

2011 arrives with a covering of ice and a chill wind. To appropriate the estimable Mr Dickens, it could be the best of times; it could be the worst of times. As the landscape of learning and development within our organisations changes radically and the population slips away into exile, it could be a year when we each come closer to knowing our greater purpose, and at the same time find a way of letting go of old cherished beliefs about our place in the scheme of things. While a passing pragmatism has allowed our coaching community a new legitimacy, I can't help but feel this has something of a mirage-like quality; our caravan having found a flickering oasis in the spreading, enticingly voluptuous sands of a remote e-informational world. As more requests for coaching arrive from colleagues wanting to make sense of what the current changes mean for them and to map a possible future; and as we help sustain them and others through their transitions in a year of many and mixed emotions; we can only strive to meet the challenge to our skills and resilience, in the hope of sustaining ourselves. Go well in 2011!



Ken Smith

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Line Management Involvement in Coaching: Help or Hindrance?

Helen Ogilvy

Coaching has become very much an established practice in organisations. The CIPD annual learning and development survey has found a year on year increase in the popularity of coaching, with just over eighty percent of respondents to their 2010 survey reporting the use of coaching within their organisations. Research into coaching, however, has lagged behind. Whilst this is starting to change, with increasingly more research focusing on coaching effectiveness and return on investment, there are many aspects of coaching which have received little attention. This article summarises the research I recently carried for an MSc programme into the role of the line manager as a stakeholder in the coaching process.

What other research says

The research already conducted by others in this area indicates that managers do not typically get involved in the coaching process and that this leads to fewer organisational objectives being set for coaching. The research also shows that when managers are involved in the coaching process they can positively influence coaching outcomes. However, little is known about what type of managerial involvement is important and the behaviours that facilitate and hinder successful coaching outcomes. As a result, organisations using coaching currently have little evidence to draw on to provide managers with guidance about how to support their direct reports' coaching and so may not be getting the maximum benefit from their coaching programmes.

Are line managers actively involved and how?

In looking for a better understanding of how line managers can support coaching and the factors that hinder and facilitate their involvement, I found that the involvement of line

managers varied a great deal. Some line managers played an active role in their direct reports' coaching, whilst about half of managers had little or no involvement. In one extreme case one of the line managers I contacted had only found out that her direct report had been coached when she was asked to participate in my research. When managers were involved their involvement ranged from encouraging employees to have coaching, helping them to identify a coach, discussing the progress of coaching was progressing and helping the coachee to set goals. There was generally very little involvement by any of the line managers in the evaluation of coaching.

Why managers decide not to get involved?

The 18 coachees and 12 line managers from five central government organisations participating in my research talked with me about their experiences of line management involvement in coaching. I asked them about the factors they thought inhibited line management

involvement. In response the majority of line managers felt coaching was a personal process, something between the coach and coachee; and that they should not intrude in the relationship, with the risk that doing so could be detrimental. Connected with this, managers were reluctant to offer coachees help in case the coachee then felt under pressure to involve them, when they may actually prefer not to.

Although coachees also identified coaching as a personal process, only half cited this as a factor inhibiting their line manager's involvement. This suggests that line managers may be more concerned about this than they need to be. If line managers were to offer support to coachees it is unlikely to hinder coaching, as long as the coachee is given the option of managing the coaching on their own if that is what they would prefer. Some participants believed that management involvement wasn't necessary anyway; and some were also uncertain about how managers should be involved. In contrast to this, factors helping involvement included manager's own beliefs that coaching was valuable and their understanding of how coaching worked within their organisations.

Goal setting

In spite of what might seem an obvious connection, and in contrast to other research, my interviews showed that when line managers were involved in goal setting this did **not** result in goals that were directly aligned to organisational objectives; i.e. whether line managers are involved or not, there is no influence over the inclusion of organisational

level goals in the coaching contract. However, feedback from managers was identified as important as it provided coachees with valuable performance information which helped them to shape any goals they had relating to personal effectiveness and career development.

Line manager behaviours

With regard to management behaviours that helped the coaching relationship make progress, line managers' encouragement and helping coachees to make time for the coaching was important. In addition, providing coachees with feedback allowed them to assess their progress and refine and focus their remaining coaching sessions. Not the least in importance, providing challenging work helped coachees transfer their learning from coaching to the workplace.

In the opposite direction, behaviours that hindered coaching included managers not using a coaching management style, being critical or unwilling to accept new ideas and not taking an active interest in the coaching. It is interesting, though perhaps unsurprising, that the management behaviours that were found to support coaching reflect many of the behaviours used by coaches in coaching sessions.

Some recommendations for practice

Although exploratory and using a small sample, my research suggests some recommendations for how coaching is set up and facilitated in organisations:

1. Line managers and coachees should discuss and agree a

- coaching contract before the coaching starts. This should set out how the line manager will be involved in the coaching and the ways in which they will support the coachee.
2. Line managers and coachees should be provided with guidance which explains the role line managers can play to support coaching.
 3. Line managers should be provided with guidance outlining the benefits of coaching and explaining how it is managed within their organisation.
 4. Line managers should ensure that before their direct report starts coaching they have provided them with feedback on their performance and areas for development.
 5. Managers should encourage employees to consider coaching as a development tool; help coachees make time for their coaching; continue to provide feedback to coachees after they have started their coaching; and provide coachees with opportunities to put the new skills they are learning into practice, where possible allowing coachees to practice new ways of working.
 6. Managers should show an explicit interest in their direct reports coaching. They should avoid taking an unstructured approach towards the coaching and should not be critical of new ideas or ways of working suggested by the coachee.

What are we evaluating when we evaluate coaching and why do we do it?

Natalia de Estevan-Ubeda

Coaching is “a growing trend rather than a passing fashion”: so says the CIPD. With organisations investing considerable financial and human resources in coaching, there is an ever growing need to evaluate its impact. This article explores some of the existing research and arguments around doing this.

Why evaluate and who for?

There is a risk that coaching falls into the category of “the impossible to evaluate”. If we consider coaching as a form of HR programme, we know that “some managers won’t even

consider conducting a formal evaluation because they assume the issues involved just can’t be measured”. (Edwards, 2003)
However, it’s possible to see three primary purposes for evaluation:

Decision making	Using evaluation outcomes to challenge the status of the coaching programme, its participants, or its coaches
Improvement	Feedback to coaches and participants
Marketing	Using evaluation outcomes to encourage adoption of a coaching programme by others

These purposes may connect with different audiences and these audiences and their interests need to be determined. There is a line of thinking in the coaching industry that argues in favour of designing evaluation activities for coaching at the start, looking at business needs analysis, one of the benefits of this early planning being to manage stakeholders' expectations. For example, as Edwards notes: "A belief persists that top executives are primarily influenced by evidence of financial impact ... however, an alternative view is that organisational decision makers are responsive to logical evidence that HR practices are done well and are logically related to key business objectives."

It's important to remember that Return on Investment (ROI) is not the only reason one may want to evaluate coaching. Do you want to assess progress? Do you want to obtain information about how to improve L&D interventions? Do you need to build up a business case for future interventions? In order to have meaningful evaluation activities delivering meaningful information, the assessment needs to be scoped, and early one in the planning.

So, how can the evaluation activities and criteria be scoped? Once the objectives for evaluation are set, the following points can be considered:

- What type of coaching is it going to be evaluated? (internal, external, line management etc.)
- How much data do you want/need to gather? (feedback from all participants, from a core group?)

- Who will provide the input? (coaches, clients, sponsors, HR, colleagues)
- What is your timeline? (short, medium, long term)
- Who is going to undertake the evaluation? (internal, external?)

What does coaching work on and who for?

Jarvis' et al (2006) case study illustrates the range of issues organisations are addressing through coaching. These are represented in the figure on page 6 below.

In looking at this diverse set of issues, we need to consider who the coaching is for. Is it for the coachee? Is it about the impact on the organisation? How do these two interact? Opinions among researchers and practitioners vary. There is the view that coaching is individually focused and that this has a major impact on evaluation, in that no set of absolute criteria for outcomes can be established across the organisation. This point is raised by Carter (2006) who says: "Coaching may start without formal aims, objectives or outcomes which would almost be central to any formal training course".

One key question when evaluating outcomes is to consider the different perspectives of the stakeholders involved in the process. Again, Carter argues that: "Any evaluation needs to be explicit about whose criteria and outcomes it is measuring and, where success criteria are different, that both perspectives are evaluated". This is the point where coaching differs from other HR programmes, as it may have dual objectives from individual and organisational perspective.



Clutterbuck (2010) offers a somewhat contrary view, arguing in a recent article in relation to wider team impact that effective coaching affects not only the client but the team and the organisation around them and follows on by recommending team goals are defined in addition to client's individual goals. This need not infer any conclusions with regards to coaching being more effective if applied to a team than to individuals in the organisation.

Carter's and Clutterbuck's arguments together suggest the need to set

objectives and consider all the stakeholders in the coaching relationship. Tipping the balance will depend upon the roles and degrees of influence of the individuals in question as well as the team's, such as business criticality of team work in certain projects or leadership and decision making of those individuals.

How can we evaluate?

The Institute of Employment Studies (Carter, 2006) lists examples of areas suitable for measurement:

Organisational level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Business performance based, such as turnover, productivity, cost-effectiveness, media citations, service quality ✓ People based, including: staff absence/sickness, customer satisfaction/complaints, comparisons pre and post coaching, skill level, appraisal, manager assessment/self-assessment, job performance.
Individual level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ 360-degree feedback ratings ✓ Achievement of coaching objectives ✓ Comparisons pre and post coaching ✓ Skills level/knowledge level ✓ Appraisal and job performance ✓ Manager assessment / self-assessment
Process indicators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Coachee, line manager and/or sponsor satisfaction with coaching ✓ Performance and quality of coach ✓ Learning transfer conditions / support ✓ Cost per coachee ✓ Administration arrangements / venues etc.

Some options for evaluating coaching, according to CIPD are:

- Progress checks and tracking improvements in business indicators
- Discussions with stakeholders, surveys

- Assessment of the objectives that were set out at the beginning of the coaching programme

Research by the CIPD shows the following evaluation practices used in coaching:

	Percentage of respondents using this practice
Feedback from participants	75
Appraisal systems	61
Feedback from coaches	44
Employee attitude surveys	41
Exit interviews	38
Assessment against objectives	37
Business performance indicators	29
360 feedback	25
Staff turnover rates	21
Other	6

Clutterbuck argues that standard ways of measuring ROI in coaching don't work. He defends this point by discarding clients' feedback as a reliable measure of coaching quality because: "Feel-good chats are not the same as significant personal change". He goes on to say that as initial goals for coaching frequently evolve, measuring outcomes on them "is fairly pointless". He recommends that real evidence of effective coaching is sought instead, such evidence including changes in behaviours and skills. He endorses the use of 360-feedback immediately after the coaching is completed and again after 6 months to ensure "changes are sustainable".

Whereas Clutterbuck makes an interesting point around the sustainability of the coaching benefits, evaluating outcomes based on objectives is very powerful to be able to link coaching to performance. As the coaching objectives are revisited during a coaching relationship, it is interesting to reflect on what we end up evaluating.

Tangibles and intangibles

There are indeed challenges involved in evaluation. Some of these may involve lacking the resource to actually undertake the evaluation activities, lack of time, lack of research data and ROI data, lack of knowledge on how to undertake evaluation activities. Perhaps, the biggest challenge of all is clearly identifying the benefits achieved through the coaching programme and assigning a monetary value to them.

I have already mentioned in this article that the chances of calculating a meaningful estimate of the impact of coaching will increase if the objectives of the programme are set out from the start. Some results attributable to a coaching programme will be more tangible than others and perhaps easier to translate into monetary value. Having said that, intangible changes to behaviour may lead to the more tangible benefits of coaching. Some examples of this are listed below:



Establishing and agreeing formulae to work out the impact and even the return on investment of coaching is something that may never happen

across the industry, there is still a point in building a case for our organisations to demonstrate the value of this fascinating discipline.

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- Clutterbuck, D (2010): How to establish ROI for coaching in *People Management*, March 2010
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Coaching Supervision and Parallel Process

Guest feature from Keri Phillips

I was having coffee at Patisserie Valerie, Liverpool Street, with a friend and colleague, Maria. She also is a coach and said she would like a quick informal word about one of her clients. Very soon after starting her story I suddenly felt very irritated with Maria. My irritation was intense and seemed totally out of context. I mentioned this to Maria. She said she had noticed how I had suddenly sat back in my chair and she knew that 'something had happened'. As we talked it through, Maria became aware for the first time that she was in fact quite irritated with the client about whom we had just started to talk.

As a result of supervising coaches who are also consultants in organisational change I have found it valuable to draw on the idea of parallel process. The phenomenon of parallel process has been described by many authors in a variety of contexts, initially in the field of therapy and counselling^{1,2}. Drawing on these sources, my **definition** is:

the unaware replaying within the helping relationship of a pattern of relationship brought from outside.

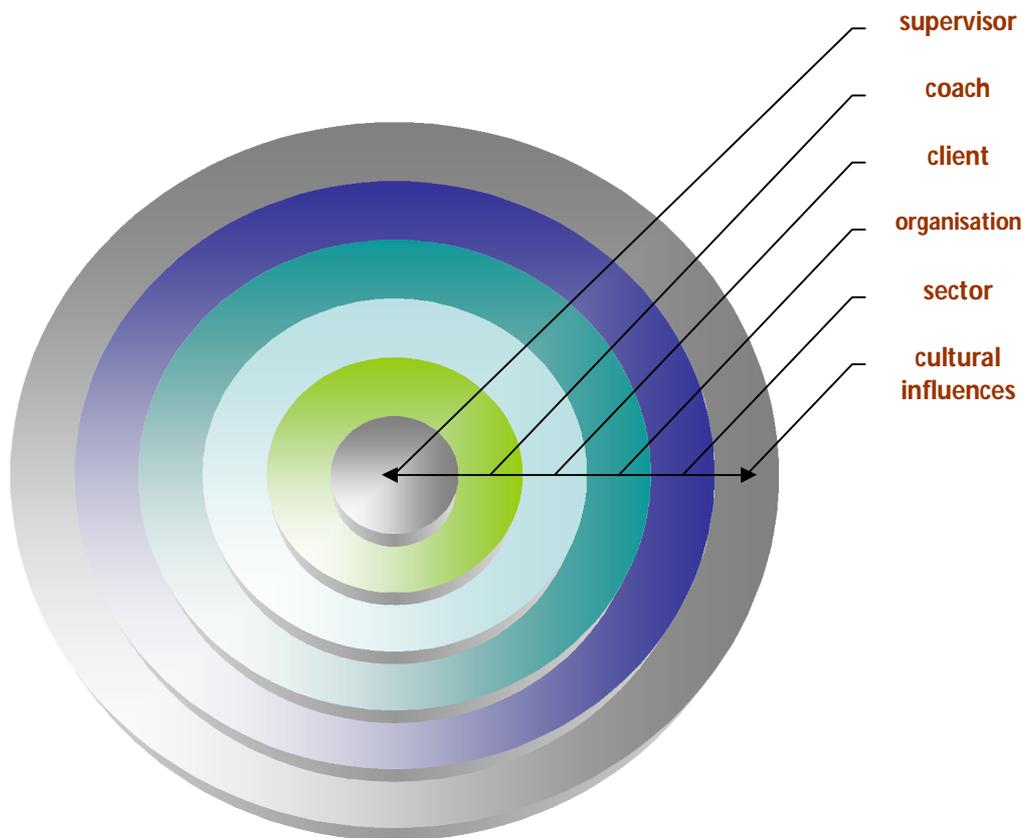
This is what seems to have happened to Maria and myself. Between us we seemed relatively quickly to have been able to identify what was happening; though even here I was rather anxious about raising the matter of my irritation and quietly concerned about how Maria might react. There will, however, be occasions when neither party notices and the behaviour and feelings will be absorbed into the supervisory session almost by osmosis, at a level of communication which is visceral, indeed beyond words.

The visceral, non-verbal nature of parallel process has strong similarities with the concept of 'scripting' in transactional analysis³. For example, early life experience can prompt an individual to "decide" on the sort of person he or she is, the sort of life s/he will lead and how s/he will end up. This might range from the types of career which should be pursued, through to a scarcely surfaced existential dimension about life: a joy or a struggle; a place of possibilities or suffocation; a source of excitement or frustration. In this there is an assumption that people can create self-fulfilling prophesies. This can take place with varying degrees of self-awareness. Some aspects of the script will be more accessible than others. The same is true of parallel process.

Along with the dimension of **awareness** there is, separate yet linked, the dimension of **visibility**. Sometimes the phenomenon of parallel process will appear in technicolour. For example, the supervisor and coach might both realise early in their session that they are working in a rather hurried, almost breathless way; they are both apparently unduly anxious and eager to reach some solid outcomes from their work together. In examining this they might subsequently acknowledge that the coach's client and indeed the client's organisation are going through a phase of 'high anxiety'; perhaps there are a number of crucial business decisions pending, each with an underlying tone of survival.

However, in contrast to this, there might be parallel process which has much more subtle tones and indeed barely stands out. For example, it may only be through the process of receiving supervision themselves that the supervisor realises how in recent months her approach to a particular coach has marginally changed; that, whether for good or ill, she no longer encourages the coach to the degree of specificity of agreed action as was previously the case. With further investigation the supervisor may discover that this is how the coach now is with his client. It may also reflect a marginally, yet significantly changing organisational culture where issues are not quite resolved. For example, team meetings are held, actions identified, ownership of those actions is clear, but perhaps the follow-up is not as rigorous as it needs to be and indeed was until a few months previously.

This example demonstrates how parallel process can flow through from the interpersonal through to the organisational. On that basis, as indicated in the diagram below, the dynamics can be both **individual** and **collective**. Also, as shown by the arrow, the energy is both **centrifugal** and **centripetal**. Parallel process can thereby be a source of strength as well as vulnerability. In other words, the supervisor, in not contributing to the existing pattern, can help to break it and replace it with one which has the potential to be developmental at an individual and organisational level.



Acknowledgement of this wider context can therefore be helpful in supporting the dual role which some helpers have as both coaches and organisation development consultants.

First, there are the possible implications for the **co-consulting relationship**. The consultancy team may absorb some of the values and behaviours of the client culture, but perhaps in a way that can impede effectiveness. This would not necessarily be a shock since consultancies need to have a lot in common with their client organisations in order to work well with them; along with this however, there is the risk that commonality

evolves to the point where boundaries dissolve.

Secondly, there is the question of the coach-consultant's personal **identity** as an agent of change. 'What is the self I leave behind when I become a player in parallel process?' This question goes beyond the purely technical: namely that the consultant does not challenge as much as is needed. The identity aspect might also mean, for example, that the consultant loses some of his sensitivity to relationships and becomes 'macho' in working with a 'macho' client. In doing so, he no longer represents perhaps a quality which the organisation most needs

and at the same time fears and despises.

Thirdly, I suggest that the recession and the current economic, business and social challenges increase the possibility of **survival thinking** being a key theme in all the domains of the model above; for example, there may be a profound anger, but also a fear of expressing it. Under these circumstances the risks and the opportunities may well be as intense as each other. On the one hand there is a risk that the coach/consultant/supervisor may be blinded by the multiplying and multi-faceted darkness that can come from shared pain. On the other hand, the opportunity is that at any point

individual introspection and a willingness to explore parallel process may provide significant insights; for example, the supervisor in asking herself: 'What do I notice about my patterns in relation to the coach?' may uncover valuable perspectives which are relevant in all the other spheres, both the individual and the collective.

In conclusion, my proposal is that coaches and coaching supervisors be alert to the option of creating a safe space where they follow their excitement and curiosity in playing with the idea of parallel process and seeing what delights and learning may emerge.

References:

1. Clarkson, P (1995): The Therapeutic Relationship
2. Dryden, W & Thorne, B (eds. 1991): Training and Supervision For Counselling in Action
3. Steiner, C (1975): Scripts People Live

Keri Phillips will be presenting on "Coaching and Betrayal" at the Network conference in March 2011. keriphillips@o2.co.uk

Boundaries – a workshop at the 2010 NLP conference

Ken Smith

We are, for much of our time, simply invisible. The things we hold as important, and which constitute a large part of our sense of who we are, can only be guessed at by whoever we happen to be with; depending on the history of that particular relationship. Often we ourselves don't know we are holding on to these things, until they are denied us or otherwise abused. Conversely, we can find the people who are closest to us sometimes surprising. At those times when the surprise is an unpleasant one, it is likely that a boundary has been crossed.

Boundaries, what they are and how to manage them safely, was the theme of an excellent workshop from Pamela Gawler-Wright at this year's NLP Conference. Pamela, founder of the Beeleaf Institute, reminded us of the tension that is part of being human: between a desire for uniqueness, to create someone that is distinctively separate; and for belonging, for being fully known and enjoyed for what we are. The difficulty comes when others' assumptions about us, their guesses of who we are, and how this informs how they act towards us, come into conflict with our notions of identity.

When this happens we feel a boundary has been violated, and we do indeed *feel* it. The first stage in the experience of this violation is a kinaesthetic one, as what is important to us is located out of conscious awareness. Our body tells our mind that something is amiss, in an unpleasant adrenalin rush of flight, fight or freeze. The next difficulty comes through the common assumption that a boundary violation can be negotiated away as a purely cognitive activity, thus dismissing this central somatic feature of how boundaries manifest themselves.

To manage or assert a boundary skilfully, requires that we are in a resourceful state and Pamela demonstrated how a simple centring exercise could enable us to present our boundary to its, often unwitting, violator; such that our kinaesthetic state (physiology), moral intention (the reasonableness and rightness of what we want) and cognitive function (how we find the words to express our boundary) become congruent. Attaining this resourceful and

congruent state is important as, for people operating with healthy psychological functioning, we can easily feel uncomfortably selfish when we claim a boundary and push back against the demands that others make of us.

It's also important to maintain and develop our knowledge of this centred and resourceful state, because the response to our first explicit statement of our boundary is very likely for the other person to increase the force and intensity of their violating demands. Managing a boundary therefore requires consistent and precise repetition of the statement that defines it, in order to enable the other person to hear it through their adrenalin rush of fight, flight or freeze, provoked by your pushing back.

Having acknowledged the kinaesthetic aspect of experiencing boundary violations, Pamela then presented a simple and very elegant linguistic model of boundary statement syntax and boundary types, the latter comprising a framework of personal, requested, shared and authority boundaries. Here it became apparent that one of the functions of boundary management is to give a clearer structure to the power in a relationship, depending on the type of boundary that is being operated. Interestingly it is in this respect that boundaries can feature in Transactional Analysis games; for example, when one person seeks to be loved by asking for approval of a boundary that is personal and really does not need any negotiation.

One of the characteristics of ineffective boundary management can be seen, in attempting to set a boundary, the individual treats their own intention and needs as equivalent to those of their partner; even though what is happening is that two previously out-of-awareness and probably quite different sets of assumptions and needs are vying for position in a shared space. We find ourselves in the grip of a misplaced complex equivalence: that my claimed needs must equal your sense of injustice. This again calls for us to create a resourceful state and suggests that it is very helpful to know how we generally react in situations of conflict and stress, which can so easily be experienced as a boundary violation. When person A sets forth, with internal congruence and respect, a lawful and morally reasonable boundary with Person B, who is another equally self-determining

individual, person A does not have to assume responsibility for how person B feels about it.

Boundaries are connected to most experiences of conflict, confusion and stress in our lives. Our interpersonal challenge is to move them from a place of ambiguity, collision and separation, to one of clarity where relationships can prosper. This workshop reminded me how useful an understanding of boundaries can be, not only as a model to offer coaching clients but also in contracting with them and, not least, in those moments when, in our desire to do good work, we find ourselves taking on responsibility for their outcomes. A useful question for your inner supervisor to ask you could be: What and where is the boundary that wraps around the assumptions you are making, about your purpose as a coach?

Group and Team Coaching: The Essential Guide - Christine Thornton

Review by Richard Spence

Christine Thornton believes groups can '*foster feelings of connection and common purpose*' but '*bad group experiences are (rightly) feared*'. In '*Group and Team Coaching*', she combines group analytic insights into '*the secret life of groups*' with practical guidance which new and more experienced coaches can reflect on to gain fresh perspective on their work. The book moves from underlying theory to detailed methods with examples and case studies that ground the theory and give context.

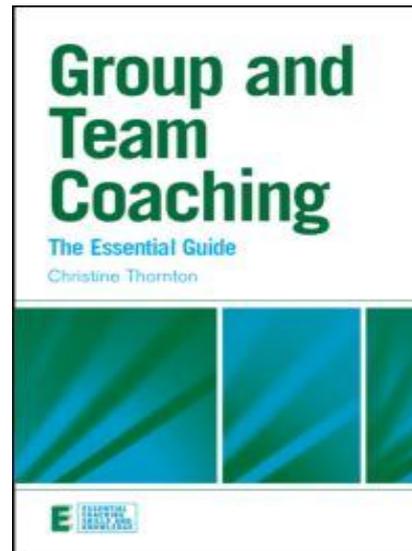
'All teams are groups but not all groups are teams'. The author defines teams as work groups with shared goals or tasks, separating them from groups brought together for common

learning. Yet she aims to '*demystify the elemental processes of group dynamics*' since individuals in all groups learn and change through fundamentally similar processes.

The essential qualities of 'holding' and 'exchange' described in part two require the coach to balance security for the group against encounters with the new, different and unknown. There follow nine group processes and the eight factors that affect learning and change. This is quite a list but the author summarises well. I appreciated her unpacking useful concepts like 'location', the principle that every event, even where it appears to be confined to one or two people in a group, involves the whole group in some way.

Part three is an almost too whistle-stop look at systems theory as a way of thinking about whole organisations. Teams are discussed as 'nested systems' within a system, there is advice on defining the system boundaries when contracting work and snappy sections on chaos, complexity and paradox. 'Tackling Group-think' resonated loudly with my own experience of working even with entrepreneurial teams.

Part four and five apply these various principles, taking a more granular 'how to' approach. First, there are chapters on coaching teams, learning groups and supervision groups. The author's long experience comes through with summaries of processes and useful signposts to bear-traps. I wasn't quite clear why she had made some choices – Balint groups, for example, seemed an left-field inclusion and I would have liked more on creative supervision in 'ways of presenting' – but there's plenty to digest here.



Next, specific issues, problems and strategies for dealing with them: chapters on '*Groups That Don't Work*' and '*Tackling Problem Behaviours*', sections spanning '*Surfacing the Undiscussables*' to '*When Someone's Contribution Is Always Boring*' for which, we gather, '*tact is required*'. I commend the author for facing such a breadth of realities and her warmth and compassion in addressing them. '*Beginnings, Middles and Endings*' completes the main text. There is a short section on further resources with a neat section of 'FAQs' based on AC members questions pointing to relevant sections of book.

This is a thorough and thoughtful book, I hope it goes to further editions. If so, I would strongly encourage re-editing it to prune the verbatim repetitions, bracketing and heavy cross-referencing to other sections within the text. This would improve the flow of the book, make it easier to read and give a greater sense of a building and confident entity.

That said, I look forward to revisiting '**Group and Team Coaching**' when wrestling with my own coaching

dilemmas. With its series of lenses, methods and advice, it contains strands of quiet good sense, strong theoretical underpinning, clear

indicators to spot what's not working and, most certainly, ways to encourage those desired feelings of connection and common purpose.

This review first appeared in the Association for Coaching UK Bulletin Oct 2010.

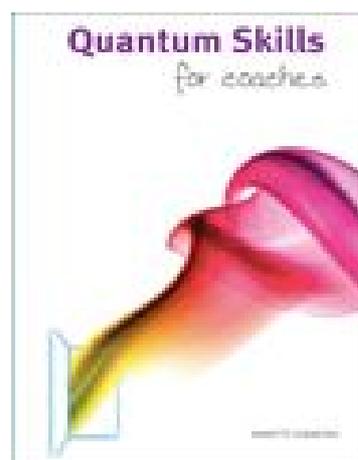
Quantum Skills for Coaches: Annette Simmons

Guest review by Stuart Hadden

This text makes the links between quantum theory (energy) and coaching. I have yet to find a resource that connects these two disciplines in such an accessible and convincing way. As well as introducing the theory Simmons provides very practical tips, tools and techniques to put these concepts into practice. When I coach individuals around vitality, energy, impact and authenticity, I now have the tools to create experiences and accelerate the learning.

Simmons' basic premise is that everything that exists is energy vibrating at different frequencies. For example, when we think a thought, some key things happen. The first is that thought, which has properties similar to a magnet (because we are essentially electromagnetic beings), shimmers out into the 'energy soup' and connects with other things in the soup that resonate with it. In other words it attracts things, such as events, that are similar to it. In my experience most coaching relationships tend to focus around actions, rightly so. But when the coachees harness their thoughts they can now work with these intentions also. Results are achieved faster and can be sustained with continued attention.

There are three tools which particularly resonated with me, I am sure you will have your own favourites but to give you a flavour here's a short overview...



Recognising that everything is connected Simmons provides two excellent tools on visualisation. The first provides a measureable example that these concepts really do work, so I often use these early on in the coaching relationship. The second focuses on the achievement of a particular goal and feeling the feeling that you will have when you have achieved the outcome you want.

'Creative visualisation works on the principle that the universe is like a vast

copying machine. When we send a thought (or an intent) out into the field of potentiality, it connects with the field and, having qualities rather like a magnet, attracts towards it things that are similar to it.'

Simmons also casts new light on working with and managing our emotions. The third tool is a focussing exercise allowing us to experience an emotion in the present moment. Coachees can simply accept the emotion for what it is, without interpreting it, making it mean anything or linking it to anything that happened in the past or might happen in the future.

'You are actually accepting it with no resistance and this is what causes it to melt away.'

I have carried this book around with me for the last 6 months, observing noticeable benefits with the individuals that I have been coaching. I have delivered the theory in the background and then used the tools in the foreground, often towards the end of session providing a great summary, a platform from which to work from and a resonant link to the next session. I appreciate books are personal choices. However, I hope you find value in taking a look at *Quantum Skills for Coaches* also...

Stuart Haden, Director, Storm Beach L & D Ltd, stuart@stormbeach.co.uk

There are now 220 members of the Coaches in Government Network, from 48 organisations. Since the Network's inception 34 members have provided in excess of 820 hours of coaching in other members' organisations. The Network has also recently begun to also provide tele-coaching for DfID staff in India.

We've made a new connection with the Metropolitan Police's internal coaching pool, who have invited us to form a co-coaching practice group.

Members may be interested in this video, entitled: *"Why is the brain divided, and what does it mean for human existence, culture and behaviour? :*

<http://www.thersa.org/events/audio-and-past-events/2010/the-divided-brain-and-the-making-of-the-western-world> With thanks to Barry Snelgrove.

And finally:

"As coaches we matter profoundly, because we do not matter at all." Nancy Kline