



CW

Coaching World

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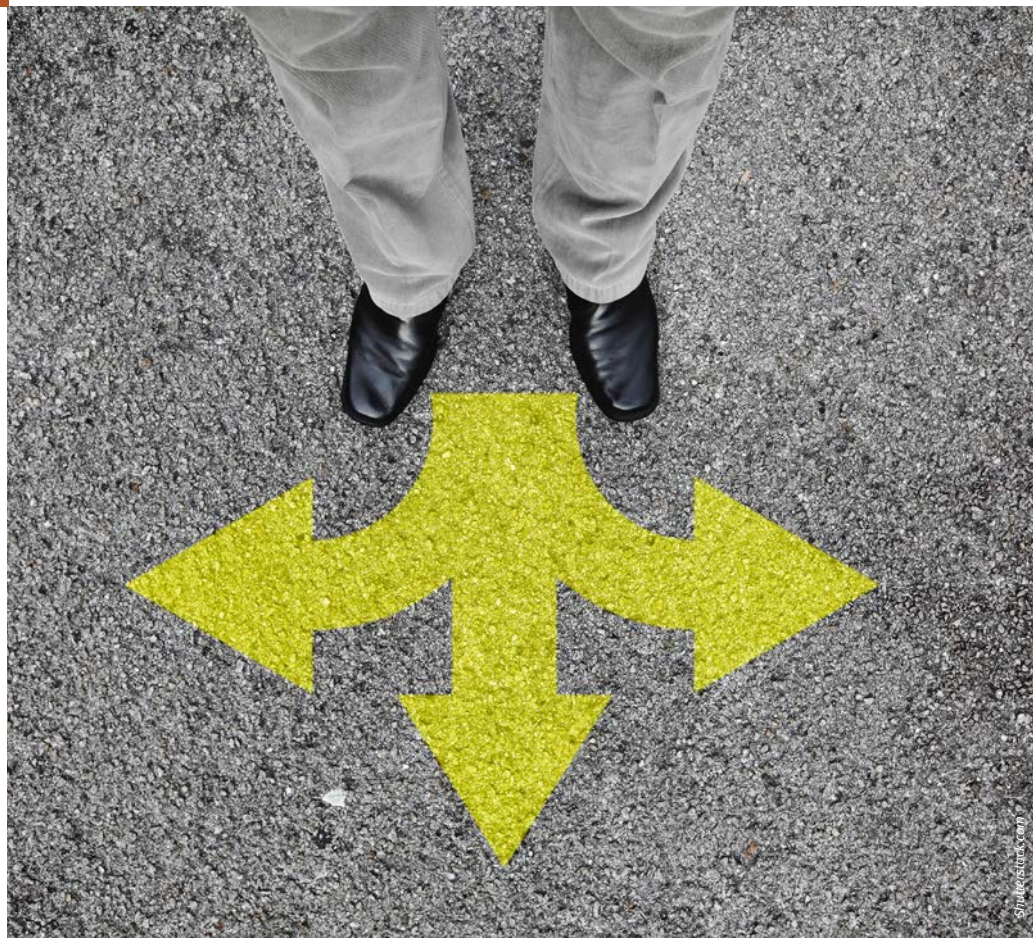
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The expectations of life
depend upon diligence;
the mechanic that would
perfect his work must first
sharpen his tools.

—CONFUCIUS



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Checking In

Simple Solutions

Whatever challenge you're facing in your coaching business, there's a good chance that the Internet will yield a tool you can leverage for a solution. This quarter, commit to testing a few new tools for your business.

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Sharing What Works

Earlier this year, my husband and I celebrated our second anniversary. Since our wedding day, I've enjoyed making use of our gifts, smiling as I do at the thought of the people who gifted them to us: From the cut-glass pitcher we use at brunch (a gift from my parents' antique-loving neighbors) to the dishes we received from my college friends, Katie and Chris, each piece evokes sweet memories of our loved ones.

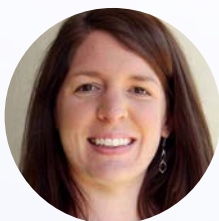
A few of the gifts also lead me to recall favorite stories, such as the immersion blender, microplane grater and whisk given to me at my bridal shower by my in-laws' neighbor—one of the most gifted, gracious hostesses I know. As I unwrapped each item, she explained her rationale: "I looked around my kitchen, picked the three tools I couldn't live without and got you your own to match."

On the surface, her explanation was practical and no-nonsense, but I was touched by the sentiment beneath it. When you find a tool that you love, you want to pass it on to help make the life of someone you care about a little bit better.

That's what this issue of *Coaching World* is all about: seasoned professionals sharing tools and techniques that can empower you to better serve your clients. From Shelley Carson and Margaret Moore's guide to organizing your mind for coaching (**page 26**) to Barb Pierce, PCC's, introduction to the principles of appreciative inquiry (**page 24**), this issue is sure to give you some fresh new ideas to apply to your practice, marketing plan and daily life.

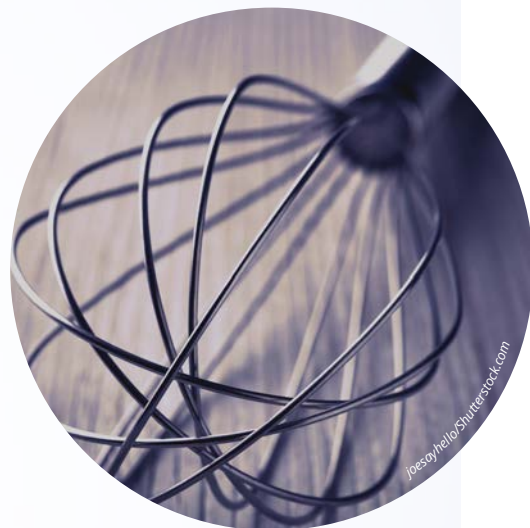
As we look for new ways to further ICF's mission of advocating for quality coaching, we're also excited to unveil the new **toolbox of resources** that we've assembled to help you speak out on behalf of professional coaching in your community and in the world. Go to **page 16** to learn more.

As always, I love hearing what tools, techniques and information you'd like to see more of in the pages of *CW*. I invite you to email me at abby.heverin@coachfederation.org to let me know how we can help you achieve your goals.



Abby Heverin

Abby Tripp Heverin
Communications Coordinator



The February issue of *Coaching World* received a 2014 American InHouse Design Award Certificate of Excellence. Read more about this award [here](#).

Coaching World also received a 2014 APEX Award of Excellence. Read more about this award [here](#).



Balanced Leadership

Since the 1950s, the literature on leadership has highlighted the differences between task-oriented leaders and social-emotional leaders, with conventional wisdom dictating that a leader must be one type or the other. However, new research from Case Western Reserve University suggests the opposite may be true.

In an article in the journal *Frontiers in Human Neuroscience*, Richard Boyatzis, professor of organizational behavior at CWRU's Weatherhead School of Management; Anthony Jack, assistant professor of cognitive science and Kylie Rochford, a doctoral student in organizational behavior, describe two capabilities in the normal human brain that impact leadership in very different ways.

Researchers found the brain contains the Task Positive Network (TPN), which is task-oriented and analytical, and the Default Mode Network (DMN), which is empathetic and social. Furthermore, they found that leaders are at their best when they can switch back and forth between the two capacities.

Through functional magnetic resonance imaging, Jack found the TPN and DMN tend to suppress one another when presented with technical or social problems to solve.

"Every normal brain contains both modes, with the flexibility to go to the right mode at the right time," Jack said. "In the business world right now, the emphasis is more on the task orientation of leaders rather than cultivating empathy. That is partly because it's easier to assess task-oriented leadership."

According to Jack, the long-term consequences of this bias are damaging. "Emphasizing one side over the other is not the best way to promote good leadership."

Leadership development and succession planning initiatives also tend to "confuse the ability to be effective in both [modes] by focusing on one," Boyatzis said. For example, the usual stepping stone to becoming a school principal is serving as an assistant principal.

"The assistant principal focuses on tasks and operations and discipline within the school, which are often lousy preparation for relationship development," Boyatzis said. "But the role of the principal is to develop relationships with the parents and community."

However, Boyatzis said there's reason for optimism: "The fact we have these two distinct neural domains suggests it is possible to cultivate both sides, and we do see that in individuals." He and his colleagues say the challenge is for organizations to provide coaching and training to help emerging and current leaders cultivate both skill sets so they can cycle between the two quickly and efficiently.

Meanwhile, Boyatzis, Jack and Rochford are devising experiments to investigate how people switch back and forth between the TPN and DMN and identify personality factors which relate to the tendency to use one network or the other for specific situations.

— Abby Tripp Heverin



Gratitude's Unexpected Rewards

If you have trouble resisting that extra cupcake after dinner or those new shoes you can't quite afford, try a little gratitude. Conventional wisdom tells us that willpower is the key to battling temptation, but new research suggests that simply feeling grateful can give you the patience you need to trade instant gratification for larger future rewards.

A team of researchers from Northeastern University; the University of California, Riverside and Harvard Kennedy School gave study participants the choice between receiving a smaller sum of cash immediately or a larger financial payout later, among other options that made them select between instant satisfaction and future fulfillment. Before making the decision, participants were randomly assigned to write about an event from their past that made them feel grateful, happy or neutral. The participants who wrote about an event that made them feel grateful had more patience to wait for the larger future reward, while participants who were made to feel happy or neutral were more likely to choose an immediate payment. The grateful participants wanted \$63 USD immediately to give up an \$85 USD payment in three months, while neutral and happy participants only wanted \$55 USD to relinquish the future payout. Researchers found that the amount of patience measured was directly correlated to the amount of gratitude a participant felt. Limiting the natural human tendency to favor immediate rewards over future ones by merely practicing gratitude could be a simple fix to some important problems.

"Showing that emotion can foster self-control and discovering a way to reduce impatience with a simple gratitude exercise opens up tremendous possibilities for reducing a wide range of societal ills, from impulse buying and insufficient saving to obesity and smoking," said Ye Li, an assistant professor of management and marketing in the School of Business Administration at the University of California, Riverside, and a coauthor of the study.

Waiting for the long-term satisfaction that comes from sticking with your goals, rather than indulging, could have some serious benefits for your waistline and wallet. Gratitude may not make you skinny and rich, but it is not a bad place to start.

The research report was published in the June 2014 issue of the journal *Psychological Science*.

—Lisa Barbella 

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The photo above depicts the Wellcoaches team on retreat to collaborate and innovate together.

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Curiosity Fun
Laugh New
Appreciation
Change



Kyle Dooley Kinder, PCC

Kyle's passion for coaching was ignited more than 10 years ago when she had the opportunity to conduct a statewide, year-long program for high-potential healthcare leaders. In 2006 she started her own company, **Heart and Head Leadership, LLC**, so she could work exclusively with organizations to develop and prepare their leaders. In the process she has become a certified Mentor Coach, become a certified practitioner of several leadership assessments and been an active member of ICF Michigan, where she has served on the board of directors and several educational committees. Kyle holds a master's degree in counseling and psychology from Western Michigan University.



Kathy Munoz, PCC

Kathy is an international coach trainer/facilitator and Director of Mentor and Supervised Coaching with the **International Coach Academy**, a Board Certified Coach, and the founder and CEO of **IMPEL**, an innovative international coaching company focusing on personal and professional branding and development.



Core Competency #5:

Active Listening

Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression.

Emptying the Vessel

It's been a busy day and you've been multitasking, doing work and taking care of some personal business. All of a sudden a reminder pops up on your computer: "Coaching session—30 minutes!" You scramble to pull your client's file and review your notes. As the session draws closer you close your eyes and breathe deeply. You know you won't be effective if you're listening to all of your own "stuff."

No one can be an effective active listener unless they create space in their mind that will allow someone else's words and thoughts to come in. If your mind is already occupied with preconceived beliefs and assumptions, it's like a full container: It has no more room. Unless you can create this space, the best you're going to be able to give your client will be Level 1 listening (see "The Three Levels of Listening" on page 9). You won't be providing the maximum value for your client.

We all have assumptions, biases, judgments and beliefs that can get in the way of truly hearing what another person is saying—or not saying. That is why coaching is so powerful. As coaches, we are trained to filter out these thoughts and allow words, behaviors and energy to enter our minds, where we can effectively synthesize information on behalf of our clients.

Even so, active listening is a competency that coaches must work on constantly. We must use all of our bodily senses—ears, eyes, heart and gut—to fully tune in and actively listen to what our client is saying and feeling. A powerful way to get to this place is to imagine yourself as an empty vessel that is open and ready to be filled by your client's "stuff." You become the safe repository and accept your client's information without judgment or assumptions. Once the vessel is full, your curious and intuitive mind takes over and is able to pull out relevant pieces of information to present back to the client for discussion. This is active listening at the highest level; i.e., Level 3

Are you listening fully with an empty vessel, allowing your client to fill it up, or is the vessel already filled up with *your* stuff, leaving no room for your client?

Here are a few simple steps to get to listening actively:

1. Prepare to listen.

Empty your vessel by getting out of your own head. Remove distractions by turning off technology and finding a quiet space where you won't be interrupted. Defer judgment by being aware of beliefs and assumptions that might prevent you from fully hearing your client.

2. Take in your client's information.


Absorb and digest your client's words, tone of voice, omissions, energy and emotions. Allow it all to enter your body.

3. Synthesize information received.

Scan all the information brought forth by your client. Trust your intuitive skills to process and retrieve the pieces that you know and believe will help her achieve her goals.

4. Provide engaged feedback.

Active listening is just as described: It's active. This means the next step is to engage in conversation with your client in the form of feedback, reflection, powerful questioning and paraphrasing around what you heard her say.

As you no doubt tell your clients from time to time, you can only master something through mindful and deliberate practice. For coaches, mastery of active listening is at the core of the value we bring to the coaching relationship. By repeatedly calling on the image of the empty vessel and practicing the four steps above, hopefully that 30-minute reminder alarm won't be so stressful next time. 

The Three Levels of Listening

Level 1: Internal Listening

When you listen at Level 1, you are generally paying more attention to your own inner voices. You may hear the words of the other person, but you're primarily aware of your own opinions, stories and judgments.

Example of Level 1 Dialogue:

Client: The new house is a mess. I've got boxes everywhere and a huge proposal due at work on Friday.

Coach: I went through the same thing last year.

Level 2: Focused Listening

At Level 2 there is a hard, laser-like focus from coach to client. While there is a lot of attention and focus on the client, awareness of outside surroundings and energy is absent.

Example of Level 2 Dialogue:

Client: The new house is a mess. I've got boxes everywhere and a huge proposal due at work on Friday.

Coach: How important is it to get settled at home?

Level 3: Global Listening

This is soft-focus listening that takes in everything. At Level 3 you are aware of energy shifts, sadness and lightness between you and the client. You are aware of the environment and whatever is going on in the environment.

Example of Level 3 Dialogue:

Client: The new house is a mess. I've got boxes everywhere and a huge proposal due at work on Friday.

Coach: How important is it to get settled at home? It seems this is the most productive you've been at work since you started.

Source: *Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life*, by Laura Whitworth, Karen Kimsey-House, Henry Kimsey-House and Phillip Sandahl (2nd ed., Davies-Black, 2007)

The Niche Business

Today we are spoilt for choice, or at least it appears that way from the outside. But the reality is that, when everybody claims to be a coach, it's harder than ever for your potential clients to find the right support in this congested and noisy marketplace.

You can stand out from the crowd by demonstrating your experience, through your branding and the services you offer, and in many other ways. But if you really want to be distinctive, you need to establish a coaching "niche" by providing a specific service that a particular group of clients will especially value because it exactly matches their needs.

Nowadays, when it's so simple to find and compare suppliers online, if you try to be a generalist—a "one-stop coaching shop"—you are likely to lose out to niche specialists who are perceived as being able to offer the best possible support.

Despite the advantages of niching, many coaches worry about losing business by reducing their potential client base, and so instinctively resist the idea. However, if you want to make a difference in the world and succeed, you have no other choice but to niche.

So, if you aren't yet in the "niche business," here are just four ways

in which finding your niche will benefit your practice:

1. Use your depth of knowledge and experience as a differentiator.

This will set you apart from newcomers to the marketplace. At the end of the day, anyone can call themselves a coach but only you have your background, life and professional experiences, knowledge, and perspective. This can help you create a unique brand personality that will resonate with your specific clients.

2. When value is perceived first, pricing comes second.

Because your clients particularly value your perspective, they are willing to pay more for it. For you, those higher prices mean a more successful coaching practice and the opportunity to earn more and create a lifestyle business in which you work less or enjoy the time to pursue other interests, including charitable causes—a much more rewarding experience, all around.

3. Marketing flows better.

Having a clearly defined message makes your marketing efforts much more effective and makes it easier to attract potential partners and joint venture opportunities because everyone knows what you stand for. As a result, you leverage everything you do, so you achieve more from much less.

4. Ongoing learning.

By focusing on a particular area, you will be continually honing and




adding to your skills, making you even more in-demand among the clients you serve.

However, finding your ideal niche isn't always an easy task. So if you're not sure what it could be, here's a simple way to get started.

Analyze the services you currently offer. Which attracts the most clients and brings them the greatest benefits? Which gives you the most satisfaction?

Look at your pricing. Which of your services is the most profitable? Does one have particular potential for expansion?

Identify any gaps. Is there a service you are often asked for which you don't currently provide and would be happy to offer?

Considering these variables will help you find your perfect niche and become the owner of a thriving coaching business. Success will feel particularly good because your clients are paying well for your services, and you feel emotionally fulfilled and in control. 



Maite Barón, PCC

Maite is *The Corporate Escape Coach™* and author of the double-award-winning book, *Corporate Escape: The Rise of the New Entrepreneur* (Ecademy Press, 2012). She is a co-founder of *The Corporate Escape™*, a coaching, training and consultancy practice helping professionals break free from the rat race and reinvent themselves as New Entrepreneurs. Maite is an international motivational speaker, co-author of *A World Book of Values* (Van Halewyck, 2013) and *Successful Women in Business* (UK Edition, Mithra Publishing, 2013) and a regular contributor to *The Huffington Post* and *Entrepreneur*. You can get regular tips on how to grow your business by subscribing to her **free updates** and connect with Maite through **LinkedIn**.



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Barbara Hankins, MSc

Barbara brings to the coaching experience in-depth personal knowledge and expertise in turning adversity into opportunity in midlife and creating and achieving an entrepreneurial career journey.

*She has 25-plus years of experience as a small-business owner, including eight years of experience supporting one SME's rapid growth, transformation and culture change, culminating in a master of science degree and the creation of a new model of motivation. An article on this research, titled "Intrinsic Motivation: The Key Driver to an Enterprising Culture," appeared in the **International Journal of Professional Management** (Vol. 7, No. 2, August 2012).*

From Stress to Success

For people with a desire to serve their communities, launching a career in the nonprofit sector can be incredibly rewarding. However, working for a nonprofit organization—particularly in a front-line, client services role—can also be immensely stressful.

Front-line staff in any industry are the most removed from top-line strategic decisions yet are subject to the greatest impact on their health, well-being and performance. Like their private-sector peers, front-line staff in the nonprofit setting must enhance their professional skills and expertise, build collaborative relationships with partner organizations and achieve specific targets or performance goals. However, there's a substantial difference between reaching a sales target and achieving desired but hard-to-measure client outcomes.

As a result, for many front-line nonprofit staffers, self-care and even the cultivation of self-awareness can take a backseat to client care, resulting in a work force that may be developed professionally, but not personally.

This was the situation confronting a well-established nonprofit in the United Kingdom that had recently undergone a half-decade of significant change and growth. A central plank of the organization's business development strategy was the continuous training and development of staff aligned with the needs of a growing business and client base.

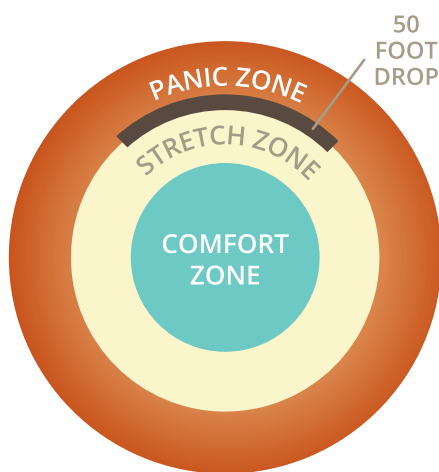
The nonprofit approached my organization, **Catalyst for Change**, to launch an innovative year-long coaching program to enhance the capabilities of 28 front-line client-services staff members. The goals of the coaching initiative were to reduce workplace stress, increase resilience and job satisfaction, and improve reflective practice.

The Tools for Success

The 12-month program, designed to be conducted partially in person and partially via Skype, included just five hours of coaching per coachee, making efficient assessment a must. I provided specific tools to enable assessment of each coachee's starting point, including a pre-coaching questionnaire, the **Wheel of Life tool**, and questionnaires focusing on values and learning styles.

The learning cycle assessment tool from Peter Honey and Alan Mumford's *The Manual of Learning Styles*—provided to coachees prior to the start of coaching—was particularly useful. At the first session, I was able to explain how the cycle fits in with the coachee's learning style so she was better able to understand herself. Some of the coachees I partnered with were Reflectors, but many of their job tasks required that they be in Activist mode, while others were Activists who needed to improve their Reflective practice.

During subsequent sessions, coachees learned how to use the framework to address specific issues by considering how and when they could help themselves by developing another aspect of the learning style.



Barbara Hankins, MSc

Stress reduction was, by far, the No. 1 goal of coachees, so many of our conversations centered on understanding whether individual sources of stress were within or outside their control. We used the concept of comfort zones (shown above) to discuss stressful situations, partially to measure degrees of discomfort, but also to offer a new perspective on stress.

Not only did coachees using this technique find that it gave them greater control over stress, they were also able to recognize the benefits of being in the stretch zone (where development happens), and even put themselves into situations that moved them into the stretch zone.

Early in the engagement, it became clear that coachees were also plagued by concerns around time management; indeed, poor time management was also a contributor to both workplace stress and subpar performance.

The use of Stephen Covey's time management matrix invited important conversations about coachees' stewardship of their time and energy. By making minor adjustments in their workflow (e.g., completing demanding tasks when energy is at its highest and accomplishing routine items, such as expense reports or inbox management, when energy levels were lower), coachees found they were able to complete a higher volume of work while feeling more in control.

The Power of "No"


Although all of the coachees were experienced and proficient in serving as the voices for their clients, they would often keep quiet about their own needs and limitations. As such, many of our coaching engagements focused on understanding the power of the word "no," and recognizing that it isn't always an outright refusal to do something: It's simply a way to put yourself in control of *when* you do something and give yourself a louder voice in your personal and professional life. Not surprisingly, when coachees leveraged the power of "no," their self-confidence increased, their stress levels dropped further and their grasp on work/life balance improved.

Passing it On

A shortcoming of the coaching program was that it wasn't grounded in pre- or post-coaching data. Collecting metrics around employee stress (e.g., absenteeism, citations of stress as a reason for leaving during exit interviews) would have enabled a greater understanding of what caused employee stress and greater facility for evaluating the ROI of coaching.

Despite the absence of hard data on the organizational level, pre- and post-coaching questionnaires administered to coachees revealed the high ROE of coaching, with coachees reporting decreased stress, improved time management, enhanced work/life balance and positive career progression as outcomes of coaching.

In a post-coaching testimonial, the organization's CEO wrote that the coaching was "well-received and had lasting effects in relation to staff's ability to reflect on their practice and communicate effectively with management. As managers, we have also learned from the experience, especially about the value of investing in staff development and listening to the voice of practitioners."

In addition to increased personal and professional effectiveness, many coachees reported that they were able to "pay it forward;" i.e., to apply the tools and techniques they acquired through coaching in conversations with their own clients to help improve their quality of life, demonstrating the ripple effect of coaching and its ability to effect genuine change in our communities and in the world. 



Joel DiGirolamo

*As ICF's Director of Coaching Science, Joel leads the Association's efforts to develop, curate and disseminate information around the science of coaching. He has more than 30 years of staff and management experience in Fortune 500 companies and is the author of two books, *Leading Team Alpha* (PranaPower, 2010) and *Yoga in No Time at All* (PranaPower, 2009). He holds a master's degree in industrial and organizational psychology from Kansas State University, an MBA from Xavier University, and a bachelor's degree in electrical engineering from Purdue University.*

Assessing Mindfulness

Last year, ICF surveyed more than 1,000 coaches and 250 training providers to identify the most popular frameworks, tools and techniques for coaches. More than 20 percent of coaches surveyed said mindfulness was among the three theories and frameworks most useful to their practices, while almost 50 percent of training providers reported that their students and graduates use mindfulness in their practices.

Mindfulness is described differently by different people, but at the heart it is about the ability to be present in the moment. It is an important element for successful coaching aligned with the ICF Core Competencies, particularly coaching presence. It is also interesting to note that researchers Nicola Schutte and John Malouff found that mindfulness is correlated to emotional intelligence, another important factor in successful coaching outcomes.


Many assessments of mindfulness exist. The most widely used are Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan's Mindful Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) and the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire by Ruth Baer and colleagues. Both assessments are well-validated. The MAAS is a single measure of mindfulness, whereas the longer Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire assesses the ability to mindfully observe, to describe actions and events, to experience without judging, to act with awareness, and to remain nonreactive to inner experiences.

Mindfulness assessments are useful to raise awareness in clients that actions can frequently occur as automatic responses—with automaticity, as it is sometimes called. A frequent example I provide is that of carrying a plate and napkin back into the kitchen after a meal: Occasionally, we may prepare to throw the plate in the trash and put the napkin in the sink. To be mindful is to be fully aware that you are carrying a plate and a napkin and that the plate goes to the sink and the napkin goes in the trash.

A mindfulness assessment will provide an objective view of a client's level of mindfulness. Once becoming aware of this information, the client

may choose how much work he wants to do on this aspect of his personality.

The decision of whether to strive for greater mindfulness can be framed by a discussion of trait and state behaviors. Trait behaviors are those fundamental attributes that came into the world with us. For example, by nature your client might be a happy, positive person who's always looking for the next opportunity. State behaviors are those learned as an adaptation to significant life events. If your client works to become more mindful but continues without much progress, it is likely his low level of mindfulness is a trait. In other words, he simply may not be wired toward mindfulness. In these cases, the focus of the coaching engagement might shift toward helping him find strategies to adapt to the trait.

Utilizing the concept of mindfulness can pay significant dividends for both you and your client. Lahnna Catalino and Barbara Fredrickson's research (available to the public in **manuscript form** via the National Center for Biotechnology Information) has shown that individuals higher in mindfulness are more likely to flourish and lead happier lives. While not a sure thing, cultivating this idea of mindfulness may help to move the consciousness of our time in a positive direction. 

Recommended Reading

"The Benefits of Being Present: Mindfulness and its Role in Psychological Well-being," by Kirk Warren Brown and Richard M. Ryan (in *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, April 2003, Vol. 84, No. 4, pages 822 – 848)

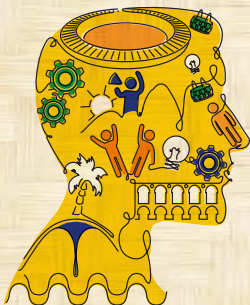
"Emotional Intelligence Mediates the Relationship Between Mindfulness and Subjective Well-being," by Nicola S. Schutte and John M. Malouff (in *Personality and Individual Differences*, May 2011, Vol. 50, No. 7, pages 1116 – 1119)

"Mindfulness in Coaching: Philosophy, Psychology or Just a Useful Skill?," by Michael J. Cavanagh and Gordon B. Spence (in *The Wiley-Blackwell Handbook of the Psychology of Coaching and Mentoring*, edited by Jonathan Passmore, David Peterson and Teresa Freire [Wiley-Blackwell, 2012])

"A Tuesday in the Life of a Flourisher: The Role of Positive Emotional Reactivity in Optimal Mental Health," by Lahnna Catalino and Barbara Frederickson (in *Emotion*, August 2011, Vol. 11, NO. 4, pages 938 – 950)

"Using Self-report Assessment Methods to Explore Facets of Mindfulness," by Ruth Baer, Gregory Smith, Jamie Lynn Hopkins, Jennifer Krietemeyer and Leslie-Ann Toney (in *Assessment*, March 2006, Vol. 13, No. 1, pages 27 – 45)

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Promoting Coaching: A Toolbox

As a coach and ICF Member, you work daily to support your clients, build your business and develop yourself as a professional. At the same time, however, you're part of something bigger: a rapidly growing industry that enjoys growing consumer awareness.

Consider the following findings from the *2014 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study*:

- Globally, 58 percent of respondents said they were aware of professional Business and/or Life Coaching, reflecting an increase of seven percentage points from 2010.
- Among respondents who said they were aware of professional coaching, 35 percent of respondents correctly identified the definition of coaching when provided definitions for five support professions.
- Despite a challenging economic climate, participation in coaching increased slightly between 2010 and 2013, with 17 percent of 2014 respondents indicating that they'd participated in a coaching relationship.

This data illustrates an opportunity for coaching professionals to spread the word about coaching and its benefits, challenge misconceptions about what coaching is and what it isn't, and demonstrate the numerous ways that professional coaching can help individuals and organizations achieve their goals. To help you seize this opportunity, we've assembled a collection of tools, tips and resources for you to apply as you promote professional coaching in your community and in the world.

Myth-busting

As a professional coach, you've no doubt heard someone from outside of our community repeat one of the common myths or misconceptions around coaching. It can sometimes be difficult to formulate the "right" response in the moment. That's why we asked a group of coach-training professionals to share what they say when they have the opportunity to speak out on behalf of professional coaching. Their replies to six common coaching myths and misconceptions can be found on the next two pages.



Francine Campone, Ed.D., MCC, provides Executive and Personal Coaching to midlife professionals, drawing on 20 years of experience in the field. She is active in coaching research and is director of the Evidence Based Coaching Program at Fielding Graduate University. Francine is president-elect of the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching (GSAEC).



Karen Kimsey-House, PCC, is CEO and co-founder of the Coaches Training Institute (CTI). A pioneer in the coaching and leadership development field for more than 20 years, Karen is a sought-after speaker, program designer and facilitator, and co-author of the best-selling book, *Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives* (3rd ed., Nicholas Brealey America, 2011).



Micki McMillan, MCC, is the president of the Association of Coach Training Organizations (ACTO). She has been teaching coaches since 1998 and developed the curriculum for Blue Mesa Group's ICF-accredited Transformational Coaching Program. She is CEO of Blue Mesa Group, a coaching and consulting firm serving clients in North America, Europe, Asia-Pacific and Latin America.



Peter J. Reding, MBA, MCC, is the co-founder of www.CoachForLife.com and a co-founder of ACTO. He is The World-changing Visionary Coach™ who coaches individuals who are compelled to inform, inspire or improve the lives of millions with their vision.



Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D., MCC, is a founding member and past president of ICF Global. She continues to coach and teach leaders worldwide and write books while sitting on airplanes when traveling.

"There's no real difference between coaching and therapy."

There is a growing body of empirical research to document the distinctions as well as the considerations needed to discern the appropriateness of coaching and/or therapy. Coach and client traits and coaching goals are key determinants and the processes and relationship dynamics differ significantly.

—Francine Campone, Ed.D., MCC

There are many differences between coaching and therapy, a primary one being that therapy generally addresses emotional and behavioral patterns which interfere with the client's ability to function effectively. Coaching largely seeks to foster an evolving expression of a client's potential by focusing on quality of life choices and effective action.

—Karen Kimsey-House, PCC

"Information covered in coaching sessions should be common sense."

"Common sense" implies that all information is evident and easily accessible to an individual. Coaching recognizes that all of us have biases and blind spots in our thinking and perceptions. A coaching conversation uncovers those aspects of a situation that the client has been unable to see or consider.

—Francine Campone, Ed.D., MCC

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >



Coaching sessions cover everyday life challenges, aspirations and triumphs. Yes, each of us is innately resourceful and each of us has fears and unconscious limiting beliefs that block our common sense. The professional coach is often the only person with whom clients can share and explore their issue, with the freedom of not being judged or told what they should do.

—Peter J. Reding, MBA, MCC



“If you already have a mentor or advisor in your field, you don’t need a coach.”

Each of these supporters can be useful. However, each acts in a different capacity: A mentor or advisor provides information and is directive; a coach builds the client’s capacity to learn from experience, problem-solve creatively and strategically, and be more self-actualizing.

—Francine Campone, Ed.D., MCC

When you are having difficulty understanding your blocks, are resisting change or can’t see your blind spots, the reflection and questioning approaches of a coach will be more beneficial for your

success than mentoring. Coaching helps you think for yourself instead of solely relying on the advice of others.

—Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D., MCC

“A coach is nothing more than a good friend you pay money to speak with.”

I think this misconception is as more of a disservice to good friendship than it is to coaching. A coach who has in-depth professional training is objective and impartial with only your best interest in mind at all times. If you think about it, this dynamic—while useful in coaching—would be pretty unbalanced and unhealthy in a good friendship!

—Karen Kimsey-House, PCC

Friends give advice, coaches don’t. The relationship between coach and client is extremely important, but unlike in friendship, coaches follow skillful steps and guidelines to support the client to reach his or her own conclusions.

—Micki McMillan, MCC

“Because coaching is unregulated, it’s impossible to objectively evaluate a coach’s quality.”

The desire to remain self-regulated is the reason the founding ICF Members developed rigorous processes for assessing coaches and coach-training programs. ICF Credentials are recognized throughout the world as indicators of coach quality. The more people know about and endorse these processes, the less the need for regulation.

—Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D., MCC

Professional coaching has been self-regulated for more than 15 years with strict ethics, professional standards, clearly articulated core competencies and a stringent due-



process Independent Review Board. A professionally trained and certified coach who spends an average of one to five years in training and advanced certification processes can be objectively evaluated as a highly qualified coach.

—Peter J. Reding, MBA, MCC

“Coaching is just another self-help fad.”

The world is rapidly changing and leaders and executives have many expectations they must meet. Because of this need, the coaching profession emerged as one development option to help leaders step up to the myriad challenges they face. Coaching fosters self-directed learning and personal growth. If leadership development is a self-help fad for organizations, then we are all in trouble.

—Micki McMillan, MCC

Coaching will last because it isn’t a technique. It’s a method of learning and facilitating behavioral change. For the same reason you can’t tickle yourself, your brain stops you from deeply examining your thoughts. Coaching helps people see themselves and their world more broadly than they can on their own.

—Marcia Reynolds, Psy.D., MCC

What You're Doing Now

Every day, ICF Members and Credential-holders around the world are advocating for coaching in their professional networks and local communities. We took to ICF Global's social media channels to ask, **"How do you help promote professional coaching?"**

I speak at events and forums, where I present not only coaching, but also ... research on why it works. I also lead workshops at universities, letting students experience coaching practically, so they learn by doing what coaching is, what it can do for them and where else it can be applied.

I believe that the best way to understand and acknowledge the power of coaching is by having the experience of it, so I offer pro bono sessions. (International Coaching Week is always a great opportunity for that.) I also participate in pro bono activities to benefit groups in need and in "out-of-the-box" projects, such as **Reaching Re-Birth**, where we had the opportunity to bring coaching to a different group of people from a different context.

—Katerina Kanelidou, PCC (Greece)

Show me someone who is in indecision and I'll show you a coach who can help them move forward, take action and get what they never knew they always wanted.

I also volunteer with the ICF Midwest Regional Conference committee. The hotel staff and city connections we make every year learn a lot about coaching from us being in town.

—Kristen Beireis (USA)

I get clients to tell their stories. We give presentations with our clients, co-author articles and submit applications for awards programs where clients need to assess the value achieved with coaching and tell their story as part of the submission process. It is amazing how much clients learn about the value they received from coaching that they were not aware of prior to applying for an award.

As one might expect with any new or poorly understood product, the first demand from a prospective client is often, "Prove to me that this coaching thing works." Fortunately there is a large body of evidence these days to make that case. However, once the evidence has been presented, the prospective client next asks about what will happen when he receives coaching or uses coaching within his organization. In the end, the stories are more important in the decision-making process than the research and evidence showing that coaching works.

—Dave Busse, PCC (Canada)

I use every forum possible to illustrate the value of coaching as a powerful development tool. Coaching doesn't just create change. It creates change that is sustainable over the long term. In partnership with a skilled, trained coach, an individual develops his or her own workable change strategies and therefore is heavily vested in a successful outcome. Coaches don't dispense advice or give answers. We help coachees create solutions that will work best for them. This is the true power of coaching and is what sets the profession apart from consulting and mentoring. Educating others on these key differences is how I advocate for professional coaching.

—Lillian LeBlanc, MBA, PCC (USA)

I educate clients and other coaches about evidence-based coaching, the importance of credentials and evaluation methods that link coaching to business value.

—Chris Groscurth, Ph.D., ACC (USA)



Knowing When to Refer

One misconception about the coaching industry is that professional coaches are on a mission to supplant counselors and therapists. This is not the case. The growth of the coaching industry does not herald the end of therapy; rather, it signals the increased availability of a service that's been proven to enhance individual and organizational performance.

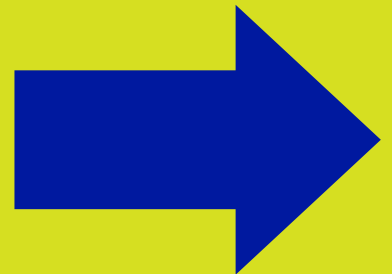
As you speak out on behalf of professional coaching, it's important to let people know that coaches are trained to understand the difference between coaching and therapy. In fact, as an ICF Member or Credential-holder, you're obliged by the ICF Code of Ethics to refer prospective or current clients to therapists when appropriate.

ICF Members are encouraged to download **"Top 10 Indicators to Refer a Client to a Mental Health Professional"** from the ICF Member Toolkit.

The Right Path

In order to promote professional coaching in a responsible, ethical fashion, it's important to acknowledge that coaching may not be the right fit for everybody. Depending on an individual's specific needs and situation, he or she might benefit more from another service, such as consulting, mentoring, psychotherapy or counseling. You can help identify the best route for the journey by sharing this map, designed as a resource for anyone feeling stuck in their personal or professional life.

Download the "Feeling Stuck?" map to share with prospective clients and members of your community at icf.to/stuck.

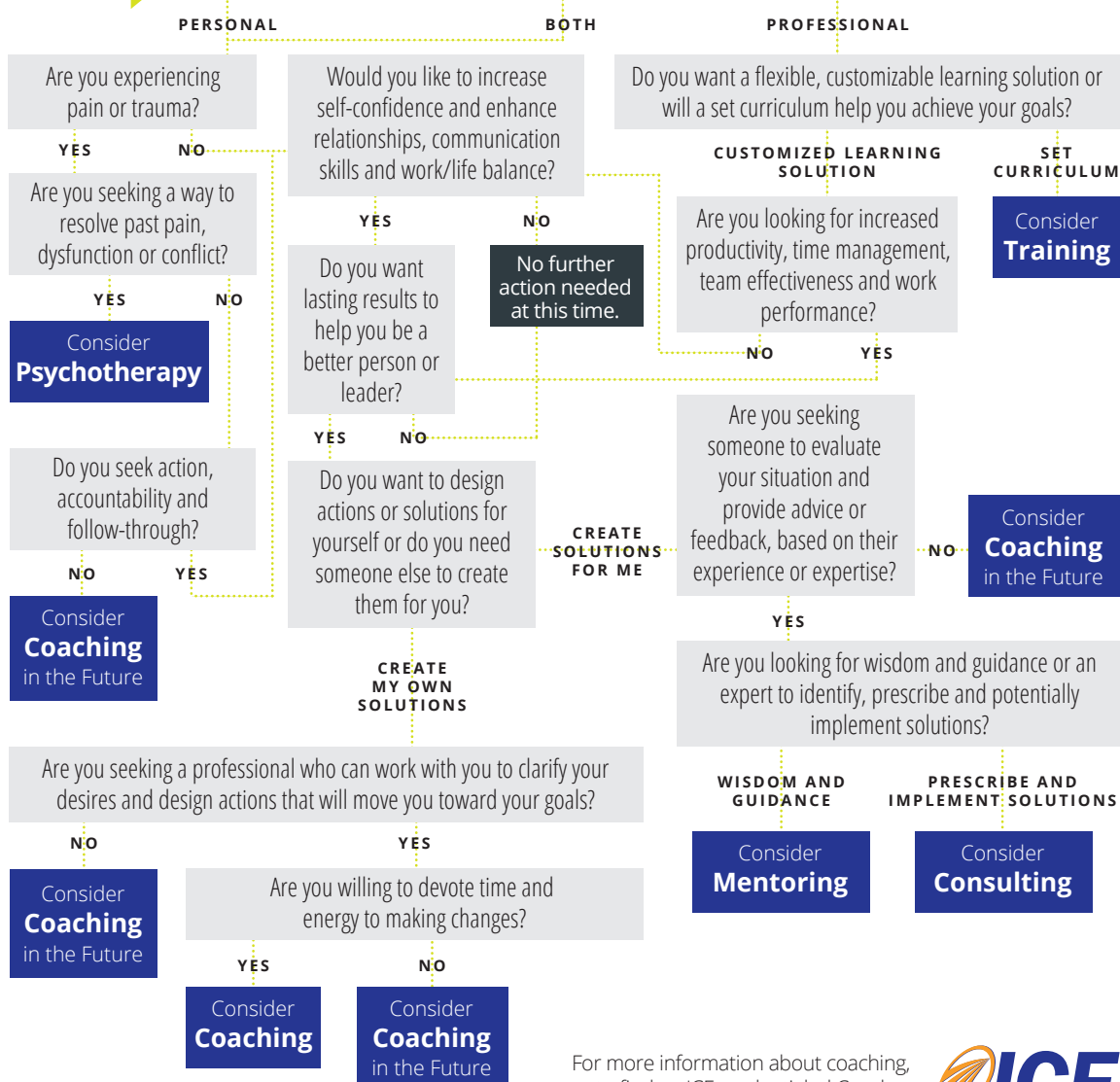


FEELING STUCK?

Take this quiz to discover where to turn.

START HERE:

Do you believe there is something more to discover in your personal or professional life?



For more information about coaching, or to find an ICF-credentialed Coach, visit Coachfederation.org.



Consider Coaching

A coach could be beneficial for you! ICF defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. Coaches honor the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative and resourceful. The coach's responsibility is to:

- Discover, clarify and align with what the client wants to achieve.
- Encourage client self-discovery.
- Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies.
- Hold the client responsible and accountable.

This process helps clients dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while developing leadership skills and unlocking potential.

Consider Consulting

Individuals or organizations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will diagnose problems and prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions.

Consider Mentoring

A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching.

Consider Psychotherapy

The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways. You may find it helpful to know that ICF Members have received training to discern the differences between coaching and therapy and are obliged by our organization's Code of Ethics to refer prospective or current clients to therapists when appropriate.

Consider Training

Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum.

Consider Coaching in the Future

Coaching might be the right fit for you in the future. To decide when the time is right, ask yourself the following questions:

- What do I want to accomplish?
- Do I value collaboration, other viewpoints and new perspectives?
- Am I ready to devote time and energy to making real changes?

5

Simple Ways to Promote Professional Coaching

1

Write a letter to the editor.

Start a conversation about coaching in your local community—or join the conversation about a column or article that you believe has portrayed coaching inaccurately—by writing a letter to the editor. Letters to the editor are typically brief and to-the-point (150 – 200 words and focusing on one to two main points). Some topics you might address in a letter include:

- The importance of the ICF Code of Ethics and Ethical Conduct Review process.
- The benefits of partnering with an ICF Credential-holder.
- Positive business impacts of coaching.

To increase your likelihood of being published, review each outlet's submission guidelines carefully and follow them exactly.

2

Leverage the power of social media.

Around the world, more than one billion users communicate, share content and build relationships across numerous social media platforms, including LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube and Google+.

You may already be using social media to grow your business or communicate with family and friends, but you can also use it to help spread the word about professional coaching. Consider connecting with ICF Global and your ICF Chapter on your preferred social media platforms to find relevant, shareable content that helps promote professional coaching.



Use video to share the benefits of professional coaching.

If you're already using video to promote your practice, consider producing a short video where you discuss the benefits of professional coaching and relay information that helps challenge common misconceptions. (If you're an ICF Member, learn how to leverage video for these purposes by watching Catharine Fennell's 2014 Business Development Series presentation, "Step Out Online with Video and Let the World Connect with You," at Coachfederation.org/bds.)

You can also take advantage of ICF's extensive **YouTube library**, which includes several videos that advocate for quality coaching. Consider embedding a video from **ICF's Credential Legacy series** on your website or preferred social media channel(s).




Create a presence for coaching at local events.

What's the best way to answer someone's questions about coaching or clear up their misconceptions? By enabling them to meet professional coaches and experience the benefits of coaching firsthand! Consider partnering with other members of your local ICF Chapter to establish an ICF presence at business and networking events, trade shows in your region, and community gatherings. In addition to simply answering questions about coaching and providing educational collateral (e.g., the fliers and brochures in the **ICF Member Toolkit**), you can offer short (20- to 25-minute) pro bono coaching sessions to event attendees.



Be the best coach you can be.

All ICF Members are obliged to adhere to the stringent ICF Code of Ethics, but living and working ethically is only the beginning. Commit to continuously developing yourself as a professional, pursuing advanced coach training to take your knowledge and skills to the next level, and engaging with the professional community. By embodying excellence in all that you do, you will help promote for professional coaching by simply being yourself. 



Promotional materials like these fliers can be downloaded from the **ICF Member Toolkit** or purchased from the **ICF Store**.



**Barb Ann Pierce,
BEng, MBA, PCC**

Drawing on more than 2,500 hours of coaching experience, Barb has been teaching coaching skills to coaches and leaders since 2008. Based on her unique background and experiences, she has integrated a holistic approach to coaching that creates a safe foundation for exploration and growth. Barb recently published *Become a Coach Leader—One Conversation at a Time* (Coaching Horizons, 2014). Her book is available in print and e-book form worldwide via all major distributors.

Solution-focused Coaching

“Leaders can provide visible evidence of enabling and supporting their employees by conducting continuous Appreciative Coaching conversations showing how the strengths of the person are aligned to the results of the organization. People then understand how they fit into the organization’s vision and mission, but create a powerful energy for excellence.”

—James M. Kouzes and Barry Z. Posner, *The Leadership Challenge* (4th ed., Jossey-Bass, 2008)

Although much effort has been invested in improving problem-solving models, there has been significant research in the past 50 years regarding the benefits of positive thinking. One area of discovery via the world of psychology has been the development of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). Initially developed for the medical field, AI has been gaining traction in the business world. A 2012 study by Anne Selcer, Gerald Goodman and Phillip J. Decker found that leaders who use appreciative coaching have significantly greater impacts on developing a common vision, and in empowering and supporting their work teams.

Learning about AI sparked an “aha” moment that forever changed how I interact with others—especially with my clients. I started implementing AI right away with excellent results and found that approaching coaching conversations through the lens of AI created a more optimistic tone. It also moved the discussion from a focus on what was wrong to what was possible; this helped my clients get to a place of understanding and possibility much more quickly. Simply put: You get more of what you choose to focus on.


Like many people, I used to focus on solving the problem during coaching discussions. I now know that focusing on the problem brings even more attention to it—often at the expense of the solution. For example, when you are biking on a trail, the more you focus on the big rock that you want to avoid, the more likely you are to hit it. To successfully navigate the obstacle, you instead look beyond the rock to the place where you want your wheels to go. The same thing is true of work or personal problems. The more you focus on the thing you don’t want, the more of it you’re going to get.

When you incorporate AI into your coaching toolbox, you see your clients as resourceful and capable, and you encourage those attributes. Asking your clients to focus on positive stories with the intent of learning what worked in the past encourages even more of this behavior. Incorporating AI in your coaching practice changes the way you connect with others. It can help pull the client out of the problem state and create a physiology that encourages new thinking.

Coaches who use AI guide their clients toward the future, while accessing and building upon the best of their past. The advantage of an AI-based approach when coaching is that the questions lead the clients to experience a positive frame of mind. It is from this place/state that the client is able to develop new possibilities.

The language used by both the coach and the client has an impact on the client's reality and potential for future changes. When the client is in an unresourceful frame of mind, she often can't see the possibilities available to her. When this occurs, the simple act of changing physiology through different postures, storytelling or visualizations allows the client to see her situation more favorably and opens her up to more possibilities.

With AI, you can do a whole lot more than just solve the problem. AI is not like problem-solving, where you look for what is wrong and try to fix it. Instead, you focus on the outcome in a way that promotes learning and discovery. The AI process is not a sugar-coated pep talk, but a true inquiry into best practices in which the coach listens for words, phrases and metaphors that illustrate what is important to the client.

Although the AI process does not encourage negative stories, when one comes up, the coach can use it to generate ideas about what was missing so that learning can still take place. If the negative stories are suppressed or ignored, then there may be resentment, and the client may feel that the process is biased or ineffective. As Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom write in *The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change* (2nd ed., Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010), "The aim is to start the solution process rather than to stop the complaint pattern." 

Learning the AI Approach

Appreciative Coaching: A Positive Process for Change, by Sara Orem, Jacqueline Binkert and Ann L. Clancy (Jossey-Bass, 2007)

"Appreciative Inquiry: Models & Applications," by Pavitra Mishra and Jyotsna Bhatnagar (in *Indian Journal Of Industrial Relations*, January 2012, Vol. 47, No. 3, pages 543 – 558)

"Fostering Transformational Leadership in Business and Health Administration Education through Appreciative Inquiry Coaching," by Anne Selcer, Gerald Goodman and Phillip J. Decker (in *Business Education Innovation Journal*, December 2012, Vol. 4, No. 2, pages 10 –19)

The Power of Appreciative Inquiry: A Practical Guide to Positive Change, by Diana Whitney and Amanda Trosten-Bloom (2nd ed., Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2010)

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World Business and Executive Coach Summit (WBECS)



Margaret Moore, MBA

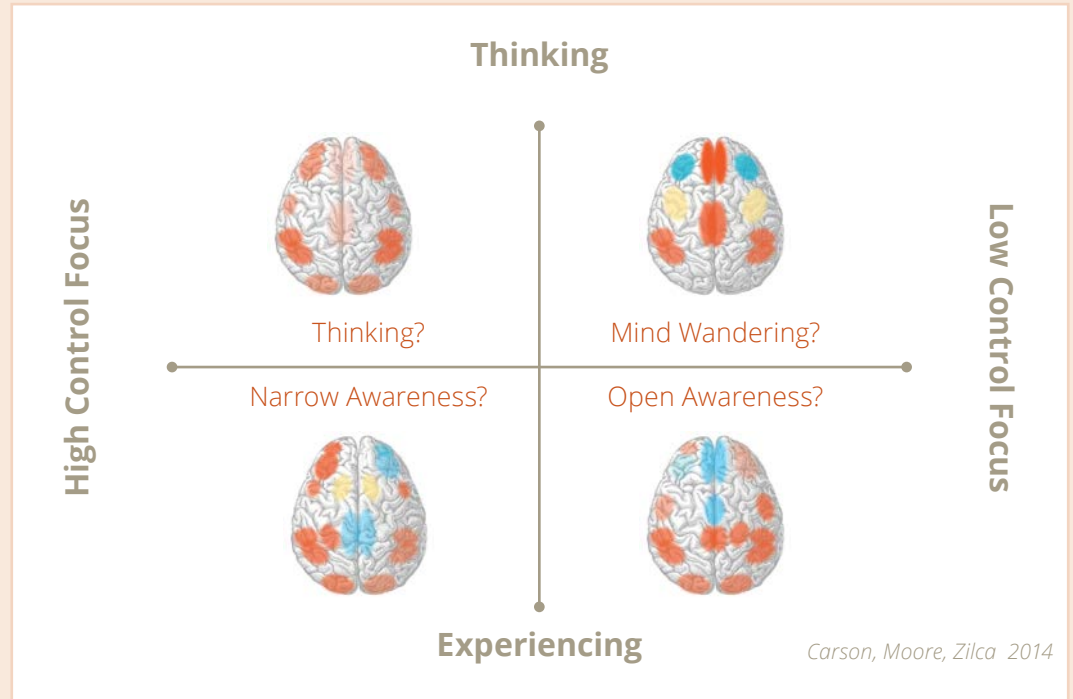
Margaret (aka Coach Meg) is a 17-year veteran of the biotechnology industry. In 2002 she founded the **Wellcoaches School of Coaching**. Margaret is co-founder and co-director of the **Institute of Coaching at McLean Hospital**, a Harvard Medical School affiliate. She is co-author of the Harvard Health Book, *Organize Your Mind*, *Organize Your Life* (Harlequin, 2011). The *Organize Your Mind* model outlined in this article will soon be offered in a self-coaching course for coaches and anyone else interested in a more organized mind. Learn more at www.organizeyourmind.com.



Shelley Carson, Ph.D.

Shelley is a research psychologist and lecturer at Harvard University, where she focuses on the areas of psychopathology, resilience and creativity. Her work has been published widely in national and international scientific journals and featured on the Discovery Channel, CNN and NPR. She has won multiple teaching awards for her popular course, *Creativity: Madmen, Geniuses and Harvard Students*.

She is the author of *Your Creative Brain: Seven Steps to Maximize Imagination, Productivity, and Innovation in Your Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2010), and co-author of *Almost Depressed: Is My (or My Loved One's) Unhappiness a Problem* (Hazelden, 2013).



Organize Your Mind for Coaching

Where is your mind right now?

Now you can find it. The graphic above is what you might call a mind locator, or even a GPS for the mind. It's a two-dimensional map. From right to left travels the level of executive control; i.e., the extent to which your left prefrontal cortex (PFC) is controlling and directing attention. The higher the control, the further to the left you are on the graph. In the middle are somewhat defocused creative brain states. On the right, your mind is wandering about without a leash.

The second dimension goes from thinking (lots of activity in the PFC) to sensory awareness, or experiencing, in the back and lower brain regions. In other words, it's moving from what is described as "in your head" to "in your body."

Consider where your mind lands on the map right now. You might be thinking critically about what you're reading here. Thinking is a left PFC-controlled state.

Your mind might be wandering right now. Maybe this article isn't engaging enough. Maybe you've got something else on your mind that's hijacking your focus, so you're not fully present and are only reading a few words in each paragraph.

Maybe you're in a state of open awareness, where you're living in your senses. There's reduced activity in your prefrontal cortex. Your attention is focused on experiencing the light coming through your window, the music piping through your computer's speakers, the apple that you're snacking on.

There are numerous brain states—each with its own ideal application in our daily lives. Most of these are used in preparation for and during a coaching session. On the following pages, we highlight 12 brain states (in addition to a 13th, not-yet-mapped state) that we're likely to draw on before, during and after a coaching session.

Four strategies can be used in concert to cultivate an organized mind. The first strategy is to use your attention in an **intentional** way and choose the brain state that's appropriate for the next task, a key strategy of an organized mind.

A second strategy is to **go deep** and invest all of your brain's resources in one brain state only—to dive deep to where the treasures can be found. Beyond intention and depth, a third strategy is **agility**; i.e., making a quick and complete jump from one state to the next and moving all of your attentional resources instead of leaving part of your attention on the last task or worrying about the next tasks.

The fourth strategy is **diversity**—making use of the many, diverse brain states outlined here.



Meta-Awareness

The meta-awareness state is unique, although similar to strategic thinking (see page 28). It's the state also defined as mindfulness, where we dial down the brain activity that is task-oriented or

experience-oriented in order to dial up the brain region that is responsible for self-awareness, observation and reflection. It's a place worth visiting frequently in order to pause and notice yourself in action and to get a strategic perspective on yourself, how the session is going, what you're feeling, how much time is left and whether you need to adjust anything.

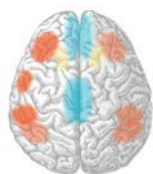
to breathe in and take in the moment. The open awareness state is the equivalent of shifting a car's transmission into neutral: It's an effective way to get out of our last brain state by getting into the present and pausing before moving intentionally into the next step of the session.



Narrow Awareness

Now you direct your awareness to the client's presence, experiencing—rather than thinking about or analyzing—his mood and energy. This is the narrow awareness state where the left PFC

gently focuses your senses and experiencing on another person, rather than the whole room and a full sensory experience.



Reasoning/Thinking

As you prepare for a coaching session, you engage your brain's executive control. Maybe you're reviewing your notes. You're making sure that you remember what happened in the last session. You're

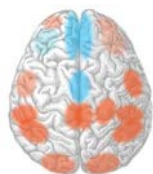
looking at your client's pre-work for the session. You have a tight focus, not a creative, somewhat defocused state. This kind of detailed, executive work stocks up your working memory with important pieces of information to draw on during the session.



Imagine

In *Your Creative Brain: Seven Steps to Maximize Imagination, Productivity and Innovation in Your Life* (Jossey-Bass, 2010), Shelley describes the imagining or envisioning brain state as critical to the

creative process. The graphic indicates reduced PFC activity associated with this state, but that doesn't mean nothing is happening. The action is in the visual areas at the back of the brain. Imagining the outcome of a coaching session, imagining the outcome of the change process, and visualizing where you and your client might go together are important steps for the human brain to create something new. Helping your client create a collaboration topic, a coaching program or a vision for the session—or even for his life—engages the envisioning brain state.



Open Awareness

The ICF Core Competencies call on you to be open and present during your coaching sessions. The beginning of the session is the time to move into an open awareness state. You empty out the

prefrontal cortex, where consciously directed thinking lives. As a result, your attentional resources are sitting in your senses. You're here to fully experience,

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE >

COLOR KEY

Orange Cortical areas of relative activation Blue Cortical areas of relative deactivation Yellow Subcortical areas of relative activation



Collaborate

The collaborate brain state is a primary brain state used in a coaching session. It is beautiful: The left and right PFC regions are balanced and integrated.

The social brain is fully engaged. Brain activity is high in many regions. Not surprisingly, this is a highly generative state that can lead to shifts in mindset; i.e., “aha” moments and insights that have the potential to elicit small brain changes which add up over many sessions to transform the brain—both mindset and behavior.



Flow

Described by Mihaly Csíkszentmihályi as the key to optimal psychological well-being, individual flow states are those moments when we are immersed and enjoying an activity so much that we lose

track of time and, without undue effort, execute the activity to the best of our abilities.

We don't yet have a brain state for relational flow (i.e., a flow state involving two or more people, such as a coach and client). Relational flow is likely a hybrid of the collaborate and flow states, capturing the creative collaboration that occurs in the best coaching sessions.



Embodied Learning

Embodied learning takes place when humans learn by watching, observing and even absorbing others keenly. The middle and back of the brain are activated, and the PFC—the thinking brain—is turned

down. This is the main mode of early childhood learning before kids have books and pencils. A coach takes in and absorbs the client's presence. This state is also used by a client to take in the coach's presence, including zest and curiosity, which contributes as much or more to the coaching dynamic as what coaches do when it comes to facilitating a rich exploration.

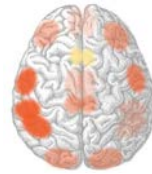


Nonlinear

This nonlinear state is where creativity happens. It's even more defocused than the flow state. This is where you're brainstorming, where you're coming up with crazy ideas one after another.

This creative brain state is a valuable contributor to

the coaching process, where you get yourself and your client out of “normal” thinking patterns and into a creative, possibility-generating space that's an amazing source of new perspectives and new ideas.



Strategic

There are moments in coaching when you need to zoom out from the nitty-gritty to bigger-picture inquiries. This strategic brain state looks almost identical to the meta-awareness state. The same areas

are activated, but to slightly different degrees. As noted earlier, this suggests that the meta-awareness state may in fact yield strategic perspectives on one's self. In a coaching session, you might zoom out by asking: What shifts are you noticing? What patterns are emerging? What are you learning? Is this working for you?



Evaluate

The judging, evaluating, critiquing brain state—with the highest degree of executive control of all of the brain states explored here—is applied with great care in a coaching session. There's

no place in the coaching conversation for judgment of the client. However, this brain state is ideal when the collaboration turns to designing actions. This is where the critical thinking and evaluating brain state is ideal.



Mind-Wandering

The imagining and mind-wandering brain states look very similar. The only difference is that the left PFC, which is somewhat activated in the imagining state, is turned down even lower in

the mind-wandering state. In fact, it's fair to say that imagination is a controlled version of mind wandering directed toward something concrete (e.g., imagining the future). While you and your client may not unleash your mind to wander during a coaching session unless you take an intentional break, perhaps to do some deep breathing, it's an invaluable brain state to recharge after a coaching session. Many creative ideas emerge spontaneously after deep focus periods, when working memory is richly stocked up with information and emotional energy and the brain is set free of ambition (e.g., when you're taking a shower, going for a walk or jogging).

COLOR KEY



Cortical areas of relative activation



Cortical areas of relative deactivation



Subcortical areas of relative activation

Gratitude

Although the neuroscience literature hasn't yet mapped the brain regions activated in a state of gratitude, we've no doubt that a brain state for gratitude exists. This is where coaches want to shift at the end of the coaching session, as we harvest with our clients what we've learned and appreciate what went well. Generating gratitude—and modeling this for our clients—is a perfect brain state for a session close as well as a daily intervention for well-being.

Now the coaching session has ended. You were intentional and purposeful in your selection of brain states, taking your client with you to the deepest places of undivided attention. You were agile, shifting fluidly among many brain states throughout the session. And diversity abounded, as you used the brain states we describe here and likely more. Your client was uplifted by your organized mind, and committed to organizing his mind for the next steps in his journey of change. 🌱

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Susan M. Hahn, PCC

As an Executive Coach, the founding president of ICF Maryland, a workplace mediator and a trainer, Susan works with diverse organizations throughout North America and Europe.

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When Perception Overrides Reality

"You're fired! You're incompetent!"

"You are a fraud and a fake."

"Did you really think you could fool people for the rest of your life?"

These are the words that many professionals fear will be directed at them at any moment. As a result of this threat, confidence, risk-taking and focus are jeopardized, potentially stalling career advancement and satisfaction. These are the hallmarks of what Pauline Rose Clance, Ph.D., and Suzanne Imes, Ph.D., coined as the Impostor Phenomenon (IP) in 1974. IP is a feeling that high achievers experience when they deny that their accomplishments are "real," or based on their actual skills and abilities. Instead, they attribute their success to external factors, such as luck, timing and the generosity of others.

As an Executive Coach, I often hear clients express fears about their abilities, despite remarkable success in their careers. I listened to Larry proclaim his fear that it was only a matter of time before "they" realized he was nowhere near as bright, capable or talented as he had led them to believe. Anita was certain that she had achieved the position of chief operating officer only because she knew how to be charming. "I charmed them all," she told me. "What happens when the charm doesn't seem charming to them anymore? I know I won't be able to pull it off." Jerry began to suffer panic attacks daily, fearing that intellectual inferiority would end his career. "And I have four children to take care of. I'm waking up every night sweating, with my heart pounding. I keep thinking I'm having

a heart attack and can't tell my wife. I'm in over my head, and think maybe I should look for another position at a lower level."

Other common statements (and self-talk) include:

- "Sooner or later they will realize I'm a fake."
- "How could I have fooled so many people for so long?"
- "What will I do when they discover that I don't really know what I'm doing?"

These comments demonstrate that feelings of being an impostor persist in the 21st century. Even the comedian and talk-show host Ellen DeGeneres has commented, "All of us, whether we are in [show] business or not, have little voices that tell us we're not good enough, and we don't deserve it."

Workplace Challenges

Through my own research on IP, I identified the three most-common workplace behaviors associated with IP: avoidance, over-preparation, and procrastination. Each negatively impacts productivity and engagement, and careers can be derailed by these symptoms.

Avoidance

Your client may believe that avoiding specific tasks or situations will reduce the likelihood of being "discovered" as an impostor. Tactics include everything from making excuses about her workload to claiming illness. In some cases, individuals will make valuable contributions to a project, but only if they can do so behind the scenes. This way, if less-than-adequate performance is revealed, it will be attributed to the team instead of the individual.

Procrastination

Immediate impacts of procrastination include missed deadlines and sub-par work. Over time, a habitual procrastinator's colleagues and superiors are likely to make assumptions about her intentions, even labeling her as "lazy" or "careless." As a result, she may be excluded from key projects or passed over for promotions.

Over-preparation

The tendency to over-prepare can be as incapacitating as avoidance or

procrastination. Chronic over-preparers are perceived by others as “perfectionists,” in that they’ll work a project over and over, striving for perfection and insisting that there’s always more to be done. Consequences of over-preparation include inefficiency, misappropriation of effort, decreased productivity and, often, conflict in workplace relationships.

IP Success Strategies

When a client displays signs of IP, the first and most important step you can take as her coach is to put the phenomenon in context and let her know that she’s not alone. IP is common among existing and emerging business leaders, but clients often feel isolated in their experience of it, believing that they’re experiencing something unique and nameless. Assuring clients that they are far from alone is essential. Coaches can be most helpful to clients by recognizing and naming the phenomenon for what it is, sharing how common it is, and creating awareness around ways to reduce or eliminate symptoms.

Through the interviews I conducted during my research, I identified six strategies your clients can use as they strive to move away from IP and toward a new view of themselves.

1. Recall prior experiences of recognized success.

Many IP clients are able to identify current or past experiences with what they perceive as “real” success. For example, one of the research respondents I interviewed was plagued with insecurity about his career, but very confident in his abilities as a father. When his thoughts about his career would spiral downward, he’d settle his emotions by repeating “I am a good father,” over and over. He said he was amazed at the positive results of this affirmative self-talk.

2. Get moving!

Staying in one place provides fertile ground for IP thought patterns to take hold. Whether your client heads outside for a run, joins an exercise class at her gym or simply takes up a hobby, such as gardening or woodworking, she’ll benefit not only from the activity itself, but from the spatial change. Clients have reported that simply moving from one location to another (i.e., from room to room or across the office) can change their perspective and thinking on an issue.

3. Call upon spiritual beliefs.

Clients who engage in some form of spiritual practice can draw on their beliefs as they strive to defeat self-doubt and silence negative self-talk. For example, one client reported that prayer provided her the solace she needed to begin changing her thinking about how to interpret the consistently positive feedback she was getting at work.

4. Use Your Body to Change Your Thinking.


During a 2012 TED Talk titled “**Your Body Language Shapes Who You Are,**” social psychologist Amy Cuddy suggested that we can create insecurity or confidence by the way we hold ourselves, sit, stand and raise our hands. Many IP clients find that exploring their nonverbal communication reveals personal and professional insecurities. Awareness and practice are essential to changing physical behaviors; this, in turn, can change thinking. Invite clients to practice different postures, gestures and expressions. Start with the smile: Ask your client to force a smile and hold it for ten seconds. When she relaxes the smile, ask what she thinks and feels. Thinking drives emotions and emotions drive behavior. Simple changes in our bodies create a change in thinking.

5. Honor past compliments.

Encourage clients to keep a “kudos” file; i.e., an archive of emails and other documentation of words of praise for their accomplishments. They can refer to this tangible record during times of self-doubt and replace their negative self-talk with the positive statements contained therein. Over time, this can decrease the frequency and intensity of IP thought patterns.

6. Breathe deeply.

As clients tune into their IP behaviors, many recognize accompanying changes in breathing patterns. One client I interviewed realized that he’d hold his breath during tense conversations, while another became aware of taking quick, short breaths during times of stress. Encourage clients to be mindful of these physiological stress symbols and make a concerted effort to shift to deep breaths from the diaphragm.

IP is more prevalent in our clients than many of us realize. To some extent, it’s even a natural part of career progression, especially for clients who are promoted into senior roles more quickly than expected. If a client’s comments during coaching sessions suggest that she is questioning her worthiness, in or out of the workplace, use powerful questions (e.g., “Do you believe others think you’re more talented than you do?”; “To what do you attribute your success?”) to identify whether IP might be at work. Putting a name to the phenomenon and supporting our clients as they identify strategies for moving beyond it are crucial steps in helping our clients see themselves as we see them: resourceful, whole individuals who are in the driver’s seat of their professional and personal lives. 



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Wilma Fellman, M.Ed.

For more than 30 years Wilma, a Licensed Professional Counselor, has been a career counselor specializing in Attention Deficit Disorder, learning disabilities and other challenges. She is the author of *The Other Me: Poetic Thoughts on ADD for Adults, Kids and Parents* (Specialty Press/A.D.D. Warehouse, 1997) and a contributor to *Understanding Women with AD/HD* (Updated ed., Advantage Books, 2002). The second edition of her career development book, *Finding A Career That Works For You: A Step-by-Step Guide to Choosing a Career* (Specialty Press/A.D.D. Warehouse, 2006), contains a special foreword by Richard Nelson Bolles, author of *What Color is Your Parachute?* Her newest offering is a partnership with the EDGE Foundation and Victoria Roche, PCC, in which she has developed a course in Career Services Specialty Training (CSST) for seasoned ADHD Coaches, enabling them to do the career piece with their clients.

Career Services Skills for Coaches

According to 2012 data collected from 34 countries by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, the average worker spends 1,765 hours—or more than 20 percent—of his or her year at work.

Given how many of your clients' hours are spent on work and related activities, it's little wonder that so many coaching conversations come around to topics such as identifying a meaningful career, choosing work that's aligned with individual values and cultivating a career that ensures appropriate work/life balance.

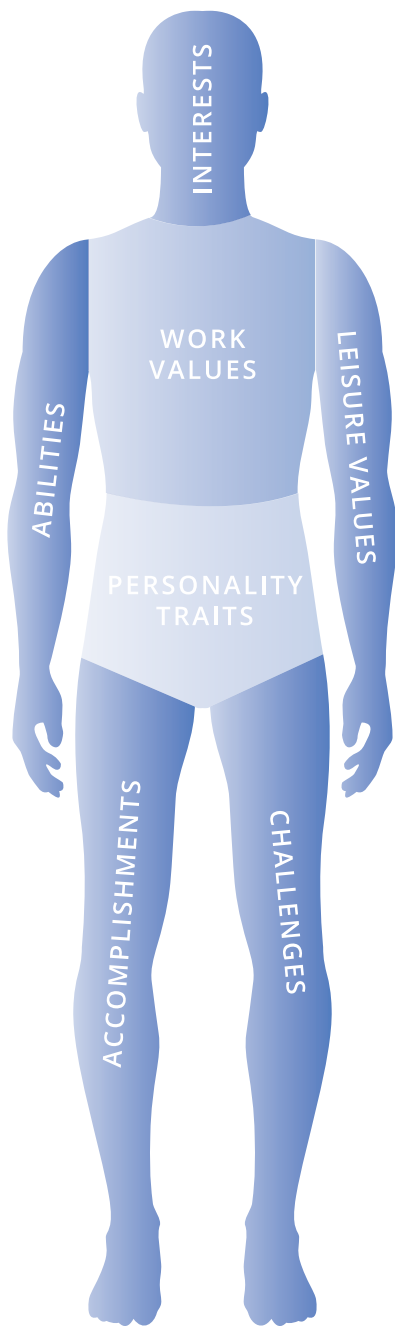
By adding a working knowledge of the career services realm to your coaching toolbox, you can help your clients listen to their inner voices and put what they learn to meaningful use in career decision-making.

Overview of Career Services

Career guidance is not a new practice. Frank Parsons' 1909 volume, *Choosing a Vocation*, is the first documented publication concerned with the topic of career choice, and is considered a foundational text for what became the career development industry. Since then, we've seen a growing body of research and dozens of differing opinions on how best to help individuals identify the "career piece" that fits best into the puzzle of their lives. There are a few precepts upon which we agree:

- Our career choice is one of *the* most important decisions we will make in our lives.
- The compatibility of our career choice plays a big role in our overall happiness and well-being.
- A poor career choice can negatively dominate our lives and lower our self-esteem.
- A systematic approach to finding that right career fit is preferable to the hit-or-miss method.

The wonderful news for coaches is that the ICF Core Competencies can be leveraged in service of a systematic, strengths-based approach to career decision-making.



Arnold C. Fellman

Asking the Right Questions

How many times have you heard a variation on this piece of advice: “Choose a career based on your interests?”

The truth is, interests are only one facet to consider as we partner with our clients. Consider what makes up a “typical” human being (see diagram above).

Leverage assessments and powerful questioning to help your client uncover answers to the following queries:

Interests:

What fires me up? What would I do even if I weren't getting paid?

Abilities and aptitudes:

What are the innate talents, gifts and skills I possess?

Personality factors:

Which aspects of my personality impact how I relate to different environments, tasks and circumstances?

Work values:

What ideals drive me? Why is this?

Leisure values:

What leisure activities do I love?

Accomplishments:

In what areas have I already experienced success?

Work-specific challenges:

What potential roadblocks do I face? Can they be removed with accommodations, modifications and/or strategies?

Other queries to be addressed along the way include:

- Do I work best in spurts, or is my focus pattern more steady?
- Am I sensitive to environmental factors that affect focus, such as lighting, smells and sounds?
- As a child, what daydreams did I have about the type of work I would do?
- What do people around me believe I do best?

Getting to the Answer

The responses to the above questions form a strong foundation for career decision-making—and another round of questions. Once your client better understands the pieces in his own puzzle, he can explore

the following questions through coaching and personal reflection:

- What jobs correlate with the combination of all of my “puzzle pieces?”
- What are the essential tasks of those jobs? How do these tasks align with my puzzle pieces? With my inner voice?
- Do at least 75 percent of the job's essential tasks align with my strengths?
- Are there ways to offset the remaining challenges easily?
- Can I gain a better understanding of the job and its fit for me by reading more about it; discussing it with those who already do it; and/or observing it via job-shadowing, an internship or a volunteer opportunity?
- If any modifications, accommodations or strategies are needed, can they be identified? Would they be in place for ongoing support?

For your clients, the process of choosing or changing careers can be a noisy one, as they struggle to make sense of competing messages from without and within. As a coach armed with a systematic approach to career decision-making, you can help them turn down the volume, hear what their inner voice has to say and make a career decision that will yield personal and professional dividends. **CW**



Royal Roads University: A Snapshot

Royal Roads University (RRU) is a distinct, special-purpose university serving British Columbians, Canadians and international students through certificate, undergraduate, graduate and executive programs in applied and professional fields. RRU is dedicated to teaching excellence and applied research activities that support the university's programs in response to market needs.

RRU's Centre for Coaching and Workplace Innovation (CCWI) offers programs designed to help people transform the way they work. CCWI offers graduate-level courses and graduate certificates in Executive Coaching, advanced coaching practices, workplace innovation, organization design and development, change management, strategic human resources management, project management, and more.

CCWI's graduate certificate in Executive Coaching program, offered via a blended delivery approach, is an ICF Accredited Coach Training Program (ACTP). RRU is also willing to partner with other institutions and organizations around the globe to bring accredited coach-training to them.

Learn more about CCWI's offerings at ccwi.royalroads.ca/.

New Roads to Innovation

Royal Roads University's (RRU) mission statement announces, "We are leaders and partners creating an enduring prosperity. Transformation in career and life results from our teaching and research applied to solve problems and create opportunities in the world."

In 2013, RRU's Centre for Applied Leadership and Management underwent a transformation of its own, taking on a new name—the Centre for Coaching and Workplace Innovation (CCWI)—and a new brand built around the skills required to create positive organizational culture. CCWI's programs are designed to transform the way people work and empower graduates to make a difference in their own workplaces.

"Our intent is to provide students with transformative learning experiences that cultivate creative confidence, allow students to take risks and learn from their experiences, push students to bust assumptions, and help them to awaken to new possibilities and create new relationships with themselves and their fellow students," explains CCWI's director, Zoe MacLeod.

Coaching and innovation go hand-in-hand, MacLeod says, because both involve asking the right (or better) questions. "Innovation often happens when people need to find a better way of doing something. People often find better ways of doing something when they are coached. If you want to achieve results, build relationships. If you want to build relationships, improve the conversations."

A commitment to high standards underpins every aspect of the student and faculty experience at CCWI. "All of our faculty members are distinguished scholars and practitioners," MacLeod says. "They are the ultimate 'pracademics' (practical academics)." The coaching programs at CCWI are led by a core team of associate faculty, each of whom has spent at least a decade in the field and holds the ICF's Master Certified Coach (MCC) designation.

"It is vital that prospective coaches pursue high-quality, standards-based development opportunities," MacLeod reflects. "It is important to assure consumers and employers that they've met a standard of practice and demonstrate a set of required competencies and skills identified as critical to maintaining excellence in the field. ... It's about setting the bar high, meeting a code of ethics and working with integrity." 



“If you want to achieve results, build relationships. If you want to build relationships, improve the conversations.”

INNOVATION IS ESSENTIAL FOR SUCCESS IN MODERN WORKPLACES.

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“What is your No. 1 tip or suggestion for coaches who want to take their conversations with clients to the next level?”

Illary Quinteros, PCC
Chile



“... invite them to look ahead into their possible futures ...”

Sometimes, when I have worked with clients for a while and they are already familiar with the coaching process and have achieved positive outcomes, I invite them to explore their own coaching journey from the “other side,” i.e., to explore who they were being at each stage of the process and connect that with what they were able to see as a possibility for action, or not, at that moment. I encourage them to reflect on and identify the changes in their patterns of thinking and then invite them to look ahead into their possible futures using only powerful questions centered on who they would choose to become to attain the future they envision.

Be an active listener and always listen with all senses. Make the conscious decision to connect with and fully focus on your client. Give him your undivided and careful attention. Then, make the effort to listen not only to the words that he is saying but, much more importantly, understand and concentrate on the complete message being said. Pay attention to his body language, his energy. Don't be distracted by whatever else may be going on around you. If you're finding it particularly difficult to concentrate on what your client is saying, try to repeat his words mentally as he says them; this will help you stay 100-percent focused. It's also crucial to demonstrate to your client that you're fully present and actively listening by showing both verbal and nonverbal signs of listening: making positive reinforcement, maintaining eye contact, nodding your head, making your posture open, smiling, mirroring, etc. Last but not least, active listening is also about being patient. Don't jump in with questions every time there is a period of silence. Give your client suitable time to explore his thoughts, feelings and emotions.




Jesús Rodríguez
Spain

“Give your client suitable time to explore his thoughts, feelings and emotions.”

As a Mentor Coach, I am privileged to support many new and experienced coaches. What I have often sensed in coaches is the need to perform, which interferes with their coaching presence and prevents them from taking the conversation to the next level.

The roots for this need to perform could be incorrect expectations or ambiguous role definition, the need to make a positive impression to generate referrals, a strong “value-add” mindset, addiction to client approval, incorrect assessment of their own experience and competency levels while accepting specific clients, perfectionism, etc.

A few tips that I would offer them include:

- Acknowledge and accept any of the above that might exist.
- Remember that coaching is unique in holding the magnificent view of the client as the expert in her life. The need to perform is triggered mostly when you feel the client might get stuck.
- Act as if you are interviewing a champion.
- Listen to hear all that is being said in the stillness of your mind, knowing that doing coaching can be stressful, while being a coach can be liberating. 



Pragati Gandhi,
PCC
India

“Listen to hear all that is being said in the stillness of your mind...”



Stephen Hopkins

Jo Simpson
Birmingham, United Kingdom

A Triumphant Journey

What an adventure of discovery the last 10 years have been. Prior to me making the decision to start my professional coaching studies, I was restless—I knew something wasn't quite right, but couldn't work out exactly what. The decision to become a coach was intuitive; I just knew it felt right! Very early on in my studies, I became conscious of my core values—more conscious than ever before—and wow! Seeing them in black and white made sense of everything. It made sense of why I wasn't feeling fulfilled in my corporate career at the time—I had chosen a job based on my value of Freedom, which was No.5 on my priority list, and not only was I not truly living that one, none of the ones above it—Love, Truth, Energy or Connection—were being met. On the flip side, coaching met all of them. This was not only the start of my coaching journey, but an amazing way to gain clarity and congruence on my decisions and from then on, my core values along with my intuition have truly been at the heart of everything I do. This adventure took me to Dubai for a life-changing 5 years. It was so rewarding to be able to work with so many different cultures all in one place. The common thread, wherever I work in my coaching practice, is that I truly believe, that the key to lasting transformation is being values-driven at your core. This is the gift of discovery that I now delight in bringing to my clients.

—Jo Simpson 

“When you live and act in line with your values, extraordinary things are possible, magic happens and life just works out beautifully.”

The Coach Questionnaire

Number of years coaching: 10

Favorite powerful question:

It has to be the intuitive one, every time. Trust that part of you that offers the question, the one that comes from nowhere. Don't question it, just say it—it is coming through you for the benefit of your client.

Favorite quotations:

These two truly summarize my journey and how I live my life:

Life changes the moment you make a new congruent and committed decision.
—Tony Robbins

What you can do, or dream you can do, begin it; Boldness has genius, power and magic in it.
—Goethe

Advice for fellow coaches:

Be bold—act on your intuition and just go for it. The bolder we become as coaches, the better we can truly be of service to our clients.

Coaching with *possibility.*

"What the ICF did in creating this body of knowledge and creating the certification means that in every part of the world they can know and the clients can know clearly with whom they can count."

ELENA ESPINAL, MCC (MEXICO)

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