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choice

the magazine of professional coaching

Social Responsibility Through Coaching

How coaching is transforming the lives of the vulnerable

Coaching Leaders in Nonprofits

Social Entrepreneurs & Leadership Coaching

Helping the Helpers

VOLUME 15 • NUMBER 1 WWW.CHOICE-ONLINE.COM

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upfront

choice
the magazine of professional coaching

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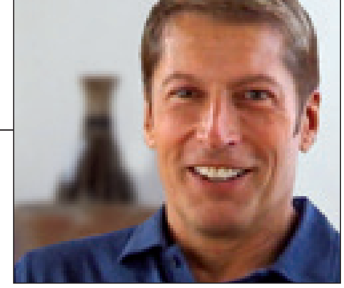

It's amazing to think that this issue begins our 15th year of publishing *choice* Magazine.

We are thrilled that our readers and writers have supported, and continue to support, our vision of being the ultimate resource for professional coaches. Your feedback is always welcome especially as to what you want to see more of or what's new or leading edge in coaching.

Speaking of feedback, we thank our writers for alerting us to a technical glitch that caused the digital version of our previous issue to be corrupted, which inserted errors that made it look like we did not proofread! We do in fact have several people who proofread the magazine several times and we are quite proud of the quality of each issue. The glitch has been addressed, the digital issue was resent and we are confident that you will receive the final, edited version of the magazine moving forward.

Now on to this issue …

Coaching has been a part of my life since the late 1990s when I was assigned a volunteer coach in my Landmark Self Expression and Leadership program. I so loved the engagement that when I was done the three-month program, I began to train as a coach for the same program. During that time I met a professional coach (someone who was paid to coach) and my entrepreneurial heart beat a lot faster knowing I could make coaching my business!

Fast-forward to today, and I am now trained as a professional coach and have completed my International Coach Federation (ICF) certification.

While I was training and becoming a part of this amazing coaching community, I heard and internalized the slogan "Making a difference"! Today I am more convinced than ever that coaches do indeed make a difference!

Within the following pages are global examples of "making a difference" in an area that is dear to my heart and the hearts of so many others in our amazing community: the social or public sector.

It continues to amaze me, as I'm sure it will you, that we continue to have a direct and ripple impact on the world.

We trust you will enjoy this issue and notice that we have been asking our wonderful writers to not only share their learning and wisdom, but also to offer you a way to implement the learning in your next coaching sessions.

Garry

Garry Schleifer, PCC, CMC
CEO & Publisher

We Want Your Feedback!

We invite you to take a more active role in *choice* Magazine, your only unbiased, professional, printed and globally distributed publication, by completing a short survey at: **http://tiny.cc/choicereadersurvey**

This is your publication and we need *your* direction to continue to make it a "must-have" resource.

Please take a few moments to complete the survey and help ensure that we continue to give *choice* readers valuable information they can use to become better, more successful and happier coaches.

Thank you in advance for participating!

Coaching and social responsibility seem destined to go together. After all, coaches choose their vocation in order to help, to make a difference, and to improve people's lives. Coaching in the nonprofit and not-for-profit sector seems like a natural extension of this calling to help make the world a better place.

In this issue, we present a wealth of articles about social responsibility and coaching. Rick Kennedy opens our feature section with a piece about the value of not-for-profit coaching, followed by Susan Jones, Holly Thompson and Wendee Wolfson writing about building a bridge between social entrepreneurs and leadership coaching. Next up, Terry Hildebrandt helps us understand the unique context of leaders in nonprofits. Ruth Ann Harnisch and Renee Freedman follow this up with an article about coaching those who serve the vulnerable, and finally, Deborah Howard describes a specific situation in which coaching became a powerful tool for addressing community challenges.

Many of our columns also deal with our social responsibility theme. In our "impact" column, Vikki Brock presents a case study of building not-for-profit leadership capacity in the Red Cross. And in our "final say" department, Kate Michels explores the social impact of coaching.

I'd like to also address an editorial decision we have made at *choice*. In the past, we have used conventional third-person pronouns in our articles (he, she) and have tried to alternate these in a balanced way. However, in 2017 the pronouns "he" and "she" are too gender specific and do not reflect the wide range of gender identities that exist.

After much research, thought and discussion, Garry and I have decided to use the pronoun "they" as both a plural and singular pronoun. As an editor and self-confessed "word geek," the singular "they" will take a bit of getting used to, as it is still considered grammatically incorrect in some circles. However, as it becomes more widely used and accepted, we felt it was time to adopt the singular "they" to reflect our commitment to gender-inclusive language.

Janet Lees, B.Journ.

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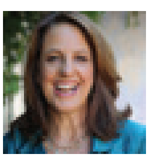

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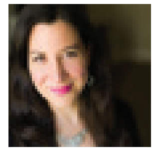

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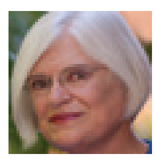
columns



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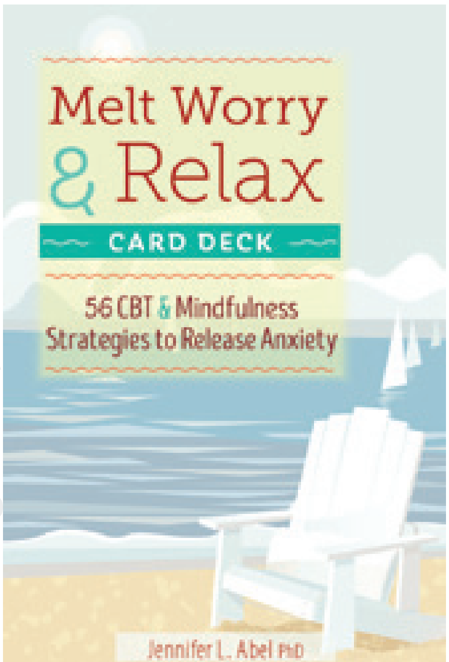
Melt Worry & Relax Card Deck



By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

Do you have clients who worry? Performance anxiety, money stress and challenging work situations all take their toll on wellbeing and fulfillment. The *Melt Worry & Relax Card Deck* gives you 56 simple and effective strategies that can help release anxiety and create more room for possibility.

The content, developed by a seasoned therapist, is organized by suits: Thinking, Doing, Relaxing and Being Mindful. Each card offers a suggested practice or activity based on current thinking and research in mindfulness, relaxation and cognitive therapy. The beauty of a card deck is that it is the antithesis of overwhelm as it gives you one small bite-sized nugget at a time to try on, learn and integrate.

The many wonderful suggestions run the gamut from creative to practical. Here's one example from the "Doing" suit: "Changing oxygen flow and expressing emotion can relieve stress. Sing a favorite song or sing about your worries. There's a reason people sing the blues!"

The many wonderful suggestions run the gamut from creative to practical.

Use the deck in a session, gift it to a client or use it for yourself. With daily practice, the content in this deck can have a life changing impact. Definitely a "must have" tool.

Vision Cards

By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

Imagine inviting your client to describe a newly emerging vision, a big possibility, or what's on the other side of a big leap. In my experience, words alone don't always capture the heart and soul of it – but images do! Pictures and visual metaphors add clarity, nuance and emotional texturing. This is why I love imagery-based tools so much!

With nearly 80 original images, Vision Cards are an awesome new imagery tool on the market. It's the kind of deck that can be used in any setting. Whether you are brainstorming, problem solving, strategic planning or even resolving conflict, images give you a new way to talk about things. They leverage the power of association and invite in color, nuance and complexity.

For example; choose a card that describes where you are and one that describes where you want to be. It's a simple question but the chosen images will give your client or team members a new way to talk about it. That bit of stimulus will open up new possibilities, directions and solutions.

If you want to elicit richly textured nuance and aha moments in your client and group work, I recommend the Vision Cards.

Images give you a new way to talk about things.

Optin Cat

By Terry L. Green

Coaches know opt-in boxes are necessary if you want to grow your list. A few strategically placed opt-in boxes, as well as an exit popup can be a tremendous help in growing your list. My opt-in box and popup creator of choice is the Optin Cat plugin for WordPress. It includes everything you need to grow your email list, and sets up in about two minutes. The opt-in boxes and popups are super easy to create, and the plugin integrates with just about every mainstream email marketing system. It also keeps great stats so you always know what's working and what isn't.

The newest version includes a feature that lets anyone leaving a comment subscribe to your list in one easy step. It adds a handy little checkbox you can either pre-check to add people automatically or leave unchecked like I have so those commenting have to check the box if they want to subscribe.

The Passion Profiler™

By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

When the work you do is an expression of passions that emanate from a deeper sense of purpose, you experience greater meaning and fulfillment. For the organization you work for, it means less attrition, more productivity and greater contributions to it's knowledge base. This is the foundation and promise of a powerful new online assessment tool called The Passion Profiler™, specifically designed for the workplace.

This well-researched and validated assessment explores 10 passion archetypes: The Altruist, The Connector, The Creator, The Healer, The Teacher, The Builder, The Conceiver, The Discoverer, The Processor and The Transformer. The individual's "archetype cluster", their top three passion archetypes, influence engagement, contribution and orientation to knowledge within the organization.

The Passion Profiler™ generates an 18-page report which identifies the "archetype cluster," describes the strengths and vulnerabilities of each passion archetype, shows how the individual's archetype cluster is operationalized in the workplace and how it compares to others on the team or in their department. It also explores the individual's propensity for reflective contemplation and meaning making – in other words, their coachability.

As a Certified Passion Profiler™ Facilitator, you will be able to offer this assessment, interpret the results, help your clients integrate the findings and then make the results actionable.

I took the assessment myself and it was so helpful to see the degree to which my passions are being expressed. The coach's interpretation was affirming, brought new insight and pointed to areas for growth. It's quite a remarkable tool!

If you are committed to organizational excellence, high functioning teams and talent development, this is the tool you want.

vCita

By Terry L. Green

I was recently introduced to a custom app for websites, social media or email campaigns that enables coaches to capture more web traffic and streamline scheduling and payments. It's called vCita, and its back office CRM stores client information, payment history, booking information and more. vCita works on any HTML website, including WordPress, Wix and Weebly. It integrates easily with a simple WordPress plugin, or can be installed as a scheduling link or button in your email.

The app's auto email and text messaging feature helps reduce no-shows.

vCita's calendar syncs with all major calendars, and has two-way syncing so changes can be made on either end. The app's auto email and text messaging feature helps reduce no-shows.

There are three paid plans, as well as a free, bare-bones plan. It is completely mobile for the business owner, with apps from both iTunes and Google Play free with your vCita subscription.

By Kat Knecht, PCC, CPCC

The Way of Social Action

Guiding coaches through the helper experience

When I looked at the theme of "Social Responsibility Through Coaching," I was intrigued. It seems that one of our primary goals as coaches is to help people. Many coaches get into this profession to make a difference in the world by helping populations that are underserved by the mainstream.

One way is to work with nonprofits whose goal is to transform the lives of the vulnerable. Whether this is your niche as a coach or you are working as a coach in other ways, I think it is important to acknowledge that coaching is a "helping" profession.

To that end, I couldn't think of a better book for ALL coaches to read than the one I choose for this issue.

It is aptly titled ***How Can I Help?*** and written by Ram Dass and Paul Gorman. The book covers a lot of territory exploring this age-old question. There are stories and explorations into what "helping" actually is. Who is the helper and who is being helped? There is often a fine line and a lot of nuances.

The book looks at this from the perspective of those who need help due to a life circumstance and those who are simply feeling lost and alone in this world. The "helper" experience gets full airplay in this book. How do those who are called to be helpers as a profession maintain healthy boundaries, remember that they need to have compassion for themselves and that self-care is essential to keep body and soul healthy?

In chapter one, the concept of compassion is examined. I was reminded of the coaching profession in this quote. "The reward, the real grace, of conscious service, then, is the opportunity not only to help relieve suffering but to grow in wisdom, experience greater unity, and have a good time while we're doing it."

Chapter two dives down into the question "Who is Helping?" One story from this chapter stands out and, though it's a story of a police officer, it reminded me of how similar all helping professions are at the core.

The police officer had an epiphany: "I see that my work is to hold to an image of who we all truly are and to be guided by that. And I have been guided by that. To greater strength and security within myself and on the street."

I found the chapter that focused on "The Listening Mind" most rewarding, as this truly evoked the connection created by the coaching relationship. This chapter contains one of the most succinct paragraphs I have ever read on this subject:

"Ultimately, this kind of listening to the intuitive mind is a kind of surrender based on trust. It's playing it by ear, listening for the voice within. We trust that it's possible to hear into a greater totality which offers insight and guidance. Ultimately, we trust that when we're fully quiet, aware, and attentive, boundaries created by the mind simply blur and dissolve, and we begin to merge into All That Is. And All That Is, by definition, includes answers as well as questions, solutions as well as dilemmas. … When we function from this place of Spacious Awareness rather than from our analytical mind, we are often surprised to find solutions to problems without our having 'figured them out.'"

How do those who are called to be helpers as a profession maintain healthy boundaries and remember that self-care is essential to keep body and soul healthy?

Chapter six focuses specifically on "The Way of Social Action." The authors explore the goal of social action, arriving in the land of reconciliation between disparate communities. I thought they summed it up well in this passage talking about people like Gandhi and Martin Luther King Jr.: "Reconciliation is not some final tactic, a way to tie up loose ends. Reconciliation is a continuous state of consciousness."

The final chapter talks about burnout. This is a condition needing attention and action in all helping professions. It becomes exponentially important in an organization aimed at helping where there are many dedicated people working towards this goal. It is easy to forget that we all need to take care of ourselves. One passage puts it this way:

"Maybe it's not the right place to be putting our energies now. Maybe the inertia of the system is too great, its effect too strangling. Maybe we just need a break, some breathing space, a walk in the woods for some renewed inspiration. Maybe we're just tired."

The final passage I chose for this review is one I offer for all coaches to take to heart… it may bring some relief to the feeling that comes when we imagine ourselves in any way responsible for others.

"If we accept the Not Knowing, we'll be less likely to get caught in models or theories, or attached to seeing things work out the way we want." ●

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How do I help clients find their legacy?

the **situation**

"As a corporate coach, I am quite often challenged with my clients' conversation about social responsibility or legacy. I'm a coach who is approaching retirement and have the same question on my own mind. How do I work with my clients around this important area without adding my personal bias?"

the experts weigh in

Suzi Pomerantz, MT, MCC

Are you more challenged by the topic of social responsibility/legacy, are you more challenged by your fear of managing your own agenda or projections in the coaching relationship, or are you more challenged by your approaching retirement? Regardless, you've got to do your own work first before you can masterfully navigate the exploration with your clients. Assuming you have your own coach (because anyone who coaches others should walk the talk and be coached), you may wish to unpack your question in three ways with your coach:

1. How do I work with my clients in general without inserting my own agenda, biases, projections and personal challenges into their coaching?
2. What do I need to do to envision and clarify for myself what matters most to me regarding social responsibility?
3. What do I wish to create for my retirement that would fuel my soul and heal the world?

Do you know the impact you wish to make in the world? Have you done your own legacy exploration? In what ways are you leaving your mark on the planet?

I'm particularly intrigued by these questions being linked to the concept of retirement as you framed it. Do you believe that only when approaching retirement do clients need to consider legacy or social responsibility? Why wouldn't that be part of the dialogue at any stage of professional development? What is it that you believe about your own retirement that might be getting in the way of accessing your own legacy work?

Now, if we switch gears for a moment and shift to your clients, what would it take for you to be able to check your own agenda at the door and listen to them and their legacy conversation from a place of generosity and support? What do you need to do to separate yourself and have healthy boundaries in your work with your clients? What might you learn from their conversation that would expand your ability to be of service to them in identifying their own legacy impact? How might you help them amplify the difference they wish to make regardless of retirement?

Hopefully this expands your thinking on the subject and gives you some juicy tidbits to chew on. Bottom line is that you don't want to be the blind leading the blind, so do your own work! That will give you the reserves to be of bigger service to your clients, thus allowing them to leave a more meaningful legacy.

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Victoia Trabosh, CDC®, CEC

These kinds of conversations are a sign you're doing lasting work. It's never too early or too late to think about what our legacy will be. Social responsibility and legacy are both personal, and while you're concerned about your biases, I'd like to address the initial question first and then the bias issue second.

Social responsibility and legacy are all about wanting to live a life of success AND significance. It's important to help clients work through a process which they can continually refer to as a development tool for their stated intentions.

Here's a three-part process you can begin to walk your clients through, and modify as necessary:

1. John Maxwell says, "How you do anything is how you do everything." To get the *anything* right, I'd start with a discussion about integrity. Have them define what integrity means for them. Reflect on each area of their life, e.g., finances, family, relationships, health, community, spirituality, etc., and define and identify any integrity voids in those areas. Clean those up and they'll immediately begin to raise their game.

2. Have them list their BHAGs (Big Harry Audacious Goals). BHAGs are those incredible hopes and dreams they have for their future and the impact they believe they can have in the world. Work through their doubts and fears to create action steps necessary to reach their BHAGs. They can then manifest their greatest hopes and dreams.

3. After creating action steps, agree upon a process of accountability where you to check in and monitor their progress. Work with them on roadblocks, keep them focused on their BHAGs and adjust as necessary.

Remember, what is easy does not last, and what lasts, is not easy. This is profound work, work that keeps people moving when the days are filled with good times and bad. BHAGs will always have more weight, be more challenging and have greater lasting value than small goals. Hold it all within a spacious structure that will give them direction, purpose and passion.

As for you my fellow coach, what, of all I have written, would not apply for you? You can go through the same process and your 'bias' will influence your coaching. You are not a therapist. Your clients know you have a bias - and they want to know what it is. Deliver your truth. But deliver it "charge neutral." Meaning, it's your truth that you're sharing but whether they agree or not is not a reflection of you.

That's coaching. Give them your best and help them reach for their stars and see your own as well.

When Sharing from Self, the key is to make sure you are doing it for the client.

Craig Carr, PCC, CPCC

As is often the case, there's both good news and a cautionary tale in your question. Social responsibility, legacy and retirement are topics fully loaded with coaching grist and here you sit, poised perfectly to be an expert coach in an area you know well from personal experience. You can choose this platform as a "claim to fame" and a benefit to your clients, or you can fear it because you don't yet have it figured out to perfection for yourself.

You sound like an elder coach who is aware of what it looks like when a coach's ego runs a session. It's dangerous and it's not pretty. Perhaps your question stems from your own awareness of this abyss and you don't want to fall into it. In getting to the crux of your question, let's review a few dynamics you probably know but may have forgotten.

First, most of us do this work because it challenges us, grows us, makes us look inside our own choices, and fulfills us. Among the coaches I know, if their work didn't continually awaken them to what *they* needed to look at in themselves, they'd get bored and look for the nearest exit! It's OK that you're feeling conflict. If you love the work it means to keep going, not to stop; and remember the differences between coaching, consulting, giving advice and teaching. Coaches who do all that and call it all coaching get confused and make messes they can't clean up.

Second, you are correct that you risk inserting your agenda. You know this because the first dynamic is something you know about and care about. I'm going to tweak your concern a bit, though, and say it is your *unconscious* personal bias that rings the cautionary bell. The troubling and beautiful thing is that unconscious bias is alive and well in all human communication and every relationship. Your job is to manage your *conscious* biases, and that's the very best you can do.

And that brings us to the third dynamic, which is about how to manage biases. A long time ago, I learned a skill from a wise and smart mentor, which she called *Sharing from Self.* A lot of coaches don't like it when I suggest they share more of what is going on for them. They think it's forbidden territory and I assure them I never said it wasn't an advanced skill that needed to be developed. I argue that in the hands of a professional working on his or her craft, this skill deepens relationship and empowers coaching perhaps like no other.

I'm not saying there aren't landmines. When *Sharing from Self,* the key is to make sure you are doing it *for the client.* This is a bit paradoxical, but through metaphor or personal story or revealing your process, you can communicate that you know first-hand the experience they are having. This is invaluable to them on many levels but for the coaching it gains safety and range, and deepens what is possible. •

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More Success, Less Selling

Create a ripple effect with team coaching

By Doug Emerson

While we all love helping clients become more successful, sales may be the least favorite part of many a coaches' business agenda. You data mine, network, make cold calls, present proposals – until at last you land a client. And then the enjoyable part begins.

Why not expand your coaching engagement within the same organization and coach the entire team? If you have the right tools, team coaching can be a natural extension of your one-on-one coaching business.

If you're providing coaching or consulting services for one leader-manager, that process usually has many ripple effects that impact their entire team: If you're using a behavioral tool, you are already drawing in the rest of the team for their input. In helping your client clarify their roles and outputs, you're including their boss in the conversation.

Team coaching has many advantages:

1. More Successful Buy-In

It's easy to apply your coaching tools and skills to the whole team – in many cases, it works far more seamlessly than coaching just one individual and then helping him or her struggle to garner buy-in from their co-workers.

There are hundreds of articles and strategies, and even products and companies that specialize in helping leader-managers implement new processes or change initiatives across their teams and organizations. Some even offer internal promotional campaigns to coax co-workers into adopting the change and training programs on how to implement it, so it is a real challenge many leader-managers are facing, and one that you can help solve with team coaching.

In fact, many new processes and systems introduced by leader-managers are only embraced by 25 percent of their teams. But by involving your client's entire team from the onset, they will all be on board and aligned with the targets and changes, which can help implementation swell to a full 100 percent and create far more effective results.

2. More Watershed Moments

Imagine the satisfaction of that watershed "Aha!" moment your client shares with you, multiplied tenfold, by helping all the members of their team.

Chances are, when you enhance the effectiveness of one client in an organization, others in the team will notice a change for the better – in their management style, in how effectively they get things done and even in how calm and confident they are. And that alone could lead to their team members wanting your services as well.

3. Enhanced Team Alignment

When you go over the change agenda or prioritize targets and goals with your leader-manager client, you will have more successful results if you align the activities of their entire team around those targets. An effective team coaching tool will let both you and your client see any inconsistencies and misaligned activities and in achieving those goals at a glance, so they can be handled instantly.

This factor alone can demonstrate faster, more effective results and greater return on investment to your client. No longer are team members working on disparate projects that don't contribute to the achievement of the leader-managers key objectives. Align the team and you emerge as the hero who saved the day.

4. A Streamlined Sales Process

All the time and effort you put into landing that one client can now be leveraged by engaging their entire team. Why start the sales cycle all over again? Hosting more webinars, cold-calling prospects?

You have your foot in the door. Just stay there and expand cross-enterprise. When you spend more time coaching or consulting and less time selling, your business expands exponentially, with less sales effort on your part. ●

Key Benefits of Team Coaching

For Your Client:

- Helps leader-managers share their vision
- Greater team alignment and focus
- Less team push-back to change
- Enhanced productivity
- More effective teams
- Increased outputs
- Faster, more visible results
- More demonstrable ROI from your services

For You:

- More business
- Longer team engagements
- Less time and effort spent on generating new sales
- Opportunity to expand from one client to teams and whole enterprises

Turning the Tide

Handling sales objections

You may think it's harder to sell your coaching or consulting services to multiple clients than to just one, but it may be easier than you think. Here are a few simple ways to address potential sales objectives your clients may have:

Objection: "It's more costly."

All clients want to see ROI on any investment they make. You can demonstrate that effective team coaching directly impacts efficiency and productivity. It's actually a greater waste of resources to buy a coaching program that never gets used by the entire team, and helping one leader-manager is only as effective as he or she can get team agreement and implementation.

You can mention an article in the *Harvard Business Review,* which claims that 70 percent of change initiatives fail.* The reason? With only 25 percent of team members implementing the change, how could it be otherwise?

If you can activate 100 percent of the team to embrace the change, you can turn that 70 percent failure rate around, and be a resounding success.

Objection: "We're all so busy. My whole team could never get together for ongoing coaching sessions."

In today's hectic workplace, this may well be a legitimate issue. However, with today's mobile team coaching tools, even this objection can be surmounted.

With mobile coaching and consulting tools, the various team members could be on the go or even out of the country, and still stay connected, share documents and see each other's targets and priorities, without having to attend meetings.

Objection: "I'm paying for your program myself. My company isn't contributing."

This is sometimes the case, but again, this objection can be overcome. When you meet with your client's boss to clarify their roles and outputs, you can mention what a good decision it was on your client's part to engage your services.

Ask: "If I can demonstrate success with my client, and show how team coaching could benefit your entire enterprise, could I make a presentation to engage the team as a test?"

Then take your business enterprise to a wider audience and watch the great results flood in!

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*Source: *Harvard Business Review*
hbr.org/2013/04/change-management-needs-to-cha

By Janet M. Harvey, MCC, CMC, CCS

Risk Being Bold

The key to generating sustainable excellence

The dilemma with seeking mastery in coaching is that no destination exists. Mastery is personal and unique, defies formulaic answers and is never complete until our last breath. Longing for a truer and deeper experience of engaging with clients is common to every level of practitioner development.

There are useful practices to strengthen skills. However, the pathway to mastery is internal and requires attention toward learning about our essence, the self, stripped of the convenience of personality. This learning requires bold, sovereign choices that we feel compelled to pursue. So the question then is, how do we discover those choices and ensure our whole self is committed?

The vulnerability associated with seeing the essence of our authentic self is often difficult to hold for extended periods of time. Seeing beyond our personality to consider choosing something different is sometimes painful. Perhaps the barrier to expressing our full potential is our attachment to how we shaped ourselves to be in life. That barrier applies equally as client or coach practitioner. What is the reward for our hard work to allow vulnerability? Freedom and ease to show up and be with people spontaneously, without anticipation.

When we have focused our attention externally on becoming someone the world expected or wanted, we come to feel disappointment. We notice something is missing and realize our choices do not generate the harmony and congruence we imagined or wanted. For many people the realizations shared here are held internally, invisible from day-to-day living.

A coaching partnership offers an environment and process to evoke the invisible in an honoring, safe and respectful way. Doing so opens a path

to transform our relationship with life. Our next choice is to surrender the practiced identity and invite our innate capacity for change. To do so is the genius and magic that emerges from accepting ourselves as whole, resourceful, capable and creative anytime, anywhere and with anyone.

"Whatever you can do or dream you can, begin it. Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it."

– Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

Boldness is required for both the client and the coach practitioner. When both choose boldness, it creates a reciprocal and self-sustaining energy for change. When we choose to respond

What is the reward for our hard work to allow vulnerability? Freedom and ease to show up and be with people spontaneously, without anticipation.

spontaneously in any relationship exchange, we expand our freedom. Any pause for analysis or evaluation is replaced with bold, free expression of our experience in the moment. Humor, laughter, joyous tears or catching of the breath are all forms of this expansion of freedom beyond the chosen words of a conversation.

Consider a few recent client conversations that generated feelings of vitality, joy and satisfaction. The expectations about role relax, and impulses to perform recede from view. In place of expectations is a deep trust in what emerges from our conversation. Like the bee that pollinates the flowers and is nourished in the process, the reciprocity between coach and client generates new synergy that is only available through our partnership in the interaction. Here we see the irony of mastery: relationship beyond the self is required to manifest our own evolution.

Be in Sovereign Relationship

To appreciate full potency in being a coach that engages from our core, authentic self, we must be disciplined to perceive, witness and fully embody the unique expression of our individual humanity. Being a sovereign coach requires perceiving through a deeper, internal perspective that is naturally curious about and on behalf of another person; perceiving that is response-agile with each twist and turn a client chooses to explore.

Dedication to building and refining our skill is valuable and important, yet it is insufficient. Rather than building understanding of what works and why, a spontaneous moment allows us to transcend identity and role to be sovereign as coach.

What I have discovered is that the most important starting point is the relationship with myself. When I stand in unconditional self-love I am centered, open and available fully to be in relationship with another without intentional bias. I perceive as a child, with wonder and awe for the miracle of being human.

My full potency lives within me as fully granted power. It is up to me to be responsible to exercise that power. Accepting this premise means that every person possesses the same capacity to be free and at choice about our relationship to life in any moment. As a role model, our way of being stimulates clients to be freer in our coaching relationship and risk creating and developing a more sovereign relationship in the domain of life they want to change. Being sovereign is the source of mastery in building trust and intimacy with clients.

"Seek the wisdom that will untie your knot. Seek the path that demands your whole being."

– Jalāl ad-Dīn Muhammad Rūmī

We must boldly allow spontaneity by trusting that our coaching process stimulates something that neither coach nor client knows will blossom until we invite it. This demands our full presence without leading, manipulating or forecasting.

We must frequently and consistently invite the client to be curious about what is disturbing, disruptive and unknown. As coach we must separate from both the need to know and the need to demonstrate knowing about either the content of the client topic and outcome or the context of the session agreement.

Our focus as coaches is upon the way the client relates, perceives and acts in response to the content and context. Our focus is internal to the client and requires evocative rather than informational curiosity to call forth. Invite clients to describe the experience that is occurring, the sensations, emotions, intuition and sentience that express inner witnessing. Frequently inviting clients to claim the insights that emerge by exploring outside of what is familiar and habitual is the source of inspiration that overcomes inertia for change in behavior.

A sovereign relationship deeply trusts

We must frequently and consistenty invite the client to be curious about what is disturbing, disruptive and unknown.

that what emerges from within each person and therefore the coaching partnership is true and authentic for the client. A path of transformation that is sustaining begins in the moment of awareness that something new has surfaced naturally, organically without condition or coercion.

A coaching partnership will lose the vitality of transformation and ultimately conclude when the purpose and drive for change lacks sovereignty in the relationship. When sovereignty is present we enjoy feelings of reciprocity that heighten positivity and tap our mutual creativity.

At all times the exchange has the potential to be unpredictable, and in the case of a coaching partnership, this is highly empowering.

Reflect for a moment personally about making a change in behavior. Our internal perspective, assumptions, bias and habits are designed to protect us. Often this also means that those indicators of our relationship to a given situation or person shield us from the growth and joy we crave. When we choose to be courageous and grant greater focus toward revealing our invisible drivers of behavior, the opportunity for different choices that are more respectful of our authentic self are available.

With individual sovereignty present in each coach and client, the partnership reveals honest and genuine choices, removing the influence from invisible, unspoken expectations. In choosing to be sovereign clients discover choices that generate integrity and response agility in every domain of life.

Invite Ownership and Commitment

Creating an opportunity for sustainable excellence to manifest in every way a client defines and experiences it is our greatest contribution. We neither predict nor have responsibility for anticipating what serves a client. Bold and unconditional curiosity fueled by trusting our perceiving of the whole of a client is enough.

Clients declare what opens the doorway as wide as possible. We create the opportunity for the client to see more clearly what is waiting on the other side of the door. Through our practice of perceiving-based curiosity, we use our whole being to experience our clients. From our experience of the client during the session, we reflect what is meaningful and relevant for the growth clients declare is most important. Since the compelling force for change is inside the client, the ingredients for sustainable excellence also belong to the client. Our sovereign relationship is a safe laboratory to experiment before clients fully integrating changes.

Ultimately, our commitment to unconditional curiosity as a coach is the key to liberating the compelling and inspiring ideas that a client pursues to manifest sustainable excellence. By allowing clients to influence us through the way we are engaging in a session, we offer a unique view into how the client navigates his or her world on a daily basis.

Here we see the irony of mastery: relationship beyond the self is required to manifest our own evolution.

Here is a principle of sovereignty that I share with all of my clients: we only perceive our impact and influence when we are engaged with another person or persons. When in the role of coach we perceive impact and influence about what our client expresses to us and how we experience it emotionally, intuitively, cognitively and physically. We allow our experience of the client to stimulate our curiosity in the form of a challenge about his or her underlying assumptions and preferences. We invite clients to reflect internally to become aware of what blocks progress toward what he or she wants.

As clients turn attention internally, his or her experience with others surfaces for review. Our engagement in this moment – to call forth and generate clarity about what motivated different choices in the client – is what reveals the source of sustaining change. Awareness is never a habit; it is a practice and an essential ingredient to the change process. Strengthening this practice on behalf of our client is key to sustaining ownership and commitment to change behavior and action toward the excellence desired. ●

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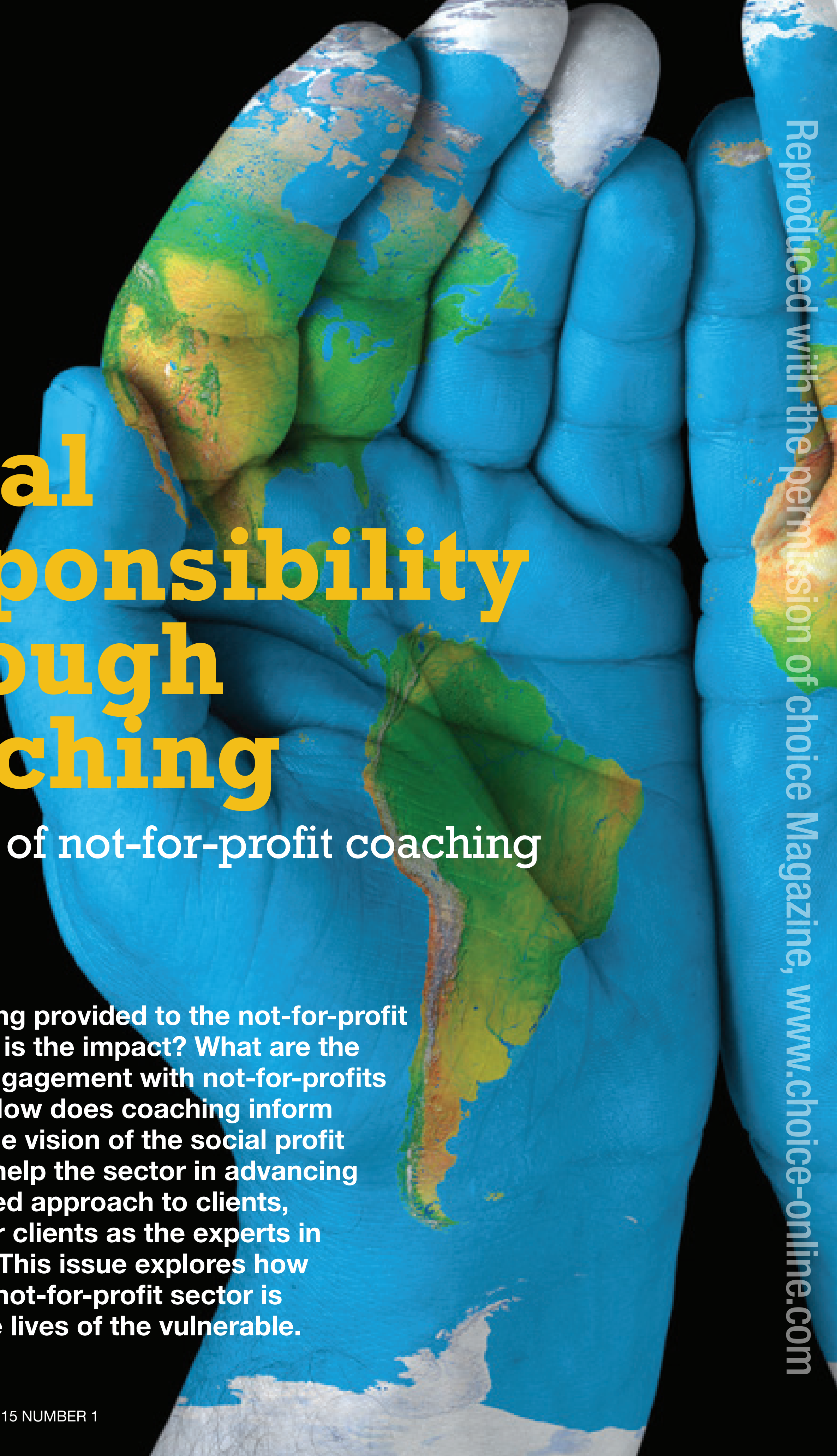

Social Responsibility Through Coaching

The value of not-for-profit coaching

Where is coaching provided to the not-for-profit sector and what is the impact? What are the differences in engagement with not-for-profits vs. for-profits? How does coaching inform and challenge the vision of the social profit sector? Does it help the sector in advancing a strengths-based approach to clients, recognizing their clients as the experts in their own lives? This issue explores how coaching in the not-for-profit sector is transforming the lives of the vulnerable.

FEATURE

By Rick Kennedy, ACC, ATC

Coaching tends to be provided at the most senior levels in the not-for-profit sector, where the levers of power and the container for organizational values are held and safeguarded. The not-for-profit's pursuit of its mission, vision and organizational goals are the shared responsibility of the board of directors and the executive director. The balancing of responsibilities is a dynamic relationship between the board – which creates the vision, articulates the strategic plan and monitors the performance of the organization – and the executive director, who manages the team responsible for the daily work of the organization and maintains the relationship with the board. This means that if you are seeking to coach staff management, clients or volunteers, getting the buy-in from the executive director is essential.

Not-for-profit work is based on the possibility of social transformation, the pursuit of social justice and the creation of a better world. Often categorized as doing "good works" for the betterment of society, such as reducing poverty, educating the public or providing healing, not-for-profits contribute immensely to the development of the social structure that holds our communities together. This sector is also a significant employer that invests in services such as coaching to improve the performance of individuals and teams.

Coaching can support this work through a process of positive transformation based on discovery and reflection, designing actions and accountability that originate in the values of the individual and the organization. Whether coaching is being done for an individual or a team, it will bring to the forefront questions that identify what has meaning and value. What are you noticing? What makes this important? What will you do with this awareness? What are you on this earth to do? Actions and accountability based on these fundamental coaching questions can create a better self, and through the work of the not-for-profit, a better world.

> "The 'currency' in not-for-profit work is not money, but values. In fact, the sector may be devaluing itself by using the term 'not-for-profit.'"

The "currency" in not-for-profit work is not money, but values. In fact, the sector may be devaluing itself by using the term "not-for-profit." Perhaps the term "social improvement organization" would better portray the value of its work; the "valuation" being considered in terms of how everyone can profit through the alleviation of poverty, improved health, increased education and the creation of a more just and equitable society.

Developing a coaching relationship with a not-for-profit often requires a point of entry based on your own alignment with the goals and values of the organization. The "coaching fit" is crucial when coaching individuals or teams working within an organization that has been "bred, birthed and fed" by the values of community members, donors and funders. In a values-driven not-for-profit workplace, people are often attracted to this work as employees or volunteers because it holds personal meaning and value to them. Consensus is highly prized and conflict, competition or controversy is to be avoided. In some organizations this can mean that change, challenging the status quo, or letting something go, can be emotionally charged and difficult. On an inter-personal level, a person may also experience strong disapproval or exclusion if their actions are perceived as outside of the organization's values.

Coaching can inform the vision of a not-for-profit by helping it to embrace its own commitment to transform the world through individual and collective action. Not-for-profits do not have to be "sold" on the notion that the world can be made better through individual actions and people working together. However, they often lack the resources of the private sector for staff development, and decision-making processes can be longer and more complex. They frequently straddle the fiscal years and varying fortunes of funders, which can result in growth spurts, times of inactivity and significant staff turnover. When starting a coaching assignment it's important to clearly identify the time line and the decision makers from the outset. Assess your own ability to be patient and to accept that a lack of action or response may not always signal that there is disinterest in your approach or dissatisfaction with your work.

Be aware that profit-motivated organizations are measured by increased profitability, growth in sales, new products in the pipeline and increased efficiency in operations. For-profit performance is denominated in tangible units that are tied to the bottom line. In contrast, not-for-profit organizations may be criticized if they have large sums of money or compensate employees at prevailing market rates. Charities in particular risk losing donors or their charitable status if they do not operate within narrow administrative margins that might be acceptable within the profit-driven sector. Perhaps their greatest challenge is that serving more clients does not always result in an immediate increase in revenue. It costs organizations to give, and this can result in the organization being stretched to its limits.

When prospecting for not-for-profit clients, explore organizations that connect with your own curiosity and passion for community improvement. Read their annual reports and connect with individuals that have been involved, who may provide additional insight. Consider attending a fundraiser or a community event. Be prepared with a response that aligns with your own values if you are asked to do pro bono work or to make a donation.

> "Coaching can inform the vision of a not-for-profit by helping it to embrace its own commitment to transform the world through individual and collective action."

Explore the coaching possibilities fully and don't assume that your work will be with their clients. Could it be work-

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ing with a board chair or executive to get clarity on what values are important to them when creating a new vision or service for the organization? Does the executive director feel "stuck" or overwhelmed? Is the team struggling, feeling undervalued and burnt out? Are they in need of connecting with what makes their work meaningful to them and rediscovering what success looks like?

"These family coaches come to their clients not as experts telling them what to do, but as coaches who support them."

Many not-for-profits have a vision statement that affirms their commitment to client empowerment and people living full and rewarding lives. Try to determine, in advance of your first meeting, if the organization engages clients and people who are affected by the organization's mandate in its decision making. Depending on the focus of the not-for-profit and if your coaching prospect is open, this will be an opportunity to discover how the organization recognizes that the people they serve are not powerless and broken. How does the organization honor their resilience, value their decision-making and support their right to try, fail or succeed at a chosen task?

Recognize that in doing this work you may be working with people who serve vulnerable communities. The impact of trauma, multiple loss and bearing witness is real. Your own vulnerability will be present in serving these clients. It would be wise to be supported by your own coach who can help you to be accountable for maintaining your own boundaries and self-care.

The not-for-profit sector could be described as an arena of human possibility, where hope battles injustice and the value of every life is celebrated. Not-for-profit coaching champions the human drive to overcome adversity and despair. It has a ripple effect; by coaching the life of one, our coaching can benefit the lives of many.

Building a Bridge

Social entrepreneurs & leadership coaching

By Susan Jones, Esq., ACC, Holly Tompson, PhD, ACC & Wendee Wolfson, MBA, ACC

Through our experiences coaching early stage social entrepreneurs, we have studied the profound value of coaching for this unique group of entrepreneurs. Social entrepreneurs comprise an important subset of entrepreneurs in the U.S. and worldwide. While they have economic goals, they also pursue a social mission (people and planet) that benefits society.

This article discusses the findings of our research which examines how leadership coaching, a personalized form of individual and professional development co-created by the client and the coach, can help social entrepreneurs – often millennials age 25-34 – realize their dual goals of profit generation and social purpose. In addition to conducting research, learning from our own coaching clients, and reflecting on our experiences, we interviewed leadership coaches, business incubator personnel, angel investors, social entrepreneurs and business professors.

The outcome of our research, although not exhaustive, can be summed up in the mnemonic and metaphor of a BRIDGE:

Balance
Relationships
Isolation
Dynamics
Grounded
Emotion

These are the areas we found ripe for leadership coaching. These young social entrepreneurs are building the bridge as they cross.

Dees defined social entrepreneurs as people who are "change agents in the social sector by adopting a mission to create and sustain social value (not just private value)…"; who "relentlessly pursue new opportunities to serve that mission" while "engaging in a process of continuous innovation, adaptation, and learning, acting boldly without being limited by resources currently in hand." They also exhibit "heightened accountability to the constituencies served for the outcomes created."

According to the *Global Entrepreneurship Monitor Special Topic Report on Social Entrepreneurship*, social entrepreneurship is a growing phenomenon and about 3.2 percent of individuals worldwide are trying to start a social enterprise, while commercial enterprises worldwide average 7.6 percent. In the US, 8.3 percent of participants in the Global Entrepreneurship Monitor reported leading a social enterprise and 7 percent are starting one.

The uptick in social entrepreneurship, fueled by advances in technology, is supported by university new venture and pitch competitions offering prize money for winning ideas. Business incubators like S & R Foundation's Halcyon House and The Aspen Institute's Network of Development Entrepreneurs support social entrepreneurs and the businesses they are creating.

Researchers have discovered that social entrepreneurs are highly dependent on social capital for starting and managing their social ventures and that more than "traditional" entrepreneurs, they rely on their personal and professional connections in the community to carry out their mission.

How Can Leadership Coaches Help Social Entrepreneurs?

Coaching is critical for early stage entrepreneurs, and while most entrepreneurs value mentoring and business coaching, leadership coaching is different. Social entrepreneurs often *want* coaching on strategy and transactional requirements, while they often *need* it around emotional intelligence and presence. Their influence skills become critical to their success, affecting their ability to enroll team members, raise funding, and develop customers.

Leadership coaching facilitates change and is transformational, forward looking, focused on possibilities, and "why not?" thinking. It goes beyond a purely tactical or current view, narrowly focused on operations and incremental improvements (though coaching engagements may begin with or encompass tactical changes towards the broader goal).

"Leadership coaching can help social entrepreneurs consider the vexing question of how to balance business success with their commitment to social entrepreneurship."

Leadership coaches can help entrepreneurs with issues associated with their youth and inexperience, lack of formal work experience and a host of other issues. Coaches can ask powerful questions to unearth awareness and create support mechanisms and tools. Coaches champion clients' opportunities and potential, encourage them to stretch based on their aspirations and personal strengths, and challenge clients to see blind spots, new possibilities and alternative scenarios.

Building the BRIDGE

Balance

Young social entrepreneurs wrestle with the daunting challenge and combined pressure of feeling solely responsible for the success of the business while managing teams, advisors and investors, and often, young families. Leadership coaching can help social entrepreneurs consider the vexing question of how to balance business success with their commitment to social entrepreneurship and to consider compromises that often have to be made to get the enterprise up and running.

> "Social entrepreneurs often want coaching on strategy and transactional requirements, while they often need it around emotional intelligence and presence."

What if a key funder wants to alter the vision or modify the product? What if the transportation costs for an eco-friendly import exceed the potential sales? What if a mentor suggests testing the service in an easier population to access and assess? A coach can provide a safe place for clients to explore such conflicts, the necessity that feels like compromise or the compromise that feels like a sacrifice of the vision.

Relationships

Social entrepreneurs quickly learn that creating a solution for a social problem may require a whole new network or a significant expansion of an existing network. They must learn to manage relationships with various constituencies like co-founders, team members, investors, stakeholders and customers.

Clients sometimes come to individual coaching sessions after a dilemma has arisen, often around interactions with co-founders or team members. Coaches can support clients around these relationships, helping them understand the contributions of their team members and deal with conflicts between collaboration, efficiency and productivity.

Moreover, coaches can help social entrepreneurs practice the best ways to communicate with their networks. This may be particularly useful for millennials, who are adept at text and email but often less comfortable with in-person or telephone communication.

Isolation

Social entrepreneurs often feel isolated even in the midst of expanding their networks and growing their teams. Although incubators, accelerators and shared workspaces create a feeling of community, our research found that social entrepreneurs still felt alone and feared vulnerability even in those environments.

Coaches can provide that safe place to be vulnerable and help clients recognize that they don't have to be the smartest person in the room or have all of the answers. Coaches can instead help them learn how to ask the best questions, benefit from recommended books and other resources, and figure out how to get answers.

Dynamic

As entrepreneurs bring on advisors and investors, the voices around the table grow louder and more numerous, each with its own agenda. While board members and investors provide guidance, connections and funding towards growing the business, leadership coaches advocate for learning around personal growth. Frank Ball, founding coach at Georgetown's Institute for Transformational Leadership and an active 'angel investor' notes that for many of those around the table, "the human side is not the last thing they look at – they *never* look at it."

The coaching relationship is most of all a place of safety, like shelter from the storm. In the midst of all of the surrounding noise, a coach can assist entrepreneurs with ways to find their voice, recognize and define their self, and develop clarity of purpose.

Grounded

Media hype about entrepreneurship, such as the television shows *Shark Tank* and *The Profit*, aim to illustrate the highs and lows of entrepreneurship while entertaining audiences, but underrepresent both the daily challenges faced by entrepreneurs and the range of skills needed to succeed.

As Ryan Ross, Program Director at the Halcyon Incubator, observed for Halcyon Fellows, those ups and downs can be jarring. In our interviews, both coaches and clients alike reported that a strong sense of mission and clarity of values was the grounding force that created resilience and sustained young entrepreneurs during the startup phase.

A coach can help them examine opportunities, hold them accountable to the priorities they have established and manage timeframes. When faced with difficult decision points, coach Mike McGinley advises always asking that essential coaching question, "for the sake of what?"

Emotion

Daniel Goleman's work on emotional intelligence indicates that important prerequisites for managing others effectively are self-awareness and then self-management. A coach can help entrepreneurs become more observant of the ways their actions are received by others.

One of our social entrepreneur interviewees said that she appreciated her coach's ability to provide a mirror to help her see mental and physical habits, such as limiting beliefs and tone of voice, which one rarely sees about oneself. The ability to reflect on the impact of one's habits is an essential component of a much longer-term effort in self-development, creating abilities that are valuable towards leadership over a lifetime.

> "Coaches can provide that safe place to be vulnerable and help clients recognize that they don't have to be the smartest person in the room or have all of the answers."

In addition to enabling them to become better observers of themselves and others, coaches help entrepreneurs create process, priorities and pathways. Along the way, coaches help entrepreneurs notice what data they take in and how to process that data, all of which can lead to robust conversations, assessing whether to stay with their current game plan, pivot, or move on.

Advice on Leadership Coaching from Social Entrepreneurs

Prior to coaching, most of our entrepreneurs viewed vulnerability as a liability and felt that there was an implicit presumption that any sort of intervention meant that one needed help or was doing something wrong. During coaching, they appreciated, almost above all else, the opportunity to be vulnerable in a safe setting.

Post-engagement, their advice to other social entrepreneurs is to embrace coaching, talk out loud about the hard stuff, reach out to others to enhance the chances for success, try not to be defensive, and accept that this is about more than business growth; it is about long-term personal development.

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FEATURE

Coaching Leaders in Nonprofits

Understanding their unique context

By Terry H. Hildebrandt, PhD, PCC

Coaching leaders and executives in nonprofits differs in significant ways from coaching for-profit leaders, and professional coaches need to consider these differences before engaging with the nonprofit sector. Understanding the organizational context of nonprofit leaders is critical for executive coaches to understand.

In this article, I will explore five core areas including mission, fundraising, staff management, stakeholder management, and budget concerns.

1. Managing Purpose, Vision & Mission

While managing purpose and vision is important for all executives, this skill is critical for leaders of nonprofits. While for-profit organizations always have as one of their goals to make money, nonprofits exclusively exist to serve the needs of their key stakeholders.

Having a clear purpose, mission and vision enable the leaders to rally support, fundraise, and energize employees and volunteers. A strong purpose statement describes why the organization exists and typically defines its customers,

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products and services, and the value it provides. A strong vision statement provides a vivid image of success. The mission statement distinctly describes how the organization accomplishes its purpose and how it will achieve its vision.

2. Fundraising: Philanthropy & Grants Management

Funding a nonprofit is one of the core responsibilities of the senior leadership team. While some nonprofits certainly charge for their services, many do not and need to find alternative sources of funding which commonly include philanthropy and grants management.

Senior leaders need to spend a significant portion of their time being the "face" of the organization to potential donors and other key stakeholders that also become evangelists for the organization. Hiring professional staff with experience in grant writing is critical if that is to be a significant source of funding.

Maintaining regular communications with donors through recognition and appreciation events enables an ongoing dialogue with key stakeholders. In some cases, major donors may also be part of the board of directors, which enables close ties between leadership and fundraising.

3. Staff Management

Motivating and engaging staff at a nonprofit is also frequently different from for-profit organizations. Many nonprofits depend heavily on volunteers to support their staffing needs. Motivating a volunteer can be the ultimate test of a leader's ability to engage staff.

Volunteers need to feel connected to the mission of the organization and gain personal satisfaction from their labor of love. Volunteers can be motivated by many different factors, including social connection, giving back to the community, learning and growth, and personal recognition, to name a few.

Spending time with volunteers to truly understand their personal motivations is critical to connecting them with activities and social opportunities that align with their interests.

Paid staff members also frequently have unique needs at a nonprofit. Many are drawn to nonprofits for the personal satisfaction of contributing to the mission of the organization. The staff may hold nonprofit leaders to a higher standard of ethics and accountability, since they may expect more from nonprofit leaders.

Paid staff also focus more on their own personal engagement since many agree to work at nonprofits with a lower salary than they could get elsewhere. Ensuring nonprofit paid employees are fully engaged should be a major focus of nonprofit leaders.

4. Stakeholder Management & Organizational Savvy

Nonprofit leaders are often faced with more stakeholders that require more organizational and political savvy to manage effectively. Stakeholders frequently include donors, customers, volunteers, paid staff, directors, community leaders, government leaders and suppliers.

Often these stakeholders may have competing demands that require executives to balance the needs of all the key players. The reputation of a nonprofit can make or break its success in fundraising and in attracting customers. Government and community leaders often are key partners and these relationships must be nurtured. Exquisite political savvy is required for nonprofit leaders to effectively build and maintain their allies.

5. Maintaining Budgets

Another common challenge, especially with smaller nonprofits, is maintaining the budget. For professional coaches, I strongly recommend offering a nonprofit rate to reflect the financial realities of nonprofits.

Coaching nonprofit leaders can also be a great way for coaches to give back to the community in the areas of their personal interests. Early on, when I was beginning my journey toward ICF certification, I volunteered at nonprofits to log coaching hours as well as support the organizations' missions.

> Exquisite political savvy is required for nonprofit leaders to effectively build and maintain their allies.

In addition, volunteering at nonprofits can possibly open doors for later paid work for coaches who wish to engage in the nonprofit world.

In summary, executive and leadership coaches need to gain awareness of the unique context and challenges that most nonprofit leaders face. This is especially important when assessing nonprofit leaders' effectiveness.

Coaches should include questions addressing the above five core areas in stakeholder interviews, online 360 assessments, and development plans. Having a working knowledge of these five areas can be useful for coaches working in the nonprofit leadership development arena.

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Helping the Helpers

Coaching those who serve the vulnerable

By Ruth Ann Harnisch, MMC (IAC), BCC & Renee Freedman, PCC

When you know that your client's work is the difference between life and death for some of the most vulnerable people in the world, your coaching takes on new meaning. We've coached people whose responsibilities are so great, they themselves become vulnerable to the pressure. Our clients often face danger, fear, threats and grief as they tackle the intractable problems without a quick fix. Coaching helps them carry on, build their resilience and maximize their service to others.

Harvesting Coaching Wisdom

When we met Alex Petroff, he was at the helm of a grand experiment in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). His vision: teach farming techniques to people so they could grow food and lift themselves from generations of poverty.

The DRC is known as a danger zone, with years of civil war leaving the population near the bottom of the world's development index – hardly any education, short lifespans, dire poverty, violence and crime, sometimes close enough to affect Alex's enterprise. After the organization Alex founded, World Villages International, attracted major funding, he decided to accept the pro bono coaching offered as a benefit of the fellowship program through which we met him. Frankly, he felt he had little choice. He thought he needed to at least give the appearance of being open to strategic support in managing this new money.

He hadn't wanted a coach before. He doubted the results would be worth his time and effort. He didn't think any coach could understand his situation. However, when his volunteer coach, Bill Carrier, challenged Alex to list ten things to address in ten sessions, and as each session unraveled a knotty problem, Alex was amazed.

The biggest surprise was that the solutions didn't come from changing the challenging circumstances of working in the DRC, but from changes within Alex himself. He realized that he'd been approaching life with problem-solving skills he developed as a child, and he saw that he had simply not evolved. With Bill's help, Alex unlocked the potential of his brilliant adult mind and equipped himself with tools and strategies that gave him a fresh approach to every issue.

The five-plus years that Bill Carrier and Alex Petroff have been coaching together prove that even the most reluctant client can come to describe coaching as "magic," as Alex does. Now Alex is the magician, using his own coaching skills to help others become the best they can be.

Coaching Tip: Overcome a client's skepticism by calmly demonstrating your competence, perhaps by helping the client discover a previously unseen facet of personality or character.

Finding Your Oxygen Mask

When she asked for an emergency appointment with a coach, we knew this self-sufficient, confident, leader of a nonprofit organization was in trouble. Literally, lives were in her hands. It was her dream, doing this lifesaving work, but it had become a nightmare from which she could not awaken. She was becoming paralyzed by the fear of causing death, of allowing death to happen on her watch, of being responsible for deaths that would follow other deaths.

> Jimmy used coaching to explore business models. Now his coaching journey is helping him further hone his leadership skills, shape his organization's culture and mentor others.

Her coach listened to this litany of sadness and guilt, and heard desperation. In a single session, they talked through the reasons she wanted to do this work. She began to remember the joy in success, and to acknowledge the inevitability that some would die.

The coach reminded her about the safety briefing on airplanes: "Put on your own oxygen mask before assisting others." The client recognized that her own self-care was now her most important job, because she can't help anyone else if she's not physically and mentally able to do the difficult work she truly wants to do.

She put on her own oxygen mask. And she is saving lives every day.

Coaching Tip: Help your clients prioritize their own well-being because this is what keeps them able to serve others.

Who Helps The Helpers?

You don't want to meet Jimmy Lin professionally. He's the co-founder of the Rare Genomics Institute, and if you're seeking the advice of this acclaimed scientist, you are sick, what you have is rare, your doctor is baffled, there's no national organization calling attention to whatever it is you have. Yet Jimmy and his team are going to help you.

However Jimmy's outstanding academic achievements in genomics might help patients, they didn't prepare him to run a nonprofit, become an industry leader, or manage a workforce of over 150 people. Jimmy loves research, studying, and learning, so he looks at his work with a coach as a learning journey. He set out to learn about different models of leadership so he could acquire the skills and habits that would serve him best.

The Rare Genomics Institute cannot exist or fulfill its mission without money. Jimmy used coaching to explore business models, deciding whether for-profit, not-for-profit, or hybrid models with partners would be most effective. Now his coaching journey is helping him further hone his leadership skills, shape his organization's culture and mentor others.

Coaching Tip: Help your clients build a sustainable business to support the work.

Finding Value Through Coaching

Alexander McLean learned as a teenager that some people have no value in the eyes of others, like the AIDS patients of

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Uganda whose families had abandoned them. As he bathed them, fed them, prayed for them, advocated for them and learned from them, he was developing the foundation of his life's next great work.

Meeting other young men his age about to be executed for crimes that do not merit the death penalty elsewhere, Alexander felt compelled to serve those living on the edge of society. And serve he did, immersing himself in the African Prisons Project, where he raced against the executioner to champion the legal rights of the forgotten and condemned.

Overworked and overwhelmed, Alexander turned to coaching. He gained self-confidence, developed his organizational management skills, and increased his competence and capacity as a leader. This eventually led to training African prison guards to use coaching skills to help do a better job managing the prisons and to support the development of staff members and prisoners. Nonetheless, Alexander notes that the crafting of a full and joyful personal life is the greatest value he's received from coaching. Coaching gave him structure, accountability, and perspective that enabled him to detach from being consumed by his work and to enrich his personal life.

Coaching Tip: Help your client design their lives so that they can experience joy, even if their work takes them to sad places.

The kind of person who chooses to serve the most vulnerable is often at risk for becoming vulnerable, too, as the burdens they bear weigh heavily on their minds. Through our work with nonprofit leaders, we know that coaching is a lifeline for those wonderful individuals. Coaches provide steady support to sustain them, a platform to explore risk taking, and encouragement to make self-care a priority. It's as challenging as it sounds, and it's the most rewarding coaching work we do.

FEATURE

Coming Together in Battle Creek

Coaching as a powerful tool for addressing community challenges

By Deborah Howard, Esq., PCC, MSOD

What happens when coaching skills become integrated in the work of community members coming together to tackle community challenges?

The community of Battle Creek, Michigan found out when local organizations and funders engaged in a collaborative effort to provide coaching skills training to various social service organizations. They had no idea that their work would spark a community-wide effort to increase racial equity in that city.

The work started when Early Childhood Connections (ECC), an organization that helps parents better prepare their children for school, received funding to use a "coaching model" as part of an innovative program to provide resources and support to families. Every family with a newborn is given the option of signing up to get a "family coach" to work with them until their child reaches four years of age and is ready to start school.

These family coaches are community-based workers, not professionally trained coaches (although some have gone on to become certified coaches). Leadership that Works (LTW), a coaching certification training organization, was brought in to provide training in coaching skills. Through the Coaching for Community Transformation (CCT) program, they helped these family coaches explore ways to apply coaching skills to more effectively serve their constituents.

The training consists of learning basic coaching skills, such as asking empowering questions, listening deeply, and engaging in difficult conversations. Participants learn that, as family coaches, their role is not to "fix" anything; rather their role is to partner with families to help them discover their own solutions to the challenges they face. As a result, these family coaches come to their clients not as experts telling them what to do, but as coaches who support them in identifying their own strengths, making their own choices, and taking responsibility and actions to achieve their goals.

As ECC began to see the empowering nature of this approach, they invited their own staff members and their community partners to attend their trainings. By integrating

> These family coaches come to their clients not as experts telling them what to do, but as coaches who support them.

coaching skills into their work, these community workers found that they are able to:

- Develop stronger, more productive partnerships with their clients;
- Release the weight and responsibility of trying to solve their clients' problems; and
- Help their clients address and overcome their challenges.

Over time, ECC invited increasingly more community organizations and individuals to participate in the coaching skills training in an effort to integrate this coaching model throughout the Battle Creek community. They strategically targeted organizations and individuals who had influence in the commu-

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nity, were doing similar kinds of work, and supported ECC's mission. As a result, a wide range of individuals from social services organizations in the Battle Creek community, including social workers, mental health workers, health workers, volunteers, educators, funders, executive directors and board members, started integrating coaching skills into their interactions with their constituents and within their own organizations.

This meant that community-based organizations from across the city began to use a coaching approach in the way they offer direct services and work with the populations they serve. Using this method, they provide clients with skills to better advocate for themselves and reach their goals.

The individuals who participated in LTW's CCT training were so taken with the coaching approach that when the W.K. Kellogg Foundation funded the creation of the Center for Diversity and Innovation (CDI) to promote racial equity in Battle Creek, they advocated for coaching skills training to be included in that grant. Therefore, in addition to other programming and educational opportunities, CDI coordinates the coaching skills training provided by LTW that supports racial equity work.

An unforeseen benefit of these trainings is the diversity of the individuals who participate. Attendees come from different races, cultures, and classes, as well as from a wide range of organizations and positions in Battle Creek. These include nonprofit organizations, local school districts, the fire department, faith-

> The focus is on supporting leaders to make changes in policies and practices that support an organizational climate and culture that is truly equitable.

based groups, as well as individuals such as civic leaders, retirees, and city council members.

The CCT coaching skills training integrates racial equity into the curriculum and gives participants the opportunity to practice coaching skills in cross-race, cross-cultural, cross-class and cross-organizational pairings. By working together in this experiential training, these community members learn the skills needed to dialogue, often for the first time, about current racial equity issues in Battle Creek. Participants leave with new skills and rich cross-cultural experiences that prepare them to use these skills throughout the community in support of racial equity.

One community member who participated in both racial equity and coaching skills trainings explained how the CCT program effectively promotes racial equity. He said, "When I completed the racial equity training, I learned a lot and my awareness had increased, but I had no idea how to put what I learned into practice. Through the review and application of coaching skills, listening to those who are different from me and being curious, now I know how to have difficult conversations across race about issues of racial equity."

Virginia Kellogg, one of the original LTW coach trainers, points out why CCT trainings have such significant impact: "As part of LTW's training, participants practice coaching with each other, which involves working on real issues in their lives, organizations and the community. We discovered that this breaks down all sorts of silos that have been in the community for a long time. In addition to giving people the skills they need to have difficult conversations about race and equity, the CCT training enables participants to develop authentic relationships across race, class, cultures and organizations."

CDI is now working to better integrate the racial equity and coaching skills training programs, seeing them both as essential parts of enhancing racial equity in the community. The most recent example is the Leading for Transformation Equity Workshop being held for organizational and institutional leaders throughout the city. The focus is on supporting leaders to make changes in policies and practices that support an organizational climate and culture that is truly equitable. In each session of the workshop, leaders learn and practice coaching skills. Integrating coaching skills into the equity work provides participants with tools that support the conversations and interpersonal connections that are essential to create sustainable organizational and community change. Each leader also benefits from five coaching sessions to support them in their planning for and implementation of equity practices.

Jorge Zeballos, executive director of CDI, sees coaching skills as "a powerful tool in helping individuals think through issues of racial equity in a non-threatening way and in ways that open up the possibility of considering issues they have not considered before. It became clear to me that it is critical to engage in these hard conversations and help others see why racial equity is important, using open inquiry rather than pointing fingers or blaming."

In a small community like Battle Creek, as more people go through these trainings, they are increasingly able to work together more collaboratively not only across organizations and agencies, but across race, culture and class

> By working together in this experiential training, these community members learn the skills needed to dialogue, often for the first time, about current racial equity issues.

throughout the community. Coaching skills training provides the foundation required to help this community imagine what is possible when diverse groups of individuals have the skills they need to work together to more effectively tackle the challenges of creating racial equity. ●

Case Study: Red Cross

Building not-for-profit leadership capacity through trust and volunteer partnerships

By Vikki G. Brock, MCC, EMBA

Many senior coaches reserve space in their practice for pro bono coaching to the not-for-profit sector, while others specialize in providing coaching to this sector for reduced rates. And many coaches sit on not-for-profit boards where their coaching expertise and business experience is beneficial and valued. For the past several years I provided pro bono coaching and strategic leadership team support to the American Red Cross Central California Region and the larger Pacific Division. Read how this came about and how it has benefitted the organization and me.

My paid clients are in the for-profit sector. To set some context, the primary difference in engagement with not-for-profits and for-profits is the passion of the people involved in not-for-profits for the organization's vision and their ability to make a difference. This is followed by the leadership skills required of not-for-profit staff to motivate, work with, and sustain a strong volunteer network. Volunteers are the life-blood of not-for-profits like the American Red Cross.

This article will address how I got involved with the American Red Cross, the development of this relationship over the past two-plus years, the strengths-based approach used, and the impact of coaching in the Red Cross Central

Strengths-Based Dialogue

What does it mean to be a strengths-based organization?
What do we do with this knowledge with our regional teams?
What do we do with this knowledge within our Division?
How should this impact the work we do together?

Coast region and West Coast division. Learning points for the reader include:

1) How existing relationships can lead to social responsibility opportunities;

2) Pro-bono and/or not-for-profit coaching's value in your business;

3) Joy and fulfillment of making a difference in your own community.

In addition to my own recollections and observations, I include those of Jim McGee, the CEO of the Central California Red Cross region, providing the client perspective.

1) How existing relationships can lead to social responsibility opportunities

In September 2014 I received an email from Mike Meko, an existing executive client who was on the board of directors for one of the local Red Cross chapters within the Central California region. This email in part stated: "There are currently 22 board members in Ventura but it's a list of movers and shakers in the community and I thought you would fit in well. They are looking for people who are well connected but also individuals that can add to the group."

Now, I have been on the boards of several not-for-profits over my 30-plus years in business. The experiences were rewarding; however, at this career stage my interests were in providing coaching and consulting, without the scheduled commitment to being on a board. Nevertheless, I indicated I would consider the opportunity and the next email introduced me to James McGee, the CEO of the Central California Red Cross region.

In his email to Jim, Mike stated, "I have worked with Vikki Brock over the past four years or so. I thought she may be a good candidate for the Ventura board and the American Red Cross, especially given the changes we are going through and her expertise."

The changes referred to a series of major organizational changes, most recently a restructuring to include seven additional counties in central California.

Jim and I met at a coffee shop on Main Street in Ventura. I was impressed by his leadership presence, commitment to community and to the Red Cross. Jim openly shared details about himself, the Red Cross, the challenges he was facing, and his desire that I join the board.

In this conversation I realized that my concept of the Red Cross supporting blood donations and disasters only was entirely incorrect. Jim shared the broader Red Cross mission and the programs and services delivered daily across his entire region, including some incredible work with local military, their families, and veterans.

Again, my desire was not to be on a board; it was to make a difference through coaching and consulting. On November 3, 2014, we agreed that my best-fit role would be to provide coaching and consulting to Jim and his regional leadership team. A win-win. I would realize later in our partnership that our work together would be a foreshadowing of things to come.

Jim McGee: *"I quickly realized in my first meeting with Vikki that there were stronger fits elsewhere. The two of us were willing to get there quickly because of our willingness to be up front about interests, strengths, our needs, and availability. In earlier stages of my career, we would be referring to this as 'partnership exploration' or perhaps even 'consultative selling.'"*

2) Pro bono and/or not-for-profit coaching's value in your business

Jim was the ideal client. He struck me as a business executive looking to bring his passion for leadership and corporate experience to Red Cross and was committed to building a high-performing organization. This was energizing for me.

For our first formal coaching session he came with clear goals, specific actions to take/not take, and what to do when he gets into trouble. His two primary goals were to:

- strengthen his role as coach with his direct reports, and
- invest and become really good at leading productive senior team meetings.

Jim had already begun implementing a strengths-based culture using the Gallup Strengths Finder and the Strengths-Based Leadership book.

Jim McGee: *"As we began discussing a 'leadership volunteer' role with our local Red Cross, two things came together beautifully. The first was a connection between Vikki and me. We both saw the need for a connection (as coaches do) and I knew I needed someone that I could trust given the help I needed and the work ahead of our organization in the midst of several restructurings and mergers. Second, I had to* *commit to investing the time necessary to help Vikki help us. Not only clients being responsible for the hired consultants success, as a volunteer manager, I needed to make the investment into Vikki to not only help us, but to set her up for a great experience with Red Cross."*

On July 14-15, 2015, Jim held an all-team meeting in Ojai, California with the goal of developing trust within his leadership team. This was the first time the entire restructured region had gotten together. A few months earlier a working team developed a set of guiding principles that were unveiled at this meeting and set the foundation for Red Cross culture and behavior. Jim and I strategized on the meeting agenda before and lessons learned after the meeting.

Jim McGee: *"Vikki's investment in the team and speaking with each of my direct reports prior to the meeting helped her build relationships early with team members. These conversations also set the tone for the discussion when we were together. Our team made significant progress over the course of these two days and proved to be a critical turning point for our region. What I realized down the road was that in working with Vikki, I was also modeling the type of relationship we want to have with leadership volunteers."*

During one of our conversations about building a strengths-based culture, Jim asked if I would be willing to support the Western Division Red Cross Regional CEO meeting scheduled for late May, 2015. Of course I said yes.

With the goal to create stronger and more impactful leaders, we used the Gallup's Strengths Based Leadership (SBL) book and assessment to engage in a meaningful dialogue around leadership strengths. Each Regional CEO took the assessment and participated in a 1-on-1 confidential debrief via phone with me. I was also privileged to work with Kathleen Sack, Director of Talent, Organization, and Development from Red Cross headquarters in Washington, DC in designing the facilitation at the May meeting (see "Strengths-Based Dialogue sidebar). As I was traveling in Kenya during the meeting, Kathleen facilitated the strengths discussion in what was a great meeting.

Jim McGee: *"It was encouraging to not only have Vikki active with my peer group but also to be having such a focus on people – our strengths and how our strengths play out as leaders. In most organizations, the laser focus on achieving results, managing our financial position, revenue generation, program and service delivery is at the expense of leading and investing in our people.*

"For some of my colleagues, working with Vikki directly not only brought new insight, but also recognition that they have an opportunity to recruit and use volunteers similarly back in their respective regions. As a trusted volunteer, Vikki continues to keep me focused and challenged on my team as the local Red Cross leader."

In early June 2015, Jim came for our coaching session on my 50-foot boat where I live and work, and this is where we have been meeting ever since. Our work together has been very fulfilling, including coaching typical CEO personnel challenges and difficult conversations, building a strengths-based culture, and developing the leadership team.

In addition, confidential coaching has been provided to several regional leaders. On the consulting side there has been agenda collaboration and facilitation for off-sites, creating strengths team matrix grids and training Red Cross staff to debrief Strengths Finder assessments, and participating in strategic initiatives at the regional and divisional levels.

In the past 18 months, Jim has continued to develop trust and capability within his leadership and all staff teams. My work with Jim continues to focus on strengthening relationships across his leadership team with the goals of knowing each other better and leveraging collective strengths; providing clarity around priorities, strategies, and goals; and to deepen trust and commitment to the work ahead.

It has also been encouraging to see Jim's role shift more to a coaching role over the past 18 months. In Jim's words to me, "The work you did around trust, starting up at the Ojai retreat, was a difference maker for our team at that time post-merger. The investment you made in each team member was and continues to be significant. You are a trusted partner and member of our team."

Fast-forward to August 4, 2016 in Oxnard, California

Talent Discussion & Succession Planning Conversation

1. Current role / duration in role
2. Major accomplishments
3. Any shortcomings / misses
4. Strengths (Gallup)
5. Weakness / Development Areas
6. Performance Recommendation (see attachment)
7. Next Role / Steps (see 9 box matrix)

when the leadership team met for its annual Talent Discussion and Succession Planning conversation (see sidebar on previous page). Working with Jim, Kelley Reszetylo, regional volunteer officer, Dylan Houck, intern volunteer, and several others, we met to develop a volunteer strategy conversation for the meeting. In her first major facilitation activity, Kelley stepped up to facilitate the volunteer conversation – leadership development in action.

Jim McGee: *"Having three leadership volunteers participate in such important roles in the meeting – Vikki; John Supino facilitating our Strategy framework and work; and Susan Wolf facilitating our work around talent calibration and development (to be rolled out later with volunteer leadership) – speaks to the significant progress we've made engaging talented, professional volunteers in our work.*

"You might ask, why focus on volunteer leadership? Well, in the Red Cross (and most not-for-profits), the ratio of volunteer staff to paid staff is 50:1. Remarkably, on average 95 percent of Red Cross programs and services are delivered by volunteers. As you know, motivating and engaging paid staff is challenging; imagine the leadership skills required to motivate, engage, recognize and retain volunteers in life-saving work that takes place 24/7 in every community across the country.

"Our meetings in Oxnard and Cambria were significant steps forward from our initial Ojai retreat. Our ongoing commitment to building trust based relationships within our team, our guiding behaviors, and establishing greater clarity around goals, priorities, and results, our team could shift to the most critical strategy of the Red Cross – engaging passionate and talented volunteers. The partnership Vikki and I have been able to establish is one that we desire to replicate dozens of times over across our ten county local Red Cross region.

"This was the focus of our time in Oxnard and Cambria - how do we begin to hold ourselves accountable while resourcing our teams to achieve this vision. Having leadership volunteers like Vikki in the room with us during this journey is an example of the mutual work it takes as well as the 'huge win / win' for everyone when it works.

"Yes, as volunteers we want to have an impact and make a difference, be part of a community, and be recognized in our own individualized way. Most important, I believe, are the relationships we have with the people we are making that

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difference with. My team trusts Vikki, has benefited from her expertise and coaching, and loves working with her."

3) Joy and fulfillment of making a difference in your own community.

As a coach and consultant for over 20 years, very little of my business activity has been in my own community. My relationship with the Red Cross has allowed me to do the work I love with talented professionals, while making a difference through others. Meeting other Red Cross volunteer leaders is an added bonus. In hindsight, I would have agreed to be an official volunteer when first asked in February 2015.

So, how do you find the ideal volunteer opportunity? Think through the questions in the sidebar below, beginning with the causes or issues that matter most to you. The key with volunteering is your intent. For me it was to give back in the best way I know how, through coaching and consulting. And I have gotten so much more than I have given – it's truly a win-win for all. •

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Finding the Right Volunteer Opportunity For You

- What causes or issues matter the most to me?
- Do I want to volunteer for something that uses the skills I apply in my paying work or do I want to do something completely different?
- What would I most like to learn by volunteering?
- What don't I want to do as a volunteer?
- Do I want an ongoing, regularly-scheduled assignment, or a short-term assignment, or a one-time assignment?
- Do I want to work alone or with a group? Or with a friend or my family?
- Am I willing to participate in a training course or do I want to start my volunteer work immediately?
- With what kind of people do I want to work--both in terms of who is receiving services and who my co-workers might be?
- What should I expect when I contact an agency to apply to become a volunteer?
- How do I find information about volunteer opportunities?

Validation:

The key to the kingdom of change

By Julian Humphreys, PhD, PCC, CPCC

I was recently at a workshop where the speaker asked the 100 or so participants in the room to put up their hands if they had more than enough validation in their lives. How many hands do you think went up? You guessed it: none.

When he then asked how many of us would like more validation in our lives, how many hands went up? You guessed it again: all of them.

Validation has been described as "the key to the kingdom of change." But what is it about validation that makes it so important? Why do we crave it, and why is it so scarce?

In this article you'll learn what validation is, why it's an important coaching skill, and how to use it more effectively with your clients.

What is Validation?

Validation is the recognition and acceptance of an internal, emotional experience. That may sound simple enough, but it's not. And here's why:

Our emotions are personal, complex, and often unsettling experiences. As a result, we rarely, if ever, talk about them, which can lead to a profound sense of isolation.

The more unsettling our emotions, the less we talk about them, and the more isolated we become, which in turn leads to even more unsettling emotions. And so the cycle continues.

We crave validation because it disrupts this cycle of ever-increasing isolation and assures us that we are, in fact, normal enough after all. So you'd think we'd all be validating each other at every turn, but unfortunately that's not the case.

Validation is scarce because it requires real effort to enter in to the private, complex, unsettling emotions of another human being. In our busy, tech-obsessed lives, we rarely have time to tune in to ourselves, let alone to someone else. As a result, empathy takes a back seat to more efficient, instrumental forms of relating (think text message instead of phone call).

The Importance of Validation

To understand why validation is so important, we need to consider the impact of invalidation.

Let's say I'm really upset about something, and you tell me to get over it. From your point of view, it's not such a big deal. But from my point of view, it clearly is; otherwise I wouldn't be so upset about it. In telling me that I don't have a valid reason to be upset, even though I am upset, I am led to one of two conclusions – either I'm wrong, or you are.

Compare this to the alternative. I'm really upset about something, and you tell me you understand why I'm so upset. From your point of view, it's still not such a big deal, just as in the first example, but you've made the effort to see things from my point of view and to understand why, from my point of view, it *is* a big deal. Immediately the tension has gone out of our relationship. Neither one of us is wrong. And I may now even be open to hearing how, from your point of view, it's not such a big deal.

In other words, where invalidation left me stuck and isolated, validation has opened me up to new perspectives and the possibility of change.

Not all validation is created equal

You may be cringing slightly now as you remember instances of well-meaning professionals earnestly saying, "I understand" when they don't really seem to. You may be thinking, "I don't want to do that. It's fake, phony." And you're right (there's some validation right there!); there is something infuriating about validation when it's done badly. And much of what passes for validation today is done badly.

Validation is not rote affirmation. Rote affirmation is general, where validation is specific. Rote affirmation is a lazy attempt at validation, and not really validation at all.

Unless your validation connects to something real and immediate in the client, it will miss the mark.

How to Validate Effectively

So how can we, as coaches, validate effectively, such that we open up new possibilities for change that would otherwise be unavailable to us?

1. Validate your own emotional experience.

As with so many things in coaching, we can only offer our clients what we have already experienced ourselves. If you routinely invalidate your own emotions, dismissing them as silly or a waste of time, you are unlikely to be able to effectively validate your clients' emotions. Learn to sit with your own emotions, especially the difficult ones, without judgement, so you'll be in a better position to offer that same non-judgmental acceptance to others.

> Where invalidation leaves us stuck and isolated, validation opens us up to new perspectives and the possibility of change.

2. Listen well.

We can't know what the internal experience of a client is unless we make the effort to access it. A coaching conversation that lurches from one topic to another without really settling on anything, especially if it's peppered with words like 'Anyway …,' or 'Never mind…', suggest the client is invalidating their own emotional experience. Unless you pick up on these clues, you'll miss opportunities for validation.

3. Ask questions.

Noticing when your client is avoiding emotions allows you to move the conversation in a more productive direction by asking questions that specifically address the underlying emotional reality. Questions like 'What was that like for you?' or 'That must have been very frustrating for you. Was it?' invite the client to take their emotions seriously.

4. Meet the client where they're at, not where you would like them to be.
Rare is the client who, in their intake, says that what they really want from coaching is emotional validation! Normally they want something much more practical than that. Listening for and validating emotions may seem like an unnecessary distraction on the road to realizing the client's agenda, but that is to hold the client's agenda too literally. Sometimes you need to slow down to speed up.

5. Develop negative capability.
The English poet John Keats used the term 'Negative Capability' to refer to the capacity to be with uncertainty, "mysteries, doubts, without any irritable reaching after fact and reason." When coaching emotions, it's easy to feel lost, confused, disoriented, such that at the earliest possible opportunity you flee back to the safety of logic and reason. But if the client is searching for clarity where there is none, you need to join them in that search. You need to experience uncertainty with them, validating the process as much as the outcome.

6. Don't be in a hurry to add value.
As coaches we're in the business of adding value. But sometimes our need to add value gets in the way of actually adding value. This is particularly true when it comes to emotional validation. Ironically, telling someone that their emotions are valid is often interpreted as confirmation that their emotions are invalid. Similarly, trying to move a conversation toward emotions when that's not where the conversation is wanting to go creates more, not less, avoidance. Less is more when it comes to emotional validation. Simply being with a person as they struggle to make sense of their emotions, offering the minimum of prompts and encouragement, may not look like you're adding value, but you are.

7. Sit in the space of discomfort.
You may find yourself experiencing some pretty strong emotions of your own as you engage with the emotional lives of others. Shock, disgust, pity, horror, fear, envy, are all possible. What to do with these strong emotions? You may be tempted to hide them with your best poker face, but this rarely works. Or you may be tempted to express them to get them off your chest. Neither of these approaches is optimal. Ideally you do with your own emotions what you're wanting your client to do with theirs – you validate them. You recognize and accept them for what they are, and then choose to do with them what best serves the interests of your client. This may or may not involve sharing them with your client.

8. Don't lose yourself.
Lastly, it's important to remember that you do not have to agree with your client. You may find your client's emotions bizarre, extreme, unacceptable, or inappropriate. It's important not to lose sight of that, because at some point you may want to share your perceptions with your client. But there's no point sharing them if your client is not ready to hear them. And remember, of course, there are many different ways to share perceptions.

In conclusion, emotional validation is not about creating change. It's about creating readiness for change.

That's why it's been called the key to the kingdom of change. Because without it, you're denied entry, no matter what you may have to offer. And with it, you can move freely, no matter what you may encounter along the way. ●

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Women in Leadership

Lessons from the Executive Coaching Survey

By Karl Corbett

Coaches and leaders around the world have a variety of opinions when it comes to women in leadership, but the 2017 Executive Coaching Survey revealed some indications leaning toward equality of opportunity. Survey results and respondents' open-ended comments both indicated progress in this area. Still, there remains room for improvement in some traditionally male industries.

Should every organization offer fair and equal treatment? Absolutely. A level playing field encourages every employee to be their best. Everyone should have the same opportunities regardless of their unique goals. Some people strive to 'go for it' and reach a top position while others prefer to avoid that high level stress. A workplace that offers equality of opportunity allows each employee to express themselves. A perception of equality creates a more appealing work environment and makes it easier to recruit top talent.

Does every organization offer fair and equal treatment? Here are some of the details that both show what people are thinking and highlight differences in perceptions. What stands out to you?

Executives and business leaders see things differently than human resource and training specialists; in general, they hold a more positive view of the way women are treated. Executives are more likely than HR and training staff to say:

- women get equal consideration for advancement (by 84% to 77%)
- women are aware of opportunities to advance (by 86% to 75%)
- women have an equal chance to hold power (by 91% to 77%)

There are clearly differences among the ranks. What do you think that indicates?

We also found that men and women see these issues differently. Men in leadership are more likely than women in leadership to believe:

• their organization values women as leaders (by 92% to 85%)

• women get consideration for advancement (by 82% to 67%)

• women are aware of opportunities for advancement (by 88% to 70%)

Although we do see significant differences, every rating of the way organizations treat women is quite high. Interestingly, a large majority of both men and women think their organization "values women as leaders." However, far fewer women leaders think women have equal opportunities to advance. Does that indicate that a disconnect exists?

Identifying a Problem

Although they might find it hard to admit, sometimes organizations know they need work. In some cases, emerging women leaders need coaching and development to reach their full potential. In other instances, organizations need to identify and eliminate barriers that prevent women from advancing.

When an employer decides to identify these barriers, they may turn to the research department at Sherpa Coaching, whose global research serves as a benchmark against which any organization can measure their situation.

When Sherpa surveys an organization, we seek to answer the following questions:

• Do both men and women have an equal chance to hold positions of power?

• If women have the skills, are they given equal consideration for advancement?

• Are men and women equally aware of opportunities for advancement?

If men and women have vastly differing opinions on these issues, then the organization has work to do. One recent client was strongly divided:

• Almost 67 percent of men said, "Women are given equal consideration for advancement when opportunities arise." Less than 25 percent of women agreed.

• Over 50 percent of men said, "Men and women are equally aware of opportunities for advancement." Less than 30 percent of women agreed.

Those are large gaps between men's and women's perceptions, aren't they? These differences clearly demonstrated room for improvement.

Leveling the Playing Field

People generally understand the benefits of a balanced leadership team. They know that women have a slight advantage over men in collaboration, problem solving and change management. Great leadership means improved revenues and operating profits. So, the awareness is there.

Sherpa Coaching founder Brenda Corbett has coached female executives across six continents and established proven ideas about what organizations *must* do to empower them. Her philosophy is this: Successful women in leadership must act as *coaches*: listening, guiding and encouraging their teams.

According to Brenda, women in leadership must learn how to skillfully and confidently:

- Resolve conflict.
- Deliver clear expectations.
- Conduct coaching conversations.
- Deal with every communication style.
- Overcome barriers to leadership and advancement.

Corporate Role Models

Quite a few major corporations have a good reputation for equality in leadership roles: AT&T, Citibank, P&G and Walmart are highly rated by the National Association of Female Executives. When an employer in a male-dominated industry starts working on equality, it's worth taking notice. Toolmaker Stanley Black & Decker (SBD) has supported a Women in Leadership Program for several years. Their goal is to realize the benefits of a balanced leadership team.

SBD has conducted three Women's Leadership Programs, with more to come. Stephen Subasic is a Vice President, Human Resources in the Consumer Do-It-Yourself division of SBD. Subasic says: "The tool business is traditionally a man's world. However, the world is changing. More women are buying tools and maintaining their own homes. We need women in creative positions and positions of power, so we can present our customers with the things they need."

> Successful women in leadership must act as coaches: listening, guiding and encouraging their teams.

Clearly, there are advantages to corporations in providing an equal-opportunity workplace that enables them to recruit top talent. There is progress, but there is room for improvement, and coaching can help. A good leadership development program is not an event – it's an ongoing process.

Columbia University 2016 Coaching Conference


Columbia University in New York City

The second International Columbia Coaching Conference was held on the campus of Columbia University in New York City October 19 – 21, 2016 and focused on the theme, “The Future of Coaching: Building Bridges and Expanding Boundaries!”

Over the course of two-and-a-half days, the conference brought together a global learning community of over 350 coaches, researchers, and a range of development professionals to envision the future of coaching during 15 concurrent break-out sessions including: six paper sessions (18 papers in total); eight experiential learning sessions; four panel discussions; and two coach demonstrations.

The event also featured seven keynote presentations aligned with the theme, including:

1. Amy Abel, Conference Board
“Looking Back to Go Forward – 10 Years of Executive Coaching Research”

2. Marilee Adams, author and consultant
“The Choice Map – An Integrative Model for Co-Creating the Future of Coaching”

3. David Rock, NeuroLeadership Institute
“Breakthroughs in Building a Culture of Coaching to Scale”

4. Richard Boyatzis, Case Western Reserve University
“Coaching for Sustained, Desired Change: Why Relationships, Compassion, and Hope Matter”

5. David Peterson, Google
“Reinventing Executive Coaching: Seven Paths Forward”

6. Erin Olivo, Columbia University
“The Neuroscience of Mindfulness and Coaching”

7. Armen Pischdotchian, IBM Watson
“Exploring Artificial Intelligence and Its Potential for Executive and Organizational Coaching”

The second Columbia conference featured a number of firsts, including the use of a conference app; e-proceedings (break-out session content including all papers, and summaries of other delivery formats); two evening, conference-sponsored networking receptions; and recordings of keynote presentations.


Experiential learning sessions make things real.


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SAVE THESE DATES!

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Reston, Virginia, USA
www.adhdcoaches.org/conference

May 11 – 13
ICF Atlantic Canada Summit
Halifax, Nova Scotia, Canada
http://us6.campaign-archive1.com

May 11 – 14
International Gay Coaches Conference
Easton, New York, USA
http://gaycoachconference.com

June 8 – 10
ACTO Conference 2017 Joint Conference with GSAEC!
Toronto, Ontario, Canada
http://actoonline.org/acto-conference

July 13 – 16
Fifth World Congress on Positive Psychology Joint Conference with GSAEC
Montreal, Quebec, Canada
www.ippanetwork.org/wcpp2017/

August 24 – 26
ICF Converge 2017
Washington, DC, USA
http://coachfederation.org/events/

Coaching Constants

Insights from the Executive Coaching Survey

Sherpa Coaching's Annual Survey gives us invaluable global data on the state of the industry. Monitoring trends puts us in great position to make predictions about the coaching industry and provides insight for coaches and clients. However, identifying trends is only one side of the coin. With 12 years of survey data at our fingertips we see the changes, but we can also see what aspects of the industry remain constant. What can these "Coaching Constants" tell us about the state of executive coaching?

Value & Credibility

The perceived 'value of coaching' has become firmly established. The value of coaching started trending from mediocre to very high 10 years ago and quickly leveled off. For eight straight years, at least 90 percent of respondents rated the value of coaching as high. From 2011-2014 it was over 95 percent, so we stopped asking the question.

With the high value of coaching firmly established, the 'credibility of coaching' emerged as another Coaching Constant. Although credibility started at a lower level, for five consecutive years going into 2016, everyone (over 90 percent) agreed that the credibility of coaching was somewhat or very high. It became such a slam-dunk guarantee that we didn't include this question in the 2017 survey (detailed report available in March).

Standards

With value and credibility high, clients started to really "buy in" to the coaching industry – literally and figuratively. More Coaching Constants emerged.

Who needs an executive coach most? The three options on the survey are:

- people with a specific problem or challenge,
- those who need leadership development, and
- individuals in transition.

That third option, individuals in transition, has hovered at 20 percent for every single year of the survey. The other two options trended in opposite directions before starting to level out. People with a specific problem or challenge is steady at 20 percent, and about 60 percent of respondents have consistently said an executive coach is most needed by people seeking leadership development. Will new trends eventually emerge in this area?

Karl Corbett and Sherpa researcher Joe Valeri present annual survey data at EXCO2016.

When clients need to hire a coach how do they find one? One option dominates the rest. About 75 percent of people find a coach through personal reference – far more than all the other options combined. But while personal reference stands above the rest, web search nearly doubled over the last 3 years. As information technology and social media expand, other methods of finding a coach may cause the number of people relying on personal reference to decrease.

Processes & Background

Do coaches base their coaching on a published process? The answer to this question has remained remarkably consistent over the years. Only 25-30% follow a specific published process while greater than 70% do not. This will gradually change as companies are hiring younger coaches and training them in the use of a published process. If this continues, and some of these coaches become independent, we'll see a gradual change over decades.

How important is it to have a recognized and standard process for coaching? For years, less than half of all business professionals have considered it very important or essential to have a standard process. About 25% of survey respondents consistently feel it's not necessary at all. Some people do see a need for it, but veteran coaches who have developed their own process are a big part of our industry. They've had success, and they will keep doing things as they always have. The most widely used process, the Sherpa process, is taught at several universities, with the University of Mexico starting a Sherpa certification in the fall of 2017. Will a long-term trend eventually develop or will this Coaching Constant persist?

What about a coach"s background? Very consistently over the years, about 95% of coaches have said a background in neuroscience moderately or positively affects credibility. However, only 10% of coaches say their training was based on neuroscience and/or psychology. It has also become very clear that a majority of professionals think coaches should have at least a working knowledge of neuroscience and that neuroscience should have a role in coaching.

Monitoring trends puts us in great position to make predictions about the coaching industry.

There are two more constants you can rely on. First, the Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey will continue to be a source of information coaches use to guide their careers. Second, *choice* Magazine will continue to offer exclusive content from the survey, along with a wealth of career advice. ●

By Kate Michels, MCC, NLP

Ripples on the Water

The social impact of coaching

The ripples go and on. This is a statement we are all familiar with and it is a great reminder that what we all do does really matter. It's important as coaches to realize how far the ripples from a coaching session really are able to travel.

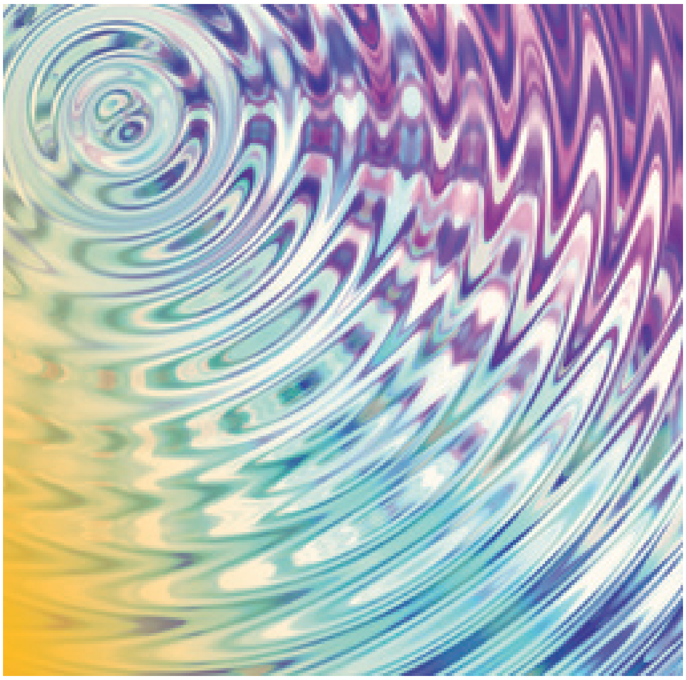
Think about the clients you have spoken to this week, over the last month, throughout the past year and (if applicable) clients you have worked with over many years. Now just pick one client – any one will do. Think about this client and consider the significance their sessions with you have made on the choices they have made in their life. Now expand this thought out to the people that this client is in relationship with: their partner, children and close friends. Recognize how your client's choices are impacting these people directly – so much so that it is almost as if those people are coaching with you, too. Move out a bit further to the extended relationships of your client, such as their co-workers and neighbors. Do you recognize how their coaching sessions with you and the changes they are making in their life are impacting these other people on a regular basis?

Let's do some simple math by putting some numbers to the ripples reaching these relationships and then begin to realistically see the social impact coaching actually does make. Your client may have close relationships with five people and extended relationships with 16 people, so being very modest we are easily up to 21 people. I am just getting started here, so let's keep adding up to see how far the ripples of coaching with you may possibly go.

The person you are coaching is also going through their life and bumping into people along the way – at grocery stores, restaurants, doctor's appointments, their children's school, and so on. In the course of a week, how many people do you think each of us just casually comes into contact with? Again, we will be modest and we'll just say three per day, so three people times seven days in a week gives us 21 plus our initial 21 brings us up to 42 people who are feeling the ripple effect of the coaching conversation you had with this one client.

The ripple effect is miraculous and the changes are numerous.

Now, let's rise above all of this to see an even bigger picture. Watch the ripples travel out into the world, touching more and more people as each person comes into contact with others. Modestly your one client is coming into contact with 42 people each week and the differences they are making as they move into responding more wisely are directly and subtly affecting these



individuals. Those 42 people are also going on with their lives and are coming into contact with at least 42 people. By doing the math with the bigger picture in mind, we see that there are easily 1,764 people who are receiving the blessings that come from your client being coached by you for one hour a week.

One of my clients did the math in her life and as a public presenter realized that she was easily impacting 1,200 people per week. Considering that maybe the 1,200 she impacted were living a life of reaching just 42 people per week, she estimated a ripple impact on 50,400 people in the world. My client became so motivated at the acknowledgement of how much the changes in her were able to multiply that she awakened a desire to reach even more than the 1,200 she was currently reaching and set out to double her impact weekly.

I often support my clients by doing this simple math process with them to help them to easily and realistically see the difference they are truly making in the world. The work you do as a coach is life changing and world changing. The ripple effect is miraculous and the changes are numerous. Do the math for yourself and see what an impact your one week or one month of coaching is making on the world.

You as a coach are truly a life changer and a world changer. We are recognized as changing the world one conversation at a time, and when you allow yourself to see the ripple affect, it is easy to see how what we do truly does change the world exponentially.

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V15N2
The Power of Specializing

What is niche coaching and why is it important? What are the benefits of a niche coaching business? Does niche coaching differ from life coaching, and in what ways? How do you find the right client niche that fits you? How do you package, price and market your niche client programs? Join us as we look at the power of specialization in building your business and making a greater impact.

Article Deadline: Closed
Advertising Deadline: April 15, 2017
Mail Date: Late June, 2017

V15N3
Breaking the Rules!

It's that secret conversation where we admit to a colleague that we also give clients advice, regularly teach or train them, or even tell our own stories. How are we limiting ourselves and not offering everything we have when we refrain from these things? How do we manage the balance between standard descriptions of coaching and what our clients are asking us for? Why are we afraid to challenge the convention that is only 20 years old? Is it time for the coaching paradigm to expand?

Article Deadline: June 1, 2017
Advertising Deadline: July 15, 2017
Mail Date: Late September, 2017

V15N4
Past, Present & Future of Coaching

It's the 15th Anniversary of *choice*, the magazine of professional coaching! We will dedicate this issue to looking back at how far coaching has come since its inception, spotlighting key milestones, and the many facets of coaching today. We will also look ahead to where coaching is going as a profession, as a business, and as a community. Coaching is alive, strong and growing. We will celebrate the past, present, and future of professional coaching in this exciting issue of *choice*.

Article Deadline: Sept. 1, 2017
Advertising Deadline: Oct. 15, 2017
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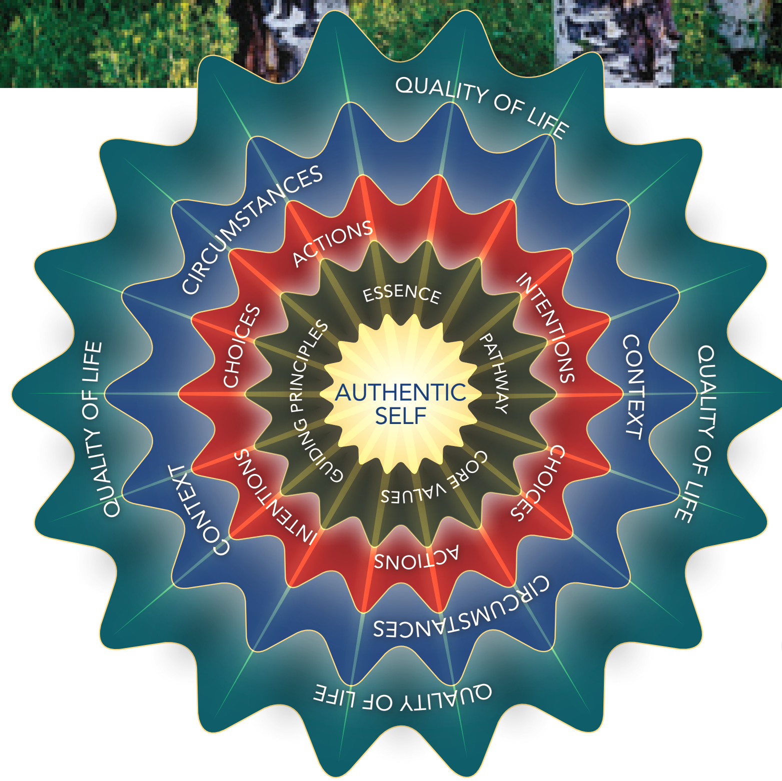

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