Professor Jonathan Passmore

Senior VP at CoachHub shares some of his favourite tools as an executive coach, drawing on extracts from his new book: WeCoach!

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From the Editor

From

SA Coaching News

To

CoachingNews.Africa

Welcome to the 3rd issue of the transformed SA Coaching News. The readership of CoachingNews.Africa climbed exponentially since converting to open access in April this year. Thank you for reading and for sharing to your network.

If you have not seen the Jul2021 Special Issue yet, have a look on the website. It contains an overview of a panel discussion about the coaching industry, held earlier this year to celebrate the partnership between COMENSA and the SABPP.

This month's issue begins with a new series of articles on coaching tools by Prof Jonathan Passmore, followed by Nobantu Mpotulo on Ubuntu Coaching, and a selection of local and international authors willing to share their knowledge and experience. Some of their topics are then supported by showcasing related academic research, again both local and international - so please dive in!

Take care and enjoy the reading!

Your partner in coaching excellence,

Jacques

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Inside this issue

http://coachingnews.africa/

New article series

Coaching Tools

Prof Jonathan Passmore

In this new series Professor Jonathan Passmore, Senior VP at CoachHub shares some of his favourite tools as an executive coach and drawing on extracts his new book: WeCoach! (Passmore, 2021)

What is a coaching tool?

During coach training and as the coach progress through various events, conferences and courses they gradually gather a range of theoretical approaches and pick up a wide array of tools and techniques. It may seem that each new development module or learning workshop presents yet more handy diagrams, acronyms and models. As a coaching psychologist I believe in an evidence-based but one which is diverse that allows the coach to flex and adapt to the client as a unique individual and their problem or issue as one personal to them. The wider the range of frameworks, models and tools which the coach can draw upon the better they can be in service of their client.

Tools by definition, are helpful when focused on a particular job. The skill of the coach is to identify when one of these may be useful to support a client with a particular situation, issue or aim. Tools are drawn from a range of different coaching approaches (such as cognitive behavioural, humanistic, Gestalt, ACT or Dialectical Behavioural Coaching) as well as other disciplines such as leadership and management theory. They include questioning techniques, visual models, practical frameworks and some very creative approaches. They can help to bring structure and focus to a coaching conversation.

But it is important to remember they are intended to be adapted and integrated into wider practice, not used as a script to be read out each time a particular issue presents itself. The coach needs to contextualise the tool to the person and the situation, and bring the tool alive through the quality of their questions, presence, knowledge and building on the working alliance they have created with the client.

Many of the tools in this series can be used equally well in individual and group or team coaching settings. It is hoped that you will find something in here to add to your existing repertoire of tools and techniques, in order to best support your clients.

Of course, a tool is only a tool and can never replace a strong client relationship, a sound theoretical base or core coaching skills. I have previously advocated an 'eclectic' in the Integrated Coaching Model (Passmore, 2007). While the emphasis remains on the client, the relationship and the context, coaching tools can provide clients with new and helpful ways of exploring situations, reflecting and structuring their thoughts, as well as gaining commitment to act. They can also provide a refreshing change in energy and different way of working, for both client and coach.

In this series I hope you find new tools to add to your practice, not to be applied mechanically but to bring alive through the unique stories and way you adapt the intervention to suit the unique client you are working with.

Coaching Tool #1:

Seventh Generation thinking

Description

In complex systems, there are always time delays between the decision or action and ongoing consequences of that decision. For example, when our first child was born, I planted a young sapling beech tree at the end of our garden. The tree was less than a foot high. The young tree is now nearly 20 foot and our teenage girl passes it by without a second glace. But in another thirty years, the tree may be 50 foot and she may say to her own children, that tree was planted the day I was born. In a hundred years, her great grandchildren may play under the tree and in two hundred years, may be her great, great, great, great, great grandchildren will enjoy the shade it casts on a warm summer day. The Iroquois Nation recognised the long shadows our decisions cast, calling this Seventh-Generation stewardship. In a world where we consumer vast quantities of precious metals, burn carbon deposits laid down over millions of years and create plastics which will last for thousands of years into the future, never is a coaching tool so needed.

This tool seeks to help our clients integrate long-term decision-making into their organisational decision-making processes, both for daily actions, but also in their strategic decisions. Seventh generation thinking urges current leaders to live and work for the benefit

of the seventh generation into the future. To think of their great, great, great, great grandchildren as the Iroquois Nation said: "*In all of your deliberations … Look and listen for the welfare of the whole people and have always in view not only the past and present but also the coming generations, even those whose faces are yet beneath the surface of the ground – the unborn of the future …*"

When does it work best?

This works best for clients who may benefit for considering the longer-term impact of their decisions, such as thinking about ecological impact of their actions or the treatment of local people involved in production or manufacturing of the products, who may live and work thousands of miles away from the prestigious Head Quarters offices in London or New York. These people who are a critical part of the value chain but are often unseen and unconsidered by the board, but they are where value is created. Like the slaves on Bristol trading ships travelling across the seas from Africa to the Caribbean, the value they create today cast long shadows into the future. What actions when our great, great, great, great grandchildren, 200 years from now, look at our actions. Which actions will they feel proud and which actions will make them ashamed being our decedents, and how we have acted towards the planet, fellow humanity, or other species.

In the Oct2021 issue

Coaching Tool #2: RESISTT - a set of seven techniques drawn from Dialectical Behavioural Therapy (DBT) which can help clients manage overwhelming emotions

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Coaching tool #1: Seventh Generation thinking

What do I do: step by step

1. Share a personal story to illustrate seventh generational thinking and link this to the story of the Iroquois Nation.

2. Invite the client to explore a strategy decision being considered by the board or which is the focus for your current conversation

3. Explore this through the lens of future generations: Who benefits? When? By how much? Who cares the costs? When will these costs be felt? How long do these costs last? How does the trade-off between costs and benefits look from 200 years in the future?

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https://coachhub.io/

Fueling the Relationship in Coaching through Deep Connection with Our Clients

Nobantu Mpotulo

ICF MCC

As the sky, the clouds and these trees in the above picture are in community, that is how coaching becomes when we strengthen the relationship between the coach, the client and the client's environment.

The sky depicts the client's environment, the clouds depict the client whose goals and aspirations determine the destination to be reached and the trees depict the coach who needs to be present, grounded and rooted. In this short article I will attempt to show the pivotal role the relationship plays in coaching through applying Ubuntu in coaching.

How to strengthen the Relationship in a Coaching Relationship?

Mr Nelson Mandela once said about Ubuntu "*In Africa there is a concept known as 'ubuntu' – the profound sense that we are human only through the humanity of others; that if we are to accomplish anything in this world it will in equal measure be due to the work and achievement of others*". The Nelson Mandela quote above emphasizes the importance of interrelatedness and interconnectedness and even takes us further that we cease to be human if other's humanity is trampled upon. Therefore Ubuntu is about humanizing us as human beings and exhibits non-duality and being interlinked. In Xhosa we have a saying that *Izandla ziyahlambana*, this simply means that hands cannot be totally cleansed unless they wash each other.

I define **Ubuntu Coaching**

as the ability of coaches to co-create fully with the client as far as the client's hopes and aspirations are concerned. This implies a deep sense of connection, compassion, care and the curiosity of who your client is. When we do this as coaches magic is created and spells are cast for our clients to thrive and succeed.

In bringing about Ubuntu Coaching to practice I have developed a model represented by the acronym **RASEA**. R – **Receive** the client; A - **Appreciate** and **Acknowledge** the client; S – **Summarize** , through connecting and listening deeply to the client the coach summarizes what the client says and confirms with the client. E – **Evoke Awareness**, the coach shares just in time observations on what is happening in the coaching relationship and be curios with what meaning the client is making with regard to the coach's observations. Lastly in the A – **Ask**, the coach asks what, when, who, with whom, why and how questions in order to get the client to commit to action.

For the purposes of this article I will be mainly focusing on **Receive, Appreciate, Acknowledge and Evoking Awareness** as I find that these steps are the crucial steps in **RASEA** in building the coaching relationship. The Ubuntu Coaching is built on a bedrock of 7 Cs : Compassion, caring, courage, co-creation, curiosity, connectedness and commitment to action.

Receive

When we greet in isiZulu we say Sawubona which means *I See You*. When I apply SAWUBONA in receiving my client in coaching this means I see you, I see your ancestors, I see your strengths, I see your


Photo by Kiana Bosman on Unsplash

hopes, your dreams and your aspirations and I see your struggles to.

As I see the client I then listen deeply to what the client says, to what the client feels and to what is not said so as to establish the state that prevails in the client's environment. The 7 Cs mentioned above are a compass that guides how as a coach I am in the relationship with the client. As coaches we need to spend more time in receiving our clients especially during these unprecedented times that are experienced globally.

In my village when you meet a community member you spend a significant amount of time asking into how the other is, asking after the wellbeing of all relatives, livestock, crops and plants and everything else that is related to that individual. As we do this with our clients we find as coaches that our clients start to relax and are able to be centred and grounded thus enabling them to have clarity of their thoughts. Lewis, Amini & Lannon (2000) in their book Theory of Love introduce us to Limbic Resonance and describe this as "a symphony of mutual and internal adaptation whereby two mammals become attuned to each other's inner states." This emphasizes the importance of limbic resonance to personal interactions and relationships. This promotes the state of empathy and compassion in the coaching relationship.

Appreciate, Acknowledge

Once our clients are now settled, centred and grounded and as coaches we have to share our gratitude and appreciate them for entrusting us to co-create with them as far as their goals, hopes, dreams and aspirations are concerned. As we do this we help to establish trust and a safe space for our clients to do their work. Another thing I notice in our clients when they come for coaching is their courage to be vulnerable and bare their all to this process. We definitely have to acknowledge this courage demonstrated by the clients in being vulnerable and we have to be vulnerable ourselves. This sets the stage for the clients to be open and transparent and start to feel secure in the presence of the coach.

Awareness & Presence in Coaching
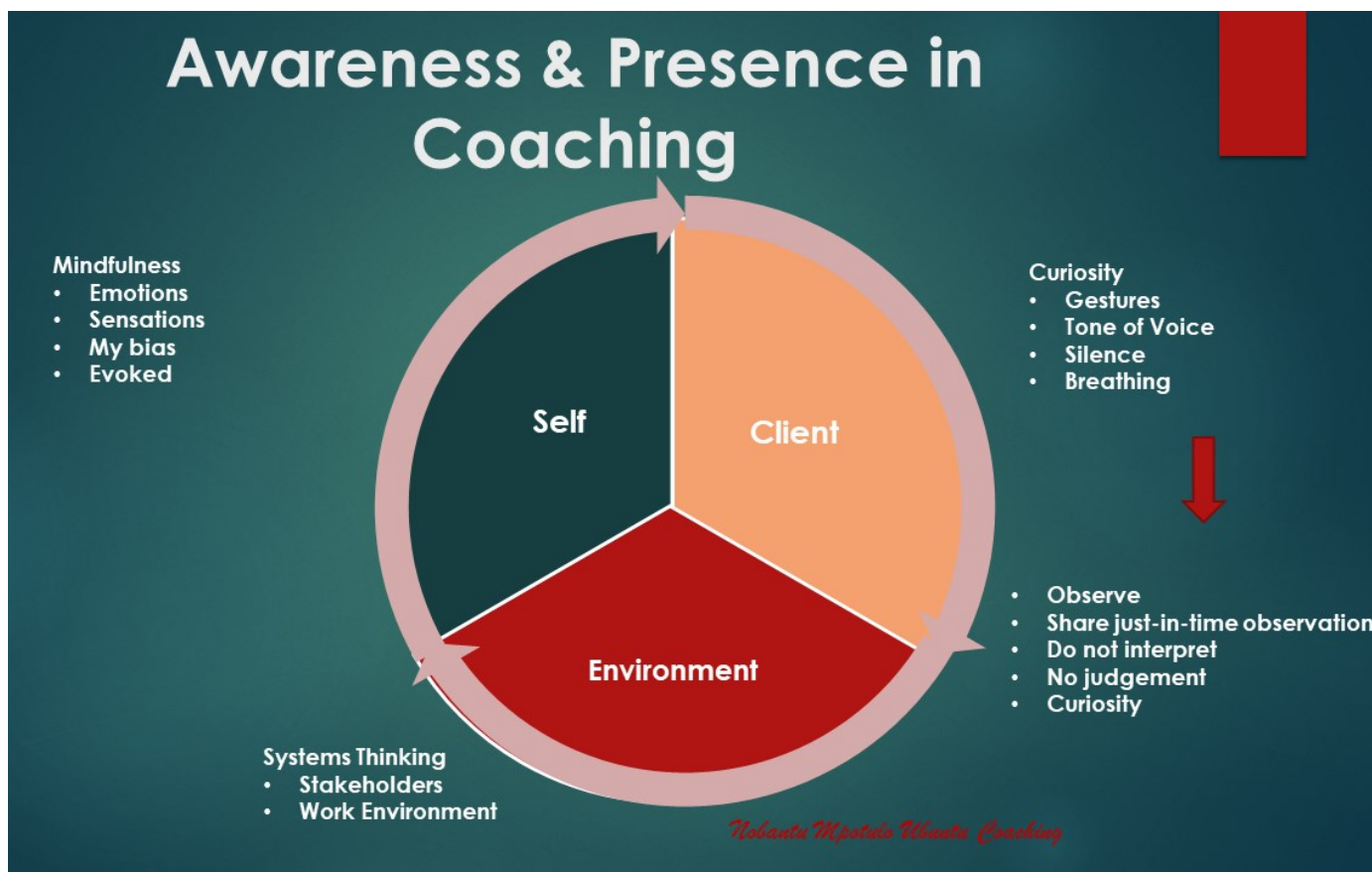
Evoke Awareness

As I have indicated above this article's focus is on creating and maintaining a relationship with the client so the last focus will be on evoking awareness. In evoking awareness the coach maintains presence, firstly in the state of the coach. Through mindfulness the coach becomes present to his/her emotions, the current state, biases, thoughts and body sensations.

As a result of what is emerging for the coach, it is important to embody a coaching mindset as indicated in ICF Core Competency 2, this awareness extends to being conscious of the immediacy within our clients. We observe the non-verbal cues in our clients, share just-in-time observations, we do not interpret nor judge what we observe but become curious and ask the client what meaning is he/she making of these observations.

The last focus on awareness and presence is what is prevailing in the client's environment and the client's stakeholders. This includes a systems thinking approach in the coaching and focuses whatever the client is working and the ultimate impact on the client's environment and the stakeholders. In the link below I focus on how Ubuntu Coaching is aligned to the ICF Core Competencies https://www.icf-events.org/podcast/ubuntu-coaching-and-alignment-to-icf-core-competencies/.

The mantra used in Ubuntu Coaching in cementing the coaching relationship is:

See More;

Hear More;

Love More;

Illuminate More;

Be More and Do Less

If you are interested in the whole application of RASEA and the Ubuntu Coaching Mantra I am running Ubuntu Coaching for Coaching on application of RASEA and alignment with ICF Core Competencies.

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Nobantu coaches leaders at the C-Suite in the private sector, she has coached in the motor industry, ICT sector, Financial sector, legal firms, senior managers up to DG level in the public sector, NGOs, International Donors all over the world in all the continents and the Higher Education sector. Nobantu is also a Team Coach both in contact and virtually.

Her coaching approach is to help clients discover themselves she focuses on ensuring self-discovery through the Enneagram, Mindfulness and Presence Based Coaching. Nobantu has been demonstrating coaching live at WBECS for the past three years for coaches all over the world. Nobantu help her clients to navigate uncertainties with dignity, they end up realizing possibilities in this VUCA environment.

Nobantu has developed Ubuntu Coaching which she has been using globally. Through probing questions and sharing just in time observations, she takes clients deep and helps them to identify their blind spots and embrace their shadows. Clients go deeper into the sub-conscious and unconscious levels and dance with what emerges. She provides a safe and open space for the clients to do their work, focusing on unexplored territories. She moves on a continuum of being non-directive to directive depending on what is missing in the client's system.

She is a qualified Gestalt practitioner, Enneagram teacher and coach, process work facilitator and organisational and systems development facilitator.

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The wheel of life A psychologically informed coaching tool?

Dr Marie Stopforth

One of the most popular and arguably most used tools in coaching, the wheel of life consists of a wheel divided in to 8 sections that can be pre-assigned 8 different areas of life. Most commonly used topics are career, family and friends, significant other/partner, fun/recreation, health, money, personal growth, physical/living environment.

However, these can be adapted to suit the coachee, contextualised to the coaching conversation (e.g. leadership or health contexts), or left blank for the coachee to complete. Typically, coachees are asked to rate their level of satisfaction on each element on a scale of 0 (not satisfied) to 10 (highly satisfied), and to mark this on the wheel. This provides them with a clear visual representation of their current life satisfaction, and can help them to identify what area(s) they wish to work on.

A lot of the commentary on this tool talks about the need for balance across the dimensions, whereas many others argue that equal satisfaction in each segment is not necessary as some areas might be more important to the coachee than others. Most agree that this tool is useful for opening up a conversation about the areas identified, and helping with goal setting or developing an action plan. A google search will provide you with many examples of the tool, and guidance on how in can be adapted and used in a multitude of coaching situations.

How was the tool developed?

Interestingly, there is little to be found in the coaching literature about the development of the tool for coaching. It appears to originate from Paul
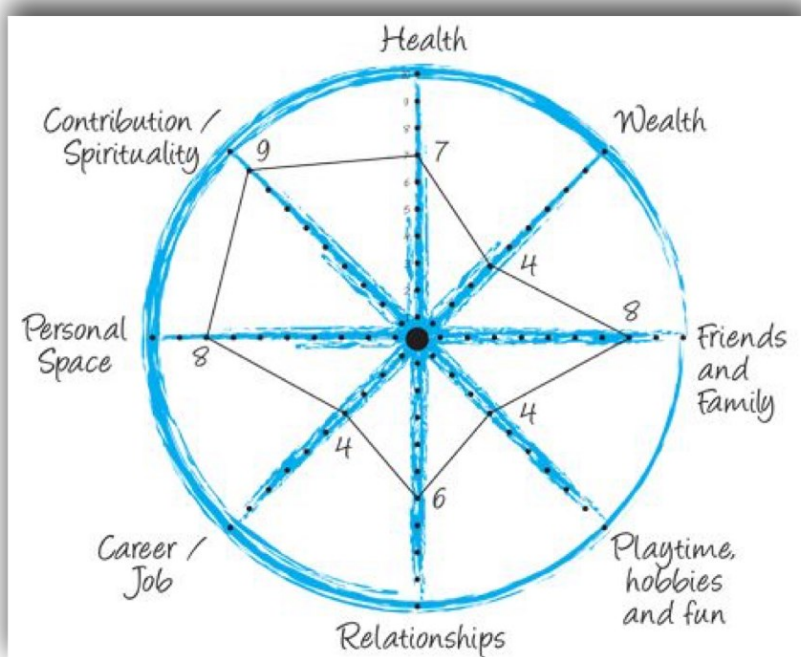
Photo by Jonathan Chng on Unsplash

Meyer in around 1996, and was presented in Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl's (1998; 2007) Co-Active Coaching text. However, a thorough search of the coaching literature did not reveal any discussion of it's theoretical or research base in a coaching context.

Luckily however, we are able to draw on literature in sport psychology to help with our understanding of this. In 1989, sport psychologist Richard Butler developed and used a very similar tool to help performance in amateur boxers. Butler and Hardy (1992) followed this up with a paper that discussed the theory and application of the tool that they called a 'performance profile'.

The wheel of life is an identical concept, except for the focus on the different areas of life rather than the important elements of sports performance, and the fact that sport psychologists encourage the athletes themselves to identify the important elements rather than these being prescribed. It appears, therefore, that this tool may have been borrowed from sport psychology, and we are therefore able to draw on the evidence base in this area to understand it's theoretical underpinning and evidence of its effectiveness.

Psychological underpinning

The performance profile was based on Kelly's (1955) Personal Construct Theory (PCT). PCT suggests that individuals strive to make sense of the world by constructing their own personal theories. This allows them to anticipate what will happen in a given situation, and then either confirm or revise that theory. Individuals differ in the how they perceive and interpret similar situations, as well as what they perceive as important and what is implied by their interpretation of the situation. This indicates that as coaches, our understanding and interpretation of events may be very different from our coachees, and therefore understanding of the coachees perspective is essential.

PCT also suggests that these constructs are built up with low levels of self-awareness, and that therefore the coachee may not be fully aware of this subconscious reasoning, and the impact that this has on them. It is therefore useful to allow coachees to explore and communicate what they take for granted in order to enhance their self-awareness and allow the coach to understand their perspective. This allows the coachee to consciously construct a picture of a given situation in a way that makes sense to them. It is argued that the wheel of life may be useful in facilitating this process.

Application of theory

The performance profile (and therefore, arguably, the wheel of life), is based on the Repertory Grid (Beail, 1985; Fransella & Bannister, 1977). The Repertory Grid is a method of helping individuals to understand their personal constructs. The grid is simply a matrix on which individuals can assess themselves against a series of constructs. It's usefulness lies in the ability to elicit what is truly important to the client in contrast to the use of psychometrics of questionnaires which assess the client against predetermined measures that the consultant (or the literature) thinks are important in a given situation.

Butler (1989) moved away from a grid format, and transferred the matrix to the wheel that we are now familiar with. The concept of assessing oneself against areas that are important in a given context in order to raise self-awareness remains the same.

Evidence-Based Practice

Best Research Evidence

Client Patient Values

Coaching Clinical Expertise

Evidence of effectiveness

Again, there was little/no robust research found which examines the effectiveness of this tool in a coaching context. However, the sport psychology literature offers some evidence of effectiveness in a sporting context. For example, Weston, Greenlees and Thelwell (2011) reported that athletes found performance profiling to be useful in: raising their self awareness; helping them to decide what they need to work on; motivating them to improve; setting goals for themselves, monitoring and evaluating their own performance; taking more responsibility for their development.

Weston et al. also report that among sport psychology consultants, profiling is believed to be useful as a basis for: goal setting and structuring training (Butler, 1997); monitoring performance (Doyle & Parfitt, 1997); developing confidence (Butler, 1995); facilitating more self-determined motivation (Butler & Hardy, 1992). However, in sport as well as coaching, there is a lack of experimental testing that is needed to empirically examine how effective the tool is in bringing about these proposed impacts.

The future

Although used extensively in coaching, there is little/no empirical evidence examining the usefulness of this tool in a coaching context. That is not to say that it should not be used. On the contrary, anecdotal evidence is strong, evidence in other settings is promising.

This therefore opens up a clear and present opportunity to replicate and extend some of the studies that have been conducted in sport and therefore hopefully provide a sound evidence base for the use of this tool in a coaching context.

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Dr Marie Stopforth

Marie is a Chartered Psychologist, HCPC registered sport and exercise psychologist, and BPS registered coaching psychologist. She has been leading on professional development in coaching psychology which has seen the establishment of a Division of Coaching Psychology within the BPS, along with new routes for coaches to become Chartered Coaching Psychologists.

Marie spent 20 years working in Higher Education, including as programme leader of an MSc Applied Positive Psychology and Coaching Psychology programme at the University of East London, and now runs her own coaching business where she provides coaching to individuals and training to organisations, as well as offering coaching psychology courses and supervision. She has just launched the School of Coaching Psychology which offers education and training in coaching psychology.

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Team coaching—the next journey

Mariana Fortuin

I first became interested in team coaching when I attended a WBECS (World Business and Executive Coaching) pre-summit with Peter Hawkins in 2015. I was fascinated with his description of systemic team coaching and the impact that coaching teams could have on an organisation. I was also intrigued by Peter Hawkins' indication that the future of coaching is in working with teams.

The ICF (International Coaching Federation) describes team coaching as: "**partnering in a co-creative and reflective process with a team and its dynamics and relationships in a way that inspires them to maximise their abilities and potential in order to reach their common purpose and shared goals".**

From my corporate background I knew what team facilitation and team development were and I was curious about how these were different to team coaching. I was looking for a team coaching approach that would resonate with my eclectic individual one-on-one coaching approach, which is influenced by positive psychology and Nancy Kline's "Thinking Environment" - 10 components of a Thinking Environment. I was also searching for an approach that didn't involve prescribed tools but where tools were created by the team itself and I found the perfect fit in the **Certificate in Team Coaching** with

Team Coaching Studio, facilitated by Georgina Woudstra (author of the recently launched book: "Mastering the Art of Team Coaching" and Allard de Jong who were the main facilitators on the course in April-May2021.

The following are some of my learning which I am excited to share with you.

Learning #1: Team coaching can only be effective if the team structure (shared purpose, defined roles) is in place. I can't "just jump into the coaching".

Clarity of roles, how each team member is interdependent on the work produced by other team members, and who needs to be on the team and why, are important in defining the team and its purpose in the organisation. If these are not in place, individuals working with individual agendas will work in silos. If the team coach "jumps in" at this point,

LESSONS LEARNED

there is no team to coach but individuals who are working as a group.

The team coach or team leader can use the concept of the Group Imago (used by Team Coaching Studio, 2021) where the team members are asked to draw the team's image of themselves, or a team map.

Learning #2: The client is the team (it has its own identity) and not the individuals in the team. The team has a collective intelligence, and this means the team learns to think collaboratively as it draws from the diversity of thought and feeling in the team. This harnessing of divergent thought and feeling leads to innovative solutions in the work that needs to be done in the team by the team. The role of the team coach is to align the divergent thoughts and feelings in service of the team and its work.

Learning #3: Psychological safety is important in the team. Each individual needs to feel that they can think and voice their diverse opinions without threat of punitive responses. Without psychological safety the team will not be able to work collaboratively on the work they need to do. The team coach invites the team to look at itself, thereby raising its self-awareness and creates the space with the team where the team decides how it wants to work together and in what environment.

Learning #4: The team coaching process is messy and complex: there are 8 different people with 8 different backgrounds, experience, culture, knowledge, beliefs, and perspectives. Once the team coach sees and embraces the energy and vibrancy that uncertainty and emerging patterns provide within the team, the team coach can support the team in how they manage the messiness and complexity. The team coach needs to do work on his/her own self-

development, triggers, relationship with conflict and uncertainty.

Learning #5: Focussing on "how" the team will accomplish the work they need to do rather than "what" the team wants to do creates a shift towards collaboration and alignment. Asking the team "how do you want to do this" or "how does this serve the team" or "how do you want to work on what is happening in the room right now" is more useful as a collaborative tool than asking the team "what they want to do about it".

Learning #6: Presence is important. Coaching in pairs allows the two coaches to "hold the space" for the team in a deeper way as the two coaches observe and sense different things that emerge. When one coach is focussing on what is being said, the other coach can pick up on body language, emerging patterns and what is not being said. The two coaches need to be authentic and comfortable with each other and each other's approaches.

Learning #7: Less is more. Trust the process. Let the team do the work.

Learning #8: The philosophy of the team coach is core to how the team coach works with the team. If the team coach believes that the team is resourceful to find their own answers, it takes the pressure off the team coach from wanting to "do" and create a sense of "being".

As coaching evolves to adapt to the complexities in our society, I think that team coaching is poised to offer additional value to support the important work that needs to be done in organisations.

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Mariana Fortuin

Mariana is a coach, facilitator, traveller, runner, friend, sister, daughter and lover of stories. Her passion is travelling the world as it humbles her to see the vast beauty of people and landscapes. She is in awe every time she encounters how unique and different people are and yet how many similarities they share. She loves learning-all the time-about people, business leadership and trends.

She has an eclectic approach and is influenced by Positive Psychology, Time To Think, Appreciative Coaching, Solution Focused Coaching, GROW and CLEARModels. At the core of her coaching philosophy is her belief that individuals are unique with unique strength sand she encourages individuals to rediscover their strengths, see the possibilities and integrate their valuesin how they interact with others.

She completed a Certificate in Team Coaching in May2021 with Team Coaching Studio. She holds a Master's Degree in Management Coaching from the University of Stellenbosch Business School and BA degree from UCT, having specialized in English and History with a postgraduate diploma in teaching - H.D.E. Her BCom Hons, with a specialization in human resources, was obtained through UNISA.

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LEARNING TO CHANGE ... CHANGING TO LEARN

Ethical wellness: it's a goal worth pursuing

Cynthia Schoeman

The view that ethics is the right thing to do enjoys wide support. However, the fact that ethics is also good for you is not as well recognised: ethics is generally not linked to wellness. Yet ethics can make a big difference in the workplace both to minimize negative issues and to optimize positive outcomes.

Ethics and stress reduction

Stress-related illnesses have increased substantially over the last few years. While stress derives from many factors, one of the main sources of stress is a person's job, and today work related stress has become a frequent and costly issue in workplaces. A 2018 study conducted by the South African Depression and Anxiety Group revealed that more than 40% of all work-related illness is due to work-related stress, major depression, burnout and anxiety disorders.

In pursuit of minimizing workplace stress, there are a number of situations that organisations can and should address via their ethics initiatives.

Ethical conflicts – about what is right or wrong, good or bad, fair or unfair – increase work stress a great deal. This can occur when there is a clash between the values of the employee and employer, the most severe version being when the organisation advocates conduct that is unethical or illegal. For example, how many people would have felt ethically conflicted if they had worked for Bosasa, the company that provided government services based on an extensive network of bribes? When the company's practices conflict with employees' personal ethical values it leads to high level of stress.

Unethical conduct can be a major cause of stress, anger and dissatisfaction for all stakeholders. The offence and outrage that is caused when an employee is subject to discrimination or treated unfairly are but two of many examples. Such treatment can lead to long-term unhappiness that has the potential to manifest in negative relationships and poor performance.

A challenging and very stressful problem arises when unethical behaviour is an instruction from a superior, for example, when an employee is pressured to by-pass tender requirements or job application criteria. In a mostly ethical environment this would probably not represent a serious problem because the individual could deflect the instruction by reporting the matter to another superior or the relevant authorities.

However, in a less ethical workplace failing to 'co-operate' by bending or ignoring the rules and regulations is likely to incur a personal cost. It means you may find yourself facing trumped up charges to be suspended or dismissed, or you might have to deal with more subtle repercussions such as being overlooked for an increase or a promotion. The enormous ethical distress this generates is amplified by the fact that once the employee has complied with an unethical instruction, he/she becomes an accomplice who is guilty of committing the offence. And the defense that the employee was 'only following orders' is, in law, not very effective.

Ethics as a source of wellness

The degree of ethical health of the organisation – that is, the extent to which it has an ethical culture – has a major impact on employees' ethical wellness. Being part of an organisation that is characterised by honest, fair and respectful conduct does not only remove stress, but also contributes to employees' sense of well-being.

One positive consequence of an ethical culture that is worth being highlighted is that it entrains better quality relationships. When you work with people who behave with integrity and whom you can rely on, it makes for very positive interactions that are free from unnecessary stress.

An ethical workplace also serves to increase employees' commitment to the organisation and build greater levels of responsibility and accountability. It follows that this has a positive impact on performance and productivity.

In addition to organisational values that obviously impact employees' wellness, such as honestly and respect, the value of care can have an impact on employees' stress. An ostensible obstacle to the inclusion of care as a value stems from the fact that the event or circumstance that warrants care, compassion or understanding is often not work related: a sick child, a family conflict or a divorce. If the organisation subscribes to a 'work is work and home is home' view, these issues would fall outside its boundaries – although the impact will still affect the employee at work.

But if the organisation recognises that the impact of work and home co-exist in employees, helping them – as a supportive leader or by providing access to suitable counselling – can reduce the employee's stress and help them to cope with the problem better.

Collectively these factors contribute to higher levels of trust which, in turn, results in other positive outcomes, such as a higher degree of confidence in management and a greater sense of workplace security and certainty. The value of trust is such that it can well be regarded as the primary currency that organisations and their leaders need to protect and preserve.

Of course, an ethical culture cannot eliminate employees' stress. But working in an ethical environment can minimize their stress and increase their peace of mind. As such, organisations should expand their ethical initiatives to encompass these outcomes. In today's complex and challenging times, this is a goal worth pursuing.

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Cynthia is the Managing Director of Ethics Monitoring & Management Services Proprietary Ltd. She is a founding non-executive director of the Ethics Practitioners Association (EPA), and sits on the Investigating Committee of the Independent Regulatory Board for Auditors (IRBA).
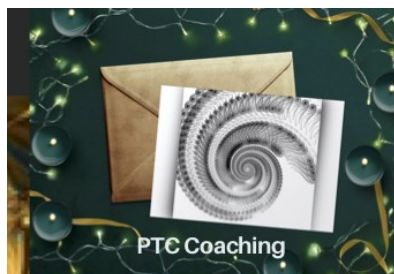
She has over 15 years' experience in the field of workplace ethics and governance. She has developed practical tools and services to support the effective and proactive management of workplace ethics within organisations and consults to private and public sector organisations in this regard.

Cynthia is a published author in the area of workplace ethics, namely Ethics Can: Managing Workplace Ethics (2014), Ethics: Giving a Damn, Making a Difference (2012) and An Employee's Guide to Workplace Ethics (2011). Cynthia's articles are widely published in business journals and the press.

Cynthia is a regular speaker on workplace ethics at conferences and is often interviewed on TV and radio as an ethics expert. Cynthia has lectured on ethics and governance as external faculty on executive and academic programmes since 2000 at South Africa's top business schools.

Cynthia has a BA from Unisa, an MBA from Wits Business School and an MPhil in Applied Ethics (cum laude) from Stellenbosch University.

If your brand could walk, would you be able to smell the strawberries?

Christél Rosslee-Venter

Can pigs fly? So how would it be possible for a brand to start walking? Never mind walk in a straight line.

The reality is that our brands should be alive and singing the most joyous song while walking with a spring in its step on a sunshine-filled summer's day! It should bring a smile to your face while you are checking all your little offspring walking merrily behind.

Crazy thought? Let's unpack.

For starters, most people think a brand is just a logo plus a couple of corporate colours and you're good to go.

In corporate situations, you will hire the services of an award-winning advertising agency. When you are running your own practice, things will most probably work slightly differently. To save money you might use a super-slick design-your-logo-in-10-minutes-internet service. It is also fairly common to get a web designer to put your website together. After all, a website is an IT function, right? You might get the print shop to design your business card. You are the expert on presentations, so you grab a trusty template with a cool background, and voila! Your presentation is done.

The reality is that all your brand elements should talk to each other and more importantly, it should be singing the same unique song while walking down the path towards that scrumptious summer picnic.

The most ideal way of fixing this Babylonian confusion is to start with a proper marketing planning session. Get crystal clear on what will differentiate you from the competition and what will create true meaning and preference in the minds of your clients.

Once you have arrived at a conclusion that makes you so excited that you are ready to take on your first run around the park, get a team together that understands the importance to design around your

A brand should be the sum total of all elements that help to identify, form, and influence unique and positive associations for a product or service, that differentiates you from your competition, creating meaning, value and preference in your prospective clients' mind.

strategic specifications and not what they think is cool.

Your visual brand family will typically include your logo, business card, email signature, proposal design, website, and all the associated website elements including social media profile pictures and icons as well as the style of your typical social media posts.

Elements such as your presentation template, your corporate video, and even your invoice should be part of your brand family. If you really want to leave a meaningful message, your office and your background in the event of online coaching sessions should ideally match the whole storyline.

Does the end result work for you?

Get your family of brand elements together by printing them out and laying them out in front of you to get a clear picture of whether they are all talking the same language, and more importantly, that the message is crystal clear and so strong that you feel like you are on top of the world.

This is the very best exercise you can do even if you think you have got all your bases covered. Be brutally honest with yourself. If you still can't see the trees from the forest, you can get your family and friends to critique your brand. Or you could hire the services of a brand coach to get you out of the woods and safely back to your summer picnic where your chilled bubbly and farm-fresh strawberries await you.

Photo by Yulia Matvienko on Unsplash

Christél Rosslee-Venter

Christél is a business coach, marketing consultant, author, and speaker with almost 30 years of experience in the marketing and marketing communication industry.

Skilled in strategic marketing planning & execution for entrepreneurs, nothing excites her more than seeing her clients rediscover the adventure in business.

Contact Christél if you need out-of-the-box assistance with your marketing, including concept development, copywriting, brand coaching, presentation planning, design, and execution.

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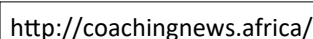
Research Participation Requests

Shirley Mthwa
Student at the University of the Witwatersrand
Master of Management in Business and Executive Coaching

Shirley asks if you would send this link to her online survey to some of your clients who received executive coaching. Shirley is exploring the impact of executive coaching on coachees' performance in South Africa.

https://wits.eu.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_0wAaS4KI9yFckmO

Reginald Bent
Student at University of Stellenbosch Business School
MPhil in Management Coaching

Reginald is looking for coaches who are practicing systemic team coaching. Reginald is investigating how systemic team coaching can be implemented to support leaders in overcoming challenges related to leadership transitions and implementing change agendas in organizations.

reginaldbent1@gmail.com

Showcasing: Coaching research

Team coaching: Systemic Perspectives and their Limitations

Purpose

The aim of this paper is to encourage the team coaching community, including academics and practitioners, to think more broadly about the work that we do and how that work can evolve to become more relevant and effective.

DESIGN

A description of five different generic approaches to thinking about systems. Existing team coaching theories are then scrutinised through this framework in an attempt to illustrate how such an exercise enables academics and practitioners to understand and to constructively challenge each other's perspectives.

RESULTS

A detailed exploration of the systems literature not only yields an understanding that multiple systems theories exist, but also that there exists a school of thought that says to think systemically may not always be helpful, that indeed it may limit our understanding of the working of small groups.

PRACTICE

This paper provides a framework through which the team coach, or aspiring team coach, can reflect not only upon different versions of 'systemic' team coaching, but also the significance of taking a meta-systemic perspective.

How then might a team coach, looking at the world through a metasystemic lens, operate differently to a coach more wedded to a systemic approach? First it should be said that such a coach may in some contexts draw upon some of the same models as the systemic coach. The meta-systemic perspective does not eschew systemic approaches, rather it recognises when the systems metaphor may be useful and when it may not. If a team and its leader have been together for a period of time and expect to be together for another period of time, and if the team and its members are all firmly attached to a more linear way of thinking, then the coach may focus squarely on helping the team define and align around a common purpose and set of objectives. Similarly, a team coach working in a complex environment, where stakeholder perspectives are opaque, dynamic and ever-evolving, in which the organisation is wedded to the idea of the team, the coach may deploy similar models to the complex systemic coach. However, through a meta-systemic perspective, the coach is constantly aware of the limitations of such approaches in some contexts, an awareness that will likely show up in some contracting conversations and in the work with the 'team' itself.

KEYWORDS

coaching, team coaching, systemic coaching, systems thinking, systemic

Showcasing: Coaching research

What Do Team Coaches Experience at the End of a Client Relationship?

Purpose

This study commenced with the following questions: What really matters at the end of a team coaching relationship? What should we be paying attention to, to facilitate learning for team coaches, their clients, and organisational sponsors? How can coaches put 'last things first to end well'? By exploring team coaches' interpretations of relationship endings in practice, we can build our knowledge through lived experience and explore how these seasoned practitioners have developed their craft. This study contributes to both evidence-based practice and academic research.

DESIGN

This paper includes a literature review tracking the evolution of systemic team coaching as a discipline, relevant social science, and business management research. The methodology provides an overview of the design process, sampling, and data collection also a diagrammatic overview of the core elements of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA).

RESULTS

The interpretation of interview transcripts using the process described in Table 2.0 identified three overarching themes when considering, 'what do team coaches experience at the end of a client relationship?'. These themes related specifically to the nature of the coach, client relationship ending: (i) the coach relationship to the client system (ii) the coach relationship towards the team learning process and (iii) the coach relationship with the team and leader. All three dimensions of their experience had a significant influence on the ending process.

PRACTICE

The role of the coach evolves throughout the learning process and therefore contracting remains a continuous cycle of engagement and adaptation, it is a fluid and temporal activity. The alignment of the direction of the team, organisation and coach is a key factor in sustaining the learning partnership to the end. Coach mastery is the ability to successfully navigate the tension between the triad of the learning process to create systemic awareness and change, the teams' purpose and the nature of the coaching field whilst sustaining the client relationship. All are subject to challenges: the learning process due to cultural dimensions of power, team purpose due to structural changes and shifting business priorities and the coaching field due to external influences, COVID-19 being an excellent example. It is an organic and capricious setting in which to work.

KEYWORDS

systemic team coaching, endings, relationship

Showcasing: Coaching research

How do coaches work with clients showing signs of burnout?

Purpose

This paper explores approaches coaches are undertaking with 'burnout' clients and uses constructivist grounded theory to help address a paucity of coaching related literature.

DESIGN

A constructivist grounded theory approach was used with an interpretivist paradigm to explore the research question. Six participants based in Ireland and the UK were interviewed.

RESULTS

Three key themes were identified where coaches are possibly 'self-caring for all through supervision' so that they may be prepared for 'tailoring the coaching contract' when perhaps faced with 'diagnosing burnout' with a client.

PRACTICE

Supervision is the primary resource for coaches when working with burnout, ensuring their own self-care and confirming the wellbeing of the client remains priority in their coaching. A supervisor challenges the coach to reflect and prepare for contracting discussions. Opportunities are created to reflect on the client's energy levels; attitude towards coaching and their ability to move forward to assess their capacity for coaching and question referrals.

KEYWORDS

burnout, coaching, supervision, mental health, boundaries

Showcasing: Coaching research

BeWell: a group coaching model to foster the wellbeing of individuals

Purpose

This study investigates coaching for wellbeing in groups, which can be a cost-effective, inclusive and flexible intervention that can be deployed in a wide range of settings, including in communities, education, health and social care, and organisations.

DESIGN

This study adopted a critical realist paradigm, which combines a realist ontology with a constructivist epistemology. In this paradigm, the ontological position is that there is a real world that exists independently of our perceptions, theories and constructions, whilst the epistemological position is that our understanding of this 'real' world is inevitably a construction from our own perspectives and standpoint. This study uses a multi-methods approach, informed primarily by the principles of action research, which is concerned with improving practice of a particular discipline (in this case coaching).

RESULTS

In the first intervention, six over-arching themes emerged from the data analysis (group, emotions, reflection, meaning, locus of control, and action and change) and seven sub-themes (feeling positive, feeling confident, feeling comfortable, self-awareness, new perspectives, choice, and accountability).

In the second intervention, four over-arching themes were identified (group, emotions, reflection, and action and change) and five sub-themes (feeling positive, feeling confident, feeling comfortable, self-awareness, new perspectives)

PRACTICE

The BeWell Group Coaching for Wellbeing model was developed, based on existing wellbeing and coaching theories as well as empirical research, and it was successfully tested over two coaching interventions. The three parts of the model (Be, Relate, and Act) were instrumental in positively influencing coachees' wellbeing. These parts are aligned with the notion of wellbeing as "best conceived as a multidimensional phenomenon that includes aspects of both the hedonic and eudaimonic conceptions of wellbeing".

Among pivotal findings is the group as the catalyst for change, both as a conduit and as a recipient of individual and collective influences. In addition, the model facilitated various wellbeing factors, such as meaning, positive emotions, locus of control, and new perspectives. It also supported individuals in increasing their self-awareness, and provided an encouraging environment for action and change, with both individual and collective accountabilities.

KEYWORDS

group coaching, coaching for wellbeing, group coaching for wellbeing, wellbeing

Leaders' adaptive identity development in uncertain contexts:
Implications for executive coaching

Purpose

The aim of this study was to explore leaders' personal uncertainty in dynamic organisational contexts. By interpreting their experience of and approach to personal uncertainty, through the theoretical lenses of sensemaking and identity work, insight would be gained into the interrelationship of the leaders' sensemaking and identity work. This insight would highlight implications for executive coaching practice towards facilitating leaders' adaptive identity development in uncertain contexts.

DESIGN

The purpose of this study was exploratory, seeking to understand leaders' lived experience of, and approach to, personal uncertainty. Thus an interpretivist paradigm was adopted, meaning that such understanding would be based on an interpretation of the participants' experiences. A qualitative approach, Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), with theoretical foundations in phenomenology, hermeneutics and ideography was selected as it aligns with the research purpose.

RESULTS

Three superordinate themes were identified: (1) leaders' personal uncertainty, (2) identity work, and (3) identity work outcomes; suggesting that identity work was the over-arching process. The leaders' personal uncertainty, an uncomfortable state of identity uncertainty, energised them to do identity work to resolve their uncertainty, leading to identity work outcomes. **At the core of the leaders' identity work, was their sensemaking - the springboard for their identity crafting actions.** The results of their actions were then adapted through further sensemaking, and/or further sensemaking was required due to unfolding events in their contexts, resulting in identity work outcomes over

PRACTICE

The main implication for executive coaches is to consider using a guiding framework for including sensemaking and identity work lenses in their coaching repertoires. The diagram, based on the research findings, highlights the components of leaders' identity work as potential areas for coaches to focus on. The assumption underpinning this coaching approach is that a trusting coaching partnership exists for the psychological safety required for working with a client's personal uncertainty, should it emerge.
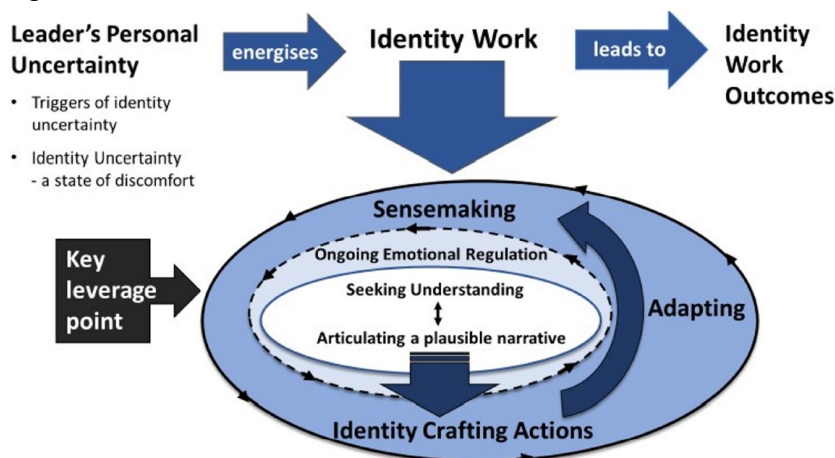
KEYWORDS

personal uncertainty, identity uncertainty, leader identity work, sensemaking, executive coaching