

JULY 2020 | ISSUE 26

# Coaching Perspectives

THE ASSOCIATION FOR COACHING  
GLOBAL MAGAZINE



## Beyond diversity

- Black Lives Matter: six coaches from around the world respond
- Dr Stanley Arumugam on white coaches with black clients in South Africa
- Coaching and Covid: notes from Milan
- How visually impaired guides can enhance human experience

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**Joseph Cooper, PG Cert. cohort 2019–20**

*‘Out beyond right and wrong there is a place.  
I will meet you there’*

Rumi



*‘Umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu: a person is a person through other people’*

Zulu saying

Welcome to the July edition of *Coaching Perspectives*. When we planned this edition, ‘beyond diversity’ – way back in 2019 (another world away) – we could not have known then how painfully immediate this theme would become. Diversity and inclusion are central to the ethos of the AC and to the magazine, but in this edition we wanted to explore more deeply: what could real inclusion and equality look like beyond workplace tick-boxes and quotas, and what might this mean for coaching?

Then, in May, the shocking and prominent killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis, USA, left us reeling; the worldwide rage and despair affected us all. Coming at a time when Covid-19 continues to cut a swathe across the world, it struck a particular note of horror in the context of collective grief and loss. The pandemic has stripped back the distractions of ‘normal’ life, bringing out the best of our humanity – courage and compassion. But it also exposes the worst, like the stain dropped on a microscope slide to reveal the cellular structure of the organism: a world where separation, fear and mistrust too easily tip into rage, cruelty and hate.

Like others I am deeply troubled. The issues of racism are made further complex by intersections of class, gender, income, education, sexuality, dis/ability, religion and politics. But there is light in the darkness. The resurgence of the Black Lives Matter movement offers us another chance to bring the terrible injustices of past and present front of mind. Read the thoughts of six coaches and leaders in our Black Lives Matter supplement.

The Rumi quote above reminds us that coaching aims beyond the bitter divisions of hate and fear to create spaces where we can truly see that ‘I am because you are’: Ubuntu (the popular form of the Zulu maxim above). An encounter in my neighbourhood brought home to me that this is both personal and bigger than me. This work involves all of us. It is challenging and painful. But if not now, when? And if not us, who?

If we are to truly go *beyond* diversity we must engage in what may be uncomfortable conversations – in dialogue. This means recognising differences that arouse anxiety: ‘Will I say the wrong thing?’. ‘Will I offend?’. Can we sit with the discomfort of anxiety, vulnerability and even shame as we become aware of inherited privileges we unconsciously continue to enjoy through no personal fault or merit? Can we let go of defensiveness as we truly try to see the world through another’s eyes?

But the prize can be great. In his classic book, *Dialogue: The Art of Thinking*, William Isaacs writes:

*‘In dialogue, one not only solves problems, one dissolves them. We do not merely try to reach agreement, we try to create a context from which many new agreements may come. And we seek to uncover a base of shared meaning that can greatly help coordinate and align our action with our values.’*

This is not just about race. During one of our many discussions in planning this edition, Jocelyn, our Deputy Editor, said:

*‘Many people feel voiceless: they have an experience of the world that they feel is not “politically correct” to speak about even in the midst of diversity discussions. We need to be curious about the things we don’t know about others, with a sense that each individual is to some degree a mystery and totally unique – and to be willing to engage with those with differences in search of the common humanity deep within. We all feel pain, fear, loneliness, joy, courage. We all bleed red.’*

*‘In truly hearing another we can form the foundation of understanding and the unfolding of new possibilities.’*

I am proud to present a range of thought-provoking and heartfelt contributions from talented leaders and coaches from South Africa, Milan, Australia, Malaysia, Belgium, the USA and the UK. Join us in our inquiries into cross-cultural coaching, the blind leading the sighted, ending female genital cutting, measuring wellbeing vs ‘ill-being’, the feminine principle, embodied working with fear and connection, hope growing in lockdown isolation, and wholeness as a viewpoint on the world. We celebrate the AC’s recent global conference and the work of Project5. Our deep dive brings together the philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre and transactional analysis in a fascinating discourse. And we pay tribute to coach and teacher Deborah Tom who very sadly passed away in May.

Working *beyond diversity* has a clear moral imperative. But it is vital also because, in our not-knowing and our not-seeing, society is grievously missing out on the creativity, the richness and the different genius of individuals and groups who feel marginalised – who don’t fit the ‘norm’. Research tells us that the intelligence of a diverse group will always be smarter than the cleverest individual. We have big challenges to address: we need the enfranchisement of everyone and the collaboration of all as we face into a new future.

I have often said I believe coaching has the potential to be a noble profession: moral in a brave, honest and kind way\*. Let us rise to the challenge.

Our October edition is themed on *Crisis and opportunity: coaching contribution to global challenges*. Send us your thoughts and your ideas. We look forward to hearing from you.

With warm wishes to everyone

*Hetty Einzig*

Editor

\*Cambridge Dictionary online

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# AN APPRECIATION OF DEBORAH TOM

Some people achieve more and have greater impact in their lifetimes than a dozen 'normal' folk. Deborah Tom was one of these. Qualified as both a chartered psychologist and a master coach, Deborah coached thousands of senior people from all walks of life: FTSE 100 board members; heads of the navy, army and air force; leaders of Olympic teams. She wrote three books, published in multiple languages, and earlier this year was runner-up for the British Psychology Society (BPS) Psychologist of the Year award. Three years ago, she began to shift the focus of her business away from one-to-one coaching for elites to the internet, and to having a wider influence on the development of young people. Her legacy will undoubtedly live on beyond her.

I first met Deborah in 2012 when she was recruiting executive coaches for a global coaching network. In order to be involved I had to give a live demonstration of coaching over the phone with a client I had not met before! Once accepted, she set us up in groups; each group asked to research and present on a vital topic in coaching. Over the last two-three years I have worked alongside her as a coach, a coaching supervisor and a trainer of coaches, and I have seen at close hand what characterised our first collaboration – an energetic ambition that was not about her own ego but instead about what she could create in the world, a desire to create this with others, and a relentless commitment to professional rigour and excellence. She had great respect for others' thinking when this thinking had integrity, and at the same time was ready to challenge anything she felt was flawed or poorly considered. She was only interested in work that was outstanding.

First an air hostess, then a chartered psychologist, before training as a coach and setting up Human Systems Business Psychologists, then Maximy and Coach Training Ltd, she threw herself into project after project with an indefatigable energy, always seeking to understand her clients' world. She designed award-winning leadership programmes for Barclays bank and Société Générale among others. She worked with generals in the British army, and with athletes in Team GB preparing for the Olympics, and her doctorate compared leadership in the military, sport and business. Her *Ultimate Coach Training Manual*, published in 2019, is a comprehensive exploration of the essential foundations, approaches and practices in coaching.

Her fierce drive was combined with an impish sense of fun and a profound yet spontaneous human warmth, shaped in part by her experience of her own shadows. When we last spoke, shortly before she died, she was looking ahead to redesigning a programme, and collaborating on this with her usual vigour, and yet deeply concerned about me as my father had died only weeks before. Rarely has working with someone been such a rich, refreshing and affirming experience. I will miss her, her laser focus, her huge heart, her wicked laugh.

**Patrick Hobbs, master executive coach and head coach of Maximy Ltd**



Deborah was firstly my coach, then my teacher and my friend.

In all of these guises she exuded a wonderful warmth that, for me, was a significant factor in why I trusted her as my coach and then continued to pick up with her at times when I was unsure about something in life.

As a coach, Deborah was as good as they come. She picked up on unspoken emotions, unlocked unrealised potential for people and galvanised people to action. I took much bolder steps as a result of her coaching and she unlocked a fearlessness in me in approaching my career.

As I moved on, I looked to learn more about coaching to enable me to be a better mentor and coach to those around me. Deborah, as luck would have it, was just starting her new coach training venture and I jumped at the chance to learn from her. Her voracity for reading and thirst for knowledge enabled her to expand the thinking of those that she was teaching. It was an experience that has made me much more conscious of how I relate to people than I ever was before.

I will miss her wise words and boundless energy.

**Catriona Macritchie, solicitor**

I first met Deborah in 2008 when I was Head of Leadership Development at Barclays bank and she was pitching to build our new leadership programme. From the beginning, I was bowled over by her knowledge, her creativity and her original ideas – but most of all by her uniqueness as a vendor. She listened, she sought to understand, and she got to know me. What resulted was a partnership like no other I have experienced. Together we built the Eagle programme. To this day, delegates remember it as a point in their careers where things changed, where they got to learn, where they gained new and fresh perspectives from leaders around the world. We built something that really resonated with people and had a lasting impact on those involved. More than that, we had so much fun along the way. Deborah's infectious enthusiasm made learning fun again.

Our relationship continued long after the Eagle programme came to a natural conclusion and what followed was ten years of mentoring, coaching and friendship. We kept in regular contact through the ups and downs of my career. Deborah was always on hand to offer insight and keep me true to myself. When she launched a new coaching programme in 2017, I didn't hesitate to get involved. The coaching course she built was a true testament to her – she put her whole self into it. We came out at the end of it, not just accredited coaches, but as people who had consumed a lifetime's worth of coaching knowledge in the space of twelve months.

Deborah has been instrumental in my career, and I will truly miss her. I doubt I will ever meet anyone like Deborah again, and that is exactly how it should be.

**Louise Kirtley, coach and head of talent and leadership development at M&S**

The two first things anyone noticed about Deborah were her distinctive and infectious laugh and her amazing energy. She had a remarkable ability to sweep people up in her enthusiasm. Getting to know and appreciate her more deeply, I learned that she was driven by a deep need to do her best for everyone around her. It wasn't enough to provide her corporate clients with a capable faculty for their programmes – they had to be the best people available, anywhere in the world. Through Deborah I met so many original thinkers, who could put across their ideas with passion and simplicity. When Deborah started working with a new client (as a learned when I went through the same process with her, to understand her method), it was a deep and intensive exploration. Occasionally mercurial, in the way that highly creative people often are, Deborah sometimes was exasperated by the inability of some coaches and clients in her networks to be proactive and imaginative. Yet, because she personified a kind of kindness that extended to the whole person, it meant she gave even more. It was a joy to work with her and I am grateful for the opportunity to have done so.

**David Clutterbuck, special ambassador, European Mentoring and Coaching Council**

I was ambushed by Deborah at a school sports day, just before I deployed as a colonel to Iraq in 2003. She had come across the 'Principles of War' that underpin military thinking and pressed me in her inimitable, unstoppable way on how this could be applied to the greater benefit of many other activities. I immediately fell into her trap, arguing there was more to this in a whole canon ripe for wider use if well articulated. I was committed to co-authoring a book before the last race. I assumed months in Basra followed by an immediate posting to Northern Ireland would cause this to be forgotten. Anybody who knew Deborah will not be surprised that, two years later, after many hours of fascinating, creative and inspirational input from her and a great deal of copying down by me, *The Business General* was published. This was the start of Deborah's rich, profound support to military leadership and her unstinting, brilliant personal advice to some very senior leaders under great pressures. As a general ten years later, she was still providing me with the wisest counsel despite being so in demand elsewhere. Deborah set the pace in terms of how all the art and science behind her mastery of psychology and coaching could improve the quality of military leadership, and also in showing how military leadership skills and experience could add immense value to even the best commercial enterprises.

**General Sir Richard Barrons KCB CBE**

*To read more about Deborah, her story and her contribution to so many, please read this article co-written by her husband, David; her daughter, Eliot; and her business partner, Rob Frost: <https://lnkd.in/dMkiNJG>*



## GOING BELOW THE SURFACE: LESSONS FROM SOUTH AFRICA

Psychologist and leadership coach **Dr Stanley Arumugam** reflects on the diversity challenges experienced by business leaders in the country and what this means for inclusive leadership.

The business case for diversity and inclusive leadership is clear. Still, business leaders struggle with sustainable diversity and inclusion change. One reason could be that coaches working with leaders do not go beyond the surface into the deeper psychodynamic space where the real issues of race, culture, diversity and inclusion reside. However, I believe coaching has the potential to make meaningful, deep and sustainable organisational change.

### CONTEXT MATTERS

Understanding the impact of racial dynamics is essential for effective coaching, especially in the South African context. The scourge of apartheid eroded not just people's livelihoods but also their psychological state. Steve Biko, South Africa's black consciousness advocate, reminded us that 'the most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed'. Coaching is in the business of mindset change, and the historical shaping of South African minds needs to be acknowledged and recognised to do so successfully.

Post-apartheid South Africa has systematically legislated several nation-building acts that promote diversity and inclusion, and address the effects of discrimination in the workplace. Despite these strong policy measures, twenty years into democracy we are still playing catch up in the workplace as we continue to struggle with real diversity issues. It's in this context that

coaching is emerging as a potentially powerful process that can enable organisational transformation.

At its heart, coaching is a relationship of equality, mutual trust and respect, which requires both the coach and coachee to become increasingly socially and self-aware, especially in the work of coaching for diversity and inclusion. Therefore, to be effective, coaching must go beyond diversity awareness around race, language and culture to consider how racial dynamics show up in the coaching relationship in the context of historic discrimination and interracial trauma.

From a gestalt perspective, deep change occurs in relationships with the self and others. We are always figuring out who we are in relation to others as we move towards self-acceptance and congruence with significant others in our world. The coaching relationship thus has the potential to serve as a powerful space for experimenting with relational healing and growth, one where the coach can model acceptance and positive regard – especially across racial lines.

### COACHING FOR EMPOWERMENT

In the last ten years, coaching has become a key leadership intervention in most of corporate South Africa. The reality is that most coaches in South Africa are white and coach mostly black employees and leaders. This would otherwise be uneventful, except for the fact of South Africans' shared history of separate

development. The problem is that these white coaches still represent a face of South Africa that hasn't fully transformed in the lived experience of most blacks in the corporate workplace. Emerging black coaches are also socialised in a white, Western model of coaching practice. This blind spot also extends to diversity programmes, which all are developed with good intent but hold an inherent unconscious bias – they recreate a corporate workplace based on the standards of 'male whiteness'. Those aspiring blacks that have broken the ranks enabled by affirmative action mostly fit the mould of the WASP (white Anglo-Saxon protestant) male.

### THE MYTH OF VALUE-NEUTRAL COACHING

I am privileged to work with a socially conscious team of South African coaches who are mindful that the contexts they practice in are diverse in race, gender and age. However, this is not the norm. Most diversity coaching and inclusive leadership programmes remain at a surface level and focus on behaviours and attitudes, using the classic iceberg model as a frame of reference. Coaching and leadership programmes at this level tend to have a solution-focused approach with the aim of helping leaders and their followers (subordinates) integrate, fit in, and learn to be successful within a dominant system.

This 'band aid' approach ignores, avoids or is uncomfortable with the more vulnerable conversations below the surface, and teaches leaders and employees how to be multiculturally sensitive, politically correct and begrudgingly patient. The result is that organisations 'tick the box', and that coachees learn survival skills to make it in a white, male world.

That said, below the classic waterline of the iceberg lie issues of beliefs, values and socialisation. In these spaces, the real conversations continue to be experiences of discrimination, prejudice and bullying.

In order to focus on real change, diversity programmes therefore need to go beyond the surface and listen to real conversations – around the water cooler, in the cafeteria and on social media – where black employees, coachees and women can speak their truth without judgement. This below-the-surface approach is raw, messy work that requires a deep dive into the unconscious spaces of individual, team and organisational psyches.

### PLACE OF DEPTH COACHING

To embrace below-the-surface coaching, coaches need to become vulnerable themselves with a willingness to become aware of blind spots and unconscious bias. A great space for this is in psychodynamic supervision. Another helpful space, I have experienced, is in working with a socially conscious diverse team of coaches who act as peer mentors, and who come from diverse lived realities.

Depth coaching for inclusive leadership takes seriously the coachee and the organisational need for psychological safety. Most diversity programmes neglect this, assuming that participants come into a shared space empowered and resilient, easily able to engage meaningfully. In a corporate programme I was a part of, this was one of the most important elements of our team coaching – creating a psychologically safe space where people can go beyond valuing differences to feeling safe, and to telling and listening to deep stories of pain, trauma and triumph. This requires soul work.

Psychodynamic coaching offers an opportunity to identify patterns of transference and counter transference. In this space, power dynamics become more evident and deeper trauma can be processed in a safe way. Is this the space of coaching or counselling? An easy way out is to relegate this work to counselling and psychotherapy, leaving the coach to work on the surface. However, coaching has more access to, and power to influence, inclusive leadership culture than psychotherapy in organisations. This requires coaches to work in the spaces of deep diversity and inclusive leadership to be psychologically mature and competent in behavioural science.

### COACHING COMPETENCIES FOR INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

I find the Deloitte model for inclusive leadership helpful in designing diversity and inclusive leadership interventions. These six signature competencies, reinterpreted, can also serve coaches in preparing to work below the waterline for meaningful, sustainable diversity and inclusion:

1. **Commitment:** coaches believe in diversity and inclusion at the core of their values.
2. **Courage:** coaches are able to hold leaders accountable to deep change.
3. **Cognizance of bias:** coaches have awareness of socialisation in their worldviews and paradigms.
4. **Curiosity:** coaches look beyond tolerance to deeper stories of trauma, resilience and growth.
5. **Cultural intelligence:** coaches display awareness and adaptability in diverse social contexts.
6. **Collaboration:** coaches create psychologically safe spaces for marginalised voices to be heard.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stanley is based in Johannesburg, South Africa. He is the Director of LIMINAL LEADERSHIP, an executive coaching and leadership development consultancy serving NGOs, faith-based organisations and corporates. Stanley currently serves on the Coaching Perspectives Editorial Board. He was previously senior leadership advisor at Action Aid International, responsible for HR, OD and governance. He is a registered psychologist and professional coach. He has a deep interest in social justice, spirituality and community development in the role of coaching for social change. Stanley is an advisory member to Factor10.

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# COACHING THE SYSTEM, NOT THE INDIVIDUAL

There is little good in encouraging women leaders to flourish if there is nowhere for them to go, says **Kerrin Miller**.

The scarcity of women in leadership roles is well known. Within the South African context, a 2018 report showed that only 29% of senior roles in South African organisations are filled by women.<sup>1</sup>

The lack of progress towards gender equity in organisations is complex. Even the ways of describing this are varied and multi-layered. While the metaphor of a 'glass ceiling' seems to be the most widely used, this is increasingly seen as inaccurate. A recent article in Harvard Business Review notes: "In truth, women are not turned away only as they reach the penultimate stage of a distinguished career. They disappear in various numbers at many points leading up to that stage."<sup>2</sup>

Women's career advancement may be more accurately described as a 'labyrinth': a metaphor that conveys a route neither linear nor straightforward, which requires resilience, deep self-insight and the solving of problems both predictable and not.

## AN ORGANISATIONAL RESPONSE

In response to these challenges, a pan-African investment bank, headquartered in Johannesburg, South Africa, launched an accelerated development programme for women. This included in-person, individual coaching to accelerate and embed behaviour change.<sup>3</sup> When reflecting on over 150 coaching sessions, a number of insights emerged. While there was little doubt that coaching was effective in building the individual capability in female leaders, organisational obstacles were preventing progress.

Coaching individual women without addressing the systemic context and organisational culture – particularly its underlying power structures and how they intersect with gender and race – seems ineffective and even potentially destructive. It requires coaches to work on the axis of simultaneously helping 'both the individual and the organisation achieve greater success, where the value they receive from each other is maximised and/or transformed'.<sup>4</sup>

The wider system, it appears, needs to be coached to unlock the return on investment of this initiative. Addressing themes of power, privilege, bias and systemic context is required to harness the individual shifts and reap the real organisational value of women – and the benefit this brings to the bottom line. It requires that lead coaches and programme designers speak up and engage courageously about the danger of creating a cadre of women ready to step up without removing the organisational obstacles to enable them to do so. It needs coaches to elevate organisational stakeholders' views and help them to see the situation holistically to gain perspective. As Eagly and Carly suggest, 'labyrinths become infinitely more tractable when seen from above'.<sup>5</sup>

## HOW TO DO IT

'Elevating the perspective' is best started in pre-programme engagements with senior leaders, sponsors and human resource partner to gain clarity on:

- the alignment of the women's development initiative to its wider business and inclusion strategy
- the organisation's expected outcomes and how success will be measured
- its cultural readiness for systemic change

- its leadership capability around inclusion
- its openness to explore and address the possible obstacles at play
- its communication plan about this initiative to both the women involved and wider system
- its focus areas in building an inclusive workplace

Next, engagement needs to include people managers. Studies have confirmed that the 'calibre and quality of the relationship between line manager and coachee had a significant impact on creating the micro-climate in which the female leaders operated'.<sup>6</sup> Recent data suggests that inclusive leadership practices explain almost half of any employee's experience of inclusion.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps our most important role as coaches is to advocate for and assist in building inclusive leadership practises across people managers.

Practically this could: involve including people managers in programme launch sessions; on-boarding them around their role in the programme; socialising them around inclusive leadership practises; driving alignment in three-way coaching objective setting conversations; and tracking their observations on participant changes.

Without this, coaching women in organisations may, ultimately, be more about walls than about wings.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Kerrin is an industrial psychologist and credentialed coach (PCC, ICF) with over 25 years' experience. Starting her career as an HR business partner within South Africa and the UK, on completing her MA she spent ten years consulting in the areas of learning and leadership. Since 2014 Kerrin has led a team of psychologists and coaches that has worked with over 500 pan-African leaders and leadership teams. She is passionate about using a blend of digitisation and psychology to develop strengths-focused, resilient, change-agile, inclusive and purpose driven leaders.

1. See 'Growing wings isn't enough', *Coaching Perspectives* Issue 24, January 2020 for more on the design and impact of the programme.
- i. [businesstech.co.za/news/business/230319/women-in-senior-roles-in-south-africa-on-the-up/](https://businesstech.co.za/news/business/230319/women-in-senior-roles-in-south-africa-on-the-up/). (Visit [catalyst.org](https://catalyst.org) and [leanin.org](https://leanin.org) for useful data and resources)
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## TO FACILITATE INCLUSION, COACHING NEEDS TO PLAY CATCH UP

Renowned equality and inclusion expert **Stephen Frost** explains why our understanding of diversity and inclusion in coaching remains inadequate and has not kept pace with changes in the world around us.

Many people still see diversity as a compliance issue, what I call Diversity 101. Others still understand it to be a reputational issue, what I call Diversity 2.0. Yet, from an American perspective, as the recent events concerning racial issues in policing have tragically demonstrated, if we do not consider diversity in the very foundation of our decision-making, we will continue to do a disservice to ourselves and to our clients who depend on us to challenge their blind spots.

Including diversity in our decision-making is what I've spent my career exploring. I call it Inclusion 3.0. In this article I'll take a broad look at the field of diversity and inclusion from this third paradigm perspective, and explore how it can help you be a better professional.

## IT STARTS WITH YOU

Think about your five best friends in the world. Who are they? Who understands you? Think about the love of your life, your partner if you have one or want one – or partners, who's counting? If it's not going so well, think about the person you'd like to be with. Now, think about where you live. Who are your closest neighbours? Think about one or two people who live

on your street. Finally, think about your five closest colleagues, professionally. Who do you confide in? Who do you rely on? Who do you trust?

Draw a circle around these names. We call this your 'in-group'. Then ask yourself: 'How diverse is this group?' Forty per cent of white Americans are surrounded exclusively by friends of their own race. Seventy-five per cent of white people don't have any non-white friends.<sup>1</sup>

Why does this matter? Diversity is simply the mix of people in a group. That difference can be in terms of race, gender or appearance. It can also be invisible differences like sexuality, disability or thinking style. The more differences a group has, the more options and possibilities at its disposal. So, it's clear that we benefit from diversity, but why is a lack of diversity problematic?

To offer an example as an answer, take driverless cars. A recent Georgia tech study showed that camera-based AI vehicles hit black people more than white people because they couldn't see them<sup>2</sup>. The design team was largely white and hadn't accounted for skin tone in their design thinking. Similarly, all things being equal when a woman is in a car crash she is 47% more likely to

be seriously injured and 17% more likely to die than a man<sup>iii</sup>. A Stanford University team has shown this is largely because cars are designed by men using male bodies as the crash test dummy norm. Heaven forbid you have a heart attack. The Centre for Cardiovascular Research found that the prescription for women is different to men because their bodies react differently<sup>iv</sup>. But we've only just discovered this because historically drugs were tested on male patients.

Many designers of driverless cars, tech stars and programmers, and medics and scientists have coaches. Are they being challenged on who is informing their decision-making and world view? Who is in our in-group matters. It's important for two reasons.

On a personal level, it contains the most important people in our lives. People we love, and are dependent on for financial and emotional wellbeing; we all need love and security and comfort in our lives.

Our in-group also forms our unconscious frame of reference for how we see everyone else. It's our rock; our norm. Most of us have in-groups composed of people pretty similar to ourselves. It might be similar in terms of ethnic group or gender, or in less obvious ways like sense of humour or political persuasion.

When those in our in-group are similar, we use that similarity, and familiarity, as the benchmark. It's the frame of reference for trust, perceived intelligence and willingness to help. That comfort is seductive. And it allows us to exclude.

Professionally, this is detrimental. Only when we're conscious of our personal in-group can we become inclusive at work. This awareness allows us to challenge our bias and to reach out to others who are different to us – to reach across divides. Quite frankly, it helps us become a more conscious human being.

### APPLYING AN INCLUSIVE MIND-SET TO REAL WORLD PROBLEMS

Ten years ago, I was responsible for diversity for the London Olympic and Paralympic Games. My team and I had to recruit 200,000 volunteers. If we had just left it to the market, we would have ended up with 200,000 people who looked fairly similar to me. I would have replicated my in-group. But we wanted the Games to look and feel like London, and for everyone to feel a part of it. So, we had to do something different to make sure those 200,000 people were truly diverse.

One thing we did was move our interview room from a tall skyscraper in the financial district of the city to a single-storey community centre in a poorer neighbourhood. Rather than expecting people to come to us, we went to them. Rather than expecting them to adapt to us, we tried to adapt to them.

Staying in our personal comfort zones at work leads to collective discomfort. If we had stayed comfortable at London 2012, all the volunteers would have been white, middle-class and middle-aged – like me.

Doing it differently means getting informed about difference. For us it meant leaving our neighbourhood and interviewing in the 'wrong part of town'. Quite frankly it means getting comfortable with being uncomfortable. Be comfortable in your personal life. At work, push yourself – you have the power to hire, fire and promote differently. If you don't, we are going to have more driverless cars killing black folks.

**Doing it differently means getting informed about difference. It means going to the 'wrong part' of town. Quite frankly it means getting comfortable with being uncomfortable**

Before you hire people, reflect on your professional in-group and work out who is missing. Reach out to them. When we moved our interview room to that deprived neighbourhood, we instantly reversed the power between interviewer and interviewee<sup>1</sup>. Create diverse longlists; ensure mixed interview panels; and ask consistent questions to all candidates.

Before you fire anyone, reflect on whether you are judging people differently based on invalid criteria. Often, people who 'don't get it' can be more valuable to your thinking than people who agree with you. When firms make redundancies, they often fire all the 'diverse' people they have just recruited in their diversity recruitment effort. You need to make a conscious effort to retain the people who don't shout the loudest.

Before you promote people, ensure that there truly is a level playing field. We know that men tend to apply for promotion when they can fulfil half the criteria of the role, whereas a woman will typically hold back until she can fulfil 90%. To ensure meritocracy, we need to proactively encourage the talented but quiet ones, and challenge bravado wherever it presents.

Your ability to include at work is free, in infinite supply and completely within your own control. Remember what Anita Roddick, the British businesswoman and campaigner, said: 'If you think you're too small to have an impact, try going to bed with a mosquito in the room.'

1. For a deeper exploration of how this was achieved, see Stephen Frost and Danny Kalman's *The Inclusion Imperative* (2014).

### REPRESENTATION, BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE AND PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Take a look at any coaching conference coming up: are all the speakers women? Or all white? Representation matters. Inclusion matters even more – you can't and shouldn't change who you are, but you can change how you behave. Coaching needs to address diversity. When fear, tribalism and polarisation threaten the very fabric of our communities, organisations and societies, coaching has a critical role to play in helping us make decisions from a position of strength and conscious inclusion.

Of course, to do that, we need to feel safe. It's something we are able to foster with our clients, but can we also do it with ourselves? If we push too hard, we get shot down. If we don't nudge at all, nothing will change. Despite taking off in Asia, does coaching in many ways remain an Anglo-American profession? Are we coaching people to fit in with outdated values? What does performance excellence mean? What is happiness?

I was brought up to abide by the Golden Rule – treat others as you wish to be treated. However, in 2020 that is insufficient. We need to move to the 'platinum rule' – treat others as they wish to be treated. If we can instil that in our clients, and they can instil that in others, wouldn't that be a better world for us all to inhabit?

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Stephen is CEO of Frost Included, a diversity and inclusion consultancy. He started his career in advertising, where he worked on disability and age-awareness campaigns. Elected recipient of the 2010 Peter Robertson Award for Equality and Diversity Champions, and named a 2011 Young Global Leader by the World Economic Forum, Stephen was recently voted one of the top 100 influential LGBT people in the UK. He teaches inclusive leadership at Harvard Business School, Singapore Management University and Sciences Po in France. He serves as an advisor to the British Government and KPMG's Diversity and Inclusion Programme.

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

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# A DEEPER MEETING

Henry Champion

*These words were inspired by Gregory Kramer, the Buddhist monk and author of Insight Dialogue, and the work of psychiatrist and neuroscientist Daniel Siegel, author of The Pocket Guide to Interpersonal Neurobiology.*

I awaken to this space  
the sights, the sounds  
the gift of now

this flow of breath  
this beating heart  
this skin that tingles

I scan for tensions  
release each one  
slip back into the flow

I open my heart  
to a wider world  
where all are one

Touched by humility  
I let go of agendas  
accept not-knowing

Sitting before you  
the space between us  
resonates with being

I see you, listen deeply  
as you speak your truth:  
memories shift

certainties fray  
time-served narratives  
lose their grip

At last you're free  
to re-shape your story  
find new ways to be

# LEADERSHIP AS A FORCE FOR STRUCTURAL CHANGE AND SYSTEMIC REFORM

Spiritual director and executive coach **Grace Owen** reflects on how history, experience, context and practice interconnect.

The invitation to share my thoughts has enabled me to reflect on recent events. This has been painful, disturbing and healing. My hope is that the following four themes become a catalyst for further enquiry and deeper conversations with ourselves, each other and all our stakeholders.

## HISTORY

Have you seen a map of the British Empire at its peak? How was it possible for a small island to dominate 23% of the world's population and 24% of its land? I believe it is because the British Empire was an idea; a 'start-up' that became an institution and a legacy. Like other imperialist endeavours before and since, it had a vision, strategies, goals, infrastructure and resources. It was meticulously organised, planned and implemented over an almost 500-year period.

The dehumanisation, brutalisation, and dividing and ruling of others by class, gender and race were part of an insidious belief system inherent in the concept of Empire. The British Empire successfully marketed its imperialist ideology and constructed a world that gave people with white skin economic, legal, cultural, linguistic, social, political and technological advantages, privileges which remain today.

The British Empire eventually shrunk back, its grip diminished, but it left behind systems across large parts of the world that continue to shape our individual and collective reality. For many white people, these structures are invisible, unseen. For people of colour these structures and systems are visible and oppressive. Oppression existed before the British Empire, but we must not underestimate its particular lasting impact.

**Leadership is a force that creates, embeds and maintains the structures and systems to benefit the few.**

## EXPERIENCE

The experiences that have converged to bring you to where you are now are unique. I went to a so-called 'rainbow' primary school. The racial, class, ethnic, cultural and gender mix of seven-year olds was the norm and it solidified my view of the world and of myself. Unsurprisingly for the UK, the class teacher and teaching assistant were both female and white. Surprisingly for the UK, a Guyanese matriarch, one of the UK's first black headteachers, was leader of the school. It was her vision, mission, values and beliefs that created a learning culture where inclusion, excellence and innovation were at the core. I am proud to be part of her legacy.

Leadership is a force that challenges, dismantles and recreates the structures and systems that can benefit the many.

## CONTEXT

Through globalisation, said to have started with the British Empire, humanity is going through a profound period of accelerated consciousness-raising with regard to health, race and the environment.

Covid-19 lockdowns have provided time for us to become more self- and other-aware. In our work as practitioners, we usually hold a safe space for this kind of introspection. But there are many people still in denial, burying their head in the sand of economic comfort, privilege and fear, closing off to the growing number of black and brown leaders, and white allies, calling for change and reform.

Leaders are made, derailed and remade by history, experience and

context. These three frames inform our leadership style. They drive why, where and how leadership is exercised. The congruence, or lack of, between our inner and outer leader-self determines our presence and impact, and the legacies we leave, intentionally or unintentionally.

## PRACTICE

A 500-year-old history, childhood experiences and the VUCA context are out of our direct control. What is in our control is our practice: as people developers, as leaders, as human beings. Perhaps you, like me, are in a new state of consciousness and asking fundamental questions: 'How have recent events adapted or reinforced my purpose?'; 'Is my practice fit for the new normal?'; 'Where will my expertise add the most value?.'

I don't have answers to these questions, but they make me wonder what competencies we will need to develop and excel in, in order to be and do our best.

## HOW DO WE GET THERE?

- **Self-care** will remind us to put on our oxygen mask before helping others.
- **Racial literacy** will give us credibility and the ability to recognise the nuanced experience of global leaders, and affirm their intersectional identity.
- **Soulful listening** will enlarge safe spaces, as leaders delve into their roots and reconsider their place in the world.
- **Reflective practice** will guide us through the deep inner work of meeting, facing and embracing our shadow self.
- **Creative imagination** will give us the confidence to play again, to dream wildly and experiment boldly.
- **Radical solidarity** will provide allies who fight oppression while demanding truth and justice.

## AND THEN WHAT?

If we each learn about the whole truth of the legacy of the British Empire. If we each know our own life experience. If we each focus on what we can shift in the global context. If we each develop and mature our practice. If we each do this messy, exhausting, painful, soulful, healing and liberating work. If... Then our individual and collective leadership can be the force that makes structural change and systemic reform happen for the many and for the next 500 years.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A British Ghanaian, Grace has been developing global leaders for over twenty years. She is currently leading the implementation of a five-year, multimillion, intergenerational, multicultural, bilingual leadership development portfolio. A spiritual director, reflective practitioner, mentor, accredited executive coach and author of two self-published books, Grace holds an MSc in Learning and Development and a BSc in Biology and Dance Studies. She is a non-executive director of award winning Camfed International, which campaigns for female education in Africa.

## FIRST NATIONS AUSTRALIA: DIGNITY AND LEADERSHIP

Australian Aboriginal **Jason Ardler** explores why dignity is fundamental to productive, compassionate and equal human relations.

Earlier this year, I undertook an executive education programme at the Harvard Kennedy School. I was introduced to Dr Donna Hicks's 'Dignity' model, which I believe provides a powerful frame for understanding Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal<sup>1</sup> relations in Australia, and the obstacles we face as a nation in achieving reconciliation.

According to Hicks, the desire to be treated with dignity is an innate human yearning. When treated as though we matter, we flourish. When our dignity is violated, we suffer – and if not acknowledged and redressed, these violations create obstacles to human relationships.<sup>1</sup>

I've seen enough human behaviour to know we have an inherent capacity to hurt one another. What I didn't appreciate is how psychological injuries trigger the same response from our brain as physical threats. Our primary concern becomes our own wellbeing, not our relationships. Left unresolved, dignity violations can become toxic, and the desire to get even can motivate our own undignified behaviour.<sup>ii</sup>

The aftermaths of colonisation in Australia – the fiction of terra nullius,<sup>iii</sup> the policies of protection and assimilation, and the denial of the Uluru Statement from the Heart<sup>iv</sup> – continue to assault the dignity of Aboriginal people. Aboriginal people were targeted universally, and the associated trauma is collective, intergenerational and largely unresolved. The consequences are relationships built on mistrust and misunderstanding, and seemingly insurmountable social and economic problems.

Acceptance of identity is the first of 'Ten Essential Elements of Dignity' in Hicks's model. Since European colonisation in 1788, Australian governments have used at least 67 different classifications to determine who is an Aboriginal person.<sup>v</sup> Up until 1969, the Aborigines Welfare Board (AWB) made decisions about peoples' lives based on 'how much Aboriginal blood' they had. Children who could pass for white were removed from their Aboriginal families and adopted out to white families. Adults were 'exempted' from being Aboriginal if the AWB considered they could be accepted, and acceptable, in white society. Neither group was permitted to speak their language, associate with Aboriginal people or receive benefits otherwise available to Aboriginal people. They often found themselves not belonging anywhere.

Identity is important because it is inextricably linked to healing and wellbeing. For nearly 100 years, the AWB operated with the purpose of suppressing our identity, attaching it to shame, inferior intellect and dysfunction.

Today, there is a powerful community movement to reclaim Aboriginal culture and language, to restore a sense of pride to Aboriginal identity and a sense of self-perception and purpose to Aboriginal people. A recent study of the last 45 years of print-media reporting in Australia found that Aboriginal voices are not dominant in the public discourse about Aboriginal affairs. Rather, the mainstream media has generally failed to represent Aboriginal standpoints, preferring instead to present disadvantage as a failure to adopt non-Aboriginal norms and lifestyles.<sup>vi</sup>

Given a voice, we would say that Aboriginal people have occupied Australia for at least 60,000 years and that dysfunction and disadvantage are relatively recent experiences for us. They are the direct result of government interventions over the last 250 years that have resulted in the loss of our lands and means of subsistence, loss of control over our own lives, loss of purpose and a sense of not belonging in our own country.

The natural outcome of this loss is trauma, and trauma needs to heal. Healing is inherently linked to self-determination, which requires three things:

1. **Agency:** a meaningful say in decisions that impact your life
2. **Empowerment:** the confidence and capacity to set and pursue important goals
3. **Connection:** advantageous relationships that support goal attainment

These are the aspirations embedded in the Uluru Statement from the Heart, which represents our desire to flourish, not merely survive. Sadly, our yearning for dignity – having a voice, being listened to and understood; having the freedom to express our authentic selves, without judgement; feeling we belong and our contributions valued; and being empowered to take control of our own lives and experience a sense of hope and possibility – remains substantially unfulfilled in the current Australian political environment.

#Blacklivesmatter has brought renewed focus to our situation and intensified community pressure on governments to act. Coaches, HR professionals and leaders everywhere can, with renewed consciousness and sustained work, contribute to this much-needed path to dignity.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Jason Ardler is an Australian Aboriginal man from the Yuin nation, and a founding director of Thirriwirri, an Aboriginal-owned business venture. Before establishing Thirriwirri, Jason was the NSW State Deputy Secretary for Aboriginal Affairs. In 2018, he received the Australian Public

Service Medal for outstanding public service to Indigenous people and in 2019 was made a Fellow of the Australian New Zealand School of Government.

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## THE BLACK WOMAN IN THE ROOM

At the heart of systemic coaching, says executive coach **Charmaine Roche**, is the ability to create safe spaces where difficult conversations can be had, hidden dynamics can be made visible, and uncomfortable, complex truths can be acknowledged.

It is a shame that the term 'systemic' feels so cold, inhuman, and machine-like, because in practice it is the opposite. Coaching systemically focuses attention on complexity, connection, interrelationships, interdependence and symbiosis.

I recently joined an innovative ecosystems supervision group. The approach is integrative, positioning us in the web of connections between our personal and professional identities, our values, beliefs, attitudes and how we want to show up in relation to what is happening in the world. For session three, approximately six weeks after the killing of George Floyd, we were invited to prepare with these words.

*'We propose to spend the time giving space to what is currently happening in the world and what this means for us as professionals. When we say what is happening in the world, we are referring to what we consider a historic moment that encompasses the murder of George Floyd, the Black Lives Matter protests, the early stages of moving out of lockdown as well as other dimensions that might come to mind.'*

I felt a creeping dread that I would be expected to speak about racism, to speak about George Floyd, which would have been unbearable had I not already taken the decision to process that trauma in a conversation with four professional black women, two of whom are my daughters. That conversation was raw, and it was cathartic. It is not a conversation I felt I could have had in any other space. In other spaces there is the fear it would be consumed as spectacle.

Coaching group supervision was not a place to do that work. In that space I felt called to do something else. I had the safety and the space to say what felt risky, exposing and uncomfortable in a virtual room where every other face was not brown. I said, 'I don't want to be the black woman in the room', a statement specific to the moment and

generalised to society. It is also a contradiction; a statement of my humanity in resistance to racialisation but also reclaiming the concept of 'blackness'. It felt, as it was meant, liberating.<sup>1</sup>

I wanted to give voice, in this space, to my rejection of how blackness is seen through the 'white gaze': as victim. Calling myself a black woman is a practice of freedom<sup>2</sup>, an exercise of power in my relation to others. It is the refusal to be put into a box as 'the black woman in the room'. I also wanted to free the white people in the room from seeing me as other, someone they had to tiptoe around. To free them from having to apologise for their whiteness.

I hoped that my boldness would liberate them too.



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charmaine is based in the UK. She is an AC-accredited executive coach and director of Lifeflowbalance Coaching and Consulting Ltd, a company she developed after a 29-year career in education. She serves a diverse client group from school leaders to leaders working at c-suite

level. Her PhD research into the ethics of coaching for social change in oppressive contexts inspired her podcast, *Speak Up Speak Out: Ethics Matter*. Season two begins in September 2020.

[lifeflowbalance.co.uk](http://lifeflowbalance.co.uk)  
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# RACISM FINALLY TAKES CENTRE STAGE – BUT FOR HOW LONG?

British executive coach and trainer **Adrian Green** says that real change has to start at the top.

## COACHES AS SOCIAL-CHANGE AGENTS

Great professional coaches serve as change agents, say US coaches **Kimberly Freeman** and **Damian Goldvarg** – and society requires great change right now.

The pandemic and the protests for justice have unmasked why ideology, race and class matter. Knowing this, how can we, a worldwide community of coaches and clients, imagine new possibilities for what afflicts the most vulnerable citizens among us?

At the outset, coaches are bridge builders. What if, to better serve our clients, we first looked inward, exploring our own biases? To accomplish this, we might access new information and resources around equity and anti-racism. Modelling self-reflection could open new lines of conversation with clients, interrogating widely held, implicit assumptions about ideology, race and class. The hard work of internal reflection is a prerequisite for building the skills needed to hold challenging, yet connected, conversations with clients. Empathy, a coaching hallmark, operates as the bridge that allows one person to walk with cultural humility in another person's shoes.

Powerful questioning and active listening help clients to uncover blind spots, perhaps even exposing to clients how racist ideas and policies undermine civil society. What if coaches also challenged their clients to individually examine their own beliefs around the role that systemic racism and structural inequality plays in denying full participation to some in our society? Moreover, suppose coaches were to also ask clients to explore how they may be individually benefiting from systems reinforced by unearned power or privilege? Maybe clients would become present to what is happening in the lives of others less fortunate than them.

Brought about in part by the pandemic, broad concerns about public health, public safety and systemic racism are summoning us into a global conversation about who we are and who we want to be as a society. These concerns are serving as powerful questions for how we will govern ourselves now and in the future. Author Arundhati Roy explains it well: 'Historically, pandemics have forced humans to break with their past and imagine a world anew. This one is no different, it is a portal, a gateway between one world and the next.'

This pandemic offers a portal for coaches and clients to understand why disparate health and economic impacts on minoritized, marginalised communities persist. For example, here in Los Angeles, Covid-19 infection rates are two-and-a-half times greater in poor communities than in communities with little or no poverty. While the virus itself may be indiscriminate, when combined with existing chronic health

conditions and precarious employment opportunities, it wreaks inequitable havoc on the lives of minorities and the working poor. Who can argue against powerful questioning, active listening and empathy's important roles in crafting long-term policy solutions here?

Finally, if the pandemic is a portal, then the Memorial Day killing of George Floyd just might be a clarion call. His death, as do the deaths of others at the hands of law enforcement, has personified the political and social consequences of inequality. Maybe society's most powerful question of all is how to ensure a diverse, equitable and inclusive world in which to realise life, liberty, and justice for us all. As bridge-builders first, who then use portals to truthfully regard ourselves and others, we as coaches can answer the clarion call and become the change agents society greatly needs.



### ABOUT THE AUTHORS

Dr Damian Goldvarg has 30 years' experience providing executive coaching, leadership training, and facilitation in over 50 countries. He is a master certified coach and received his PhD in Organizational Psychology from Alliant University. An accredited coach supervisor (ESIA),

he facilitates certifications in professional coaching, mentor coaching, and coaching supervision. He was the 2013-2014 ICF Global President. Damian published four books on coaching and several book chapters, and in 2018 received the ICF Circle of Distinction award and in 2019 the Coaching Supervision Award from EMCC



Dr Kimberly Freeman is the Associate Dean and Chief Diversity Officer for the USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. Freeman is an experienced corporate, community and educational leader. Freeman brings a unique mix of formal and experiential education drawn from her interests at the intersection of business, government and higher education practices

affecting California's most vulnerable communities. She is a certified professional coach. She holds an undergraduate degree in Industrial Engineering and Operations Research from UC Berkeley, an MPP from USC, and an MBA and EdD from UCLA

On the 25 May 2020, an African-American man by the name of George Floyd died in Minneapolis at the hands of the police.

A black man dying at the hands of the US Police Department is not new. However, the world erupted in response, as this time it was captured on camera phone. The indifference of the police officers to being recorded was sickening. Perhaps they thought they were justified. Perhaps they felt untouchable and all-powerful. They certainly thought that Floyd's life was insignificant. The same goes for Ahmaud Arbery, Breonna Taylor, Manuel Ellis and countless others who have died as a result of systemic racism. Their lives just didn't matter.

Since then, anti-racism marches have taken place around the world.

But this isn't the first time that a black man has been captured on video phone dying at the hands of the US Police. In 2014 Eric Garner was filmed being held in a fatal neck hold by a police officer. His last words were also, like Floyd's, 'I can't breathe'. Yet protest marches did not erupt around the world then. I wonder what is different now?

The incident between Amy Cooper and Christian Cooper (no relation) in Central Park, New York, was also significant for being captured on camera phone. While Amy Cooper claims she is not racist, her behaviour is in line with what we now understand about racism.

Racism can be overt or it can lie dormant, an unconscious bias revealing itself in moments of discomfort, fear, frustration or anger. Racism can hide in a throwaway comment, in a micro-aggression, or in a subtle feeling of discomfort when, for instance, seeing a foreign name on a job applicant's form. Racism is something that is not just 'happening over there' in the USA. It's everywhere.

Do I believe things will change? Well, I'm an optimist, and pessimism is generally counter-productive. Humans need hope. And let's face it, everything changes in some shape or form... eventually. And attitudes have changed. But not nearly enough, quickly enough or high up enough.

The UK Windrush scandal is a sobering reminder of the inequality and deep-seated racism that exists in the upper echelons of the British government and civil service. The scandal didn't happen in the 60s, 70s or 80s. It happened between 2012 and 2017. I urge you to watch *Sitting in Limbo*<sup>1</sup>, a shocking docudrama about Anthony Bryan who, after living in the UK for more than 50 years, is wrongfully and inexplicably detained by the Home Office in a detention centre. He lost his job and right to claim any benefits, he lost his home. He still awaits full compensation.

Did I, as most other people of colour, face racism growing up in an overwhelmingly white society? Absolutely yes. But I was lucky. I had an older brother who paved an easier path for me to tread. Also, I see myself as a relatively privileged black man, as a result of my parents' values and ensuring good education for us all. I am the middle child of parents who came to the UK during the Windrush era in response to the 'motherland's' call for more labour. They instilled in us the key values of education, family, respect, hard work, openness, fairness and boldness: be determined and never give up in the face of prejudice. Outside of sport in the UK public figure role models who looked like me were far and few between. But my parents were there. There were black journalists, artists and hard-working public figures. They just weren't visible to me.

1. [bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p08g29ff/sitting-in-limbo](https://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episodes/p08g29ff/sitting-in-limbo)

So where and how do I think change needs to happen?

I'm a fan of the twin action strategy of both bottom-up and top-down change. At the education level our dark past should be taught: the history of the slave trade and its direct link to capitalism and globalisation, and how many leading economic nations established their wealth and at whose expense. We also need more black and ethnic teachers who can be role models.

Top down, we need to take a closer look at the judiciary and political arena, and our military, police and security forces. The commercial sector has a huge role to play too: capitalism, slavery and racism are historically linked. However, we need to address the boardroom for real, lasting, systemic change. Leaders need to delegate, distribute and embrace the dilution of their powerbase. The reason why change hasn't happened is because those in the ultimate positions of power haven't changed.

I grew my career in the media agency industry. I have been fortunate to work with and coach brilliant, inspiring and open people within it. However, there is literally no other industry that talks so much about diversity and does so little. Why? The latest diversity report published by the IPA suggests that it will not reach its 2020 diversity target for another 10 years!

Marketing professor Mark Ritson hit the nail on the head in a recent article. He calls out the boards of leading global brands for their total lack of ethnic diversity, while engaging PR machines to shout about their support of BLM.

It seems clear that boards and CMOs have no real plan to dilute their powerbase. One reason given is the lack of black talent ready for that level of responsibility. We all know this is not true, but it begs the question: where is the plan to develop and realise the black talent pipeline? One company I work with that claimed it didn't have the budget to do this has suddenly found £30m to invest in eliminating racism within its business.

I have coached 100s of executives over the last 20 years. Few have been black, Asian or any other ethnicity. That's not because they haven't wanted coaching support, but because they haven't been nominated or, if nominated, have been given a white 'preferred supplier' coach. Those I have worked with have flown – though all too often straight into a glass ceiling.

To discuss these issues further, reach out for coaching support or even enquire how we can help you develop the black and ethnic minority talent within your organisation, contact [adrian@pressure-point.com](mailto:adrian@pressure-point.com) #windrushday



### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Former international athlete and advertising executive, London-based Adrian Green is the founder and MD of pressurepoint, specialising in coaching senior executives and teams. He also designs and delivers leadership, management, culture and people-development programmes.

He works across the UK and EMEA. A founder member of the AC, Adrian is qualified in several assessments including MBTI, The Emotional Capital Report (EQ for leaders), Social Styles, The COF, MTQ48 Mental Toughness and PROPHET.



## NATURAL INCLUSION: THE BLIND LEADING THE SIGHTED

Coach facilitator [Andy Shipley](#) shares his experience of how visually impaired guides can enhance people's appreciation of the world around them in new ways.

In 1980 I was registered blind. I now spend my time working with individuals, groups and organisations to bring about a deeper relationship with ourselves as society and with the natural world. On the face of it, these might appear to be mutually exclusive goals but, as my life and career path has evolved, I've discovered that when we share an experience in nature with others, we can begin to open our hearts and see the human and natural world through new eyes.

As a direct result of living with visual impairment, I have been drawn towards a career focused on securing equality for disabled people. Over the past 25 years I've found that one factor has been central to the level of the progress we've achieved: the perception that people have of how the world is, and works, and the degree to which disabled people and disability are present. In my experience, the prevalent, popular perception is that the world functions without the presence or involvement of disabled people, who are predominantly perceived as occupying the periphery, as beneficiaries of charity or state welfare.

However, perceptions of disability can be transformed! When I joined a charity called the Fieldfare Trust as a trustee in 2010, I began to discover how this might be possible. The Trust ran an annual competition for UK schools called the Fieldfare Challenge. The challenge demonstrated the truly transformational power of bringing young people of diverse abilities and backgrounds together in nature to achieve a shared goal. Schools across the UK would

enter teams of eight students, comprising four disabled and four non-disabled members. Heats took place in all regions, bringing schools in the local area together to compete in solving a series of three-dimensional challenges. The competition culminated in the final, which took place over two days, along the trails, on the water and in the treetops of the magical Kielder Forest.

The most significant aspect of the Fieldfare Challenge was that the successful teams were those in which every member was enabled to play their unique part. One of my most abiding memories is that of a team from the Royal Blind School in Edinburgh demonstrating supreme spatial awareness and balance as they danced their way through the treetops on a high-ropes course. As I reflect upon it now, witnessing this has to have been a defining moment for me. Being at height, with unstable footing and without vision, would, you might think, be reason for hesitancy – even paralysis. Or it would if one is dependent upon vision to function in the world. But if vision isn't your dominant sense, you aren't as impeded as a fully sighted person whose eyes are indicating that you are in a precarious situation. Freed of this perception, your agile non-visual senses can flourish.

In 2013, this concept took me to St Davids in Wales to work with coastal adventure company TYF, to explore how their range of activities could be made more inclusive for visually impaired participants. As I began to work with the guides with their non-

visual senses, we discovered that a more subtle experience of the ecosystem was unveiled to them. Minute ripples on the compact sand, invisible to the eye, became visible through the soles of the feet. The wind and salt tang in the air provided reliable references for orientation. Ramping up the adventure, we surfed, feeling for the swell; climbed, feeling our way across the rock with fingers and toes; and coasted by simply taking leaps of faith. These insights formed the foundation for the 'Super Sense' experience, which I ran in partnership with TYF and also took to different locations during 2014.

In 2016, out of the blue I was contacted by Dr Sarah Bell from the University of Exeter's European Centre for the Environment and Human Health. It so happened that Sarah's research project, 'Sensing Nature', was looking at how people with visual impairment in the UK experience the natural world, aiming to identify more opportunities for inclusive multi-sensory nature encounters.

In true blind coasting style, I just leapt in! Sensing Nature engaged with natural heritage organisations to explore how our encounters with nature and narratives can be expanded to incorporate a richer, multi-sensory and inclusive experience of habitats and ecosystems. It all came together at a fantastic two-day workshop in 2017, amidst the gossiping and squabbling of thousands of wetland birds, at Wildfowl & Wetlands Trust Slimbridge. We immersed ourselves in the soundscape, textures and smells, including feeding the resident geese and swan colonies, blindfolded. Believe me, nothing gets the blood pumping like blindly proffering your hand to a mute swan, hoping it will limit its chomping to the grain you're holding!

What emerged for many participants was a strong sense that when we expand the narrative and sensory experience of all visitors, you create a more inclusive relationship, both between people of diverse backgrounds, and between the habitats they encounter. The learning from Sensing Nature evolved into 'Nature Narratives', for which we designed and delivered a series of workshops for volunteers and staff at nature reserves, country parks and estates, focusing on the practicalities of creating a more multi-sensory, inclusive visitor experience. Although many had been working there for years, the staff and volunteers we worked with described and demonstrated a conscious shift in how they experienced these habitats.

This summer was scheduled to be spent shifting perceptions a step further. In a project in partnership with the Woodland Trust, I devised a programme of sensory walks, to be led by visually impaired guides who continually practice a dynamic interaction with the non-visual landscape. By using this experience to expand participants' awareness of woodland treasures, of which they might otherwise be oblivious, guides can open a portal for people into a deeper connection with the natural world. A programme of workshops also populated my calendar, all of which vanished with the onset of the coronavirus outbreak.

The Covid-19 pandemic has, for me as for others, led to a rapid process of reinvention and reconfiguration. The process of shifting a practice that is firmly rooted in facilitating experiential workshops in the natural world to something that can happen in the virtual environment has been a stretch, but a worthwhile one. One project that has successfully transitioned to the virtual world was a workshop on attentive listening, which invites residents of

the Chilterns in England to make audio recordings of their local soundscape. The workshop was intended to be delivered at events over the spring and summer, but now contributors can complete the course at their own convenience online. I must confess, though, that the process of filming and uploading each of the video sequences has cost me hair that I really can't afford to lose!

At the beginning of 'lockdown' I launched 'ss,' a programme of guided exercises and other resources to help people connect with nature more deeply through the weeks of self-isolation<sup>1</sup>. People have said that having the programme of daily exercises has given them a welcome break in each day and an opportunity to appreciate 'nature on the doorstep and further afield'. Since the beginning of May, I have also been delivering a weekly online sensory immersion experience. These sessions have attracted a regular following from participants in different parts of the world including Canada, Australia, Europe and the UK.

The experience of being guided to rediscover nature through a different sensory lens establishes a connection for participants. A connection with aspects of themselves that they had forgotten or compartmentalised. A connection with aspects of the world to which they have been blinded by society and the distractions of daily life. And a connection with the possibility that, once having begun the process, the exciting prospect exists that much more years to be unveiled.

The healthiest natural ecosystems are the most diverse, in which each species occupies its particular niche while simultaneously contributing to the health and wellbeing of the whole. I believe that by enabling others to experience the richness and diversity of the natural world more deeply, visually impaired guides can also uniquely contribute to the health of our own rich and complex ecosystem by heightening people's perceptions of the value of the diverse array of perspectives it contains.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Andy is a coach, facilitator, speaker and campaigner. He is an alumnus of PCI and AOEC and is a Clore Social Fellow. You can get the details by friending him on Facebook. You can also email him if you want to find out more about his work or are interested in developing a programme.

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1. For more information, visit [www.natural-inclusion.org/free-14-day-sensory-odyssey](http://www.natural-inclusion.org/free-14-day-sensory-odyssey)



# WHAT DOES 'BEYOND DIVERSITY' MEAN TO THE MOE FOUNDATION?

Sue Bratton from the MOE Foundation describes how its radical inclusion model is all about empowerment.

At the MOE Foundation we believe that diversity should go beyond the 'tick-box' version that has become the norm within many organisations over recent years.

MOE brings together a community of individuals in a non-prescriptive way. Our leadership and coach training programmes aim to empower young people from less privileged backgrounds, helping them to unleash their potential for making a positive change in the world. There are no boxes to tick; we do not predetermine the make-up of our cohorts or community based on gender, race, religion, disability or demographics. When you attend a MOE programme you never know who you may be sitting next to. We are fully inclusive and open to all.

MOE is a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO). In the hearts and minds of the people we work with it is a growing community of positive change-makers. We deeply believe that everyone has the ability to make a difference.

Since 2012 we've gifted over £2.5 million worth of professional development and support, and have over 1000 MOE-certified coaches. Now we are turning our attention to our ambition of positively supporting one million people across the world.

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



Jeffrey Wotherspoon, left, is a growth and impact director for the MOE Foundation; he shared his thoughts on how he believes we create real inclusion through our programmes.

"To me, "diversity" is a true representation of the world or a

community, where every type of person is represented. I come from a black and minority ethnic (BAME) background and recognise when an environment is not truly diverse and genuinely inclusive, because I feel out of place. It is instinctive; I just know. As a young, black, male coach I am unusual – there aren't many of us, and there are even fewer trainers. In the work I do it can feel like I'm the only person who looks like me. Others are often surprised when they realise that I am the trainer running the programme – it is obvious even without them voicing it. Their unconscious bias is just that, unconscious.

"To facilitate diversity based on the things that can be seen, like colour or race, is easy. To break through even further we have to go beyond to consider not the characteristics you can see but

those you cannot. Tick-box diversity does not account for class, for example, yet for me this is the biggest cultural barrier there is.

"As an organisation you can say "we are diverse" and prove it based on a paper version of what that means, but we look to push beyond that and reach everyone.

"I know, without a doubt, that the greatest facilitator of diversity for the MOE Foundation is the gifting model we operate. This addresses the class divide. No one is priced out of what we offer; it is inclusive of all."

## SOCIAL MOBILITY IN ACTION



Jack's story illustrates how our gifting model helps. Jack Jacobs, left, discovered MOE at age 22. He knew he wished to pursue a professional career in coaching, but didn't have the finance to enable him to do so. Due to his circumstances, Jack was able to

access a full scholarship and secure a place on a MOE-certified coaching course – one that would have been inaccessible to him in the commercial marketplace.

"I found MOE at a very difficult time in my life. Being offered a scholarship broke down the initial barrier to start coach training, which would have taken me about two years to save for and finance myself. MOE changed the entire trajectory of my life and also the timeframe it took to start to achieve my ambitions."

Jack is following in MOE's footsteps by 'paying it forward'. Due to the positive impact MOE had on him, Jack is able to have a positive impact on the lives of young people across the UK by offering the same gifting model in his coaching sessions, with no agenda or acceptance criteria for his programmes – just complete inclusion.



## Meet Emily Nuttall, a member of our diverse and inclusive community

Emily has lived with disability and mental health challenges. She knew she wanted to make

a difference in her community in the Channel Islands, but did not know where to start. Emily learned about MOE during a chance conversation, and graduated as a MOE-certified coach in 2015. Through the support MOE has provided, she has become a disability sports coach, mental health campaigner champion, ambassador and speaker.

## ABOUT MOE FOUNDATION

MOE Foundation is a charitable organisation founded on the belief that by empowering our own lives we can positively impact the lives of the people around us, and that collectively we can make a positive contribution and difference in the world. We teach personal leadership tools and coaching methods in our different programmes, and have an amazing community of positive-thinking change-makers. Our aim is to help people unleash their full potential. More information can be found at [moefoundation.com](http://moefoundation.com).



Head to [bit.ly/CPsounds](http://bit.ly/CPsounds) to listen to Sue Stockdale speaking to former British rower Cath Bishop, a world champion and Olympic silver medallist alongside Katherine Grainger, about what space is given to diversity in a partnership operating at the highest level.

DIGITAL READERS CAN USE THE BUTTONS BELOW



# LEVERAGING CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN COACHING

Sally Bernham, course director of the Certificate in Coaching at the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education, and coach Alexandra Terhalle reflect on a unique intercultural coaching programme.

Just before the coronavirus crisis hit the world, a group of coaches from across the globe spent three days in the beautiful surroundings of Madingley Hall at the University of Cambridge, UK. Their discussions were part of the Leading and Coaching Across Cultures programme and focused on exploring and experiencing together how an understanding of cultural diversity could enhance coaching practice. The programme is a collaboration between the Institute of Continuing Education at the University of Cambridge and Professor Philippe Rosinski, the author of Coaching across cultures and Global coaching, whose work has been influential in bringing the intercultural dimension into coaching. The programme complements the accredited coaching programmes the institute offers and sits within the portfolio of short courses of continuing professional development for coaches at the Institute of Continuing Education.

## JOINING THE CULTURE CLUB

Culture is always an important influence in coaching relationships. Sometimes that influence is obvious; at other times it is subtle, but always a factor. Seeing culture as an opportunity rather than a barrier to be overcome enables coaches to enhance the impact of any coaching intervention. Integrating a cultural perspective into coaching offers an alternative way of addressing complexity in our interconnected, ever-changing global environment.

Intercultural coaching is less about recognising cultural differences in order to work more effectively with clients from different cultures, and more about recognising the possibility of leveraging culture as a force for change. Intercultural coaching is a dynamic process that opens possibilities and invites coaches to consider the cultural dimension at play in their practice through reflection. As such, it could be said to be relevant to all coaches, not just those working in overtly cross-cultural contexts.

## EXPANDING THE CONCEPT OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY

Cultural diversity is traditionally conceptualised as external (such as visible differences like ethnicity, gender or age) or internal (such as cultural preferences regarding time management, communication, thinking or organising). While useful, this distinction may be more interconnected and complex than it seems. Intercultural coaching offers an expanded conceptualisation of cultural diversity that distinguishes between the explicit (manifest) and implicit (hidden or latent, but nevertheless potentially available to the team). From this perspective, cultural diversity is always present, even when latent or implicit. Embracing this expanded notion of cultural diversity is a wonderful opportunity to systematically weave a cultural perspective into coaching and leverage the rich potential of cultural diversity.

The programme brought intercultural coaching to life in a very tangible and impactful way. The group discussion was an opportunity to both understand and experience how cultural differences can become a creative and unifying force. Through intercultural peer coaching, group presentations and action learning, participants were encouraged to question and identify their own cultural assumptions and beliefs – which is most often the core difficulty in cross-cultural interactions – and discover ways in which they could leverage them. Such dynamic and experiential learning allowed students to play an active role in the workshop and experience differing cultural orientations like time management, communication patterns and modes of thinking. They were able to see real life examples of the ways in which cultural differences manifest themselves, and discover creative ways to maximise opportunities to embrace and make the most of the diversity within the group.

Participants said the programme helped them look beyond the traditional view of cultural diversity, and that following it they were able to apply key learnings immediately to their coaching practices, and to their teams and organisations.

## COACHING CONVERSATIONS FOCUSED ON CULTURAL ORIENTATION

The three-day programme also provided the opportunity to become certified to use and administer the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF)<sup>1</sup> as a practical way of understanding and leveraging cultural differences within coaching. The COF assessment is a self-assessment tool which facilitates the understanding of salient cultural characteristics for individuals, teams and organisations and enables coaching conversations focused on exploring cultural diversity.

FIGURE 1. Cultural Orientations Framework (COF)

<p><b>SENSE OF POWER AND RESPONSIBILITY</b></p> <p>Control/Harmony/Humility</p>	<p><b>TIME MANAGEMENT APPROACHES</b></p> <p>Scare/Plentiful Monochronic/Polychronic Past/Present/Future</p>
<p><b>DEFINITIONS OF IDENTITY AND PURPOSE</b></p> <p>Being/Doing Individualistic/Collectivistic</p>	<p><b>ORGANISATIONAL ARRANGEMENTS</b></p> <p>Hierarchy/Equality Universalist/Particularist Stability/Change Competitive/Collaborative</p>
<p><b>NOTIONS OF TERRITORY AND BOUNDARIES</b></p> <p>Protective/Sharing</p>	<p><b>COMMUNICATION PATTERNS</b></p> <p>High context/Low context Direct/Indirect Affective/Neutral Formal/Informal</p>
<p><b>MODES OF THINKING</b></p> <p>Deductive/Inductive Analytical/Systemic</p>	<p><b>OTHER</b></p> <p>Customised supplemental COF dimensions</p>

The COF assessment examines two aspects: an orientation represented on a horizontal axis that reflects an individual's preference; and a vertical axis that represents the extent to which an individual is currently capable of deploying that orientation.

Clearly, there are advantages in this approach for practitioners whether from a leadership, coaching or interculturalist background in being able to systematically integrate the cultural dimension into their work. In our disrupted and uncertain multicultural world, now more than ever there is a strong case for learning from cultural differences and integrating multiple perspectives to address common challenges.

The next Leading and Coaching Across Cultures course and COF certification programme will take place at the University of Cambridge on 2-4 March 2021. For more information, visit [philrosinski.com/events](https://philrosinski.com/events)

## ABOUT SALLY BERNHAM



Sally is an experienced executive coach working mainly in the university sector with senior leaders and executive leadership teams. She is course director of the Certificate in Coaching at the University of Cambridge, Institute of Continuing Education, and a coach supervisor.

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## ABOUT ALEXANDRA TERHALLE



Alexandra is a University of Cambridge-certified coach and is the relocation and executive coach for Relocate Global.

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Sally and Alexandra were co-facilitators with Philippe Rosinski at the Leading and Coaching Across Cultures Programme in March 2020 at the University of Cambridge's Institute of Continuing Education.

1. [www.COFassessment.com](https://www.COFassessment.com)



# DEMONSTRATING VALUE IN COACHING WITH HEALTH NOT WEALTH

Dr Sarah Stewart-Brown, professor of Public Health at Warwick University, discusses the new role of wellbeing in measuring service value and how this approach could benefit coaches and clients alike.

An unexpected collateral effect of the Covid-19 pandemic is the widespread fostering of conversations about wellbeing. Before the pandemic, wellbeing was a divisive topic with its ardent advocates and dismissive opponents. Advocates knew about the value of focusing on the positive and thinking in holistic terms about human performance, behaviour and health. Opponents saw wellbeing as pink and fluffy – a hook to enable the ‘wellbeing industry’ to exploit the vulnerable and the ignorant. But right now, wellbeing has become an important topic. In the UK, government and public health websites have started to display advice for supporting your wellbeing, and the media discusses wellbeing with fewer qualms as its opponents have gone quiet.

## WELLBEING AND COACHING

The concept of wellbeing had arrived in the coaching world, of course, long before the pandemic. Workplace wellbeing is high on the agenda of businesses and organisations because of its links to performance and profitability. But it is also on the coach’s agenda because human wellbeing has value in its own right. Some are starting to think that it could be a better metric than profit for measuring the performance of an organisation. Some economists<sup>1</sup> and even the occasional government<sup>ii,iii</sup>, are now advancing this view. Some of the latter have set in motion programmes to monitor the wellbeing of their populations so they can begin to value this alongside GDP.

## MEASURING WELLBEING

Especially in the current context, it is useful for the coaching profession to consider the measurement of wellbeing. Being able to show a quantitative improvement in the wellbeing of individuals or organisation might be an easier way of demonstrating the value of coaching than current approaches to reporting. But the approach to measurement needs to be simple, respected and easy to use. Above all it needs not to interfere with the subtle processes of coaching. Quantitative measures have a habit of subverting the activity they are trying to measure because they can give all involved a biased view of its purpose. In the context of coaching, for example, they could distort the coaching process because they give coachees a false impression of the purpose of coaching: coaches might want to ensure that benefit is demonstrated in the ways the measure captures, and because they can have a profound influence on those who are funding the process or activity. So, measures need to be appropriate from everyone’s perspective.

On the other hand, there is no such thing as a perfect measure, especially for activities that focus on essentially subjective experiences like wellbeing. So, the measure needs to be good enough for purpose. It needs to be a reliable indicator of the way things are going rather than a tape measure.

## WARWICK-EDINBURGH MENTAL WELLBEING SCALE

The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS, pronounced WEMWeBS), and its shortened version WEMWBS-7, may have much to offer coaches from this perspective. The result of developmental research at the University of Warwick in collaboration with the University of Edinburgh, the measure was developed in the context of public health to enable evaluation of policies and activities that promote health, particularly mental health.

Public health is supported and delivered by a multitude of community-based charities and NGOs (non-government organisations) that provide a diverse range of services, often involving volunteers. These organisations have for some time favoured asset-based<sup>1</sup> approaches because they have seen that they work better. In times of scarce resources, local authorities and other funders demand concrete evidence that NGOs are providing value for money and quantitative measures are preferred for this end over qualitative evaluation. This stimulated great demand for a positively focused evaluation measure in this sector. Local authorities themselves had started to recognise the burden of mental illness and the need for prevention and promotion, and wanted to measure the impact of their policies and services in a non-stigmatising way. People with lived experience of mental illness and psychiatric services were demanding that services focus more on recovery and strengths-based approaches, promoting their health rather than just treating their illnesses. When presented with measurement tools that might be used to evaluate recovery services, they chose positive measures, and WEMWBS in particular, over more clinically based measures of mental health<sup>iv</sup>. Some countries – such as Iceland and Scotland, as early adopters of WEMWBS, and England from 2010 on – began to see the value of measuring the population impact of national policies and programmes through their effect on wellbeing as well as on GDP.

## RESEARCH ON WEMWBS

WEMWBS was designed to capture the mental (cognitive, emotional and relational) aspects of wellbeing. It has its origins in holism – the idea that mind, body and spirit work as one system and cannot be separated – but emphasises the mental aspects because these have been woefully disregarded in public health. There is much debate in the literature about the nature of wellbeing, and mental wellbeing in particular, but authorities are now converging on the idea that it comprises feeling good and functioning well. This definition feels appropriate in the health world in which diseases, particularly in psychiatry, are usually defined by the way in which they make people feel bad and function poorly.

1. Asset-based approaches were first described in the context of community development, Asset Based Community Development’s premise is that communities can drive the development process themselves by identifying and mobilizing existing, but often unrecognised assets.

## WEMWBS FACTS AND FIGURES

The original WEMWBS comprises fourteen positively focused statements with five response options from none of the time to all of the time. The participant is asked about their experiences over the last two weeks. The short version comprises seven of these items. The scoring is simple: item scale scores are added together to give a single total score. The seven-item version needs an additional step of transformation of final scores, but this is not difficult to do.

Both versions are now supported by a wealth of research. Population norms (which can be used as reference points for average scores) are available in the UK and some other European countries, and particular scores have been defined to suggest high wellbeing and also low wellbeing (which indicates mental illness).

Minimally important change has been defined; this refers to the amount of change experienced by an individual that is unlikely to have happened by chance or through day-to-day fluctuation. The measure has been validated in many different settings and cultures and translated into over 30 languages. Two different studies are now attempting to give financial value to different WEMWBS scores. The first has counted the cost to the public purse in terms of health and social care and lost productivity attributable to different levels of the scale. The second is using a health-economic approach to enable the public to value different WEMWBS wellbeing states<sup>v</sup>.

## WHY IS WEMWBS SO POPULAR?

WEMWBS has been enormously popular in a wide range of sectors including academia where it is supporting research on the determinants of wellbeing and on interventions and approaches which can improve wellbeing. Many surveys to assess the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on wellbeing in different social groups and cultures are now being carried out using WEMWBS.

Given that WEMWBS is not that different from many other scales of mental health, the question is why it has proved so popular – especially since, unlike some mental illness scales, it is not diagnostic. And unlike many well validated scales developed to cover different aspects of human psychology, it does not point to precisely which aspects of wellbeing need attention.

Some answers to this question include the fact that people like it because it is easy to understand: the items are not threatening and are recognisable as related to positive mental health. People using the scale really value that all the items are positively phrased and ask about a positive aspect of human

functioning. The scales seem also to serve the function of demystifying the concept of mental wellbeing amongst sceptics, because they get a sense of what the concept is and they feel confident that something is real and important when they see a number changing.

### WEMWBS IN THE COACHING SETTING

There are several ways in which WEMWBS could be used in a coaching setting.

- Prospective clients could be asked to complete the scale as a way of assessing how they feel before coaching begins. In my experience this can result in some surprises. They could complete it again at the end and compare scores, hopefully recording a gain in wellbeing. This process may help those who are not used to reflecting on themselves to understand its potential value.
- For coaching that draws on positive psychology, registering how they feel during different activities can be helpful to enable clients to focus more on activities that support wellbeing. Clients could be asked to share their responses or just the total score with the coach at the beginning and end of the coaching process, so the coach has a quantitative measure of the client's response.
- Scores obtained at the beginning of a coaching relationship may indicate that the prospective client could have a mental illness and might help the coach tailor their approach or decide to refer on.
- Coaches could use the average change scores they observe in clients as a way of showcasing the value of their work.
- Organisations could quantify the benefits of coaching. A number of businesses have started using WEMWBS to get a snapshot of organisational wellbeing, to assess whether initiatives to improve wellbeing are working and to measure change over time. In such organisations the impact of coaching could be benchmarked against organisational norms.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Sarah Stewart-Brown is Professor of Public Health at the University of Warwick, UK. She led an interdisciplinary team of researchers and fellow academics in developing the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale and continues to support research and dissemination of the measure in diverse settings. She is a teacher and practitioner of bodywork, including Zero Balancing and Deep Massage, and she is currently training to be a coach.

*WEMWBS is protected by copyright. Those wishing to use the scale can obtain a licence to do so. Please visit [warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs/using](http://warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs/using) for information on the type of licence you will require and details on how to apply. Further information on the research behind the scale and how to use it is available at [warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs](http://warwick.ac.uk/wemwbs). Any further enquiries can be directed to [wemwbs@warwick.ac.uk](mailto:wemwbs@warwick.ac.uk)*

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# COACHING IN THE WORKPLACE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE

From 24-26 June, the AC and Institute of Coaching hosted a joint online leadership and coaching conference, comprising more than 30 sessions across three subject tracks. **Soraya Shaw** shares her reflections on attending the event.

If your experience of the pandemic has been anything like mine, I am sure you have felt a rollercoaster of emotions, including a strong need to be with those who make you feel secure and valued. This was a defining theme of the AC Coaching in the Workplace conference, which created a sense of belonging and left me with a strong feeling of being part of the coaching community.

Being one of the original AC founding members, I've always enjoyed the conferences – not only for updating my practical knowledge but also to make contact with colleagues. Having been out of the AC community loop for the last few years while studying, on receiving the conference announcement email and seeing that it was a virtual event, I felt that it was just what I needed to reconnect with the coaching community and the latest thinking.

From the perspective of attending a conference, the planning and hard work involved certainly paid off. It was well organised, and while there were a few expected technology hiccups they were quickly resolved and, overall, the event ran smoothly and the sessions were well directed.

The three strands of the conference stayed true to their daily subject content, so I felt that I was gaining the knowledge and experience that was relevant to me for the days I attended. Highlights for me included hearing from Jeffrey Hull and his thoughts on the changing face of leadership from alpha to beta, and being introduced to the more systemic, dynamic and collaborative workplaces that are needing leaders that can engage and communicate across diverse groups – something which is especially relevant in the age of Covid.

Richard Boyatzis is a bit of a hero of mine, so to hear him speak was another highlight. I left his talk with a sense of certainty as to the value of our work in the coaching profession. It reminded me how privileged we are to be accepted into another person's world, to share their vision and dreams, and to empower them to be the best they can be – not just 'fix' something they perceive to be not working. This felt especially relevant to me given the focus of my work in applied neuroscience; taking a vision-based approach supports the current neuroscientific understanding of how we learn and develop, which is showing that our brains excel when we adopt a growth mindset approach.

I highly valued the speaker Q&As I attended; time had been allocated to allow the speakers to expand on the knowledge areas addressed in their talks, so they were much more informative than other virtual conferences I have recently attended and had the feel of a chat more than a lecture.

As ever, the co-coaching groups were rich in experience. Having not been involved in one for a few years, they reminded me of how valuable they are. The coaching circles I attended helped me to re-engage with past colleagues, learn from the wisdom and depth of those in the group, and reaffirm what a warm, resourceful and welcoming group of people coaches are.

A virtual conference is obviously different to an on-site one, and you do miss the social closeness of others. However, the benefits are that the reach of participants and attendees is much wider than it might have been at a face-to-face event, and it was wonderful to meet others from so many parts of the world whom I imagine may not have been able to make it to a local event.

Could it be improved, and what was missing? I think the benefits of the conference being virtual, at least certainly in our pandemic-stricken world, certainly outweighed the downsides of missing the physical presence of others. We are sociable creatures and we thrive on relationships, but virtual can be for the many and not just the few.



Participants from  
52 countries



34 international  
speakers



60 live interactive  
sessions

## ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Soraya Shaw is the founder of Springboard Coaching. She advises and coaches senior leaders, business innovators and future leaders to approach – from a brain perspective – ways to achieve resonant leadership, resilience, wellbeing and business transition. A founding member of the Association for Coaching and an executive coach for over seventeen years, Soraya is one of two people globally to complete a new MSc in Applied Neuroscience in Organisations. Her practice focus and research continue, into positive resilience and wellbeing mindsets.

## Behind the scenes

What goes into producing a global, fully virtual event? We talked to **Smaranda Dochia**, the AC's Director of Digital Learning & Events, about how the conference came together and what it was like to be part of the production team.

### When was the idea to have the conference first raised?

We first started discussing the conference in March 2018, so it's been a long time in the making. The initial idea was raised in one of our central leadership team meetings. We explored what the conference would look like, who the audience would be and what kinds of partnerships would be involved. We wanted it to be virtual right from the very beginning.

### Why did you want it to be virtual?

The previous AC international conference was held in 2014 in Budapest, Hungary. When it came to planning the next one, we wanted it to be truly global and accessible without the cost of travel. Nowadays, virtual events are a genuine option, so having people travel across the world for a conference is a less obvious solution to the aim of bringing people together. At the same time we still wanted to create networking opportunities and to replicate that connectivity you feel in a face-to-face event; we didn't want to have webinars scattered here and there, but a joined-up, continuous event.

### How did Covid-19 affect the conference?

Since the conference was planned as an online event, it actually didn't change much. A couple of speakers unfortunately couldn't join anymore, but that didn't affect the design or structure of the conference. That said, lockdown did make things harder, as everyone got busier than ever and many of our team had to work alongside having kids at home and managing home-schooling.

### How did the conference actually work?

To make sure the conference was accessible to a global audience we decided to have two schedules, each running for seven hours per day over three days. The structure included speaker talks, Q&A sessions, interactive coaching circles and networking breaks, where we invited participants to connect in the chat lounge or visit the exhibitors' hall. All of this happened twice a day in order to offer participants around the world the possibility to join us live. Importantly, the live element was always there, with each speaker joining two live Q&A sessions,

which was really exciting. The conference platform we used helped us implement our vision and create a great experience for those who joined us.

### What was the biggest obstacle or the biggest problem?

We've had a few challenges on the way. The conference production itself was big, because everything we did over the three days had to be duplicated, plus there were always two or three sessions running in parallel. That's fourteen-hour days with multiple things going on at the same time. And for everything we had to have a video in place on the conference platform, so this was a big part of the process. Fortunately, we had a couple of dedicated video editors to help us pull it all together. Managing all that and having everything in the right place at the right time was intense. I am so proud of our small team and what we managed to achieve together.

### Was it hard to communicate with a team spread out all over the world?

The AC team works virtually on an ongoing basis, so this was nothing new for us. Nevertheless, there were technical issues that had to be dealt with but the team was great at troubleshooting during the conference. In a face to face conference, you would have the entire team onsite with regular briefings, which of course we weren't able to do. Everyone was very responsive though (the team's WhatsApp group was very active!) and we managed to pull it all together with a virtual team spread all over the world. It was amazing really!

### Will there be another one?

We're definitely talking about it. We want to reflect on what we've learned, what worked and what we can do better. There's an appetite for having this as a regular component of the AC digital programmes, and hopefully again in partnership with the Institute of Coaching, which worked really well. So we need some time to understand what the best next steps are, and to recover a bit!



## YOUNG PEOPLE AND THE COACHING ERA

Co-founder and CEO of Circl [Charlie Stainforth](#) says younger generations' outlooks are primed to embrace the coach approach, but work is needed to make coaching accessible to all.

You won't be surprised that when we ask less privileged 16-25-year-olds what they think 'coaching' means most of them talk about sports coaches. It's fair enough. What other reference points do they really have? If you asked them about the skills that a good coach or a coaching leader should have, they'll talk about the need to have lots of experience and to know your topic really well so you can tell people how to improve. Despite this view of coaching being so successfully challenged by Tim Gallway over 40 years ago, I'm sure you don't see this as an unexpected response.

Coaching as a concept, whether it's in leadership, team, career, life or executive coaching, has been reserved for those with the self-awareness that they want to improve their performance and the means to do it; i.e. adults or privileged young people. Yet, imagine if young people of all backgrounds entered the workplace and leadership positions already equipped with resources to coach and be coached. We'd save so much time trying to shift mindsets and immediately access an untapped abundance of autonomous creativity. I believe that people have

never been so receptive to the principles of coaching, and we're now in an era to make this a reality.

It is hard to argue that things are the same for young people as they were twenty or more years ago. The single biggest factor is technology. The internet has democratised information and communication in a way that was incomprehensible at the turn of the century. While it's obviously not all good for the 'digital natives', the impact of growing up being able to instantly learn about and directly engage with different ideas, opinions, cultures from almost every community worldwide certainly encourages the resourcefulness and curiosity, values central to coaching and being coached.

As an example of where this has already been realised, the most cutting-edge teaching methods, such as enquiry-based learning, are already making use of young people's ability to access near-infinite information (through digital channels) and their receptiveness to the coach approach. Acting much like a coach, in an enquiry-based lesson, the teacher uses questions to help the students find their own resources to tackle problems or find

answers. The emphasis is on the students being creative and resourceful – not being told what to do. I don't need to tell you how positive an impact this level of empowerment can deliver, and yet it is still reserved for the most privileged students.

McKinsey's 2018 Gen Z study<sup>i</sup> describes the generation as radically inclusive: no longer relying on their parents' and teachers' values and principles but building their own in the mould of tolerance and progress. Nevertheless, I hasten to add that this state of mind is only possible due to the experience of previous generations that have paved the way. In fact, in reality I'd argue that it's not just young people who are now more open to the principles that coaching conveys, but all generations.

The availability of information in this era, the focus on breaking down hierarchical structures, and the move away from command and control leadership provide perfect fertile ground for the coach approach to flourish in all generations. It just so happens that young people don't have to break down any previous beliefs shaped by the experience of work, and so can help lead the way.

Nevertheless, the challenge remains to ensure that young people from *all* backgrounds are exposed to coaching as soon as they are ready and that the coach approach continues to spread in society and worldwide. Organisations like the Association for Coaching are well on the way with the latter and at Circl we feel we're making progress with the former. In our

virtual programmes in the last few months we've seen first-hand how technology has effectively brought together younger and older generations and demonstrated that the conditions for a coaching era are truly here. Despite everything that is going on in the world, I'm writing this article full of optimism for the future.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR

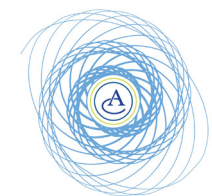


Charlie started his career at a London pupil referral unit working with disengaged young adults from under-represented groups. As a founding member of the skill development company Elevate Education UK, he played a major role in their growth. Following this he worked as Head of Partnerships at career coaching organisation Future Frontiers, where he started exploring the mutual benefits of connecting professionals with young people. In partnership with Adrian Blair he designed Circl to thoroughly equip both groups with the skills and experience they need to be effective leaders.

<sup>i</sup> Francis T and Hoefel F. 'True Gen': Generation Z and its implications for companies. McKinsey & Company, 2018. [www.mck.co/3hqquaF](http://www.mck.co/3hqquaF)

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## ENDING FEMALE GENITAL CUTTING

**Julia Lalla-Maharajh**, founder of the Orchid Project, shares personal reflections on her cross-cultural journey to end female genital cutting and what this means for facilitating social change.

It was in 2009, while volunteering in Ethiopia, that I found myself confronted by the reality of female genital cutting (FGC). I had learned how it affected 74% of all Ethiopian women. Girls were often cut before their fifth birthday. The more I read, the more concerned I felt. But I had so little legitimacy to raise my voice around this issue, as an outsider, that it was initially easy to simply look away. After all, here was a taboo on the grandest scale, related to other women's genitals, a chronic human rights abuse and part of a culture that wasn't mine.

But as I did a deeper dive into FGC, I realised I had to move outside my comfort zone. The cut affects more than 200 million women globally, with four million girls at risk each year in over 60 countries around the world across Africa, Asia and the Middle East. A chance meeting with two small girls whom I was unable to 'rescue' helped solidify my intent and, not knowing what I could do, I simply vowed to do whatever I could. It would take tenacity and more.

The moment of shift was winning a YouTube competition to go to the World Economic Forum in Davos and create a

panel discussion about how to effect change. This helped me overcome some of my doubts and introduced me to one of the most important teachers in my life.

### SHIFTING SOCIAL NORMS

Molly Melching is the founder of Tostan, an NGO headquartered in Senegal, working for sustainable change and community-led development to allow people to choose a better life for themselves. I first met Molly in London in 2010, and I had mapped out the model that I wanted to create to support systemic change. I had put 'my' organisation, what would become Orchid Project, right in the middle. Molly gently said to me: 'Where do you think change really comes from? Is your organisation the most important locus? What about the communities where the change actually happens? Why don't you come to Senegal to see what it's all about?' Unlike others who had used their learning to shame me with how little I knew, her approach was to ask me into her world to witness and then form my own conclusions.

*Molly looked at my model and gently said: 'Where do you think change really comes from? Is your organisation the most important locus?'*

Six months later, I travelled to Senegal to learn from Tostan. My whole worldview shifted as I realised that community-level change needed to be primary. Molly and her team supported communities to set their own agenda for change, and not allow external organisations to impose theirs. In the absence of formal education, most communities were used to oral communication and continued doing what their families had always done. In many communities, cutting had taken place unquestioned for centuries. Moving away from 'the tradition' could interrupt a girl's future belonging to the community, which could threaten her survival.

Importantly, Tostan understood that FGC is a social norm. A social norm is an informal code that upholds our behaviour in a society<sup>1</sup>. If it is not adhered to, it can disrupt the entire societal framework. Social norms are rarely discussed but their power is extremely strong. However, a social norm can shift if, amongst other factors, it is made visible, so one starting point is helping people to talk about it. In order to do this, two elements have to be in place. Firstly, that people understand their universal human rights and their responsibility to uphold these rights for themselves and for others. Secondly, that they have the capacity to aspire to change and realise that it is possible. Once a community is allowed to talk about the social norm and grasps that cutting is harmful to a girl, it can then choose to question it.

In this way, the individual response to the practice is discussed collectively and the interdependent ownership of FGC is made more visible. Instead of labouring in isolation and perhaps questioning the practice internally (a state called 'pluralistic ignorance'<sup>2</sup>) people socialise their response towards what was once the taboo of cutting and are able to discuss it. Together the community makes a choice about whether it is ready to abandon FGC and declare an intention to stop the practice. The declaration is vital because it is public and witnessed by other nearby communities. Thus, everyone knows that a girl will be uncut – both their families and their current and future social networks. This declaration is a moment like no other: when the social norm visibly shifts from 'all girls are cut' to 'all girls are uncut'. Now, over 9,000 communities throughout West Africa have taken this decision for their daughters: these girls will no longer go through cutting.

Seeing this change allowed me to support it with renewed vigour. I returned to London and set up Orchid Project, an NGO with a vision for a world free from female genital cutting within the next generation. The model for achieving social norm shift is replicable, so our work has now embraced communities all around the world; most recently we have launched an Asia network to end FGC there with the same guiding principles.

In the last decade, we have worked to galvanise change by supporting social norm change but also by persuading those who are mandated to do more to follow through. Often these persuasions are made easier by shining a light on the work done at the grassroots. This approach has resulted in governments choosing to fund sustainable solutions and choosing to prioritise the issue<sup>3</sup>, something UK readers might recognise.

### WHAT COULD COACHING LEARN FROM THIS APPROACH?

- Listen and learn, without judgement, at the right level, and as close to the issue and its ownership as possible.
- Major shifts in behaviour first need the issue to be made visible.
- Mapping the interdependencies, including everyone in decision-making positions, fosters ownership and sustainability.
- Taboo issues might seem too difficult to tackle, but finding an entry point can lead to incredible change.
- Once there is momentum for change, people are inspired to share this themselves, which can lead to onward change.
- Those who are pioneering change need to be supported.

### MY LEADERSHIP JOURNEY

By the time I had to decide whether to pursue a vision of a world free from female genital cutting, the time had also come for me to make a conscious choice to be a leader. I'd spent my life in positions of follower: partly fate, partly the lot of a young woman of colour excluded from an invisible system of privilege, partly a well-honed impostor syndrome founded in a taught modesty. In retrospect, I developed some helpful characteristics in my time in the corporate sector: a quiet confidence, cemented by a track record of competence, reliability and effectiveness. I actively enjoyed the intellectual rigour that working on infrastructure in the private sector proffered.

What I didn't know then was that life experiences would enhance some of these competencies and take my personal philosophy to a different level: a humbling acceptance of life with a chronic illness, volunteering in Cambodia and Ethiopia that allowed me to find values that had long been dormant, and a burgeoning realisation of what integrity and dignity meant to me. When I chose to set up Orchid Project, I also chose no income for a vulnerable two years. It helped me act with congruence and authenticity, never asking others to do what I wouldn't myself.

It was crucially important for me to speak truth to power. I vowed that I would tell people clearly about FGC but that I would never belittle, confront or shame anyone for not doing more; instead, I would aim to help them understand the part they could play in ending the practice. I found myself telling queens, princesses, archbishops and ministers about FGC, but always in such a way that, if those affected had been listening, they would have been nodding in agreement.

I made uncomfortable decisions, such as setting a vision of a world free from FGC within the next generation, which is both audacious and completely impossible to qualify statistically. For the last decade, I have been trying to describe how exponential change happens: one community communicates with up to five others and, in turn, each of those to another five, and on it goes. Suddenly, the coronavirus pandemics means we all know about exponential transmission and I shall never have to search for an imperfect metaphor again.

*Through coaching, I've learned how to recognise the invariable shadow that comes with leading in the glare of the spotlight*

I'm clearer about living with uncertainty, knowing a social-change line graph will never be linear, but instead mimic the flight of a bumblebee. Throughout my time at Orchid, I've been privileged to work with incredible people. Crucially, through coaching, I've learned how to recognise the invariable shadow that comes with leading in the glare of the spotlight. My fallibilities are many, and being able to self-identify and be shown them is a humbling process of constant learning and course correction.

Humility is very important as a founder: you have to recognise that your ethos and DNA flow through the organisation, but that this power must be held lightly. Lastly, as I transition away from the CEO role, I'm re-examining my intentions and who I am as a leader. This time my volunteering has taken me into my local doctor's practice to support primary healthcare in this time of

crisis. Humility is the watchword as I see our care workers carry the brunt of what matters most to me. I've helped set up a group to converse and support each other as we think and do more to be part of creating a new normal. The world needs all sorts of leaders, now more than ever.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Julia Lalla-Maharajh is a change agent, advocate and speaker. She has worked across the corporate, voluntary and third sectors in a career spanning three decades. Her journey to Ethiopia as a volunteer in 2009 led to her founding an NGO, Orchid Project, with a vision of a world free from female genital cutting. She has inspired and catalysed a global movement to end female genital cutting in the next generation. In 2016 she was awarded an OBE for her work.

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

- i. Gerry Mackie, Francesca Moneti, Holly Shakya, and Elaine Denny. *What are social norms? How are they measured?* UNICEF/University of California, San Diego, Center on Global Justice, 27 July 2015. [www.unicef.org/protection/files/4\\_09\\_30\\_Whole\\_What\\_are\\_Social\\_Norms.pdf](http://www.unicef.org/protection/files/4_09_30_Whole_What_are_Social_Norms.pdf)
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- iii. [theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/23/uk-funding-pledge-fgm-female-genital-mutilation-africa](https://theguardian.com/society/2018/nov/23/uk-funding-pledge-fgm-female-genital-mutilation-africa)

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# EMBRACING GENDER DIVERSITY TO BUILD RESILIENCE

Drawing lessons learned from her work in gender equality, leadership coach **Karen Downes** explores how better inclusion of women in the workplace builds business resilience.

For over three decades I have worked in the fields of healing, gender equality, personal transformation and leadership development. During this time, through experience and observation, I have come to see that inclusion and diversity are critical factors in building resilience in order to flourish. We see this in the natural world, and it's time to heed Mother Nature's wisdom if we are to go beyond surviving to thriving.

Resilience might seem an unusual approach to the subject matter of diversity and inclusion. However, the word resilience appears to be on everyone's mind right now: building resilient businesses, developing resilient leadership and personal resilience. But do we really understand what true resilience is and how to build it?

## THE ROLE OF FEMININE AND MASCULINE QUALITIES IN REBUILDING

There are many lenses through which to address diversity and inclusion, but the particular focus here is on gender. Equality involves equally valuing and including everyone, empowering them to bring their intelligence, unique qualities, competencies and skills to fulfil an active role in the community

or business they serve. Diversity of qualities and attributes in turn brings creativity and innovation, which has been shown to be strongly relevant in terms of gender diversity. As research into team intelligence by Anita Woolley and Thomas Malone shows: 'There's little correlation between a group's collective intelligence and the IQs of its individual members. But if a group includes more women, its collective intelligence rises'.<sup>1</sup> Their conclusions show that – as if there weren't sufficient grounds otherwise – there are economic reasons in addition to ethical, moral and human rights arguments for establishing laws that support equality in communities, societies and organisations.

The world is certainly dealing with a crisis, but out of any crisis there is an opportunity for transformation. A moment in time to re-evaluate the ways in which we have worked that no longer serve us well. We have before us an opportunity to build new regenerative business models, to create new cultures that shift the notion of diversity from a concept or business strategy to its actual practice and embodiment.

In the context of the Covid-19 pandemic, a wider range of qualities is required for us to flourish. With this change we are seeing a re-evaluation of who brings such qualities as care and compassion; the qualities that will be needed to rebuild

our societies and workplaces. We are witnessing broken lives, broken spirits and broken businesses – and all great leaders know you that 'you can't build on broken'. As we come out of the pandemic, we will need both women's and men's contributions, and we will need to develop what are traditionally seen as feminine qualities, denigrated in business for decades, alongside the classically masculine qualities we have overvalued, in order to rebuild our people and business.

Elevating consciousness and transforming our past conditioning is no easy task, but it's what is now called for if we are to rebuild our lives, our businesses and society to enable a flourishing future.

## A PROCESS FOR INCLUSION

There are three steps I believe are necessary for us to take in order to go beyond now outdated approaches to diversity and equality, especially in relation to gender; this is how we build a rich culture in which people flourish and business prospers.

Firstly, acknowledge that emotional discomfort felt in the body is a personal trigger activated in the nervous system from a past experience. For example, crisis may produce a sense of vulnerability in the face of the danger, but it may also be due to uncertainty; frustration may come from judgement of another. Past angers and fears are often related to a negative imagined future. Each person must take personal responsibility for becoming aware of and managing their triggers in these uncertain times, developing practices to self-regulate and have compassion for others' experiences.

Secondly, recognise that personal inner work is needed before we can authentically bring gender equality and diversity into our community, society and workplaces. We are often reluctant to look within ourselves at the personal beliefs and judgements we have adopted that are discriminatory or dismissive in relation to anything or anyone who is 'different'. It is important we examine and deconstruct the stories and beliefs we have made up about ourselves and others in order to truly embrace diversity.

Thirdly, authentically respect, appreciate and value the fact that each individual is unique, with different life experiences, skills, competencies and inherent qualities. This ranges from dimensions of race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation to socio-economic status, age, physical abilities and religious beliefs. Difference is what brings innovation. Capacity-building is building on strengths and qualities – balancing feeling with reason, intuition with intellect, and imagination with logic.

Diversity, inclusion and equality are critical for our future thinking and planning. We all value the rich diversity present in nature, its grace and resilience. In creating a flourishing future, it is not only planting seeds or ideas that matters but the richness of the culture, the preparedness of the soil and the nourishment those ideas receive. We know our planet thrives on diversity and inclusion. Let's begin our transformative process by honouring

this idea. In business, empowering women to hold equal place at the decision-making tables and valuing all people for their contribution to building the culture of the organisation. These factors will be essential for re-establishing psychological safety, emotional wellbeing and positive mental health, and for the building of true resilience as the foundation of healthy workplaces and prosperous businesses.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Karen has built successful companies, supported civil society organisations to transform entrenched cultural norms, advised business leaders and led development programmes around the world. In the 80s she co-founded and built a multimillion-dollar enterprise from kitchen table-top to global business success story. She has authored six books, selling over half a million copies. In 2003 Karen moved to London and has since worked as a business advisor, leadership development programme lead and coach.

Contact Karen for speaking engagements or information on her women's leadership programme, *Leading with Grace and Resilience*.

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

[www.femmeq.org](http://www.femmeq.org)

i. T Malone and A Wooley, 'What makes a team smarter? More women'. *Harvard Business Review*, 89.6. 2011, p32-33

# A HELPING HAND THROUGH A CRISIS

Dr Craig Newman is a clinical psychologist with over twenty years' experience of working in the UK National Health Service. Sue Stockdale interviews him about his latest venture, the creation of Project5 – an innovative new support service for all who provide care for others.

Project5 is an online booking system which gives anyone who works in the UK's National Health Service (NHS) access to free one-to-one support from a team of coaches, accredited clinical psychologists and other mental health experts.

## How did Project5 begin?

As a clinical psychologist and coach, I already work very closely with NHS teams, providing wellbeing and coaching support at all levels. Pre-Covid, it was clear that teams were strained and many NHS staff (whether porter, cleaner, administrator or clinician) were working at full capacity, every day. Covid's arrival quickly revealed that staff were facing a huge challenge in terms of keeping afloat both logistically and emotionally. I'd seen the value of providing the right type of space for staff to reflect, receive support and to put themselves in the frame. I could see, beyond the louder narrative of mental health, that early interventions for anyone who feels the need for them would be of great value. But I also saw that this had to be designed at the right level, with adequate clinical governance and in a way that this support could exist alongside the NHS and not be a distraction to its own efforts to help its own teams; hence, designing the Project5 approach.

To get started I did two things:

1. I put a request out on LinkedIn to see if anyone wanted to help support the NHS. Hundreds of people responded. Overall, 4,000 people registered to volunteer their help – a huge, fantastic and heart-warming response.
2. Accessed the knowledge, capability and an army of volunteers from my business UXCGroup, which specialises in implementing rapid-learning, evidence-based models in the NHS and other sectors to create services that allow the NHS to get the right help at the right time by the right people.

## How are coaches involved in Project5?

When NHS staff use the Project5 booking system they refer themselves to the level of support (which behind the scenes are divided into tiers) most appropriate to their needs. Coaches will work in tier 2.

- Tier 1: **Routine advice and support** given by family, friends and colleagues. The NHS as an employer will provide education, supervision and guidance on various issues.
- Tier 2: **Coaching.** Project5 offers coaching sessions to support staff members when making decisions that might raise dilemmas and complications.

- Tier 3: **Stress and wellbeing support.** Project5 provides trained and experienced wellbeing specialists to support a stressed staff better manage stress in the future and retain greater wellbeing in their lives.
- Tier 4: **High levels of anxiety and distress.** Project5 does not provide an active service for staff members at this level of need, but it does give online guidance on how to get it as quickly as possible.

## How does the coaching work?

The volunteer coaches are located all over the UK. All the sessions are conducted by Zoom, Skype or phone, so the one-to-one private sessions can be done anywhere. Coaches will only have two sessions with their client. This is a very limited amount of time, and does not allow for the usual chemistry sessions or longer explorations that may occur in normal circumstances. This means the sessions must be relatively concise and productive.

Ideally, we would like the coaches to follow a solution-focused conversation (see panel). Our solution-focused, strengths-based model has well-established processes and has been applied in a variety of different health and social contexts. For example, solution-focused conversations are useful for helping NHS staff navigate critical clinical dilemmas (such as which patient to save or put on a ventilator), or how to manage low PPE supplies.

We designed the tiered approach and chose solution-focused coaching after an extensive literature review and in response to concerns raised by experts in this field about the appropriate use of coaching in crisis contexts. One major concern is the risk of coaches inappropriately supporting staff with trauma or mental health needs rather than referring them to a psychotherapist. This solution-focused approach makes that less likely. Our system invites the staff member to move to the next Tier if their needs remain unmet, hopefully moving those who need it to the level of support that is appropriate.

It is important that coaches are aware of their competencies and limit themselves to working within tier 2 – dealing with work-related or general stress. Anything that looks like it is beyond this scope must be reallocated to tier 3, where issues can be dealt with by specialist mental health practitioners. All coaches who have been onboarded get clear guidance around moving clients into the next tier, how to look out for the signs of distress and what to do if they feel that they are unable to deal with the conversation in which they find themselves. This is a safeguarding issue for both the coach and the NHS staff member.

## How suitable is the Project5 approach to meet societal needs beyond Covid-19?

We don't know the full extent of the psychological impact that Covid-19 has had on us all. But we can say, with some certainty, that the global health crisis caused by the outbreak has stretched many health services to their limits. In the UK, doctors, nurses and healthcare support professionals are working around the clock and beyond normal shift patterns to treat the critically ill, at an unknown cost to their physical and mental health. The mental wellbeing of our NHS is at risk, both now during the pandemic and beyond when this crisis appears to be under control.

Project5's current focus is on keeping NHS staff well at work. Our project has a quality improvement research component that generates an understanding of what helps and what doesn't, with a specialist group developing changes in the approach. It is unclear what the need will be while individuals, organisations and the wider system adapt to drastic changes in living and working. Coaching has an advantage over therapy in that it particularly focuses on activating strengths in the now – creating a growth mindset in the context of adversity. That is going to be very important as we move forward in these uncertain times.

To meet future needs we have built a model based on a 'learning and reapplication of knowledge' template. This means that, while the current model is a 'crisis response model', we can reapply the knowledge we gain during this time into the future service we offer. Our post-crisis model should be different from the one we started off with if it has sensitively responded to the needs of NHS staff. By constantly monitoring the support and wellbeing needs of NHS staff, Project5 offers a continuing and responsive support model ready for future unknown challenges.

## Safe uncertainty

My feeling is that creating a mindset of 'safe uncertainty' will be vital. We embrace the fact there may be no models or evidence to direct us to what will work for people, but this uncertainty can be made safe by recognising organisations' need to adopt a growth mindset. The ability to say out loud that 'we don't know' is critical – and it is clear that we don't! Organisations and systems may need help to achieve psychological safety in the context of a 'shared unknowing', but this starts with the coaches themselves. We don't need to rise up with an answer or a solution, rather a mindset that can permit others to feel ok about not knowing too. How does this translate into how the profession will evolve? I am confident in saying, 'I don't know!'

## How does Project5 manage risk and quality assurance?

We have built a governance model and we check coaches' accreditation credentials. The verification process had to be thorough so we could ensure coaches had enough experience to handle whatever the NHS sessions would throw at them. Knowing that the person they would be talking to is a highly trained, credible professional was also important in helping NHS staff to feel confident using Project5.

Interestingly, all the coaching bodies have their own certificates/accreditations and some experienced, highly qualified volunteers were not accredited with any coaching body. So, given Project5's own governance model, we would have had

to turn away excellent, experienced volunteers. To address this, Project5 created an excellence framework that allows the circumnavigation of this issue while still adhering to a strict governance policy. This allowed many more volunteers to be onboarded into Project5.

In addition, we are committed to making sure our volunteers feel valued by taking them on a journey towards excellence. To this end, we are developing a key skills framework that will articulate what skills are most needed in this space, how they are achieved and how they are demonstrated. Based on this, we will deliver continuing professional development to take our coaches towards excellence. This is common for clinicians and something we are bringing to our coaches.

## ABOUT CRAIG NEWMAN



Craig Newman is a clinical psychologist and coach with over twenty years' experience. He is the CEO of UXCGroup, a research and interventions team that develops theories of change and solutions specific to complex organisations, and which is deployed by his coaching platform [www.aim-you.com](http://www.aim-you.com). Craig has two doctorates and the unique honour of being twice winner of the prestigious BMJ award, the 'Oscars of Medicine'. He lives with his partner, three children and four horses in the countryside in Devon, UK.

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

## ABOUT SUE STOCKDALE



Sue is a master executive coach and author, with over twenty years' experience of helping leaders worldwide to maximise their effectiveness. She has an MBA in Entrepreneurship, an MSc in Quality Management and a global outlook. Sue has interviewed hundreds of leaders, academics and coaches to gain their insights in leadership, entrepreneurship and what it takes to be successful. Sue recently authored the special report for the AC, *Enabling Leadership: Developing a leader coach mindset*.

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## SAME STORM, DIFFERENT BOATS – NONE OF THEM STORM-PROOF

Everyone's experience of the Covid-19 pandemic has been different. We should explore and embrace those perspectives in search of an enriched future for all, says **Helen Teague**.

I engaged with an inspiring webinar delivered by Dr Barbara Mariposa<sup>1</sup> recently and she introduced the metaphor of the Covid-19 pandemic being a shared storm experienced by all of us, but each from different boats. This got me thinking. I'd already found myself in the early days of lockdown starting telephone calls with my close family believing I knew what they were going through, only to realise quickly how little I actually understood of their reality. There's no doubt that this Covid-19 storm has touched us all, but our experiences of it and its impact on us will have been as different as different can be. What if, once we are able to engage fully again with family, friends, colleagues and clients, we take time to truly connect and join our stories and experiences up, in order to value the differences and understand them individually and collectively for a better future? What if we shared and disclosed the insights from our individual journeys in individual boats that shone a light on the more challenging and unheroic experiences we had while in the thick of the storm? Might this enrich relationships and unlock unforeseen, better futures?

In the spirit of honest sharing, let me tell you a little about my boat – as I write, I've been in it for seven weeks. It's had several different names. At the beginning it felt so precarious – like a

ricketty rowing boat easily rocked by the latest wave of news headlines. And because I didn't like feeling precarious, I named my boat 'Invincible' to make myself feel better as I tried to make my boat storm-proof, thinking that I'd try to pretend this wasn't happening and I wasn't affected. However, as I started to connect virtually with others either for work or pleasure, I realised the storm was raging for everyone and denial was futile! And I felt myself shifting internally, choosing – when engaged in work meetings – to remain invisible while using virtual technology, to stay more hidden from sight than usual as I allowed myself to surface, feel and tune into my powerful emotions of fear, sadness, loss and helplessness. What use could I possibly be and did it or I matter anyway? I decided to call my boat 'Self-compassion' at this point, and took refuge in it for a little while.

In a few weeks I moved forward to connect with coaching clients whom were mindful of the value, now more than ever, that coaches have to offer just by 'being there' – wherever the client's 'there' is – with no agenda and no demands that a

i. For more information on Dr Barbara Mariposa, visit [drbarbaramariposa.com](http://drbarbaramariposa.com)

client should be a certain way or in a certain boat. I went right back to the foundational thinking of Carl Rogers in relation to unconditional positive regard leading to unconditional positive self-regard<sup>2</sup>. I trusted that the co-created virtual coaching space would support clients to be their true selves and to speak their truth, whether palatable or not, as they charted their course through the Covid storm. And I gave myself permission to share elements of my own insights from my boat in service of the client – however vulnerable that made me feel. I experienced how the power of human connection and embodied inclusion transcended the glitches of virtual technology, and how simply trusting myself to be myself was all that was needed. At this point I named my boat 'Beisser' (after the psychiatrist Arnold Beisser); I've always loved his paradoxical theory of change and I've experienced it so strongly during this voyage. (See the sidebar for more information about how Beisser has inspired me.)

Here in the UK we are preparing to come ashore; the future is uncertain, and the ground will undoubtedly feel more unsteady than firm. My boat is now called 'Hopeful'. Hope for the journey of discovery and deepened self-awareness that started in our individual boats because of a storm we didn't choose, and hope of continuing a shared journey of transformation where we choose to make collective decisions for the benefit of all. Let's not – in our haste to return to 'normal' – choose to gloss over things, stay quiet and take up our old place again in perpetuating an illusion of control.

What if society really listened to and learned from the diverse stories and experiences, including the painful ones? What if the global community of coaches seized this opportunity to fully play their part in working with leaders as they grapple with unprecedented challenges, discomfort and unknowns in the wake of this storm?

We are a part of the fabric of society; our voices and how we choose to use them in the roles we play as coaches, leaders and, perhaps most importantly, global citizens matter now more than ever. But before we come ashore, let's tune into our own stories and what we've noticed and learned about ourselves, so that from that space of self-awareness and self-knowing we are best placed to be of service to our clients.

What has it really been like in your boat and what are you taking from it as you come ashore? Is there anything that needs to be acknowledged, said or done to unblock yourself for your emergent future?

### ARNOLD BEISSER'S PARADOXICAL THEORY OF CHANGE<sup>ii</sup>

Arnold Beisser articulated his paradoxical theory of change in 1970. It accords with an appreciative approach to coaching and is central to gestalt philosophy. John Leary-Joyce, in his book entitled *The Fertile Void: Gestalt Coaching at Work*, describes Beisser's paradoxical theory of change as follows: that 'when we accept who we are, we stop criticising and limiting ourselves, opening up possibilities and opportunities for change to emerge.'

I came across Beisser while undertaking my formal coaching accreditation and it resonated strongly with my emergent learning journey, which I'd called 'just being me'. In my own personal and professional growth, I've experienced how self-awareness in and of itself leads to breakthrough moments. And I've seen the impact on clients, where they suddenly feel as if a weight has lifted when they pivot away from striving to become what they 'ought' to be to embracing who they already are.

Read Beisser's original theory of change article here [gestalt.org/arnie.htm](http://gestalt.org/arnie.htm)

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Helen is an experienced executive coach, senior HR leader and OD specialist based in Devon, England. Helen has a breadth of sector experience including several years as part of the senior leadership team of the University of Plymouth as Head of Performance and Change. She commenced her independent portfolio career in 2019, combining executive coaching and OD projects alongside a non-executive director role for her hometown's National Health Service trust. She holds a postgraduate diploma in Strategic Human Resource Development and the Advanced Practitioner Diploma in Executive Coaching, awarded by the Academy of Executive Coaching.

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i. Rogers, CR (1980). *A Way of Being*, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing, New York  
ii. Beisser, A. 'The Paradoxical Theory of Change' in J Fagan and I Shepherd, *Gestalt Therapy Now: Theory, Techniques, and Applications*. PaloAlto, (1970)



# FEAR AND CONNECTION IN AN INTERDEPENDENT WORLD

Paul King coaches using embodiment approaches and techniques. He looks below the surface to explore the subconscious patterns that drive and entrap us.

Dig below the surface of most personal and social issues and you will find shared subconscious patterns and narratives that drive and entrap us. Diversity and inclusion are subjects that encapsulate and reveal these patterns, patterns that are often so up-close in our personal and cultural psyche that we do not fully perceive our biases and the milieu we are swimming in.

A core role of the work done in coaching, both for coach and coachee, is precisely to make more of the unseen and the unmet seen and felt. This is work done not only with the mind but also the body. Working with our narratives – and with the neurology and biology that underlie those narratives – we can reshape ourselves and the stories and culture we create.

In organisations and elsewhere, the diversity agenda runs ahead of inclusion. We can, it seems, more easily create a richer mix of representation at the table (albeit slowly) than we can truly include all the voices. Inclusion demands more internal work; work to confront patterns, to confront culture. Diversity and differences are rich in potential if we learn how to open ourselves up to them and engage with them.

## THE DIVERSITY PARADOX

The challenges facing diversity and inclusion are writ large in recent discussions: #BLM; the disproportionate suffering of BAME people (Black, Asian and minority ethnic) during Covid-19<sup>1</sup>; and in gender inequality, ageism, and neurodiversity, all of which play out in organisations. Can organisations reconcile the tension between focusing on inclusion as a matter of simple moral integrity and the business case to back these decisions as well? One might argue it is functional to adapt oneself (or an organisation) to play according to

the ruling game (e.g. the predominant globalised capitalist system), even when the game itself is dysfunctional. Humans have an expediency bias as a strategy for survival – this makes logical sense. Expediency is a preference for acting quickly and in a way that addresses immediate fear and anxiety, choosing the present over the future. Add to that the other in-built biases in the brain such as the similarity bias – preferring things or people that are like us – and we find diversity and inclusion hitting neural highway roadblocks.

Our nervous system, biased as it is towards threat, drives our compelling need for safety, status and control; our preference for our 'tribe'; our caution with difference; and our tendency to create 'others', which we fear. When fearful, whether from uncertainty or the unfamiliar, we contract in our thinking and from connection with the world around us.

Dr David Rock, the founder of the Neuroleadership Institute, summarised five primary human social needs in his SCARF model<sup>2</sup>: Status (being valued/respected), Certainty (knowing what is going on), Autonomy (having choices), Relatedness (a sense of belonging), and Fairness (felt not only for self but for other). This model can be used to create inclusion policy and training for managers and executives, but unless these needs are satisfied in those executives they will still be entrapped by anxiety and fear. So, the paradox is that the exercise of diversity and inclusion can trigger our fears and hinder our capacity to connect.

i. This trend has been very pronounced in the UK. For more information, see [gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/covid-19-understanding-the-impact-on-bame-communities)

2. [your-brain-at-work.com/files/NLJ\\_SCARFUS.pdf](https://your-brain-at-work.com/files/NLJ_SCARFUS.pdf)

## FROM FEAR TO ENGAGEMENT

How do we move from separating to connecting, and from contracting to opening? How do we move from threat and retreat to approach and engage? What are the possible paths? Here are some suggestions:

- **Know where you are:** This concept is central to mindfulness and the development of self-awareness. F M Alexander, founder of the Alexander technique<sup>3</sup>, worked with the deep habitual patterns of the body-mind. He emphasised our primary capacity to inhibit – to stop doing what we are doing – before enacting the complementary capacity of direction. That is, we lay answers on top of cultures of habit that distort the original intent. Before we engage in these automatically, we first need to inhibit or pause action. As the poet David Whyte says, the first step in any courageous conversation is to stop having the conversation you are currently having.
- **Name the fear:** It can help to simply name the fear or anxiety. Separating our executive brain function from the emotional energy dissipates the energy and its hold on us (this works with other felt experiences too).
- **Look for connection:** We can shift our perception, for example by extending our sense of 'tribe', challenging separateness, and allowing connection to be felt and compassion to flow.
- **Embody compassion:** Neuroscience shows that, as we develop our capacity for compassion and embody it in action, fear drops away.
- **Centering:** The adaptation of aikido practices and principles for the everyday embodies the capacity to extend connection and compassion towards threat and stressors. Doing this within the process of centering, we access a different neurology – a different reality – resourcing ourselves to be with what is in the present and with presence, while simultaneously freeing ourselves from habitual reactive patterns. The body leads the way, shape-shifting, learning to extend and include the threat or trigger rather than contract, shrink away and separate. In Wendy Palmer's Leadership Embodiment, for example, we learn how to centre and align our head, heart and gut to create an embodied experience, to speak up with clarity and without aggression, and to listen without taking things personally.

We have always faced the challenge of navigating our way through life in this uncertain and turbulent world. The global eco-social system has been offering up its feedback for a good while. Moving forward with the pandemic, diversity and inclusion at all levels, and climate change, the ante has been upped. This could be scary, but it is also an opportunity to change our relationships with ourselves, others and our planet. Inside-outside, outside-inside: there is work to be done. I for one have more work to do.

3. 'A process that shines a light on inefficient habits of movement and patterns of accumulated tension, which interferes with our innate ability to move easily'. [alexandertechnique.com](https://alexandertechnique.com)

## FOUR PATHWAYS FOR LETTING GO OF FEAR: A CONVERSATION WITH DAVE RICHO

In a conversation in January with David Richo – a Jungian psychotherapist, teacher and author whose workshops we have hosted over many years – he and I explored the key themes in his work. We mapped out four arenas of practice that can help us move from fear of others to engagement with them.

**1. Radical acceptance of ourselves, others and reality as it is**  
We cultivate an 'unconditional yes' to the unavoidable 'givens' of human life and we learn to embrace our predicaments without trying to control the outcomes. We trust the givens as gifts that help us grow in character, depth and compassion. The five unavoidable givens of everyday life are:

- Everything changes and ends
- Things do not always go according to plan
- Life is not always fair
- Pain is part of life
- People are not loving and loyal all the time

When we offer an unconditional 'yes', our predicament, whatever its shape or however ominous, becomes a path.

**2. Letting go of fears that interfere with our happiness**

When fearful, often we are being bullied by our own unfinished business. Looking at what provokes us, we find opportunities to develop resources to stay calm and find lasting resolution.

**3. Dealing with 'the dark side'**

We contain creative qualities and powers that we keep hidden out of fear and self-doubt, our dark sides. Our shadow includes all that we find repugnant in ourselves and all the wonderful attributes that we have discarded or denied. We project our negativities onto others as strong dislike and our positive potential onto others as awe and admiration. What is the healthy response to malice and injustice? There are liberating, as well as creative, ways to confront these aspects of individuals and society.

**4. Looking to the compass of trust and finding grace**

Trust toward ourselves, others, a higher power or purpose, and reality itself. We can learn to trust our inner resources. We can become more adept at knowing who to trust. We can build trust when it is broken. In all this we find grace, the power to act virtuously. We can then trust that whatever happens shows us a map of our best future.

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Paul King is co-founder, with Marie Faire, of The Beyond Partnership. Paul has been working with integral, holistic, and embodied approaches, connecting personal development to larger system change, for more than 30 years. He has delivered embodiment-based workshops and coaching across Europe and in North America and Asia, he is now transferring some of this work online. His experience includes Inner Game coaching, Leadership Embodiment, Feldenkrais (Movement Re Education), Tai Chi, Qigong, Polarity Therapy, NLP trainer training and Spiral Dynamics.

# WHOLENESS: A NATURAL PERSPECTIVE FOR COACHING

Leadership coach **Richard Bellars** reflects on the nature of diversity within connectedness, and what that means for coaching and leading from a perspective of wholeness.

Everything is energy. Everything is connected. Everything is included. The timeless wisdoms of ancient cultures have always taught this. Quantum and environmental sciences show this. Current public experiences now demonstrate this – although it has taken an invisible threat to daily human existence on a pandemic scale for us to collectively take notice!

Why is this important to coaching? Recognising life's systems as whole and interrelated shifts our perspective to enable greater awareness and space for inspiration and innovation. I encourage you to explore Michelle Holliday's vibrant messages on 'thrivability' and developing organisations as living systems. She describes people as 'active stewards of life's unfolding process and as part of a larger living world.'<sup>1</sup> She invites us to engage organisations as 'practice grounds' for enabling all life to thrive. There is beauty in the idea that diversity is core to life while simultaneously part of a larger whole. For me as a person and as a coach, this is so resonant.

Nature is all-inclusive, an interwoven phenomenon that we are a part of, not apart from. Communities are replacing outdated constructs that have faithfully served their time and purpose but no longer serve the needs of collective global-local society. We see an emergence of the 'collective' or 'hive mind', of collaborative co-operative co-creating.

The ancients knew this. They observed and listened to nature, its cycles, and mapped them. When it comes to the wisdom of ancient China, I learn so much from the work of Nick Haines<sup>2</sup>. He is a modern-day master of translating those maps and applying them accessibly to the complexities of our cyclical lives and the energies that drive them. One such key was the original Yin-Yang symbol as a

measure of the cycles of sun and moon, light and dark, expansion and contraction, through the accompanying seasons, each element integral to the greater whole, all in one dynamic balance. (It had nothing to do with gender; that would be a later re-interpretation, by a subsequent dynasty, to suppress the status and role of women.<sup>3</sup>)

From this perspective, there is no need to limit the potential of people according to gender, race, age... whatever differentiation our habitual biases would have us see as separation. Instead the focus is on the uniqueness of a person's combination of water, wood, fire, earth and metal energies, and their own dynamic interplay in each moment. When balanced, an individual is energised and in flow with 'life force'; when unbalanced, they are prone to disconnection and dis-ease – physically, emotionally, mentally, spiritually. With greater individual balance, collaboratively we can move mountains.

Today, the healthcare, education, environment and charitable work sectors naturally draw those with more earth energy. Earth energy takes time to care for others, to comfort, to understand. It wants to listen, to learn, to share, to nurture and to enable growth.

Unfortunately, this can also be taken for granted. Over-played, off-balance earth energy can lead to playing the martyr – nurturing others beyond caring for oneself. Topically, the levels of sacrifice by key workers from frontline services (eminently noticeable during the Covid-19 pandemic) can cost them greatly, in some cases the ultimate price. Some services can even end up unsustainably dependent on such levels of sacrifice.

1. Co-founder of the Five Institute and creator of the Vitality Test

What I wish to highlight is that any coach or leader is capable of drawing from their own earth energy as part of their own dynamic balance, with the awareness and adaptability to call on other energies as required. My view is that neither coaching nor leadership is fixed and definable any more than is a human. Because, like being a human, it all starts with being.

Higher levels of consciousness are now continually birthing and evolving, but we urgently need greater momentum. We *all* need to be self-responsible leaders of our lives and how we influence. This goes for all genders alike, and not just the traditional guardians and caregivers. The innate wholeness in service to life is already in us: in those we work with, in the systems we work in. We just might be a little out of balance and practice... or in some cases a lot!

We could generalise that women think and behave a certain way from which men would do well to learn – moving from competition to collaboration, separation to inclusion – but I see this coming from a higher awareness of wholeness, of self and other, not gender: directing one's energies into power *for* people and planet, not power *over*. When we do that, the power is phenomenal – in the truest sense of the word.

So what? To converge thinking after expansion, to bring inspiration to Earth, here are some ideas to stimulate reflection and action for us as coaches and leaders from a perspective of wholeness:

- **Be kind to yourself.** As Nick Haines describes it, develop 'kindset as your mindset'. Be kind to the Earth too (including through your choices of partners and projects) – it's the only home we've got.
- **Lead by example.** Think, feel, behave and operate from the perspective of 'eco' not 'ego'<sup>iii</sup>. Is what I think/feel/do beneficial to me? Beneficial to others? Beneficial for the planet?
- **Demonstrate and invite empathy and compassion** as a strength and value within all levels of leadership, transforming redundant systems and old behaviours.
- **Stop playing the martyr.** It's a noble human capability to serve a greater cause, but not to the point of imbalance. Nurture your own wellbeing to be able to nurture others.
- **Transform/replace support systems** that have become dependent on self-sacrifice and martyrdom. Support nurturers and their support systems to do their jobs effectively.
- **Proactively support multi-level health and education** as the essential support services they are, including collaborative education of health and wellbeing, mental and physical – our best immunity is to be balanced and resilient in the first place. For example, the UK charity Help For Heroes has created a *Field Guide for Self Care*<sup>2</sup> for healthcare workers. Another is Project5, a system which offers free wellbeing support for UK healthcare workers. [See our article on p40]

2. [helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/mental-health-and-wellbeing/a-field-guide-to-self-care](https://helpforheroes.org.uk/get-support/mental-health-and-wellbeing/a-field-guide-to-self-care)

A final thought on our 'essential natures'. It constantly whispers to me of a truth, hidden in plain sight, that within us already is this innate sense of wholeness – one that we know-without-knowing as children, then easily forget through cultural conditioning, before moments of self-realisation in our lives re-mind (insight) and re-member (embodiment) us. We are now living through massive collective realisations, individually and together, aware or not, resisted or embraced. Let's embrace.

*'We're all here to do what we're all here to do. I'm interested in one thing, Neo, the future.'*

*And believe me, I know: the only way to get there is together.'*

*The Oracle, The Matrix Reloaded*

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Richard Bellars delivers experiential learning programmes for social impact leaders and social entrepreneurs; in the UK he works with wounded veterans and business. His background includes corporate change management and he speaks fluent French and Spanish. He has a passion for travel and has co-led small groups on 'open adventures of self-exploration' in remote parts of the world. He is an active trustee of the London Sports Trust and a fellow at the RSA.

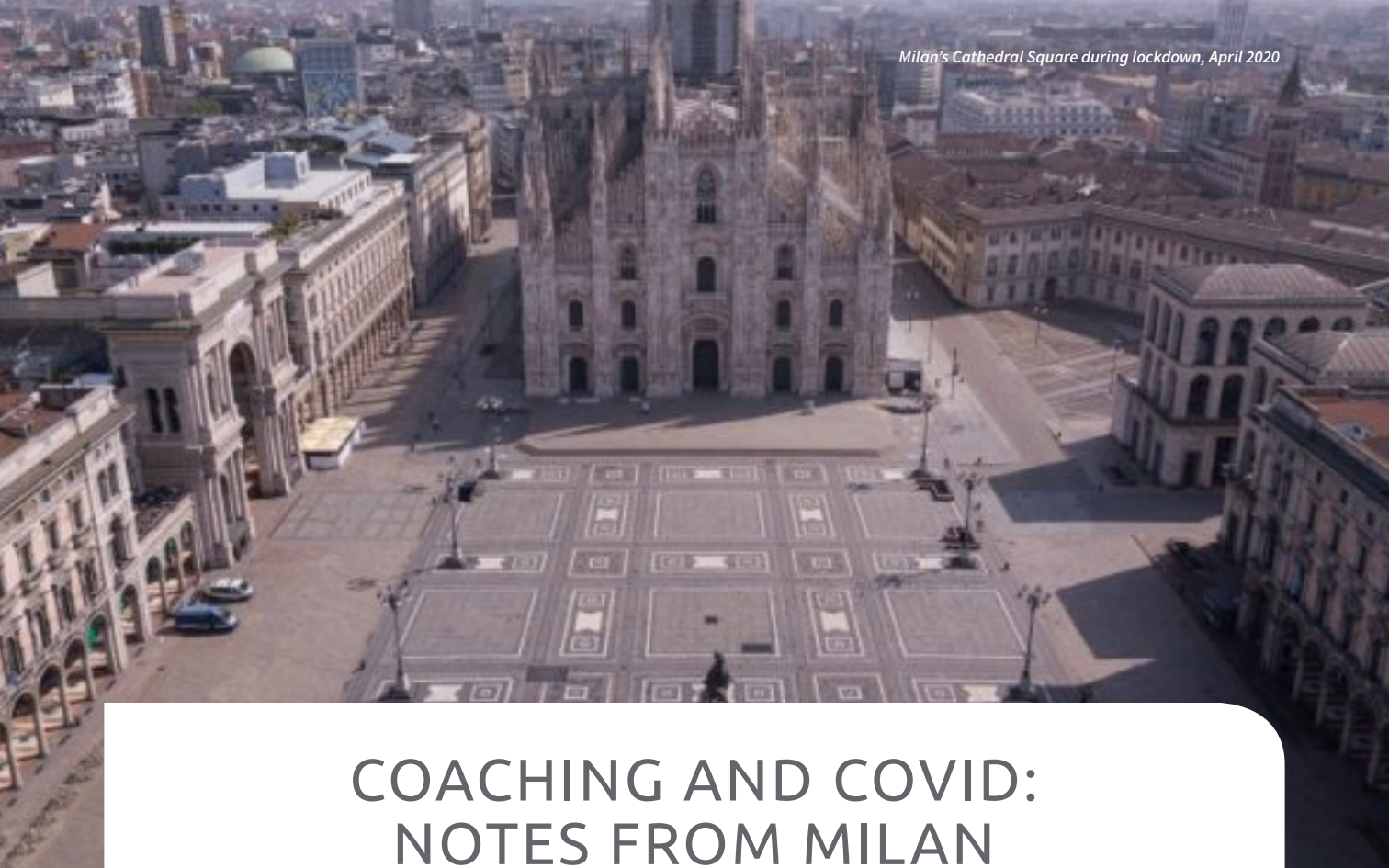
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## COACHING AND COVID: NOTES FROM MILAN

Executive coach **Simon Losasso** reflects on how the coronavirus pandemic has left its mark on his home city, and what this means for the future, coaching and coaches.

*'It is necessary to inhabit the time of uncertainty and fear to find a passage forward out of uncertainty and fear.'*

*Massimo Recalcati, psychoanalyst*

*'The imagination may be compared to Adam's dream. He awoke and found it truth.'*

*John Keats, poet (from letter to Benjamin Bailey, 22 November, 1817)*

On 29 January 2020, Italians woke up to the news that the Spallanzani Hospital in Rome had confirmed the first two cases of the novel coronavirus in Italy: a Chinese couple, visiting Rome as tourists. The hospital reported both patients were in a serious condition and isolated in intensive care. Thankfully, they both survived the virus and were declared cured on 26 February.

Others have not been so fortunate. At the moment of writing this – with newspaper cuttings strewn across my desk and while, through the open windows, the swallows wheel and whistle against a cloudless, azure, Italian sky – 30,201 people along the length of the peninsula have had their lives cut short by the coronavirus, including 163 doctors and 40 nurses, three of whom committed suicide. Milan alone, where approximately 2000 civilians died in allied bombings over the five years of World War II (1939-1945), lost 700 of its citizens a week during the month of April.

As February progressed and the death toll mounted, people struggled to take in the gravity and speed of events, veering wildly along a continuum from scoffing denial to abject terror.

The government issued common-sense recommendations: wash your hands frequently; avoid large gatherings; cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth with your hands. The authorities wavered between the wish to protect and the fear of causing serious alarm. Some people ignored the recommendations, others applied them religiously. Others again, the majority, interpreted them as they saw fit. On 2 March, I went to pick up the car I had bought a week earlier. The salesman I had shaken hands with a few days before offered me his elbow with which to touch my own by way of greeting. I followed suit, feeling a little ridiculous. I was in denial.

On 9 March, the Italian government announced a national lockdown, and the world as we had known it abruptly halted.

In Albert Camus' *The Plague* (1947), following rumours of a possible epidemic in the Algerian port of Oran, an emergency meeting is held at the prefecture between doctors and municipal authorities to discuss the situation and adopt measures. Doctor Rieux, the novel's involuntary hero, finds an ally in his much older colleague, Castel.

*'The question, old Castel cut in almost rudely, is to know whether it's plague or not. Two or three of the doctors protested. The other seemed to hesitate. The Prefect gave a start and hurriedly glanced towards the door to make sure it had prevented this outrageous remark from being overheard in the corridor.'*

Predictably, the authorities decide not to intervene decisively and cause alarm. It is better, they reason, to wait and reflect – in short, to refuse the evidence before them. Those who have fallen ill are demoted to isolated cases of fever with swellings in the groin. Vague recommendations are made to the population. Only later, as the disease rapidly takes hold and risks killing half the town, are draconian measures introduced and suddenly the plague belongs to everyone.

Sound familiar?

Transposing ourselves from fictitious events in Oran in the 1940s to a very real Milan in May 2020, what are the implications for coaches and coaching during the world's first modern pandemic?

Firstly, coach and client share the same psychic setting. Involuntary prisoners in their own homes, or forced to brave the virus for work reasons, the backdrop of a collective trauma of possible contagion and death remains the same. A new dimension is brought to the concept of mirroring. Furthermore, the reciprocal peek into the physical reality of the other by way of the webcam – cups and plates on the draining board in a kitchen, or a client marooned in a child's bedroom surrounded by toys, with an occasional brief appearance by the child herself – adds an extra layer to the sense of sharing. Shared danger and adversity engender intimacy.

Secondly, the speed and severity of the Covid-19 crisis and its repercussions on everyday lives have led many to a sudden and

radical reconsideration of who and what is important to them. The discovery, or rediscovery, of an individual's most deeply held values and consequent needs, those supporting columns of identity, always hover over the coaching space. Today they loom particularly large.

*The reciprocal peek into the physical reality of the other by way of the webcam adds an extra layer to the sense of sharing*

This peculiar intensity of sharing between coach and client and the psychological prompts of the crisis make the terrain for coaching particularly fertile. Conversely, the potential magnitude of those new awarenesses – more than one fragile relationship has cracked during the lockdown – makes deciding what to do next necessarily daunting, often overwhelmingly so. Furthermore, the world as it was no longer exists and no one knows what the new world will look like. 'Doubt is not a pleasant condition, but certainty is absurd', opined Voltaire. Never more absurd than now.

So, where does that leave us as coaches?

As a human being and a coach, I have found the greatest inspiration in the thoughts and words of our wise relatives, the psychoanalysts. They, more than any other profession, have their fingers on our psychic pulses and help us understand what is really going on.

Massimo Recalcati, an Italian psychoanalyst, philosopher and writer, comments on the so-called 'phase two', the reopening of society:

*'In our imaginations we would like to finally separate ourselves from the horror, forget the nightmare, start afresh, consider this beginning the recovery of the world as it was before the virus, healed in a restitutio ad integrum. But this is only a regression, a childish fantasy, the intense wish to not even contemplate the harshness of the middle ground over which we must now tread... The reopening (phase two) is not the simple antithesis of the lockdown (phase one), for the simple reason that the intrusion of the virus into our lives is not over. Our tremulous return into the open does not constitute a definitive exit from the trauma we have experienced, rather the trauma re-presents itself in a new guise. Re-emerging into the open does not signify re-emerging from danger but entering a different relationship with it. This means that the reopening is not a return to things as they were, which implies a new trauma.'* [author's translation]

The British psychoanalyst Wilfred Bion (1897-1979) wrote of the effects of 'catastrophic change', where the psyche is forced to reconfigure itself when confronted with the unimaginable.

Recalcati develops his theme:

*'It is necessary to inhabit the time of uncertainty and fear to find a passage forward out of uncertainty and fear. We need to develop the capacity to confront the void, without rushing to find improvised solutions that may do more damage than the illness they wish to cure. In this precarious context, one thing seems clear to me: to the trauma which has devastated our lives with unimaginable force, we are called upon to react with an equally unimaginable force.'*

Recalcati's article, which appeared in La Stampa<sup>1</sup> on 7 May, is entitled *Poetry will save us from the virus*. I began with a psychoanalyst, a poet and a deserted Cathedral Square. When and how that square, the heart of this city, will be repopulated and beat again is not and cannot be predicted at the time of writing. As we cautiously explore the asperities of our *terra di mezzo* with our clients, their ways forward – and intimately ours too – into a post-crisis world that has yet to be imagined, it is to the imagination we must turn.

Extreme adversity throws the essential and the superfluous into sharp relief. That clarity of discernment is not unrelated to the words, or images, clients use to describe a successful coaching session. They report feeling 'lighter', or even that they 'see more light'. It is in the course of that unburdening that solutions reveal themselves.

Recalcati intimates as much in his rhetorical question:

*'Perhaps we should look to artistic thought to learn how to stay out in the open in a state of uncertainty and danger, without abandoning our creativity, our inventiveness and our imagination.'*

I am reminded of the trust exercise done in pairs where one deliberately falls backwards and the other catches them. This requires courage and trust. These are the two qualities most required of us today, and exponentially so. We must trust to our imaginations to seize on the passage into the new world.

1. An Italian daily newspaper

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Born and educated in the UK, Simon moved to Milan in 1981 and has been there ever since. A practising coach since 2015, Simon worked many years in sales before finding his true passion in the learning and development space. He is currently a global talent consultant with healthcare provider Medtronic.

# THE COVID SPRING 2020

Peter Hawkins

*'Do not be afraid; our fate  
Cannot be taken from us; it is a gift.'*  
***Inferno, Dante Alighieri***

It is often easier to give than receive,  
Can we accept with an open heart  
what fate lays at our feet,  
When your cat brings you young dead birds  
Or a field mouse, still half alive.  
When life brings you a surprise virus,  
Or fate takes you round a dark, unexpected, corner.

The Covid Spring,  
Like Pushkin's Boldino autumn  
Is a time of renewal,  
Of going inside,  
The great pause,  
When planes no longer criss-cross our skies,  
Shops and bars are asleep,  
And there is quiet.

In Delhi the mountains have reappeared  
and in Venice the fish have returned,  
Once again, I can hear the lark ascending,  
Breaking the clear air,  
over our spring white hedgerows.

When the rivers dry up,  
We must discover the hidden springs,  
Often buried beneath our busy-ness  
or covered over with possessions.

We must dig them out,  
Renew their flow,  
And feel the water course  
through our veins  
And refresh the land  
As it awakens us  
To new unseen connections.

*Thank you to Pam Maclean for the reference to Puskin's Boldino Autumn*

## THE FUTURE IS NOW

Malaysia-based coach **Vimala Suppiah** describes the positive impact of a pilot mentor-coach programme for high school students in Kuala Lumpur.

On January 2019, EMCC-Asia Pacific Region (EMCC-APR) was launched at a two-day conference in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. At the conference Ivan Yong, the current EMCC Head of Global Social Responsibility Work Group, presented his talk, on solidarity, society and mentoring. As I listened, my mind wandered off to an idea: what if a mentor-coaching project could be rolled out for high school students in Kuala Lumpur. At that time, I was the assistant secretary in a Malaysian registered NGO, My Shining Star Foundation (MySSF). As part of its work, our coordinator was running programmes for 60 young people by invitation of the headmaster of a school in Sungai Buloh, Kuala Lumpur.

### WHO ARE THESE YOUNG PEOPLE?

The students in the programme attend SMK Sieramas School. The school is situated in a socio-economically challenged

environment where gangs, drug dealing, low school grades, bad attendance and dropouts were regular features. Despite these challenges, the headmaster briefed the MySSF team that the 21 students chosen had the potential to benefit from a mentor-coaching programme. When we met them for an orientation session in order to introduce the idea of what mentor-coaching is, they were unruly and disruptive – but curious. We used sports celebrities as role models: David Beckham, Usain Bolt, Lionel Messi and Malaysian's very own icons Lee Chong Wei and Nicol David, all of whom succeeded despite their challenges. We asked the students about the challenges each sports celebrity had faced and who had helped them. We were surprised to hear they knew all about the many difficulties these successful icons had endured. When the word 'coach' came out as the answer to who helped these celebrities, we knew we had the 'green light' to introduce the idea of a mentor-coaching programme.

I shared the idea of a mentor-coach pilot project for school students with Ivan Yong, the MySSF Chairman Mr Sithadaran, and Simone Buijzen, the NGO advisor. Collaboratively, we shaped the project objectives, logistics, expectations, outcomes and evaluation strategy. I recruited three newly certified coaches and a project team was set up to manage the initiative and design coaching modules. On 29 June 2019, in collaboration with the school's headmaster and EMCC-APR, we launched the 'Shine As A Star' mentor-coach programme in SMK Sieramas School.

### THE PROJECT SCOPE

The mentor-coaching project is aligned with MySSF's vision: 'to be the guiding light to many Malaysian youths with a vision of creating an ever-moving body of stars who will grow up to be adults who take a positive, active role in their communities. In turn they will support new children to shine and transform their surroundings.'

The project is framed within the 'Cool Coaching & Mentoring: 5-in-5' programme, a brainchild of Professor David Clutterbuck, who is one of the earliest pioneers of developmental coaching and mentoring. The vision of the project is to support five million young people of school age in learning and acquiring the skills of being a mentor-coach, with the support of certified and experienced adult coaches and mentors to achieve their own potential. A tall order indeed!

We continued to develop the project with the intent to leverage the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals 2030 (SDGs). These are targets for global development adopted in September 2015 and set to be achieved by 2030. Malaysia was one of the signatories to the global agreement to work towards achieving these goals. One of the 17 SDGs to transform our world is Goal 4: Quality Education. As a corporate social responsibility-capacity building initiative it aligns with MySSF's vision to empower youngsters through their.

### THE PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The main objective was to mentor-coach school students to gain confidence and self-esteem, and acquire a growth mindset. They already knew about value systems and, as part of the first session, we leveraged that understanding to encourage the students to embody such values for themselves and their community at large.

The six modules of the Shine As A Star mentor-coach programme are:

1. Meet and greet, build trust and rapport, contract, identify aspirations/goals.
2. Clarify aspirations, set goals, identify challenges and roadblocks.

3. Identify steps towards goals, develop a SMART plan, journal progress.
4. Grounding: identify new behaviours and mindset, support options, watch out for return of old behaviours.
5. Check progress: what is a vision, vision-board exercise.
6. Growth mindset as team coaching, appreciations.

### EVALUATION AND INSIGHTS GAINED

Although four of the 21 students left the programme, we successfully delivered the pilot project objectives. Separate student and staff evaluations were done after each session and a midterm and final evaluation were conducted as questionnaires. Further feedback was received from parents, the school's headmaster, the school counsellor, and the MySSF chairman and coordinator.

Although we found the students eager but disruptive at the start of the project, the progress made to date reflects what has been highlighted in many youth mentor-coaching programmes. We are happy to report the following improvements with the seventeen youths we mentor coached.

- Lower high school dropout rates
- Healthier relationships and lifestyle choices
- More positive attitudes to school
- Higher educational aspirations
- Enhanced self-esteem and self-confidence
- Improved behaviour, both at home and at school
- Stronger relationships with parents, teachers and peers
- Improved interpersonal skills
- Decreased likelihood of initiating drug and alcohol use

Phase two of the programme will aim to help develop programme participants to become peer mentors in the school.

### ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Vimala Suppiah is an award-winning global coach leader, global ICF Professional Certified Coach, the founding president of the Association of Coaching Supervisors and Mentors (ACSM), and founder of GameChange Coaching Consultancy. With a successful coaching practice based in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, she helps leaders gain insights of personal blind-spots and performance gaps, and coaches them on how best to lead their organisation, their people and their lives. She is a speaker, author and futurist, and loves visiting art galleries.

## EMBRACING DIFFERENCE AND VALUING AUTHENTICITY

In this supervision case-study we look through both the supervisor's and the supervisee's lens. We encourage you, the reader, to hold both perspectives, quite literally, side by side as you read.

### SUPERVISEE'S PERSPECTIVE

**SYLVIA:** I am a coach and supervisor, with a background in science, medicine and academia, working in the large NHS Leadership Coaching Academy (the British National Health Service). When looking for my own supervisor, although I was tempted by people with knowledge and experience like mine, I proactively reached out to Caroline. I deliberately looked for a diversity of processing style, to purposefully include those areas I realised were less well developed in my practice, such as embodied, emotional, relational and non-cognitive analytical understandings and approaches.

The main focus of my practice is developmental, which I apply to my own supervision and CPD as a priority. I find Caroline's supervision style very impactful, as it takes me out of my comfort zones into spots that are hidden and blind to me, yet familiar and resonant to her; it allows me to include, appreciate, integrate and practise other perspectives. Being very different types of people contributes to a greatly enhanced supervision

process. As a result of the variety of our styles, the way we work together includes stretching me to the learning edge while being held in a secure, safe space. It prompts horizontal development, with modelling and discussions of new modes of practice, and, more importantly, vertical growth, with a new perception of my own 'self' as coach and supervisor.

Thanks to Caroline, I am able to develop my practice in the service of my supervisees and coachees, and ultimately patients. We bring organisational as well as personal developmental value, by sharing the learnings within the NHS Leadership Academy. These new meanings have been starkly illustrated in recent times when I have been supervising frontline healthcare staff, who are less used to embracing discussions of feelings and emotions. My growing awareness and comfort in this element of experience means that my clients, too, are beginning to process the impacts on their whole selves of their changed work and home environments during the Covid-19 pandemic.

### SUPERVISOR'S PERSPECTIVE

**CAROLINE:** I am both a coach and supervisor. I was delighted when Sylvia invited me to supervise her, as I too have sought out diversity in my coaching and supervision over the past nine years.

Coming from a non-clinical background and the private sector, and now working in the NHS, learning about clinical perspectives is important to me. I have always tended to the emotionally dialogic approach to change, so I continually learn from my supervisees; in Sylvia's case, this has been about medicine and academia.

I have been struck by Sylvia's desire to really stretch herself. Her self-reflection over the past year of working together has become much more about self and personal insight, evolving from dialogue that was initially rather factual and, at times, presented in the third person. While working together with difference is important, I also value the fact that our differences remain, so that we don't lose our authenticity; this gives us 'grit' in our discussions. Through her desire to test a different way of being, I know Sylvia has remained true to herself and has adapted and flexed as she has wanted to change – not simply just to be different. I believe that Sylvia's coaches and coachees have benefited from her change: the feedback they've given her has become more rich and more personal, which illustrates how her new approach has become integrated into who she is as a practitioner.

Did you enjoy reading this piece? Do you have some content or ideas for future editions? We welcome suggestions from all contributors regardless of whether they are AC members or not. Please contact Benita Treanor at [benitatreanor@btinternet.com](mailto:benitatreanor@btinternet.com) or Michelle Lucas at [michelle@greenfieldsconsultancy.co.uk](mailto:michelle@greenfieldsconsultancy.co.uk). They are both AC volunteers and part of the AC supervision education team.

### ABOUT THE AC GROUP SUPERVISION CALLS

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

[associationforcoaching.com/page/EventsGroupSupervi](https://associationforcoaching.com/page/EventsGroupSupervi)

### ABOUT CAROLINE CHIPPERFIELD



Caroline is an executive coach and supervisor. In her role as director for leadership development and delivery at the NHS Leadership Academy, she brings experience from healthcare, retail, hospitality and education.

### ABOUT DR SYLVIA BENJAMIN



Sylvia Benjamin is a coach and supervisor with NHS Leadership Academy England, bringing her clinical and academic career experiences to healthcare staff development and wellbeing to enhance patient care.

# BOOK REVIEWS

## INTELLIGENT KINDNESS: REHABILITATING THE WELFARE STATE

*Hetty Einzig is left convinced of the need to include kindness as a critical component of how we structure our care systems and wider society.*

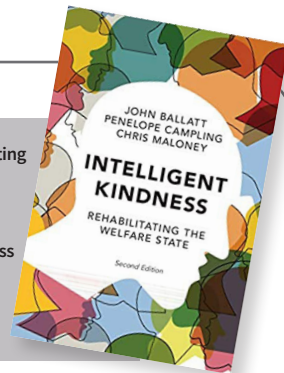
Sadly, one could hardly have imagined a better time to launch the second edition of this important book. The Covid-19 pandemic has shown us vividly that we can rise to a crisis, that our courage and our desire to help outweigh our fear of others. However, the murder of George Floyd in Minneapolis and the resurgence of outrage and despair in protests in the USA, UK and Europe at persistent racism remind us also that kindness cannot be left to personal responsibility alone – it must be a societal and political policy choice also.

*Intelligent Kindness* makes the case for the reestablishment of a thoughtful and systemic integration into our care systems of our natural instincts for kindness – as a matter of urgency. We are consistently failing to recognise, say the authors, that self-interest and the interests of others are bound together. We need therefore to deliberately cultivate our connection with others and our capacity to care, and this involves managing the emotions that arouse unkindness and even violence within us.

This points to the ‘intelligent’ part of the title. We cannot take our instinct to kindness for granted – we have to work at it. The book examines its many aspects: what blocks, destroys, enables and sustains the practice of kindness in an intelligent, conscious, consistent and systemic way, and we are reminded of its critical role in healing and social cohesion. The book is the fruit of the authors’ many decades of experience as practitioners in the British National Health Service and social care services, as well as a wide range of teaching and consulting expertise – not to mention their long and deep personal reflection. It is informative and lucid, with short chapters on the politics of kindness, the emotional life of teams, the edges of kinship and the case for kindness, among others. The authors look at blame, hate and our unsettling times, including a study of the period when the UK government deliberately created a ‘hostile environment’ as a particularly nasty way to deal with immigration.

Kindness suffers from being seen as a nice-to-have attribute rather than a defining one, not just in healthcare but also in societies. The authors cite the seminal work of Robert Putnam and of Kate Pickett and Richard Wilkinson on the building of social capital. In societies where the gap between

**TITLE:** Intelligent Kindness: Rehabilitating the Welfare State (2nd ed.)  
**AUTHOR:** John Ballatt, Penelope Campling, Chris Maloney  
**PUBLISHER:** Cambridge University Press  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** 2020  
**PRICE:** £17  
**ISBN:** 978-1911623229



income levels is smaller, trust is higher: people are more involved in their community and civic engagement, and they have more social ties. All this correlates startlingly accurately with levels of health, educational achievement, juvenile crime and even mortality rates. They cite social network theory, which shows that the impact of our network remains strong to three degrees: you are more likely to be happy if your friend’s friends’ friends are happy.

Why does this matter to coaching? Because here is the evidence – if we needed any – that above all else our project is to help our clients access, develop and express their ‘better selves’, which involves our capacity to care and enabling others to grow. High performance should not be measured solely by targets or profits, but by the creation of environments where all can flourish – and this is work done together not alone.

It is a shame it has taken a global crisis to reinforce this message, and a collective shame that our care and social systems are so often riven with unkindness, anxieties and meanness bred by the pressure of targets, shrinking budgets and our unconscious biases. As coaches, we need to stop buying into the narrative of individual heroism: to rely on the courage of individuals to inspire us will not necessarily change the deeper structures and frameworks of our societies. Let us encourage our clients to build intelligent kindness systemically within organisations, communities and institutions as an effective strategy for better futures for all.

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Hetty brings over 25 years of psychology and executive coaching experience to global corporate culture change and leadership development, with a key focus on women’s leadership and coaching for contribution. She holds a Masters in Organisation Consulting and is a certified coaching supervisor. Hetty is Editor of *Coaching Perspectives*, the AC global magazine. Her latest book, *The Future of Coaching: vision, leadership and responsibility in a transforming world*, was published by Routledge in 2017.

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## AC Health & Wellbeing Conversations



To help through these challenging times, the Association for Coaching (AC) is offering complimentary webinars on a range of Health and Wellbeing topics to help Members navigate the challenging circumstances.

Health and resilience experts share their top tips on keeping their spirits up, staying supportive and caring, being creative and staying healthy. Join us to hear from doctors, coaches, resilience specialists and positive psychology practitioners.

### How to Stay Well and Not Get Sick

Relevant to all who work at high intensity while balancing their health needs, this interactive webinar helps coaches to support clients to prioritize their health. Dr. Ben Sinclair shares key preventative strategies and tips to stay well, from optimum nutrition to how to reduce the risk of contracting COVID-19.

### Financial Wellness in a Time of Crisis

While physical safety is obviously our top concern during a global pandemic, money remains a source of concern. Leveraging social psychology, neuroscience, and behavioural finance, this webinar introduces fundamental concepts that embed financial decisions in a broader search for a meaningful life.

### Resilience Skills for Coaches

Resilience is the ability to deal with, find strengths in and/or recover from difficult situations. The skills that help us build this life-enhancing capacity are needed now perhaps more than ever. In this webinar, Dr. Chris Johnstone will share how we can apply and cultivate resilience skills using the ‘me, you and us model of resilience’

### Positive Psychology for the Corona Crisis

This webinar offers an overview of positive psychology, the science of wellbeing and explores the PERMA model of wellbeing in the context of the Coronavirus pandemic.

### The Company we Keep Shapes our Life

The company we keep (including with ourselves) has a profound impact on the quality of our life - especially at times like this. Join Ian McDermott, AC Global Ambassador for Innovation and Collaboration, for a conversation about how we move forward to be more proactive, more productive and more purposeful.

### Creating a Personal Health and Wellbeing Plan

In times of crisis, it may be instinctive to step into our helping role and put others first. However, now is the time for each of us to consider the notion of ‘putting on our own oxygen mask first’.

This webinar helps you create your personal Health and Wellbeing Plan as a critical practice for Supervisors and Coaches today.

## COACHING IN ISLAMIC CULTURE: THE PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICE OF ERSHAD

*Dr Clare Beckett-McInroy discovers plenty to ponder in a book that explores the role of coaching in a non-Western setting.*

The coaching profession is yearning for more culturally appropriate approaches, with few solutions available at present. According to the principles of Ershad (which means 'guidance') coaching revolves around self-guidance to learn and finding the right pathway for the learner (the client), who is supported by a Murshid – a guide or facilitator (the coach).

According to the practice of Ershad, the stages of the coaching conversation consist of: discovery; intentions; pathways; and effort. While these have parallels with the GROW process, the Hadith (reports of what the Prophet Muhammad said or did on certain occasions) states that 'all action is judged by intention' rather than a focus on outcome. This represents a key difference in approach and is endorsed by both the Noble Qur'an (a version of the Qur'an translated into the English language) and Sunnah (traditions of the Prophet Muhammad).

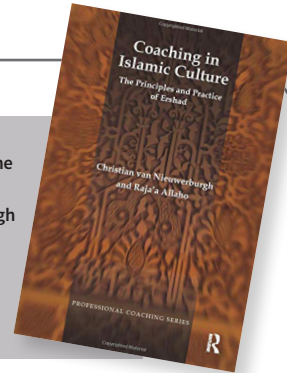
The authors propose three key elements to effective coaching: a conversational process; a set of communication skills and a particular 'coaching way of being'. This means that a 'facilitator' needs to have the key attributes of faith, modelling, initiative, discretion and positive thinking.

The Ershad coaching framework is set among relationship conditions for partnership, which is founded on deep trust and respect, and the authors recommend that the partnership conditions are discussed at each stage of the coaching relationship. The framework does not explicitly include addressing transition planning, coping with potential setbacks and practice, which may further serve to deepen learning, understanding and 'forward' action.

Also key to this approach is the alignment wheel of the Ershad method, which provides a framework for Muslim beliefs about God, self, others and the world. The alignment wheel consists of, at a high level, 'beliefs', 'self', 'universe/life' and 'people'. The book provides stimulus questions such as 'how do you balance these four elements?', which suggests that the wheel is to be used as a tool, not a model. There are also some pre-prepared questions that may support new coaches; however, I believe that in pursuit of coaching mastery, non-attachment to questions and being comfortable not knowing what question to ask may be more fruitful than preparing; coaches do not know where the coaching will travel in each session.

The book is substantiated by empirical evidence, although a wider range of references drawing upon research on the impact

**TITLE:** Coaching in Islamic Culture: The Principles and Practice of Ershad  
**AUTHORS:** Christian Van Nieuwerburgh and Raja'a Allaho  
**PUBLISHER:** Routledge  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** 2017  
**ISBN:** 9781782201991



and uses of other coaching models, even with a critique and stronger rationale for this model, would have been useful. Equally, although the book is an attempt to build a model consistent with specific cultural values, beliefs, traditions or religions as its main focus, there are a few technical elements that may not sit well with pure coaching enthusiasts.

For example, chapter three addresses 'listening with purpose'. The need to create a safe thinking space is beautifully explained, as is the need to build trust, but I do question potential assumptions that could be made from the data around body language clues, such as 'sitting up right' meaning the coachee may feel confident or the coachee may not be relaxed, especially when used across cultures.

The way that quotes from the Noble Qur'an are intertwined in the chapters works extremely well, especially as they are written first in Arabic then translated. Similarly, throughout the book key coaching skills are, where possible, mapped against teachings from the Noble Qur'an and the Sunnah.

There is an inherent assumption within this text that coaches from the West do not coach at the level of values and beliefs. A wider literature review and an exploration of other cross-cultural coaching models would have been well received. There is also clearly a need for further empirical work around this topic, and also coaching Muslims who do not reside in the Gulf region, which is not explicitly addressed. Nevertheless, this book adds to the body of knowledge around the importance of culturally sensitive coaching, and may help coaches who are not familiar with Islamic culture working in a way that is not resonant with core beliefs or that could cause offence.

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Dr Clare is a Master Certified Coach and President of ICF Qatar, Coach Mentor, Supervisor, published author who has worked internally and externally across sectors globally including Fortune 100s. She is presently Internal Executive Coach with Qatar Financial Centre Authority, providing bespoke leadership development and leader-as-coach programmes, psychometrics, executive and team coaching through a systemic lens. She founded BECKETT MCINROY CONSULTANCY's CoachME Coaching Model and resources, designs and delivers AC and ICF coach training, with an organisational focus, as well as the TAP360 'Team Advance Profile' team levels tool mapped to high performing team data.



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## 101 COACHING SUPERVISION TECHNIQUES, APPROACHES, ENQUIRIES & EXPERIMENTS

*Jeannette Marshall is delighted to find an extensive yet accessible guide to a wide range of techniques and approaches applicable to supervision.*

They say never judge a book by its cover: how wrong they are in this instance! From the moment my eye caught the glass tentacles on the cover – for me evoking the symbolism of the far reach that supervision has – I was hooked.

A plethora of authors have shared their thinking, innovative ideas and tools here, so that the reader may benefit from their experience and wisdom. It is organised into ten chapters, each reflecting a different philosophical basis for the coaching supervision work: existential, gestalt, positive psychology, psychodynamic, solution-focused, systemic, thinking environment, transpersonal and finally eclectic.

Each chapter is broken down into easily digestible sections covering the following:

- A description of the philosophy
- Underpinning principles and beliefs of the philosophy
- The role of the coach supervisor in the context of the philosophy
- How you would prepare yourself to work congruently with the approach
- How might the way of working be particularly useful to the supervisee
- Anything else you need to consider before applying the approach
- A step-by-step guide to the practical implementation of the techniques, approaches, enquiries and experiments

In addition, there are icons to illustrate the settings in which the techniques are most suited; both the type of supervision relationship where it can be used and the range of experience of the supervisee are taken into consideration.

One of the highlights of this book is the lists of tables and figures that explain, in a simple format, exactly what the philosophy is and how it can be used. When working with clients, it's really useful to be able to refer them to a visual aid that can enlighten them.

I found this book to be both informative and inspirational. Often the thing that holds us back from trying new things is the fear of showing our vulnerability to others, whether that

**TITLE:** 101 Coaching Supervision Techniques, Approaches, Enquiries and Experiments  
**AUTHOR:** Edited by Michelle Lucas  
**PUBLISHER:** Routledge  
**PUBLICATION DATE:** 2020  
**PAPERBACK PRICE:** £30  
**ISBN:** 978-0367481155



be with clients, peers or colleagues. With the clear guidelines given for each technique, along with a thought-provoking note of caution, this publication encourages the reader to push the boundaries and step into uncharted territory while feeling informed, supported and empowered to try new things.

With such a variety of approaches covered, there is something to appeal to everyone, no matter their preferred style, level of experience or type of client. Most of the techniques can be used in coaching too, so this book has a much broader appeal than one might at first think.

Designed to be dipped in and out of to stimulate thinking, I benefitted greatly from reading it from cover to cover and then selecting the ideas that resonated with me. As a supervisor (and as a coach!) it's important to keep things fresh and vibrant, so having a compendium of concepts to call upon as and when required is a greatly appreciated addition to any professional's toolkit. My list of ideas to implement has grown immensely and I am inspired to test out some of the innovative methods demonstrated so skilfully within the chapters.

The true test of any book designed with practical application in mind is how quickly the reader chooses to implement elements of it – I got to just the third chapter before I did so.

### ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Jeannette Marshall is an AC-accredited master executive coach and coaching supervisor. As Director of Accreditation for the Association for Coaching (AC), her role is to enable others to raise the bar through the rigorous and robust accreditation schemes designed for the development of coaches and supervisors. Her clients include senior leaders and teams across all industry sectors.



## BOOKS THAT HAVE SHAPED MY COACHING

**Martha Freyman-Miser** reflects on a work that helped her reassess and reimagine her approach to leadership and its purpose.

*Leadership for the Disillusioned* by Amanda Sinclair

'This leadership book,' begins Amanda Sinclair, 'is for those who are disillusioned by their encounters with leaders and leadership'.<sup>1</sup>

I was first introduced to Sinclair, the Australian author and business professor, during the early years of my doctorate programme. At that point, I had decades of practitioner experience, including a recent stint as ING's global head of leadership and change. I considered myself a seasoned coach, educator and consultant. I knew my way around corporate HR practices, 360 assessment tools and a variety of change models. And yet, when I read Sinclair's words, I realized I was disillusioned with the 'impoverished theories and oversimplified templates' of the leadership literature. Here, I thought, is a fresh voice that will help me reimagine my approach to leadership coaching and development.

I was not disappointed. Taking a hard look at 50 years of scholarship and practice, Sinclair notes that leadership has become a cure-all based on an idealised notion of the heroic leader. She insists that a great deal more thought has 'gone into *how to do leadership* than into *what leadership is for*'. In the popular market, leadership has been 'McDonaldized' into a curious set of 'bland and predictable' conventions based on the 'flawed assumption that it is the job of leaders to change the behaviours, actions and beliefs of others'. HR practices ensure conformance with the assumption of strong and self-confident leadership. And a flourishing leadership development industry has created an 'interlocking system' of experts, peddling 'appraisals, performance-management systems' and 360 tools.

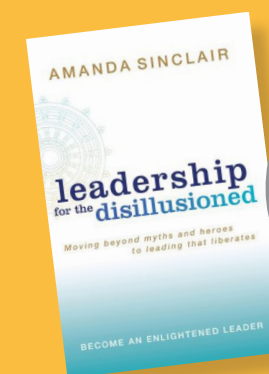
Sinclair's work spoke to doubts I'd had but never voiced. More compelling were the questions she posed: What is all this leadership for? Who benefits? Who doesn't? Most important: What is my leadership for?

In response to these questions, Sinclair argues that the purpose of leadership should be to liberate, that leadership is less about doing and more about being: 'thinking and acting' in a way that 'awakens and mobilizes people to find new, freer and more

meaningful ways of seeing, working and living.' These ends, she writes, are achieved by engaging in practices that foster self-reflection and awareness, curiosity, experimentation, purpose and agency.

Sinclair's book gave me permission to critically examine the beliefs I had absorbed and used in my practice. In fact, her work became integral to my doctoral thesis (I eventually asked her to be a member of my dissertation committee) and it underlies my practice today.

Sinclair's liberating spirit and sense of purpose infuse my approach to leadership coaching and education. I have found that self-reflection brings awareness of, and release from, misguided beliefs, goals and vulnerabilities that drive leaders into endless cycles of striving and struggling to prove themselves. The experience of freedom from self- and institution-imposed beliefs is a profound experience – one that opens the door to the question I have never forgotten to ask since reading *Leadership for the Disillusioned*: What is the purpose of your leadership?



We would love to hear what your favourite books are – fiction or non-fiction. Do send us your contributions.

1. Sinclair, Amanda. 2007. *Leadership for the Disillusioned: Moving Beyond Myths and Heroes to Leading that Liberates*, p. xiii. Crows Nest, NSW: Allen & Unwin.

# Turning Sartre's hell into a terrestrial paradise through transactional analysis and coaching

Through the dual lens of Jean-Paul Sartre's existential philosophy and the psychological model of Transactional Analysis, psychology student Arielle Rosinski and her father, global coach Philippe Rosinski, take a deep dive into an issue that lies at the heart of coaching: how do we exercise and promote personal responsibility, and play our part in creating a 'terrestrial paradise'?

During interviews with team members (with Philippe) in preparation for a team coaching engagement before the Covid-19 pandemic, some members expressed their satisfaction about working for a reputable company offering a valuable service to society, but others complained about various issues with colleagues and with their management. While the former group was grateful about their work circumstances and accepted the inevitable challenges, the latter seemed mired in frustration with a sense of powerlessness and injustice.

During the subsequent team retreat, the satisfied team members were the quickest to solicit feedback from their peers, welcoming the opportunity to learn from others and to grow. The unsatisfied team members made some effort to participate constructively and to open up, but didn't solicit direct feedback from colleagues about their behaviours and the impact on the team. In their view, progress would be achieved when the organisation and upper management were ready to change.

Failing to assume personal responsibility while expecting others to carry the burden of changing our lives for us, is a common problem. However, to what extent are we free to choose our actions and are we really responsible for them?

For centuries, philosophers have debated this fundamental question about our human condition. Positions range from hard determinism, by philosophers such as Paul-Henry Thiry (1770), which eliminates human freedom, to the radical freedom at the heart of Jean-Paul Sartre's existentialism, which holds that we are responsible for everything we do and are defined by the choices we make.

Sartre's radical philosophy can be a source of inspiration for coaches who strive to promote personal accountability and who help coachees build and live a life they can truly call their own. His key concepts are outlined in Table 1.

## SARTRE'S HELL

Sartre's core views seem untenable given recent advances in genetics, neurosciences, psychology and sociology. Sartre did not know much, for example, about how the brain functions and how it can limit a person's possibilities (Studebaker, 2012). He also discounted the importance of unconscious processes revealed by Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis. However, these constitute a form of psychic determinism that undermines our capacity to exercise our freedom. Sartre's notions of freedom and responsibility do not seem to take these factors into account.

Even if we are unsure about the extent of our free will, not believing that we have individual responsibility in how we act can lead to the death of morality with catastrophic consequences (e.g., the Nazis committing atrocities without feeling responsible: they were 'just obeying the orders').

In Sartre's play *No Exit* (1957, original French version: *Huis Clos*, 1947) three characters (Estelle, Garcin and Inez) are shut in hell and condemned to stay there together forever, locked in psychological games. Garcin acts harshly vis-à-vis Estelle, who keeps longing for his love. Estelle goes on refusing Inez's advances with mockery and contempt, while Inez keeps reminding Garcin that he is a coward (Garcin deserted during the war). The moral and mutual torture of this 'drama triangle' (Karpman, 1968) never ends. Everyone is both the persecutor, the victim and rescuer of the others. Garcin concludes that 'hell is other people'.

## TERRESTRIAL PARADISE

So how does this relate to coaching? Despite its limitations, Sartre's appeal to be responsible for everything we do and exercise our freedom lies at the heart of the coach's mission.

Table 1. Key concepts in the existential philosophy of Jean-Paul Sartre

Identity	We are what we make of ourselves. We are defined by our actions
Freedom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Our choices belong to us; we are free to make them as we see fit</li> <li>• We have freedom of mind (to imagine what might be) and freedom of action (to try to make it happen)</li> <li>• People can transcend their cultural, social and historical contexts to shape their own identity through choice and action</li> </ul>
Responsibility	We have total responsibility for our existence: 'By creating what we want to be, we create at the same time an image of man as we believe he should be.'
Existential anxiety, or 'nausea'	Having to find our own meaning generates anguish and anxiety, what Sartre called 'nausea'
Bad faith	Those who do not exercise their responsibility have bad faith. They are either 'cowards' who lack courage and fail to see their personal responsibilities, or 'bastards' who commit bad actions in good conscience
Relationship to others	The way we see ourselves is largely defined by how others see us: 'Whatever I feel about myself, the judgment of others enters into it.' We can remain enslaved to these judgments, and suffer one's own hell in the eyes of others. Alternatively, others' views can drive us to change.

Sartre argues that 'our responsibility engages the entire humanity'. Even this claim may not be as outlandish as it seems. Indeed, failing to recognise our individual responsibility can lead to the 'Tragedy of the Commons', when people consume more than their part of shared resources (water, energy sources etc.), each considering that their own actions have a negligible effect on the whole, yet causing together the ultimate collapse of the 'commons' (Hardin, 1968 - Myers & Twenge, 2019). Conversely, Wangari Maathai, founder of the Greenbelt movement and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, tells the story of a hummingbird taking action against a forest fire, choosing to act despite being mocked by other animals rather than passively watching the forest going down the drain like these other animals. She argues that 'doing the best we can' to make a difference is the antidote to feeling overwhelmed and powerless (Maathai, 2007). This attitude is essential to overcome the 'diffusion of responsibility' phenomenon (i.e., we tell ourselves that someone else will probably help and, in the end, no one does) (Darley & Latané, 1968).

We contend that the main problem is not that Sartre challenges us to be responsible but rather that he does not provide us with the means to discern psychological obstacles and to overcome them to liberate ourselves. Coaches can often recognise their coachees (and maybe even themselves) participating in the type of psychological games dramatized

in *No Exit*, where individuals play shifting roles between persecutor, victim and rescuer.

Among the different psychological approaches that modern coaching draws on (see e.g., Stober & Grant, 2006; Rosinski, 2010), transactional analysis (TA), created by Eric Berne (1961, 1964), has proven to be particularly applicable to coaching (Brock, 2012). Moreover, Karpman's addition of the drama triangle (1968) effectively describes the dynamic of Berne's 'psychological games' (1964). TA offers simple (but certainly not simplistic!) explanations about human behaviour and provides a good complement to Sartre's philosophy in offering concrete ways to empower humans to assume their responsibilities and build constructive relationships.

While Sartre dwells on hellish, toxic relationships between the characters of *No Exit*, TA and coaching offer a way out by proposing healthier alternatives to communication (Berne, 1964), which culminate with 'intimacy' (open, personal and genuine interactions), modelled by effective coaches.

As Berne argued, if the characters in Sartre's play had known about transactional analysis, this experience could have been inspiring for them (1966). The same could be said about all too many people in real-life families, organisations and countries, mired in toxic relationships and sterile conflicts, blaming others and abdicating personal responsibility; lives could be transformed with TA-informed coaching.

Replacing destructive interactions with constructive ones, fostering warm and fulfilling relationships, paves the road to happiness. Numerous research findings highlight the primary importance of positive social relationships and connections for happiness (Gilbert, 2006; Vaillant, 2012), which is likely the nearest experience we can have of 'paradise'.

Looking beyond the small group of characters in interaction and taking a broad view, social psychologist Scott Plous (2020) and philosopher Roman Krznaric (2014) notice that the most important societal problems (e.g., war and terrorism, poverty, social injustice, violence and abuse, pollution, destruction of ecosystems and climate change) arise in part from a lack of empathy. They argue that, conversely, these problems 'would be greatly reduced if people felt more empathy toward one another, across space and time (i.e., future generations)', and that bringing empathy into our everyday life would 'create the revolution of human relationships we so desperately need'. Coaches could actively contribute to this revolution by promoting caring and respectful relationships in place of destructive games, not only among their immediate coachees but also within the larger community they impact. Following Maathai's example, we don't need to be discouraged by the magnitude of the task and the seemingly paltry impact we can have, but instead play our part in bringing us all closer to a terrestrial paradise!

## TA-INFORMED COACHING

According to TA, we communicate from four main life positions ('I'm not OK, you're OK'; 'I'm not OK, you're not OK'; 'I'm OK, you're not OK'; and 'I'm OK, you're OK') and three ego states (Child, Adult, Parent).<sup>1</sup>

The word 'transaction' in TA refers to the basic unit in every social relationship. When two people come into contact, sooner or later one of them will show, in a verbal or non-verbal way, that the other's presence is recognised. This constitutes a 'transactional stimulus'. The other, in turn, will react in a verbal or non-verbal way: 'the transactional response'. TA depicts these transactions and determines which ego state is in action (Harris, 1973). There are three types of transactions: complementary, crossed and ulterior. The type of transaction used will determine whether an exchange between two humans will run smoothly or not (Berne, 1961, 1964).

Let's examine how these transactions are exemplified in *No Exit*.

- **Complementary transactions** happen when the message, sent by a specific component (or 'ego state') of one's personality, receives the expected answer (from a specific component of the other's personality). It can happen between any ego state.

### Example

**INEZ:** Did you suffer much?

**ESTELLE:** No. I was only half conscious, mostly.

**INEZ:** What was it?

**ESTELLE:** Pneumonia.

In this case, the transaction stimulus is destined to Estelle's Adult and her transaction response comes from that activated Adult state.

- **Crossed transactions** happen when the message receives an unexpected answer, addressed to a different ego state than the one which started the stimulus resulting in a blocking of communication.

### Example

**INEZ:** Are these the real reasons? You reasoned you did not want to engage lightly. But fear, hatred and all the filth that is hidden are also reasons, come, search, question yourself.<sup>2</sup>

**GARCIN:** Shut up! Do you think I've waited for your advice?

The transaction stimulus from Inez is from her Adult (even if there is a Parent component: 'question yourself', the Adult dominates here). However, the transaction response comes from Garcin's Parent after his not OK Child has been triggered. He does not answer the legitimate question with his Adult but shuts the communication with his angry rebuttal.

A professional coach could have helped Garcin to step back and to consider healthier responses. The coach could have asked: 'How did you feel then?' (the coach highlighting afterwards that it was human to feel scared under the circumstances), 'How could you forgive yourself for having run away?'; 'How could you accept your vulnerabilities?' (the coach could possibly share his or her own fallibility)... Eventually, Garcin would likely have realised that he could have replied with his Adult in the following manner (to Inez but most of all to himself): 'No, you're right. These are not the main reasons. In truth, I was scared. I regret what I did and if could turn time back, I would stay.' When his Adult takes charge by accepting his Child's fallibility, it paves the way for his growth.

1. We refer readers to Eric Berne (1961, 1964, 1975) and Thomas Harris (1973) for these fundamental TA concepts, and to Philippe Rosinski (2003, 2010) for the application of TA to coaching. 'I'm not OK, you're OK' is conducive to productive and fulfilling communication, in contrast with the other mental combinations: 'I'm not OK, you're OK' (Submissive Victim); 'I'm OK, you're not OK' (Persecutor, Rescuer or Rebellious Victim); and 'I'm not OK, you're not OK' (hopeless). The ego states constitute centers of internal resources. The Child refers to our emotions, intuitions and sensations. The Adult concerns our logic, objective analysis of facts and information, and pros and cons. The Parent is about our values, opinions and beliefs. The Normative Parent gives and enforces rules, which protect but can become damaging (Critical Parent, Persecutor) when the rules are overly strict and constraining. The Nurturing Parent takes care, acting as an enabler, but can become harmful (Rescuer) when this behavior is overdone (i.e., preventing the other person from acting and learning from experience).

2. The English translation by Stuart Gilbert puts more emphasis on the Critical Parent ('So carry on, Mr. Garcin, and try to be honest with yourself—for once.') than the original French version ('Allons, cherche, interroge-toi.')

- **Ulterior (hidden, covert) transactions** happen when the initial message is double. The real message is disguised in a socially acceptable transaction.

### Example

**GARCIN:** Wait a bit! I ran a pacifist newspaper. Then war broke out. What was I to do? Everyone was watching me, wondering: 'Will he dare?' Well, I dared. I folded my arms and they shot me. Had I done anything wrong?

**ESTELLE** [laying her hand on his arm]: Wrong? On the contrary. You were—

**INEZ** [breaks in ironically]: —a hero!

Garcin's transaction stimulus comes from his Adult. Estelle's transaction response also comes from her Adult making the transaction complementary. On the surface, Inez's transaction response also emanates from her Adult. However, the irony in her reply reveals a masked Parent-Child transaction response destined to activate Garcin's not OK Child.

Here, again, an experienced professional coach would have spontaneously asked constructive questions to Garcin, such as 'How could you make peace with your past?', or 'What permissions could you give yourself to stop beating yourself up about something you cannot change?'

Rather than being reinforced in his not OK position by Inez's scathing irony – feeling a coward – Garcin could have forgiven himself with his Nurturing Parent ('You have done the best you could with what you knew at the time') and could have replied candidly with his Adult ('I'm not a hero and I'm not proud of what I did. Unfortunately, I cannot change the past, but I do not intend to continue to beat myself up'). He could have said the truth right away without lying and therefore perhaps avoided the unpleasant remark from Inez. Incidentally, she could have responded with her Adult, without judgment but with real coaching questions instead ('Wrong? What do you think? What could you have done differently?'). This would have stimulated Garcin's Adult rather than locking him into his not OK Child.

TA offers simple and yet powerful vocabulary to help coaches and coachees alike discern toxic transactions and replace these with healthier alternatives. This human development approach would have helped our three protagonists escape from hell and engage in OK-OK constructive exchanges instead. TA shows that we always have choices, that we are not doomed, that the OK-OK position is always accessible to us. Other people are only hell to the extent we join them in psychological games.

It is salutary and probably necessary to challenge people to be fully responsible in their lives and to exercise their freedom. Otherwise people could find excuses for the atrocities they

have committed, arguing that they did not know or were not in charge. However, it may be ultimately ineffective to expect a sense of responsibility from everyone without helping them understand and overcome personal obstacles on the arduous journey to self-aware responsibility. Irvin Yalom (1980) considers freedom as one of the four existential challenges that we all face (alongside death, isolation and meaninglessness) and has devoted his life to devise a psychotherapy approach to help people deal with these complex issues. Yalom's research shows that simply being told that we are responsible for everything we do is typically not enough to set us free.

When Sartre views Garcin and Estelle as not OK, it may paradoxically undermine his declared pursuit of freedom by making these people feel guiltier but still unable to assume their responsibilities. By contrast, TA would consider that the 'coward' was perhaps a person with a not-OK, fearful Child, obeying his repressive Parent. TA would allow him to 'decontaminate' his Adult.

Contamination refers to the Adult state fully or partially polluted by the Child or the Parent ego state, for example when someone confuses a belief (which belongs to the Parent state) and a fact, or when a fear goes out of proportion and prevents the person from thinking logically about a situation (the state of frightened Child). Only the autonomous person characterised by an emancipated (i.e., decontaminated) Adult is in a position to make a real choice and to exercise his freedom. A major contribution of Transactional Analysis has been to provide a thorough but still accessible examination of what prevents people from being fully autonomous and, most of all, it offers the means to develop their autonomy.

Both Sartre's existentialism and TA insist that humans are fully responsible for their actions. Harris wrote: TA 'confronts the patient with the fact that he is responsible for what happens in the future no matter what has happened in the past. Moreover, it is enabling persons to change, to establish self-control and self-direction, and to discover the reality of a freedom of choice.' (1973) He shows that TA provides the tools to help people change and achieve their purpose.

This outlook is very much needed in today's world where many people still prefer to blame others and attribute their failures to situational factors rather than taking the necessary actions to achieve progress and success, for themselves and for society overall. However, while Sartre confronts us with our responsibilities, TA and coaching empower us to fulfil our essence and to make the world a better place.

*This article is adapted from Arielle Rosinski's International Baccalaureate Extended Essay, The Application of Transactional Analysis to Jean-Paul Sartre's Existentialism (2019)*

## ABOUT ARIELLE ROSINSKI



Arielle is currently completing her BSc in psychology at University College London. She is particularly interested in social psychology as well as in the psychology of memory and decision-making. She values psychological research and the application of evidence-based findings in various contexts, particularly human development, wellbeing and justice. Arielle is curious to broaden her perspective by learning from other disciplines including law, philosophy and management.

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## ABOUT PHILIPPE ROSINSKI



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

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

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# Looking to Accelerate your Team Coaching Practice?

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

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

# PROPHET

Predictive Role Profiling for  
High-Performing Executive Teams

(Digital viewers can watch the PROPHET explainer video [here](#))

### What is unique about PROPHET?

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

### Benefits to organisations

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

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

*Gillian Jones-Williams, Emerge*

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

Quote 'ACPROPHET2021' to get the special member's rate.



[www.wisdom8.com](http://www.wisdom8.com)

## August

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**Wednesday 5th August**

09:30 – 10:30 BST  
Ireland – Virtual  
Virtual Café

**Wednesday 5th August**

18:00 BST / 19:00 CEST / 13:00 EDT (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Helping teams learn and develop using Belbin – *Jo Keeler*

**Tuesday 11th August**

09:00 – 10:00 EST / 08:00 – 09:00 CST  
USA East Coast - Virtual  
Breakfast Networking Hour – Building our Coaching Community

**Thursday 12th August**

18:00 BST / 19:00 CEST / 13:00 EDT (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Now That We're Virtual – *Jeannette Marshall*

**Tuesday 18th August**

17:30pm – 19:30pm AEST  
Sydney, NSW, Australia, Evening  
The Intersection of Development & Play  
– *Greg Lowry*

**Wednesday 26th August**

18:00 BST / 19:00 CEST / 13:00 EDT (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Coaching – are we in trouble? – *Ginny Baillie*

## September

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**Wednesday 9th September**

18:00 BST / 19:00 CEST / 13:00 EDT (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Selling In A Crisis – *Lee Warren*

**Thursday 10th September - Thursday 17th December**

09:00-10:30 EDT / 08:00-09:30 CDT  
USA East Coast – Virtual  
Group Supervision Experience for Coaches  
– *Sarah Tennyson and David Rothauser*

**Thursday 24th September**

08:15 BST / 09:15 CEST (Full day event)  
Virtual Masterclass Event  
Understanding our coaching conversations – *Professor Erik De Haan*

**Mid September**

18:00-19:00 EST / 17:00-18:00 CST  
USA East Coast - Evening virtual  
An Evening with Michael Cavanaugh – *Michael Cavanaugh*

## October

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**Wednesday 21st October**

18:00 BST / 19:00 CEST / 13:00 EDT (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Five Crucial Steps to a Highly Profitable Coaching Business  
– *Lisa Farr*

## November

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**Wednesday 4th November**

18:00 GMT / 20:00 CET / 13:00 EST (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Adventures in Transformative Coaching  
– *Ben Dowman*

**Wednesday 11th November**

08:15 GMT / 10:15 CET (Full day event)  
Virtual Masterclass Event  
Team Coaching  
– *Georgina Woudstra*

**Friday 13th November**

08:00GMT / 9:00 CET / 12:00 GST (Full day event)  
PROPHET Certification Training  
– *Katherine Tulpa*

**Wednesday 18th November**

18:00 GMT / 20:00 CET / 13:00 EST (2.5 Hour Event)  
Virtual  
Coaching Approaches and Styles – helping you understand the differences  
– *Alexandra Morgan*

## December

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**Tuesday 1st December**

08:15 GMT / 10:15 CET (Full day event)  
Virtual  
Understanding our 'impact' and the case for executive coaching  
– *Professor Erik De Haan*

\* Dates and times subject to change

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

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