

OCTOBER 2022 | ISSUE 35

Coaching Perspectives

THE ASSOCIATION FOR COACHING
GLOBAL MAGAZINE



Health and wellbeing

Coaching in context: menopause, ADHD and diabetes

How polarisation impacts negatively on health and wellbeing

Mental health red flags: what we need to know

The multifaceted nature of self-care

New feature: The Reading Room

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ADVANCING COACHING IN BUSINESS AND SOCIETY, WORLDWIDE

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Here in the UK, the days are turning crisp and the nights are drawing in. Whichever season you are experiencing, we invite you to put your feet up, get comfortable and settle into this edition of *Coaching Perspectives* with a focus on health and wellbeing.

I have to say that reading this from cover to cover has felt like a real act of self-care and I hope that you have a similar experience. I am very grateful to all our authors for sharing their personal and professional insights so generously and inviting us to reflect on the many facets of wellbeing and self-care. Our Coaching In Context section includes illuminating articles on menopause, by Mary-Jane Budd, on ADHD, by Sarah Templeton, and on people living with diabetes, by Jo Carnie.

One of my self-care strategies is to spend time outdoors daily and I have compiled this editorial while walking my dog in the countryside where I live. These are the times I feel most calm, clear and creative and this, not surprisingly, is one of our key themes. Nature has much to teach us – Anna-Marie Watson's article shows us how.

The word 'holistic' comes up several times in this edition, which got me thinking about the different ways holism applies to health and wellbeing. We have the concept of mind, body and soul. How might we as coaches facilitate connection to all three? We have access to an array of mainstream and complementary healthcares across the globe. We are not stuck... we can keep searching for the timely, suitable solution. As coaches does this change our view of signposting and referring on? We have the systemic view and an awareness of a system that sometimes triggers ill health and yet simultaneously holds ancient healing traditions from cultures around the world.

These last three years have been tough for many of us and our clients. We are coping with increased stresses and strains at home, work, across our networks and in relation to the planet. These show up mentally, emotionally and physically. In this edition we take a look at self-care for ourselves and our clients to help us navigate these difficult times. Joe Roe and Caroline Anthony share their thoughts on self-care and more in a conversation between colleagues. Dr Joan Swart offers us important understanding about red flags for mental health and how coaches can best respond.

I was on a dance retreat recently and we were playing with the concepts of solitude versus connection, time for self and time with others. A quarter of the group were coaches and therapists, taking time out for ourselves, recharging in an embodied way. What is the link between inner peace and happiness and the ability to connect with and inspire wellness in others? Much can be gleaned from positive psychology, as Robert Biswas-Diener and Christian van Nieuwerburgh explain in their column.

The theme of polarity is present throughout this edition – exclusion versus belonging, solitude versus connection, authenticity versus acting and so on. It seems that unhealthy extremes, and the tension that ensues, may contribute to ill health. Mindfulness and gestalt practices have much to offer here. Marie Faire and Fenella Trevillion, Sue Jackson, Rob Kemp and Carroll Macey all invite you to explore these concepts from different angles.

On a recent trip to Costa Rica I was struck by their national ethos of *pura vida* which, based on various conversations, seems to translate as 'live a good, simple life to the full'. Maybe your country also has a national ethos grounded in wellbeing, but if not, what might our individual ethos be? What conversations can we have as coaches that might advocate for change and restoration on a wider scale? Priya Tandon invites us to do this kind of thinking and more.

I hope there are many take-aways here that will light your way. Your feedback is, as ever, much appreciated.

Best wishes,

Clare Manning

Clare Manning
Co-editor

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Did you know?

In the **Association for Coaching's (AC) 20th anniversary year**, we wanted to showcase a few highlights of our collective achievements.

Ongoing learning

- In 2022, the AC awarded over **15,000 CPD webinar and event certificates**.
- The AC's community **covers 128 countries** and counting.
- The AC's **Coaching in the Workplace conference** welcomed delegates from more than 65 countries.
- The AC held **450 live and virtual events** across the world during the Covid-19 pandemic.
- The AC held **256 co-coaching forums**, with over 2,200 attendees.
- The AC celebrated its **100th podcast episode** in September 2022.
- The AC has introduced **virtual global co-coaching events**, and has already welcomed attendees from 24 countries.
- The AC has over **300 contributors** gifting their time and skills to initiatives all across the organisation.
- The AC's **CPD hours scheme provides recognition** of ongoing professional development from a leading global professional coaching body.

Thought leadership

- The AC has published **six coaching books** with its publishing partner, Kogan Page:
Excellence in Coaching, Psychometrics in Coaching, Leadership Coaching, Diversity in Coaching, Supervision in Coaching, Mastery in Coaching.
- The AC's flagship international magazine, **Coaching Perspectives**, keeps you in touch with current trends and coaching thought leadership.
- The AC's **Future of Technology in Coaching Group** has supported two research initiatives.
- The AC academic journal, **Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice**, offers unique and insightful research from thought leaders.
- The AC journal, **Philosophy of Coaching**, is an open-access journal: a forum for coach practitioners, educators and academic researchers to share their knowledge and expertise with the international coaching community.

The above achievements would not be possible without the dedication of our leadership and support teams, nor our contributors spread across the globe.

Membership

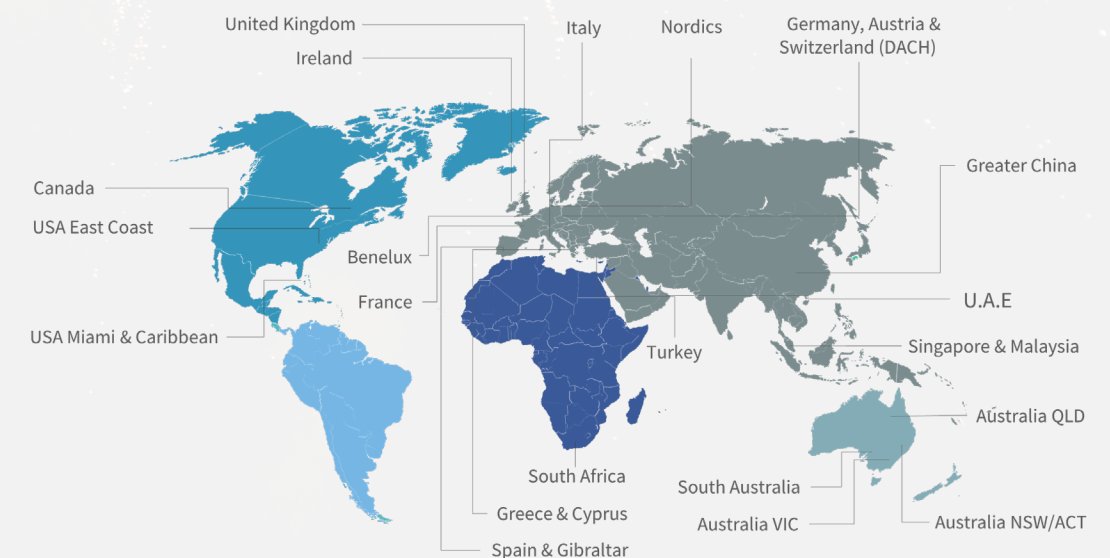
- The AC offers a flexible **corporate membership package** for organisations building a culture of coaching.
- This includes **world-class events and connections** to support internal coaches.
- The AC's **Leader Coach Accreditation Scheme** is the only programme of its kind offered by a global coaching professional body designed for leaders adopting a 'coach approach'.
- Coach training schools who are **organisational members** of the AC can gift their coaching students with a **one-year introductory associate membership** to the AC.
- In 2023 the AC will be launching its **fellow membership** – stay tuned!

Alliances and partnerships

- The AC has signed a **global statement committing to collaborative action** on the climate change and biodiversity crisis.
- The AC supports the **Future of Coaching Collaboration**, an organisation contributing to safeguard and connect stakeholders in the profession.
- AC members can benefit from **preferential rates** from our vetted tools partners (for example, ECR or PROPHET certification).
- The AC works with **insurance providers** to provide our members with special rates.

AC local and global reach

- During our 20th year we have set up our 21st region – each one benefitting from an established leadership team 'on the ground'.
- In 2023 our focus will be to expand further into the USA and southeast Asia.



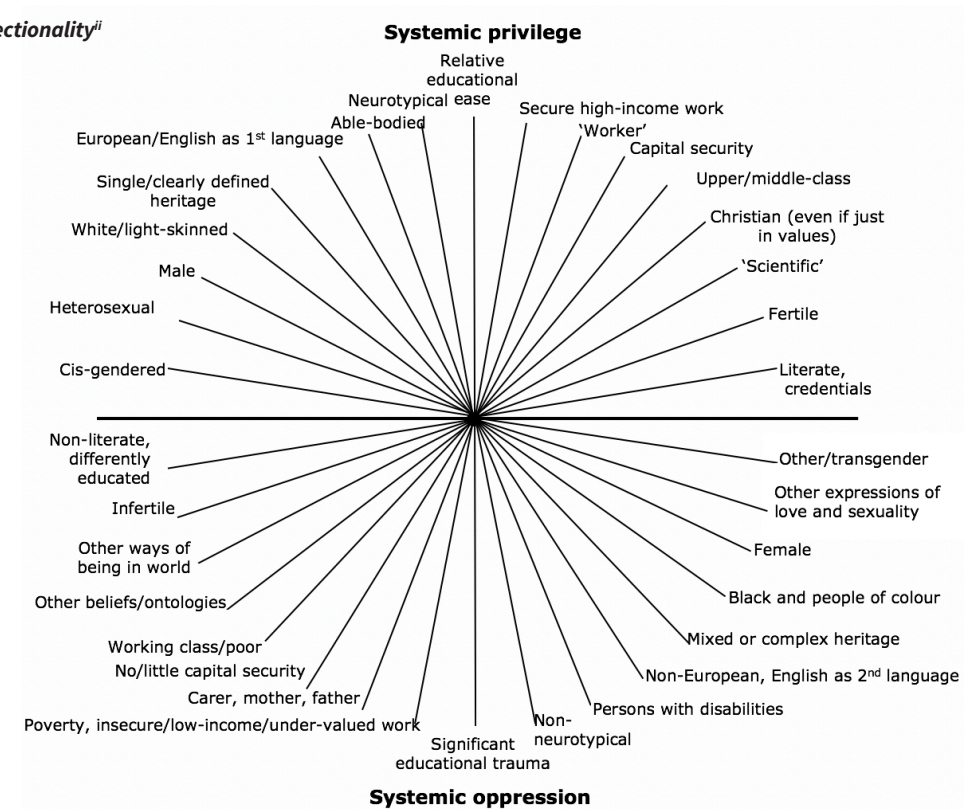
INEQUITIES, HEALTH AND BELONGING: THE IMPACT OF SYSTEMIC OPPRESSION

How can coaches support a sense of belonging – an essential foundation for wellbeing? It starts with re-examining our knowledge and prejudices about systemic privilege and oppression, say **Marie Faire** and **Fenella Trevillion**.

If the coaching profession is serious about the democratisation of coaching and being inclusive, we have to address directly our own prejudice and bias, and the inequities in our world – including the consequences on the mental and physical health of those who are marginalised and excluded.

Research about health inequalities often focuses on provision and access. A neglected area of research is the impact of how systemic oppression negatively effects the health of the individual(s) being oppressed. This happens both directly (such as the predominance of medical research being focused on the conditions of white males)ⁱ and indirectly as a result of the exclusion inherent in oppression.

Figure 1: Intersectionalityⁱⁱ



The term intersectionality describes the way that multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage affect privilege and oppression. Figure 1 is based on the original work of K P Morgan (1996) and adapted from the work of Nathaniel Hughes (2020)ⁱⁱⁱ with kind permission.

When we, the authors, facilitate (white) supervisors to explore racism, we put racism in the context of intersectionality and all systemic oppression, and we explore the issue of belonging and exclusion.

In humankind's early origins, shame kept us safe and in line with the mores of our culture. Shame is also the most destructive of emotions. As Jung said, 'shame is a soul eating emotion.'^{vi}

'Pain can be alleviated by morphine, but the pain of social ostracism cannot be taken away'^{iv}

We are social beings with an innate desire to belong (a good thing when our survival is dependent on us being part of a group or tribe). Likewise, we avoid shame, and exclusion shames. Indeed, all forms of oppression exclude and shame the people who are oppressed.

'Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience of believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love and belonging — something we've experienced, done, or failed to do makes us unworthy of connection'^v

HOW PEOPLE ARE EXCLUDED^{vii}

Rejection (direct negative attention)

- Dehumanising language
- Discrimination and stigmatisation
- Hurtful laughter
- Microaggressions: micro-assaults, micro-insults and micro-invalidations (in many people's opinion, including ours, microaggressions is an inappropriate term to describe interactions that are anything but 'micro' in their effect.)

Ostracism (being ignored)

- Averted eye gaze
- Being forgotten
- Information exclusion (out of the loop)
- Language exclusion (biased language, linguistic ostracism)
- Uncomfortable silence

When people feel excluded and shamed, they produce large quantities of cortisol, as well as other hormones that promote

action (to get away from the cause of the fear or pain), and enter a state of hyper-vigilance. If this state is constant and continuous, there is a negative impact in both psychological and physiological health that can have life-changing and life-limiting consequences. The panel below shows the short- and long-term psychological and physiological outcomes, which include weathering.^{viii}

When considering racism, it is sad that many ‘well-meaning’ white people believe that they evidence their lack of racism by saying, almost proudly, ‘I don’t see colour’, completely unaware that this is in itself an expression of our privilege as white people.

In our profession, those who are systemically oppressed (in the bottom half of the intersectionality model) are grossly under-represented (with the exception of women). By far the majority are middle class, educated and white. With all coaching and supervision, there is a need for self-reflection and awareness of the biases that guide our behaviour. It is no different for our personal journey of understanding our systemic privilege.

From birth, a baby’s perception of the self consists of them and those close to them: one world with no differentiation. In the UK, those born with white skins will see those around them as part of themselves, people who are also likely to be white. Unknowingly they bring a white person’s behaviours and perspectives. White privilege can be described as ‘an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks.’^x Black people often say that they must work twice as hard, and do twice as much, to gain access to the same resources as white people.

These invisible provisions are the hidden data inherited by white people; the innate knowledge on how to navigate the world, how to behave, and the assumptions white people make about being safe and secure and having access to opportunities. If you are black or a person of colour (BPOC), you are likely to talk to your children about the fact that they will inevitably experience racism and the need to be wary of public services such as the police. As white people we don’t need to give ‘the talk’ to our children.

APPLICATION: WHAT WE CAN DO

A primary coaching and supervisory skill is making connections and remaining in rapport with our clients, while simultaneously providing as safe a space as possible to explore challenging issues. This is crucial, as it is well-documented that the quality of the relationship between practitioner and client is a major predictor of positive outcomes.

Here are some things we believe assist in creating the conditions of good connections with clients who may have profoundly different life experiences than us:

- Explore our own intersectionality and implicit bias, racism, privilege and core beliefs. This, in our experience, is a life-long journey.
- As we know, a key aspect of connection is trust. Generative conversations build trust, give opportunities to exchange assumptions and pave the way for compassionately navigating shared spaces.
- Connection also comes through having a knowledge and understanding of the social and historical context occupied by the person in front of you.
- Be brave and acknowledge your differences, both perceived and real, as part of contracting. This can be done, lightly, and when appropriate with humour. Differences in age and skin colour are obvious ones to mention: ‘I am a middle-aged, rapidly becoming old, white woman... and I have noticed you are not,’ often brings a smile in our experience! This names the elephant(s) in the room, legitimising them and making it easier to speak about them in the future, if needed. It works whichever aspects of intersectionality are different.
- There is a richness in exploring all of the above with other people – your supervisor, peers and in our case our fellow author!

These all give a strong foundation for the relationship through which challenging issues of belonging can be explored.

WHAT ELSE CAN WE DO?

- Be humble, fallible, and human. We will get things wrong.
- Support clients experiencing exclusion and oppression, including through demonstrating empathy, by encouraging their own self-compassion and positive reappraisal of their self-worth.
- In the wider world, speak truth to power, and challenge exclusion of any sort.
- Use our influence systemically to change the system.

‘We know that social exclusion is closely tied to the new economic world order, globalized, with free and open markets, which isn’t bringing prosperity or social justice to all.’^{xiii}

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



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Marie and Fenella run a programme for coach supervisors: ‘Working with Difference – Exploring Race’. For further information please contact the authors at info@thebeyondpartnership.co.uk

NEGATIVE PSYCHOLOGICAL OUTCOMES^{ix}

Short-term exclusion

- anti-social intensions and behaviours
- basic need threat (belonging, control, meaningful existence, self-esteem)
- dehumanisation
- negative effect (anger, humiliation, sadness, shame)
- neurological pain and hurt feelings
- perceived ostracism (feeling ignored and excluded)
- relational devaluation

Long-term exclusion

- alienation
- depression
- helplessness
- meaninglessness

NEGATIVE PHYSIOLOGICAL OUTCOMES

Short-term exclusion

- greater inflammation
- impaired immune functions
- exacerbated physiological stress responses
- sympathetic nervous system activity
- cardiovascular acceleration
- cortisol and inflammatory protein release

Long-term exclusion

- cancer
- heart disease
- vulnerability to pathogens
- autoimmune disorders
- psychopathology

BELONGING: THE DOMINANT ISSUE

A prevailing theme in the large number of recent books by BPOC authors is a lack of belonging. David Olusoga felt ‘profoundly unwelcome in Britain’^{xi} and, like other black authors, experienced a predominantly racialised world that consisted of a preponderance of white people in positions of authority (with some exceptions). This is echoed in the ‘helping’ professions – including coaching. At school, the historical and literary narratives BPOC authors heard through history and literature were those of white people – a world that did not reflect people like them. As they wondered what their narrative was, the experience gave them a sense of exclusion and non-belonging.

Turning to ourselves, how cognisant and aware are we:

- Of the overlapping histories and origins of the different racial groups in the UK?
- Of the trauma experienced by many non-white people, through racial violence and the omnipresence of ‘othering’ and so-called microaggressions?
- Of how racism often causes the individual to inherit generational trauma experienced through slavery and colonisation?
- That race is only a social construct, created through the 1666 Barbados Slave Code, its purpose being to ‘organise [and divide] society along racial lines’^{xii} and give rights and privileges to the white race over others?

i. Dwass, Emily (2019) Diagnosis Female: How Medical Bias Endangers Women’s Health. Rowman & Littlefield, UK

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ix. Riva, Paolo and Eck, Jennifer Ed. (2016) Social Exclusion: Psychological Approaches to Understanding and Reducing its Impact. International Publishing, Switzerland

x. <https://admin.arts.washington.edu/sites/adming/files/unpacking-invisible-knapsack.pdf> [Accessed 22/8/2022]

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EMOTIONAL LABOUR AND THE COACH

Where do our coaching rules come from and how do we choose to be when coaching? It all affects our wellbeing. **Rob Kemp** shares findings from his research into emotional labour.

Say the words ‘emotional labour’ and you may be met with a range of responses – from confusion to knowing nods. As with many terms there is the popularist use and then there is something more grounded in its original meaning, or perhaps even the academic context.

The term emotional labour was created by American psychologist Arlie Russel Hochschild in the 1980s while observing air hostesses at Delta Airlines: their training and supervision mandated that they smile – ‘really smile!’. The ‘Delta smile’ was promoted in marketing campaigns and became so entwined with the brand that workers saw that smile as a mandate – a ‘must do’, no matter what. These ‘display rules’ (expectations for a role) were enforced in many ways – and Hochschild observed the effort required to conform, and the emotional cost of doing so. She also observed how there were differing strategies for compliance – either simple pretence (surface acting or feigning), compared with attempting to try and identify with the rule and working from the inside out (deep acting).

Since the original work on emotional labour, the terms and definitions have been hotly debated, but the essential elements of the theory persist: display rules, surface acting and deep acting. The literature on emotional labour is vast and covers time, sector and a very large number of roles: in healthcare, in education, in the service industries, in sex and body work, in status professions – almost any kind of job you could think of – but not coaching, or in fact any other closely allied professions such as psychotherapy.

There are only a handful of studies that demonstrate no adverse effects for emotional labourers. Conversely, vast swathes of studies detail the stress, anxiety, feelings of inauthenticity, turnover intentions

(quitting) and burnout that can ensue from emotional labour. It is opportune, therefore, that this issue of *Coaching Perspectives* focuses on wellbeing: the wellbeing of the coach emerged as a principal finding in my research into emotional labour in coaching.

The literature on emotional labour is vast and covers a very large number of roles, almost any kind of job you could think of – but not coaching

Returning briefly to definitions: there is a sense in the general literature that emotional labour is synonymous with anything emotional; this ‘catch-all’ was not researched here. Of course coaching is inherently emotional, bound up as it is with emotions and dealing with high emotion at times – but that is not what I mean by emotional labour. I researched how coaches perceive they should behave (the display rules for the profession), where these perceptions come from (how do we derive our display rules?), and the times when coaches felt driven to comply with these display rules through either surface acting or deep acting. Finally I considered what effects the experience of emotional labour had for coaches.

Working with 15 coaches and coach supervisors through a phenomenological approach of conceptual encounter – a methodology originated by Joseph DeRivera in the 1980s – I presented an initial model of emotional labour in coaching derived from the general emotional labour literature. This model went through an iteration after each interview or group discussion to eventually become a final model in coaching (nothing is ever really final, but ‘final’ in the methodology).

How and where emotional labour shows up in coaching will be illustrated in three vignettes derived from my interviews, as a way of explaining my findings.

1. ‘Elise’ works with high-level clients in a major city. The organisations she works with are smart, savvy, image-conscious and well-resourced. When Elise meets her coaching clients she is aware of the power dynamic (these are very senior people), and often feels overawed. Nevertheless, she puts on a confident face and pushes through the discomfort. This is a common start to Elise’s coaching assignments.

2. ‘Scott’ works as an external coach to frontline salespeople. He often finds himself getting very frustrated with his clients and wants to say: ‘If we’re not going to fully invest in this, then let’s not bother doing it at all’. That frustration makes him ‘want to bang their heads against a wall’. Scott doesn’t say or do either of those things though – instead he works hard to main a ‘professional’ demeanour and pushes on.

3. ‘Sarah’ works with big organisations, and often has multiple meetings with internal stakeholders – human resources, learning and development, senior sponsors or line managers. She recognises the differing needs of these stakeholders, and sometimes differing beliefs around what coaching is for. Sarah can ‘play the game’ well and presents herself with just the right nuance to satisfy multiple agendas. She does this to get the work, and get to the client, so that she can do ‘the real work of coaching’.

Each of these three scenarios, rooted in the truth of coaches’ experiences, has some element of emotional labour (conforming to a perceived standard of presentation or behaviour), and we will look at each in turn.

Elise feels one thing and portrays another – she feels under-confident but portrays confidence. She acts ‘as if’ – and takes on the role of one with confidence. When asked, Elise is aware of what she is doing – and this interesting example relates to both surface acting and deep acting. Elise’s experience tells her that when she is able to act with confidence (despite not feeling it) it sets the relationship up well – so she does. But she also knows that, with time and increased familiarity, power will become less of an issue; the relationship will feel equal by the time they have done their work. This is a nice example of where Elise has only to pretend that she is confident, but supporting that surface acting is a belief that it will be okay in time – in other words deep acting. I suspect that many of us would be able to identify with Elise and imagine what it might feel like after that first session – exhausting, one might expect.

Scott finds himself doing most of his work in a scenario where he feels that there is not a great deal of buy-in from coachees. While coaching is not mandated, it is an expectation (you would have to explain yourself if you turned down coaching), so one might argue that it is mandated. He is very frustrated by the scenario, and feels inner turmoil, even anger, yet he works hard to maintain what he describes as a professional demeanour. So, rather than externalising

any of his frustrations to his coachee (or indeed banging any of their heads against nearby walls), Scott keeps them to himself and acts as if there is no issue. This way of being as a coach makes Scott question whether this is the right work for him (though it is steady and well-paid, which is why he is still there), but it also leaves him tired, unfulfilled and feeling like a fraud.

In emotional labour terms, Scott is clearly just surface acting – none of what he portrays externally is aligned with how he is feeling, nor his value set or belief systems. He is suppressing his felt emotions for a mask of neutrality. We will come to the question of where Scott has learned the rule that says he can’t express frustration – and where his image of professionalism comes from – as that is a crucial and central point.

Scott is clearly just surface acting – none of what he portrays externally is aligned with how he is feeling, nor his value set or belief systems

The final vignette describes an experienced coach who knows how to approach organisational clients to get paid work – she is formerly from those worlds and holds a good deal of kudos by her educational background and work history. She understands what needs to be done to satisfy everyone – including the finance director, namely to raise a purchase order. Sarah shows some sense of pride in being able to navigate this tricky ‘negotiation’ – and demonstrably does it well. However, she says she does so to get the work in order that she can go and do the ‘real work of coaching’. She complies with the forms, the evaluations, the feedback systems – and all of that ‘company stuff’ – though she does not believe or give any credence to any of it: it is a necessary evil. When asked how selling her services relates to her coaching style the answer is ‘chalk and cheese’. Sarah feigns (surface acting) a performance designed to secure work in order that she can access coaches – and go and do what she sees as good work. We might view her approach as subterfuge, or we may question her authenticity in those scenarios.

To illustrate: when we have a leaky tap, we might phone a plumber. We agree the job, price and timescale with them. The plumber comes, as appointed, but notices a problem with the central heating and hot water system. They work with that – and they may do good work. Then they leave. The problem is that the tap is still leaking when they leave, and we are not even fully aware of what they did... we just know that we can still hear dripping.

While that analogy has some obvious flaws rooted in a deficit model, and many other things we could notice, the plumber is still somewhat like Sarah. She agrees to coach and nods at all the stakeholders, with the intention of doing what she sees as the real work of coaching (she leaves with the metaphorical tap still dripping). This approach has potential reputational consequences at a number of levels, including that of the profession. This dynamic, which I named ‘commercial emotional labour’, is one coaches

recognise. Indeed, one of my research participants described how she has given up corporate work for exactly this reason.

In each of the small examples there is emotional labour of some sort – some acting, some pretending, some feigning. When we think about the outcomes of emotional labour in other fields, it is not difficult to see how they relate to coaches and coaching; emotional labour is experienced both in and out of the coaching room. We can also relate these scenarios to our own work, and maybe this is a lens through which to view our practice – where does emotional labour play out in our worlds, and what work do we opt in and out of?

Our perceptions of what coaches ‘should be like’ are mostly derived from personal disparate sources of our own experience

I have not yet touched upon two key areas, the first being our rule derivation: where do our rules come from, anyway? The second is our way of coaching; or, more accurately, our way of being as a coach. The way we coach is directly related to our experience of emotional labour.

Without display rules (accepted or prescribed ways of being in coaching) there is nothing to adhere to or comply with. A large part of this research was questioning to understand how coaches think they ‘should be’ and present... and who tells them so?

While professional bodies and coach training had some part to play in the creation of rules, the most powerful drivers were undoubtedly personal experiences of coaching: admired or despised others; positive or negative experiences as a coachee; observed others; and the time-honoured tradition of trial and error. In other words, our perceptions of what coaches ‘should be like’ are mostly derived from personal disparate sources of our own experience – and so our beliefs around what ‘we’ should be like are similarly disparate. What for one coach was their stock-in-trade for others was anathema (or ‘airy-fairy crap’ as one put it). This disparity has implications for us individually, and for the profession.

Who told Scott that he should not express his frustrations? Who told Elise that she should present with confidence and hide her worries? Who told Sarah that she should do almost whatever was necessary to secure work? Nobody did. They have built their own constructs, rules and ways of behaving, and they determine their own standards in relation to display rules (albeit we can probably all agree that physical violence towards a client is unacceptable). To a large extent we make our own rules as coaches.

My final point is around our way of being as coaches. Those coaches who described themselves as gestalt coaches, or coaches with a high ‘use of self’, did not describe experiences of emotional labour in the coaching dyad. One coach said that she didn’t understand the concept of emotional labour as her relationships were ‘porous’, without the need for pretence or acting. Those coaches

who externalise their inner selves negate the need for pretence or suppression. This makes obvious and logical sense – no acting, no emotional labour. At least, it seems obvious now, though I neither predicted, thought about nor understood the dynamic until researching deeply in the area. The use of self in coaching appears protective against experiencing emotional labour; given the undesirable effects that can ensue, this could be a good thing for the preservation of coaches’ wellbeing.

Coach wellbeing is not yet firmly on the agenda in our profession. The early research around negative outcomes for coaches is enlightening, and should progress. Carsten Schermuly, particularly, has been a pioneer in looking at negative outcomes for coaches, and his work is well worth exploring. The ideas of coach wellness, good fit and healthy practice need much more traction overall – otherwise we coaches are just the human resource who expend ourselves in service of clients and organisations, and that balance is not equitable. Emotional labour is one of the areas that we need to consider in our wellness: the concept, and this research, asks some difficult questions of professional associations, trainers, supervisors and organisations – and also first of ourselves.

To quote from one of the generous contributors to this research: ‘coach in service of clients, coach in service of organisation... what about coach in service of self?’

IN PLACE OF REFERENCES

I have deliberately kept the references in this article very light, if not absent. If you would like to follow some of the thoughts presented here in the academic literature, you can do so by either looking at the *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* (2022, S16, pp.185-195. DOI: 10.24384/H98Q-Q162), or for those with a keener interest in full e-thesis from the British Library. If all else fails, you can always send me an old-fashioned email.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Dr Rob Kemp has recently been appointed as head of accredited coach training at Barefoot Coaching. After a corporate career, Rob dedicated his professional life and learning to coaching – first through a postgraduate certificate (2005), then an MSc (2013), and then as a doctor of coaching and mentoring (2021). Having practised as a coach for almost two decades, Rob is now developing other coaches through training and supervision. He can be reached via rob@barefootcoaching.co.uk.



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FINDING LIGHT AT THE END OF THE MENOPAUSE TUNNEL

Mary-Jane Budd outlines a coaching approach that encourages perimenopausal and menopausal women to rediscover themselves by realigning with what really matters to them, alongside increasing their vitality for life.

Menopause seems to have gone from a topic that was ‘never to be mentioned’ to being talked about almost on a daily basis in the media. High-profile celebrities and medical practitioners are speaking out and encouraging women to become educated about perimenopause (the period before menopause) and menopause (when menstruation ends). Much of the information focuses on the medical model of menopause, telling us how the depletion of the three main reproductive hormones (oestrogen, progesterone and testosterone) affects our bodies. This is important in helping women to feel well during this stage in their lives, but there is also a psychological approach that can be addressed to improve the quality of a woman’s life during these stages.

Experiencing perimenopause and menopause is an individualised journey. Some women only experience minor symptoms that appear not to impact their daily lives. For others, the impacts are severe – lack of sleep, low mood, anxiety and poor concentration to name a few. A symptom-focused approach to menopause empowers women to make informed choices about whether to go on hormone replacement therapy (HRT) or to choose alternative approaches such as mindfulness and cognitive behavioural therapy. Alleviating the symptoms of perimenopause and menopause will enhance day-to-day life; however, what remains for many women is a sense of loss of who they are.

The psychological impact of menopause is derived from the time in their lives that women experience menopause. The average age of women going through menopause is 51. My clients tell me that they are experiencing life events such as children ‘flying the nest’, feeling stuck or stale in their careers, having problems with relationships, taking on caring responsibilities or dealing with serious health conditions – and they are often experiencing more than one of these events at this one time. In addition, menopause creeps up on us and, because of the (mostly) slow development of symptoms from the age of 40 or so, women may not associate certain symptoms with the menopause. Our medical practitioners may not be trained in this life-stage medicine, and so this also means that diagnosis of

menopause may be slow. Of course, surgical menopause (through hysterectomy for example) also has an impact on a woman’s life, and everything in this article can most certainly be applied here too.

My personal story of menopause led me to become an advocate for coaching through menopause. I was 45 or so when various symptoms began to affect my quality of life. Severe migraines saw me visit a neurologist who put me on strong anti-epilepsy medication. I was offered anti-depressants on a number of occasions. More than once I was told not to take HRT because of a family member with breast cancer. Through this period I was very open, taking freely about menopause in work and social spaces. I started researching and educating myself on the pros and cons of HRT – helped in more recent years by the Balance app and website. However, through my coaching work, I was seeing more and more women saying the same thing: ‘I don’t know who I am anymore’.

Following a talk from Clive Leach about coaching for career transition, I was curious to see whether this approach would be suitable for a different transition in life – that of menopause. A life transition can be any time where lots of change takes place, requiring a period of adjustment that causes you to re-evaluate your life. Menopause really fits well into this definition of a life transition. When we lose who we are, it is important to return to ‘what really matters to us’ – our values. You can ask your clients what is important to them and you can go from there, or I suggest that you can use the VIA strengths survey (visit viacharacter.org) to delve deeper into the values that matter to them.

When we lose who we are, it is important to return to ‘what really matters to us’ – our values

To begin the process of a more value-driven life, thus connecting deeper with who you really are, small, daily steps are required. Practising what matters to you each day makes you more aware of these values. I suggest that clients keep a journal of their daily values in action to keep track of their progress. What matters to you is at the core of who you are. This is not about trying to get back your 30-year-old self – there are no magic wands here. Acceptance of your 50-year-old body comes more easily when you recognise that you are adhering to the values that you hold most important to you.

To follow a value-driven life, you need energy and motivation. Trying to improve and enhance your vitality for life can support you through a life transition like menopause, and can be achieved through the following steps, which draw on the New Economics Foundation’s *Five Ways to Wellbeing* paper.ⁱ

1. DISCOVER WHAT ENERGISES YOU

Firstly, think of the people in your life who give you an ‘uplifting’ feeling. What is it about them that makes you feel like this? Can you identify this about them and put a label on it? Recognise that you too make others feel ‘uplifted’. Self-compassion about your own ‘oomph’ is important and spending time focusing on this can increase your vitality. For women experiencing symptoms such as low mood and tiredness, this uplifting feeling can often be replicated by simply thinking about these people that have a positive effect on you.

2. FOCUS ON THE HERE AND NOW

Becoming aware of what is around you can take your mind away from intrusive thoughts. Get away from our ‘time travelling mind’ that ruminates over the past and worries about the future. Practising mindfulness through meditation or through walking can be helpful. However, less formal mindfulness practice such as focusing on an everyday task such as making tea, eating breakfast or brushing your teeth is a good place to start. Noting down in a journal your daily mindfulness practice can be of benefit. Awareness of how you are feeling is also a good practice. Stop several times a day and ask yourself: ‘how am I feeling?’. You may be surprised at the positive responses, and these may even outweigh the negative ones. There is a plethora of evidence for the benefit of mindfulness on anxiety.ⁱⁱ As one of the most common and debilitating symptoms of perimenopause and menopause, I am often asked how to alleviate anxiety. Through the use of ACT and mindfulness, many women are able to calm their minds and quieten their anxiety.ⁱⁱⁱ

3. MOVE

Exercise or being active has been shown to help with wellbeing. But this does not have to be running a marathon! Being outside in nature appears to have positive benefits.^{iv} Nature reminds you there is a bigger world out there and can put things into perspective. A daily activity outside can give us vitality, lifting our mood. Choose the time of day that suits you – I’m a morning person, so always exercise before work, but others prefer evening activities. Always be aware of how you are feeling and listen to your body. Never force exercise, and be gentle with yourself. A short distance is better than no distance at all. A common symptom of menopause is achy joints and this is often alleviated with gentle activity. Of course, a good night’s sleep (disrupted sleep being another common symptom) is helped by physical tiredness, and this also helps prevent weight gain.

4. LEARN

By learning new things we can boost our confidence. We talk about challenging ourselves and pushing ourselves outside our comfort zone. Think about things that you’ve always wanted to try. Again, this doesn’t have to be a grand plan but something built up of smaller,

more achievable steps. Trying a new activity or hobby stimulates you and makes you feel good. Try and do this every day – it might seem challenging but it can be done. For example, how would it feel to sleep on the other side of the bed? Or to not have that coffee on the way to work? Be curious to experiment a little with your daily habits.

5. GIVE

The final way to increase vitality is to ‘give a little’. I don’t mean donate money to charity (although you can if you are able to). Perhaps listen to an elderly neighbour – giving time. Or smile at a stranger and make them smile too. When driving, be generous by letting someone out in front of you. These small acts of generosity not only have a positive impact on you but also the person they are directed to, resulting in a lifting of mood.

At this point in the programme, I like to challenge my clients to take the approach of being in charge of their menopause rather than letting it control their life. I ask them how they can make sure they are aligning with their values every day, and what they are going to do to enhance their vitality alongside this?

Taking this approach, women can redefine themselves around what really matters to them. I ask them to write down what life would feel like in 12 months’ time if they did nothing differently to now. Following this pause, I ask my clients to write down what life would be like if they made a small change every day to be more aligned to what matters to them, and what it would be like if they brought vitality into their lives through the five steps outlined above. This is a powerful exercise which enables women to take control of who they want to be and provides a pathway for this journey of discovering a renewed version of themselves, overcoming the ‘loss’ of who they used to be.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mary-Jane Budd PhD is a chartered psychologist and coach. Through 1-1 coaching, group coaching and training in organisations, Mary-Jane uses a number of coaching approaches to allow women the space to explore who they are now and how they can alleviate the psychological effects of perimenopause and menopause. Mary-Jane maintains an academic career as a senior lecturer at the University of East London, UK, and is carrying out a number of world-leading research studies around menopause and optimising cognitive functionality.

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COACHING FOR PEOPLE WITH DIABETES

Jo Carnie shares findings from her research into coaching that helps people living with diabetes to optimise self-management in support of their wellbeing.

WHAT IS DIABETES?

Diabetes is a condition that affects the body's mechanism for utilising sugar and prevents it operating as it should, resulting in high blood glucose levels. The two main types of diabetes are called type 1 and type 2 (T1D and T2D). Around 90% of people with diabetes have T2D, which most commonly develops in adulthood and is linked to genetic and lifestyle factors.

SETTING THE SCENE: THE NUMBERS BEHIND DIABETES

NHS England published a report in 2020 stating: 'managing the growing incidences of diabetes in England is set to be one of the major clinical challenges of the 21st century'.ⁱ Around 9% of the population of England could be living with T2D by 2030. Across the UK, diabetes and its complications cost the National Health Service (NHS) over £10bn per year. Globally, by 2045 there are predicted to be around 700 million adults living with the condition.ⁱⁱ

In England, 90% of adults with T2D are overweight or obese, with obese adults being five times more likely to be diagnosed with the condition than adults of a healthy weight.ⁱⁱⁱ

Alongside these significant statistics, diabetes is noted as being one of the most demanding long-term conditions for patients to manage; 'few conditions are associated with such a complex array of lifestyle and medical treatment issues'.^{iv}

As a coach living with type 1 diabetes, I have a view that coaching could be a useful intervention to support people living with this condition, which can require daily or even hourly management.

Optimal self-management provides numerous opportunities to set goals, understand and manage feelings and assumptions in relation to the disease, and to raise awareness of the motivations underpinning patterns of behaviour.

The focus of my research was to look at the use of coaching in support of type 2 diabetes. There is strong evidence to suggest T2D is often preventable. If the disease has already developed, through lifestyle causes, it can be possible to reduce the health impacts of the condition and put it into remission.^v

My research comprised of a review of the literature relating to diabetes and more general health coaching, followed by analysis of semi-structured interviews held with nine research participants currently living with T2D. Some key themes emerged.

COACH MATURITY

At the earliest stage of development, a coach may be a 'teller' using 'prescribed coaching models, received knowing, and may give lots of advice'. At an advanced stage of development, a coach may demonstrate 'genuine compassion and adjustment to their approach based on the needs of the individual'.^{vi}

Training and maturity of coaching practice may have the effect of allowing a coach to choose from a range of approaches. This flexibility in approach can allow a coach to maintain an open and enquiring position and take a range of perspectives as they meet the individual needs of a client.

Many health coaching studies, while referring to practitioners as coaches, don't specify the length of training each coach received, or note formal training as being around two days.^{vii} De Haan notes the issue of inexperienced coaches holding subject matter knowledge in high regard and feeling the need to impart this knowledge to a client

to help them come up with solutions.^{viii} Clutterbuck and Megginson note that less experienced coaches may feel drawn to provide answers, and the effort it takes to suppress this desire can effect the coach's ability to listen to what the client is saying.^{ix}

Based on the strength of emotion displayed by several of my research participants, and more broadly by clients living with other long-term conditions or struggling with food-related issues, a coach experienced in working with a range of psychological techniques may provide optimal support. Coaching at a psychological level could facilitate exploration of whether faulty assumptions or habitual thinking may be contributing to the feelings of fear and anxiety expressed by all my research participants. Also, deeper psychological and behavioural competence on the part of a mature coach can potentially help them better support the client in remaining psychologically safe while exploring issues.^{ix}

Four of my research participants described some sort of resentment at being told what to do by a healthcare practitioner. They each expressed a lack of desire to make changes in relation to the condition at the time of the interview. 'I've just basically ignored it'; 'she gave me a load of rules, I didn't follow them'; 'they've told me what I should and shouldn't do, that hasn't changed anything'.

A coaching approach with a focus on facilitating inner learning... deep thinking and reflection rather than advice-giving may provide an alternate approach with those clients who tend to respond to an educator with a child rather than adult ego state

Passmore and Whybrow note resistance is likely to occur when a coachee's stage of change is not matched with the approach taken by the coach.^x One participant provided an example of this: 'all the nurse does is sit there and moan at me. The more she does it, the worse it gets. I don't even listen anymore. Her current approach is scare tactics. ... she isn't diabetic herself; she is not having to eat nuts instead of chocolate every day. ... she told me to eat a quarter of a bag of chips... I never follow what she says.'

Miller et al note that where a practitioner increases emphasis on the negative outcomes of a behaviour, for example through 'scare tactics', the client is likely to become more entrenched in their view and move further away from making a change.^{xi} Within his writing on parent, adult and child ego states, Harris notes how use of the words 'should' and 'shouldn't' potentially indicate a parent state.^{xii} An interpretation of responses such as 'just basically ignored it' and 'I don't even listen' are clues to the presence of a child ego state in response. A coaching approach with a focus on facilitating 'inner learning... deep thinking and reflection' rather than advice-giving may provide an alternate approach with those clients who tend to respond to an educator with a child rather than adult ego state.^{xiii}

GOAL SETTING

The knowledge and skill relating to when and how to set goals with a client is another differentiator between a novice and an experienced coach.^{xiv} If goals don't resonate with the learning style of the client, the work can be ineffective.^{xv} There is a risk of coaching potentially failing to optimise change outcomes if the intention for the work doesn't align with the client's values and vision for the future.^{xvi}

Most of my research participants cited blood test results as their only measure of success in relation to diabetes management. They described the difficulty of remaining motivated to manage the condition alone for the period of up to 12 months between healthcare appointments and blood tests. All participants who relied solely on blood results were unable to cite any examples of resilience when confronted with health setbacks. Just one research participant had multiple goals that he was able to self-check without needing a medical appointment. His goals were across broad areas such as long-term fitness and family adventures: they struck a balance between aiming to live a long life and being gentle enough on himself to enjoy each day.

The goals my research participants had agreed with their healthcare practitioner were all generic, relating to improving health statistics. Ibarra discusses this type of outcome-focused goal as being problematic, generating concerns within the client about how they may be perceived if the goals are not achieved.^{xvii} This view was reflected in comments from my participants: 'I get into trouble whenever my numbers aren't right'; 'I feel like she is disappointed if I am out of range'; 'my numbers are good, she's happy, so I'm happy'. Ibarra goes on to discuss the increased motivation attained through broader thinking about success measures and creating a space in which clients are looking at 'possible selves... about the kind of person they want to become'.^{xviii} The participant with a broader set of goals – with his focus on his 'whole life' rather than blood test numbers – also cited resilience following setbacks and, unlike all other participants, didn't describe peaks and troughs in self-management between healthcare appointments.

TIMING OF AN INTERVENTION

In her book on diabetes and mental wellbeing, Nash notes that depression is two to three times more common in patients living with a chronic physical condition, such as diabetes, when compared to those who are not.^{xix} She states the 'burden of diabetes care with its lifestyle changes and unremitting self-management tasks, detrimentally effects the quality of life of the person living with diabetes'. Another study notes that diabetes burnout is common in people who have been living with the condition for an extended period.

Within my own research I found patterns among the participants in relation to the changing psychological impacts of this progressive disease. A wide range of energy levels, behaviours and emotions was discussed and displayed, particularly in relation to feelings of isolation, otherness, social stigma and the management of diet and exercise regimes as the disease progressed.^{xx}

WHO PROVIDES THE COACHING?

There is an ethical risk, with a potential conflict of interest, when a coach also plays another role such as healthcare provider to the client. I found that in much of the health-related coaching research coaches did undertake a dual role within the client's system, generally

as a nurse or other healthcare worker. In cases where a coaching practitioner works also as an ‘authoritative expert’, there can be a regular shift back-and-forth between ‘directive’ and ‘coaching’ modes. There may be a risk of inadvertently taking a manipulative approach based on the practitioner’s deep professional learning and what could almost be a hardwired desire to help by imparting knowledge.

CONCLUSIONS

Coach maturity: With my research data highlighting the presence of deep emotions, entrenched thinking, complex assumptions and diverse behaviours in relation to diabetes, my interpretation is that there is a strong argument for the use of coaches skilled in taking a blended approach to this branch of health coaching work. Knowledge of coaching psychology alongside a range of goal-setting methods may be of value.

Coachee readiness and intervention timing: Participants within my study who had low energy levels and expressed denial or apathy towards the diabetes diagnosis may have gained limited benefit from coaching – or any other intervention – unless it had a focus on goals other than health for health’s sake, and instead on aspects of life they felt energised about.

When considering the impact of timing, participants commented on evolving support needs throughout their diabetes journey. If we consider coachee readiness alongside timing, a system of referral or self-referral at a point where the client becomes energised and ready to make a change, because of evolving physical or psychological symptoms, may help ensure coaching opportunities achieve optimal results.

Who provides the coaching? De Haan notes the importance of independence within the coaching relationship and for coaches to feel they can work free from the influence of sponsors.vii As long as health coaching comes solely from a healthcare expert and from within a healthcare system generally taking a quantitative and positivistic approach to research and to measuring success,

it may be challenging to maintain this position of independence. Someone without a deep knowledge of diabetes or with mature coaching skills may be at lower risk of adopting a ‘telling’ approach. Professional coaches undertaking cost-effective group interventions and working alongside a diabetes care team may be an option worthy of further research. With the NHS reporting the cost of diabetes care and associated complications at approximately £10bn per year and rising, my overriding perception is that something has to change.xx

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Jo is an experienced personal development and executive coach. She has an MSc in coaching and mentoring, is accredited at senior practitioner level and also has a management career spanning over 20 years. Jo has supported coaching clients across many ages and stages of life. She has a firm belief that psychological and physical wellbeing cannot be separated, and she will often work with executive clients on both wellbeing- and career-focused goals. Jo has type 1 diabetes and through research and coaching practice has developed a keen interest in the ways in which coaching can be used to support diabetes management.

Jo has worked on a voluntary basis through the charity Macmillan Cancer Support, coaching people living with cancer. She currently works as partner coach for an organisation specialising in the provision of mental health coaching in the workplace and also at a university as a mentor on their degree-level coaching apprenticeship programme.

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The Recognized Accelerated Pathway (RAP) Route to Accreditation

Demonstrating your Commitment to Coaching

Our new Recognized Accelerated Pathway (RAP) route is a simplified process for coaches and executive coaches who have already achieved an EMCC accreditation or ICF credential.

The AC Accreditation team is here to support you through this process.

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- Builds upon existing competencies and coaching experience by demonstrating their personal approach to their practice.
- Encourages reflective practice and coaching supervision to apply that approach

The applicant guide and other material is available on our website and can be found here: www.associationforcoaching.com/general/custom.asp?page=RAPDetails

Announcing the launch of the AC Team Coach Accreditation Schemes for Individuals and Training Providers

After extensive research and input from key stakeholders, we are delighted to announce these new schemes are now available to members.

For Individuals there are three levels of accreditation based on training and experience. Applications are supported by evidence of CPD, supervision, ethics and some written elements.

For Training Providers there are also three levels to reflect the breadth and depth of training programmes available in the marketplace.

For more information, please see the AC website

COACHING, ADHD AND WELLBEING

Sarah Templeton shines a light on ADHD – what it is, why diagnosis is important, and how coaches can balance goal achievement with wellbeing for those with the condition.

I only discovered I had ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) when I was 51 – coincidentally the same year I qualified as a counsellor. I had trained as a coach previously and didn't know whether I would ever meet another ADHD person. Fast-forward seven years and I have met so many ADHD clients that I have had to take on more than 70 therapists to help me with the workload!

Receiving an ADHD diagnosis is critically important to clients' health and wellbeing because undiagnosed ADHD can massively affect both without you even realising why. Working integratively with ADHD clients is so beneficial. Not only do we include our counselling skills with ADHD coaching but psycho-education and self-disclosure play huge parts in helping each client, no matter their type of diagnosis (combined ADHD, inattentive ADHD or hyperactive/impulsive ADHD). Combined type is by far the biggest group: we have a combination of all the hyperactive and impulsive traits. Interestingly, I have found it is more often the inattentive ADHD clients who come to therapy.

I firmly believe this is because they suffer more with 'stuckness' and depression, and therefore become frustrated at underachieving. Their brains still fire off as many ideas, dreams and plans as the other two ADHD types but their lack of motivation and their procrastination usually scuppers these plans, leading to frustration, missed opportunities and potentially a wasted life.

Counselling skills come in extremely useful, as ADHD people are likely to have heard 20,000 negative comments by the time they reach adulthood. 'Stop fidgeting', 'sit still', 'why do you always have to knock that over', 'why do you have to do everything in such a rush', 'concentrate on what you're doing'... The list goes on, especially when people are undiagnosed/unmedicated. Of course, this affects feelings of self-worth and leads to low self-esteem.

Any number of counselling modalities are powerful at working with a client's self-esteem and my least favourite of them all, person-centred, is actually very good for this if handled in the right way. Another counselling modality that works brilliantly with ADHD brains is cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT). CBT is largely to do with identifying your thoughts, accepting that they are just thoughts and not necessarily facts, and turning negative thoughts and behaviours into positive ones. ADHD people are fantastic at catastrophising, and

I have found integrating CBT with coaching to be extremely powerful, indeed life-changing for many clients.

A lot of adults are being late diagnosed with ADHD; until 2009, it was thought to be a childhood behavioural disorder that you outgrew in your late teens. Not having a diagnosis means clients are more liable to addiction and impulsive and compulsive behaviours – including alcohol and drugs problems and eating disorders – all of which have an impact on their health and wellbeing.

THE POWER OF DIAGNOSIS

Modern science has shown that ADHD is the result of a different brain wiring – one that you are born with and you die with – and, since 2009, tens of thousands of adults have queued up to get diagnosed. It's these clients who benefit from counselling skills. What they go through is very similar to the grief process. A late ADHD diagnosis can bring anger, regret, guilt, shame, remorse and hundreds of other emotions that a counsellor can untangle.

Once they understand the condition, its positives and challenges, it is much easier for people to focus on their health and wellbeing – understanding why some things are much easier for them and some things feel totally out of reach. Routines, for example, are very difficult for people with ADHD. They like spontaneity and variety. Once they understand this, ensuring that their diet and their exercise is varied is critical; it often explains why previous health and fitness plans have failed at the first hurdle.

Self-disclosure can be extremely powerful. I was concerned in the early days that I was self-disclosing too much until my counselling/coaching supervisor told me that I had to stop thinking of it as 'self-disclosure' and consider it 'normalising'. As she explained, most of these clients had never met another ADHD adult and I was making them feel normal by telling them that I felt the same.

She was right. I began to see this myself. I could see the weight lifting from clients' shoulders when they realised they weren't the only person in the world who had any of the vast number of ADHD traits.

Psycho-education is so important. Some clients will have turned to Google, read every ADHD book they can lay their hands on, joined

ADHD Facebook support groups and used all that to work themselves out and understand their new diagnosis. I know I did. But some clients are the polar opposite and know absolutely nothing about their own condition. It's these people who often turn up in therapy, so therapists need to have a good understanding of ADHD to work with such clients.

The client may not know about emotional dysregulation being the most impactful element of ADHD. They may not have heard of rejection sensitive dysphoria, having a heightened sense of justice, wanting everything their own way or believing they know best – nor all the other myriad traits that make up ADHD. But being aware of these will give them a real understanding of their own behaviours and what might have led them into difficult situations. I have had clients who have lost numerous jobs because they wanted everything done their own way – which hasn't suited their employers!

THE ROLE OF THE COACH

So where does coaching come into all this? You will see more ADHD coaches than ADHD counsellors advertising themselves. People with ADHD are very often driven – one of their traits is 'always wanting more', as are restlessness and hyperactivity. They are never satisfied and want the next thing. They also have more compassion than most. It's very easy to see why ADHD clients want to move on, achieve more, change things, make a difference and help people.

This can very often be to the detriment of their own health and wellbeing because they don't have an off switch. They will push themselves to burnout; working with a coach to allow them to regulate their activities and also to look back and appreciate what they have achieved. People with ADHD tend to only look forwards.

ADHD brains tend to not want to wallow, but instead to accept a situation and put it in the past as quickly as possible. This is very probably why I have always considered myself more of a coach than a counsellor – despite five years of counselling training, a level-four person-centred diploma and a level-five CBT qualification.

Rushing ahead, not learning from the past, hyperfocusing and crashing headlong into the next exciting idea often thwarts people with ADHD from achieving.

Encouraging clients to see the bigger picture and to focus on their physical and mental health is something very few are able to do for themselves. A good coach can transform a coachee's way of looking at themselves. A coach can help them understand their past, to stop and recognise their thoughts and feelings, and identify unsuccessful behavioural patterns. These are important building blocks needed for meaningful change.

Coaching ADHD clients is most often fun and exciting. They aren't afraid to accept a challenge, they think big and have plenty of ideas. But coaches need to be aware that ADHD clients will often suffer from overwhelm and cannot regulate easily, so they will take on far too much and then become deflated when they don't achieve it. It's the coach's job to manage expectations and make sure that they work in bite-sized, achievable goals.

People with ADHD have poor short-term memories, so another job of an ADHD coach is to remind coachees of previous successes. Reaffirming achievements is crucial because coachees will often have forgotten them and will most certainly belittle them, thinking they are unimportant compared to their next goal. The coach needs to hold a balance. Be prepared to make more notes and keep a record of

achievements. It's highly likely your ADHD client will either forget these or lose the piece of paper they are written on!

Some clients with ADHD will prefer to work with a coach who doesn't have the condition. But they will expect the coach to understand ADHD and to be able to take that into consideration.

It's a very rare ADHD client who doesn't need integration of therapeutic input. I myself combine CBT, coaching and psycho-education with some counselling techniques. Considering their own health and wellbeing is very often low down on ADHD clients' agendas. It is up to the coach to ensure that they don't lose sight of this.

A final thing to note is that there is no standard ADHD presentation. Everybody with ADHD has a different variety of hyperactive, impulsive and inattentive traits. They have different severities and different coexisting conditions. Work out the strengths and challenges your particular ADHD client has, and then work with them collaboratively to define and meet their goals.

APPROACHES FOR AN ADHD COACHING RELATIONSHIP

1. Remember to text your client a reminder of their appointment. Do this the day before and then again a couple of hours before the session.
2. Don't ask clients to do work between sessions. It is usually much better to do the work during sessions.
3. Accept that goals might change. What excited your client last week may no longer be stimulating this week. It's up to you to focus your client and to dig deep as to why they have changed their mind. Often, when challenged, they will change it back again.
4. Accept your client may have poor and sometimes no short-term memory. Asking them to remember something you spoke about the week before is almost always going to be met with a blank stare.
5. Make sure they don't take on too much and overwhelm themselves. This can be crippling for ADHD clients.
6. Allow them to think big. ADHD people are leaders, they challenge the norm and think outside the box.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sarah Templeton is an ADHD author, counsellor, coach and campaigner. She is the managing director and lead therapist for Headstuff ADHD Therapy Ltd and is CEO of the charity ADHD Liberty. She is a member of the UK all-party parliamentary group for ADHD and is a campaigner for ADHD screening in police stations, young offender units and prisons. Her book *How NOT To Murder Your ADHD Kid: Instead Learn To Be Your Child's Own ADHD Coach* was published in 2021. Her second book, aimed at helping teachers understand ADHD, is due to be released in November 2022.

GAMES INTROVERTS HAVE TO PLAY

Tanya Sushchenko and Nicky Torode reflect on what it's like to be an introvert in the workplace – how to be true to yourself, and the role managers play in creating an environment where introverts can thrive.

How do two introverts, a coach and a senior marketing manager, best get into dialogue on these pressing topics? Live collaborative writing of course! A dance across the page!

We used a collaborative writing appreciative inquiry technique, essay in two voices (E2V – see below) as it enables co-creators to think, write and reflect together in companionable silence.

Our approach here mirrors the key message of this article – to be well and perform well, and to create appropriate conditions and diverse approaches based on the individuals' communication and processing styles. If you're a manager, team member or internal coach, remember: meet the employee where they're at.

COLLABORATIVE WRITING – TWO VOICES APPROACH

Some years ago, Tanya and I used a version of the essays in two voices (E2V) approach, a technique in appreciative inquiry created by Madelyn Blair. In E2V, participants agree a topic. They write live, separately but together, in six rounds, each with diminishing word counts (from 500 in first round to 80 characters in final one). After each round they read the other's writing and move to the next round.

For this article, we designed our own rules:

- We wrote freely in the first round on the topic workplace wellbeing and introverts.
- We wrote for 35-40 minutes each round.
- We chose when to write, stop, read others' piece and write more.

- At the end of each round, we bolded key words in each other's texts – you'll see this throughout the piece.
- We identified three emerging themes for our subsequent weekly write-ins.
- We used Riseup Pad – a web application that allowed us to see each other's writing grow, colour-coded, in real time.

The four themes we agreed:

1. Who is an introvert?
2. How to chase a career as an introvert
3. Consequences to our wellbeing
4. How to make it better for our mental health in the workplace.

Themes two and three were combined below as they are interlinked in practice. Some of the raw data was shaped for readability.

Our interest in the writing-as-thinking process

This method suited us both: I use writing as a development tool with groups and writing is in Tanya's heart, both professionally as a marketing manager and as an author. Plus, writing together as opposed to interviewing each other face-to-face felt – comfortably – like turning off the camera on a Zoom call. For introverts, we know that works – see *Coaching Perspectives* April 2022.

GAMES INTROVERTS HAVE TO PLAY: WELLBEING AT WORK

Must be something wrong with me

Am I good?

Do they know I'm good?

Stressed at being forced to not be myself

Overlooked because I'm not loud

World set up for extroverts

A separate world in my head

In this world, I have ideas, things that are done or can't be done

Sometimes imagining things feel enough

I could have done this and this thought adds to my helplessness

This helplessness is provoked by me

I don't want to shout my own praises

Why do I have to be vocal and visible to be rewarded?

Can I be a little invisible me instead, just for today?

But I'm wasting my talent if I don't speak up

Have to prove myself in other ways

Head down, work hard, compensate for my inadequacy somehow

Always pressure to show my worth

Pushing myself so hard

Under pressure, it's fight or flight

Exposed if I don't go along

Exhausted by the drama at work

On the edge of a breakdown

I can pretend

I can do what's expected

Faking it

Why am I not awesome anymore?

Why does nothing bring me joy?

Why do I feel burnt out?

What doesn't help?

WHO IS AN INTROVERT?

Tanya: In an extrovert-orientated business world, introvert is like a dirty word. At work we have an English mastery club. One day I brought up the topic of introversion and one young employee mentioned she was an introvert. No sooner had she said it, than an older guy dismissed it, saying she's too friendly and talkative to be an introvert. He's a real introvert – silent and conservative.

I don't see a contradiction here. You can be an introvert AND like people. You can be an introvert AND be friendly. You can be an introvert AND be fun. Introversion is just one trait out of dozens we possess.

Nicky: DISC and Myers-Briggs tests measure introversion-extraversion by source of energy and focus of attention. I know – now - I need time alone: I like reflecting and I'm best at brewing ideas solo. But I also experience 'highs' from sensing and intuiting from the external world. Things fall into place when I'm honest about my needs, communicate them and play to those strengths. It

sounds simple, but I spent many years and early careers going along with the expected, extroverted ways. I wonder if others even noticed. What matters is me, otherwise it takes its toll. Waking up and feeling I'm not being myself, day after day.

WHAT DOESN'T HELP?

Tanya: Business books and methodologies on success at work and in business are mostly based on extrovert-ish behaviours. Best practice is often designed from an extrovert's mindset and way of doing things. If we list all the things one is normally asked to do to have a successful career, it comes down to being an extrovert: small talk, build networks, personal branding, posting here and there.

Nicky: Swallowing scripts from work life, home life and social life. One-size-fits-all, modelling success of extroverts. Be like them. Feeling judged. Expectations that those introvert-ish ways can just be fixed.

WHAT HELPS?

Tanya: An **introverted boss is an eye-opener**. Sometimes you can learn from them, sometimes you see how you can deal with some of your downsides better. When we see how fellow introverts have the same problems and manage to solve them, it's like **a tailored shirt**.

What really helped is starting to observe myself and others. When we ignore our priorities and the things that bring us joy, we burn out. Having had psychologists, mentors and coaches also helped me know myself and be myself.

To sum up what helps – **never fake it till you make it!** And never believe that the only way to achieve your goal is the way your nature rebels against.

Every time I have a task that my nature protests against, I try to find a way to solve it my way. Sometimes the difference is subtle, sometimes it's just a thought, but it changes the world for me.

COACHING INTROVERTS

Nicky: Honesty is vital in order to get the most out of the coaching. The coach creates the conditions of safety – through welcoming, not judging, deep listening, empathy and giving time to think and respond. Trust emerges and self-honesty comes. One recent client had this moment in our third session when she explained why she hadn't pursued her agreed action points: they just weren't her. This was a profound moment, like she was saying to hell with this façade. This time and forever.

Journaling during the session is a way to gather and process thoughts through simple exercises like lists, dialogues or a letter. Introverts tend to journal. Other creative approaches involve using metaphors, guided visualisations, breathing exercises, closing eyes, movement and gestures and drawing. Also building self-knowledge through coaching on peak career experiences, identifying conditions for flourishing and learning about essence and scripts.

Tanya: I believe **introverts are built for insightful 1:1s**. Soft-skills training doesn't change a thing.

But 1:1, and now I am talking about coaching, is not simple either.

My first experience of working with a coach was the first time I heard 'fake it till you make it'. I was coached to be more impactful using well-known techniques. It was a good toolkit and I did my

‘homework.’ But I hated it so much, and this rebellion was so counter-logical; I had to rationalise it and just accept it. I just could not afford to add to that inner rebellion.

I never made that mistake again. I pay attention to who my coach is and what they believe in, and whether we **speak the same language**. And retrospectively, I know, I have picked introverted coaches since then.

They helped me to **find my voice** and **heal my traumas**. This dissolved my challenges.

FUTURE VISION

Imagine you are Chief Wand-Waver for a day. What would you create to promote inclusion and belonging for introverts returning to the post-pandemic workplace?

Tanya: It starts and ends with a manager. A manager is a person who can reward you for delivering results, or for being loud. A manager is the one who matches a task and a person, who has the power to moderate conversations to make them as **unbiased** as they can be.

Or they can ignore the fact that people and cultures are different, with the risk of damaging productivity.

Managers of all levels are the people who should be trained and coached to avoid bias and be knowledgeable about the benefits of diversity in the workplace.

If you ever get startled by how much those silent people don’t share, you are a lousy manager; you lead a team you don’t even know.

Nicky: Hybrid working is here to stay. It’s exciting to see ‘remote first’ in job ads and ‘100% introvert-friendly’ on online events these days. Cameras off for meetings, fewer virtual meetings. Team brainstorming through live chat on collaborative platforms, just like we’re doing now!

I’d have quiet rooms at the office like quiet compartments on trains! I’d have inhale time, pause time, built into schedules.

FINAL REFLECTIONS

Wellbeing.

*I am **well** when I am **being** myself.*

#No filter!

The noise stops.

I bring my full self to work.

Games I don’t have to play.

WHAT HAS WRITING TOGETHER BROUGHT TO THIS CONVERSATION THAT MIGHT NOT HAVE HAPPENED OTHERWISE?

Tanya: The things I write always reflect my current mood, thoughts and perspectives. It’s like I picked a 2D sheet of paper out of a 3D idea. But when we write together and I read Nicky’s piece it feels like an explosion! That single layer is transformed back into 3D, with a universe of colours, meanings and contexts.

Nicky: I liked the pace, the atmosphere, watching our words grow on the page. It calmed me, excited me. In a spoken interview, I’d have felt pressured to perform, give ready-formed perfect answers. Typing, watching, reading and seeing you just there, engrossed in the same thing, helped me find my voice and stretched my thinking.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Tanya Sushchenko has worked in global tech for over 15 years, including a decade at Microsoft as a senior marketing manager. She is host of the Introverts in Business LinkedIn group and author of a forthcoming book, *Introverts in the Post-Pandemic Workplace* (seeking representation). For further information see Tanya’s LinkedIn group.

[linkedin.com/groups/8762362/](https://www.linkedin.com/groups/8762362/)

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



Nicky Torode has been a career and entrepreneurial mindset coach for over 14 years, working with entrepreneurs, career wonderers and creative businesses. She facilitates journaling for success, wellbeing groups and a smart-thinking book club (no cameras!). She won an innovation award for a coaching employability course for a London local authority, and another for being an inspired trainer. She is author of a forthcoming book, *Whitespace: A Guided Journal for Maximising Entrepreneurial Mindset* (seeking representation)..

www.diamond-minds.co.uk

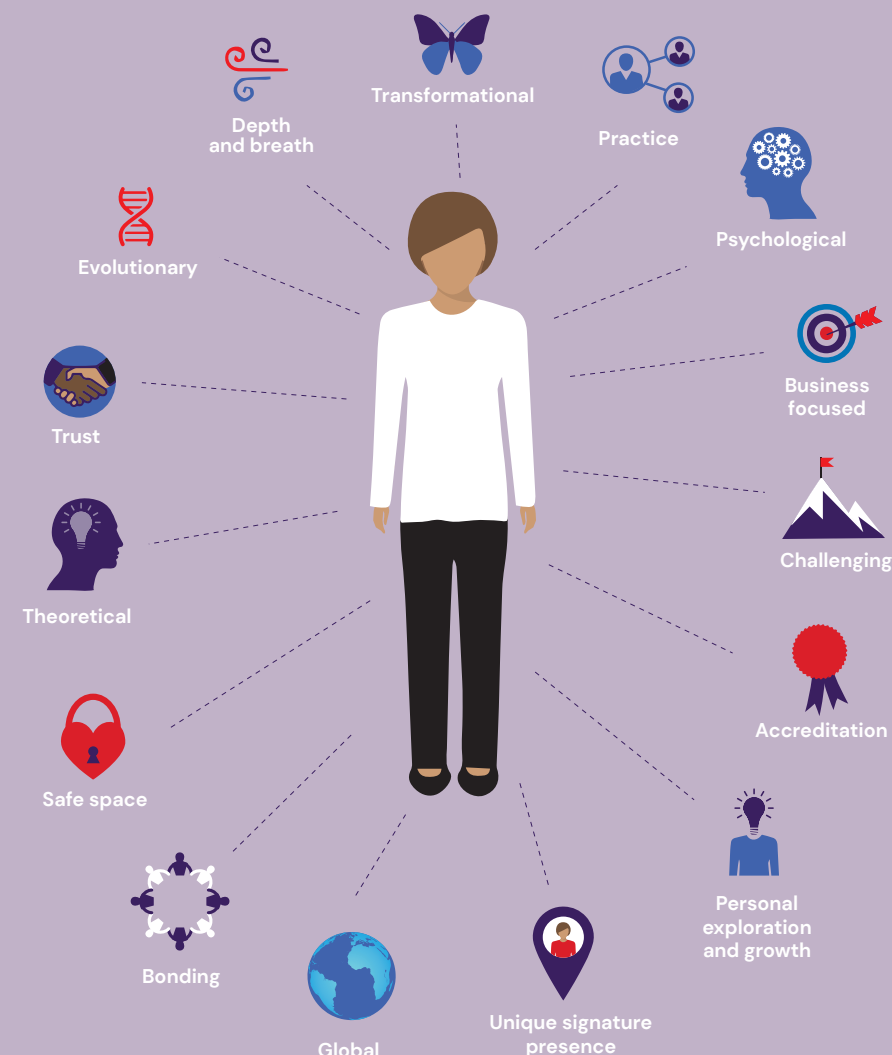
FURTHER RESOURCES

- Introverted Leadership Toolkit, (2011) South Central Strategic Health Authority and Welsh Government
- www.introvertedleaders.co.uk

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NOTIFICATIONS, APPS AND EMAILS: ESTABLISHING OUR DIGITAL WELLBEING

Lisa Blackett makes a compelling case to review and refine our relationship with digital technology for the sake of our wellbeing.

As with most habits and ways of being, we need to raise our awareness before we can change. Our awareness of how we interact with our digital devices is often only surface-level and rarely examined. Most clients I have worked with recently didn't come to coaching to improve their digital habits, but it has played a major part in their wellbeing outcome. Let's look at some typical cases.

CLIENT A: SENIOR EXECUTIVE

In exploring causes of work-related stress, this client mentions the pressure of responding to constant, insistent emails late into the evening. Despite knowing, on a certain level, that it was causing stress and guilt, taking her away from her husband and children, she felt a sense of responsibility to the organisation and a fear of not responding. This was normalised by both her and the organisation. Through observation of these behaviours and habits, her own values and desired outcomes, she was able to set boundaries. She created rituals to finish the day and close the door of her home office, leaving her laptop and phone out of sight, and therefore keeping work and home separate. At first this was a challenge, but as she persevered she became more productive and happy at work, and found she had a better quality of personal life.

CLIENT B: INNOVATION MANAGER

This client was struggling with her creativity and productivity but said she had no issues with her digital life. I suggested she observe her personal and work-related digital behaviour for a week, without judgement, and record how she felt. As a result, she discovered (to her surprise) that she:

- was spending much more time than she realised on social media and feeling worse afterwards;
- took her phone to bed and scrolled aimlessly;
- had email and work notifications on during the working day;
- and had stopped doing 'analogue' activities she loved such as reading, puzzles and exercise.

This awareness of behaviours and feelings allowed her to develop strategies. She now times herself out of certain apps, keeps her phone out of her room at night, has (and meets) reading goals and ensures her breaks are nourishing rather than tiring. She is now much more creative and generally more relaxed.

CLIENT C: FINANCE AND OPERATIONS MANAGER

This client came to coaching due to stress, pressure and fear of failure in a relatively new role. He said he was making various mistakes and worried he would be let go. Leaving email and other work-related messaging services open was significantly disrupting his attention and ability to get other work done. Additionally, he felt a need to respond (react!) to messages immediately, which was very stressful. He recently experimented by switching everything off and working for hours with no distractions, resulting in a great sense of accomplishment. He was able to do 'deep work', (see Jackee Holder's article *Going Analogue* in the April 2022 issue of *Coaching Perspectives*). It reinforced his understanding of how constant interruptions were damaging his work and wellbeing.

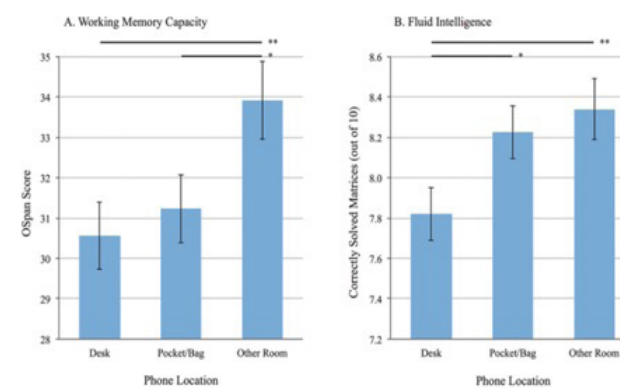
We all have some digital habits that don't serve us. What many organisations don't realise is that they create digital demands that are not only bad for the individual but for the organisation. The most common challenge to wellbeing and productivity is the constant demand of digital communication. In most organisations, the assumption that you are available by email is a given and many add other channels or communication apps. While the intention may be connection, especially with so many people working from home, the outcome can be damaging.

And if it is damaging, why do we persist? This is where the neuroscience comes in. We are wired to respond to stimuli for our survival. While our interactions with the world have changed, our brains haven't kept up and are still constantly working to find what might help us survive, with neurohormones playing a big role. Dopamine is released at the 'expectation' of a reward. It encourages us to take action to get what might sustain us, including whatever that email or text entails. Serotonin, which we associate with 'feeling good', achievement and esteem, plays a role in our pursuit of getting 'likes' on social media or the quick fix of answering an email. Oxytocin, which helps us bond to others as social beings, is present when we feel like we belong to an online group.ⁱ App designers know this and intentionally develop them to 'hook' us.ⁱⁱ

One 'hook' that is easy to disable is notifications. When you are writing a report or working on a budget and your email notifications are flashing, your brain cannot not see them. The same goes for app notifications on your smartphone. Another hook we can control is our device location. Even the presence of your phone keeps your brain alert to the possibility of something interesting contained

therein, reducing working memory and potentially even IQ (see Figure 1). Out of sight, out of mind is a useful adage to apply!

Figure 1: Impact of phone locationⁱⁱⁱ



When our attention is drawn in more than one direction, we 'task switch' – not multi-task, as is often believed. Task switching requires cognitive resources and there is a lag when we go back to what we were doing beforehand: we lose time and productivity. Additionally, the more external stimuli we experience at one time, the less our brain can filter what is important, with 'a chronic mismatch between the abundance of environmental information and the limited ability to process that information individuals need to be selective in their allocation of attentional resources'.^{iv}

We are less explorative and more exploitative (reaching for what is easy and accessible) in our thinking. Along with less effective cognitive processing, we experience reduced working memory and long-term memory^v, less creativity and increased poor decision making.^{vi} Creativity, imagination and innovation are engaged by the same parts of the brain as memory, and accessing our memories is part of our creativity.^{vii} It is also key in our ability to perceive, predict and analyse our world, in turn having an impact on our behaviour. Imagine all the stimuli are like papers that you need to file for later retrieval: when there are too many, they don't get put in their right place, they end up on the wrong shelf or on the floor, and then they're difficult to find when you want them.

The quality of our work, as well as our wellbeing, can improve by taking control of our devices and using them as tools, not the other way around. Modelling this as coaches, leaders, parents and partners will also enhance the quality of our communication and relationships.

The quality of our work, as well as our wellbeing, can improve by taking control of our devices and using them as tools, not the other way around

HOW CAN COACHES HELP?

There are numerous ways to support clients to improve their wellbeing in the digital world. Here are a few approaches to consider.

- Additional contracting when coaching virtually: suggest that your client switches off all notifications and puts any devices not required for the session in another room. You can suggest that they lock the time in their diary and include 10 minutes either side that are meeting and email free. In addition, consider moving around a couple of minutes before the session, or conduct it in a different space.
- Explore your client's relationships and behaviours with their devices and communications. Suggest that they observe, and if possible track, their digital behaviours: what triggers their attention? When and why? Consider what is supporting and what is hindering their wellbeing, and consider values and boundaries and how they apply to digital behaviour.
- For organisational clients, consider a review of their digital demands, meeting schedules, communication apps and 'right to disconnect' policies.

Once we better understand how we are spending our time in digital spaces, and how it makes us feel, we can make changes that improve our wellbeing.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Lisa's purpose is to support the wellbeing of individuals, organisations and society. Her coaching and leadership approach is informed by neuroscience, positive psychology and an MA in coaching, during which she researched remote versus in-person coaching. She recently completed a six-month digital wellbeing course, Consciously Digital.

Lisa is a non-executive director for NHS National Services Scotland and Potential in Me, a Scottish social enterprise. As an AC virtual event organiser, she enjoys supporting our wonderful speakers.

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SELF-CARE MATTERS – AND IT'S NOT SELFISH

Self-care is fundamental for individuals in an interconnected world and for the health of our planet. [Priya Tandon](#) explores its origins.

'Health is wealth': and, if I had a penny every time I heard this I would be very wealthy. Humour aside, I have understood that nothing is more valuable than health. However, I have also understood that health is emotional, mental and spiritual; wellbeing is an inclusive term that includes all aspects that make us human.

My journey with wellbeing started when I began to question stress. Why are we stressed when we have so many conveniences and amenities? Why do we have to manage stress? Clearly, my grandparents were doing something different even though they had more work in hand and fewer gadgets and tools. They ate healthily, were more joyful and embraced life even in their old age. It is hard to believe there were no issues or worries in their life!

This personal research took me into the heart of 'self-care' – a modern-day term. When my grandfather woke up early to do his exercises, that was self-care; when he used to choose fruits from the local farmer, that was self-care; when he would read a book in the evening and tell stories to his grandchildren, that was self-care; and when he used to laugh heartily, that was self-care. My grandmother would sit in beautiful surroundings watering the plants, humming under her breath and wearing the most beautiful clothes: that was self-care. When she talked about praying, offerings and yoga practices, that was self-care. They knew they needed this and had it embedded into their daily lives. Whatever the day brought, they

were wired to respond without knowing the meaning of stress management or self-care.

When we talk about the evolution of self-care, we ignore that it has always been there, and that's how human beings thrive. As a holistic-approach coach, self-care is for me like the root of the plant. If we were to water the leaves of the plant but not the roots, what do you think would happen to the plant? We know the roots are where water is needed for growth. Yet, we ignore the roots of self-care regarding health and wellbeing. Or worse: self-care comes with a block that it is selfish.

Self-care matters – and it's not selfish.

One cannot pour from an empty cup; therefore, fostering a healthy and balanced relationship with self is essential. Self-care is selfless in that it allows us to give our best to ourselves and to family, friends, coworkers and others in our lives.

My personal top five tips for self-care, and ones that I do myself, are to:

- Meditate and take nature walks
- Practise self-compassion
- Practise gratitude
- Ask for support
- Be true to myself

That also translates to coaching practice. I believe that when a coachee comes in for a session, a desire for self-care takes root. A coach facilitates, and the coachee starts watering the root and comes up with solutions to tend to the areas that need attention.

As a coach, I have learned to tend to my wellbeing garden, especially before and after sessions. I indulge in meditation practices to enable me to be fully present. I may meditate with the client during the session if interest is shown. Post-session, I always express gratitude and I know the value of having space between sessions as a safeguard for burnout and processing my emotions: it is all in service of being kind and compassionate towards oneself. I highly recommend that coaches have a coach for themselves that benefits their healthy being, growth and development.

When we talk about the evolution of self-care, we ignore that it has always been there, and that it's how human beings thrive

I find that a coach is like that feather in the cap of the mainstream medical field that complements and brings out the best for a coachee looking after their health and wellbeing. A coach can help lay a solid foundation for wellbeing but also help in building upon the solutions that conventional medical methods may offer. As a coach, we believe that every individual is whole, and all the answers lie within the individual: making this the basis of a coaching practice helps clients find and stick to the solutions they work upon.

This is not to say that the mainstream medical diagnosis is irrelevant but to emphasise that, where an individual can find the focus and motivation to work on the solutions they had found themselves, they are more likely to succeed – in any area of life. Issues such as trauma, clinical depression and suicidal thoughts need a medical professional. Still, at some point, if the client wants to engage a coach and a psychiatrist, it is possible – although it may need collaboration and require the coach to avoid stepping on the boundaries of a medical diagnosis. Still, if we keep in mind our client's wellness, then the outcome can be best suited to the client.

A holistic approach to coaching implies I see my client as a whole individual. We may have many tools for taking a holistic approach, such as meditation, energy healing, yoga postures or even tarot card readings, but all point in the same direction: an individual is not a half or a quarter life but a whole life. We don't need others to make us whole. There are also new and developing tools for understanding the 'why' behind a client's behaviour or responses – such as integrating neuroscience in the coaching session. Whichever the tool or technique, they should bring out the best for the wellbeing of our clients.

The field of coaching may employ technical and holistic tools, which are valuable, but this is a field where one human is interfacing with another human with the essential ingredients of emotions,

thoughts, experiences of the past, learning of today and expressions of the body – which make humans unpredictable by nature. Defined by active ingredients that shape us into whom we are, self-care fosters the understanding that we are humans and that the wellbeing of a coach is as important as the coachee.

Survival, health, and wellbeing are requirements for improvement in any direction, not only for clients but also for a coach and our humanity

On a broader note, we have gone through cycles of evolution to be where we are as humankind. Whether our actions take us back in time or pulse us forward is the question a conscious human mind introspects. Raising our consciousness collectively and moving forward is the only way we will progress. And if we have to strive in any area of our lives – from financial to spiritual gains – we must take care of our health and wellbeing. A poor person cannot think of spirituality: they only think of survival. Similarly, a sick person only thinks of being healthy and not progress. Thus, survival, health and wellbeing are requirements for improvement in any direction, not only for clients but also for coaches and our humanity.

Consciousness, awareness and being present and inclusive are key to being evolved and they separate us from animals who know to survive but lack conscious perception and action. The vision and awareness of being whole leads us to understand that we are our life creators. And with that knowledge, would we ever want to create a bad life? Suppose we are inclusive and understand that all that exists in the universe is interconnected. In that case, the air we breathe is exhaled by the trees, and what we exhale is inhaled by the trees. Would we ever think of hurting one another, or would we be motivated to take steps for self-care? Once we understand that we are creators, we will not only care for ourselves but others. In doing so we will create, care for and protect a healthy, eco-friendly environment for generations to come.

This is my prayer and wish for everyone – both as a coach and as a human – for a conscious world.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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

FACILITATING MEANINGFUL CHANGE

Kathryn Bean and Shannon Salentine describe the impact of the Hunger Project's integrated coaching programme for global community development leaders.

Global non-profit organisation The Hunger Project (THP) is on a mission to end hunger for good. They pioneer sustainable, grassroots, female-centred strategies to fight starvation and poverty around the world. Instrumental in the community-led development movement, THP mobilises communities to develop solutions, advocating for the adoption of similar approaches at every level of government. Between 2020 and 2022, EthicalCoach joined forces with THP to give leaders in this sector the tools and resources they need to thrive.

One of the first collaborative projects these organisations undertook was to create an integrated coaching programme that would support 30 THP leaders representing the US-based team, and 21 country teams throughout Africa, south Asia and Latin America. Coaching would be made available in several languages, including English, French, Portuguese and Spanish (based on the leader's preference). During two initial cohorts, 50% of participants were women.

Packaging multiple coaching approaches and tools, this programme specifically addressed the unique challenges and the type of social impact work these leaders undertake. At the end of the programme, leaders had strengthened their team, boosted their confidence as leaders and were able to drive stronger organisational effectiveness.

The Hunger Project realises that sustainable development requires individual empowerment and growth. That is why it champions a form of transformational leadership that inspires long-term, positive change in community members as a core part of its commitment to community-led development. An integrated coaching programme was designed to respond to the nature of the organisational structure of THP: multinational, multilingual, decentralised teams working at a fast pace, and located in various geographies and time zones.

There were two key goals driving the design and implementation of this integrated programme. Firstly, to improve the leaders' effectiveness through enabling them to know themselves and their teams better, and develop their team leadership capabilities. Then, to increase their problem-solving initiative so that individuals could develop solutions and options, taking the lead in solving problems.

PROGRAMME DESIGN

The programme included both individual and group-level support:

- **LPI (leadership practices inventory):** a 30-question survey as a first step in building a culture of self-awareness and reflection, establishing a clear vocabulary around leadership. It is also an opportunity for leaders to build their development goals around feedback.
- **Connection meeting between coach and client:** a 90-minute conversation to help leaders establish key issues, goals and guidelines for the coaching process.
- **Meeting between the leader, their supervisor and the coach:** a meeting intended to bring the expectations and focus of supervisors into consideration during the coaching process.
- **Individual leadership coaching for leaders:** six months of coaching sessions, twice per month (10 sessions in total).
- **Development and sharing of go-forward plan with supervisors:** helping leaders to stay accountable to the things they learned and the ways they grew.
- **Group coaching sessions:** virtual, one-hour 'leadership circle' sessions, convened five times over the six months to share

experiences, learn from one another, and receive training and resources from the coach facilitators in order to integrate new leadership practices.

- **A final 90-minute individual meeting between the coach and client** to summarise accomplishments and agree on future strategies.

OUTCOMES

Overall, leaders reported that the biggest benefits from their coaching experience were in terms of self-awareness, confidence, honesty and innovation. Overall, feedback was very positive: 96% of leaders said they would recommend this coaching programme to their colleagues at The Hunger Project, while 74% said that the positive shift they experienced with coaching is a permanent one. Ninety-six per cent of leaders also said that the programme met their expectations, while 61% said that the programme exceeded their expectations. The biggest take-away was that leaders changed meaningfully. Individual coaching drove specific, outcomes in three key areas:

- **Leaders became more confident, capable and aware of their impact.** They developed skills vital to the functioning of their team and the pursuit of their mission. Leaders reported having increased confidence and increased capacity to navigate tension between management and leadership. Overall, leaders also found that the programme supported a deeper awareness of professional behaviours affecting them. As one leader shared: 'It helped a lot to organise my leadership. It also opened up new visions and made me realise more ways to be a good leader.'
- **Teams got stronger.** There were significant improvements in the leaders' capabilities to motivate and empower their teams. One leader shared how their team became committed to specific goals that the programme helped them illuminate: 'The programme helped in working better with others and getting them to be their best. I am able to better listen, direct and delegate at the same time. I've also reduced the number of instances that I unintentionally antagonise others.'
- **Programmes worked better, advancing the mission of the organisation.** Whether it was enabling innovation or helping teams to align to the strategic direction of an existing project, leaders saw meaningful change in the capability with their team. This included innovating the work, solidifying strategies, thinking strategically, analysing solutions and making informed decisions. According to one leader, they were able to shift from focusing only on short-term, urgent matters to longer-term objectives: 'The programme helped me to identify faster what gets us closer to our mission.'

MEASURING SUCCESS

To calculate return on investment, EthicalCoach and THP used three key measures of leadership within an organisation, established through the LPI.

- **Self-awareness:** an understanding of strengths, weaknesses and limitations, of how to gather and process information, and of how to handle ambiguous and stressful situations. It also sheds light on others' perceptions and the quality of interactions with others.

- **Business ownership:** the control over an enterprise, providing the power to dictate operations and functions.
- **Strengthening leadership:** a leader's confidence to lead and influence in a collaborative and respectful way, while providing praise and recognition to their team.

Leaders' feelings about their relationship to these leadership measures were surveyed, working on a scale from one to 10, before and after their participation in the programme. Every one-point change was equated to two hours of time saved. The number of hours saved was then multiplied by the hourly wage of the leader in United States dollars to provide a measure of return on investment (ROI).

Looking at leaders across Africa, south Asia and Latin America who participated in the programme, including an estimated hourly rate of the coaches that volunteered their time for the programme, the return on investing in a leader's development was 237%. Removing coaches' hourly rate because they volunteered their time increased the ROI to 932%.

An integrated coaching programme is a uniquely powerful tool when working at the community level to stimulate development through local leadership

LEARNINGS AND PROGRAMME EVOLUTION

The programme has evolved to serve fast-emerging employee and organisational needs. From inception, the strategy has been to learn from each cohort and refine the programme to offer the best experience. The sustainability of an integrated programme is dependent upon ensuring that, at all phases, it continues to support the needs of the clients. Systematic 'learning moments' are gathered through a post-coaching client survey, a mid- and programme-end coach survey, and annual, qualitative interviews with organisational leaders.

In response to feedback, the programme evolved in the following ways:

- **Client education:** EthicalCoach and THP came to understand that the audience's familiarity with the principles of coaching must not be assumed. Continuous education for future coaching clients, and their employers, is essential. The introduction of a welcome webinar for clients (taking place before they are matched with their coach) provides a coaching demonstration, an insight into lessons learned from a previous cohort and an opportunity for new coaching clients to ask questions.
- **Focus on individual coaching:** establishing where client is at in their leadership journey.
- **Building internal champions:** after learning about the need to educate organisations, the programme has evolved to provide coaching to leaders at different levels. When senior leaders receive coaching, they serve as advocates for the benefits of coaching.

- **Streamlining the integrated programme:** the content has been modified to only include components that are most impactful and accessible to clients. This involved removing the group coaching due to time and language constraints, the three-way meetings with supervisors and the 360° assessment.

FINAL THOUGHTS...

An integrated coaching programme is a uniquely powerful tool when working at the community level to stimulate development through local leadership. The adaptability of the practice allows local visions and perspectives to be factored into the leadership development process. The focus on transforming leaders' mindsets and capabilities enables sustainable change through deep investment in the right human capital. Finally, this programme has shown that an integrated approach creates meaningful outcomes at each level of the organisation – team, personal, and programmatic.

Ethical Coach is always looking for new volunteers and partners; discover more at ethicalcoach.org. Visit thp.org to find out more about The Hunger Project

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Kathryn Bean is a certified human resource leader who has led national teams of learning specialists, coaches, business analysts and customer service agents, specialising in talent management with deep experience in coaching, change management, learning and development, employee engagement and strategic resourcing. She is the director of coaching initiatives and partnerships for EthicalCoach. Kathryn is leading pro bono leadership coaching engagements globally, with organisations such as Global Shapers Community, UNHCR, the WILD Network, The Hunger Project, Amref Health Africa and Justice Innovation Lab.



Shannon Salentine is an executive leadership coach, facilitator and global development consultant. She works with individuals and groups to find clarity in their purpose, take action and make a difference in the world. Shannon believes that radical self-trust, understanding your life purpose and acting courageously are keys to living the fully integrated and authentic life you deserve. She is the founder of Lead for Good, a coaching company that supports leaders and organisations to reimagine, reconnect and recommit support for those who are taking the steps to make a difference in our world. www.leadforgood.co



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PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH WELLNESS THROUGH COACHING

This conversation between **Joe Roe**, a mental health coach, and **Caroline Anthony**, a coaching supervisor, looks at the role of coaching in inspiring self-care, how coaching complements mainstream and alternative healthcare, and how to hold the space effectively when a client shares their mental health state.

Caroline: Within your coach role, can you share an example of how you coach to inspire self-care for your clients and other coaches?

Joe: I use an extensive coaching toolbox to bring about resourceful lasting change to mental health and well-being. Have you heard of the saying: 'you can't pour from an empty cup', right? This inspired my creation of a simple coaching tool designed to promote self-care called 'Hug in a Mug'. I have found this tool effective for my adult, child and coach clients.

This tool starts with clients creating their mug, for example, drawing or using their actual favourite mug. Then through coaching questions, clients fill up their mugs with their self-care responses. I have created ever-growing flexible coaching questions, enabling you to bring your style of questions.

Here is a flavour of a handful of themes explored through coaching questions:

- Being kind to your mind
- Kindness to others
- Being relaxed, calm and peaceful
- Nurturing and taking care of self
- Mindfulness of the four seasons and nature
- Hobbies and trying new things
- Feeling healthy inside and out e.g. enjoyable exercise, healthy mood food, staying hydrated
- Confidence boosters
- Sound sleep hygiene
- Vibe tribe supportive network
- Inspirations eg: quotes, books, films, tv, internet
- Gratitude attitude
- Purpose
- Mojo and feel-good factors e.g.s., motivation, happiness, fun

To promote self-care routines and habits, clients then decide how they wish to use their unique 'Hug in a Mug' such as priorities, frequency and picking something intentionally or randomly.

Joe: Within your supervisor role, how do you inspire self-care for your coaches?

Caroline: I always check in on how a coach is within the initial stage of our supervision session: this is a strong indicator for me and them to monitor their wellbeing themselves. I have a framework that I refer to when supervising coaches around managing overwhelm. For instance, Joe in February 2022 recognised some triggers that potentially could create a situation of her moving into unwellness. Joe contacted me to work through managing this situation within a supervision framework which we contracted into our work together.

My framework consists of the following holistic approach to explore:

- Sleep
- Diet
- Grounding
- Focusing on simplified tasks/activities
- Respecting creativity
- Exercise
- Person-centred
- Choice
- Managing the pace of life
- Clear diary of non-essential appointments/tasks

All of these were pertinent for Joe: to make choices within each area for temporary changes to her work/personal life and allow space to do things for herself that were essential to staying well. If it had been necessary to talk with her mental health team, then Joe would have done this. Fortunately, this rejigging allowed Joe to move forward in a much gentler manner which meant she stayed well.

I support coaches that feel overwhelmed within work with a client and their behaviours. I utilise coaching to gain a perspective to offer choices around how coaches move forward within this work or the options coaches can present to their client, while promoting and working within a framework of safe practice both for the coach and client.

Caroline: What are your thoughts on coaching complementing mainstream and alternative health care practices?

Joe: With my person-centred coaching approach and personal experience of mental unwellness, I'm a passionate believer that coaching offers people another option for mental health wellbeing. There is no one size fits all, and coaching promotes healthy conversation to explore client options of how coaching can complement mainstream and alternative health care.

Best practice in the UK involves signposting to the National Health Service (NHS) for medical professional support and guidance; this alongside exploring alternative and holistic complementary approaches, can lead to a balanced and blended practice for clients. This includes medication, talking therapies, coaching, meditation, mindfulness, NLP, yoga, reflexology, reiki and acupuncture, to name just a few.

My lived experience when sectioned in a secure mental health unit, was that a couple of staff had person-centred coaching skills. I found these conversations to be the most beneficial as I felt listened to in a safe space: they built rapport and trust, and asked me questions to explore my options to feel empowered to move forward with goals and towards mental wellness.

The NHS offered me medication, counselling, CBT, psychoeducation and mindfulness. I prefer to use the most beneficial blend to regain and

maintain my mental wellness. Coaching became my personal biggest game-changer alongside NLP, medication, lifestyle changes, alternative practices, and a supportive network to bring about a holistic approach.

In the UK, there is a shift towards NHS resources integrating with mental health charities offering coaching approaches. I think this is promising for the coaching sector to become more recognised for mental health wellbeing.

Coaching promotes healthy conversation to explore client options of how coaching can complement mainstream and alternative health care

Joe: What are your thoughts on this holistic approach, Caroline?

Caroline: Coaching offers a small, gentle approach when relating to mental health or wellbeing conversations with clients. A safe space can be created for clients to be open and explore their choices or options in general and gain the perspective that they need support for their mental health within this holistic approach. Clients may have never shared their inner wellbeing with others: the rapport and trust that are established within a robust, healthy coaching environment can be the first instance that individuals have felt safe enough to share their thoughts and emotions.

This is personally something I have experienced working with adults and children. An example of this was a single mum of four children who was experiencing anxiety and an eating disorder. Through our conversations, she chose to speak to her General Practitioner to access specialised counselling around her eating disorder and anxiety. This led to her returning to work part-time, after many years of unemployment, obtaining her driving licence and generally living a fuller life.

This can be a valid first step outside the arena of professional NHS medical support, which the individual may not feel able to initiate. Through sharing in the coaching arena, this may be a supported method for the individual to work through, accessing professional medical advice through the non-judgemental approach of the coach, in recognising the clients' mental wellness is a necessary area to address.

Joe: When a client shares their current mental health state unexpectedly within a coaching conversation, from your professional experience, what best practice advice would you give to a coach?

Caroline: Be mindful of your behaviours within your coaching approach when presented with sharing from the client around their mental health state. Acknowledge what the client has shared while remaining grounded and receptive. If you can hold the space and conversation safely for the client even if you do not feel equipped to manage the situation, you can utilise your listening skills for whatever comes into the conversation with the client. This still supports the client: they have trusted you and this brings about an opportunity for them to explore their options. Coaching can become a safe and trusted holding space for clients to share this within their coaching conversations.

Caroline: Joe, what are your thoughts on options about the direction of coaching or signposting for clients?

Joe: Over 792 million people are affected by mental health issues worldwide. Recent reports suggest these figures are increasing with

contributing factors such as a shift towards removing the stigma that it is ok to talk about our mental health, added to current affairs of the pandemic, increased cost of living/inflation and war/conflict. I predict an increase in clients' readiness to share their mental health states with their coaches.

To support building a coach's confidence and that of our clients, there are a wide variety of options that a client can access support around their current mental health state. The following is a framework that I professionally work within, staying within coaching boundaries, supported by essential supervision and The Global Code of Ethics for Coaches, Mentors & Supervisors.

- Engage in coaching where appropriate
- Awareness of when coaching becomes therapy and signposting other support such as talking therapies, mental health charities and medical professionals
- NHS guidance for UK clients to access urgent help for mental healthⁱⁱ

Caroline and Joe have created an ever-evolving personal framework of best practice through supervision and coaching, in line with accreditation standards, training and experience.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Joe Roe With 20 years of coaching experience, 6 years of these within mental health coaching. She has personal lived experience of anxiety and bipolar manic episodes with psychosis and being sectioned twice in a secure mental health unit. Joe is a highly credible skilled coach with a Coaching Diploma, an NLP Practitioner, extensive training, and an Accredited Member of the National Council of Integrative Psychotherapists (NCIP Accred.) Coaching has been the 'game changer' for her clients and her own mental wellbeing



Caroline Anthony Brings 30 years of experience supporting children and adults around the fundamentals of emotional and mental wellbeing, to empower them to thrive and succeed within their choices in life whilst encountering the many difficulties that can arise. Caroline supports other coaches through supervision to further develop purposeful coaching practices whilst building good self-care for themselves.

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RESEARCH AND COACHING: PERSPECTIVES AND USE OF SELF

Is there a budding researcher inside you? **Gillian Squirrell**, new lead of the AC’s Enquiry and Research Special Interest Group, explores the parallel skill sets of researchers and coaches and invites us to engage in some qualitative research of our own.

Each of us has a unique path and our own way of travelling, which is why we invite you into yours. I have been a life-long researcher. I have memories of long before I was an academic of being a researcher as a child undertaking self-created projects on lions, or investigating a teacher’s in-passing comment about ancient cultures; later in life I remember doing research at the desk bought for entry to senior school and the rituals of homework. There has always been the thrill of the chase: being some sort of Sherlock Holmes of the library, virtual or otherwise. A university role was a safe container for such enthusiasms, and of course had the imprimatur to open various doors. However, knowledge-making is a far more distributed affair, with those thought leaders featuring in the *New York Times* bestsellers list not necessarily coming from a university department. The researcher identity – often with us as children – does not have to go to ground and can always be reclaimed.

As an academic I have always – or at least once I had confidence and independence – been interested in the interplay of action and research, one there to leverage and extend the reach of the other. In my case, it has been action in the arenas of social justice and welfare. Elements that hold significant interest are those of participatory research and evaluation research, and building capacity in organisations and individuals to add the identity of researcher to a panoply of other roles.

Earlier this year I was fortunate enough to take on the role of leading the Association for Coaching’s Research Special Interest Group (SIG). It had run for a year and this seemed a good point to take stock for setting the coming year’s agenda and to consider how the group might best serve the broader AC community. I set up some questions to explore the topics and formats that were most energised and how our SIG might serve the AC. The night before our meeting I realised I hadn’t asked the most obvious questions of all: what do people consider research to actually be? What is ‘research in mind’ or indeed ‘the researches in mind’ that people hold? Those constructions are enormously powerful no matter their accuracy.

Stepping into exploring ‘research in mind’ gave rise to exercising some prejudices and fears within the SIG. Positivism and quantitative methods

were held aloft, alongside fears that individuals did not know how to read or interpret certain statistical tests, let alone administer them, or fears that if something did not have a quantitative base it might lack generalisability. Much about ‘research in mind’ can carry the baggage of arguments for positivism or the value of experimental designs over qualitative approaches. Older inherited prejudices can rumble on, even though many within the social sciences favour mixed methods and see the value of a range of qualitative, participatory and creative approaches to research and evaluation research.

Such concerns within the SIG were counterbalanced with ideas of research as learning, journeying, reflection and enquiry. Capturing this spirit, we renamed the group as the Enquiry and Research SIG: enquiry and questioning very much embrace the importance of ideation, hunches and intuitions.

The following session, we looked at a thought piece on the parallels of practices, perspectives, skills, qualities and orientations that coaches might possess with qualitative researchers and approaches to qualitative research. While not decrying the value and importance of survey-style work or experimental designs as appropriate to certain research questions, this thought piece was an activity to prime the thinking that coaches have many skills and understandings they might step over: ones that have wonderful crossover with undertaking some types of research activity and embracing the role of researcher. It is a role that coaches may adopt to explore coaching and coaching practices, as a small-scale project by themselves, with others or with academics.

In the service of thinking about capacity-building and adding research to coaches’ identities, we share this piece in progress, along with an invitation to join the SIG. While this is only a quick sketch, it may be a stimulus to think about the honed skills, perspectives and practices a coach may have taken for granted, nor appreciated their transferability. It may be a stimulus for thinking about some already available capacity to engage in qualitative research and enquiry activities.

Skills, orientations, attributes, qualities	Qualitative research	Coaching
Use of self as instrument	The researcher is reaching out to form a research relationship with a participant. There are particular rules to the interaction requiring self-management; but authenticity, perhaps some sharing, management of the power dynamic, genuine appreciation and non-judgement are all called for. Awareness of the impact of researcher on participant and being alert to feelings engendered by the participant are important in contextualising the research data collected.	Being very in tune with oneself is important for coaches, as is recognising those shifts in energy and feelings that a client may inspire (boredom, low energy, excitement, engagement, confusion). There are guidelines directing coaches in their client interactions that require self-management, awareness and ethical approaches.
Questioning: open/powerful and being quintessentially curious	Unstructured or non-survey-style interviewing – or even having ‘conversations with a purpose’ perhaps with only a topic guide – take the interviewer very much into the research participant’s world. Meaning, weighting of importance, type of language used, emphasis, values and significance all have potential to show the researcher unanticipated or unknown areas of importance, as well as the significance that participants may or may not place on an area of research interest or research question. Such methods may generate insights quite different to the researcher’s expectations.	Questions are the fuel of effective coaching, along with the capacity for listening to what is said, silences and what is not said. Accepting and working with what is said and not falling into patterns of surface questioning or advice giving is important, which may feel less intrusive for both coach and coachee.
The importance of the language used, negotiation and development of shared meanings and meaning creation	The importance of the language used by research participants underscores framing, significance and meaning for them. This could be quite different to the concepts and constructs of a researcher or research team. Lack of time spent deconstructing language and meaning can involve stepping over what is meaningful and significant. Erring in such ways could mean missing real insights into the research questions.	Not bringing assumptions into the session and clarifying what a client means, repeating back, using client language and exploring what is meant by a term are all vital. Otherwise coaching could, like a research interview, head off down a less helpful or meaningful path.
Developing a shared worldview	Stenhouse, an educational researcher, spoke of the power of sitting alongside a research participant and looking out on the world as they perceived and interpreted it. It’s a demanding, humbling and very privileged experience to be invited to enter the world – and worldview – of another.	The coach challenges their own experiences and assumptions, and works to build shared understanding, having suspended judgement as to what they perceive as right or important.
Edginess and clarifications	Within the context of understanding the potential power dynamic within a researcher-participant relationship there are opportunities to really delve into the worldview, sense and meaning-making of a research participant. Of course, implicit in such deep dives and probing questions should be the researcher questioning the power dynamic and recognising what they are taking from a research situation and why, and what might be offered back. Data collection and interviews are not a form of word-based smash and grab.	Overstepping models and possibly safer routes of questioning to explore with the client the process they have the courage to bring to a session. Metaphors, clarifications, challenges, enquiries and encouraging the adoption of other perspectives. Exploring modalities such as somatic work, narrative and creative writing may help extend the client’s journey. The coach has opportunities to provide a hugely expanded container for the client’s growth.
Power and dynamic	The research relationship will have a power dynamic – perhaps inherent in the nature of the research topic, the context of the participant or the context of the researcher. It is important to understand how the researcher and research is perceived by both participant and researcher. Ethical research practices should guide the process of data collection and usage.	A coach has a potentially powerful role, and ethical guidelines can help steer the coach to temper that and have clear boundaries.
Checking own understandings and interpretations	The researcher seeks to clarify and, by weaving back through answers and collected data, to understand better the participants’ worldview. They will seek to extend or even challenge the researcher’s own interpretations and assumptions.	Coaching depends on the iterative process of checking meaning – of what has been said and what is understood by the client – and not running on personal whims, insights or assumptions.

Skills, orientations, attributes, qualities	Qualitative research	Coaching
Creative approaches	Some research questions, contexts and respondents might engender potential for selecting creative activities with which participants can engage – and which may elicit very different data than would have been discovered by the researcher's questions alone.	Coaching may be practised in ways that are very word dependent. Sometimes clients are expert at word parrying, offering a deluge of responses that enable them to slide away from what is more charged. Clients may also not have the language for what they want to say or to formulate the concept they wish to share. Other modalities to explore and express might more readily surface what a client wishes to emphasise or explore. See Figure 1 for ideas of research methods that could be applied in coaching contexts.
Observation: pauses to speech events, body language, positioning to landmarks, others, self in the room	The researcher observant of more than simply what is said and its delivery.	The coach uses their observational skills in placing what is said within a broader context and what may be supporting a client's ease or lack of.
Running date categorisation and noting links between data: returning to previous commentary, meaning making, preoccupations, interpretations etc.	The process of listening is an active analysis of what is heard. Researchers take opportunities to cycle back or clarify, to tease out discontinuities, contradictions or that which may be downplayed.	The importance of listening to what is said and given emphasis, exploring changes in emphasis, undermining or boosting previous positions.
Type of attention paid to defining the client as subject/object: choices, judgement, being non-judgemental	Researchers will not be honouring the work or the participant if they arrive with preconceptions or judgement, a sense of prior knowledge, or ideas based on previous reading or interviews. There is a clear choice in language adopted and role assigned (subject, participant, respondent). Awareness of researcher fatigue or burnout, and of shifts in interest and attentiveness, is highly informative.	The importance of self-awareness on the part of the coach and the significance of reflection-in-action underscores the value of keeping a log and exploring: perceptions of the client; the flow of coaching sessions, such as energetic changes and interests; and reflections on coach impact. This involves engaging in more broad-brush interrogations of how the coaching work is currently conceptualised.
Data analysis: relationships, interpretation, potential impacts and consequences	The qualitative researcher will be looking out for patterns, links between what has been said and what might have been said by other research participants, and for explorations from other contexts. The researcher will be asking questions, probing angles, and asking about patterns or how an experience has come to be interpreted in a certain way.	A coach working with a huge amount of aural information will be thinking about what is said and how it relates to previous sessions, goals, values, visions, intentions and accounts of actions essayed. They will look at patterns and repetitions. They may challenge, interrogate or confirm – doing so through questions, metaphors and images, exploring the material in other ways, or perhaps suggesting enquiries or out-of-session activities that might help the coachee gain insight.
Expert or naive traveller?	The researcher has a choice as to how they fashion their role and their relationship with a participant. Have they heard it all before? Are they able to suspend belief and to take the respondent as they represent themselves? What is the relationship that the researcher assumes to the participant's life and the research topic? Being less of an expert on the individual participant's life does not undermine the researcher's expertise: it means they are foregrounding certain types of research values and awareness of the potential power dynamic. It also demonstrates commitment to the uncovering of differences of perspective, experience and interpretive meanings.	Coming to the coaching client as expert on their life is to do so with respect and awareness that coaching clients hold the keys to their own problems, issues and potential solutions. It is to coach without adopting a one-size-fits-all paradigm.
Self-awareness/knowledge of assumptions	The role of professional reflection is paramount. Schon distinguishes reflection-on-action and reflection-in-action. Both are important. For example, how might the researcher be skewing or shaping an interview, the respondent or the focus group? What was said or done could inadvertently affect disclosure and trust, and what might be done or said to regroup the research process?	The role of professional reflection is fundamental in coaching. How is the client responding to the impact that the coach is making, to what is being said or asked or even to the session's silences? Is there something that the coach does in the moment that changes the complexion of the speech event or the temperature of the client's engagement? What might be done to highlight or draw attention to this and to regroup or seek a response as to what took place?

Skills, orientations, attributes, qualities	Qualitative research	Coaching
Log/journaling	A practice of keeping reflections and charting journeys into research, of recording findings or in-process insights or conclusions, is hugely important as data – not least for the researcher to return to and see where they may have started to formulate a view or a position, where there may have been choice or decision points in the research process or relationship, or where they may have exerted influence in interim analysis.	Reflection after action has much merit. For example: considering the broader aspects of the coaching session; considering the role of the coach; exploring what was not said and what might have been left unattended to; asking why this was so; and speculating on the role of the system in the coaching relationship or session. Logs might explore patterns, emotions or feelings raised. All such material is valuable for the coach in future sessions – both with that client and other clients.

Figure 1: Creative approaches to research and/or coaching



ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Gillian Squirrell has worked as a researcher, lecturer, curriculum developer and manager within universities, and as a consultant and evaluator to social justice and welfare sectors and NFPs. She has founded two small non-profits in the UK and US. A practising and accredited coach (CTI and ICF) accredited in several models for coaching, she has particular interest in equine-assisted coaching and leadership, and working with natural and man-made environments in coaching and leadership activities. Current projects include work on self-leadership, memoir and narrative writing, and coaching with individuals and communities not often accessing coaching.

GET IN TOUCH

The Enquiry and Research SIG welcomes any AC member with an interest in thinking about enquiry, research or reflection, has a germ of an idea for a project, or is underway in developing a project or programme. The SIG intends to offer some research and enquiry sessions during the upcoming year and would welcome knowing what might be of value to you. To contact us on any of the above topics, please email editor@associationforcoaching.com.

You can expect a research or enquiry-based column in each issue of *Coaching Perspectives*, either as we report on something occurring within the SIG or a project or programme a member is developing, or a thought piece or account of someone else's work.

MINDFULNESS FOR TEAM WELLBEING

Team coach and mindfulness teacher **Carroll Macey** explains how mindfulness supports coaching for collective wellbeing.

The principle of wellbeing can be defined as ‘the state of feeling healthy and happy’ (*Cambridge Dictionary*, 2022). Without it, teams run the risk of increasingly poor decision-making, and having less energy to achieve their goals and fewer resources available to ensure they do no harm in their relationships with others and to themselves as individuals. It is so important. So, what is wellbeing in the context of team coaching?

LIFE PARADOXES

We live in a seesawing world, constantly tipping wildly as one side becomes heavy and the other light. There are many dichotomies in life, such as everything that has a beginning must have an end – which is difficult for those of us who find it hard to embrace change. That greater success, happiness and health comes from working less is evidenced in many books and research papers over recent years (we don’t really appreciate this until we have a health crisis or burnout). So too that there is no ‘I’ in teams, and that teams are a complex system of individuals where the ‘I’ is multiple and the possibility of both conflict and harmony is a constant polarity. Creating an effective team is like taking all the ingredients for a cake and putting them together into a mixer. Let’s explore this further in a mindful way.

THE MAGIC OF TEAMS

Take each ingredient needed for a cake. Notice the unique quality of each one. The colour of the light brown sugar, the way the light catches the crystals, the smell. As you add the flour into the mixing bowl, a little puff arises, coating the sides slightly. The richness and texture of the cocoa powder, the taste as some of it is inhaled. Break the eggs. Notice the smoothness of the shell, the heaviness of the yolk and the viscous, transparent nature of the egg white. Add some milk and the whole bowl is a fascinating swirl of separate colours and textures. Pour in boiling water. Feel the heat as it flows into the mixture; now switch on the mixer and the cake mixture becomes liquid. Every ingredient is still there adding its unique flavour and

texture, yet without each one of those ingredients the cake will not be the same. Now we put it in the oven and bake for 25 minutes and you have something entirely different, amazing in visual appeal, taste and smell.

This is what team coaching is: a seemingly magical transformation, a combination of individuals that is greater than their individual parts. It’s helping the team make meaning about what is present and emerging in the moment in their relationships, tasks, processes or aims in service of meeting the team’s needs: baking the cake so that it rises to its full potential of taste and texture! The ingredients that made the cake are still there, but they are metamorphosed.

BEING PRESENT

Mindfulness-based approaches are central to my practice because I’m interested in the idea of how we connect to other people, and to do that effectively we must do our own inner work as team coaches. What do I mean by inner work? If we’re going to make a connection with other people, we need to make sure that we’re connected to what is happening within us first, and to be aware of that impact on the people around us. As team coaches, it is important to be able to stabilise and manage our attention and presence, to find balance. I tend to do this in quite a pragmatic way through mindfulness-based approaches.

FINDING BALANCE

As part of mindfulness practice, we can be aware of conflicting emotions, having the intention to hold them lightly, to notice what is present. In so doing, a wisdom arises, and this is where polarities come into being. For example, noticing that within the team there is anger and frustration also means that there is love (or compassion may be a more acceptable word) and calmness – one cannot exist without knowledge of the other. Wellbeing for teams (and individuals) goes out of balance when we lean too far towards one polarity.

As team coaches, we can help a team find balance by accepting that both can exist at the same time and that the sweet spot is somewhere in the middle. A definition of mindfulness is ‘paying attention in the moment’. We can choose where to focus our attention and we can find a point of balance between two opposing polarities.

Team coaching is helping the team make meaning about what is present and emerging in their relationships, tasks, processes or aims

DRIVERS OF WELLBEING

How can we understand more about a team’s collective wellbeing? Diagnostic tools such as teamSalient (see www.teamsalient.com) can provide insights on some of the key ‘drivers’ of mindfulness:

- The level of **psychological safety** – a shared belief that it is safe for team members to take risks and be themselves – has a significant impact on wellbeing. Are members able to be open with each other and discuss problems and issues without negative judgement? Are they able to make mistakes and learn from them, or is it safer to keep quiet? Can team members be themselves? We need to create a safe space where individuals can reveal themselves and start to see the possibilities of how the team can connect to do the work.
- The team knowing its **purpose**, its reason to exist and its contribution to the organisation. Living a purposeful life and belonging to a thriving community or environment is an important aspect of wellbeing.ⁱ Is the team’s work important and satisfying to team members? Does the team have a clear sense of direction? What are the team’s perspectives on this? How has the Covid-19 pandemic changed their meaning-making of work and life balance?
- The degree in which there is **‘team glue’**; do team members spend time together to get to know each other? What is the level of cohesion and interdependence? During the pandemic, this was one of the hardest drivers for team leaders to maintain as a result of the increase in remote learning, leading to a noticeable increase in mental health issues.
- **Communication, collaboration and achieving results** are all important drivers for success and contribute to team glue, but when overdone can contribute to exhaustion and increased attrition. A Microsoft 2022 Work Trend Index study of more than 31,000 people in 31 countries reported that 43% of the workforce were considering leaving their jobs because of unsustainable workloads, the biggest cause being the amount of time spent on collaborating!ⁱⁱ In a two-year period, this study found that: team weekly meetings increased by a whopping 252%; six billion more emails were sent; there was a 32% increase in chatting online; and that there was an average after-hours work increase of 28%.

AN INVITATION TO PRACTISE

Let us try one of the mindfulness exercises that I often use in my workⁱⁱⁱ to bring the team into the room, to focus a team’s attention on what’s important to them right now.

Read this and then close your eyes and allow yourself to drop into your thoughts, simply noticing what’s on your mind right now. It’s okay if your head is full of thoughts; as human beings, our heads are often full of thoughts. That’s part of the process of how the mind works. Notice that your mind is full and choose not to get lost in the narratives running through it. Just observing, noticing, labelling, letting those thoughts go. You can always come back to them afterwards when you’ve finished the practice. Right now, we’re choosing to place our attention where we want it to be. Right now, it’s on noticing the thoughts. Now gently bring your attention and focus to your breath and allow yourself to breathe, not controlling the breath. Just noticing where the breath is and being curious about each breath as you breathe in... and the breath as you breathe out.

Take 10 breaths, noticing each one. Enjoy the sensation of just breathing as an anchor to being present. Open your eyes and notice how you feel mentally, physically and emotionally.

As team coaches we need to be present to what is emerging in ourselves and in the team, and this takes a little practice as neural networks are rewired. In the UK’s National Health Service the phrase, ‘put your own oxygen mask on first’ is well-known. To be a good, or even great, team coach, you need to be able to do that. If your wellbeing is compromised then so much data that is present and available to you – in you, in the situation and in the team – will be missed. Once you are settled into a regular practice of awareness, offer that practice to the team as a ‘check-in’. We hold a responsibility as team coaches to ensure the wellbeing of ourselves and the team.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Carroll Macey is an executive coach, team coach and mindfulness teacher. She has been coaching for over 20 years and is a faculty member for both teamGenie – a company specialising in team design, coaching and development – and Team Coaching Studio, where she is head of ED&I and co-founder of the TCS Team Coaching Community of Practice.

- Ikigai for leaders and organisations. Frank Brueck ISBN 9781716605307
- Microsoft New Future of Work Report 2022
- The Mindful Approach To Working Life. Carroll Macey and Catherine Midgeley ISBN 978-1906542979

ARE YOU TEAM COACHING COMPETENT?

To accompany the AC's team coach accreditation scheme, launched this month, [Declan Woods](#) introduces the AC's new team coaching competency framework.

While competency models have their critics, they still have their place: they inform and guide good practice, and the concept of competencies is helpfully widely known and understood. As the use of competencies has served the AC's other coach accreditation schemes well, we chose to continue using them in our work raising standards of team coaching.

As a reminder, the AC defines a team as: 'Collaboration between a recognised group of people drawing upon individual capabilities and strengths who are committed to working together inter-dependently to achieve a common purpose and collective performance and learning goals.'

And it defines team coaching as: 'The application of coaching skills while working with a whole, intact team over time to improve inter-dependent members' abilities to work together collaboratively to achieve the team's collective purpose, potential and performance.'

Team coaching training programmes teach coaches the skills to work with teams, whereas competencies refer to measuring the ability to use these skills effectively while coaching teams. Competencies combine a coach's skills, abilities and knowledge.

Rather than using them in a reductionist way, the best team practitioners will use the competency model flexibly and dynamically as they adapt their practice to a team's changing needs.

This article is presented using Rudyard Kipling's famous 'six honest serving men' as a structure – why, who, how, when, what and what next – and will focus mostly on the 'what' to increase understanding of the competencies.

WHY?

With a plethora of competency models readily available, why did we choose to create a new one? Team coaching is a relatively new way to support and develop teams at work and its use is on the rise. I wrote about this and the drivers behind its growth in the July issue of *Coaching Perspectives*. Given team coaching's relative newness, it is not surprising that it is not clearly or widely understood. Indeed, my experience (as a practising team coach) is that there is significant misunderstanding about it among teams and how it is both alike and different to other team interventions. This will form the basis of a future article. Creating a specific team coaching competency model provided the opportunity to bring some much-needed clarity to a confused market for practitioners and teams alike.

WHO?

The team coaching competency model is designed for many uses and users. The hope is that it will be used to educate organisations about team coaching and inform providers' design and delivery of their team coach training programmes. The chief aim is that these competencies will develop and raise standards of team coaching practice and that, through this, teams at work will be better served and supported.

HOW?

Creating this team coaching competency framework was a major undertaking involving many contributors over a period of more than three years. Thank you all. The methodology to design them involved a five-step process:

1. reviewing of the available literature – on teams and groups;
2. gathering of subject matter expert (SME) tasks and KSAOs (knowledge, skills, abilities and other characteristics);
3. validating the interview findings; and
4. developing a team coaching competency model.

The focus of the literature reviewed was wider than teams per se, and included existing research on groups and fields related to team coaching (e.g., group reflective practice, group analysis, organisational development and so on).

Step two entailed conducting semi-structured interviews with dozens of team coaches and practitioners (those that work with teams but who do not necessarily identify as a coach). The aim was to gather a widespread and diverse set of participants that (we hoped) encompassed a range of different ways of working with teams. We were interested in understanding how they went about working with teams and groups and the requisite knowledge, skills and abilities they needed for this.

We codified the interview findings into themes then tested them with both the coaches we had interviewed and other practitioners, in order to validate them before organising them into a team coaching competency model. We consulted on this model and made changes in light of further inputs and feedback, and will continue to refine it as the practice of team coaching evolves over time.

WHEN?

Whether you are a practising team coach, organisational buyer of team coaching or team coach training provider, the team coaching competency framework is available to use now. You can download it on the AC website.

WHAT?

Let's bring these team coaching competencies to life.

Competency 1: meets ethical and professional practice guidelines

This competency is about practising safely and ethically. Safe practice involves operating within the boundaries of your training, abilities and fitness to practice. It is also about working within the scope of work and in ways that have been agreed (contracted for) with a team.

Behaving ethically is vital when coaching teams. Practically, this means being able to understand what a team needs and to align this with an appropriate intervention. There are numerous potential

ethical pitfalls to be encountered while team coaching, and so this is a very important competency.

This competency also involves appreciating and explaining how team coaching differs from other work with teams (e.g., facilitation or teambuilding) and providing the best solution.

To do this, it will help if team coaches have thought about their approach to team coaching so they can articulate it to a team. It is acting in the best interests of the team. That is different from acquiescing to a team's demands. It is doing the right thing for the team, tough as that might be at times.

Competency 2: establishes the coaching agreement

Many difficulties within team coaching can be tracked back to a lack of – or insufficient – contract with a team. This competency is about creating a clear and agreed coaching agenda, approving how all parties will work together during the coaching in a way that is in line with both what the team needs and the coach's espoused approach. While remaining congruent with this, a team coach will work to a team's (changing) agenda, and not their own.

Competency 3: establishes a safe and trust-based relationship with the client

Teams can be challenging places to work. Sometimes they are not safe. Making them psychologically safe for members helps create the conditions for learning, taking risks, and trying new things and ways of working, and is a key component of what makes a team effective and high performing.

Creating strong relationships can help team safety. Team coaching can be seen as a relational process, developing a relationship between coach and team leader, with individual team members and with the whole team. The client is all these parties. Understanding and attending to all their needs is key.

Competency 4: coach presence and self-management

Teams can be challenging for coaches too. Practitioners will need to be able to work with their own emotional reactions to a team and manage their state (as well as that of the team) while looking after and resourcing themselves. Supervision is an invaluable support for coaches in this area.

Equally, coaches can use the (somatic and affective) awareness of their and the team's state as a source of data to inform the coaching and make deliberate use of their presence accordingly.

This competency also encompasses being aware of our biases, preference and habits – and the potential effect of these during team coaching.

Competency 5: effective communications

This competency covers a range of core communication skills – questioning, listening, observing – and using these openly and directly with the team to improve mutual understanding. It is also about the skill of encouraging a team to improve its ability to communicate better. Use of these skills allows a team to express difficulties, which can be liberating.

Competency 6: awareness and insight-raising

This competency builds on the previous one and includes the coach sharing information and giving feedback. The aim of this is to increase a team's awareness, sense-making and ability to generate new thinking. This could either arise from the use of information from outside the team (e.g., the coach introducing customer or stakeholder feedback), inside the team (e.g., the coach encouraging different conversations between members) or from the coach's 'use of self' (e.g., the coach sharing their observations or explaining how they have been affected by the team somatically).

The use of psychometric and team (effectiveness) tools can help raise a team's awareness and is included in this competency.

Competency 7: live team coaching

Like competency 1, this competency is a critical one. It is the delivery of live coaching with a team. Dynamics are always present in teams. Understanding and being able to work with them and help teams resolve any conflicts is a core part of the work. Coaches able to use a range of approaches flexibly will be the best placed to do this, and this competency is about understanding and expanding a coach's range of practices and using them intentionally with a team. Working with a co-team coach (whether another external coach or an internal one) is also included here.

Competency 8: maintaining progress in team coaching

Coaching is a means to an end and should help teams work towards this – whether that be focusing on team purpose, potential or performance. The challenge for the coach is leaving responsibility for performance with the team while following through on their actions.

This competency is about a team coach keeping the end and outcomes in mind and focusing a team on them without taking on responsibility for them. It includes helping a team to identify what is working and what might be hindering team progress, and then making changes and improvements to the team's systems, processes and norms. Evaluating the effectiveness of team coaching is part of this competency.

Competency 9: working with the organisational system

Teams in organisations rarely exist in isolation. They work alongside other teams inside and outside of the organisation. Understanding this complexity and the interplay between them is important and is the essence of this competency. Encouraging a team to connect with others is part of this. It is important for a team coach to understand an organisation within its context. This includes working within the scope of any organisational policies and aligning the team coaching work to support the wider organisational aims.

This competency also includes a team coach understanding existing roles, relationships and sources of power and authority – and working with these.

Competency 10: team knowledge

Knowledge is key. For team coaches, that is knowing about teams, what makes them effective, how they change and develop, team and interpersonal dynamics and dysfunction, systems theories and so on.

It is also valuable for a team coach to understand the vital role leaders

play and how teams work, change, develop over time and become more effective. The knowledge domains shown here inform a team coach's approach and model (competency 1) and how they coach in practice (competency 7).

Competency 11: coach professional development

Team coaching is challenging work. This is also part of its joy. To stay at 'the top of our game' requires ongoing professional development as a team coach. This competency encourages team coaches to engage in ongoing reflective professional practice and regular development. It urges practitioners to engage in supervision of their case work with teams and to understand themselves, their vulnerabilities and their triggers with teams more fully.

SO WHAT?

Feedback on the team coaching competency model during testing and consultation has been positive:

- 'I am impressed that the team coaching competencies are concise, inclusive and practical. They are very well thought out and their purposes are clear.'
- 'Very comprehensive and detailed. Really great overview for a team coach.'
- 'I am thoroughly impressed with the breadth and depth of the competency framework and the pragmatic and flexible approach to assessment.'

It is encouraging we are on the right path.

WHAT NEXT?

The team coaching competency model is an integral part of the AC's new team coach and team coach training programme accreditation schemes. These have been in final testing stages over the summer and early autumn and, we are delighted to say, have just launched. We hope you will have seen the separate communications about this: do look out for more to follow, including a more detailed article about this in the upcoming January 2023 issue of *Coaching Perspectives*.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Declan Woods is the global head of team coaching standards and accreditation with the Association for Coaching and the CEO of teamGenie®, a company specialising in team design, coaching and development. His book *The Triumphant Team* has just been published. See www.triumphantteams.com.

THE RISE OF TEAMS AT WORK: A RESPONSE FROM GEORGINA WOUDSTRA

Never before in the history of humankind has there been a greater need for a different approach to leadership and problem-solving. Otto Scharmer hit the nail on the head when he said 'we are collectively creating results that (almost) nobody wants'.

We are far beyond the point where any one individual, or set of individuals, however dynamic, focused and charismatic, can turn the tide. The problems are simply too complex to be solved by the old models of top-down authority. Collaboration is critical to the success of organisations. It is the key to resolving the challenges ahead at every level, from global contexts to local ones.

As Declan Woods' state of teams article in the July 2022 issue of *Coaching Perspectives* illustrates, time and again teams fall short of their potential. The good news is that the skills required for collaboration and teamwork are identifiable and can be developed. Team coaches guide and challenge teams to work more effectively together, both within their own team and with other teams across alliances and partnerships. Yet, team coaching is not for the faint-hearted – it is challenging, messy and unpredictable, and you can't control the outcome. It takes coaches to the edge of their capacity, to the limits of their courage and into the depths of their vulnerability. Mastering the art of team coaching requires many hours of training, practice and supervision.

Team coaching is significantly more challenging and complex than individual coaching, and bad team coaching can do more harm than good. The AC's new team coaching accreditation scheme offers guidance and guardrails for coaches and organisations by defining what great team coaching is and setting out the competencies needed to achieve high standards. It will provide a gold seal of approval, helping buyers to distinguish professional team coaches from those who are not equipped – psychologically, practically or ethically – to do the work.

At the Team Coaching Studio, we provide top-quality professional development for team coaches. Our team coaching competency model, developed in 2017, has been influential in the design of the new AC framework, and we have updated our programmes to ensure their alignment. We are also very supportive of the AC's decision to require coach training providers to assess live team coaching practice during

training programmes, and we are already geared up to do this, as well as provide the CPD and supervision required to apply for accreditation.

The AC team coaching accreditation scheme is ground-breaking, and I believe it is the most well-considered, comprehensive and rigorous scheme of its kind available. The different levels of accreditation support a coach's development over time: level 1, accredited team practitioner, is for those with basic training and experience facilitating one-off and shorter interventions with groups or teams; level 2, accredited team coaching, requires more intensive training and evidence of practice; while level 3, accredited master team coach, provides real recognition for those at the top of their game.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Georgina Woudstra is the founder and principal of the Team Coaching Studio. She is a successful CEO, senior team coach, a passionate speaker, an advocate for team coaching and the author of *Mastering the Art of Team Coaching*.

COACHING OUTDOORS: HEAD OUTSIDE AND INVITE NATURE IN

What is your unique relationship with nature? **Anna-Marie Watson** encourages us to get closer to nature and consider how we can incorporate coaching outdoors in our work with clients.

‘That bunch of trees represents the past; they’re all gnarled, shrivelled and standing isolated, whereas these ones are taller and straighter, yet intertwined and supportive of each other.’ She addresses them directly: ‘I want you to be my champions within my network. It’ll be a reciprocal partnership and I’ll do the same for you.’

We’re stood amidst a copse of beech trees near Avebury Circle in Wiltshire, UK. Rain clouds pass overhead, though beneath the canopy we’re snug and dry. The landscape feels as old as time. Rebecca, HR director for a large tech company, stands animated; her initial despondence at the beginning of our session has disappeared and she’s talking quickly and confidently. Admittedly, talking to trees hadn’t been part of my professional coaching qualification. The entire course had been conducted within the temperature-controlled comfort of a hotel in Abu Dhabi. Heading outdoors and acknowledging nature typically lies beyond our collective accepted norm of what coaching ‘should’ look like.

It’s not surprising: research from Ambius – a British human resources consultancy – reveals that almost 40% of office workers spend a maximum of 15 minutes outside each day.ⁱ This is considerably less than UN guidelines for the humane treatment of prisoners, where it’s explicitly stated that inmates must have ‘at least one hour of suitable exercise in the open air daily.’ⁱⁱ If you combine this factor with the sedentary nature of our indoor activities, we basically sit indoors for the majority of our lives. This is fundamentally opposed to our evolutionary heritage: as humans we’re genetically designed to walk up to 12 miles per day.

NATURAL BENEFITS

The benefits of connecting with nature can be traced back to ancient Greece, where Aristotle walked with his students around the Lyceum. More recently, scientific research reveals positive evidence from the Japanese art of *shinrin-yoku*ⁱⁱⁱ, otherwise known as forest bathing; attention restoration theory (ART)^{iv}; stress reduction theory (SRT)^v; biophilia hypothesis^{vi}; nature deficit disorder (NDD)^{vii}; restorative qualities of favourite places^{viii}; and bird soundscapes^{ix}; as well as links between natural environments and mental health.

These studies focus on a range of physiological and psychological data such as heart rate variability, systolic and diastolic blood pressure, hormone levels and brain activity alongside mood profiles, impressions of nature, and evaluations of stress. The physical, emotional and mental benefits of acknowledging nature and integrating movement have been shown to enable:

- deeper ability to contemplate and reflect;
- increased cognitive control and replenishment of attention;
- greater awareness of behaviour, emotions, values and beliefs;
- stronger connections towards self, others and the environment;
- and an expanded sense of identity beyond the ego and development of the ecological self.

However, the field of study that directly connects the benefits of coaching with nature and movement is still in its infancy. More research is needed to understand how these elements interact.

‘Thoughts come clearly while one walks’
Thomas Mann, German author

YOUR RELATIONSHIP WITH NATURE

Before coaching others outdoors, start with your unique relationship with nature. Dedicate some time to reflect on the following questions as you wander and wonder.

- What’s your earliest memory of being outdoors?
- Describe your relationship with nature.
- What attracts your attention outdoors?
- What risks do you find in nature?

Everyone will have a different connection, belief system and personal narrative around nature and the outdoors. It can be a place of freedom, space and escape; conversely it can be a great unknown, full of risk and uncertainty. Be conscious and mindful of your relationship and how this could influence the coaching dynamic. It can be worth inviting prospective clients to consider their personal relationship with nature and the outdoor environment during the onboarding process. Seek to understand what potential triggers there might be and preempt how to manage in advance.

There are numerous techniques that can be integrated into coaching outdoors alongside possible existing coaching methodologies, theories and styles. The spectrum can range from unconsciously interweaving different approaches into the conversation to actively inviting nature to co-create the coaching process. The techniques in the table opposite offer possibilities to shape and develop your coaching practice.

PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Coaching outdoors necessitates essential planning and preparation where the following must be considered:

Dynamic environment: the outdoors involves an element of the unknown and risk – from physical safety to hidden psychological safety and emotional containment. The multi-sensory environment can be both distracting and overwhelming for both coach and client.

Health and safety: ensure first aid, public liability and professional insurance are covered. Clarify any medical conditions relevant to walking outdoors. Consider your personal safety, especially when meeting a new client for the first time.

Client comfort: some clients are content to experience all weathers and terrains, though some might prefer more comfortable options. Co-create the entire outdoor element with your client and reference it in your coaching contract.

Technique	Comments
Deeper questions	These provoke how clients think, feel or believe differently about information within a frame of reference as opposed to simply eliciting more information. Deeper questions challenge beliefs, assumptions and norms to generate alternatives and possibilities – and then then create change.
Deep ecology	This theory focuses on ethical and moral responsibilities to ourselves, others and environment. The process involves self-actualisation where the ‘egoic’ moves towards a more ‘ecological self’. Deeper questions can be framed to explore connections and disconnections with nature (and within ourselves) against the wider natural environment.
Systemic approach	Our natural ecosystem offers a lens to view the world, based on a client’s connection and/or disconnection within the wider social system. Networks of relationships and perceptions of gestalts can be explored to encourage self-reflection and self-confrontation of personal responsibility to the wider system. The hierarchical pyramidal system can also be used to contrast thoughts, feelings, values and beliefs in comparison to a more networked approach.
Natural cycles	Annual seasonal and life cycles (birth, life, death and decay) can be linked to cyclical themes that arise during coaching (career, self-development or within a specific project). Timelines (or circles) can be created to identify interrelated elements, connections, opportunities and possibilities (link to nature play, below).
Evolution	Change over time forms the basis of evolutionary theory and is a desired outcome from coaching. The nature versus nurture binary could be introduced as a metaphor to explore a fixed mindset versus a growth mindset.
Nature play	This creative approach uses natural resources (stones, leaves, moss, bark, flowers etc.) to symbolise and externalise timelines, relationships, networks and so on. The experiential element enables different perceptions and emotions to emerge and shift.
Visual and linguistic metaphors	Visual metaphors observed in natural environments (e.g., path junctions, light or water) can be used to externalise and explore ideas. Linguistic metaphors that reference nature can be explored, such as ‘rays of light providing hope’ or ‘everything’s mirrored in the stillness of the lake’.
Mindfulness	There are different approaches that encourage moment-by-moment awareness of our thoughts, emotions, bodily sensations and surrounding environment (such as body scans, loving kindness and breathwork). Try it out: identify a quiet and restorative location near home or work. Make the commitment to visit regularly over a period of time. Record observations in a journal related to changes in the environment and personal thoughts and feelings when there.
Nature retreats, vision quests or pilgrimages	These are generally longer than an individual coaching session and a variety of coaching approaches could be incorporated. Nature retreats usually focus on a holistic lifestyle approach; a vision quest is a powerful ritual process that can include solitude, nature and/or fasting; whereas pilgrimages are prolonged journeys with a possible moral or spiritual component, often to a specific destination of significance.

Location, location, location: time spent in recce is seldom wasted. Review the venue and route in relation to terrain, distance, accessibility, toilets, refreshments, session timings, fitness levels, confidentiality and medical issues.

Experiment: trial the concept in advance with your peers or willing clients. Select an accessible local park or open space to test it. Reflect on the experience and adjust and develop it.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Happiest outdoors, Anna-Marie Watson grew up free-range and served as a British Army officer in order to avoid the confines of four walls. Her coaching work with global leaders has taken her across five continents, visiting locations from icy Arctic tundra to hot and sandy deserts. She is on a mission to encourage a different approach to business – one where our natural environment is valued. An active writer, podcaster and facilitator, she has contributed to *The Coaches Handbook*, *Succeeding as a Coach* and the *Coaching Outdoors* podcast, and has led outdoor-inspired events for international organisations.

www.rfmcoaching.com
www.coaching-outdoors.com



COACHING MUST PUT WELLBEING BEFORE RESULTS

Robert Biswas-Diener and **Christian van Nieuwerburgh** reflect on the multi-faceted topic of wellbeing and its place within a coaching conversation.

About a decade ago, one of us coached a middle manager who absolutely hated his work. He felt ill-suited to the fast-paced, highly competitive company culture. Worse still, he had started to doubt himself and his skills. As a result, he often found himself fantasising about a new career. His presenting topic for coaching was to address this dilemma: should he change his attitude or change his job?

One month into the relationship, he didn't show up for a coaching session. It was uncharacteristic for him not to attend without sending a message. It turned out that he had suffered a minor heart attack. He never returned to coaching. Instead, he just returned to work. In an email, he explained that the 'gravitational pull' of his managerial role was simply too great: he could not break free. He did not look forward to clocking in each morning but it was something he 'had to do'.

We have spent time reflecting on this story and have come to the conclusion that wellbeing is crucial to every coaching interaction. For its decades-long history, the coaching profession has spent the lion's share of its focus on supporting people to achieve goals. To be provocative, we suggest that coaching has become too focused on achieving goals at any cost. Happily, coaching seems more recently to be moving towards the notion of supporting people to achieve goals, but not at the cost of wellbeing. In fact, this could be one positive legacy of the Covid-19 pandemic: businesses are no longer thinking of wellbeing as a side issue but are now considering it a core aspect of organisational policy.

We are encouraged by this trend because we know the research supports the idea that experiencing wellbeing doesn't just feel good, but is actually good. For decades, positive psychology researchers have been flipping the standard question. Instead of asking what leads to happiness they have been investigating what happiness leads to. Using sophisticated study designs and large, diverse samples, they have found that wellbeing leads, causally, to a variety of benefits.

For example, being cheerful boosts the immune system enough to offer significant protection from minor illness such as the common cold.ⁱ People who report higher levels of happiness engage in better health behavioursⁱⁱ and happier students study better.ⁱⁱⁱ Similarly,

happier people are more likely to stay in long-term relationships and are more likely to volunteer to help others.^{iv} Being optimistic and experiencing frequent positive emotions are associated with eye-popping work outcomes as well: better customer evaluations, better supervisor evaluations, being more likely to help colleagues, getting promoted and making more money!^v

To put it simply, if an organisation cares about health, prosocial attitudes and workplace performance, then wellbeing is an overlooked resource for accomplishing these objectives.

WHAT IS WELLBEING, ANYWAY?

It makes sense to pause and consider what, exactly, wellbeing is. It can be surprisingly difficult to arrive at concise definitions. We acknowledge that wellbeing and happiness are distinct concepts, but a clear definition of each is fairly elusive. For example, if you ask people what they think happiness is they are highly likely to offer an answer that confuses the causes of happiness with happiness itself.

They might say, for instance, 'happiness is family', or 'it is my faith' – or the cheeky 'happiness is being rich'. In each case, they are suggesting that there are predictable causes of happiness. There is a widespread intuition that if a person is faring well in these areas of life – enjoying their family, feeling spiritually fulfilled and making decent money, for example – then they are experiencing wellbeing. Commonly used assessments, such as the 'Wheel of Life' measure of satisfaction, are examples of methods for linking specific areas of life with wellbeing.

The most intuitive way to understand wellbeing – the experience itself rather than its causes and correlations – is through so-called objective list theories. As the name implies, these are lists of component parts that make up wellbeing. Your list might include meaning in life, the experience of joy, an optimistic outlook or feeling connected to others. The advantage of this approach is that it can be a large umbrella under which we can fit many related topics. On the downside, the lists can grow so long that basically anything positive becomes part of wellbeing.

Social scientists who study wellbeing typically use lists that can be broken into distinct categories. One category is emotion: when a person feels safe, enthusiastic, joyful or interested. Another category is social; feeling connected, included and trusting is also a vital aspect of wellbeing. Health could be considered a third category. The fourth and final wellbeing category includes non-emotional psychological processes such as purpose, growth, autonomy and self-acceptance.

For us, as coaches, it is helpful to understand wellbeing as an experience that 'things are good' – and this incorporates psychological, social, physical, emotional and spiritual aspects. Importantly, a significant component of wellbeing is determined by a person's self-evaluation of many of these aspects. That is one reason that coaching can be a good medium for assessing one's wellbeing.

WELLBEING SCIENCE AND COACHING

We feel it is important for coaches to be familiar with these approaches to understanding wellbeing because it offers more options for exploration in coaching. For example, if a client complains that they are not enjoying work (a wellbeing complaint) it is helpful to be able to distinguish between feeling overwhelmed (an emotional wellbeing problem), isolated (a social wellbeing issue) or stuck (a growth and optimism topic). This is just one of the ways that wellbeing science can inform coaching. Here are some others:

Wellbeing is so central to the human experience that we ought to be asking about it

- Wellbeing frameworks provide more nuanced vocabulary, so coaches can explore client wellbeing with greater sophistication.
- Research suggests that wellbeing is relevant to bottom-line professional concerns and other important outcomes.^{vi}
- Wellbeing can be used as a lens to evaluate the 'cost' of client goals and decisions.

SOME FINAL REFLECTIONS

Although we have made a case here that wellbeing is relevant and important to coaching, we also acknowledge that there is a certain risk associated with the idea of 'coaching for wellbeing'. In our experience, coachees do not tend to show up asking, specifically, for greater wellbeing. Instead, they want to be better leaders, to smooth out conflicts in their teams, to create schedules that allow for better balance and to perform better at work. We could argue that wellbeing is the ultimate (implied) outcome; that better work performance, improved teamwork and realistic schedules will all produce greater wellbeing.

If our clients have not asked for it, however, it makes sense to wonder if we are overstepping our professional boundaries if we work to instill enhanced levels of wellbeing. Here, we distinguish between using wellbeing as an exploratory lens, on the one hand, and on the other becoming an undercover advocate for the client's wellbeing. The

bottom line, in our view, is that wellbeing is so central to the human experience that we ought to be asking about it. Clients are more likely to do well and feel good when they consider the ways that their decisions might harm or enhance their wellbeing, or that of the people with whom they work. The ultimate decision, however, is up to the client.

Finally, given the challenging time that many of us have experienced during these pandemic years, it is worth noting that wellbeing science would suggest that we, as coaches, should prioritise our own wellbeing too. In our case, it goes beyond looking after ourselves: being intentional about our own wellbeing can have two important outcomes. First, we need to experience adequate levels of wellbeing to be fully present for our clients. Second, whether we like to admit it or not, we can be seen as role models by our clients. Demonstrating that we pay attention to our wellbeing may encourage our clients to do the same.

On this note, about five years ago one of us turned up for a coaching session with a client while suffering from a splitting headache. A sense of duty and 'not letting the client down' meant that the coach proceeded with the session. Now, we wonder whether that was the right decision.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Robert Biswas-Diener is a thought leader in positive psychology coaching. He holds a doctorate in psychology, and frequently publishes research on topics such as happiness, hospitality, teaching and coaching. Robert loves to apply his background in psychology to the coaching endeavor and is eager to add nuance to and improve coaching practice. He has trained coaches at Positive Acorn for a decade and has run workshops for professionals in 25 countries. He lives in Portland, Oregon, USA, where he draws or rock climbs every day.

Prof Christian van Nieuwerburgh is professor of coaching and positive psychology at the Centre for Positive Psychology and Health at RCSI University of Medicine and Health Sciences, global director for Growth Coaching International, a coach training provider for the educator sector and principal fellow of the Centre for Wellbeing Science at the University of Melbourne. He is an academic, researcher, executive coach and consultant interested in the integration of coaching and positive psychology in educational and health settings. He has published widely in the field, regularly speaks at global conferences and has given presentations and delivered training in Europe, the USA, South America, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and Australia.

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ALL TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING LEADS TO SELF-ESTEEM

Can coaching quieten our inner critic and boost self-love? **Keith Merron** explains how transformational coaching can help us heal our self-esteem.

In all my 40 years of transformational coaching, I have noticed one fundamental phenomenon – one that appears so true that it is axiomatic: all good roads lead to greater self-esteem. I know that as soon as I state a truism, the minds of many analytic readers will search to find how this may not be true. Of course, if you search, you may find an example to the contrary. But instead, let's look at a few examples of what causes people to come to transformational coaching, in order to consider the wisdom of this point of view.

Here is a list of some of the problems or challenges that have people knock on my proverbial door for coaching:

1. I need money to survive, so I'm stuck in my job.
2. I won't be able to find a better job.
3. I want to have more gravitas.
4. I have difficulty confronting people.
5. I make too many commitments. Either I am unreliable, or I end up working too hard.
6. I want to inspire people more.
7. I'm afraid to fail.
8. I don't listen well. I'm arrogant and push people away.
9. I'm too friendly and have difficulty making tough decisions.
10. I procrastinate and have difficulty finishing things.
11. I'm not doing what I want to do the most.
12. I can't seem to find balance in my life.
13. My supervisor, or the people above me, won't give me the room to do what I think is best.
14. I'm too wishy-washy. I want to be firmer in my convictions and clearer in my expectations.
15. I want people in my organisation to work better together.

Let's take a random selection and dig underneath the surface to imagine what might be the underlying cause of the pattern these people wish to change. The underlying causes could be numerous, so permit me to generalise in order to search for and convey a pattern.

Presenting problem: I need money to survive, so I'm stuck in my job.

Likely underlying cause: client is likely stuck in a survival mindset. They live within a shrunken sense of whom they are and what they're capable of. Were they to have strong self-esteem, they would trust life and not feel so stuck.

Presenting problem: I want to have more gravitas.

Likely underlying cause: client is likely holding back on the full expression of whom they are, what they think and what they believe. They may even fear ridicule, were they to express themselves. People with high self-esteem tend not to be shy in their self-expression. They express themselves with natural gravitas.

Presenting problem: I'm afraid to fail.

Likely underlying cause: client beats themselves up whenever they make a mistake. People with high self-esteem don't, nor do they define themselves solely by what they do. They are not their results.

Presenting problem: I'm too friendly and have difficulty making tough decisions.

Likely underlying cause: client is either afraid of failure – and therefore plays it safe – or is concerned that they might be rejected by others, so they take the path of least resistance. They get wobbly if they fail or if others don't like them. With ample self-esteem, they can make those tough calls with minimal concern.

I'm not saying that self-esteem is the only objective of the people who come to me, but it is often central. It comes with many names. Self-love, self-acceptance, self-regard. But in all cases, it involves knowing oneself and being good with oneself. There certainly are other factors, but almost always a lack of or reduced self-esteem is playing a mighty role in the presenting problem. It manifests in a shrunken sense of self, contracted expression, deep self-abnegation, self-denial, insecurity or any number of similar inner experiences.

If this is true, then the path to healing or transformation must go through the land of low self-esteem and address it to the point where the client experiences enough self-love that the pattern transmogrifies almost naturally. One client I worked with recently recognised this: instead of focusing on the outer presenting problem of avoidance and procrastination, she worked on her inner capacity to accept and love herself. By quieting the inner critic and understanding the parts of her that sabotage, as well as amplifying the parts that truly and naturally accept herself, the pattern of low self-esteem gave way to the delicious sense of ease that accompanies almost everyone with high self-regard. She now rarely procrastinates or avoids; when she does, she is far more conscious about it than before. Our work is not complete, but the ease she is experiencing is sustainable and will likely continue to grow.

Addressing inner critics and helping clients live with more grace is not the only path to self-love, but it is typical. In almost all cases, the road to self-esteem generates the basis upon which so much of life is healed. It is an essential element of the transformational journey.

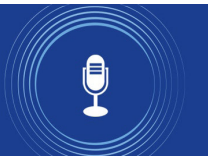
ABOUT THE AUTHOR



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

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THE VALUE OF DIAGNOSTIC SKILLS FOR COACHES AND SUPERVISORS

How to support best and when to refer? [Dr Joan Swart](#) encourages us to observe clients' behaviour and get familiar with 'mental health red flags' that show us the way.

Back in the 1990s, spearheaded by work at the FBI's newly established Behavioral Analysis Unit, or BAU, criminal profiling intrigued many and quickly became widely known. With the interest in serial killing phenomenon in full swing by the turn of the century, movies and television series like the Hannibal Lecter franchise and *Criminal Minds* went to the tops of the charts. The value of behavioural profiling methods grew in investigations and courtrooms as an accepted evidence-based science.

These advances ignited my interest in the human mind and its motivations and expressions, which were at the core of my master's and doctoral studies in forensic psychology. So, my supervisor wanted to know how I can condense my decade-long experience in these areas to help benefit coaches and their clients?

BEHAVIOUR IS IMPORTANT

A good start is to be attentive to clients' behaviour, especially non-verbal, while not neglecting how we, as coaches, influence it.

This skill is still largely in the behavioural scientist's or therapist's domain, but coaches increasingly learn to recognise the different states of brain activation when a client sits in front of them. They view their body language, listen to their stories and ask questions to make inferences regarding their behaviour. With small exceptions, this process is the same as behavioural profiling.

COACHES ARE INCREASINGLY FACED WITH MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

Although it is not a coach's job to pathologise, clinical observation and analysis are core skills in all helping relationships. Despite its importance, coaches are rarely trained or skilled to recognise the basic psychological signs their clients present with.

Clinical symptoms can significantly interfere with the coaching process, risk profile and coachability of the client. If they are unexpected and/or unfamiliar to the coach, the coach may miss them altogether, dismiss their influence or make coaching decisions that could harm the client (or coach). A coach trained to observe and suspect any of the most prevalent psychological features is better prepared than one who is not. In 2019, nearly one in five adults in the US and UK lived with a mental health issue, such as depression, anxiety, PTSD or substance abuse.^{i,ii} Since then, reports indicate that these numbers have sharply increased, which strains health services.ⁱⁱⁱ As a result, coaches become more exposed to mental health services such as first-line support and to mental health issues among people seeking coaching.

Therefore, experienced coaches can identify risk to the self and others, as well as other warning signs and red flags in common clinical presentations, which help inform the way forward. The way forward may include referral to a specialist or coaching termination.

Always keeping in mind what coaching is and isn't, as well as an accurate and honest assessment of your competencies, protects both the coach and client from harm and malpractice. This undertaking is best managed together with an experienced supervisor who provides a safe space, facilitates reflection, dissects ethical dilemmas and highlights developmental needs.

BECOME A BETTER COACH (AND SUPERVISOR)

Improving your diagnostic skills and the knowledge required to interpret and analyse the information gathered in conversations with your client improves your coaching ethically. The increased efficiency, better outcomes and expanded competence puts you in a position to serve more clients, explore deeper issues and refine your niche to the next level.

1. The first step is to **increase your knowledge of mental health conditions**. Useful activities include reading books and other peer-reviewed literature. Start with contents that are accessible to you and can be converted to a practical application in your practice. Consider joining a mental health supervision group. Look at enrolling in a mental health first aid programme. Extend your network of coaches and experts and ask for advice.

2. Next, you will want to **gather the best information** upon which to apply your knowledge. Be curious. Have a genuine interest in the client's experiences. Work with a childlike wonder about life. When the client raises a difficult topic, do not shy away from exploring deeper. The door is open: walk through! If mentioned or hinted at by a client, talking about feelings of suicide or any other mental health issues will not increase the risk to the client. On the contrary, showing an interest and empathy tends to reduce the pressure. Taking small steps gives you an opportunity to back away as soon as the client shows emotions or reactions that may be difficult to control or reverse.

Constantly hone your skills to be receptive and observant, to listen and to question. Be especially attentive to...

- Inconsistent or harmful and dysfunctional behaviour
- Contradiction between behaviour, beliefs and emotions
- Gaps in information
- Trends and changes
- Constellations and patterns
- Cause-and-effect relationships and contexts

Put together, these areas provide a rich platform from which to match recognised symptoms.

3. **Be aware of red flags**. Although open to interpretation, a good rule of thumb would be to refer a client if (1) the risk of self-harm or harm to others is high, or (2) some conditions exist that render the client impossible or very difficult to coach.

Suicidal ideation

Remember that awareness of suicidal ideation (knowledge that the client has thoughts or ideas about suicide) does not necessarily lead to taking action. While just under one in 10 people admit to thinking about suicide, less than 30 percent of those make an attempt.^{iv} Talking to clients gives the coach an idea of the level of distress, the support available, feelings of self-hate, guilt or hopelessness, intentions and motivations, and a sense of the opportunity and means. These are risk or protective factors indicating the probability of harm.

Red flags for coachability

Mental health conditions that are common and not always likely to contraindicate coaching include mild depression, anxiety, substance use and conditions that are managed or in remission. Any form of psychosis where the person is disconnected from the consensus reality, such as hearing voices or unable to follow a conversation, must be referred.

Behaviours that would indicate caution include significant distress and suffering, an inability to adapt to or interact with one's environment, and behaviour that is uncontrolled and unpredictable, irrational and/or violates important social norms.^v It is also likely to make the coach feel uncomfortable and trigger unwanted thoughts and feelings.

The decision to refer is sometimes obvious. Many situations are not so clear. Know your competence and trust your instincts. If you are unsure, seek advice from your supervisor. Rather than clinging to your pride and your natural passion to help, consider the safer option for your and your client's sake.

4. Make sure you **apply your knowledge** in a meaningful way. Your interpretation may not be 100% correct but it is the best you have to work with. Research the area of concern. Consult with your supervisor and experts. Carefully consider whether to refer or continue working with the client. Be honest with yourself about your biases, limits and drive to help.

In this way, your mental health knowledge and diagnostic skills become some of the most valuable assets in your coaching practice. If you stay humble and curious, your clients will feel empowered instead of stigmatised, informed rather than blind and will replace despair with hopefulness.

Observe. Ask. Listen. Learn. Most of all, be patient.

People nearly always are aware of what to do to get positive results. Yet, in many cases, they are unable or unwilling to do what is needed. When, despite the best efforts of the coach, a client remains stuck, it is possible that they are not ready for coaching.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



With MBA and PSYD (forensic psychology) qualifications, Dr Joan Swart spent 20 years in corporate management roles before switching to a psychology practice. Since then, she has designed curricula, and supervised and trained learners at institutions like the Dr Bosman Group and the Jay Shetty Certification School. She has authored three books, various book chapters and peer-reviewed articles. Joan is an accredited supervisor with the Association for Coaching, and corporate programme director at Coaching Minds.

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RESOURCING WELLNESS THROUGH COACHING SUPERVISION

How can personal leadership support the wellbeing of coaches?
Sue Jackson shares a framework that can be incorporated into the supervision process.

An important source of resourcing for coaches and coaching supervisors is engaging in the practice and process of supervision. Supervision generates capacity and empowerment by raising awareness, developing skills, integrating resources and promoting practitioner wellness.

Wellness is defined by the National Wellness Institute (NWI) as an active process in which individuals take intentional steps and make choices towards a more successful existence. Wellness encompasses the whole person through emotional, occupational, physical, social, intellectual and spiritual dimensions. Wellness affirms and mobilises positive qualities and strengths.

Wellness is important for organisations, nature and the planet, and coaches and coach supervisors can embrace these different arenas of wellness: the principles are similar, but the scale and challenges are different.

The current and severe global climate, economic and human crises are compounding challenge and this is apparent in coaching and supervision conversations. Dealing with uncertainty and unexpected events can present us with significant additional demands and feelings of vulnerability, which we may not have previously encountered.

Therefore, building resources and resilience to engage with and empower change, and promote adaptability to maintain our state of wellness, is both challenging and important. Processes and tools that support wellness can therefore be highly useful.

The supervision process facilitates wellness and learning by providing a space of:

1. Psychological safety and trust
2. Empowerment for coaches and supervisors
3. Critical and constructive reflection and scrutiny of practice
4. Exploration and appreciation of differences
5. Exploration and testing of new ideas and approaches
6. Energy management and assessment of the risks of fatigue and burnout
7. Engagement, support, fun and belonging
8. Reassurance of quality assurance for organisational clients

PERSONAL LEADERSHIP

Personal Leadership (PL) is an evidence-based tool that has been co-developed and refined over the years by myself and a colleague (see page opposite). It is based on our experiences of coaching and training in the arenas of leadership development, coach training, mental health, and medical and cancer coaching within a British National Health Service setting. PL promotes empowerment and

enablement of wellness for clients, coaches, organisations and the planet. It is introduced as a method for resourcing wellness in supervision.

Supervision resources coaches' wellness and empowers professional and personal growth, for a thriving professional life and to ensure the quality of the work. The Personal Leadership tool is a comprehensive resourcing framework for wellness of coaches and supervisors. Your observations and comments will be welcomed.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sue is an accredited master executive coach, coach supervisor for internal and external coaches, participatory facilitator, trainer and a qualified mindfulness practitioner. She has had previous careers in biology, education and landscape architecture, which inform her practice to empower clients to navigate challenge for optimal functioning, and to raise awareness of climate change and biodiversity loss to enable people and the planet to thrive. Sue is co-editor of *Empowerment in Health and Wellness* and a volunteer cancer coach.

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PERSONAL LEADERSHIP: A FRAMEWORK FOR EMPOWERMENT AND DEVELOPMENT



Source: Parsons and Jackson Ch. 7 Coaching for Personal Leadership in Eds. Parsons, Jackson & Arnold (2021) *Empowerment in Health and Wellness*. Panoma Press, St Albans, UK

1. MINDFULNESS AND PRESENCE

The development of our mindfulness and presence heightens awareness and leads to structural neuroplasticity (the brain's ability to change its physical structure as a result of learning). It increases our capacity to self-manage and take different perspectives to better meet the challenges we face and optimise our functioning. It gives attention (a resource) to energy management, motivation and fitness for listening, which enhances dialogue (the art of thinking together) and awareness of narratives. The reflective process of supervision raises awareness and increases our options.

2. WELLNESS RESOURCES

Wellness strategies for supervision focus on the capacity of the coach to develop their skills and behaviours of resilience, reconfiguration and adaptability. Thus well resourced, they may navigate volatility, uncertainty, overwhelm and vulnerability with their clients, empathetically and compassionately, while staying well themselves. Aaron Antonovsky's salutogenic model is a foundation in this element of the tool to develop the behaviours and mindsets that promote health and wellness.

3. SELF-LEADERSHIP

The three learning cornerstones that develop our self-leadership and self-care abilities are:

- Behaviours
- Thought patterns and emotions for effective and adaptive interactions
- Natural rewards: accessing positive emotions and intrinsic motivation

Self-leadership focuses on the balance between job demands and resource availability. Job resources buffer job demands and burnout. Supervision supports coaches' self-leadership; for example, evaluating and reconfiguring work through boundary setting can provide support for coaches to prevent and manage stress (over-engagement) and burnout (disengagement and pessimism) and instead focus on ways to balance coaching requirements and wellness.

For internal and associate coaches, supervision to resource wellness considers effective organisational structure, greater autonomy over coaching-related tasks and activities, as well as transformational leadership and access to high-quality social support.

4. WORKING WITH OTHERS

Supervision supports reflection and external feedback around the wider systemic contexts and challenges coaches face when working effectively with all their stakeholders, so that everyone can thrive and contribute at the highest level. This benefits organisations with increased return on investment in coaching and through effective quality assurance.

Awareness and the ability to work with difference – for example relating to socio-economic groups, genders, races and cultures, and neurodiverse individuals – with empathy is vital (see the NWI's Multicultural Competency Wheel for more). Supervision enables coaches to explore difference and what it means for them in their coaching, find information, and develop competencies for equity and inclusion in their work.

DYNAMICS OF HEALTH AND WELLBEING FOR COACHES, CLIENTS AND SUPERVISORS IN TURKEY

Two AC Turkey volunteers, [Nükte Gündoğdu](#) and [Günay Özarın](#), conducted a survey of Turkish coaches and supervisors, looking into the relevance of coaching and supervision to health and wellbeing.

Recently the number of people in Turkey suffering from anxiety and depression has significantly increased due to factors such as recurring natural disasters, migration, economic downturn and the Covid-19 pandemic.

According to data from Turkey's Ministry of Health, 17% of the population face mental health issues, 3.2 million people suffer from depression, and antidepressant consumption has increased by 56% in five years.

Many projects have been running in recent years with a coherent, structured and coordinated effort towards mental health and psychosocial support in Turkey. Among these, coaching and coaching supervision are professions that can support people to lead happier and healthier lives.

We have noticed that, especially after the Covid-19 pandemic, coaches and supervisors focus on their clients' wellbeing (physical, emotional and behavioural health) as well as the clients' specific goals. Both coaches' and coach supervisors' primary goal is to help others adopt a positive lifestyle and make behaviour changes to support their goals.

However, little is known or discussed in the literature about how coaches and coach supervisors manage their own wellbeing.

When job strain increases, individuals are less likely to use adaptive self-regulation strategies such as job crafting or other self-care strategies. Therefore, how coaches manage their own personal resources is considered a key component of coaches' individual wellbeing. Coaching supervision can act as a buffer to job strain as it helps coaches to be resourced and to manage their wellbeing levels.

DEFINING WELLBEING

The UK Government Office for Science describes mental wellbeing as 'a dynamic state, in which the individual is able to develop their potential, work productively and creatively, build strong and positive relationships with others, and contribute to their community. It is enhanced when an individual is able to fulfil their personal and social goals and achieve a sense of purpose in society.'

SURVEY RESPONDENTS

Fifteen coaches and seven supervisors participated in the survey.

The coaches and supervisors surveyed were AC members with between three and 14 years of experience, and over half of them were accredited by one or more coaching institution.

DATA COLLECTION

Two separate surveys were prepared for coaches and coach supervisors. Most of the questions remained the same.

The surveys focused on three dynamics of a coach's and coach supervisor's individual wellbeing (figure 1).



Figure 1: dynamics of a coach's and a coach supervisor's individual wellbeing

DATA ANALYSIS

The coach perspective:

- While most of the coaches had had more than one instance of wellbeing training, coaches who had received only one training mostly preferred meditation, mindfulness, breathing or emotional agility and endurance trainings.
- The most common wellbeing problems they faced as coaches were a lack of motivation to take action, pessimism, low energy, rapid loss of internal motivation, lack of courage and difficulty in concentration. Coaches stated that coaching provides support for people's quality of life and wellbeing, including examples like 'starting a change with awareness, questioning, having the courage to take responsibility for their lives, clarifying, helping to identify the current situation, providing a wider perspective and seeing things from different angles.'
- In the changing, post-Covid-19 world, coaches have developed tools to help their clients develop resilience, including emotional freedom techniques, meditation, breathing exercises, emotional intelligence and brain gym.
- Eighty per cent of coaches said that at the beginning of their work they supported their clients in developing a plan for their wellbeing by explaining the importance of wellbeing in achieving goals.

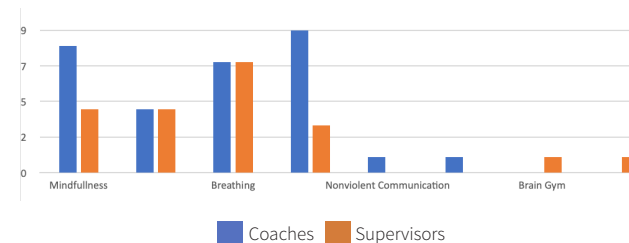
- Eighty-seven per cent of coaches found that 1:1 and group supervision sessions were beneficial in discovering the safe limits of their proficiency and identifying development gaps. As high as 94% credited supervision with helping with understanding the issues that a client needs more support on, staying in the moment, developing internal motivation, focusing, overcoming the difficulty of decision-making and eliminating a lack of courage.

The supervisor perspective:

- While most supervisors had received more than one training on wellbeing, the supervisors who had received only one training preferred the breathing, mindfulness, meditation and emotional agility trainings the most.
- Seventy-one per cent of coach supervisors had received supervision for their wellbeing. The most common problem they had faced as coach supervisors was a lack of motivation to take action; other prominent issues included difficulty in making decisions, lack of courage and difficulty concentrating.
- Six out of seven supervisors stated that coaches who could not find customers had the lowest rate of wellbeing, followed by, in order: student and trainee coaches, life coaches, relationship coaches, executive coaches, career coaches and internal coaches. Team coaches stood out as the coaches with the highest wellbeing.
- Six out of seven supervisors stated that at the beginning of their work they supported their clients in developing a plan for their wellbeing by explaining the importance of wellbeing in achieving goals.
- All the supervisors surveyed said their supervision clients benefitted through better understanding issues that clients need support on, staying in the moment, overcoming the difficulty in making decisions and eliminating a lack of courage.
- Eighty-six percent cited supervision clients seeing the benefits of discovering the safe limits of their proficiency, developing internal motivation and focusing.

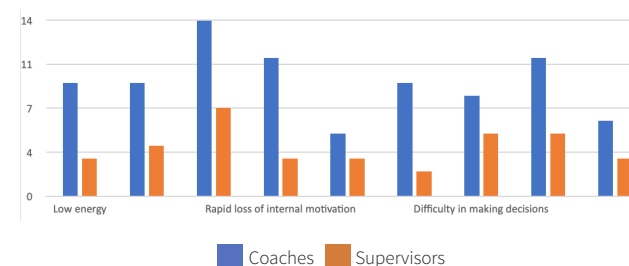
Wellbeing training

(The coach cohort consisted of 15 people. The supervisor cohort consisted of seven people. The question allowed multiple answers per person)



Most common wellbeing issues faced by both coaches and supervisors

(The coach cohort consisted of 15 people. The supervisor cohort consisted of seven people. The question allowed multiple answers per person)



DISCUSSION

Up to the Covid-19 pandemic, coaches' individual wellbeing gained less attention in training, discourse and research. By placing a heavier focus on coaches' individual wellbeing, this survey and associated article seek to go some way towards amending this deficit.

One highlight of the coach supervisors' answers was that all Turkish supervisors participated in breathing training. It seems likely that they have realised that breathing is where life begins, which is the core concept of wellbeing.

According to supervisors, supervision has the most impact on coaches in the following areas: eliminating the lack of courage, staying in the moment, understanding the issues that may need extra support in their studies, and overcoming the difficulty of making decisions.

They describe the most common wellbeing problem among coaches as a lack of motivation to act.

CONCLUSION

With this survey, we looked at the perceptions of the wellbeing of coaches and supervisors living and working in Turkish culture, and their strategies to protect it. Wellbeing plays an important role in coaching and coaching supervision.

Coaches are not without risk of having issues with their own wellbeing when they work. Coaches' wellbeing is an important part of coaching because it requires proactive self-regulation not only for coaches themselves but also while coaches act as role models for their clients.

Supervision and self-reflection are very important for coaches who put their own wellbeing first.

There also needs to be an acknowledgement that coaches need an awareness of their own individual cues for changes in wellbeing and how to recognise and respond to these early.

The next step? After exploring the results and the effects of supervision on wellbeing, coaches and supervisors will gather and talk about all these results.

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



Günay Özarın is the founder of Göz Danışmanlık ve Koçluk in Turkey. She is AC-accredited as both a professional coach and a coaching supervisor. She is one of the founders of AC Turkey and is the lead for group supervision experience calls there as a head of talent and engagement.

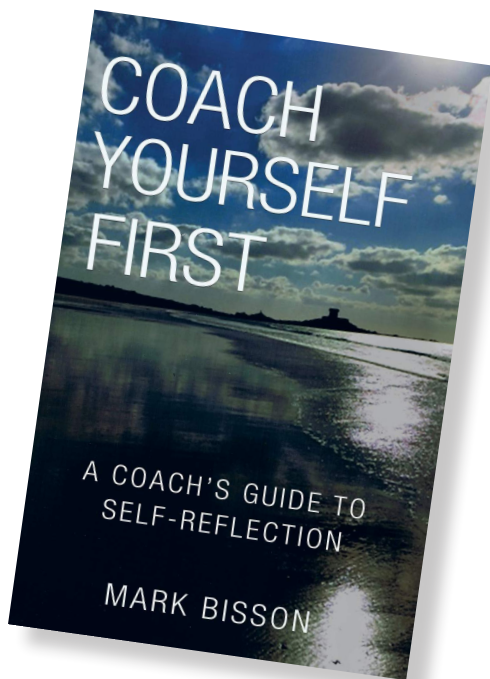


Nükte is an English teacher in Turkey. She is an ICF-accredited coach as PCC. She is the member of both AC Global and AC Turkey. She is one of the members of the talent and engagement team in Turkey. She has been coordinating the supervision calls there for two years.

THE READING ROOM

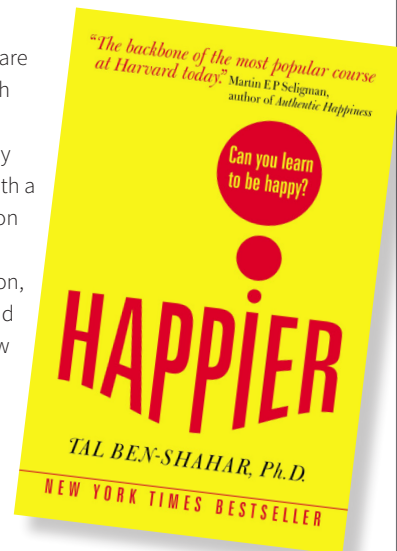
Welcome to the launch of The Reading Room. In each issue, **Sarah David** and **Lizzie Bentley-Bowers** will offer thoughts and ideas on books to stimulate enquiry, reflection and conversation in keeping with the issue theme.

What assumptions might we make about what self-care and wellbeing for coaches involve? This question was at the forefront of our minds as we drew together this inaugural selection. We invite you to have that question in mind as you consider what you agree with, are stimulated by or indeed rail against in this book offering.

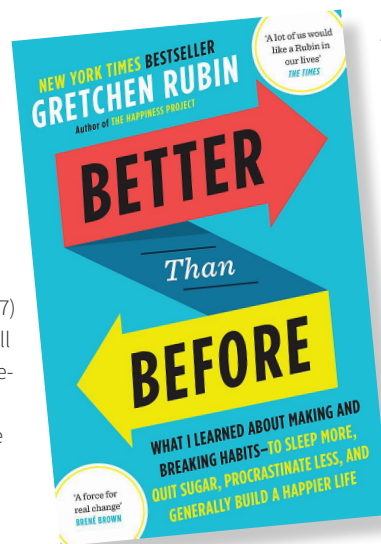


We would argue that a mix of theory, research, creativity and acknowledgement of the pivotal role of supervision are all key to coaching self-care. **Coach Yourself First** (2017) by Mark Bisson is a gentle and supportive exploration of all four of these aspects, provided in a compact and evidence-based book. We appreciated the inclusion of exercises and stimulating questions prompting readers to make the important move from theory to application.

In considering why self-care matters, and sticking with the shorter, accessible format, **Happier** (2008) by Tal Ben-Shahar opens with a reminder of the distinction between the quest for happiness as a destination, and the more realistic and reflexive question of 'How can I be happier?'. If *Man's Search for Meaning* (1946) by Victor Frankl is the 'why', *Happier* is a useful 'how', guiding the reader to lean into the thought that 'most people are as happy as they make up their minds to be'. Like Bisson, Ben-Shahar includes definitions, research and scientific grounding combined with frequent reflexive questions and exercises encouraging us to engage with our 'inner sage' as a form of self-care.



Better than Before: what I learned about making and breaking habits, to sleep more, quit sugar, procrastinate less, and generally build a happier life (2015) by Gretchen Rubin is described by the *New York Times* as a 'detailed instruction manual', and one that for us speaks to the physical



foundations of wellbeing. Rubin likes a pithy statement to capture an issue: 'what we do every day matters more than what we do once in a while', or 'we should make sure the things we do to feel better, don't make us feel worse', and is generous with details of website resources and nearly 400 podcast episodes.



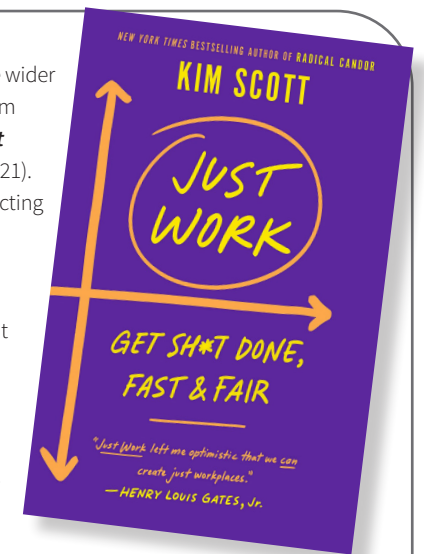
And what if we do not feel happy? The hug in a book that is Pema Chodron's **When things fall apart: heart advice for difficult times** (1997) walks with us in those moments when the small and the big challenges in the world might seem too much, and in the kindest way nudges us to consider that this restlessness and groundlessness is simply part of life. She challenges us to use the effort and energy that could be spent judging ourselves for being 'right' or being 'wrong' to stay instead in a space of openness and choice.

Turning to the wider ecosystem in which coaching sits, **Systemic Coaching: Delivering Value Beyond the Individual** (2020) by Peter Hawkins and Eve Turner offers disciplined academic and reflexive practitioner insights across 14 chapters of challenge and support. It is wide-ranging and thought-provoking, and generous in its referencing and inclusion of numerous writers and



thinkers, echoing the dynamics of culture and communities that are at the heart of a systemic approach. Each chapter includes coaching questions, case studies, and practical tools and methods, all supported by evidence-based models. Throughout the book, we are invited to consider the future world and to consider the needs of others who may not look or think like us, nor have similar experiences to our own.

Our final offering on the wider context of self-care is Kim Scott's **Just Work: Get It Done, Fast and Fair** (2021). It's a handbook for reflecting on and combating bias, prejudice and bullying in the workplace, for managing power so that it doesn't manage you, and for handling the coercion and demand for conformity that often sits at the heart of systemic injustice.



These latter two books prompt us to be aware of the externalities that can affect self-care as well as what might be affecting others' wellbeing when attention is not being paid to it. Taking care means a variety of things to people. What books have we not referenced that you value for this topic? We welcome your thoughts, contributions and observations.



ABOUT THE REVIEWERS

Sarah David focuses on creating positive direction with leaders who want to make a difference. She partners with clients to clarify strategy, accelerate leadership impact and nurture positive culture. Having worked at executive and non-executive level in global and multi-site businesses, she is experienced in embracing complexity and working with leadership teams to find simple, impactful solutions. Sarah is a qualified lawyer with a strategy MBA, and is a master's-level coach with research focused on the role of leaders' mental fitness.

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Lizzie Bentley Bowers is an accredited coach working with senior leaders and teams who understand the far-reaching impact they have on both organisational outcomes and individual wellbeing, and who want to create and sustain environments in which they, their colleagues and their organisations thrive. She is skilled at supporting and challenging teams to understand and leverage their strengths, and to uncover what is getting in their way in order to increase wellbeing, trust and performance.

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PODCAST REVIEWS

Suzy Hunt and **Lisa Robyn Wood** from the *Coaching Cast* podcast reveal and review their top picks with a health and wellbeing focus.

Suzy's choice

Slo Mo: A Podcast with Mo Gawdat: #144 Francesca Specter – How to Thrive When You're Alone and the Power of Solitude

(52 min, 17 July 2021, Spotify and Apple Podcasts)

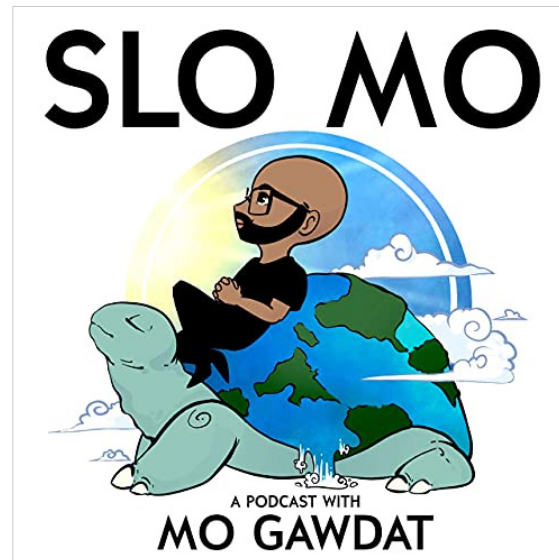
The *Slo Mo* podcast is a series of conversations hosted by the bestselling author and former chief business officer of Google Mo Gawdat. Mo is joined by guests to explore profound questions and obstacles that we all face in the pursuit of purpose in our lives. In this particular podcast episode, Mo talks to Francesca Specter, author of the book *Alonement*. They discuss the term 'alonement', which Francesca created to convey the idea of spending time alone and the benefits of doing so.

This topic captured my attention because, as coaches, while we often advocate being present for our clients, what about for ourselves? In being alone and embracing alonement, could we become more present and reap the benefits in terms of our wellbeing and relationships?

Mo and Francesca discuss the differences between being alone and being lonely, something I hadn't considered before. They move on to explore why those with extrovert preferences may need to learn the skill of being alone. A light bulb went off for me at this point: this is me! I am awful at spending time with myself, whether that's physically or switching off digitally and being in solitude, decompressing from my last coaching session. I hadn't considered the benefits of doing this before, but after hearing how some of Mo's greatest ideas have come to him in moments of solitude, I was convinced.

The discussion progresses into relationships. Both reflect on previous relationships and whether solitude had played a big enough role. Choosing time alone and the solitude that brings, even something as small as going for a long walk on our own, is critical to our wellbeing. These acts nourish our soul, empower us and in turn make us better in our relationships – whether that's with partners, family, friends or coachees.

In closing, Francesca offers her top tips for having a positive experience alone. I certainly found these tips helpful in terms



of thinking how I could get started in my new quest for alonement. With a day off looming, rather than my normal plan of arranging endless catch-ups with others, I am off on a solo walk. So, if like me you are feeling inspired and curious, pop those headphones in, queue up this podcast and head out for that long walk alone. Let this dreamy, interesting and inspirational chat on alonement enrich your wellbeing and your coaching practice.

Our top five podcasts for you to check out this issue

1. ***Slo Mo: A podcast with Mo Gawdat***
2. ***Walk to Wellbeing*** by Health & Wellbeing (DC Thomson)
3. ***Generation Exceptional*** with menopause expert, coach and trainer Bev Thorogood
4. ***Ctrl Alt Delete*** with Emma Gannon
5. ***Being Boss*** with Emily Thompson

Available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify

Lisa's choice

Ctrl Alt Delete with Emma Gannon: #394 Donna Lancaster – Healing Ourselves and Post-Pandemic Grief

(46 min, 14 July 2022, Spotify and Apple Podcasts)

Emma Gannon is a writer, broadcaster and podcaster, best known for her *Sunday Times* best-selling business book *The Multi-Hyphen Method* and for being named in 2018 as one of Forbes '30 Under 30' in media and marketing.

In her award-winning podcast, *Ctrl Alt Delete*, Emma speaks with a variety of guests across multiple industries and specialisms, starting in the career and work sphere, but exploring a depth of topics including creativity and wellbeing.

In this episode, Emma speaks with Donna Lancaster, who has worked as a coach and therapist for more than 25 years and is probably best known for her work at The Hoffman Institute UK, where she co-created The Bridge Retreat; a six-day personal development experience intended to help individuals process grief and loss.

A few of my closest friends have experienced the retreat. Although the specific details of their experience remain private, I have seen the positive impact their time spent at the retreat has had, and the small snippets that have been shared have fascinated me.

The conversation between Emma and Donna flows seamlessly and I am drawn into their easy exchange. Donna demonstrates a humble vulnerability that is immediately appealing, and reinforces my knowledge of her and her coaching practices.

The conversation is focused on the subject of healing, and Donna's ease at being open and honest with her audience provides depth and value.

Donna admits to struggling throughout her life with her inner critic – something I can personally relate to and see as a lifetime project, both in my work as a coach and in my personal life. Managing my ego – especially the negative



side, which threatens to encroach on me being my best self and disrupting my flow when I'm working with clients – is something I'm always aware of, and I was intrigued and inspired by Donna's approach to her own ego. She explains how she 'turns towards [my inner critic] with tenderness, rather than this harshness'. She explains how, by acknowledging that her critic is speaking to her with the agenda of looking after her and her best interests, she can create space to separate her thoughts, accurately label their intent and purpose, and make an informed decision to move forward.

Lancaster believes this level of internal awareness, understanding and acceptance aids our ability to heal: 'learning to self-soothe is also about learning to build our self-resilience because it's recognising that we have the capacity to recalibrate our own nervous system, that we have the capacity to calm ourselves down when we get anxious, when we get activated, that we can hold our own hand.'

A fascinating and insightful listen from a true expert in healing – personally and professionally.

ABOUT THE REVIEWERS

Suzy Hunt and Lisa Robyn Wood are experienced commercial leaders, qualified coaches and the hosts of *The Coaching Cast* podcast. In 2020, when the commercial world worked from their sheds, bedrooms and kitchen tables, the pair sought a place where they could go to feel supported and less alone at work. Unable to find what they were looking for, they created *The Coaching Cast*. Suzy and Lisa hunt down the conversations no one else is having in the working world and raise them in a light-hearted but insightful way.

Listen to *The Coaching Cast* on Spotify, Apple Podcasts and Google Podcasts. Visit thecoachingcast.co.uk to learn more.



BOOK REVIEWS

CREATIVE REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Lorna McDowell enjoys this call to the imagination – a must for anyone facilitating learning in self and in others.

The importance of reflective practice and supervision is well understood by coaches, and most have their preferred cadences. I am constantly reminded, however, of the importance of disrupting one's repertoire and of being playful, in order to free up energy and avoid complacency. Creativity and reflexivity therefore go hand-in-hand, and Beckett-McInroy and Ali Baba have curated a divine mezze of theories, practices and ideas to stimulate one's being.

They make the point that reflective practice is a lot more than 'just reflection': it is the systematic capturing and expression of the reflection that is important, because learning happens through metacognition – the process of recording and representing enables us to learn more about our learning. It is simply not enough to sit and think things through oneself, or even with another: it is how we go on to process and engage with the insight that makes the difference.

Professor Peter Hawkins, in his forward to the book, goes a step further: 'We can no longer wait until we are part of a professional training to develop these skills. We need to help our children and grandchildren learn them as they are growing up.' Teachers, parents, and business and community leaders alike would also benefit from this book.

I was particularly drawn to the insights shared by practitioners around the world, which highlight the cultural nuances of reflection. For instance, consider the paradox of Russia's deep history of literary reflectors such as Tolstoy and Dostoyevsky existing alongside the concept of Homo Sovieticus: this ideal of the 'Soviet man' shunned wasting time on feelings, emotions and self-digging, which were seen to be weak, passive and 'sickly', bordering on psychoanalysis. In order to further reflective practice in this situation, the practice must be robustly clear, benefit-driven, and with a safe and 'rigorous' learning space to succeed.

Likewise, I liked the challenge from Joseph Ogbonna, who states that Africans, relative to people in the Western world, have lived in harmony with nature for years, but that they are rarely acknowledged as contributors to the development of the modern world. What could this knowledge teach us about current ecological crises?

TITLE: Creative Reflective Practice

AUTHORS: Dr Clare Beckett-McInroy and Sameera Ali Baba

PUBLISHER: Beckett McInroy Consultancy

PUBLICATION DATE: Dec 2021

PAPERBACK PRICE: £20

ISBN: 978-0993199998



I also enjoyed the reflection through colours, which really shifted my energy and emotions as I considered a topic that has been troubling me. I shared this with a team I was working with: thinking 'by the light of the Moon' and 'splashes of insight' invited us to rediscover our inner genie, dissolving some hardness that had settled on the topic like removing limescale from a shiny surface where so much hard water has flowed.

An exercise on feeling love by connecting with people's eyes was also powerful – introduced by Roxani Oilkonmou, a microexpressions trainer in body language coaching. This offered inspiration for enlivening a Zoom session.

This book is a call to the imagination – a must for anyone who is facilitating learning in self and in others.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Lorna McDowell is a systemic transformation coach and consultant helping organisations find new ways to bridge their resources and develop untapped value for better business and better society. She is the founder of Xenergie, a consultancy registered in UK, Ireland and Australia that has developed an award-winning approach to helping organisations develop their 'social energy', which is taught through Xenergie's AC-accredited advanced diploma in systemic transformation. She is also the driving force behind Clusters.world, a not-for-profit action-learning experience helping leaders transform their practice for positive social impact.

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EXPLORE: A LIFE OF ADVENTURE

Rob Kemp enjoys surveying the parallels between adventure and coaching in a book packed full of exploration, courage and achievements.

Explore is not a coaching book, nor does it claim to be – but it does contain much that will interest a coaching audience. Sue Stockdale tells the story of her life of (many) adventures in a charming book that is well written and easy to read. I found myself genuinely moved at times as I was invited into Sue's story.

We are led through the early parts of Sue's life, through to her emergence as a coach. Many of us will relate to parts of her story, though probably not the parts dealing with extreme cold and hardship. What we might see in this book, though, are learnings for coaches and coachees. My 'take-aways' spanned several areas: what constitutes adventure for one person is not necessarily adventure for another (our infinite variety and 'makeup' as humans), and also that courage comes in many forms. Plus, that the meeting of opportunity with curiosity sometimes leads to extraordinary things.

Sue's achievements are always described with and through others. The importance of being able to work well with people and teams, and as a leader, is pertinent throughout (and yet the personal inner journey is also so influential).

I would not usually pick up a book like this (perhaps because it makes my life seem so unadventurous and mundane) but I am glad that I did; it felt like a window into experiences that have some relevance for me, even though the context is so far from my own world.

TITLE: Explore: A Life of Adventure

AUTHOR: Sue Stockdale

PUBLISHER: Albert Bridge Books

PUBLICATION DATE: April 2022

PRICE: £9

ISBN: 978-1909771321



ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr Rob Kemp has recently been appointed as head of accredited coach training at Barefoot Coaching. After a corporate career, Rob dedicated his professional life and learning to coaching – first through a postgraduate certificate (2005), then an MSc (2013), and then as a doctor of coaching and mentoring (2021). Having practised as a coach for almost two decades, Rob is now developing other coaches through training and supervision. He can be reached via rob@barefootcoaching.co.uk.

COACHING AND MENTORING (4TH EDITION)

The way the book is structured could easily make it the go-to refresher and update manual for professional coaches and mentors, says Mihaela Diaconu.

Coaching and Mentoring remains a helpful overview of coaching and mentoring through a refreshing and refreshed lens. Now in its fourth edition, the authors have made a great effort to bring in the latest research, newly updated stories and some references to the impact of newer technologies on coaching, mentoring and the relationships within. They also make it clear from the start that they only tackled areas that had serious research data behind them, and that if certain topics aren't covered it is because they couldn't find evidence to support them.

Saying that, I was curious to see David Rock's 2008 SCARF model covered, as this model hasn't particularly been subjected to peer reviews. Ultimately, it does seem to be used by many practitioners though – and successfully – and so perhaps it shouldn't have come as a surprise to see Diane Newell's mention it in her chapter on learning and adaptability.

The book's central structured consists of two major parts. The first covers:

- a snapshot of the coaching profession and its development;
- a chapter explaining the contribution of coaching and mentoring to learning and adaptability;
- core skills required to undertake both activities;
- a toolkit chapter;
- a chapter on awareness of individual differences;
- supervision;
- and stories of coaching and mentoring.

The second part focuses on our work with organisations:

- building a case for investing in coaching;
- comparing coaching and mentoring and how they might be used in organisations;
- implementing coaching and mentoring;
- roles and responsibilities;
- supervision with an organisational scope in mind;

TITLE: *Coaching and Mentoring: Practical Techniques for Developing Learning and Performance (4th edition)*

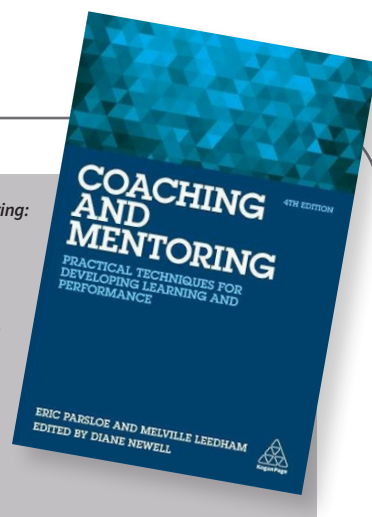
AUTHORS: Eric Parsloe and Melville Leedham (Edited by Diane Newell)

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- coaching the team;
- a look at the system;
- and the authors' thoughts on next steps.

Coaches will find plenty of familiar ideas, especially in the first part of the book. For me, I found the new snippets among the last two chapters of part one, especially the stories of coaching and mentoring. These are very well written and provide sufficient detail to easily use the learnings for your practice.

Although a lot of the information and the toolkit aren't 'new' as such, I still found myself highlighting quite a few quotes and references throughout that first part of the book. Whether this is old knowledge or new for practitioners, I believe that the way the book is structured could easily make it the go-to refresher and update manual for professional coaches and mentors, with the added benefit of a number of practical examples of coaching and mentoring insights from experienced practitioners.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Mihaela is an organisational psychologist focusing on leadership and people and organisational development. She is a coach, facilitator and consultant. Mihaela's mission is to support people to flourish at work and build thriving workplaces and communities using business psychology principles: one conversation, one experience and one process at a time. She is a certified corporate and executive coach and business psychologist, has an MSc in organisational psychology and is a fellow of the Chartered Management Institute. She has an extensive background in operational, project and product management and is also a British Psychological Association psychometrics test user.

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November

Friday 4 November

10.00 CET/ 09.00 (BST)

DACH (Germany, Austria & Switzerland) - Virtual
Community Cafe

Wednesday 9 November

09.00 BST | Ireland - Virtual

Virtual Cafe

Thursday 10 November

10:00 GMT/11:00 CET | Skills Dev Half Day - Virtual
Trauma-Sensitive Mindfulness in Coaching - Pilar Puig

Wednesday 23 November

09.00 BST | Ireland - Virtual

Virtual Cafe

December

Friday 2 December

10.00 CET/ 09.00 (BST)

DACH (Germany, Austria & Switzerland) - Virtual
Community Cafe

Tuesday 6 December

12.00 EST | Canada - Virtual

AC Coaching Perspectives Forum

Wednesday 7 December

09.00 BST | Ireland - Virtual

Virtual Cafe

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Advancing coaching in business and society, worldwide