

OCTOBER 2018 | ISSUE 19

Coaching Perspectives

THE ASSOCIATION FOR
COACHING GLOBAL MAGAZINE

Ethics, values and
reflective practice

Why do good people do bad
things at work?

Your ethical dilemmas and Dr
Dec's coaching conundrums

Neil Scotton, Aboodi Shabi
and Kerry Woodcock discuss
values with Clive Steeper



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What do you do when a coachee reveals organisational fraud, during a session? How should you behave when the boss catches you in the corridor and tells you the coachee will soon be fired? How do you feel when you realise that your client has hired you to help manage-out half the team?

Welcome to this edition of *Coaching Perspectives*, where our theme is values and ethics and the reflection that is required to engage with them. In a world where fake news, alternative truth and spin have become commonplace, I am not alone in believing that we urgently need to revitalise and refine our ethical muscle – most especially when it comes to our leadership. Leaders and coaches probably encounter more ethical dilemmas in a day's work than most, and we all have witnessed someone turning a blind eye to wrongdoing, or making excuses for damaging behaviour; or we may have encountered bullying and discrimination in the workplace. And probably many of us have ourselves done things we are not proud of.

By definition leaders hold the power to act and direct others, but coaches also hold more power than we often admit – the power to influence and support change within our clients and therefore their actions in the workplace. Do we always use this power wisely, and how often do we take the path of cosy rapport rather than challenge? Do we collude or hide behind the coaching mantra to 'follow the client's agenda' rather than declare our values and guide him or her to do the 'right thing'? These are pertinent and urgent questions that go to the heart of our troubled world – whether you look at business, politics or society. And of course, doing the right thing, acting in 'good faith', serving the organisation and a 'good society' is always complex, with several stakeholders and different needs, views and agendas to consider. But if we as coaches shirk our responsibility to grapple with these issues, how can we hold our clients to account? As the sages say: it's all connected.

I have often wondered why ethics is considered a dry topic – it is anything but, and I hope you will agree once you have dived into the rich and varied offerings within.

Roger Steare kicks us off with the arresting question: Why do good people do bad things at work? And Professor of Leadership and Ethics **Donna Ladkin** completes this edition with the equally arresting plea: I wish you hadn't told me...

Her exploration of workplace ethical dilemmas provides essential guidance to the coach in our *Deep Dive*.

In between, **Geoff Abbott** points out the importance of asking 'Why?' and the contribution of existential philosophy to ethical practice. Coaching colleagues **Birch and Clifford** track their reflective journey to go beyond the code of ethics and find its essence; while **Rendle and Norval** share the resulting model from their journey of reflection together. We publish your responses to some core coaching dilemmas and start a new column by **Declan Woods**, who takes an inside look at the challenges of team coaching. Meanwhile, **Sue Stockdale's** interviewee **Maya Hu-Chan** emphasises the need to think globally – adding extra layers of complexity to acting ethically! And master coaches **Scotton, Shabi** and **Woodcock** discuss reflective practice, mindset and a values-driven approach to coaching with **Clive Steeper**. Olympian **Cath Bishop** looks at attempts to address the murky situation of harassment in sport, and **Iordanou and Williams** provide a fascinating whistle-stop overview of the history of ethics to put it all in context. Our regular focus on supervision raises the pertinent issue that a supervisor is an upholder of values, not a keeper of secrets.

I believe coaches and coaching can set the example of bringing ethical behaviour back to business and to workplaces – we need to reflect deeply together with our clients and help them make choices that serve the best in people and outcomes that make a contribution beyond the bottom line.

Enjoy your read and reflection and, as ever, do tell us what you think.

Warmest regards

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Hetty Einzig'.

Hetty Einzig
Editor

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Digital readers can **click here** to listen to Editor Hetty Einzig and Deputy Editor Sue Stockdale discuss the importance of ethics and values in coaching in the latest *Coaching Perspectives* podcast



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WHY DO GOOD PEOPLE DO BAD THINGS AT WORK?

Roger Steare, Visiting Professor in Organisational Ethics and Corporate Philosopher in Residence at Cass Business School, looks into the heart of the moral DNA of some iconic organisations and finds some troubling behaviour.

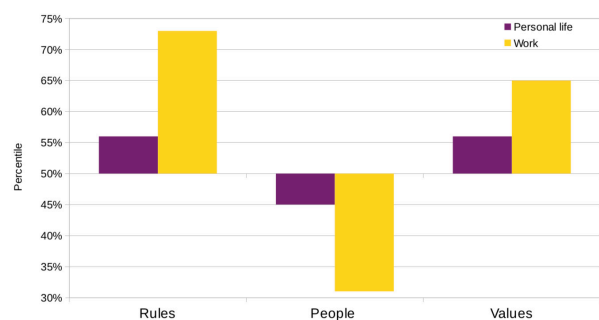
'Integrity has no need of rules'
Albert Camus

Since 2008, I have been part of a team that has been profiling the character of leaders and the culture of their teams with MoralDNA®, a psychometric tool. Data and insights have been gathered from over 160,000 people, including leaders at petroleum giant BP after the Gulf of Mexico disaster; leaders at Barclays, HSBC and RBS after the scandals of pension protection mis-selling and manipulation of Libor (internal bank loan) rates in the UK; and from a number of UK NHS Trust boards. Although these sectors are diverse, one insight is both significant and consistent across these organisations and sectors: good people do bad things at work. They do this by creating, colluding with or tolerating a fear-driven culture where doing the 'right' thing means 'doing as you're told, or else.' Robotic compliance becomes the dominant ethical perspective at the expense of our ethic of care for other people.

MoralDNA assesses our personal and professional preferences for the three core moral philosophies of

deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics, which we have interpreted as *Rules*, *People* and *Values*. Graph 1 shows an analysis of over 2,000 leaders in financial services, published in April 2018 by the UK Financial Conduct Authority. While there are differences across all three ethical fields between behaviours at work and in personal life, the preference for *Rules* is significantly higher at work, whilst for *People* it falls to near the 30th percentile.

GRAPH 1 - ETHICS IN PERSONAL LIFE & WORK OF FINANCIAL SERVICE PROFESSIONALS



MoralDNA™ findings May 2015

Why does this happen? To answer this question, we need to consider not just moral philosophy, but also political philosophy and the use and abuse of power in the workplace.

In most societies today, governments are elected by the people. They are democracies or on the way to becoming democracies. As Winston Churchill once remarked ‘...it has been said that democracy is the worst form of government except all those other forms that have been tried from time to time.’ But governance in most workplaces is not democratic. In the private sector, most organisations are plutocracies, where power comes from wealth rather than innate worth. While some might argue that public sector employers are democratic, others argue that power here also comes from wealth, but here in the form of taxation.

Former US President Theodore Roosevelt had this to say on the matter of governance by wealth and the wealthy: ‘Of all forms of tyranny, the least attractive and the most vulgar is the tyranny of mere wealth, the tyranny of a plutocracy.’³ The use of the word ‘tyranny’ by Roosevelt is key. Unless you achieve your target or comply with the thousands of rules, systems and processes at work, you run the risk of not getting that promotion or that pay-rise – or you run the ultimate risk of losing your job. Fear, and not care for others, becomes our moral imperative. Other symptoms of fear in the workplace include bullying, harassment and assault, manifesting not only in high-profile cases like the recent spate of allegations of sexual assault and bullying against film company CEO Harvey Weinstein, but also often at the root of workplace mental illness.

It is ironic that while many employers enthusiastically promote ‘diversity and inclusion’ and physical ‘health and safety’, they do not include or permit diversity of thought, inclusion in debates and decisions, or an incident book for bullying, harassment and assault. In short, most people work in organisations where culture is closer to the tyranny of North Korea than to the democracies of the free world.

HOW THE EXECUTIVE COACH CAN HELP

So, what can the executive coach do to support those leaders who really want to do the right thing at work and put *People* and *Values* ahead of *Rules*?

For the last fifteen years, I have found that the most effective approach is to coach leaders to do three things:

1. Explore and be true to their own values and beliefs: their moral character.
2. Learn how to create a safe space for democratic debate when working with their teams.
3. Make decisions that not only comply with good simple *Rules*, but also create good outcomes for *People*, based on shared moral *Values*.

In April 2016, Joe Garner became CEO at Nationwide, the world’s largest building society. Within the first week, Joe asked me to begin working with his executive team as their coach. We worked together for a year to develop this leadership practice not only with Joe’s team, but throughout the organisation.

Results were transformational. Within six months, the Glassdoor* score for employee satisfaction increased from 3.2 to 3.7; Joe’s approval rating hit 94%; and in terms of business performance, Nationwide attracted more current account switchers than all other UK banks and building societies combined. Nationwide now has over 15 million members and has become an icon for democratic capitalism, with a renewed purpose encapsulated by the slogan ‘Building society, nationwide’.

Those of you who have experience of systemic coaching will recognise key elements of systems theory in this approach. Most culture ‘transformation’ programmes fail because they wrongly assume that people at work can be controlled and coerced to comply with deterministic, linear processes. However, if you transform the tyranny of ‘meetings’ into purposeful, safe, values-driven, democratic debates that aim to benefit customers, then you really can trigger a rapid phase transition and create a high-integrity, high-performing culture.

We began with a quote from the French novelist and philosopher Albert Camus. He also summarised this leadership philosophy more eloquently than I have here when he said:

Don’t walk behind me;
I may not lead.
Don’t walk in front of me;
I may not follow.
Just walk beside me
and be my friend.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Roger Steare is Visiting Professor in the Practice of Organisational Ethics and Corporate Philosopher in Residence at Cass Business School. He also teaches at Duke Corporate Education, FTIE Corporate Learning Alliance and London Business School.

Since 2002, Roger has advised the boards, senior executives and leadership populations of several major organisations including Barclays, BP, Citi, HSBC and Nationwide on how to build high-integrity, high-performing cultures.

1 <https://www.fca.org.uk/publication/discussion/dp18-02.pdf>

2 Sir Winston Churchill (1874 - 1965), *Hansard*, November 11, 1947

3 Theodore Roosevelt, (1913) *An Autobiography*. (Currently available in several editions)

* Independent review website where employees and former staff can anonymously rate their employer



BEYOND THE CODE OF ETHICS

Experienced Coaching Supervisors **Lorenza Clifford** and **Jo Birch** describe their journey exploring coaching ethics. As they deepen their developmental inquiry, they share individual and joint reflections, include way markers along the route, and conclude with some questions for reflection.

SETTING OUT DOWN THE ROAD

JO When I think about ethics I imagine a rich, stimulating, stretching dialogue about to emerge... calling on my daring, inviting me to peek around the next corner and step forward into the unknown. I'm excited.

In a recent professional group, Lorenza spoke about attending a 'good quality coaching supervision training course' in 2011 and, while appreciating the depth of the course, she believed it lacked a substantial inquiry on ethics. Lorenza described wanting to dig downward, and inward, to understand where ethical understanding and 'taking responsibility' arises from within her. As she began to practise as a supervisor, ethical dilemmas appeared, and at first she believed herself to be ill equipped. I realised she was talking about the training course that I now lead in the UK and abroad! My eyes opened wide. I wanted to know more.

Let's immediately link this to the topic of ethics: in any ethical dialogue it is important that we open not only our eyes but our heart and gut too!

What do I mean? Ethical dialogue is multi-dimensional. Notice! Feel. Test your willingness to 'go there', to dare to be fully in touch with multiple perspectives. Ethical dilemmas brought into compassionate dialogue may reveal a multitude of glistening surfaces, rich depths, dark shadows, and beckoning lights.

A CHANCE MEETING

LORENZA Jo and I came together to have a conversation about ethics, to enter into dialogue as peers interested in exploring deeply, going underneath the surface of the ethical code. We were interested in sharing our thinking and building mutual understanding. What emerged was fruitful.

When I dive in, courageously testing my current understanding of a code, I experience the principles behind it through how I feel, as I adopt different perspectives, and understand what is appropriate in context.

HOW DID WE BEGIN OUR JOURNEY WITH ETHICS?

LORENZA Initially I explored common dilemmas and examined how supervision helps people gain perspective, tease out aspects and options, and make decisions about the way forward. Above all, for my clients, supervision resulted in deeper understanding of the whole presentation of an issue, including potential risks and awareness of the different needs of individuals or groups.

After many years of practice, I notice increasing intricacy and complexity in the dilemmas I encounter. Perhaps I am setting the climate in a way that attracts clients to be more open about all that is going on? Maybe professional maturity opens me to a deeper philosophical awareness, and therefore dialogue about ethics becomes more nuanced and more likely?

So how do ethics show up in practice? How do we know when ethical dilemmas have not been explored? What happens if complaints arise? We found that, from insurance companies and professional bodies, very few claims arise from clients although coaches do sometimes make complaints about other coaches.

JO *Claims? Complaints? Shudder. I feel a push and pull. Don't let me bring this energy near to me... and yet how will we explore ethics with only the sweetness of the intricate dialogue? What then, if our 'dilemma' tastes dark, sour and bitter? We go there!*

AT THE TURNPIKE

LORENZA Another source of information was our emotions, which we discussed during stages of our inquiry. During our conversations we noticed our own emotions and, at times, resistance:

- Jo noticed tightness and stillness, finding herself immobilised and unable to move beyond a resistance to opening the door to the 'energy of complaints' until a slightly ajar door presented itself!
- I want to frame my thoughts developmentally: to start from where people are now, inform, encourage thought and enable conscious choice.
- I felt fear as I read the many different texts. Awareness led me to rise out of the detail, examine what was wood and what was thicket and where the paths were, before landing back on a path with renewed vigour.
- I recognise the possibility for many other emotions; they have all snagged me at times, and I experienced them as negative, associated with this topic of ethics. Here they are, with typical examples:
 - Indignation (Who are they to tell me?)
 - Frustration (What is perceived as ethical keeps changing, the bar is rising steadily)
 - Insecurity (How do I hold my ethical values and conflicting customer demands?)

- Hurt (How do I hold my confidence to work through, and keep growing, even if others judge me?)
- Shame (Dare I reflect on my true emotions, though it is easier to pretend than face these deeper feelings?).

Emotions experienced as positive – for example revelling in understanding a difficult text, following that thread beyond the point of its utility – can capture us too.

According to neuroscientist Dr Paul Brown, emotions can be thought of as energy for action. In my gestalt training with John Leary Joyce at the Academy for Executive Coaching, noticing what is staying 'figural' as opposed to background was important. Namely, where something is staying present in our awareness and begging our attention. As an illustration, I don't normally notice my teeth: they are background. If one becomes wobbly or chipped, my tongue is constantly drawn back to explore it: it becomes figural. In these moments of noticing what our attention is drawn to in our reflective practice, our bodies can inform us – through a tightness of immobility, a sensation of weight of frustration, or a grip in the throat of hurt. Inquiring what emotions are associated with these 'resistances' allows us either to accept the emotions or decide how to act to resolve them in accordance with our values.

Jo sees emotions as a language – one in which we are invited to become attuned. We give names to feelings in our body, and the emotions we describe are not positive or negative, simply more information, neutral, unless we overlay them with our mind and meaning-making! We are agreed that emotions are prevalent resources in the exploration of ethical dialogue.

Recognising our own and others' emotions is a key skill to inform our reflections on our practice. Being honest and able to wonder what information emotions give – about ethics and our natural patterns of flow, yielding or resistance.

ALL ROADS LEAD TO ME

JO *How can I continue to equip myself to move towards relationship in times of conflict, so that I might hear another in their pain, hurt, anger, frustration or in their stories and meaning making; how can I help myself notice the times when the imposter of 'right and wrong' enters my field?*

We know our clients cannot enter territory into which we ourselves dare not go. If I dare not face my own human failure, neither will my clients face theirs; if I cannot stand in my own sadness and pain, neither can my clients; if I cannot truly embrace my own wonder and greatness, neither will my clients be able to stand in awe of their own brilliance.

We can turn this round and say: when I am truly courageous and step towards 'relationship', bringing my vulnerability and centred, compassionate powerfulness, then that action is the most likely to encourage others to join me. I believe this might best serve ethical dialogue.

I need to do my own personal 'work' in order that I bring my best practice, and best self, in service of my clients, wherever

the conversation takes us. This to me is the embodiment of 'fitness to practise' as incorporated in ethical codes.

JOURNEY THROUGH THE CORE

Individually and collectively, increasing self-awareness supports coaches and coaching supervisors to hold steady, and take a breath to re-align, ready to step forward one more time and say: tell me again... tell me more... until I better understand 'you.'

Developing this capacity to embrace and hold unhappiness, frustrations, rage, fear, or whatever the drive of the discord, is the key to creating patterns in our profession coherent with the purpose and role of a coach. Such a pattern might be one of 'embracing fearless conversations', or maybe a more useful perspective would be 'embracing consciously fear-full conversations'! Could I aspire to this? Could we, as a profession? Embracing conversations in which we hold a commitment to the relationship, even when the going is tough, bumpy, sharp, critical or judgemental – all those 'spears' that produce 'ouch' moments in the listener.

This holds potential to support our individual practice and collective professional field. Each of us, as coaches and as supervisors, developing a conscious ability to dare to go back in, to be explicit about being knocked off-centre, honest about re-centring, and invitational of something more constructive. Let's re-enter the dialogue together in service of a much greater good.

MELDED BY THE HEAT

LORENZA In strong supervision relationships, there exists a bedrock of commitment to the relationship; all parties courageously maintain contact, and emotions can be owned, voiced and heard. In reflection together, you and your supervisor can enquire into all perspectives, raise awareness of your own emotions and the potential emotions of others, explore needs of different parties, and allow resolution routes to emerge. Trust and respect, if not necessarily liking, are kindled in these conversations in moments of profound developmental honesty.

The earlier the issue can be voiced, heard and considered, the better for all parties. Being heard, with respect, changes things because it helps release the emotions, and allow resolution to follow.

I feel a responsibility to be at my best and demonstrate a healthy way of dealing with conflict that allows all parties to have confidence to stay in contact. It takes strength and resolve to 'stand in the fire', with honesty about my own emotions, enquiring and accounting for the different needs and perspectives: trusting that a constructive way forward will emerge once the fullness of emotions, needs and perspectives have been voiced for all parties.

The purpose of ethical dialogue in supervision is to make explicit the values that are guiding our thinking and action. Human beings come from such different backgrounds and bring cultural and personal interpretation to any given

context. So there are multiple paths that could emerge to resolve an ethical dilemma. These nuances, encompassing our own conscious and unconscious process, are factors that influence outcomes. We can bring our patterns to the surface through supervision, examine them and make more conscious choices.

GOING BEYOND WITH SOME REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS

- How are you feeling as you read this article?
- What might you engage in, to stretch your self-awareness?
- What are you open to learning about yourself through reflection and supervision?

To share your responses, please contact the authors direct or the magazine's editorial team at editor@associationforcoaching.com

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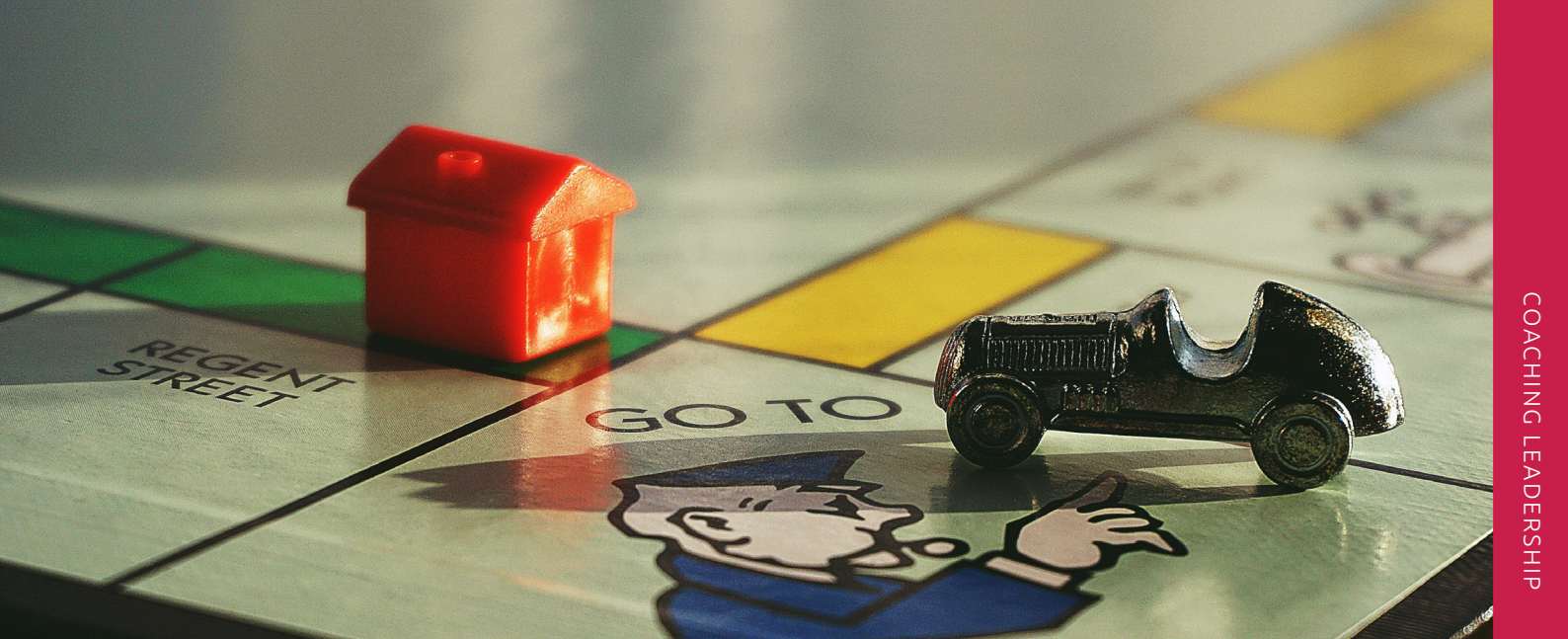
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IN A WORLD OF WINNING AT ALL COSTS, ARE THERE SOME COSTS WHICH ARE NOT ACCEPTABLE?

Cath Bishop has competed at three Olympic Games and seen inside the world of Olympic motivation, the commitment to be the best and the pressure to win medals. This has left her fascinated with the question of what does and doesn't constitute a high-performance environment.

Sport often acts as an analogy for what's going on in our society; it dramatises the full range of human experiences and dilemmas before our eyes, revealing the best and worst aspects of human nature – all on display as we watch.

The question of ethics poses one of the greatest challenges for sport. Some of the darkest sides of this challenge have been exposed at the highest levels of leadership and governance across organisations such as the International Olympic Committee (IOC), FIFA (the international football federation) and national sport federations. It also plays out on a personal level on every pitch, court, track and lake as coaches and athletes try to negotiate the path to high performance without crossing the line into unethical practice, while working out exactly where they think that line may be. I want to focus more on the second point, which links closely to the wider challenge at work about creating the right environments for people to perform to their best.

Firstly, it's important to recognise that a 'high-performance culture' is not a single concept. I am frequently asked:

'What's it like to train in a high-performance Olympic environment?' There isn't a simple answer. I experienced three different high-performance cultures across three Olympiads, under three different coaches, and at different stages in the development of the British rowing system. One cycle was much more conducive to high performance than the other two. Unsurprisingly, that Olympiad was where I achieved my best results (both at the World Championships and Olympic Games) and was also the one where I had the best experience – even before winning any medals.

The differences may have been subtle to some observers, but they were enormous in terms of personal experience. In every Olympiad, we trained long hours (often three sessions – approximately six hours – per day), were constantly measured and pushed on a daily basis to go beyond our mental and physical comfort zones, and to improve as much as possible. However, the support, culture and environment across each Olympiad varied hugely. In the least enjoyable and, for me, least productive high-performance environment, we were measured

constantly and those daily results became something we feared. They were often used against us as proof that we weren't good enough, or not trying hard enough or, worst of all, they were held up as evidence of mental weakness that left us feeling like less-valued individuals. This was, of course, not performance-enhancing. The daily results fed into a zero-sum coaching narrative – if I did well one day, then that was always at the expense of another athlete who did less well on that day – and we all dreaded the day when we were the one on the 'losing' end.

A few years later, in a more positive high-performance culture, the focus was much more on the daily progress in performance than on results. We were still measured regularly – the aim was still to go as fast as possible at the World Championships or Olympics – but the coaching focus was on the areas we needed to improve, regardless of results that day, and on how we could do this and learn from those around us. There were aspects of the team's overall performance that the 'slowest' person (that day's 'loser', in the language of the first environment I described) was doing well and that others could learn from. While everyone wanted to do well, this approach was less destructively competitive: each individual athlete had their own goals each day, and it might be that going slower was a crucial part of making a technical change that would result in greater boat speed in three months' time. This refinement wasn't possible in the negative zero-sum-game mentality environment.

Looking beyond my own experience, we have seen in recent years a number of athletes speak out publicly about bullying and intimidation experienced within certain Olympic teams. Jess Varnish's allegations against British Cycling received the most media attention, and were followed by an in-depth investigation by an independent panel. It is often incredibly hard for athletes to have the courage to speak out and have a voice to challenge the sporting establishment; it is this establishment that will select them for or deselect them from the Olympic team. There are often no effective whistleblowing routes and no HR departments in most sports. The British Athletes Commission (BAC) is trying to grow its capacity to support athletes, which UK Sport (the over-arching government-backed body which oversees elite sport in the UK) has now acknowledged as an important part of improving the checks and balance in this area.

The high-profile stories, coupled with a greater understanding of what's required to perform at elite level and the latest sports psychology advances, have led to a reconsideration of a world traditionally governed by the drive to win at all costs. There is now a move to scrutinise those 'costs' a little more carefully. UK Sport measures a number of indicators of how individual sports have been performing. These indicators determine UK Sport's continued – and often significant – allocation of grants from the UK's National Lottery Fund. Until last year, these indicators did not include a cultural element, but in response to the pressures and revelations in this area UK Sport has now introduced a 'cultural healthcheck' for each

Olympic and Paralympic sport they fund, and employed a Head of Integrity to develop their role and expertise in this area.

On the ground, coaches face a dilemma – one shared by many business team leaders and CEOs: how to train, develop and push an athlete (or employee) towards becoming the best, in a world where standards only ever go in one direction, without pushing them too far? And what point is 'too far'? At what point should a coach stop pushing their athletes, or a manager stop asking for more from their team member? At what point does a coach or manager driving performance become a bully?

To be at the top of your game and able to withstand the pressure of delivering a world-beating performance on the day of the Olympic final requires preparation: you need to get used to high amounts of pressure during training. In an Olympic environment, where athletes are pushed constantly to stretch themselves and to keep pushing even when – particularly so, in fact – at the point of exhaustion, how does a coach protect the mental as well as physical wellbeing of their athletes? At what point does an athlete pushed to train as hard as they can, cross over the line where they are mentally and or physically pushing into a zone of lower performance?

This mirrors the challenge within many competitive organisations where high performance is expected and client demands are always increasing. How does a team leader manage the need to deliver to clients while supporting the mental health and wellbeing of their team?

Certainly coaches and leaders require more support to navigate this grey area: more understanding and education around mental health, psychology, the developing neuroscience of performance, and research on effective performance cultures. But there is a new breed of coach emerging. The likes of football's modern managers, such as Pep Guardiola and Gareth Southgate, now speak the language of 'culture comes first' and 'the collective must come before individual egos'. Coaches such as Toni Minichiello, who was Olympic and world champion athlete Jessica Ennis-Hill's coach, or Mel Marshall, coach to British swimmer Adam Peaty, work with their athletes, and co-create their programmes with them, to maintain those same world-class ambitions as a joint responsibility.

As performance standards increase, we can't afford to get culture wrong. Elite team managers need to become experts in providing support so that athletes can switch off while at training camp. They need the actual and emotional space to reach out and discuss their worries, to maintain a personal life away from the training ground, and where they can plan for the rest of their lives after their elite sporting career ends. In the same way, many executive coaches ask: where are the support networks? Where is the permission to show vulnerability? The safety to speak out when you feel uncomfortable?

There remains a school of thought that fears that this new focus on culture is a form of going soft, and a huge loss

of medals will result. For me, the exciting challenge – one I completely believe in – is to learn fast how to seize this opportunity to shape more effective and healthier, happier performance environments that will allow athletes to test themselves as much as they always have, allowing them to achieve the next marginal gain* while maintaining their mental and emotional wellbeing. This will allow the next generation of athletes to have a better experience and to fly further, higher, and stronger.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Cath Bishop works as a leadership speaker, facilitator and coach, drawing on a career as an Olympic rower and another as a senior diplomat specialising in conflict stabilisation. Cath competed at three Olympic Games, was world champion in 2003 and an Olympic silver medallist in 2004. As a diplomat, Cath was posted to Bosnia and Iraq, as well as working on conflict issues in Whitehall.

Cath led a masterclass on Smart Resilience for the AC in June 2015.

www.cathbishop.com

* Refers to the approach adopted by Team Sky Cycling coach David Brailsford. This focused on making small improvements which when added together would produce a significant uplift in performance.

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF ETHICS: FROM PLATO TO MODERN COACHING

In this abridged extract from *The Sage Handbook of Coaching*, [Ioanna Iordanou](#) and [Patrick Williams](#) trace the discipline of ethics from its origins to the present day and outline some of the approaches that can be applied to your coaching practice.

The history of ethics can be traced back to the ancient Greek philosophers around 400 years before the Christian era: Socrates, Plato and Aristotle, who laid the foundations for the development of moral philosophy. Moral philosophy is primarily concerned with the question of what is morally 'right' and 'wrong' and has produced a variety of ethical models to answer this question.

In the Western world, the two historically prevailing models are:

- **Deontological ethics.** Grounded in the doctrines of German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804), this places reason at the core of morality and is premised in a set of universal beliefs about the nature of reality.
- **Utilitarian ethics.** Deriving from the writings of 18-19C British philosophers David Hume, Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, this view focuses on the maximum benefit for society of any course of action. An action is judged right or wrong through an evaluation of the extent of its positive and negative consequences.

In essence, the deontological approach sees human beings as ends in themselves, while the utilitarian approach considers them as a means to an end.¹

Competition between these two prevalent approaches to ethics has spawned several other ethical positions:

- **Virtue ethics.** Derived from a revival of interest in Aristotle's ethics, this dictates that the 'rightness' or 'wrongness' of an action is not determined by duty, obligation or consequence, but by the core virtues (such as courage, honesty, loyalty) that enable an individual's growth.
- **Ethics of care.** This is a feminist approach to ethics, premised on the female experience of acting as carers for others, for instance children.²
- **Ethics of Power and Structure.** When there is more than one person involved in a decision, the question of power inevitably arises. Karl Marx (1818-1883) famously attacked the fact that morals are usually dictated by the most powerful in a society. This approach attempts to establish whose interest would be served by a specific action.³



Clearly, different approaches to ethics depend on a variety of factors and cannot easily converge into one coherent and pervasive ethical line of action that everyone can follow. This realisation has led to:

- **Communicative or Narrative ethics.** This approach is grounded in a postmodern assertion that a universally distinct ethical system may not be possible. So it may be wiser, and more practical, to explore what kind of ethics are most appropriate for any particular context rather than attempt to impose a universal code that everyone must adhere to. This issue is particularly pertinent in professional contexts, where a morally right or wrong action is dependent on a variety of conflicting factors.*

In turn, this naturally leads us to the rapidly growing discipline of *professional ethics*.

- **Professional ethics.** This comprises a set of values that dictate ethical professional conduct within a profession and constitute 'an integral part of professional identity', the most elaborately developed of which is medical ethics.

ETHICAL APPROACHES FOR PROFESSIONAL ETHICAL COACHING BEHAVIOUR**

THE UTILITARIAN APPROACH

The ethical corporate action, based on this view, is the one that produces the greatest good and does the least harm for all who are affected – customers, employees, shareholders and communities, as well as the environment.

THE RIGHTS APPROACH

Ethical action is the one that best protects and respects the moral rights of those affected. Based on the belief that human dignity is fundamental to human nature, people have a right to be treated as ends in themselves and not merely as means to other ends. The list of moral rights – what kind of life to lead, to be told the truth, not to be injured, to a degree of privacy, and so on – is widely debated. It is now increasingly argued that non-humans – animals and the environment – have rights, too. It is also argued that rights imply duties; in particular, the duty to respect others' rights.

THE FAIRNESS OR JUSTICE APPROACH

Aristotle and other Greek philosophers contributed the idea that ethical actions treat all humans equally – or if unequally, then based on a fair standard that is defensible: for example, it is fair to claim a salary commensurate with one's work and how much one contributes to an organisation. Hence the debate over CEO salaries which are multiple times larger than the pay of their workers: is the huge disparity based on a defensible standard, or is it the result of an imbalance of power and therefore unfair?

THE COMMON GOOD APPROACH

The Greek philosophers also contributed the notion that life in community is a good in itself and our actions should contribute to that life. This approach suggests that the interlocking relationships of society are the basis of ethical reasoning and that respect and compassion for all others – especially vulnerable people – are requirements of such reasoning. It calls attention to the common conditions that are important for the welfare of everyone: laws, effective police and fire departments, health care, a public educational system, or even public recreational areas.

* For a more detailed exposition, with examples of coaching dilemmas, see Donna Ladkin's Deep Dive article on p xxxxx

** The following summaries derive from the website of the Merkkula Center for Applied Ethics at Santa Clara University (USA). The interested reader can read more extensively on the framework for ethical decision making proposed by the Merkkula Center for Applied ethics on this web-page: <http://www.scu.edu/ethics/practicing/decision/>

THE VIRTUE APPROACH

Aristotle's Ethics underpin a view that ethical actions should be consistent with certain ideal virtues that provide for the full development of our humanity. These include honesty, courage, compassion, generosity, tolerance, love, fidelity, integrity, fairness, self-control and prudence. Virtue ethics asks of any action, 'What kind of person will I become if I do this?' or, 'Is this action consistent with my being and acting at my best?'

Each of these approaches can help us determine what standards of behaviour can be considered ethical. However, there may not be common approval of any one specific approach. There may not be consensus on what constitutes a human right, or the common good; and different approaches may not answer the question 'What is ethical?' in the same way. Nonetheless, each approach gives us important information to help us as coaches determine what is ethical in a particular circumstance.



Patrick Williams



Ioanna Iordanou

This summary of the history of ethics is a shorter version of chapter 38, 'Developing Ethical Capabilities of Coaches,' in the Sage Handbook of Coaching (2016), p696-712. For a full list of references please see this publication.

The original version of this chapter can be found here:
<https://bit.ly/2Ci3SaB>

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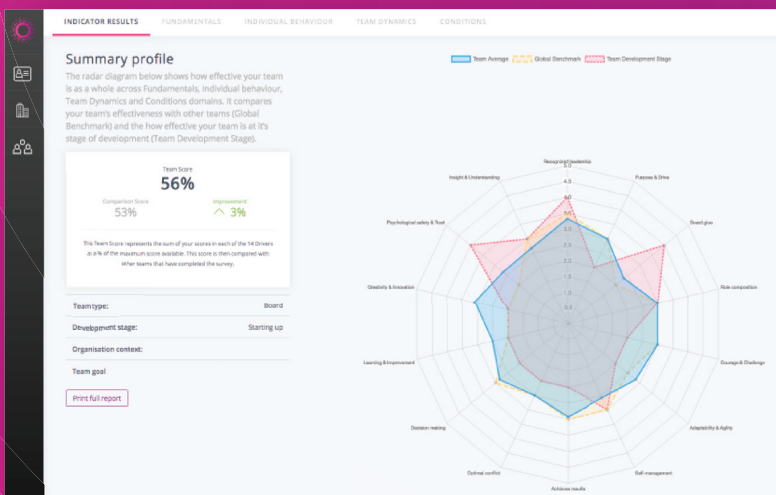
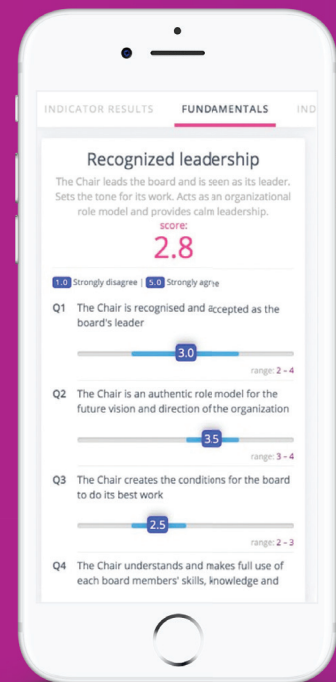


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Global leadership isn't about geography: it's a mindset



Leaders need to ask more questions and listen to different perspectives, according to [Maya Hu-Chan](#), co-author of *Global Leadership – the Next Generation*. She talked to Deputy Editor [Sue Stockdale](#) about her work.

Recently I was teaching coaching skills to a group of managers from a small business based in London. We discovered that there were over twenty nationalities represented amongst the staff. Although English was the common language, the managers had to understand and adapt to the cultural nuances of the individuals to maximise team performance. And this phenomenon is no different in many cities around the world, where the term global leader has come to represent something much closer to home because there is so much geographical diversity in the local workforce.

When I met Maya Hu-Chan, an executive coach who is based in San Diego, California, and specialises in global leadership, she agreed. An undergraduate in journalism and business, Hu-Chan moved to the US from Taiwan to attend the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school in 1985 and soon discovered that she would have to choose between two paths. Not knowing anyone, and with just a basic understanding of English, the most comfortable path would be to join the school's Chinese student association. There she could meet plenty of students – many from Taiwan – find a Chinese roommate and be part of a bustling group of like-minded peers. It would feel like home.

But after meeting a few Chinese students who had already been at the university for a number of years, she found that most of them spoke very little English except when in class, and their experiences in the US rarely extended beyond their circle of friends.

Realising that her dream of experiencing the West would never come to pass unless she took a risk, Hu-Chan found a roommate who was not from Asia, which would mean she had to choose a different path. As the US poet Robert Frost has written, she ‘...took the one less traveled by // And that has made all the difference.’

LEARNING ABOUT DIFFERENT CULTURES

Rated as one of the top eight Global Solutions Thinkers by Thinkers50, Hu-Chan is an international management consultant and executive coach. Hu-Chan uses her early experience of coming to the US to encourage her clients to push themselves to grow. ‘When it comes to global leadership,’ she says, ‘leaders need to be curious and adaptable. You don’t have to leave your country to do this, but just find opportunities to learn about different cultures, how people live, how they do business and how they communicate. This can provide a tremendous growth opportunity in terms of personal development.’

The London company I worked with were using organised social events as an opportunity to learn more about their colleagues’ backgrounds and what life was like in their respective countries when they were growing up. Taking time to step into other peoples’ shoes builds empathy and understanding. This characteristic of appreciating cultural diversity is one of five highlighted by Hu-Chan and her co-authors Marshall Goldsmith, Cathy L. Greenberg and Alastair Robertson in their book *Global Leadership - the next Generation*.

They are:

1. Thinking globally
2. Appreciating cultural diversity
3. Developing technological skills
4. Building partnerships and alliances
5. Sharing leadership

These characteristics, says Hu-Chan, apply to any leader who works with a team either virtually or globally. She defines a global mindset as ‘to realise that there is more than one way of doing things.’ It’s as simple as that. Global mindset is not about being right or wrong, or the need for someone to accommodate another’s view – it’s about exploring. If we listen to each other, and understand where one another is coming from, we can come up with the best solution. There is always more than one way of doing things when it comes to business.

COMMUNICATION CHALLENGES

At university Hu-Chan studied journalism, which helped her realise the value of asking questions. ‘I’m interested

in people,’ she says, ‘what they care about, what their challenges, successes and aspirations are. It’s a curiosity that has served me well as an executive coach. For example, when clients initially describe their issue, it is often not the real issue they have. You have to be curious enough to explore it further.

‘Typically, clients come to me with challenges in leading diverse or multi-cultural teams. Perhaps they are missing important business objectives or losing clients, or their employees are disengaged and unmotivated, or perhaps good people are quitting, all of which can negatively impact the organisation’s bottom line. You have to be able to help them step back and look at the big picture to understand what’s going on.’

Hu-Chan relates the story of a client in a financial services firm. One floor of the firm’s offices houses compliance, while another is for sales and bankers. A habit had arisen of communicating by email between the two divisions, rather than meeting in the building. As is so often the case in a hectic work environment, emails would be misinterpreted, leading to conflict. Hu-Chan worked with the team, helping them see that their issues had little to do with substance and much more to do with communication skills.

The result was a commitment from both teams to meet their colleagues face-to-face when issues arose. Reviewing things a month later, the teams realised that talking over a cup of coffee led inevitably to getting to know each other better, which meant issues could be resolved in a matter of minutes. Altogether, instituting regular cross-team meetings has helped build more cohesive teams and better working relationships – and has had a positive impact on the bottom line.

While communication usually improves when employees engage face-to-face, this is challenging for a global team that communicates virtually. Paying attention to small details can have a positive impact, however. For example, considering various time zones when scheduling a conference call or outlining expectations at the start of each call as to how it will be run can all help keep things running smoothly. Introducing simple good practices for virtual team communication, can make all the difference to the effectiveness of a global team conference call.

POWER AND CONTROL

Another challenge when leading a global team is the question of power and control. Hu-Chan believes that the ability to share leadership is one of a global leader’s core competencies. In some countries, however, this may also mean relinquishing control, which can be uncomfortable – particularly for leaders operating in a culture where they are expected to have all the answers, and team members who never challenge upwards. She has also observed over the last twenty years in her work with global organisations that the command and control style of leadership is becoming increasingly ineffective.

Today, many people are knowledge workers. They are paid to think and solve problems, so they want to be heard and to make a difference. If a leader represses that and retains control of everything, it discourages others from thinking and over time you lose them.

'When I am working with a leader who has a "command and control" style,' explains Hu-Chan, 'I go deeper with the client to explore their need to be in control. I enquire: where does it come from? How does it impact the team? How do they want to show up as a leader? I also ask them what their team really needs from the leader in order to perform at their best. This helps the leader to understand their behaviour from the team member's perspective and realise what is causing them to display the need to control. I can then help them look at other options they may have. It takes time, but I think it is the coach's responsibility to bring awareness and help leaders to see the impact of their style on their team.

'Leaders also need to learn to "style shift"; Hu-Chan adds. This means that they may look at a situation where there are certain cultural expectations and, for example, be more direct rather than being polite and not saying anything. 'It's not about undermining their own value system but being flexible and prepared to adapt their style to bridge the gap. That's being influential.'

GLOBAL BUSINESS ETHICS

What is acceptable business ethics in one country may be viewed negatively in another, which can make the task of leadership even more difficult when operating with a global team. Leaders need to reconsider the realities pertinent in each culture, and realise that what constitutes ethical behaviour in one individual's mind will depend on their life experience as well as their cultural background.

Hu-Chan's view is that when companies set global ethical practices, they should explain clearly where the boundaries are. For example, outline what is unethical, what is appropriate, where there can be flexibility and where there is no room for negotiation. 'It's the difference between doing things right and doing the right thing. Ethics will always win over short-term gains, so it's really important leaders set the right tone and lead by example.'

Leaders should ask more questions and listen to different perspectives, she says, to be able to form their own views about broader global issues. 'To be well informed, leaders need to learn about other viewpoints. With all the algorithms on the internet we tend to only get to read what we agree with, and we don't hear, see or read about different perspectives. I encourage leaders to pick up a publication they have never read before, and talk to people with different backgrounds – they don't have to agree with it, but it helps them to think more broadly, and they may find out something that surprises them.'

Finally, while there are many challenges that global leaders regularly face, Hu-Chan identifies three that she sees occurring most regularly:

1. Managing the complexity of a global business environment
2. Leading virtual teams
3. Inspiring and leading change

Hu-Chan encourages leaders to focus on being present. 'It is important for leaders to learn to be in touch with their emotions, manage their physical and mental wellbeing in order to show up at their best. The pace of change and uncertainty is not going to slow down. As a leader, your team looks to you, and if you are solid, calm and present, that will positively impact the people around you. Ultimately, that can be what makes the difference.'

Back in London, the managers in the small business I was working with now view themselves as global leaders. By developing their coaching skills, which heightened their ability to listen well to their colleagues, not to make assumptions and to develop patience to identify what the real issues are, they have learned that being a global leader takes effort, but brings greater rewards in terms of engagement and morale.

ABOUT MAYA HU-CHAN



Maya Hu-Chan is a globally recognised speaker, executive coach, and author. She helps leaders effectively lead diverse, multicultural and virtual teams. Maya was ranked in; the top eight Global Solutions Thinkers by Thinkers50; World Top 30 Leadership Gurus; and Top 100 Thought Leaders in Management & Leadership. Her book *Global Leadership: The Next Generation* was recommended by Harvard Business School. She is also a contributing author of ten business books and writes a monthly column on INC.com.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sue Stockdale is an accredited executive coach and coaching supervisor. Her clients include leaders in business, elite sport and not-for-profit organisations in UK, and North America. In 2014, Sue received a global coaching leadership award at the World Coaching Congress in Mumbai. In 2017, she was a judge at the UK Business Awards. As an author, Sue has written and co-authored eight books including *Cope with Change at Work*, (Teach Yourself Books 2012); *The Personality Workbook* (Teach Yourself Books 2013); and *Risk: All that Matters* (Hodder & Stoughton 2015). She is Deputy Editor of *Coaching Perspectives*.

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ETHICAL DILEMMAS: READER RESPONSES

We asked you, our readers, to share experiences of ethical dilemmas in your coaching practice. We were pleased but not surprised at how many replies we received from you! Here are some of your responses to three typical dilemmas.

1. Have you ever coached a corporate client who wanted to leave the organisation, but the company pays for your services? Who is the client and how have you navigated the situation?

✉ I was coaching a board member of a medium-sized company. The coaching was sponsored by the CEO, who was keen to provide development opportunities for his employees in order to grow the business and develop the people.

Contracting and chemistry went well, but during the second session my client announced he was fed up with the organisation and intended to leave to set up his own business. He also suggested that his new business would make him a direct competitor of his current organisation, and that he planned to take some existing clients with him. Half an hour after this session, the CEO rang me and asked how things were going with the coaching.

This presented a couple of ethical dilemmas. Addressing the CEO was simple, as I had contracted over confidentiality. I told the CEO that they should ask the coaching clients direct if he wanted some feedback.

I did, however, feel challenged by coaching someone who was aiming to become a competitor. I was mindful that I was being paid by the current business with direct sponsorship from the most senior level. I didn't feel right about continuing coaching sessions that were in direct conflict with the initial contracting and terms of my engagement.

So that was the last session I ran. I talked this concern through with the client, wished them well and walked away.

Andy Matheson

✉ I have had this more than once and I am very clear about my response. I tell the client that I am paid by the organisation and cannot ethically coach them on how to leave. What I can do is help them to be more effective, as well as learn new skills and apply them while they are still in the organisation. Whatever they gain from the coaching they can take with them to another

organisation if they still decide to leave.

Veronica Wantenaar

✉ This situation is not unusual in companies bound to fast organisational transformation, or with high-potential talents who are prompt to jump to the next career step.

When this point comes, my reaction is to listen more actively, bring the client into a deeper-thinking and less emotional state, and understand the background and substance of the intention; importantly, I never break the conversation flow or damage trust when the topic arises. Maintaining trust and strict confidentiality are fundamental, as well as setting clear boundaries.

Jean-Philippe Gauvrit

✉ I have come across this a few times. In anticipation of this possibility, I always begin a coaching relationship by meeting with the client, the coachee and their line manager, and while explaining how coaching works, build in the possibility that coaching can, sometimes, result in the coachee being coached out of the organisation. It's out there then: up-front and clear.

If it actually happens and the coachee reaches this conclusion, then I see it as a win-win situation. The coachee can move on to something that suits them better, and the employer benefits as they can then recruit someone who better meets their needs. An unhappy employee is never good for business.

I know this can happen because it happened to me and, as a consequence, I trained to become a coach myself. I am very grateful to my coach for giving me the strength of character and the clarity of mind to move on.

Gordon Fyfe

2. Have you been in a situation where a corporate client has shared personal experience of bullying and harassment in the workplace? How have you managed confidentiality and the prospect of reputational risk to the organisation?

✉ This is always very delicate. Often the recollections can be heavily influenced and clouded, unsurprisingly, by a coachee's emotions. It is always important to acknowledge their feelings (and perhaps your own, if they are having an impact) and get to the core facts – the reality – to help the coachee move things forward. There have been instances where the coachee has realised they may have overreacted, but, in some cases, there is a need to follow a formal process to get the situation resolved. I have offered to be present when a coachee needs to have a difficult conversation with their line manager, but stressed that this is outside of my coaching role. Luckily, I have never been in a position where I have needed to compromise the client's confidentiality as they have always been empowered to take the steps themselves.

Karen Walters

✉ I have been confronted with a client being sexually harassed by the head of their department.

The coachee did not dare to raise the issue officially in fear of losing the job and not having any growth opportunities anymore in the company.

I coached my client by asking to explore possible situations that would bring the information to HR without revealing the person's identity. This happened with the help of a designated 'confidentiality person', who went to explain the situation without revealing the victim's identity.

In response, HR asked the victim to file a written, anonymous complaint. Following this, the aggressor received a warning that they had to stop immediately or face being asked to leave the company.

My client did not encounter any problems after this, but I did have to continue coaching on the topic to allow the victim to regain their self-confidence – as well as to face the aggressor in a calm and normal way during meetings in work settings.

I believe we should always try to help our clients with these types of problems. They can have a significantly negative impact on their wellbeing.

Ingrid Belmans

3. Do you think that coaches should refrain from giving suggestions? If so, under what circumstances would it be suitable to provide suggestions?

✉ The vast majority of the time I avoid giving suggestions and believe it is more beneficial to ask powerful questions, with the aim of helping the client to arrive at their own conclusion.

However, if the client has not had any experience in a particular area or lacks relevant knowledge, then I may ask their permission to give a suggestion, providing one only if they agree.

Another technique I sometimes use is to start a sentence by saying, 'I was wondering...'. For example, 'I was wondering if

asking your doctor might help you gain more insight?' It is not so direct as, 'What I suggest...' or, 'What I think you should do is...'. This approach still gives the client the opportunity to think things through.

Garry Lane

✉ Normally I refrain from making suggestions, believing I am at my least useful as a coach when I'm 'solutionising'.

The exception would be a situation where, reviewing options for addressing an issue, a client has failed to spot a potentially beneficial option – perhaps a re-framing of the issue. Then I might add this to the list of options they have generated and get the client to rank each one for their attraction and practicality. That way it's still the client's choice.

Miranda Kennett

We are pleased to share the following call for papers for the upcoming special issue of *Applied Psychology: An International Review on Advances in the Psychology of Workplace Coaching*.

The special issue will see the first collection of publications on coaching in a high-ranking journal. We are looking for papers that demonstrate extremely high levels of theoretical and methodological rigour in developing and advancing our understanding of how and why coaching works.

In this issue, we aim to establish a stronger connection between research in applied psychology and workplace coaching by presenting a series of theoretically robust, empirically novel research studies examining the antecedents, outcomes and processes associated with workplace coaching effectiveness. Therefore, the types of research design best suited for the special issue are pre-test-post-test treatment design with control group, meta-analysis, systematic literature review and conceptual papers. However, qualitative papers and papers utilising emerging methodologies such as diary studies and multi-level studies will also be considered.

Further information is available on the journal website.

Please direct any questions regarding the special issue to the co-editors Dr Rebecca J Jones (r.j.jones@henley.ac.uk) or Dr Gil Bozer (gilbozter@gmail.com). Submission is open now and closes 31 January 2019.



COACHES IN CONVERSATION

In this edition of *Coaches in Conversation*, **Clive Steeper** discusses ethics and values, and their implications and challenges for coaches, with **Neil Scotton**, **Abodi Shabi** and **Kerry Woodcock**.

I opened by inviting my guests to reflect on some of the ethical issues they have faced when they have been given information about their coachee from others, and how they've managed to remain detached and as unbiased as possible.

Kerry Woodcock: I work as both an internal and an external coach. In my role as an internal coach, there are times when I have felt that some of my HR colleagues have wished to share – and have me share – information about coachees that is not appropriate. At that point, there is a realisation, and we are now in the process of redesigning our relationship with HR colleagues and sharing the coaching ethics which we adhere to.

Neil Scotton: Over the years, I've cultivated the sense that 'I don't know anything'. And make sure I'm not attached. I take whatever I hear as 'this is their view'. In some senses, it may be useful for me to know the view of others; the client may have a completely different sense of the relationship. The main thing is to not necessarily believe everything I hear in the first instance, including what the client says. They may not be seeing themselves in the way others are seeing them.

So, that's the thing – don't get caught in someone else's view.

Abodi Shabi: There are ethical concerns when we coach, but what is interesting is how we have the conversations: being able to stand up to someone and say it's not okay to say something. I believe this is about the inner work of the coach. That's where the richness lies. Competencies should give us all we need to have proper conversations. I also think holding lightly the views of the coachee and those involved with them is important, as is recognising that someone's views are not necessarily the whole truth.

Clive Steeper: In some corporate environments, information manipulation can be common. For example, when a coach is given confidential information or insights about a coachee from an interested party, should the coach be prepared to challenge them? It's a challenging question.

QUALITY OF SELF-REFLECTION

CS: I'm hearing the depth of reflection in our conversation. I'm not sure the required level of reflection is necessarily

appreciated in the early stages of many people's coaching careers. But reflection is something that the better you do, the more likely you are to perform well.

KW: A lot of my work revolves around team coaching, where I deliver the programmes with another coach. I'm an extroverted reflector. We constantly observe, reflect and feed back to each other. This quality of reflection 'saves' and improves me – I'm not let off the hook! I have my supervisor as well – which is quite new for me. I realised that's what I've been craving for a number of years, another voice to advise and reflect. I don't feel I'm in the desert any more, having those things.

AS: I think it's important to have supervision, but it's only part of the work. There are many other things I do to help myself: meditation, boxing, the therapy group I go to – recognising there are plenty of blind spots in me which will cause me trouble if I don't acknowledge them in some way. I want to deliver my communication from a clearly grounded place. I'm a fan of supervision, but it's this inner work that I mentioned earlier that we have to do to develop our professional work.

CS: Sometimes when we go for the 'chemistry' sessions, we're not who we really are – we're trying to get the business. So, there is this phase in an initial meeting where we've got more of a sales hat on than is perhaps natural. But alongside this there's a second reality, which is learning values as we go through the coaching journey: the expectation that things will change. What are your thoughts on this – is there a difference between this understanding of change and trying 'falsely' to adapt to different situations?

AS: This concerns the 'being' of the coach. It is a relationship. Even in the third and fourth session I'm figuring out who I am in the relationship with the coachee. There is always a bit of trying to figure this out.

CS: Some coaches think they must have it all organised and insist that they'll follow this or that model. But the point you make about always searching is important: checking with self. Where are we up to? We'll never get to the end. Things keep changing.

AUTHENTICITY

NS: I used to ask myself, 'Who am I as a coach?' Now, it's 'Where am I coming from: what am I attached to in this moment?' Am I attached to being a friend, to keeping this business, or to getting an answer and outcome? What's actually going on for me in this moment? Often many things can be in flow, so one of the skills we evolve is operating on many levels, listening closely. At any time a number of conversations are happening at once, including one within the coachee which may not necessarily be actually spoken. It's about trying to get to the stage where, as coach, we stop trying and simply notice these things happening. When I started as a coach, I had to work hard at preparation; now I make sure I'm in a good place, and what happens, happens.

KW: In the first meeting with a recent client, the CFO of an organisation, I noticed something happening in me that I felt I had to voice. I noticed defensiveness... but I worried this could make or break our relationship. We were only 45 minutes into having met. I told them, 'I'm about to say something that I'm noticing in our conversation' – and I did! I think that was actually the making of the relationship, and eventually getting the 'Yes, we want you guys to come in and work with us' that I was looking for. I don't like it when I come out of a session and think, I didn't say what I should have.

CS: That level of authenticity is important. But it is nerve-wracking, and it raises another thought: I sometimes wonder whether, if a coach is risk-averse, they will be strong enough to adequately challenge the coachee?

NS: We all have ways of being, and if a coach is risk-averse they might need to reflect on 'being of service'. I make one request of clients: for them to get the most from the conversation, they must be real. We know when we're not being real, so the aim is to be able to hold each other to being real. When I started, I trained in terms of being a 'good' professional coach. But you can be 'good', or you can be 'whole'. There's all these behaviours open to us as human beings, and to be a full, whole human in front of the client, I must be able to express that to them.

This morning, I went to see the man who christened one of my children and oversaw the marriage of another one, because I thought it would be important to hear his perspective on confidentiality, which is part of his profession too. There's wisdom in many different places. I'm aware my being has changed through things like t'ai chi. I've been helping with a charity that helps boys in the transition to men, which has made me confront all sorts of things in my own masculinity. When I started as a coach, the last thing I wanted was to share my mental health issues. But it's all good. I'm a human being. The more I'm okay with all of that being here, the easier it gets – no performance anxiety. Here I am. Off we go!

CS: I'm drawing from this that ethics doesn't limit our bandwidth; if anything, it can increase it. We have the accreditations and values and the processes. They provide some guidance but don't make us into a good coach; progressing from good to great is about the reflective practice. It's what we do, which is the point Aboodi was making earlier.

AS: I remember John Whitmore saying the difference between a good coach and a great coach wasn't more training, it's ongoing work on yourself.

COLLECTIVE ETHICS

NS: I think there's a whole conversation around the profession: can somebody just be a good coach out the box, or is it about protecting the profession? Our code of ethics is based on the premise that the individual is the thing. I think we are now – as organisations, as governments, as

individuals – realising it's all connected. What's happening in America affects us, and everywhere else. I wonder what it means for ethics, when we look at the codes from the point of view that we're all connected. If my client does something I don't want to see, what do I do?

Our codes of ethics have been quite good at getting us to where we are, but they won't get us where we want to get to. We need to address questions like: what is my responsibility, in terms of how my work goes out into the world? What is the most important work we ought to be doing now?

KW: Connected to what Neil is saying, sometimes I feel guilty about who I want to work with and don't want to work with. Some clients want to go to more of the systemic level. Others want to go deeper. I prefer and get more joy from working with clients who want to explore what this means. But is that ethical? Everyone is at a different place; if you just work with one group, do you leave the others behind?

NS: I did a speaking gig just after Donald Trump was elected in the USA, and I said: 'Imagine the scenario. He's decided he needs a coach and it's going to be you. What do you say?' There were some who said yes and some who said no. All their responses were valid. The key thing was understanding: where do you go and why? Sometimes the question is more important. Sometimes we must find a really good question and grapple with it. Sometimes there is no answer to the best questions.

AS: I want to challenge Neil a bit. I am very political and open about it. The coach does have an agenda; we do have to stand for something. We live in a time where many of us have strong feelings about what's happening in the world, and I don't think we can just say, 'We don't have any opinion'. [Author and coach] John Blakey asks: where were the coaches in the banking crisis? It's a difficult ethical question. There aren't answers, but what is the profession about? I often ask coaches, are we part of the problem or the solution? I don't think the answer is as clear cut as we would like. What are we in service of?

It goes back to us being human. We're not divorced from the world. We read the news and hear things and part of our dilemma is how do we care and express love for the world? There's no straightforward answer. If we'll be of any value, we have to mature into being able to hold the complexities it brings up in us.

KW: To see the whole – being human – and bring our wholeness, and all the different voices in ourselves, gives our clients permission to do that also. I haven't named it like that before, but I realise now that's what I stand for. It can be challenging and uncomfortable but very rewarding.

AS: We have to stand for something. Or we're just amoral.

FITNESS TO PRACTISE

CS: When you talked about boxing, Aboodi, it made me wonder to what extent do coaches ensure they are able to protect themselves? That's not to say they shouldn't go

into a difficult area, but we need to be able to come out of it afterwards and detox from it, not carry it with us. Perhaps protection isn't the right word: we need to be 'match fit'.

AB: I would say most coaches are complacent about the amount of work and practice needed to be match fit. There is something about the idea that you can just coach on a roll. There's a paradox here – coaching is very much an in the moment thing, and it's a lifetime's work to be match fit.

KW: We need to partner with our clients. They're doing their work, so we should expect ourselves to show up as partners. Not as heroes.

AS: In a sense we're not partners. If I'm coaching someone, I'm supporting them, but I have to be ready to not be triggered. I have to be more in the conversation than them. I have to hold the 'contending'.

CS: I don't think of it as partnering. I see it that our clients owe it to themselves to have a team of support, of which a coach might be one – like an athlete. The coach is not a catch-all.

NS: We did some work in 2011, which we titled 50 Conversations, interviewing people who had more of an impact in the world than their job position would normally allow. We found that they created three teams in their lives: their home team (those who kept them grounded), their work team, and their field team (those sensing what was going on). The personal development they did was not an MBA or an accredited qualification. It was yoga, a martial art, t'ai chi, or gardening or painting. Eyes and hands and body, and often in relationship with other people – integrated. That was the development driving their success in the operations they were doing.

CS: A learning from this is the potential of inviting coaches to consider the level to which they have integrated their whole life in their coaching. What are they doing about their development? How does that feed in?

NS: Interestingly, the leaders cultivated people around them who told them the truth. Someone said: 'For me to be a good boss, I need to be strong enough for people to say to me when I'm being a bad boss.' If I want to be really good, I have to adopt a beginner's mindset and be comfortable with all my experience, yet turn up with a completely open mind. Detached, yet invested. So, a daily challenge for me is: 'What part of me needs to find a new way of listening to get Team Neil through this?' It's a team gathering – a community meeting. All of me listening to all of me. I've worked on making that space one for all parts to be listening, to understand, with respect and without judgement. In recognising that my own listening is simply another part of me, it enables (all of) me to not be beholden to it.

KW: What we create during team coaching is an atmosphere where everyone is invited to practise reflecting and observing what is happening to the energy in the room – the emotional field. This sometimes results in observations concerning how my co-coach's and my own emotional energy are affecting the team! In a sense we're creating

a kind of coaches' 'coaching room' where everyone is encouraged to notice and contribute. Initially, teams may find it strange and awkward to be asked to tap into the energy of their team, yet we notice that after a while they find it light-hearted and fun, and gain huge value in helping each other to become better observers and reflectors of personal emotions and the collective emotional field. This develops presence and emotional agility for all – coaches included!

NS: When I started in coaching, it was about constructing models and theories. Stories have more of a part to play these days. I was nearly in tears a few days ago because a overseas client asked me if I knew the Pink Floyd song Time. I did. As the story unfolded, it turned out that whilst that younger me was listening to the song sat in my bedroom in peaceful English countryside, the client was doing the same in their village being bombed and trained as a child fighter. I had no problem crying. I had no problem telling him: 'What do I know?' We've got to be prepared to get off standing on the sidelines in a clinical, cold way.

AS: I have no wisdom of my own. I read little non-fiction these days, but I did read Naomi Klein's book *No is Not Enough*. She says: 'Let's not be pessimistic. Let's save that for better days.' She's saying it's important to take care of our resourcefulness. It's easy to be despairing. But we need to just get back to being match fit. It's not always easy. If we don't, we're in trouble.

ABOUT THE CONTRIBUTORS



ABOODI SHABI

Working as a coach since 1997, Aboodi's coaching style is profoundly influenced by his personal history and by his educational background in philosophy. Born in London of Iraqi Jewish and Lebanese Christian parents, he has a sensitive antenna for different perspectives and cultures, and a deep curiosity about people and what makes them tick. Aboodi brings this 'outsider's' viewpoint to his coaching and leadership development work, challenging the status quo to bring new perspectives and transformational thinking to his clients.



KERRY WOODCOCK, PhD, CPCC, ORSCC, PCC

Kerry leads change for a world of change. Weaving together innovations from the world of change leadership and systems coaching, Kerry supports and challenges leaders, organisations and social systems to amplify the power of relationship – for it is powerful relationships that create meaningful change. As a change leadership coach and systems-inspired leadership trainer, she brings a natural lightness and rigour to developing the capacity of leaders and teams to develop both a change culture and coaching culture.



NEIL SCOTTON, PCC

Neil spends his working time mainly with The One Leadership Project, supporting organisations, teams, leaders, communities and coaches taking on the challenge of real, positive, systemic change. Then he grows veggies, plays guitar, does tai chi, hugs his family and gets a healthy slice of humble pie working with a charity: A Band of Brothers. He's a past president of UK ICF. *The Little Book of Making Big Change Happen*, co-written with Dr Alister Scott, is currently inspiring catalysts.



CLIVE STEEPER

Clive is an award-winning coach, coaching supervisor and business leader with a reputation for helping people improve their performance. Having successfully led international businesses, worked in sport at an elite level, and been an executive coach for over eighteen years, Clive has a wealth of experience and skills to help leaders. He has been contributing in different ways to the AC for over ten years, is currently a coaching supervisor on the AC Group Supervision calls and a regular contributor to *Coaching Perspectives*.



COACHING FOR ETHICAL LEADERSHIP: A HELPING HAND FROM EXISTENTIAL PHILOSOPHY

Dr Geoff Abbott explores the spiritual world of 'Why?' central to ethical coaching, through the work of existential philosopher Alistair Ping.

Most established organisations have policies and training related to corporate ethics. Recent history would suggest, however, that the impact on behaviour of this combination might be limited. For one notable example, at the time of the national team's infamous ball-sandpapering incident, Australian Cricket had a Head of Integrity and an array of approaches to promote ethical behaviour. A recent guest on Queensland University of Technology's (QUT) 'On the Edge' Leadership Coaching series was Dr Alistair Ping, who drew on existential philosophy to provide guidance for executive coaches who are working in murky ethical waters. Ping has a career spanning the financial markets, education, consulting and farming. His work included high-adrenaline trading on the volatile Japanese markets around the time of the financial crash. He was recently awarded the prestigious Colin Brain Governance Fellowship at QUT following his PhD dissertation on ethics and corporate social responsibility. His focus is on why good people do bad things.

Ping's observations and experience indicate that both at the graduate education level and also in leadership development in organisations, teaching ethics doesn't necessarily lead to ethical behaviour. He has used existential philosophy,

particularly the work of philosopher Martin Heidegger, to develop an ethical framework. Heidegger was deeply suspicious of rational thought, proposing instead that 'The most thought-provoking thing in our thought-provoking time is that we are still not thinking.' Heidegger encouraged deep reflection, suggesting that 'To dwell is to garden.'

Ping related the story of the scorpion and the frog. Both were seeking to cross a river. The scorpion asked for a ride. The frog agreed on the understanding that the scorpion did not sting him, noting that both would die if the scorpion broke his word. Half way across the river, the scorpion stung him. The shocked and dying frog asked why, to which the scorpion responded, 'It's in my nature.' Ping's work provides a scaffolding for us to question our assumptions, and to consider how the past shapes our identity and influences our present behaviour in ways that limit our future. His model then provides an action-focused approach to constructing a meaningful future.

Ping describes how, from our earliest experiences, we learn how the world works, including judgements of what is right and wrong. We work out who we are and develop our unique 'winning strategy', which becomes a largely fixed view of

the world. This serves us well – provided the environment we inhabit is relatively unchanging. We improve over time and all is well, and we may even reach expertise in our chosen fields. However, the trap is that in this VUCA world (of volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity), our environment is constantly changing. We need new thinking if we are to thrive. Ping draws on research carried out by social psychologist Timothy D. Wilson at the University of Virginia that suggests we only spend about 5-10% of our time planning for the future with fresh thinking. The other 90-95% of the time is consumed by different versions of the same thinking drawn from our fixed view of the world.

Ping highlighted the existential angst between who we are and who we want to be. For all of us, the future is risky while the past is evidence-based and rational – and essentially safe. To realign our emphasis towards constructing our futures we need to be *intentional* and determined. For this, Ping turns to an evidence-based and practical approach developed by organisational expert Richard Boyatzis at Case Western University in the USA – *Intentional Change Theory*. This theory is the bedrock of QUT's approach to change at the individual, group and organisational levels and is embedded in our coaching work and leadership development programmes. It is a strength-based approach, supported by a variety of empirical studies. The essence is to determine three elements:

- **Vision:** What am I trying to create?
- **Mission:** How am I going to create it?
- **Values:** What will guide me?

We need to be very sure of the 'why' of our intention to change. We also need the support of those around us. Ping reminds us that simply having conversations about the intention to change will change nothing. It is action that matters. We also need to turn time around. This means that, from the existential viewpoint, our future becomes the present, which then becomes the past. This is counter to traditional Western thinking that starts with the past. Ping posits that we must shift the balance of our thought so that approximately a third is devoted to shaping actions that create our futures. He calls this existential alignment, and it's achieved by rigorous action learning across our physical, emotional, mental and material worlds. The spiritual world of 'why?' is central to the approach.

From here we go to the basics of creating a meaningful life shaped around a statement of being that captures emotion. We constantly ask, 'What would we need to habitually do to be like that?' We construct daily practices that set and follow intentions of how we want to be. Each day, we set an intention. During the day, we monitor internal dialogue. At the end of each day, we ask, 'What did I do right today?' and 'What am I grateful for?' Then, whilst we are asleep, dreaming provides our 'synaptic pruning' to establish our base for a fresh tomorrow.

This may sound formulaic, but it is done in a spirit of experiment and play. We tease the world by often asking, 'I

wonder what would happen if...?' We hold the belief that we are not as smart as we think we are, and know that fixed thinking is the enemy of change.

Philosophy informs and inspires us and points us towards ethical positions in life. However, it's up to individuals themselves to set in place actions that shape exciting and positive futures, and collaboratively add to the moral and ethical fibre of teams, organisations and societies. Our focus needs to shift to the nature of *what is coming*; not remain fixed unconsciously in what has been. By anchoring what we do in values and meaning, perhaps we will end up doing the right thing more often than the wrong!

Coaches are well positioned to generate conversations that can take advantage of knowledge from existentialism. They can add impact with related and practical models such as Intentional Change Theory that are grounded in research from the social sciences and neuroscience. A deep coaching conversation that explores intention, values and meaning and results in actions that change behaviour might be of more value than a corporate ethics session. Or perhaps organisations could align and embed ethics training and coaching as part of leadership development to leverage the best of both worlds?



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Geoffrey Abbott is an educator, author and leadership coach. Geoff is currently Director of Executive Coaching in the QUT Graduate School of Business in Brisbane, Australia, where he designs, delivers and manages leadership coaching programs. Geoff has extensive coaching experience, including as CEM Field Mentor for Ford Motor Company in Australia and New Zealand. Geoff's executive experience is with the Special Broadcasting Service Australia where he managed corporate planning.

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TWO COACHES, FIVE LEARNING JOURNEYS, ONE MODEL

A chance encounter at a networking event led coaches [Alison Rendle](#) and [Sandra Norval](#) on a co-coaching journey that proved transformative through the richness of their shared reflective practice.

STARTING OUT

You never know what to expect when you are out networking! Our journey together started when we met at an event for new business owners. We quickly realised we shared similar values and decided we'd like to find ways to collaborate. A couple of conversations over coffee later, we decided to start by committing to a series of collaborative coaching sessions.

We both had coaching models and skills we wanted to test out and develop, and we knew from the rapport that had emerged that we could create a safe and supportive learning environment underpinned by feedback and joint reflection. Alison was looking for an opportunity to apply her new skills in Clean Coaching and neuro-linguistic programming (NLP), and feedback to support her learning. Sandra wanted to test her own values-driven coaching model, the 'Four Elements' (Values, Strengths, Courage and Action). She was keen to work with a coachee from an unfamiliar sector to explore the model's depth and breadth.

Neither of us realised at the outset how important this coaching relationship would become for us as relatively

new business owners, but it became clearer as we started to enjoy the role of coachee and to draw support and learning from the coaching relationship. This proved to be invaluable as both of us encountered some rocky roads during the ten months we worked together.

THE FIRST OF FIVE JOURNEYS

As we started working together, we gradually came to realise that we were on several journeys, developing in parallel, interweaving and influencing each other, and enriching our experience as coaches and as coachees.

The first two journeys were those we went on individually as coaches, exploring the territory of our respective coaching models. At the outset, we contracted to give each other feedback and to make some time at the end of the process to reflect together. Devoting time to do this properly has deepened our learning.

Alison as coach: 'The journey as Sandra's coach started towards the end of an intense period of learning as I was

completing training in Clean Coaching and accreditation as an NLP practitioner. I wanted to hone my skills and develop my own voice using these techniques and approaches. Working with Sandra over ten months provided an ideal opportunity to try things out in a safe space and to receive thoughtful and developmental feedback which helped me to learn and grow in my skills.'

Sandra as coach: 'I'd recently completed my Diploma in Executive Coaching and had developed my own Four Elements coaching model. It was designed for sustainability professionals but I was realising that it works for a much wider audience; testing it in an open, critical process was immensely worthwhile. Alison's experience and background provided a rich and intense focus to explore what did and didn't work!'

THE THIRD AND FOURTH JOURNEYS

As coachees and business owners, we both experienced significant personal and professional challenges along the way, which could have derailed us. To find our way through these obstacles we drew on the coaching processes we'd learned. These enabled us to access our resources and resilience and this proved to be a powerful transition to the possible futures for us.

Alison as coachee: 'This was a profound process for me, through which Sandra helped me explore and challenge some deep-seated attitudes and assumptions which were getting in my way. As the year went on, I was increasingly thinking of myself as a business owner, and taking a very different view of how I needed to package, market and price my services. My business, my mindset and my outlook are totally transformed from where they were a year ago and the results are showing.'

Sandra as coachee: 'I set out thinking I was going to focus on building my business, but as the year played out I experienced a very difficult period in both my personal and business lives. Personal resilience and tenacity, along with the determination to complete my book about the Four Elements model, emerged as consistent threads. I was at a stage where I was holding myself back, but we worked with the metaphor of water in all its guises to describe my progress and the outcome was transformational. I entered an intense period of high productivity and self-belief, emerging ready to grow my business and my professional standing, with several landmark goals achieved in quick succession. I really hadn't expected that!'

THE FIFTH JOURNEY – THE COLLABORATIVE PROCESS

This fifth journey only became apparent to us when we had finished the coaching process and spent time together reflecting on what we had experienced and learnt. We

explored our collaborative journey of reflection and the way that the other journeys have enriched each other.

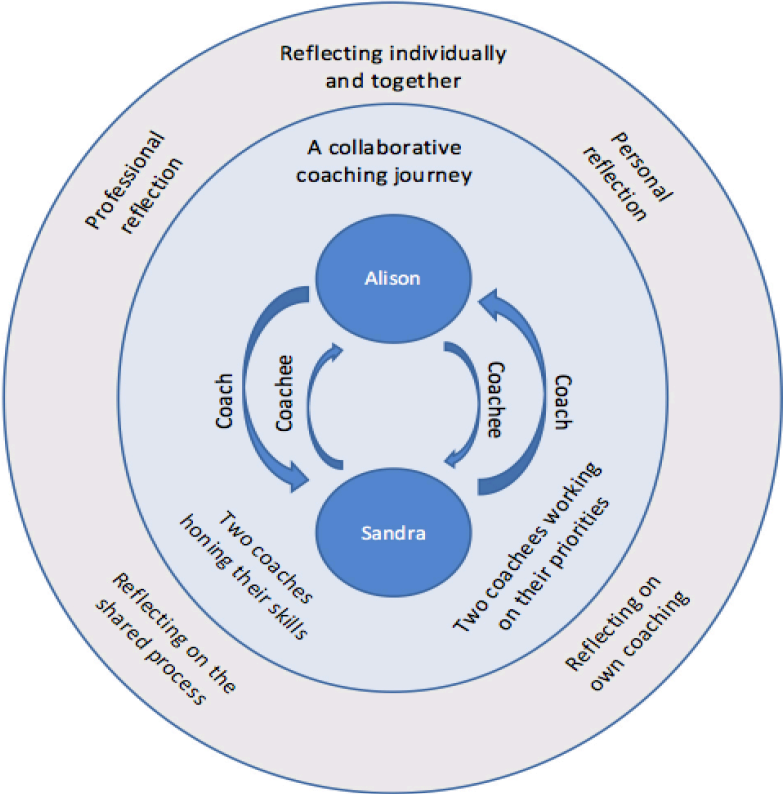
In retrospect, we realised that we had done something quite ambitious, negotiating multiple roles and boundaries throughout the process. By staying true to the contract we made at the outset, we were able to switch between the roles of coach and coachee and keep these separate from our friendship, which also grew through these months. It's been an important part of the learning to recognise how – subconsciously – we became skilful at maintaining the boundaries whilst still noticing key points.

THE CO-REFLECTIVE MODEL

As we moved into the reflection phase of the process, we drew together the strands of our work into a collaborative coaching model. The four journeys of coach and coachee sit at the centre of the model. Wrapped round these is a collaborative learning journey where each participant learns from the other in both coach and coachee modes. The final element is the reflective lens through which all of these journeys are considered, and where the learning is drawn out and embedded. There are several elements we've identified which we believe have made this model powerful for us. We also recognise that each pair working in this way would be different; in fact, this is an essential element, as it is the rapport between the two participants that unlocks a deeper level of engagement, providing the opportunity for development. Here are the important elements of the model:

1. Choose the right person to work with – an essential prerequisite.
2. Commit the time – it takes longer than simply coaching or being coached.
3. Commit yourselves emotionally: both participants need to be seeking change, even if they aren't sure what that change might be.
4. Contract carefully: how to manage the switch between coach and coachee modes; plan for reflection and feedback; preserve clear boundaries throughout.
5. Consider the roles and talk through how to manage the boundaries between these at the outset.
6. Set expectations: this includes expectations for the individual coaching processes but also for the collaborative aspect and the reflective element.
7. Recognise that this approach is a long-term commitment to yourself and your collaborative partner. Expectations are created that must be met.
8. Recognise that maybe this is not for everyone. It requires deep personal reflection and sometimes we just aren't in the headspace to gain the benefit.

We believe this model is much more powerful than the sum of its parts and we are now considering our next steps to explore how transferable it could be to other contexts and other relationships. We welcome any thoughts and comments, especially from anyone who has taken a similar approach!



ABOUT ALISON RENDLE

Alison is an accredited executive coach and NLP practitioner. She is currently completing the ILM accredited Clean Coaching for Leadership training with the Clean Coaching Centre. Having worked at a senior level in education and the public sector, she now coaches leaders and future leaders in these sectors as well as the owners of small and micro businesses. She enjoys helping her clients to recognise and develop their leadership potential and align organisational priorities with their own values.

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ABOUT SANDRA NORVAL

Sandra completed her Practitioner Diploma of Executive Coaching with the Academy of Executive Coaching, during which she developed her model, The Four Elements, originally intended to support sustainability professionals in delivering change and developing their leadership. She now embeds her coaching into her two businesses, Catalicity, which enables businesses to develop sustainability strategies, and Bluedotaug, which visualises sustainability data in virtual and augmented reality environments. She is currently editing her book, card set and journal before publishing.

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THE THREE-LEGGED STOOL OF REFLECTION

New Zealand coach and facilitator **Yvonne McLean** offers a simple three-pronged approach to reflection that leads to new insights – especially for women stuck in beliefs that hold them back from career progression.

Anna was in her mid-forties, juggling career and family commitments. She knew that the next step in her career would have to be a big one, probably into general management, quite possibly in an area of the business in which she didn't have expertise. Highly capable, well regarded by her colleagues and bosses, she had received consistently good performance feedback. Yet she still didn't trust herself to speak up in meetings unless she knew that she could speak with authority. Despite her mentor's encouragement she did not want to put herself forward for her company's general manager role when it became vacant.

This is a common story in both 1:1 coaching and leadership programmes that I run for senior women. Most of the participants have been hand-picked as 'talent' within their organisations. Yet, for many, progression to higher levels of leadership within their organisations seems unattainable.

What stops them? Is it the much-vaunted glass ceiling that must be shattered? Or could it also be a case of a sticky floor – that they may also be holding themselves back?

Many women admit to experiencing 'imposter syndrome': the belief that they have succeeded in their careers by luck or fluke and that they may be uncovered at any time as a fraud. Rather than acknowledge their skills and achievements, these women convince themselves that they are insufficiently qualified for bigger roles and that, if they apply, their little secret will come out – that they aren't good enough to progress any further.

Many women also admit to being their own harshest critic. By examining the voice of their inner critic, however, and seeing it for what it is – namely, an inner voice with messages that are intended to protect them from harm, based on a previous experience that is now outdated and irrelevant – they can shake off some of the shackles that hold them back.

Preparing these women for more senior roles requires exploring their values and challenging their beliefs, many of which are rooted in habits and attitudes formed in childhood or earlier in their careers.

They may have got used to praise and recognition by parents, teachers and peers for their achievements when they were young, and they haven't adapted to the world of work. Typically, women make the mistake of not letting people know about the good work they have done, instead expecting their leaders to 'notice'.

They may have grown up with the belief that girls have to be likeable – with the subtext of modesty and humility being paramount. They view singing your own praises as boastful and deplorable, while office politics (described as 'greasing up to the bosses' – for example, engaging in social interactions, or going out for drinks – and 'self-promotion') are considered highly distasteful. And they fume when they see colleagues talking about their achievements with their leaders and connecting with them socially.

Reflection on limiting beliefs and deeply held values, either alone or with others, will help identify the roadblocks that women put in their own way and the formulation of new strategies to deal with a situation. However, reflection can take time.

In the premiere episode of the recent Netflix series of interviews by US television anchor David Letterman, My Next Guest, earlier this year, former US President Barack Obama warned of the danger of accessing only one or two similar news sources. He suggested that many people operate in an 'echo chamber', only talking to like-minded people, reading publications and watching TV stations that reflect their own opinions and views.

His point was about the value of gaining a broader perspective by deliberately seeking out sources of information that clash with your viewpoint, because the value of understanding what other people are thinking helps form integrated views and strategies based on what has been learned.

Just as two rocks striking against each other create a spark to light a fire, we benefit significantly from consulting people who will challenge our thinking, present us with alternative points of view, rethink approaches to address a situation and not collude with our usual patterns of behaviour and thought. A three-pronged approach to this type of reflection is particularly powerful. And it will ensure that a person isn't trapped in their own echo chamber.

THE THREE POINTS

First, the solo activity of journaling allows us to open up to our emotions and surface patterns of thinking and behaviour that may not have been so clear to us beforehand. However, on its own this may not facilitate sufficiently fresh insights to spark change.

Second, coaching provides a safe environment to explore further the insights and ideas that have emerged through journaling. And, unlike being in an echo chamber, working with an independent coach will provide the space to reflect, to challenge thinking, and to create new ways of seeing a situation. It is without a doubt a powerful forum for self-reflection.

Third, groupwork. One of the richest outcomes of the women's leadership programmes I run is the provision of a safe forum for participants to open up to each other and explore other ways of thinking. Talking through their situations with peers, some of whom may be experiencing or have experienced something similar, and encountering diverse thinking, they often see new ways to address their issues. For example, during a recent discussion about personal responsibility and the payoffs that prevent people from taking responsibility, two participants had 'aha' moments as they realised what was holding them back, in two very different situations – one woman in a scenario at home, and the other at work. Issues that had held them stuck in cycles of frustration for years suddenly became clear and avertable. Both observed that by talking through the theoretical concept as a group and applying insights from the conversation to their own situations, with others asking questions to challenge their thinking, the penny dropped: they saw how their own behaviour was effectively in collusion with the behaviour they were complaining about.

The biggest learning from my work with women has been discovering the immense value of peer mentoring, alongside coaching and journaling. Women open up and are far more willing to be honest and vulnerable in these women-only forums. They tend to let their guard down and talk openly about their experiences, their hopes and their fears – something that they are reluctant to do with male colleagues present. Through conversation with others they can uncover novel ways of addressing their situations.

My biggest learning has been the value of this three-pronged approach in comparison to purely focussing on coaching alone. This doesn't diminish the value of coaching. Rather, it broadens a coachee's horizons and can spark some truly creative thinking.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Yvonne McLean is the principal of Strategic Direction Consulting Limited. She is a leadership development consultant, facilitator and executive coach, based in Auckland, New Zealand. She is an ICF Professional Certified Credentialed Coach and a Forton Group accredited professional leadership coach. An area of special interest is women in leadership – she has developed targeted leadership programmes for women and coaches a number of female leaders. She is also the NZ Chapter Chair for The Women Presidents' Organization, a US-based organisation that supports female entrepreneurs.



DR DEC'S TEAM COACHING CONUNDRUMS

This is the first of an occasional series focusing on team coaching, and a new feature to *Coaching Perspectives*. [Dr Declan Woods](#) explores commonly encountered dilemmas that coaches face when working with teams. He looks at relevant theories and models and considers how these might be used to approach the challenge. We hope that Dr Dec's questions at the end of his column will stimulate reader reflection and responses, which we will publish in subsequent editions.

SCENARIO

You receive a call from the sales director of a well-known organisation asking you to coach her sales team. During a brief telephone conversation, she explains to you that she is finding it difficult to get everyone aligned and working together; she sees team coaching as the solution. She has had a positive experience of being coached personally and is eager to get started and things 'sorted out'. You accept the invitation and arrange to meet the leader and team together to start the coaching.

During this first on-site meeting you:

- Meet a team of 23 people
- Discover that, in a desire to be inclusive, the sales director has invited different people to join her sales team events and meetings at different times. Some members are

present for the first time at this meeting

- Find the team is highly enthusiastic about the idea of coaching, having recently engaged in some company-wide team building
- Discover the team members sell very different, unrelated products and services, and have individual goals and targets
- Corroborate the sales director's opinion that the team does not work together closely
- Identify that the sales director is popular with everyone in the team and does not wish to jeopardise this by confronting members with her frustrations

Experiencing some doubts and anxieties, you are unsure whether team coaching really is the 'solution'. What do you do next?



SENSE-MAKING

This is an all too common occurrence within teams and for team coaches. Rather than start with the question of whether team coaching is a suitable solution and how to intervene, perhaps the question for the team coach to ask first is, 'Is this a team?'

Definitions of teams abound. An oft-quoted one is by Katzenbach and Smith: '... a small number of people with complementary skills who are committed to a common purpose, set of performance goals, and approach for which they hold themselves mutually accountable.' Why is this significant here?

A team of 23 is very large, and it is perhaps unsurprising that the sales director is finding alignment tricky. Size does matter here. Such large teams can find it difficult to work together constructively, particularly where the composition of the team is changing, as is the case here. This inconsistency has caused confusion about who is part of the team. Wageman *et al*² remind us that stability of membership is an important ingredient of an effective team. Given these factors, it is also likely that team norms have not yet been established or are not operating across the whole team, either of which will hamper effective 'teaming'.

As humans, we have a fundamental need to be close to others – to belong.³ We form into groups for safety. Where we can, we choose people or groups we associate with based on a perceived shared identity. This is under threat here because the boundary, created by the membership of the team, is unclear and permeable. Determining this is a key leadership task and the sales director will need to decide this. Doing so will help improve team cohesion.

The salespeople have individual goals and targets. While this is normal practice, we are not clear on what unites members

other than being part of a notional team. In other words, are they inter-dependent? Do team members need to rely on one another to carry out their role? It does not appear so. We also know they sell different products and services, again suggesting a lack of the inter-dependence that Katzenbach and Smith considered an important ingredient.

From all this, we might conclude that this is a group rather than an intact team. If so, it is likely the sales director's aspirations for the team coaching will need modifying and the coach will need to take a different approach.

INSIGHTS INTO ACTION

The opening question of 'Is this a team?' is a simple, but not simplistic, intervention. The answer has important implications for the team and any subsequent team coaching. The team is too large, members possess individual measures of success and they do not need to rely on each other. These are design issues that would be best addressed before any team coaching starts. This could be achieved through:

- **Team membership:** starting with a clear decision by the sales director about the membership and composition of the team. Who is part of this team and who is not? This will need to be communicated clearly. Doing so will reinforce the boundary of the team and likely strengthen team member identity and team cohesion.
- **Team purpose:** determining the team's common purpose. What unites them? Why should members work together and what will be gained by doing so? Is there a collective team goal as well as discrete targets? While this might form part of a team coaching agenda, deciding that there is a common endeavour would be a valuable start.

- **Team design:** clarifying team member roles. Who will do what? How do team roles fit together? This might necessitate some organisational design work. Team coaching could then follow to help the team develop new ways of working together.

Roger Harrison⁴ developed his 'Waterline model' to help practitioners decide the depth at which to intervene. He considered *Structure* (roles) and *Dynamics* (ways of working) to operate beneath the water's surface with interpersonal and individual elements functioning at an even deeper level. He explained the latter could be related to structure and dynamics rather than residing purely with the individual(s). Relating this to our sales team, this model suggests that if the team can clarify its purpose, design and roles, then individual behaviour and working together could improve.

It is encouraging that the team is enthusiastic about the coaching as this may create energy for change. Peters and Carr⁵ call this 'Individual engagement' and stress its importance. The coach may want to check the team's understanding of team coaching, however, as their positivity is based on some recent teambuilding – which is very different from team coaching (We will explore these differences in the next column). Part of the role of a team coach can be to educate the client. Here, advising them of the differences will help to set and manage expectations from the outset and avoid confusion later.

This column has considered the fundamental question of 'What is a team?' Academic definitions are less important. What is important as a team coach is that you have your own definition of 'team' in order that you can articulate this to teams you are working with. Answering the following questions will help you:

- What is a team? What makes an effective team?
- What is a group? What makes an effective group?
- What informs your definitions?
- Why are these differences important?
- What are the implications for your practice as a team coach?

REFLECTION TIME

Next edition's column will look at what is meant by 'team coaching', the demand for it and the skills needed to coach teams effectively. Reflect on the following questions:

- What is team, and group, coaching?
- How are team and group coaching different from team building and facilitation?
- What skills and competencies are needed to coach teams? How well equipped are you to coach teams?

Let us know your answers and thoughts by emailing Hetty Einzig at editor@associationforcoaching.com or myself using the contact details in the bio.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Declan coaches CEOs, c-suite executives and leadership teams. He is CEO of ZPD – a board level consulting company. Declan is a Chartered/Registered Psychologist and the first AC accredited Master Executive Coach. He holds two master's degrees in psychology and an Executive MBA. His doctoral research was on team functioning. He was the AC's inaugural Global Head of Standards and Accreditation and honoured as an AC Fellow. Declan is the creator of Middle Circle® for Teams.

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THE KEEPER OF SECRETS

What happens when we are faced with something that does not sit comfortably with our own values? Here coaching supervisor [Anne Calleja](#) outlines a supervision dialogue in which two colleagues share their vulnerabilities and challenge prejudices in order to deliver an ethical outcome for the client.

THE BACKGROUND

An external organisational development (OD) consultant, trainer and coach working with an organisation is presented with a dilemma in which they felt 'in the middle' of several key stakeholders. The coach had agreed a coaching contract with HR for six months, with potential to extend. Boundaries and confidentiality were a clear part of the contracting process.

During a chance encounter with the managing director in the corridor, they informed the coach that her coachee was to be given two weeks' notice to leave. The casual and unplanned way in which this information was delivered left the coach feeling very uncomfortable. The coach was scheduled to meet with the coachee in two days' time. She contacted her supervisor for support.

Supervisor: I noticed the tension in my supervisee as she arrived. This was unusual. As she spoke about her

dilemma, I began to notice my own feelings of tension and responsibility, and how my personal values were coming into our work. How could a coach be expected to be the holder of such a secret and be authentic with their client?! I felt my supervisee was being put in an unbearable position, caught between loyalty to the organisation and duty of care towards her coachee – and with little time to work it out before their next meeting.

I suggested we explore what was important, firstly in managing the coachee relationship and then subsequently with HR and the MD, as well as thinking about her wider involvement with the organisation as consultant and trainer.

This led to generating options: seek clarification from HR on the reasons the MD had shared confidential information; manage to keep the 'secret' and remain impartial within the coaching session, and explore any conflict with her OD

consultancy role, which was to enable leaders to lead and demonstrate company values consistently. We explored her assumptions about the coaching contract and the behaviours of the leadership team in the organisation.

After reflection we looked at how she could apply the learning from this situation to future contracting, being more explicit in flagging possible conflicts of interests and how these might be worked with should they occur.

Supervisee: I felt very tense and needed help to decide whether to have a meeting or not with my client. I was surprised at how much the situation had surfaced my sense of right and wrong in how I treat people. Through exploration I recognised my strong loyalty and desire to do the 'right thing' for both the organisation and my coachee. I felt the MD 'should know better', and should have recognised he was breaching boundaries of role, confidentiality and respect for the individual.

However, supervision, using Hawkins and Shohet's *7-eyed model*^{*}, helped me unpick the different perspectives or 'eyes' of self, others, the system and the organisation. I was able to think about this from different angles: perhaps the MD saw me as a trusted partner and thought it would be helpful for me to know, or perhaps it was a moment's irritation after a stressful meeting with the individual concerned!

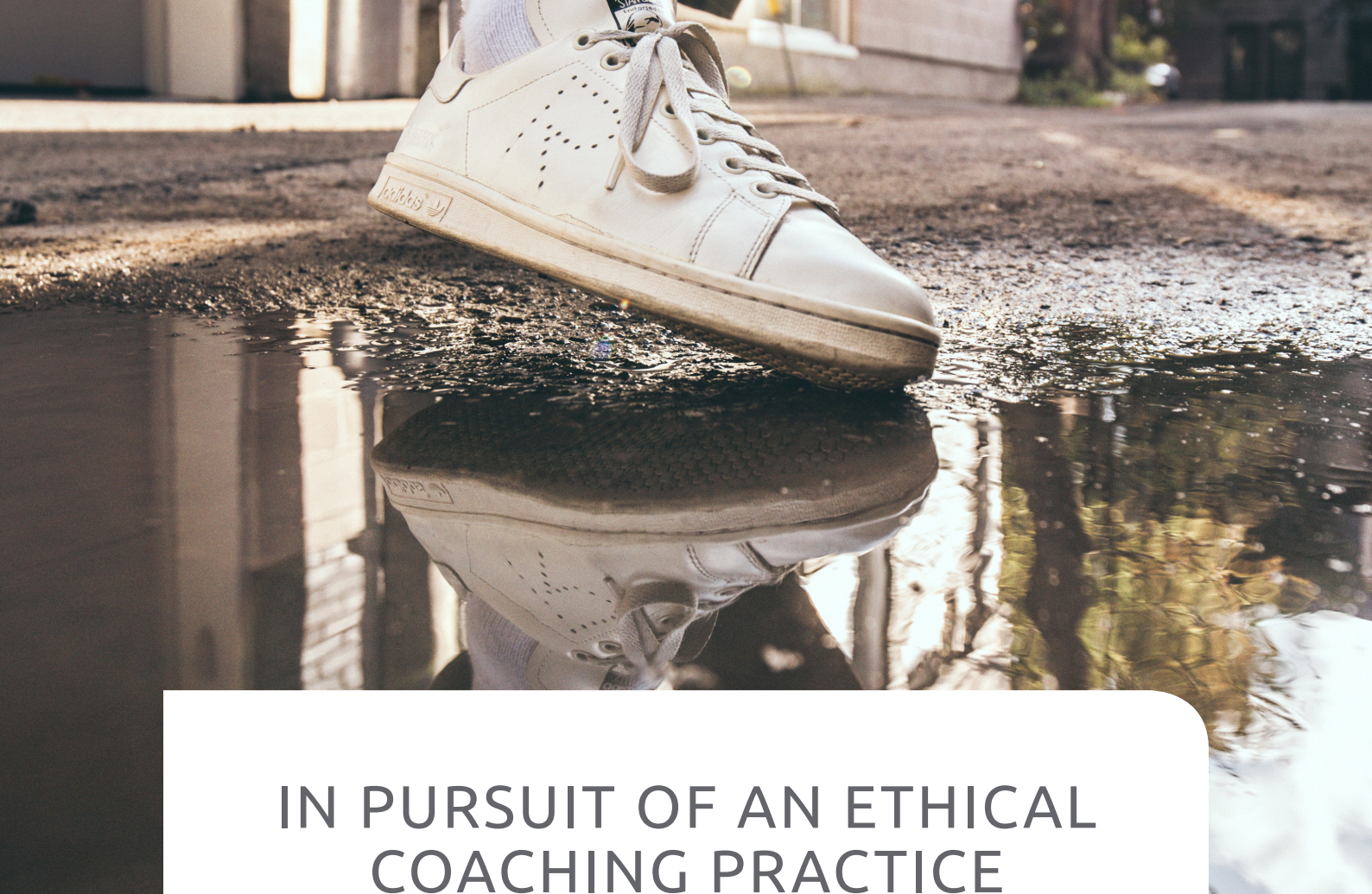
Exploring my own values, assumptions and expectations of others helped me to articulate what is important for me in my decision-making and to remain congruent with how I behave in practice. I am reminded that there are many factors which influence confidence and decision-making; there is no 'right or wrong', nor easy answers, and the outcome mainly derives from the quality of discussion to create a shared understanding of the issue presented in supervision. I then felt more equipped to handle myself both with the client and within the organisation.

ABOUT THE AC GROUP SUPERVISION CALLS

Anne Calleja is an accredited coaching supervisor and volunteer. The Association for Coaching provides a Group Supervision Experience on the third Thursday of every month. The calls are held via video link or low-cost teleconference line and are facilitated by experienced AC coaches and coaching supervisors, who donate an hour of their time to support fellow AC members. The calls last up to one hour with a maximum of five participants. AC Group Supervision Experience calls are designed to offer members a taste of what supervision is like and what can be gained from participating in it. The calls are available for AC members regardless of location across the world. For more information, visit

www.associationforcoaching.com/page/EventsGroupSupervi

* The model for supervision in the helping professions developed in the 1980s by Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet. See also the article by Felicity Hodkinson & Victoria Smith-Murphy in *Coaching Perspectives* Issue 15, October 2017.



IN PURSUIT OF AN ETHICAL COACHING PRACTICE

Working as a mediator in France, [Allison Grant](#) recently qualified as a coach, prompting her to reflect at length on what it might mean to be an ‘ethical coach’.

An ethical coaching practice requires a commitment to understand our values in action, to challenge our beliefs, and to make sense of our relationships and the world around us. In addition, an ethical coach learns from mistakes and grows in the process. Building an ethical coaching practice may sound grandiose, but in reality it is about being ‘conscious’ rather than ‘idealistic’. It’s about increasing our awareness of our own values in order to understand those of our clients better. So, what does this mean in practical terms?

The reason for my ruminations on the subject is my sense that ethics receive little attention on coaching training courses. It’s easy to understand why: this apparently dry subject holds limited appeal for the eager ‘coach-in-training’ looking to expand their toolkit with new coaching techniques. I am convinced, however, that the study of values and ethics is perhaps the most important subject in executive coaching today – partly because coaching is a relatively young ‘helping’ profession, and also because it is largely unregulated. There are all manner of coaches, trained and untrained, and a great deal of confusion in the market

place about the meaning of coaching. Most importantly, we create a privileged relationship with our clients, which is a big responsibility: they share confidences and often make themselves vulnerable with us. It seems to me that increasing the conversations around values and ethics is key if we want to inspire respect, trust and professionalism in executive coaching and, critically, if we want to keep our clients safe. I believe we start with ourselves: if we are committed to continuous examination of our own values, we grow in the self-awareness and maturity that are the foundations for an ethical coaching practice.

So where do we start? A useful place might be the requirement for the coach both to abide by their professional association’s code of conduct, and also to make this known to potential clients.

While acceptance of professional guidelines may help to set the scene for an ethical practice, I’m concerned that, by relieving us of the need to reflect critically on our own beliefs, assumptions and actions, this may make us lazy. We grow by ‘doing’ and through deep reflection around our

own responses to ethical choices. So, how do I build up an ethical coaching identity through personal reflection? What processes do I need to put in place to develop my ethical maturity as a coach? And, since ethics can be seen as values in practice, where do my own values come in? I'm aware that it's easy to state my values, yet difficult to move beyond words. The real test is when I face conflicting ethical choices, and such experiences take time to accumulate.

My own starting point is consideration of how I turn up to a coaching session: I know myself and I have a tendency to plan my time badly, but it won't do to turn up to my coaching session and apologise for being late, or even to cut it fine with a minute to spare. So part of my being an ethical coach means I arrive 5 or 10 minutes early and allow myself time to settle. To do this I practise mindfulness techniques, which also feed into other aspects of the coaching session.

In an article in *The Coaching Psychologist*, Jonathan Passmore and Oberdan Marianetti conclude that a coach's practice could be enhanced through training in mindfulness in a number of distinct ways: preparing more effectively for the coaching sessions; bringing one's attention more fully to the needs of the client and to the session that is about to take place; remaining focussed during the session; maintaining watchfulness over one's own mind and bringing the wandering mind back to the client when we notice our focus starting to drift; and remaining emotionally detached while still empathising with the client.¹ There is an additional benefit to mindfulness, too: it also helps me with self-reflection.

Mindfulness requires an acute focus upon what is happening 'in the moment', and this is reflected in another technique I use for increasing my ethical awareness. This is *narrative reflection*, writing down my thoughts after a coaching session so that I can better understand why I act or feel the way I do. This takes some discipline, but it enables me to leave a record of my thoughts directly after the coaching session. I can re-examine these thoughts at a later date and perhaps gain a different perspective. International coach Philippe Rosinski specifically recommends writing or 'journaling' for the practising coach. This reflective process is purposeful because it makes me think about my values and to examine them in practice, rather than simply recounting events or feelings.

Reflection is looking at scenarios from as many angles as possible in order to better understand them. Through narrative reflection I 'untangle', I make meaning and I learn lessons – and, in the long run, it helps me remember, and I even save time. As organisation and management expert Peter Drucker is famously quoted as saying: 'Follow effective action with quiet reflection. From the quiet reflection will come even more effective action.'

At the opposite end of the 'reflective' scale comes 'reflexivity'. Reflexivity is about 'finding strategies to question our own attitudes, through processes, values, assumptions, prejudices and habitual actions – it is about making oneself strange, standing back from belief and value systems and becoming separate. Reflexivity involves coming as close as

possible to an awareness of the way you are experienced and perceived by others. It is being able to stay with personal uncertainty, critically informed curiosity as to how others perceive things, as well as how I do, and flexibility to consider changing deeply held ways of being.'²

Learning to be reflexive in my thinking is all about challenging myself: questioning, pushing myself further. It is important to reflect by myself, but it is also important to share and dialogue in order to understand values and ethics. Regular supervision helps with this process. Both supervision and self-care are key to building my ethical practice and it takes time to find the right support and develop the relationship. Supervision offers the chance to discuss in-depth issues that arise in coaching and might cause concern or interfere with my ability to be neutral with my client. Supervision is also a space for a learning conversation. It is a protected space for exploration of issues, concerns and critical questions. It is one way, too, of pursuing professional development. For me, this is vital in my coaching practice.

So there it is, in a nutshell: it's all about developing processes to increase self-awareness in order to be more valuable to my client. This is how I am trying to 'be' as an executive coach, to become more ethically aware in a conscious rather than idealistic way, to be disciplined in my practice and to act responsibly with my client. Not always easy in reality, but this is my commitment, for my clients, for myself and for the coaching profession.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Allison Grant is an executive coach (certified HEC, Paris) working with individuals and teams. She has over 25 years of business experience working in complex global organisations and as an entrepreneur in France. Allison works effectively across cultural and geographical boundaries and is passionate about helping her clients become as fulfilled as possible.

Allison is a speaker at HEC Paris (Global Executive Coaching). She offers executive coaching and leadership development for senior management teams, leadership development for women and workplace mediation.

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COACHING FOR IMPACT

This ambitious book promises well but Yvonne McLean found that it confused and it frustrated her as much as it informed and stimulated her thinking.

Coaching for Impact promises to 'equip trainee and beginner coaches with an A-Z of executive coaching' and to 'engage the seasoned practitioner in an uncompromised pursuit of excellence by pushing the boundaries of leadership.'

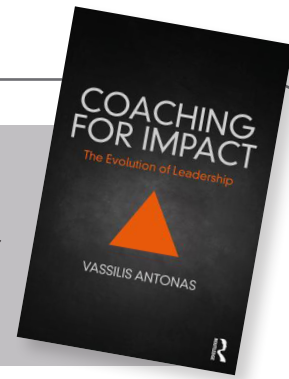
The book recognises the link between leadership and coaching, describing the latter as 'a discipline that enhances performance by generating meaning through the art of relating.' The promises, coupled with acknowledgment of this link, drew my interest and filled me – a seasoned coach – with anticipation.

The book is ambitious. It covers core topics such as coaching methodology, coaching presence and fundamental coaching skills (listening, generating data and giving/receiving data), while also stretching into transformational leadership as well as systems-focused executive coaching, coaching team managers and a new leadership model, designed with a view to evolving leadership.

I found the discussion of fundamental coaching skills interesting. The explanation of psychodynamic concepts for coaching provided helpful background to deepen an understanding of coaching approaches and methodologies that many non-therapist practitioners will be well-versed in. The book also covers the need for coaching supervision to ensure coaches attend to their own development, in addition to exploring how psychological constructs impact the coaching relationship. This is something that has not necessarily been common practice for many coaches, particularly those who do not hail from a therapeutic background like the author, and is a welcome addition to the book.

All that said, and despite various five-star ratings, I got off on the wrong footing with the book due to the author's philosophy about coaching: 'Coaching is not and should not be a profession in itself. It is a frame of mind, a leadership (or management) approach, a philosophy, a supplementary skill for executives, consultants, politicians or anyone who wishes to lead change and evolution...'. This was apparent throughout the book through an underlying commentary based on a philosophy that the coach should be an experienced and expert organisational development consultant, ideally also a qualified psychotherapist, who is there to model, tell and advise and to keep the conversation focussed on a greater agenda than the coachee might bring.

TITLE: *Coaching for Impact: The Evolution of Leadership*
AUTHOR: Vassilis Antonas
PUBLISHER: Routledge
PUBLICATION DATE: 19 Oct 2017
PRICE: £24.99 (Paperback)
£71.94 (Hardback)
ISBN-10: 1138087572
ISBN-13: 978-1138087576



I struggled with this approach. For me, assuming that one is not looking at remedial coaching, coaching can and does provide space – with a skilled, impartial third party – for already successful leaders and managers to reflect on their leadership, their relationships within and beyond their organisations, and their capacity to take their performance and that of others in their organisation to another level.

Overall, I found this slim volume heavy going. Partly because the layout made it difficult to read, and the copious references buried within the text – rather than appearing as footnotes or endnotes – interrupted the flow. The language was frequently technical and jargonistic when it could have been expressed in more plain English, and the tone was often superior and didactic.

In a case study on *Transformational Leadership*, the author reflects on his epistemology: 'the core set of values and beliefs' that are formed at an early age, and how these may have had an impact on the way in which his business was being perceived. There is a certain irony here: what Antonas professes he had wanted to address in a rebranding exercise for his own company has, unfortunately, come shining through in this book – 'introversion and self-righteousness' and a lack of 'empathy and respectfulness towards others'. This is a shame, because within the covers of this book there is much coaches and leaders can learn from.

In summary, I suspect that if I had read this book when considering coaching as a career I would have been put off by the opening chapters. And, if I had persisted, it could have set me up with some delusions about my offering and my own importance within the client/coach relationship. As an experienced coach, there are ideas that I look forward to exploring further.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Yvonne McLean is an accredited professional leadership coach, a trained coaching supervisor and leadership development consultant. She works with senior business leaders and professionals across the globe, particularly in New Zealand and Asia, in various sectors including accountancy and law, banking and finance, insurance, manufacturing, FMCG, government, construction, pharmaceutical, dairy, telecommunications and retail. She regularly runs programmes for women in leadership and on emotional intelligence. She is on the Faculty of the ICF Accredited Coach Training Provider, The Forton Group.

MAPPING MOTIVATION FOR COACHING

Carole Thelwall-Jones learns how mapping can be used to accelerate and deepen coaching to boost motivation.

'Motivation – energy – fuels all that we do,' write James Sale and Bevis Moynan in *Mapping Motivation for Coaching*. Their book shows how motivational maps can be used by coaches to better understand themselves and help their clients.

Access to a quick and simple online self-assessment questionnaire is signposted within this book. Minutes after pressing 'submit', my Motivational Map Profile landed in my inbox. My personalised fifteen-page report presented fresh insights that made me curious to read the book straightaway, and is well worth doing.

Each chapter contains awareness-raising activities – over 60 in total – which are instantly applicable within good coaching practice. They flow in a logical fashion, gradually deepening the reader's understanding of the nine motivators. These are grouped into three clusters: Relationships (*Friend, Star, Defender*), Achievement (*Builder, Director, Expert*) and Growth (*Searcher, Creator, Spirit*). Listed at the end of each chapter, the learning points are highlighted progressively.

The authors explain how to build rapport and personalise coaching questions based on the motivational maps of both the coach and the client. They explore how individuals can align their vision and goals with their motivators. Identifying areas of importance where effort will have the greatest outcome, based on a motivational map, offers a novel way to apply the Pareto Principle (often known as the 80:20 rule, where 80% of the effects come from 20% of the causes), to focus coaching practice to improve performance.

A chapter is dedicated to exploring the links between neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) and motivational maps, correlating the three clusters of motivators described above (Relationships, Achievement and Growth) with different NLP concepts (for those familiar with the field: *Think, Feel, Know* or *Big Picture* and *Detail*) to enrich how a coach may relate to a client in terms of matching use of language preferences. And the 'A.B.C.D.E tool' gives individuals a five-step process to reframe assumptions and change beliefs.

Studying the '22 numbers in a Motivational Map' exposes potential conflicts in motivation both internal

TITLE: *Mapping Motivation for Coaching*

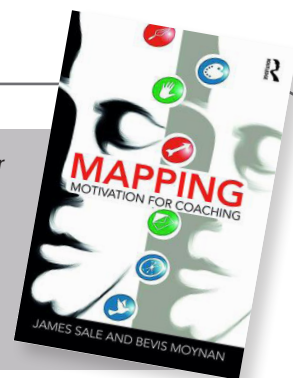
AUTHORS: James Sale and Bevis Moynan

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to the individual and also with other people. The authors use real world examples to illustrate how adapting language to suit others' motivators can reduce conflict and unblock barriers to success.

Connecting motivational profile and satisfaction with highly relevant micro-rewards and 'big' rewards allows individuals to 'feed' their motivators and sustain progress towards goals. Linking motivators to values explores the instances when an individual is moving away from or towards values. Through deeper, pertinent, questioning, the coach can help the client surface limiting beliefs that underpin the value. These can then be reframed into enabling beliefs consistent with the client's motivators.

Understanding that motivators naturally change with time is helpful in career coaching. Many of us experience a career crisis at some point. Exploring our own Motivational Map can highlight the areas where we are least satisfied. Individuals can choose verbs congruent with their motivators to help (re)define their purpose and find a new, more fulfilling direction.

This book offers ideas and practical tools that allow coaches and their clients to explore the real barriers to performance. Whether you are seeking to coach yourself, your clients, or both, this book has the potential to help unlock the energy needed to achieve success.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Carole Thelwall-Jones is an independent training consultant with expertise in volunteer engagement and leadership. For ten years Carole developed and implemented the Rugby Football Union's national volunteer strategy. Carole has been helping individuals, teams and organisations in business, sport and the charity sector for the last five years. She is a member of the board of Get Berkshire Active. Follow her on Twitter @OWL_Ltd

RESPONSIBLE BUSINESS

Alister Scott admires this attempt to address some of the most pressing challenges for modern businesses, but is disappointed by an overreliance on simplistic, one-size-fits-all solutions.

Few can deny that the topic of responsible business is here to stay.

Whether you are an advocate or a sceptic, the modern ethical and ecological pressures facing businesses – from radical openness and social media, consumer awareness, and targeted campaigning – all seem likely to continue to exert intense pressure in the boardroom.

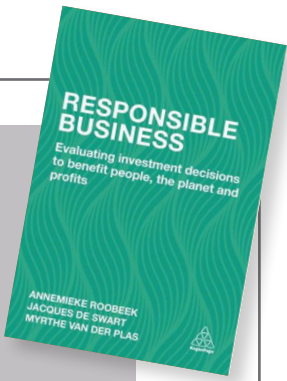
As management expert Jim Collins and colleagues wrote in his influential work *Good to Great*, one of the key traits of organisations that sustain success over many years is that they face the facts, yet so much management and ‘leadership’ behaviour is still so unevolved that the response to these aspects of business, not least among many coaches, is to treat them with a smirk or a patronising tone – until the moment when they become a crisis, that is.

For these reasons, I’m very pleased to see that three people who are clearly multi-capable, well intentioned and experienced have spent a lot of time getting to grips with this timely and important topic in this book. There is much to commend the text, including a useful rehearsal of the forces acting on organisations and their history of the development of corporate social responsibility – albeit that they are heavily reliant on just a few authors, such as Michael Porter. They condone a deliberative style of decision-making that is much needed not just in business but in our democracies too.

Yet I have found it challenging to write this review. The authors have a tendency, from the very first page, to hold up their own Responsible Business Simulator™ [sic] as the answer to everything as it ‘neutralises bias and objectifies the decision-making process’ across the many dimensions of responsible business. Their repeated references to this method, with as many as five mentions to a page, betrays a sense of desperation, and means that even the most tolerant reader will be losing patience.

There are other problems too. The authors claim they use historical data to ‘allow decisions to be based on hard facts’, yet surely it is these facts that hamper our decision-making in a world characterised by

TITLE: *Responsible Business: Making Strategic Decisions to Benefit People, the Planet and Profits*
AUTHOR: Annemieke Roobeek, Jacques de Swart, Myrthe van der Plas
PUBLISHER: Kogan Page
PUBLICATION DATE: 3 June 2018
BOOK PRICE: From £24.99 (Paperback)
EAN: 9780749480608



exponential change? Who could have predicted the internet and its seismic impacts? How can existing players in the energy sector adapt to the coming combined juggernauts of exponential solar batteries and electric vehicles? To my mind, it is precisely expert linear predictions based on past trends that have tripped us up and held us back! Which business leaders would have thought, for example, that single-use plastics would have become such a huge issue so quickly in 2018, with massive implications for many businesses.

No method can make objective our decisions in a VUCA world. The very essence of responsible business is inspiring shared purposes beyond self and beyond profit, but beware any salesperson that tells you that you don’t need to know what the model does before you buy it – as these authors do. Read this book as a primer, but beware the advertware and the pretence at making complex decisions wholly objective!

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr Alister Scott is the co-Founder, with Neil Scotton, of The One Leadership Project and co-author, again with Neil, of *The Little Book of Making Big Change Happen*. The aim of One Leadership is to enable those global teams who are making big change happen. Alister is also Chair of Cuckmere Community Solar, which is trying to build one of the world’s first subsidy-free renewable community power stations, near his home in Sussex, United Kingdom.

THE EMPATHY INSTINCT

Despite some jarring moments, Sally Phillips found this book to be a heartening reminder of the humanity that is a valuable component of coaching and our wider existence.

Question: 'The coach should show empathy – True or False?' read the 2007 questionnaire. Answer: 'False' – obviously! At least to this coach, aiming to work with detached respect, chary of introducing their own agenda or inadvertently downplaying the coachee's own resilience and resources.

But my 2007 response ignored the wider system, the increasing recognition of our VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) world, and the calls for greater involvement of the coach, all of which are becoming the accepted wisdom of our profession.

One of several recent books on the subject, *The Empathy Instinct* explores the place of empathy in our VUCA world. Its author, Peter Bazalgette, is the former head of the production company that brought reality television show *Big Brother* to the UK. Bazalgette's book provides a comprehensive overview in which failures of empathy are laid bare – with examples, horrific and discouraging, from recent history. But the best of empathy is also acknowledged in uplifting examples of individual courage and generosity.

The science is all there: continuing discoveries in neuroscience and genetics are explored, and there's plenty of evidence from social science studies. In addition, the book explores how empathy underpins human society, with chapters dedicated to crime, race and religion, the arts, and health, and empathy as an antidote to technology. Bazalgette reminds us of the need for action to follow empathy, and the book concludes with a charter for empathy. This, however, reads like a wish list, in which pleas for increased empathy in public life and institutions are not matched with recommendations for action.

Coaches won't be surprised that behaviours such as questioning, mirroring and encouraging mindfulness are shown to help develop empathy in others. And they may welcome the distinction between cognitive (understanding of another) and affective (feeling another's state) empathy.

Bazalgette unsettles the reader at the outset. While he describes the potential for empathy as 'our most civilising force,' he reminds us of the view of

TITLE: *The Empathy Instinct: How to create a more civil society*

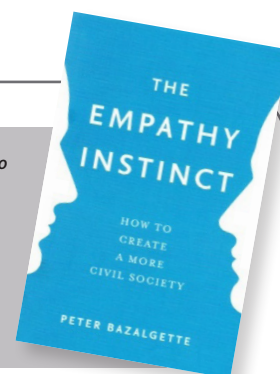
AUTHOR: Peter Bazalgette

PUBLISHER: London, John Murray

PUBLICATION DATE: 2016

PAPERBACK PRICE: £10.99

ISBN: 978-1-473-63753-5



primatologist Frans de Waal: 'We've evolved to hate our enemies.' He tells of his own instinct to view people from different races as outsiders, and in doing so reminds us that to acknowledge our shadow is a powerful antidote to our reverence of perfection and a prerequisite for meaningful progress.

But Bazalgette also reassures. He cites the fascinating 'moral babies' experiment in which one-year-olds display an inherent sense of fairness; credits maternal love and guidance for the success of a respected neuroscientist who has the brain map of a 'full-blown psychopath' and several murderers in his family tree; and demonstrates, counter to prevailing opinion, how people with Asperger's syndrome are indeed capable of empathy.

As would be expected, given Bazalgette's background, the book is clearly written and organised, and evidently well researched. But it reads as a dutiful compilation rather than a heartfelt manifesto: there is little sense of the author's own engagement. Meanwhile, my copy-editing instincts were alerted to the incongruity of some of the language: what are out-of-date expressions such as 'inmates', 'mankind' and 'the disabled' doing in a book with a progressive agenda on empathy?

But, overall, it's a useful and informative book. And for this coach, eleven years on, a heartening reminder of the humanity that is a valuable component both of our professional expertise and our clients' growth.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Sally Phillips has trained at the London Centre for Psychotherapy and School of Coaching, and has practised as a business coach since the early 2000s. She is a member of the Association for Coaching and an accredited Clean Language facilitator. She is Sub-Editor of *Coaching Perspectives*.

‘I wish you hadn’t told me that’ – Ethics and dilemmas in workplace coaching

Donna Ladkin, Professor of Leadership and Ethics at Antioch University, dives deep into the tricky ethical dilemmas we come up against when coaching.

One of the most difficult ethical dilemmas I faced as a coach arose when I was coaching the senior team of an IT company. As a relative newcomer to coaching, I’d agreed to coach each of the six members of the executive team separately, as well as working with them together with the brief of ‘helping to improve their interpersonal relationships’. What I didn’t know was the hidden agenda: as the piece of work unravelled, it became clear that the new CEO wanted to find legal ways of dismissing several members of the team whom she perceived to be her predecessor’s ‘people’. She was afraid that they would stab her in the back, as the history of her relationship with her predecessor was one of power plays and one-upmanship. I was dumbstruck when, after several months of working with her and her team, she told me that she hoped I would help her find a way to dismiss them.

Of course, this was not made explicit at the beginning of the coaching contract! It only became apparent as I focused on ‘performance issues’ for the members of the team she was keen to fire, and she became increasingly frustrated that their performance levels had in fact improved. Our conversation made it crystal clear to me that no matter how hard these people worked, or how good their outcomes were, she still wanted them out. Her history with her predecessor meant that she did not trust them and felt threatened by their presence. It was only then that I realised I was bang in the middle of tricky ethical territory. Certainly, I couldn’t tell those in her sights that this was the case, but was it ethical to continue to coach them around performance when I knew that, no matter what they did, their time was limited?

As a coach in this situation, what was my best course of action? There are steps I could have taken so as not to have arrived there in the first place. I asked myself: is it ethically wise to coach the entire senior team of an organisation? Could I have been more precise earlier on, in my contracting arrangements with the CEO in particular, to glean her motives for hiring me? But that’s often the way ethical situations arise – by stealth. There you are, one moment, thinking you are doing your job, and the next some monster issue emerges. What do you do then?

In this piece, I don’t aim to ‘reveal the right answer’ to such ethical dilemmas. In my view there is seldom an unequivocally ‘right’ answer (and if there is, it is often so self-evident that there is no ‘dilemma’). Instead, what I’m offering is an approach to both recognising and engaging with the ethical situations which are ubiquitous within coaching relationships. What would it be helpful to pay attention to in such situations? What questions would it be helpful to ask? Where can you go to for help if a situation gets sticky? Through reflecting on my own experience complemented by my study of ethics within organisations, I hope to offer some novel ideas about how you as a coach might engage helpfully with this territory.

What do I mean by ethics?

The word ‘ethics’ is not necessarily easily defined. Most of us have our own view of what it is to act ethically, which will be formed by our upbringing, our religious or professional affiliation, or our cultural norms. Commonly, people have a sense

that behaving ethically is about not doing ‘wrong’, or not causing harm to another person. Before thinking about how ethics relates to coaching, it may be helpful to spend a little time considering more broadly the purpose that ‘ethics’ serves.

Each of us has our own needs, aspirations and desires. As a human being living with other humans, it is inevitable that occasions arise in which my needs, aspirations or desires will conflict with your needs, aspirations or desires. For instance, I may desire a rise, but in an organisation in which financial resources are limited, giving me an increase in salary might result in someone else having to take a cut in pay, or go without training, or not be able to hire extra help. In every human community and throughout human history, trade-offs need to be made between competing claims. Ethical understandings have arisen which provide guidance as to how to resolve such conflicts, usually in ways that are considered ‘fair’ or in some way correct by the prevailing culture. Things that are ‘legal’ may not be considered ethical – for instance, it may be legal for corporations to find ways to limit the amount of tax they pay, but recent demonstrations against companies like Amazon which engage in such practices indicate that people will challenge the ethics of such ways of operating.

It is important to note that ethical approaches themselves can result in different answers about the best way of balancing needs between people. For instance, from a *principle-based perspective*, one might refer to a ‘rule’, such as: ‘CEOs may not receive more than ten times the wage of the lowest wage earner in the company.’ From a *utilitarian, or ‘consequentialist’ perspective*, a calculation might be made concerning the outcomes of certain actions and which of these will result in the greatest benefit for the largest number of people. This is often used as a rationale for making people redundant: ‘If we make 100 people redundant, we will be able to keep 800 in jobs.’ Occasionally decisions might be made by referring to a *virtue approach*, in which a decision is based on its ‘correctness’, as judged by those of wise ethical repute. What is interesting is that each of these different approaches can lead to a different action – for instance, from a rule-based perspective, it may be deemed that CEOs’ pay should be capped, but from a utilitarian perspective it may be deemed that paying a CEO at a very high rate creates a symbolic message which could benefit the company overall. Neither approach is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but each one leads to a different outcome. In his book, *After Virtue*, Alistair MacIntyre describes a number of cases in which people can be operating ‘ethically’ but

reach different conclusions about the right thing to do depending on the framework they are assuming (MacIntyre, 1985).

Examples such as these start to demonstrate the challenges of making ethical choices. Given that there is not necessarily a ‘right’ answer, if one wants to act ethically how does one go about doing so? Especially when one is coaching others, how does one assess the relative advantages of one course of action over another? For instance, in the story which began this article, how would one balance the wellbeing of those the CEO wanted to fire against her own feelings of threat caused by having people working for her whom she did not fully trust? Determining what would be the most ethical way forward is not something that can be easily resolved by reference to a rule. Instead, a particular kind of judgement has to come into play – something more akin to ‘wisdom’. Before delving into the implications of this, the next section considers in more depth the ethical dimension of coaching.

How do ethics apply to the coaching arena?

Ethical dilemmas are inherent to the coaching context. As a coach you will be making judgements concerning the information a client is telling you. And at the very extreme edge of the ethical territory you will be making judgements as to whether the information you are being told needs to be passed on to another body (for example, when you receive information about illegalities). As a coach you are probably aware of codes of conduct, which set out basic guidelines for working with clients.¹

A code of conduct provides a helpful starting point for navigating ethical territory, but often falls short of helping you to resolve specific issues which arise within the coaching relationship. For instance, although I was adhering to confidentiality expectations, and not sharing information with the CEO, the mere fact of knowing her position would have coloured the approach I took with those she did not trust. This points to the fact that although contracting with a client or their organisation is an important element of clarifying expectations and guidelines for action, a contract can never predict every circumstance which will arise in coaching.

This is particularly true when you are coaching several members of the same organisation. In order to avoid such issues, some coaches refrain from working with more than one person from the organisation, particularly when coaching senior members. This question – whether to work

1. The Global Code of Ethics adopted by the Association for Coaching can be found here: <https://www.associationforcoaching.com/page/AboutCodeEthics>

for more than one member of an organisation – simultaneously points to another ethical dilemma which itself is endemic to the coaching context: that of ‘conflict of interests’.

Once again, the concept of conflict of interests is clear-cut in its explicit form: for instance, that a conflict of interest could arise if you were coaching senior executives of competing firms, or if the coach were applying for the same job that his or her client might be applying for. But what about the occasions when a conflict of interest is not so obvious? What happens to the coach if the client no longer needs them? Examined carefully, it becomes apparent that the moment you take on a coaching client a conflict of interests can arise based on your desire for work, since, once they get to the point of no longer needing you, you are out of a job! Such ethical issues are common for both coaches and consultants.

Similarly, what if you know in your heart of hearts that you are not the best person to coach a client? For any number of reasons, you might realise that a colleague might be better suited to dealing with the client’s needs. What if you know this, but you yourself need the income that the coaching client provides? Just as consultants can act questionably by continually ‘selling on’ interventions, whether or not those interventions are in the client’s best interests, so coaches can similarly extend their contracts beyond the point at which their coaching is of value to the client. How is it possible to judge whether or not as a coach you are putting your own interests before those of your client? Here, two other frameworks might be helpful to explore, those of ethical perception and *ethical consideration*.

Ethical perception

Before being able to apply ethical judgement to any situation, one must first recognise the ethical aspect of the situation. If you don’t recognise that there is an ethical issue to attend to, then how can you be expected to respond ethically? Identifying the ethical dimension can be trickier than it seems. In his book, *Defining Moments*, James Badaracco notes how the ability to recognise a ‘defining moment’ is the often overlooked aspect of ethical decision-making (Badaracco, 1997). Reflecting on my own coaching practice, I have to admit there were many times that I was only really clear about the ethical aspects of a situation after I’d become embroiled in it!

One way of remedying the habit of ‘feet first, consider the ethics later’ which I found useful was

to engage proactively with a number of questions offline about the larger organisational system. These questions differed from those I might ask the client, and would include reflection on issues such as: ‘Whose interests are at stake within the situation, both inside and outside the organisation?’ ‘If this course of action is pursued what will happen to stakeholders I’m not considering – such as those lower down the organisational hierarchy?’ ‘How is this situation reflecting larger systemic issues within the organisation?’ Of course, you might argue that such questions should make their way into any good coaching practice. However, asking them while holding the intention of acting ‘ethically’ in the system allows a different quality of engagement, one perhaps that is looking for the potential ethical pitfalls rather than hoping they do not appear.

Ethical perception relies not just on an objective assessment of a situation, but also on the capacity to perceive from an empathetic perspective. The importance of empathy in arriving at sound ethical decisions has been a primary focus of ‘care’ ethicists such as Carol Gilligan. Her book, *In a Different Voice*, is particularly valuable for the insights it brings to gendered differences in judgements about the best ethical way forward (Gilligan, 1982). As a coach you will be aware of the balance between an ‘objective’ viewpoint and your more subjective care for your client. From an ethical perspective, that care should be extended not just to your client, but also to the wider system in which they operate. This raises the question of just how far that empathetic extension needs to reach; this question is central to the notion of ethical consideration that is explored in the next section.

Ethical consideration

Ethical consideration, or, as it is more frequently called, *moral consideration*, relates to an understanding of who (or what) merits ethical regard. Generally speaking, the question of how far one should extend one’s moral consideration refers to human stakeholders. However, increasingly (and especially with the threat of environmental degradation and climate change) ethicists are urging us to think beyond human communities to include also the more-than-human world in our assessment of ethical choices. Indeed, there is a growing argument that the earth herself should be regarded from an ethical perspective. See David Abram’s wonderful book, *The Spell of the Sensuous* (Abram, 1996), for a compelling argument concerning the degree to which the ‘more-than-human world’

warrants ethical attention.

As a coach, you will probably enter the client relationship with an unexamined assumption about how far your ethical consideration should extend. Take the time to bring those assumptions to conscious awareness. For instance, I noticed in the opening case that I was only really considering from an ethical perspective those the CEO wanted to fire; I hadn't extended ethical consideration to the CEO herself! I think this can be a common occurrence: after all, when you are acting as a coach it is probably correct that the starting point for your ethical regard is with the person you are sitting with. But asking yourself if it might be helpful to include others within your circle of ethical regard can be helpful.

If your client tells you about their experience of being bullied, does your ethical regard extend to others in the organisation who might similarly be being bullied? What about your ethical consideration for the person being accused of bullying? What might your coaching intervention look like if you considered such others in your judgements about what to do next? The question of moral consideration most raises its head when you think about who you are responsible to within the coaching arrangement. When you are coaching an individual the boundaries may be easier to draw – the contract is between you and them. But what if they divulge information which materially affects another human being? Is it important to extend moral consideration to them? Such questions are not easily addressed, nor should you expect to have to address them alone.

The value of wise others

The Code of Ethics adopted by the Association for Coaching requires that coaches engage in supervision, both as a way of enhancing their practice, but also as a way of helping to ensure ethical integrity. The notion of talking with 'wise others' harks back to the ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle's 'virtue ethics'. Aristotle was of the view that it is impossible to learn to be ethical in isolation. Ethics are the product of human communities, and as such the best way of learning to be an exemplary or virtuous human being is to engage with virtuous others. This approach also appreciates that no one individual can ever have the total perspective of a situation, and in navigating ethical territory having a range of perspectives is most likely to result in an optimal way forward. In coaching practice, this can be accomplished through supervision discussions, either one-to-one or within a peer supervision group. As well as acting as a sounding board, supervision can invite you to see

outside your own box and gain different perspectives on the situation.

Ethics as a practice, rather than decision-making

The territory of coaching is filled with decision-making moments: figuring out when to say what, when to push, when to pull back... When do you reveal your own view of a situation, when do you work with the client to help them work it out themselves? In considering how to enhance your own ethical astuteness, it can be helpful to think of how you developed your own coaching expertise, and the role that 'practice' played within gaining mastery. As suggested by the late biologist and ethicist Francesco Varela, the kind of 'practical wisdom' which is at the heart of ethical engagement requires regular practice (Varela, 1992).

What kinds of activities develop ethical capacities? In my own work I argue for the value of three key practices: proactive perception, negative capability, and inquiry (Ladkin, 2015). This article has already considered the value of proactive perception through looking outside one's usual frame to enquire about other stakeholders who might not normally be taken into ethical account. The benefit of asking questions, both through the contracting process and also through supervision, has also been touched upon. It may therefore be of help to consider the term negative capability and how it leads to enhanced ethical capability.

Negative capability is an idea written about by the British poet John Keats (1795-1821). It involves resisting the impulse to grasp for particular outcomes, especially when facing uncertainty. In the present century, the organisational scholars Peter Simpson, Robert French and Charles Harvey have written a contemporary account of the value of not leaping to action in times of organisational crisis (Simpson, French, & Harvey, 2002). It is important to note that 'negative capability' does not mean you 'check out' and take a holiday; rather, it is a kind of 'active waiting', in which you allow a situation to reveal its fullness to you before deciding on a course of action. It could be argued that President John F. Kennedy's ability to do just this saved the world from nuclear disaster during the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

Within the coaching realm, negative capability could be seen as a capacity to 'wait with', and to assist one's client to do the same as a situation's ramifications become apparent. Learning when to act and when to wait is of course crucial here. Developing a sense of timing around interventions and their 'rightness'

in a given situation is again something that can be developed through practice, reflection, talking with others, and trying again. It is in this commitment to continually practise, and reflect on that practice, that mastery of the ethical dimension of coaching can be honed.

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Donna Ladkin is Professor of Leadership and Ethics with Antioch University's School of Leadership and Change. An experienced coach and mentor, she draws on her background in philosophy and aesthetics to promote an inquiring, body-informed approach to working with both postgraduate level students and coaching clients.



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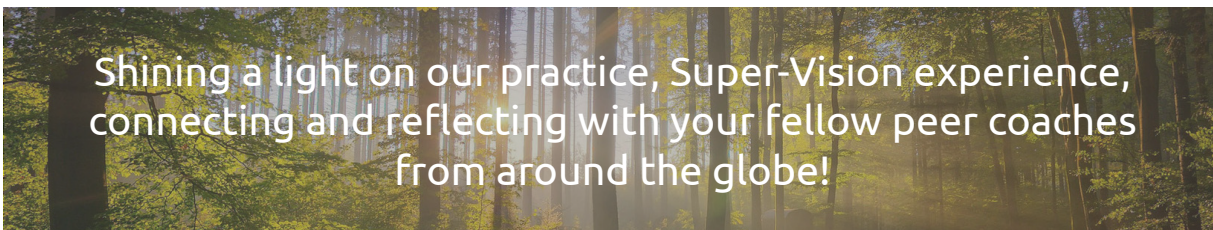
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