academics and practitioners: that everyone has the capacity to lead[5]; consequently, we argue that all leaders should coach. In the academic literature on leadership, this is not a new refrain; see, for example, the many papers and books centred around the work of Bass and Avolio on the topic of transformational leadership.[6] In this model, the transformational leader (distinguished from the transactional leader operating under the *status quo*, the management-by-exception leader and the laissez-faire leader who is not leading at all), relies on four key mechanisms or interventions. One of these fundamental interventions is that of coaching (or 'individualised consideration' in academic speak). In other words, effective leadership seeking to achieve success in a changing environment, must draw on the skills of coaching.

An alternative academic example supporting the need for coaching skills is that of situational leadership, exemplified through the work of Hersey and Blanchard.[7] This argues that leaders need to use different skills and capabilities in different circumstances. The aim of the productive and successful leader is to delegate and empower others as much as possible in order to maintain focus at the appropriate strategic level. To achieve this, the skill of coaching is critical to move a colleague or team member from requiring directive, time-intensive behaviour, to that of the sweet-spot of delegation.

> "As part of our responsibilities to challenge our clients, we must go further and draw attention to the importance of coaching skills in leadership and hence the greater impact that can be gained from a coaching engagement"

While these leadership theories are relatively mainstream and are but two examples of many others in which the role of coaching is important to effective leadership, we are yet to see this narrative arise in the professional coaching field. The connection may not even be recognised in the training and development materials of the coaching professional bodies. And yet, for a profession that excels in helping others to see different perspectives and understand different links,[8] this feels somewhat ironic. It may be that, in the long term, our industry is afraid that identifying the significance of this relationship will potentially diminish the pool of coaching assignments. This may be, but is, in our view, unlikely.

Building an element of teaching-about-coaching into a coaching assignment makes good sense. Certainly, it reduces the concerns we might have about clients developing a dependence on us. More than that, it builds long-term sustainable solutions and puts the key conversations between leaders, and those they collaborate with, back where they belong. Indeed, we would argue that many coaches and coaching models embed this premise. For example, the coaching model advocated by David Rock follows a deliberate rubric, through which the coachee learns not just to address the initial dilemma that triggered the intervention, but develops the ability to re-use that methodology to address any future challenges they face.[9] However, we are pushing this to the forefront in arguing that at the end of the engagement, the coachee will benefit from a clear awareness of the concept of coaching as a leadership skill of their own. They will learn that they can draw on this, and how to do so, at least to a reasonable degree of quality.

Coaching on the go

As professional coaches, in our view, it is inadequate to work on the assumption that our role ends with either the initial dilemma or challenge set by the coachee, or indeed further issues that the coachee identifies during the coaching journey. As part of our responsibilities to challenge our clients, we must go further and draw attention to the importance of coaching skills in leadership and hence the greater impact that can be gained from a coaching engagement. Without effective coaching skills to use as leaders, from the basics of contracting skills, to high quality generative listening and more, your coachee will not be the most effective leader they can be. Some clients - for example, the CEO - simply need to confide in someone, and that might be the exception to our proposition. But usually, any client benefitting from a professional coaching engagement will gain even more from skills that have the potential to make them a brilliant leader-coach.

In coming to our view that coaching the issue we are presented with is not enough, we started to consider how best to close the gap. We have presented part of the answer, namely the extension of the goals of the coaching engagement. Nonetheless, this will not provide sufficient development to practise and build the leadership skills of coaching – there is simply too much to cover within a standard short-term, one-to-one coaching engagement. Our attempt to address the needs of the busy leader or manager led to us writing our book, *Coaching on the Go*,[14] which explains each of the key components of coaching and offers a range of behavioural →

> More than 600,000 senior executives in the UK share a common objective: to get the best out of their teams and others they work alongside. Meet these unsung potential coaches

Where to start

If our logic has convinced you, the next question is: what can we do about it? We've been practising this concept for a while now and here's what we have learnt:

It starts at, if not before, 'hello'

During the contracting conversation, we now raise the subject of leaders-as-coaches and we are explicit about how this belief drives our work with individuals. As a consequence, we often find that the contracting deepens and expands to include more elements than simply a one-to-one coaching assignment. For example, the coachee may specifically speak about a current dilemma that they'd like coaching on, but also say that they believe they will benefit from some direct skill building. This can also mean expanding the contracting conversation with the party that engaged us, not necessarily the coachee. After all, if we are to extend the impact of our coaching, then the fee-payer, or commissioner of services, has a right to understand that this is part of our process – and hence a part of our impact.

Broadening the outcomes

A natural extension of deepening our initial contracting conversation is bringing attention to what other dilemmas our coachee may have, has had, or anticipates, which may link to the skill of coaching as a leader. This involves looking beyond the initial dilemma or challenge and asking where else might the learning from the coaching conversation generate value.

Coaching conversations explicitly include a learning component

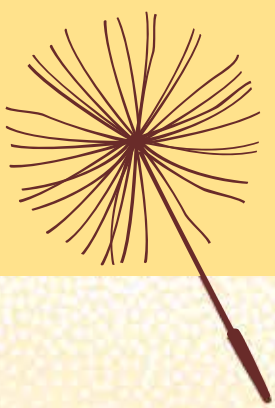
In helping a client to think through their situation, we make extant the tools and techniques that we are using. For example, if using appreciative inquiry,[10] we will explain what it is, why we use it, how it works and then ask our client to apply it to the circumstances they are currently finding difficult. Some might argue that this is inappropriate as we are 'leading' the coachee, something which is anathema to effective coaching. In contrast, we believe this argument is naïve. In choosing any coaching technique or approach with our clients, indeed the very question we decide to ask first, we are leading them. This is unavoidable. Advocates of Clean coaching[11] might say they aim to reduce this to its absolute minimum – to which we would say, you still made a choice as coach, meaning that you did not draw on other potentially valuable techniques, and so you also led the process. This is the skill we bring as coaches, of which we should be proud. What we are now advocating is the identification and sharing of this skill with our coachee leaders.

End with a summary of the topics and tools

Typically, we ask our coachee to summarise the conversation. Sometimes, this is in the last 10 minutes of the session, sometimes by email as follow-up, or perhaps both, for maximum reflective impact. In addition to asking them to simply summarise their key take-aways/actions/insights, we also ask them to reflect on and talk about the tools that we used to generate those outcomes. Then, using the principles of nudging,[12] we ask them to consider where else they might use these tools.

Extend beyond the meeting

As the tempo of the assignment settles down, we invite our clients to begin to use and experiment with the tools that they are experiencing in our sessions. If, for example, we have used a positional perspectives conversation[13] to give them some new insight, later on we ask them how they might use that sort of approach when helping another member of their team who may be stuck on something.



experiments that the reader can try out to test and develop their capabilities accordingly. The book provides something we can use both during the client engagement, and leave with clients to continue their journey developing coaching skills for use as leaders after our engagement. Our hope is that the book can help address a serious leadership development need. We are also suggesting further reading for our clients, which adds another learning dynamic to our conversations.

There are more than 600,000 senior executives in the UK alone, who share a common objective: to get the best out of their teams and others they work alongside.[15] Meet these unsung potential coaches. They do not wish to become professional coaches, but are instead, professional managers or leaders who nevertheless search for ways to develop others. These non-coaching professionals deserve to walk away from a coaching engagement with a wider array of skills than they started with. As coaches, we can teach. We are ideally placed to do this.

Leaders come to coaching for a variety of reasons. Whatever we do, whatever tools we use, whatever relational bridges we build, there is an opportunity for them to take away a skill set that is immensely valuable. That is a truly sustainable solution and we owe it to the organisations we work for to change our mindset and theirs. ■

Dr Phil Renshaw and **Jenny Robinson** are academics, entrepreneurs, teachers, and both have extensive private coaching businesses. Phil and Jenny met on the first day of their PhDs and immediately realised that they shared a depth of business experience from around the world that, combined with coaching, provided a unique perspective on leaders and their leadership. They are the authors of *Coaching on the Go* (Pearson, 2019), which offers a unique perspective on coaching skills for leaders and the power of coaching by focusing on everyday life situations. They welcome your views on the issues raised here.

jenny@coachingonthego.co.uk
phil@coachingonthego.co.uk
www.coachingonthego.co.uk

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BACP Coaching responds...

I read this article with great interest because a large percentage of my coaching work is with leaders, often with an explicit focus on developing leadership skills. The authors make many valid points, underpinned with useful theories. I absolutely agree that passing on information and developing skills through experience is a key part of leadership coaching. As a coach, I seek to value the client's thinking above my own and only share information, including tools, when they have gone as far as they can with their own mind and when they ask for it. In practice, with permission, I have shared many tools and frameworks and recommended books for coachees to read, though offering these lightly. Often, those new to leadership or to a particular role soak these resources up with enthusiasm and run with them, applying them in their own way in their own unique context. It's interesting to think about whether this constitutes 'teaching'. It is certainly enabling learning and sharing of information, though I think it's important to avoid being didactic in the sense of taking the position that 'we know best'.

I also agree with the authors that there is a danger that managers and leaders outsource difficult conversations to coaches. This robs the leader and their direct reports of opportunities to really understand one another's position and to strengthen and build the relationship by appreciating difference and holding one another accountable in terms of performance, both of which can increase confidence and efficacy. Mary Beth O'Neill articulates this clearly, outlining the differences between what she identifies as adopting a 'rescue model' versus a 'client responsibility model' of coaching.[1] The need to resist rescuing and unwittingly taking responsibility and power away is equally relevant in terms of leaders and their direct reports. Coaching skills can also be useful when managing up in an organisation, as well as with the teams for which leaders have a responsibility. I have found that leaders who are able to consciously distribute leadership and who are aware of different leadership styles for different stages of development, such as the situational leadership approach, are likely to be far more effective. It's also important to note that we can all benefit from the generative attention of another person, however skilled we are; coaching ourselves is not quite the same proposition as coaching someone else. While I always end coaching sessions with an invitation to the client to articulate what they are taking away, the authors of this article have inspired me to go further, by inviting clients to reflect on the tools used to generate the outcome and asking them to consider where else or how they might use them.

Carolyn Mumby
Coaching.Chair@bacp.co.uk

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A leader for good? Communication in leadership

Dimos Kyritsis looks at current communication tools within leadership practice and asks how coaches can employ these to help transform good leaders into leaders for good.

In my professional experience, the majority of conflicts that occur in the workplace can be mainly attributed to lack of communication rather than to lack of expertise, technical skills or commitment. The good news is that we always have a role to play in a situation where communication skills are required. We can, therefore, take responsibility for the language we use and the messages we send to others.

According to Lasater and Lasater, the authors of *What We Say Matters*, speech is the most human of activities.[1] They argue that it enables the functioning of society on all levels, claiming that whenever we speak, we change the world, as the way we speak connects us both to ourselves and to those we are relating to.

Good leaders versus leaders for good

Regarding leadership, the role of the leader is to build trust, engage, influence, facilitate and coach the team, as well as manage challenging behaviour, deal with conflict, introduce change, and often manage internal politics within teams.[2] This multitasking role is inevitably fraught with anxiety. Leadership theorist John Adair[3] makes a differentiation between being 'a good leader' and being a leader for good, giving the example of Adolph Hitler as a 'good leader', but who was certainly not 'a leader for good'. Communication plays a crucial role in being a leader for good.

In my leadership coaching practice, many of my clients have asked for help in developing their communication skills, citing feelings of uncertainty about how to communicate their messages, as well as how to interpret verbal messages they receive. Regarding communicating messages, Lasater and Lasater argue that employees are often intimidated about expressing themselves at work, for fear they may be disregarded or invalidated.[1]

Transactional analysis for leadership

Therapists Stewart and Joines[4] use transactional analysis (TA), a theory of personality that provides a model of communication and a method of analysing systems and relationships, both in personal and work situations. It can help people to stay in clear communication and avoid setting up unproductive confrontations. TA is suitable for use in leadership coaching and it can be a powerful tool in management, communications training and in organisational analysis.

One of the most fundamental ideas of TA is the basic model of three ego states: Adult, Parent and Child.[5] We are considered to be in the 'adult' ego state when our behaviour, our feelings and our thinking are related to what is going on around us in the here and now, appealing to all the resources available to us for support. We are deemed to be in the 'parent' ego state when we are thinking, feeling and behaving like our parents or others who have been parental figures to us. The model of the parent ego state can be subdivided into the categories of 'controlling parent' and that of 'nurturing parent'. We are considered to be in the 'child' ego state when we tend to behave, think and feel in ways we did when we were children. This model can be subdivided into the model of the 'adapted child' and 'free child'. TA provides insights into our behaviour; thus, we can use it both to develop a greater awareness of the way we communicate and shift between the most suitable ego state for a given situation. We can use TA to interpret messages as it enables us to understand the reasons why people feel, think, behave and communicate the way they do, helping us to release judgments and develop an empathetic approach towards others.

> How is it possible to step out of your stressful daily tasks and duties, connect with yourself, recognise ego states, become more aware of your feelings and needs, and make requests based upon your feelings and needs?

One of the most powerful lessons I learnt during my professional coaching training was that any message we receive is based upon the speaker's world, mental state, belief system, perceptions and judgments. It's not only about the content of the message (verbal cues), but about the speaker of that message; their tone and pitch of voice, the words they choose, their body language. The good news is that it's not about us. Even if the speaker has plausible arguments, or if they have a reason to be upset, that does not permit them to be ill mannered. We are all humans, we all make mistakes, we all deserve to be treated with respect.

Developing empathy and compassion

Having found myself in this position, I asked myself what I have to embrace and what I have to let go of in order not to take things so personally, and the answer came along. I had to suspend taking responsibility for other people's communication patterns and embrace empathy and compassion. None of this came naturally to me. I had to reframe my own disempowering perspectives, practise, and effect changes. My coaching supervision supported me a lot in this journey. Kegan and Lahey[6] of Harvard University elaborate on the change challenges we face today, differentiating between 'technical' and 'adaptive' change. The former necessitates the development of new skills, while the latter 'can only be met by transforming your mindset, by advancing it to a more sophisticated stage of mental development'.[6] Investing in a new way of communication is definitely an adaptive change challenge. The notion that any message we receive is associated with the speaker's world and mental state is one of the essential pillars of empathy and compassion.

It is worth considering that offering empathy and compassion neither requires that we →

approve of nor condone the other person's behaviour, nor does it detract from our own perception of reality or perspective. We can give empathy and compassion to someone and at the same time disagree with or disapprove of their action(s). It simply helps us to understand the reasons why someone speaks or acts the way they do, and we can therefore focus on observing the other person's speech, and release any judgment we may be holding, which is likely to lead us to labelling that person. As psychologist Kristin Neff writes: 'The moment you see the man as an actual human being who is suffering, your heart connects with him. Instead of ignoring him, you find to your amazement that you are taking a moment to think about how difficult his life is. You are moved by his pain and feel the urge to help him in some way'.[7] Empathy involves understanding the reasons why someone behaves as they do, while compassion entails the clear seeing of suffering, feelings of kindness for those who are in discomfort, and the acknowledgement that all of this is a common human condition.

As I noted earlier, the way we speak is the way to connect to ourselves and to others. During my recent teacher training in restorative yoga, my tutor, Deborah Berryman, emphasised the importance of empathy and compassion in teaching, pointing out that we cannot give empathy and compassion to other people unless we give it to ourselves, otherwise we are building non-functioning relationships with unclear boundaries. That was another powerful lesson that brought home to me that I had been judgmental and critical towards other people not because of the things they said or did, but because I had been judgmental and critical towards myself. According to Neff, compassion for ourselves involves recognising our own discomfort and suffering, discerning the reasons for our suffering, extending kindness to ourselves because of our suffering, and realising that this is a part of the common human experience.[7] We are not the only ones in this world thinking, feeling, speaking and communicating the way we do. Apart from our verbal communication, our state of mind affects our non-verbal communication, and our body language in general, which others pick up on.

The key components of non-violent communication

The first gift of (self) empathy and (self) compassion is that it enables us to differentiate between observations of facts and evaluations when we communicate, as both help us to release judgments. This forms the first component of the non-violent communication (NVC) model, developed by Marshall Rosenberg,[8] who argues that a combination of observations and evaluations is often heard as criticism. Observation is a statement based upon a fact that happened, and is free from any form of our own perception or opinion. The statement, 'She said she will not meet her deadline' offers an example of pure observation, while the statement 'She won't meet her deadline' is an example of observation mixed with evaluation, as it contains our own estimation of her performance. Leaders can invest in the art of observational language whenever they evaluate someone's performance at work, so as to make it more useful and less prone to misinterpretation.

Empathy and compassion are also associated with the identification of feelings. Once again, to improve our capacity to identify, acknowledge and assuage the feelings of others, we need first to develop a greater awareness of our own feelings and be able to communicate them. This is the key to self-expression – the second component of non-violent communication. We often expect other people to guess how we feel, while we are reluctant to express and communicate our own feelings, in the false belief that the more vulnerable we appear to be, the more likely we are to be exploited. Rosenberg highlights that the expression of one's vulnerability is likely to resolve conflicts.[8] He also argues that when we express our feelings, we should be cautious to distinguish between feelings and thoughts, which entails distinguishing between what we feel and what we think we are, as well as how we think others react or behave towards us. He argues that the statement 'I feel that you don't respect me' does not involve an expression of a feeling, as he does not identify 'you don't respect me' to be a feeling. Rather, it expresses what the speaker believes the other person is doing to him. By contrast, the

> Unless we give empathy and compassion to ourselves, we will be unable to extend empathy and compassion to our clients, release any hidden judgments we might make, and develop greater unconditional positive regard for them

sentence: 'I am sad that you did not attend the meeting' does verbally express a feeling.

Heightened awareness of our feelings and the reasons we experience each feeling helps us to gain further clarity of our needs. The expression of our feelings facilitates the expression of our needs. The more we express our needs, the more likely we are to fulfil them. Acknowledging and expressing our needs is the third component of non-violent communication.

Rosenberg[8] and Lasater and Lasater[1] agree that the way to get our needs met is through request making. We therefore ask for actions that may comfort our needs. Rosenberg is in favour of using positive language when we make requests, suggesting that we communicate to others what we *do* want them to do, rather than what we *don't*. Lang suggests we focus on verbal positive pathways as a means of reframing negative pathways, arguing that speaking the positive is as empowering as hearing the positive.[9]

Requests seem to be more constructive when they are accompanied by the speaker's feelings and needs, otherwise they may be perceived as demands. Lasater and Lasater[1] argue that a speaker who makes a request should be open to the possibility that the other person may decline. If they try to pressure someone into agreeing, then they make a demand, no matter how calm and kind they may appear to be. In the workplace, leaders are likely to make a request in a group situation. In a group, the members need to be clear about what the request is and who it is directed towards, so that they can know what they are expected to do and how they are expected to act. Request making is the fourth and final aspect of NVC.

Creating leaders for good

The above theories and practices of communication invite leaders first to connect and communicate with themselves, as a means of developing a greater awareness of their own patterns, feelings and needs, and communicate them through observations and through request making, instead of demand making. Considering Lasater and Lasater[1], who argue that whenever someone connects with themselves, they connect better with others, we can infer that a leader who is connected with themself builds a greater connection with their team members. As Kinyon and Lasater state: 'When you tend well to yourself, you can listen with interest, hear the other person, and understand what is going on for them. Working through a conflict with them starts with connecting to yourself'.[10]

How is it possible to step out of your stressful daily tasks and duties, connect with yourself, recognise ego states, become more aware of your feelings and needs, and make requests based upon your feelings and needs?

The answer is practice. Leaders can focus on practising these skills outside of work, in situations that do not seem to be stressful.[1] They can therefore train the brain to memorise the sensation produced and to bring it forward when needed. A daily ritual can also act as a reminder. Kinyon and Lasater stress that daily practice of a skill enables one to integrate it so that they can have access to the body memory to regain awareness, presence and choice in the moment they need.[10]

These communication theories and practices are also highly applicable to coaching relationships. As coaches, we can be overwhelmed by the dynamics of the conversations with our clients, as well as by our willingness to support our clients in producing results. Unless we give empathy and compassion to ourselves, we will be unable to extend empathy and compassion to our clients, release any hidden judgments we might make, and develop greater unconditional positive regard for them. The theory of ego states that TA offers can help us understand better both where our clients are, and then pinpoint the ego state we find ourselves in and make the choice to shift into a different state to connect with ourselves and better serve them.

Having invested in developing self-compassion and empathy, I am much more present, focused and calm in my sessions. My clients are picking up that energy, stating that they are feeling listened to and cared for. Adopting the model of transactional analysis in my relationships with my clients has helped me move from the state of 'nurturing parent' into the 'adult' state, and that shift has given agency to my clients and greater ownership over their results. In following the principles of non-violent communication, I have managed to create more structure for my clients and set clearer boundaries with them.

A coach, a leader, and anyone who is able to express themselves and communicate their feelings without defensiveness, attack, judgment or blame, has the ability to inspire others to do the same. Inspiration is a clear contributing factor to change. Modelling healthy behavioural and relational patterns as a coach is a skill that has the potential to elevate a good leader into a leader for good. ■

Dimos Kyritsis is an ICF-certified coach, a certified yoga instructor and a qualified special needs teacher. His specialisms as a coach and trainer include communication skills, behaviour economics, decision making and career transitions.
dimos.kyritsis@gmail.com
www.dimoskyritsis.com

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Ask the Executive

Members of the BACP Coaching Executive answer another common question:

What do you call yourself?

Do you include 'coach' in your title – and when did you know it was OK to do this?

Carolyn Mumby
Chair of BACP Coaching

I mainly call myself a coach. Sometimes as an associate, I am called a 'leadership coach' because I coach senior leaders in organisations.

I had an interest in coaching long before I trained as one, and in common with many counsellors and therapists, I already had a good deal of the skills and approach needed. I think these were particularly developed in me for two reasons,one to do with training and the other to do with clients and context.

Firstly, my diploma in counselling in the 1990s included both Gestalt and Contribution Training,[1] the former a very dynamic and creative approach, and the second, less well known, a practical approach, based on a sense of equality with clients, where being transparent about useful information, holding a focus on the positive and sharing practical models and strategies, are key parts of the work. Secondly, of necessity, I used a very proactive approach when counselling young people, based on the work of Geldard and Geldard.[2] I had previously worked in the second stage of an 18-month drug rehabilitation programme for adults, with a focus on groupwork and the development of life skills. Finally, I brought transferable skills from supervision and consulting work with organisations. I came across other coaches before I trained, who assumed that I already had what I needed to do the work, but I didn't feel comfortable claiming the title without a proper qualification.

The ILM level 7 qualification that I took in 2009 was to be an 'executive coach and leadership mentor' and people can see that on my profile. Subsequently, I found that the personal consultancy framework[3] was a useful container for the work in the shared territory between coaching and counselling, and I did more training with Nash Popovic at the University of East London (UEL) to embed my instinctive use of it more clearly. I sometimes refer to the model in pre-coaching calls with clients, as in private practice I often use an integrated approach, starting as a coach, but if needs be, going back to do a little therapeutic work in the service of moving forward. People seem to understand the value of this integrative model quite quickly.

Other significant training for me is as a Time to Think facilitator and coach with Nancy Kline.[4] Creating the conditions so that people can think for and as themselves is key to everything I do, and depending on the context, I might refer to myself as a licensed Thinking Environment professional. Generally, though, my starting point, and the umbrella term for my skills, is to describe myself as a coach, though I pretty much always go on to acknowledge that I am a dual-trained practitioner.

Karen Ledger
BACP Coaching's Executive Specialist for Supervision

When I introduce myself, I tend to go through the whole list of psychotherapist, leadership or executive coach and supervisor.

I think I do this because all these roles are equally important to me and have become part of my identity. I use these terms so that people hopefully already have some context of what I might have to offer. After training as a therapist and growing into that role, I began looking outside to explore coaching and the differences between coaching and therapy. I was particularly interested in leadership and executive coaching as I had first-hand experience of the need for organisations to become relational and person centred. Furthermore, I had spent considerable amounts of my time feeling hurt, angry and frustrated about the way I and others had been managed, and the psychological ill health that can result for people working in a toxic environment.

In the early 2000s, I did my research by reading books and by garnering the advice of other coaches and organisational development consultants. This all coincided with a serendipitous moment when I was invited to join a facilitated practice group of executive coaches who had all trained at the London School of Coaching.

Even though I could not afford the cost or the time, I grabbed the opportunity and was involved in that group for two to three years. I learnt so much about coaching and coaches from my experience in the group, which I viewed as training and a qualification in itself.

I had started to let my network know that I was working as a coach, which led to an executive coaching accreditation process in the NHS for the Yorkshire and Humber region. A number of referrals came in, and fortunately have continued to flow in ever since. I do often think about getting a coaching qualification and I believe I will, mainly to let the outside world know that I am qualified. However, I do feel that my supervision and person-centred therapy

training and my own Gestalt therapy have prepared me for both roles and allow me to understand the difference between working in a person's present as a coach and when a person is at a deeper, more historical place in their internal landscape. Alongside my movement into coaching, I choose to have supervision with well-established coaches for additional reassurance.

While I appreciate that there is overlap in both relationships, in that, for example, I find myself coaching in therapy and vice versa, I keep the two relationships separate. I do this to avoid confusing myself and my clients about the work they are undertaking, which can be confusing enough when in the thick of personal/professional development. However, I am open to hearing other coaches' views and I look forward to future ongoing debate about coaching and therapy.

Michèle Down

BACP Coaching's Executive Specialist for Executive Coaching

I call myself an 'executive coach'. I have played around with 'therapeutic executive coach' but that's a bit of a mouthful and creates more questions than it gives answers. So I have settled for the simplicity of executive coach, because that's what my clients want, and within the corporate world, it is instantly recognisable and has traction. I've been an executive coach for over 20 years, and I'm happy with that.

However, I know that I am more than simply 'executive coach', so my website and stationery also describe me as 'facilitator and change catalyst' to communicate that I work with teams and organisations through change. I have recently added 'team coach' as I noticed that people assumed I didn't work with teams.

I don't think terminology effectively describes how we show up with clients, but any words I've tried to find either don't capture the essence of my work, or sound like marketing blurb. I'm happy to stick to something down to earth and fill in the gaps when I'm face to face with clients. I recognise that a marketer would probably find much better words to describe me than I do myself, and that could be helpful in attracting new clients. All suggestions gratefully received by those who know me and are reading this!

Steve Page

BACP Coaching's Executive Specialist for Supervision

For me, the transition to feeling comfortable calling myself a coach took place over a number of years and followed a series of stages.

In 2001, I had been a counsellor for 24 years, accredited for 11 of those years, and I was promoted from the head of a university counselling service to the head of student support services. I relinquished my accreditation and BACP membership, so I had no professional identity beyond my job title for three years.

I then undertook some initial coaching courses and became involved in two mentoring schemes; one an inter-organisational scheme in the York region, and the other supporting new-in-post directors of student services across the UK. So, I was then a mentor!

In 2010, when the University of York set up an in-house coach training course, I was asked to help support the supervision process of the new coaches, and I agreed to do so on the basis that they also put me through the coaching course. Once we started that course and I became a member of a coaching skills group of colleagues, I felt able to call myself a coach within the university. I felt a bit uncomfortable calling myself a coach outside of the institution, and I signed up for a Level 7 Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) coaching qualification, to strengthen my sense of being properly qualified.

I resigned my university post in 2013 and returned to private practice, offering coaching, counselling, supervision and training. In my publicity materials, I have separate sections on 'personal coaching, counselling and psychotherapy' and 'executive and business coaching'.

In general, the approach I take in describing the work I do focuses on the relationship, the purpose and some examples of what the client might find helpful. The work is defined by the contract the client and I agree through discussion and the relationship that we co-create, rather than being defined by my 'offer'.

In practice, many of my clients seem to be looking for some combination of therapeutic and developmental approaches, often with some practical work on specific strategic issues.

I finally decided I felt OK about calling myself a coach because I had clients seeking me out for coaching who gave me lots of feedback that our work together was successful and productive for them. A curious journey!

Tom Andrews

BACP Coaching's Executive Specialist for Network Groups

I've always had problems with labels. Maybe it's to do with not wanting to be put in a certain preconceived box. Maybe that's why, throughout much of my working life, I have set up projects, organisations and charities myself, wanting to forge something in my own language.

Although I'm both a qualified counsellor and coach, I was initially not comfortable with either of these terms. They come with baggage and perceptions. When I became freelance, I wrestled over how I should describe myself in my email signature. Coach? Counsellor? Facilitator? Consultant? A list of all of these things? Do I define myself by a profession, a title, what I do or how I do it? In the end, I opted for 'one-to-one support' which for me describes what I do with enough freedom for improvisation.

That said, I do call myself a coach and a counsellor too. I only felt I was able to do this when I had both a qualification and a reasonable amount of experience under my belt. 'Coach' is particularly tricky, I think. In my current role, advising and supporting third-sector chief executive officers, coaching seems to be viewed as one of two opposite points on a complex spectrum: ie either as specifically directive knowledge transfer (eg financial coaching or sports coaching); or as a non-directive, client-led, enabling space for growth. In my current work, the role has a non-directive foundation, but with a smattering of guidance, signposting, stories and anecdotes, where appropriate. The key is the relationship.

This is where I struggle with labels, as at the heart of all this is a sense of privilege and appreciation for this work in the here and now; of a connection between two people that refuses to be constrained by a brand or a badge – that sense of human connection. It is something special and precious. ■

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Developing a coaching business

Part 4: How to place your products and services

In the final part of our four-part series on business development, executive coach, mentor, supervisor and coach educator **Julie J Allan** explains how to place your products more effectively.

Business development describes the tasks required to grow a business (and its monetary value) via strong products/services, relationships and markets. Through mentoring for the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and further research, I realised many coaches are unclear about and uncomfortable with the practice of business development, often fearing the idea of defining, pricing, marketing and selling their services, and there are few opportunities to learn how to do this well.

I am writing this article series and running related training events to address this gap and help coaches learn how to sell well so that their businesses thrive profitably.

To sell is described in the Oxford Living Dictionary as to 'give or hand over (something) in exchange for money'.[1] Using this definition, professional coaches sell the service of coaching to clients. This is a fact of what we do – regardless of how we feel about it.

This article is the fourth and final instalment of a series in *Coaching Today* about business development and how to sell well, based loosely on the 'marketing mix' or 4Ps (product, place, price and promotion).[2] Over the past four issues, we have covered the following:

1. products and services (published in July 2019)[3]
2. pricing (published in October 2019)[4]
3. promotion and selling (published in January 2020)[5]
4. place: where to sell/target market(s) [this issue].

But what does 'placing products and services' mean for practising professional coaches? As a coach who wants to develop your skill in this area, you need to know:

- How to match your unique skills and experience and the benefits of your products/services to the market(s) most appropriate to your unique selling points
- How to decide who to sell to – your target market(s)
- How to decide where to sell – the 'place' from the marketing mix (including channels, coverage, locations, delivery, etc)
- How to value your services
- How to quote.

Placing products and services is all about creating convenience for the purchaser/customer (in this case, your potential coachees and/or their organisations).

Matching your unique skills and experience and the benefits of your specific type of coaching (ie your products/services) to the market(s) most appropriate to you and your business is the starting point for knowing the best place(s) in which to sell. For example, my career has been entirely in the commercial, corporate world and my approach in general and in my coaching is therefore well suited to the corporate world. My unique skills and experience lend themselves to me selling in the world where I am most comfortable. My client base is almost entirely made up of large corporate organisations and senior leaders and their teams. This is the 'place' in the marketing mix of my business. My target market is mainly senior leaders in the corporate world, and this was certainly the market in which my business started. What is the equivalent for you? Are there extensions from this where you can stretch yourself and your brand into new or nearby markets? Spend time really thinking about this so that you choose the right market(s) for you and your coaching business.

Deciding who to sell to – your target market(s) will evolve from this. Within my broad target market of the corporate world, there are specific target markets – for example, sectors, such as financial services, transport, marketing, IT, etc. Then there are large, medium and small-sized organisations. There are also individual clients within the corporate world and there are corporate clients who buy coaching and team coaching 'wholesale'. Deciding which of these I am able and willing to sell to is an important consideration. Deciding this for yourself and your business is important, as is the choice about whether to specialise and have a very 'niche' market, or whether to target a portfolio of markets in parallel. (For example, I have several corporate clients across many diverse sectors, who buy my coaching and team coaching en masse, and I also have some sectors and clients where individuals buy my services). I have worked with coaches who specialise in a given sector, and within that specialist sector they are the experts in a clearly defined specialism and/or choose to work only with a particular group of individuals or a specific level/role type. What is the client base and target market(s) where you can most effectively operate and therefore sell to? Do you want to stick to this or expand more widely? Be clear yourself before you choose and try to sell to these markets. Seek feedback from those who know you and your work, and keep your mind open to new possibilities as well as playing to your strengths. I now have clients in sectors I never would have guessed I could work well within, and at levels or in roles that are equally surprising. And if your passion is in a specific, narrowly defined niche, that is OK too.

Deciding where to sell – the 'place' from the marketing mix (including channels, coverage, locations, delivery, etc) – is another important consideration. Once you know your target market(s), this will help inform your choice of sales 'channels'. Sales channels may include websites, social media, trade shows or trade fairs, networking events, business cards, flyers, speaking events, being published, advertising in journals or magazines, billboards, referrals from existing clients, one-to-one meetings, professional coaching bodies, such as EMCC, the Association for Coaching (AC) or the International Coaching Federation (ICF), or other professional bodies such as BACP,

the British Medical Association (BMA), or the Chartered Institute for Professional Development (CIPD). The coaching professional bodies allow members to list their services in a directory on their website, and people who are seeking a coach often use this as a first port of call. I keep my decisions simple regarding the channels I use, and I have found that asking the people who buy coaching within my target markets where they look for coaches is a great starting point. I keep track of where each of my clients comes from, so that I know what percentage (via quantitative data) of my business comes from where. Using the channels that work well for you, and learning to capitalise on and improve these, works well, alongside trying out new channels and tracking their effectiveness. Some new channels will work well and provide large streams of new business, and others less so or not at all: the only way to know is to try (and to track the numeric and financial return). I suggest that being OK with both successful and failed experiments with new channels is part of the journey, and all provide invaluable learning. The channels that your target market(s) use will be unique. For example, the academic and medical sectors tend to value academic research and publications, so being published may be more effective in these sectors than elsewhere. Some sectors have specific trade journals you can write for, while other sectors have events or seminars you can speak or present at. Understand and work within the preferences of your target markets and sectors, and play beyond these if you want to extend your reach.

Knowing how to value your services is crucial (see my second article in this series on pricing)[4], as, if your pricing is not competitive, you can have the best product/service and the appropriate target market(s) and sales channels, but you still may not be able to sell. Be equally cautious about underpricing as well as overpricing. You can inadvertently give the message that your coaching is of poor quality if you price too low. Use market research and test the market to ensure that you set your price appropriately for your market(s) and your skill level and expertise.

Knowing how, where and when to quote is an important part of selling well. There is a point (and I'd suggest this is quite early in the sales process) where you need your potential clients to know what you charge, and you need to know that they can afford you and are willing to pay your rates; otherwise, you can waste lots of time chasing sales that do not convert, or you will get business but find that the client is unable or unwilling to pay your particular rates. The time, energy and money wasted in these scenarios can be significant and should not be underestimated. The cost of your own time in this abortive work is calculable and worth tracking and avoiding.

Quotes can be as simple as a brief email outlining your costs, or you can provide a brief contract outlining your services, rates and other terms. Or you can create a full 'proposal' document that includes details about you, your business, your experience and qualifications, your services, prices, contractual terms, etc. From experience, it is best to be absolutely clear about all terms before any work commences, including payment terms (x days from the date of invoice), cancellation clauses, VAT, etc. Most clients appreciate having clarity on such matters, as once they know, they can either negotiate amended terms with you or (in most instances, if you have your pricing right), they will adhere to your terms.

I have often seen coaches avoid being clear about cancellation clauses, or whether they will be available in between coaching sessions (or if they are available, whether there will be a charge for their time), or how much they charge, or what their policy is regarding charging travel or subsistence costs to clients and at what rate.

In my experience, and those of others I have worked with, I have repeatedly seen that lack of clarity often ends in further embarrassment or difficulties (even when the lack of clarity was well motivated, or caused by reticence or trust or simply having a 'good feeling' about a client). My advice would be to be as clear as possible on all of these items as early as possible in the process. This tends to make life easier for everyone involved. Clarity in these matters will benefit you, your cash-flow and your clients. It is important to make sure that as well as having clear, accurate, concise quote and contract documentation, your invoices comply with the relevant tax and other legal requirements of your particular location and jurisdiction. You should seek professional advice on these matters if you are in any doubt, and be aware that such requirements are constantly evolving.

It is also important to learn and work within the financial and procurement systems of your clients. Some organisations can only pay when a purchase order (PO) number has been generated, some have specific timescales and methods for the payment of suppliers, and others have set criteria for how invoices are laid out and submitted. Some organisations even use specific procurement systems within which all tenders, quotes and invoices have to be generated for approval and payment. It is important to understand these 'rules' before you start working with a particular client, in order to make things as easy as possible for them and you – and to ensure that you are paid in a smooth and timely fashion.

In summary, learning to place and sell our coaching services well is possible for all of us – but only if we do the hard work of being very clear about our unique selling points and our services, then relate these to the appropriate target market(s) and the 'places' in which it is best to promote and sell for our chosen markets. Tracking the effectiveness of each channel and choosing those that work best is important. Pricing and tendering for business, including the provision of professional, legally and financially accurate quotes, proposals, contracts and invoices, are vital to the running of a professional coaching business. Once all of these challenges have been met and overcome, generating profitable business and creating satisfied customers is easy and a delight – for us and for them. ■

Julie J Allan is a self-employed coach, team coach, mentor, supervisor and coach educator, with board-level experience in the legal, transport and water sectors and senior management experience in financial services. Julie passionately believes in the inherent capability of all, and in the power of Gestalt and Three Principles-based coaching, to unlock that potential.
julie@julieallancoaching.com
www.julieallancoaching.com

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INTO THE FOREST: resilience-building for young adults

Jane Owen describes an innovative outdoor coaching project that supports the wellbeing of young people through engagement with nature and woodland.

Origins of the forest experience project

I saw it all in the easy smile spreading across her face, as Natasha* found herself, however briefly, feeling happy, confident – perhaps, even, that she was back to her former self? Whatever it was, it shone from her face, and for the briefest time, in the woods, she seemed connected, content and comforted.

Aged 17, Natasha had been finding life challenging. Demanding family circumstances and increased responsibilities outside of college were creating incredible pressure and stress for her, which had led to missed deadlines, below average work output, lower attendance and disconnection from her small, but fiercely loyal, group of friends. All this from a young woman with previously excellent grades, a strong work ethic and a compassionate nature.

The hour-and-a-half she had just spent in Coalbrookdale Woods, using mindfulness and forest bathing activities, demonstrated the power of nature to reconnect and relieve tension.

I could testify to my own experience of this phenomenon, but even I was staggered by the tangible physical difference I witnessed in one person as a result of spending time connecting to her own senses and nature, in a woodland environment. Perhaps I shouldn't have been. After all, this project had arisen from observing my own son's behaviour, in the same woods, with his pre-school, a Reggio Emilia nursery, renowned for its outdoor approach, and leaning heavily towards the Scandinavian style of early-years schooling.[1] Often overshadowed by his older sister, in the woods, my four-year-old son took charge – and I was struck by how confident and capable he was in this environment.

Research from the Forestry Commission testifies to the success of forest schools in developing confidence, motivation and →

> Six out of 12 students saw an increase in their wellbeing, with four students seeing an increase of eight or more points on the scale. Areas showing the greatest increase related to feeling more relaxed, and increased interest in new things, while feeling closer to other people and improved confidence also showed increases of six and seven points across the group

concentration.[2] The Forest School Association describes the principles of forest school as the use of outdoor woodland space for regular sessions, developing a relationship between learner and natural world, using learner-centred approaches to promote resilience, confidence, independence and creativity, and including some elements of taking calculated risks.[3]

Often, these sessions are a regular part of the school week, led by a specialist teacher. However, children's forest school experiences generally occur only up to key stage one. Once a young person reaches the age of seven, their official forest school experience is ad hoc at best, or reliant on participation in voluntary organisations such as Brownies and Cubs, and family outings. This may leave many young people spending more time indoors, using devices for their entertainment. Once they have become teenagers, their familiarity with and confidence in woodland environments may have all but disappeared.

As we witness a significant increase in mental health issues for young people,[4,5] it is perhaps unfortunate that their forest experiences end so early in their lives. The reintroduction of forest experiences as a tool for supporting mental wellness is supported by a recent *Guardian* article,[6] which reports that research from Kings College, London concluded that exposure to trees, sky and birdsong improved mental wellbeing.[7] The article states that two hours a week is the optimum time to spend in woodland in order to gain maximum benefit, and suggests that forest bathing could even be offered through 'social prescribing' within the National Health Service.

So, could a reintroduction to forest experiences help improve the wellbeing of young people?

Background

I am a lecturer in travel and tourism at Shrewsbury Colleges Group in Shropshire, teaching 16 to 19 year olds. I also teach on education programmes and support colleagues through training and coaching. Each year, the learning coaches are asked to develop a project based on an area of interest. After completing my coaching qualification, I was particularly interested in using coaching techniques to help young people with building tools for resilience, creating positive life goals and supporting their holistic development. Sessions have included growth mindset, visualisation, and goal setting through a classic coaching GROW (Goal, Reality, Options, Will) model in classroom groups. However, I wanted to try something new.

My students at the college are of mixed backgrounds and academic ability, and are at a stage in life where they have lots of choices and decisions to make, which can be both challenging and stressful. They often work long hours in their part-time jobs, in addition to their college coursework, and have a high dependency on mobile phones and social media.

Having observed the changes in my own son in a woodland environment, I decided to open up a discussion on forest school experiences with my own tutor group of young people in the college. Half the group had experienced forest school in their primary schools and remembered it fondly. Equally, they were keen to experience it again as young adults, with a view to providing some form of 'stress-busting' relaxation.

My own forest experience

Following this initial enthusiasm, I made contact with the community development officer at Severn Gorge Countryside Trust[8], Cadi Price, to discuss my project and plans. Fortunately, she was in the process of creating a four-week training course in mindfulness in nature and forest bathing. This allowed me to directly experience these approaches in supporting mental health and wellbeing. The sessions were made up of small numbers of participants, with various motivations for getting involved. Sally, a retired school teacher and educational psychologist, led the mindfulness in nature section of the walk. Jan, with a background in physiotherapy, and specialising in Bowen therapy, led the forest bathing activities.

Forest bathing, or the Japanese cultural practice of *shinrin yoku*, is described by the Forest Bathing Institute UK as 'mindful time spent under the canopy of trees for health and well-being purposes.'[9]

The forest bathing rules were clear: stay silent – in your own space; turn off phones; avoid labelling the nature you observe.

Sally and Jan's calm enthusiasm was infectious, and before long we were silently trusting strangers to guide us through the woods, and offer us twigs to feel and plants to smell, as we walked, with our eyes closed, listening to the symphony of the woodland. My own experience was profound. I found my place and my ground again, and early memories flooded back, prompted by the smells of moss and woodland soil.

In the fourth and final session, we were invited to scan the woods and allow ourselves to be drawn to a tree. My tree had two smaller trees growing out from within its root space, where squirrels had buried a forgotten seed. I found myself creating a metaphor from the tree's life to my own. My tree was sheltering and supporting the younger, smaller trees to prosper and grow strong.

Without doubt, this was an emotional session for me, and led me to consider that, with the additional support of a coach guide, in a one-to-one session, this would have opened up an incredible vision for my future. I knew that, managed in the right way, this was a golden opportunity for young adults to reconnect with their inner child, with nature and to find a new approach to destressing their lives.

> “Could we develop a more structured approach to coaching in a forest environment? Could we devise more courses and activities to benefit young adults to improve their mental wellbeing, and provide tools for their long-term resilience and self-esteem?”

Students' forest experience

As an induction to the forest session, Cadi and I agreed that meeting the group in their natural environment (the classroom) prior to their visit to Coalbrookdale Woods, made sense. I created an indoor forest session, using pictures, poems and quotes, to seed discussion. Dividing the class into small groups, Cadi and I helped the students →

to investigate their thoughts on forest experiences and what they hoped to achieve from the session outside.

We arrived at the Countryside Trust's offices on a dry November day, wearing (mostly) the right gear. One pair of bright white Converse trainers was swapped for a spare pair of wellies. After initial giggles at the relaxation activity, I was relieved and pleased with how well the students managed to follow the ground rules of being silent, and turning off their phones. By the time we arrived at an activity that involved being guided, eyes closed, along a path, surrendering trust to a walking partner, and using all other senses to understand the environment, the students were hooked, responding to Cadi's questions with frank, honest accounts of their experiences. When asked to collect items of nature that attracted them and drew them in, some even offered metaphors for what each item represented in their lives. Creatively, they framed these items to create pictures on the ground. At this point, I was desperate to pull out my phone so I could capture the students' pictures; however, the rules are the rules, and so the pictures were simply recorded to memory. Finally, Cadi invited the students to observe the trees around them, walk towards a tree they felt drawn to; to touch, look, listen and consider the life of the tree, and get to understand it. By this stage, the students were so involved, it took no time at all for the trees to be hugged.

The session was rounded up with shared hot chocolate and biscuits, sitting on logs, taking pictures and chatting about the session, as well as the latest news on social media. But for an hour-and-a-half, these young people were immersed in the woods and had experienced first-hand the sensations nature could offer them, if they were only to stop for a while, put down their phones and breathe.

The future

Can coaches, counsellors and educators use forest experiences to help build and support the development of resilience, confidence and self-esteem for teenagers and young adults?

Following on from my students' session, I asked the participants to complete an evaluation of the afternoon. This highlighted a clear desire to complete more sessions, and so we have agreed to visit different woods, seasonally. Our winter walk took place in February this year, with spring and summer walks planned for later in the year. Using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale each time, I hope to demonstrate sustained improvements over the year.

In addition, I intend to create one-to-one coaching sessions, inspired by Catherine Gorham's article in the October 2019 issue of this journal, where she discussed the use of 'nature as dynamic co-partner'.[10] Catherine provides many examples of research to support the use of nature within our practices, and the practical application of nature in coaching.

Contemplating the impact of the forest experience had led me to research the benefits of forest school to early years learners, and whether this could be translated for teenagers

Case studies and results

Using the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS),[11] before and after each activity, we demonstrated significant improvements in wellbeing across the group. Six out of 12 students saw an increase in their wellbeing, with four students seeing an increase of eight or more points on the scale. Areas showing the greatest increase related to feeling more relaxed, and increased interest in new things, while feeling closer to other people and improved confidence also showed increases of six and seven points across the group of students.

I was particularly keen to get feedback from Poppy*, a student with a diagnosed mental health issue, who benefits from using medication, and has a high level of understanding as to what works for her. From the beginning, Poppy was interested in how the experience in the woods could be of benefit to her. Poppy has opted to complete an additional A-Level extended project, involving research into how animals may support people with mental health conditions. She is very open to alternative treatments and activities that may help her and others with mental health conditions. On the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale, Poppy showed an increase in wellness of eight points. An increase of four points is considered a good result from this scale, so her results were incredible.

Rachel* is retaking her maths GCSE this year – her third attempt. The pressure to pass this time has felt overwhelming. Her self-esteem and confidence have all been compromised by this one element of her learning. On her main programme, her work is of a high standard. While quiet in nature, she will be an excellent employee, with amazing skills in terms of reliability, problem solving with customers, and her use of initiative. However, the fear of the exams had started to take its toll. Her confidence in the main programme, gaining part-time employment and her general health have all suffered because of the exam anxiety. Rachel's response to the forest experience was: 'Let's do this again, it helped me to see the big picture, let go of the worry for a while.'

Our coaching sessions together have uncovered other ways of seeing the exam situation; however, the visit to the woods gave her one more tool to use when the pressure felt overwhelming. Rachel sat a mock maths test two weeks after the forest experience and achieved a comfortable pass 69/80, an outstanding result, providing hope for the exams in June.

and young adults. We are currently at a crossroads, with the acknowledged increase in mental health issues for young people, while at the same time, culturally and socially, there is a drive to improve our environment and plant more trees, creating more woods.

Could we develop a more structured approach to coaching in a forest environment? Could we devise more courses and activities to benefit young adults to improve their mental wellbeing, and provide tools for their long-term resilience and self-esteem? Could forest school be on the curriculum for teenagers in the future? ■

Jane Owen is a newly qualified coach and experienced teacher, who is eager to explore approaches to broaden the use of coaching in forest environments with teenagers and young adults.
janeo@shrewsbury.ac.uk

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Resources

Gary Evans, from the **Forest Bathing Institute UK**, describes the benefits of forest bathing as 'looking at nature's patterns [helps] to stop thoughts spinning in the head'.[9]

He goes on to cite research at the Nippon Medical School, Japan, which found 50 per cent of the benefits (of forest bathing) came from the chemistry in the forest. Increased oxygen, through photosynthesis of carbon dioxide, makes the air clean. The research also states that phytoncides, which are produced by trees for their own immune systems, can also boost the human immune system.[12]

Forestry England describes the benefits of forest bathing as 'The simple method of being calm and quiet amongst the trees, observing nature around you whilst breathing deeply … can help both adults and children de-stress and boost health and wellbeing in a natural way.'[13]

The organisation has created a number of wellbeing resources to support teachers in using the woods for this purpose. *Tributes to Trees*, for example, is an excellent resource for activity ideas.

The Forest School Association states that: 'Forest School is an inspirational process that offers all learners regular opportunities to achieve and develop confidence and self-esteem through hands-on learning experiences in a woodland or natural environment with trees.'[3]

These opportunities are surely equally as important to teenagers as to early years learners, and developing the provision for teenagers and young adults within the forest school movement would be a significant development.

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How do you *feel*?

Coach and consultant **Nick Wright** explores the role that emotion plays in coaching.

'What are you feeling?'
'Where do you feel it?'
'Whose feelings are you feeling?'
'What lies behind how you are feeling?'

These types of question may be common in psychological coaching practice, yet the responses that our clients offer could be far more revealing, complex and significant than we at first imagine. In my experience, this is particularly the case when working systemically or cross-culturally. I explain these ideas below and suggest applications to practice.

Language

'What are you feeling?' A client could respond to this question with something like, *'I feel happy'*, or, *'I feel sad'*. These are examples of labels that people use in the English language to express certain types or categories of experience. I say 'types' because, on the face of it, *happy* or *sad* are only general descriptions. To develop this point, we could consider, for instance, how happy is happy? What does being happy feel like? How is happy different to, say, joyful, exuberant or content?

A client may also use other words to express nuance or increase accuracy. For example, *'I feel very happy'* expresses a level of intensity. *'I feel generally happy'* says something about continuity of experience. In coaching, we may dig deeper by posing scaling questions that enable clients to reflect, focus or evaluate their experience or aspiration further – for instance: *'On a scale of one to 10..?'* – by enacting the scale to explore what they feel and become aware of as they do it.

We can see at once here, though, how a client is both enabled and constrained by language, by the use of words to express

subtle shades of emotional experience. In principle, the wider range of words the client has available to them, the better they should be able to articulate what they feel. In this sense, the client is using language descriptively, to distinguish between different emotional states. It's as if an emotion simply *is*, and the client is seeking to find the best label to describe it.

However, it is tricky to use words to describe and differentiate emotions in this way, as if emotions exist and are experienced by people as discrete, distinct entities. Firstly, an emotion isn't an object with fixed shape, dimensions or form. It's a feeling, a felt experience, a fluid dynamic, a sense of something that is experienced deeply, psychologically and physically. It's often a shifting state, hard to pin down or grasp hold of and yet, nevertheless, powerfully present, influencing and impacting.

Secondly, language not only expresses what a person feels, but shapes it too. A client draws metaphorical lines to distinguish between their different emotional states and assigns a label to each state. Where a particular client draws the line is governed by the cultural-linguistic categories they have inherited and are aware of. Since language is socially constructed as such, we can consider that how a client articulates their emotional experience is an implicit indicator of that client's culture.

Relationships

We are also able to observe that, developmentally, from an early age, children notice how others respond to experiences. They copy others' reactions when faced with similar situations and thereby find themselves subconsciously and culturally expected to respond, or inhibited from responding, in certain ways. In some respects, therefore, what a client feels and expresses is partly a learned, conditioned response. Emotion is both personal and an indicator of their relational background.

This leads us to the third question: whose emotion is a client feeling? We are aware, for example, by 'use-of-self' in coaching that, as human beings, we can tune into others' emotional states, albeit often subconsciously. A client may pick up on unexpressed feelings held by a person, family, group, organisation or community and experience them as if their own. The boundary between what the client is feeling and what others are feeling can be permeable and blurred, and therefore confusing.

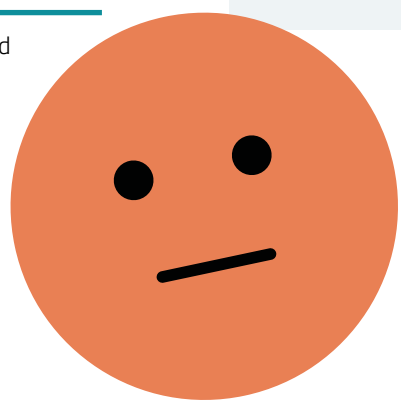
We can find similar and useful insights along these lines in related fields such as psychodynamics (transference, countertransference, parallel process); transactional analysis (evoked ego states) and Gestalt (field dynamics). I have found that paying attention to these dimensions can invite broader cultural, relational and systemic influences into the frame, and thereby can offer potential for transformation. It means noticing and drawing on our own feelings as well as those of our client.

Focusing on emotion is more than cathartic. The idea that a client's emotional state can function like a mirror, shedding light on wider issues and influences, suggests that, when a client expresses how they are feeling, it can be useful to explore that feeling within the client's own cultural and relational context – not simply as a personal feeling or state, but as something that points towards significant people, relationships, beliefs and values that shape their experiences and stance in the world.

Conclusions

So, what is the client feeling? It depends on the language available to them, the categories they have learned to assign to emotional experiences, and the ways they have learned from others to feel and respond. Why are they feeling it? It's partly a personal and partly a social response to psychological, relational, cultural or contextual influences. Whose emotion are they feeling? It's their own, but sometimes it's not *only* their own. We can work with emotion to enhance energy and awareness.■

Nick Wright is a qualified and experienced psychological coach and organisation development consultant.
www.nick-wright.com



How to apply these insights to coaching practice? Here are some ideas:

1. Invite a client to explore their emotional language within their own relational and cultural contexts – what it may mean and what it may point towards
2. Encourage a client to notice who and what impacts on their emotional state – when, where, why and how
3. Support a client's emotional and social development by enabling them to observe and act on how they/others feel, and who and what influences change

Suggestions for further reading

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Coaching in Practice: Somatic coaching

Clare Myatt was one of Strozzi Institute's first certified master somatic coaches in 2001, a methodology that acknowledges the deep wisdom of the body that shapes who we are and all that we do.

What is the approach you use in coaching (the theoretical model, its premises/ underlying beliefs or reasons for being developed etc)?

The *foundation* of my work is somatic. What do we embody, what's easy? What action is daunting or impossible? How do others assess us? Bold, tentative, curious? Are we drawn towards or away from others; equally, are they drawn towards us or disinterested?

The *framework* of my work is therapeutic coaching – an integrated approach, offering both breadth and depth.

Why were you drawn to this approach/ model and how did you go about becoming skilled/qualified in it?

Having spent seven years navigating the demanding licensure process to become a psychotherapist in California, I launched a private practice with enthusiasm; but there was something missing and I didn't know what it was. I was blessed to find Dr Richard Strozzi-Heckler's somatic work at Strozzi Institute; I knew instinctively that I'd found the missing piece. Here was someone (a psychologist, author, athlete, martial artist) who understood change, knowing it required more than insight. My psychotherapy clients had plenty of 'aha' moments, but that didn't necessarily mean they could take action on these. Richard's students could.

I enrolled in Strozzi Institute's transformative training and became one of their first certified master somatic coaches in 2001. Initially, I simply worked on my own mountain of hard-earned strategies for staying safe – most of which were no longer helpful – and as time passed, it became clear that finding a way to weave this into my professional work was essential, otherwise I would be out of integrity and falling short of what was possible.

California's ethical standards of psychotherapeutic practice required separation of coaching and therapy. I found this immensely frustrating, seeing opportunities for an integrated approach from a somatic perspective. I was surprised to discover the UK had no such limitation, so since my return in 2006, I've been weaving together a cohesive and integrative approach of therapeutic coaching, through a somatic lens. Recently, I've become certified as a Focusing practitioner and now thread this into my holistic methodology as well.

Do you work with a particular client group, and how do your clients benefit from the fact that you take this particular approach to coaching?

There's something about drawing in exactly the type of clients we need – whether to expand our own awareness, confront us with our unresolved issues, or because we have the type of synergy which allows us both to grow. I tend to attract executive clients interested in coaching who actually have underlying therapeutic issues – perhaps they don't see them, or perhaps they feel more comfortable seeing 'a coach' rather than 'a therapist'. I also specialise in trauma and addiction, so clients struggling with those conditions find me; and I am blessed with a significant number of curious coaches, therapists and therapeutic coach clients in my practice.

My work is to reveal the wisdom and power of working on/with/through the body. It can seem magical. Clients often ask: 'How could you know that about me?' and I'm able to respond that I observe the nuances of the body – demeanour, energy, holding patterns, safety strategies – all of which are constantly revealing the real backstory. Therein lies the secret.

Let's take a concrete example. Supposing someone needs firmer boundaries. Under pressure, the possibility of a boundaried yes/ no/maybe isn't available to them, for they are already triggered to a reaction: fight, flight, freeze or fold. This core reaction reveals how they stayed safe from early childhood (be seen and not heard, be the clown, be the good one, be perfect, and so on). While it's important to acknowledge the value of this incredible skill – reinforced over years of unconscious practice – what we want is the possibility of more 'choice-ful' action under pressure to set a boundary. This can mean taking a pause, a breath; a transformative moment to ground and access internal safety/assuredness in order to respond, rather than knee-jerk-react.

What do you most love about being this kind of coach? Have you experienced this kind of coaching in your life and how does it resource you as a practitioner?

I love the distinct challenge each client brings; I love the creativity of working with emergent material; I love the variety of each session's utter uniqueness. I appreciate the fine discernment that comes with being a seasoned practitioner and, perhaps most importantly, I'm curious and love to listen deeply.

I believe our own awareness and development determines how far we can be with our clients. We can't take them further than we've been ourselves. So my best work as a practitioner reflects the quality of coaching, therapy, therapeutic coaching and supervision I've experienced as a client. I choose that support system with great care!

Are there any downsides or difficulties to working in this way?

Somatic work is not for the faint-hearted. It can feel confrontative and tremendously revealing. My job is to keep holding a safe space for all this, particularly when those inevitable shame parts show up to protect our safety and dignity. Someone recently asked me about the experience of being a client in this process and I reflected on how loud and messy some stages had been. Less so today. Latterly, my breakthrough moments of awareness have been much more subtle. It seems I've gone from sorting through the boulders to the stones and pebbles, and now I'm working with fine-grade sand.

Could you share a tool or framework or aspect of this approach that other coaches might be able to use or draw on now in their work with clients?

How do we change? If you're willing to try something somatic, fold your arms. Notice how they're arranged. Then fold them the other way. Now, that required intention and thought, and probably involved some confusion. How does it feel? Most people say some version of 'bad' and 'wrong'. That's how we change: an integrated bodily experience that only comes with practice. That's why somatic coaching shines – we have the tools to foster this process of embodiment.

If people are interested in finding out more, what can they read, or where could they participate in training/CPD?

My website is a Pandora's box of resources, including articles and blog posts on somatics, books, therapeutic coaching, and so on. It also includes links to Strozzi Institute and other relevant bodies. My own book[1] explores a profound therapeutic relationship and its mutual rewards. I also offer in-depth one-to-one work and, less frequently, public workshops for therapists and coaches. ■

www.claremyatt.co.uk

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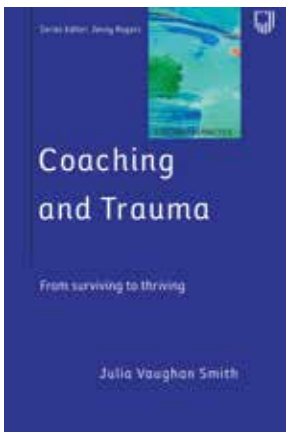
On the bookshelf: what you're reading



Coaching and trauma: from surviving to thriving

Julia Vaughan Smith
McGraw-Hill (Coaching in Practice Series) 2019
ISBN: 9780335248421
£27.99

Should coaches ever work with trauma? Many would answer with an emphatic 'no', and the conviction that such work should always be left to specialists. But perhaps a more pertinent question is whether coaches can avoid working with trauma? As the author, executive coach and integrative psychotherapist Julia Vaughan Smith, argues, trauma is ever-present and can manifest itself in much of the behaviour and patterns that prompt people to seek coaching, such as overwork, impostor syndrome, lack of boundaries, people-pleasing and communication problems. A growing number of practitioners believe that trauma cannot be neatly 'annexed off' and treated as a specialism, because it manifests itself at some level in even the most outwardly functioning clients. In this book, Vaughan Smith makes a convincing case for every coach increasing their understanding of the causes and impact of trauma. She believes that an awareness of when the there-and-then is impacting the here-and-now benefits both client and coach, increases the effectiveness of the work, and reduces the risk of getting stuck, or wasting each other's time.

Vaughan Smith believes that underlying trauma is often at the root of frustrating coaching experiences: clients who say they want to change but then resist change happening; clients who insist they want a better work-life balance, then the next time you see them, they have taken on yet more work; clients who never seem to be fully in the room with you; clients who actively sought out your 'expertise', then proceeded to undermine and dismiss you; or clients who trigger in you an urge to rescue, going over and above what you are contracted to do.

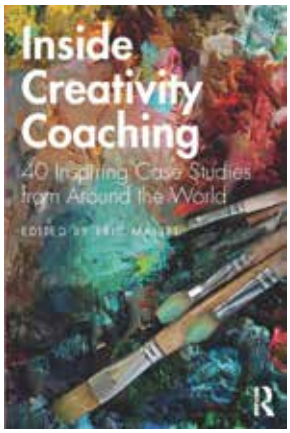
But what counts as trauma? Modern understanding is that it can be caused by ongoing, low-level stress, a 'series of paper cuts', as well as dramatic events. Trauma has its biggest impact when it occurs in early childhood, and Vaughan Smith's examples include experiencing parental disengagement due to illness, mental health problems, financial hardship, or substance abuse; sibling death, and serious illness in a child or parent. But not every individual who has experienced such life events remains traumatised. The author refers to research that shows that people with the ability to respond to the here-and-now, without reverting to patterns laid down in the there-and-then of trauma, tend to have a capacity for self-reflection, and an openness to emotional self-management. The focus of coaching, she says, should be on accessing those resources.

Vaughan Smith has trained with trauma specialist Professor Franz Ruppert, and she translates his work and theories in a readable, no-nonsense way, illustrated throughout with short vignettes. Ruppert's theories on how we deal with trauma are based on the idea that we split the psyche into three parts: the trauma self, the survival self and the healthy self. The trauma self holds the feelings associated with the trauma at the time, remaining frozen and cut-off from our awareness unless the feelings are triggered and re-experienced in the here-and-now. The survival self is our 'armoured' part, the defences that block out the trauma feelings and allow us to function. It's the survival self that drives us to overwork, stay in stressful jobs, form relationships with emotionally unavailable or toxic people, or to overeat or drink, or even experience medically unexplained symptoms.

The hopeful aspect of Ruppert's model is the belief that we all have a healthy self, which Vaughan Smith describes as 'the place where we have contact with our sense of agency'. She includes a simple pie-chart illustration as a way to introduce the model to clients, and to start an exploration of what patterns and dynamics may belong to which 'self'. In coaching, the emphasis and the work should be on identifying and nurturing the qualities, behaviour and beliefs of the healthy self, rather than colluding with the survival self, or trying to heal the trauma self. Helping clients become aware of the different parts of their psyche and how they manifest, starts by questioning choices and behaviour, through asking, 'Is this healthy for me or not healthy for me?' The model is also a useful reminder for ourselves of when we may be acting in survival mode – our aim as coaches is, of course, to operate from our healthy self.

Vaughan Smith says her book is not a toolkit for working with trauma. It does, however, offer insight into what trauma-influenced dynamics may be at play with clients. She argues a convincing case for all therapeutic practitioners becoming familiar with their own trauma biography, and the favourite strategies of their survival self, and when these may be triggered when working with clients. If the theories resonate with you, the book will probably serve as a springboard for further exploration. But it also has much to offer as a standalone text. Devouring all 130 pages in one sitting, I had a lightbulb moment in every chapter, and my work with two long-term clients has deepened as a result.

Sally Brown is a therapist and coach in private practice, and editor of BACP's *Therapy Today*.



Inside creativity coaching: 40 inspiring case studies from around the world

Eric Maisel (editor)
Routledge 2019
ISBN: 9780367219833
£29.99

Though fairly well established in the US, the branch of coaching known as 'creativity coaching' is in its relative infancy in the UK and Europe. This growing field applies coaching techniques to help those who seek to make meaning – and/or a living – through 'creative' work, however they may choose to define that. Clients of creativity coaching typically include those whose art-making or creative practices are integral to their work and their identity – painters, artists, writers, designers, photographers, film-makers, etc. However, viewed more broadly, creativity coaching can be applied to anyone who seeks to live their life as a work of art. In this way, creativity coaching grapples with the essential existential problem of meaning-making and creating a life that matters.

One of the leading creativity coaches in the US, Eric Maisel is well known for his work in this field, having authored numerous books on the subject, most notably *The Van Gogh Blues: The Creative Person's Path Through Depression* (which I credit with kick-starting my own interest in coaching). In this volume, however, he steps out of the spotlight to showcase the work of fellow creativity coaches from 'around the world', in a series of highly readable, bite-size case studies. (It is not always clear from the contributor biographies where each coach contributor lives and works, but 'around the world' seems to be shorthand mainly for US and Canada, UK, Europe, Australia and New Zealand, with many coaches working internationally via email and video conferencing). These 40 narratives relate the stories of various coaches and the clients who have come to them for help with their creativity and meaning-making. Along the way, we encounter issues with motivation, procrastination, blockage and performance anxiety. But buried beneath all of this, we also find stories of grief, loss, bereavement, long-term health issues, depression, anxiety and rage. We hear the story of the artist whose art-making was inextricably connected with pain and suffering, caught between the rock and the hard place of making work and being happy. We learn of the industrial designer whose work and life partner announced suddenly that she was leaving him, and how the fallout of a separation and divorce negatively impacted him and his work. We read about financial and career struggles, relationship breakdown, physical and mental collapse – and in each case, we are led through the process of how the coach worked with their client to restore some semblance of meaning, and the desire and ability to create once more.

These are by no means in-depth studies – each of the 40 vignettes runs over three or four pages at the most. However, they do encapsulate within them the various tools, methods and techniques that are available to coaches using creativity as their medium. Every study is followed by a section of 'learning points' and self-coaching questions for the reader (who is presumed to be a prospective or practising creativity coach). The book closes with an appendix, written by Maisel, offering suggestions and tips for coaches, taking us step by step through an imaginary case scenario, and examining the various ways we might respond. I imagine that a coach-in-training would find these extremely helpful and insightful, and a useful complement to their formal training, while an experienced coach in another discipline would quickly identify the applicability of these techniques to their own work.

For myself, I found the brevity of the case studies and the tools and learning points within them to be refreshing – and a handy reminder of what I already know but perhaps had forgotten I know. I was also able to apply the stories to elements of my own work, and found myself relating not only to the coaches, but to their clients. One particular story – of a coach who chose to use herself as her own case study, describing how she worked through her painful resistance towards writing her book chapter – struck an almighty chord (as I imagine it would with anyone who has ever written or considered writing an article for this journal). We are certainly not immune ourselves to the struggles our clients face! As contributor Jackee Holder writes in a subsequent chapter: 'In my mind, every client is a gift showing up as both student and teacher'. This volume of case studies is a testament to the fact that creativity offers a pathway into our inner landscape – and that the work of the creativity coach has the potential to transform lives.

Diane Parker is a coach and group therapist who uses dance movement and creative practice in her work, and is editor of *Coaching Today*.

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Routledge 2019

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