

# Introduction

Jonathan Passmore

The first edition of *Excellence in Coaching* was published in 2006 and has since established itself as a popular read for practitioners and those studying coaching. The book has sold across the world and is now a course text on coaching programmes in the UK and beyond. Its popularity has led to numerous reprints and new editions.

Since it first appeared, other collected editions have been published but the popularity of *Excellence in Coaching* has remained.

This fourth edition divides the book into three sections. The first deals with the nature of coaches. These chapters cover how coaches can establish and best manage their business and how to work in parallel with clients and coachees. The second section of the book is concerned with coaching models and techniques. Rather than concentrate on a single model we have offered a number of models: behavioural, cognitive behavioural, transpersonal, solution-focused, Appreciative Inquiry and a way to bring these together through an integrated approach.

Our aim is to help coaches to extend their professional practice. Most people are taught a single coaching model in their coach training; we have tried to encourage trainers and coaches to use a diverse range of models which meet the needs of their coachee and of the issue. I have previously advocated that coaches develop a personal integrated model of coaching which blends together different approaches, and I hope that the range of models will help coaches in this endeavour. The third section of the book focuses on issues facing coaches, from working with stress to ethics, cross-cultural working and standards.

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PART ONE

# The business of coaching

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# The development of coaching

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## The development of coaching at work

The past 20 years, since 2000, has seen a substantial growth in interest in coaching, which has been mirrored by a growth in membership of professional bodies as well as in coaching research.

Over this period coaching has moved from being a side industry with a few thousand coaches providing personal services to senior executives, to being an industry with maybe several hundred thousand coaches providing coaching in a wide variety of contexts, some as professional business coaches, but others in more informal settings from schools to offshore oil rigs, and from learner drivers to healthcare settings. Alongside this the number of coaching books and research has mushroomed. Research has widened from individual case studies being written by consultants and coaches based on their personal experiences to include qualitative studies examining the coachees' felt experience to randomized control trials and meta analyses.

Recent meta-analysis research (Theeboom *et al*, 2014; Jones *et al*, 2015; Sonesh *et al*, 2015), and this wider growing body of coaching research demonstrates that coaching has become a popular intervention that now ranks alongside leadership development and management skills programmes as an effective tool to facilitate learning and change (see Passmore *et al*, 2013 for a wider discussion). Further, there is positive evidence that coaching can have an impact on individuals from improving education outcomes to addressing health-related issues, as well as in safety, driver training and organizations.

However, the ability to harness this potential takes self-awareness, self-belief, personal motivation and tools to enable the coachee to put new ideas into new ways of behaving. The role of the coach in the relationship is to facilitate and coordinate these elements, working in harmony with his or her coachee. Some have suggested that the harmonic relationship in coaching should be like conducting a band, waving the baton of the question and focusing attention on each element in turn. I would prefer to see this more like playing jazz, with the coach and coachee working together to weave a pattern that emerges from the process.

In organizations there is the added complexity of working with a second 'client': the organization sponsors. They have their own views about what needs to be delivered from coaching. Over the past two decades since the original edition of the book, organization sponsors have developed in their understanding of coaching: what they expect, what coaches should deliver and how to select the right coach. As the market continues to develop and HR professionals become more confident in managing coaching contracts, it is likely that organizational coaching relationships will start with tripartite meetings to set the scene and agree the objectives, and will close with a similar review. We are likely to see a continued shift to professionalization, which means a continued growth in postgraduate qualifications in coaching degrees and further developments in accreditation from professional bodies.

Finally, we are seeing the continued adaptation of the core principles of coaching to new environments, and new applications. Coaching for teams, coaching in schools and coaching as a management style all draw on the key principles but apply coaching in new ways.

### Well-being coaching

Well-being coaching has developed too. The market itself is even more diverse, ranging from coaches working in health areas such as smoking cessation, stress and diet management, to more traditional lifestyle work. For these health interventions, coaches with backgrounds in health services or psychology are completing coaching qualifications, often to add to their counselling qualification. The evidence is that coaching, using cognitive behavioural and motivational interviewing approaches, is well placed to help support behavioural change and enhance well-being.

## Coaching training standards

While coaching has become a recognized intervention, sadly there has been no regulation of the industry. Professional bodies have continued to develop their own standards, but the lack of regulation means anyone can call themselves a coach.

As a result clients need to be cautious when appointing a coach. They need to ask questions about their coach's training, qualifications and ethical practice.

Given the development of coaching into territories such as health, well-being and relationships, coaching has begun to compete with counselling, and in such cases clients may well benefit from a regulated industry.

## Coaching competencies

In an environment where few coaches were trained, knowing which behaviours were effective was arguably of limited importance. The development of coaching and its journey towards becoming a profession brings with it the question of standards and training.

What does a coach need to learn to be effective? A small number of writers have sought to answer this question. Alexander and Renshaw (2005) suggest that a number of key competencies are important. They felt that coaching competencies should be divided into three clusters: relationship, being and doing. In the first of these, *relationship*, coaches need to demonstrate that they are open and honest and that they value others. In the second cluster, *being*, coaches need to have self-confidence to be able to work with their coachee through difficult challenges. They also need to maintain an enabling style, to avoid slipping into a directive approach with their coachee, and to be self-aware. In the third cluster, *doing*, coaches need to hold a clear methodology, to be skilful in applying the method and its associated tools and techniques, and to be fully present. Few of these competencies easily lend themselves to a formal training.

Research (see Grant *et al*, 2010) suggests that coachees have a very clear view of what they value within a coaching relationship. They expect their coaches to have strong communication skills, to be able to listen, to recall information accurately, to challenge while maintaining support for them as an individual and to direct attention through questions. The senior executives in the study also expressed the view that relationship skills were

TABLE 1.1 Contrasting coaching and mentoring

	Coaching	Mentoring
1. Level of formality	More formal: contract or ground rules set, often involving a third-party client	Less formal: agreement, most typically between two parties
2. Length of contract	Shorter term: typically between 4 and 12 meetings agreed over 2 to 12 months	Longer term: typically unspecified number of meetings with relationships often running over 3 to 5 years
3. Focus	More performance-focused: typically a greater focus on short-term skills and job performance	More career-focused: typically a concern with longer-term career issues, obtaining the right experience and longer-term thinking
4. Level of sector knowledge	More generalist: typically coaches have limited sector knowledge	More sector knowledge: typically mentors have knowledge of organization or business sector
5. Training	More relationship training: typically coaches have a background in psychology, psychotherapy or HR	More management training: typically mentors have a background in senior management
6. Focus	Dual focus: more typically a dual focus on the needs of the individual and the needs of the organization	Single focus: more typically a single focus on the needs of the individual

important. In this respect, credibility and previous experience helped to establish and maintain the relationship, alongside empathy and affirming the coachee. There was also a view that knowledge about human behaviour and knowledge of the sector were valued. The second of these, sector knowledge, is often contested but this may reflect a desire to divide coaching and mentoring into neat boxes. My experience suggests that the two areas are intertwined and mixed (see Table 1.1). The table suggests pure forms, while in reality coaching and mentoring run between the polarities illustrated.

Researchers (Passmore *et al*, 2014) have offered behavioural anchored coaching competency frameworks, allowing coaches to reflect on their own behaviours, as well as providing a framework against which external coach assessors can measure coach performance.

Table 1.2 is drawn from the 10-point Behavioural Anchor Rating scale – and shows level 9 – Moving towards mastery. The scale does not show all behaviours used by master coaches, but rather provides indicative behaviours which might commonly be used by a master coach.

The full document contains behaviours for coaches starting their coaching development journey and for those who are moving towards competence.

TABLE 1.2 Coach competencies – Indicative behaviours – Moving towards mastery

<p>Factor 1: Establishing a clear contract</p>	<p>Coach explains coaching process, their role in it and their expectations of the coachee and organization to maximize the value of the sessions.</p> <p>Coach jointly agrees the logistical arrangements for the coaching assignment and offers a coaching contract.</p> <p>Coach explains confidentiality with both coach and organization, who will receive what information, how the coaching will be reviewed and the limits of confidentiality.</p> <p>Coach jointly agrees main themes of the coaching programme with the coachee (and their organization where appropriate), and if not appropriate for coaching will redirect the coachee (and organization) to the appropriate intervention or person.</p>
<p>Factor 2: Building a trusting relationship</p>	<p>Coach uses themselves as a tool, through personal stories and insights; such stories are always for the benefit of the coachee and are explicitly linked back to the coachee's agenda.</p> <p>Coach openly answers questions raised by the coachee, but does so at a time that facilitates the learning and development of the coachee's insight, without avoiding answering.</p> <p>Coach uses listening, questioning, affirmation, summaries and reflections throughout the coaching session.</p> <p>Coach keeps their commitments made to the coachee (and the organization).</p>
<p>Factor 3: Facilitating agenda</p>	<p>Coach jointly agrees SMART goal(s) with the coachee that reflect the length of time available, the themes agreed at the start of the assignment and previous conversation.</p> <p>Coach periodically reviews progress through the session, as well as at the end of the session, appropriately challenging the coachee if the coachee appears not to be fully engaged.</p>

TABLE 1.2 *Cont'd*

	<p>Coach uses a range of communication skills to maintain the focus of the coachee on the goal and the pace of the session to complete the task (or agrees otherwise with the coachee).</p> <p>Coach maintains focus of the coaching programme throughout the relationship to help the coachee (and organization) achieve the wider goals.</p>
<p>Factor 4: Facilitating reflection and learning</p>	<p>Coach uses short and simple open questions throughout the session, which regularly recreates moments of silent reflection for the coachee.</p> <p>Coach actively listens to words and body language and communicates this through their body language and when reflecting back may demonstrate their understanding of the emotions and details of the situation (when appropriate), which can result in silence and/or emotional responses from the coachee.</p> <p>Coach uses complex reflections, such as amplified reflections.</p> <p>Coach summarizes to provide breaks, check understanding and support the coachee's learning for the next part of the session and/or help the coachee remain focused/remind them of content.</p> <p>Coach uses affirmation, by reflecting back or making a personal statement which validates the coachee or their work, and which contains a statement of the coach's emotions in response to the situation.</p> <p>Coach uses silence and body language to encourage the coachee to continue thinking or speaking.</p> <p>Coach uses four or more models and blends this together within their coaching practice, adapting to meet the needs of the coachee and their presenting issue.</p>
<p>Factor 5: Managing emotional and organizational boundaries</p>	<p>Coach displays (appropriate) empathic emotional responses to the coachee, and is aware of the individual, the coaching relationship, gender and cultural issues and the social context/environment.</p> <p>Coach contains their own emotions.</p> <p>Coach identifies issues with strong emotional content that require immediate or future referral to other individuals or agencies, and actively works to ensure the coachee does not come to harm.</p> <p>Coach refers skilfully where the issue is beyond the competence of the coach, or where they can identify another coach who could more effectively help the coachee.</p>

TABLE 1.2 *Cont'd*

	<p>Coach uses their self-awareness about their own values and beliefs appropriately.</p> <p>Coach manages the boundaries between different stakeholders involved in the process, recognizing potential conflict and systemic issues.</p>
Factor 6: Reviewing outcomes	<p>Coach jointly reviews with the coachee the outcome of the session against the goals and supports further work outside the session, encouraging the coachee to draw support from their manager, friends and colleagues.</p> <p>Coach jointly reviews the outcome of the coaching assignment with the coachee (and the organization where appropriate) with explicit reference to the original themes agreed.</p> <p>Coach invites feedback at the end of the session, and the end of the assignment from all stakeholders, uses follow up and probing questions to gather behavioural evidence of both 'positives' and 'what could be different next time' and notes feedback for future reflection and learning in their journal.</p> <p>Coach reflects on their and their coachees' behaviours, cognitions or emotions at the end of each session and the end of each assignment and notes these in their journal, as well as identifying learning and/or future actions (where appropriate they share this with their supervisor or in their journal).</p> <p>Coach recognizes they are on their own learning journey towards mastery and actively seeks new experiences and insights to aid this developmental journey.</p>

SOURCE: Adapted from Passmore *et al* (2014).

The main professional bodies, the Association for Coaching (AC), the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) and the International Coach Federation (ICF), have also developed competency frameworks. Some, like the AC's framework, are used as guides for self-assessment and training; others, like those developed by the ICF, are used to assess credentialing and the level of a credential.

The reality, however, is that the journey towards mastery is not based solely on coach competencies, but should also provide space for insight, reflection and wider systemic understanding, which the coach can draw to support their coachee during their developmental journey.

## Conclusions

This book, we hope, will provide readers with an enjoyable, stimulating read across the current debate within coaching.

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