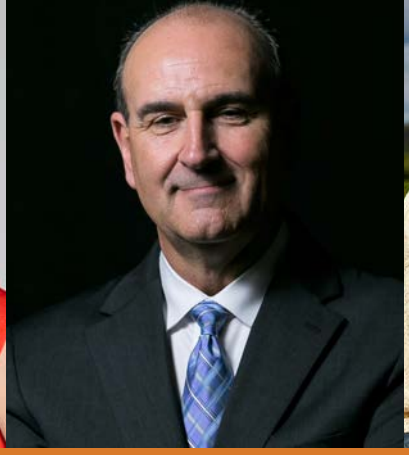





Association for Coaching

Enabling leadership:
Developing a leader coach mindset

Sue Stockdale

Interviews with global thought-leaders that will make a difference to you, your organisation, and society.











Association for Coaching

First published in 2020 by Association for Coaching.

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data: a catalogue record for this title is available from the British Library.

Print version ISBN 9 781916 345003

eBook ISBN 9 781916 345010

Designed by www.martinwilliamsondesign.com

Edited by Sally Phillips

Association for Coaching, Golden Cross House, 8 Duncannon Street, London, WC2N 4JF, UK

Tel: +44 (0)333 006 2676

www.associationforcoaching.com
sues@associationforcoaching.com

Contents

Foreword

The job of a leader is to think. Taking action is what they're known for, but that's pointless and dangerous if it isn't preceded by deep, difficult thinking. Thinking is what leaders are paid for, and that's what their peers and colleagues expect them to do.

But it's hard to think alone. The mind wanders, and we all are tempted to reflect on what's easy or comforting, and to avoid the hard, complex problems that assail leaders today. So coaches perform several invaluable tasks: listening for the deeper, underlying issues, creating a safe space to explore them, and ensuring that the thinking gets done around decisions and actions that matter.

Many leaders find their first experience of being coached or using coaching skills strange, even awkward. They're typically more focused on actions and answers than exploring questions. But great coaches gently shift that perspective, bringing a deeper, calmer approach to complex, emerging challenges. The benefits can be enormous: not only better, more coherent decision-making, but also an attitude to people and problems that is responsive, alert and trustworthy. Better still, the experience of being coached and using coaching skills changes leaders in their capacity to develop others as they have been developed themselves.

It's hard to recall a time when running an organisation was tougher. Huge questions continue to confront leaders: not just technological change, but also its ethical implications; political volatility; economic uncertainty; constant public scrutiny, and an environmental crisis that challenges the legitimacy of every company. In that maelstrom, the capacity to think has never been more precious, nor the value of a thinking partner more critical.

The outstanding voices of leaders and coaches that Sue Stockdale has gathered in this special report reflect the wide diversity of the coaching and leadership community and the development of coaching expertise. No two coaching conversations are the same, but collectively the wisdom gathered enriches us all, not just in our thinking but also in the actions we take.

Margaret Heffernan
CEO, Author: *Wilful Blindness: Why we ignore the obvious at our peril*

Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the development and production of this special report including Hetty Einzig, Sally Phillips, Martin Williamson, Smaranda Dochia, Katherine Tulpa, Alex Szabo, Darren Robson, Margaret Heffernan, Clive Steeper and all those who were interviewed.

I dedicate this report to all those leaders and coaches who are committed to improving their performance and to learning from others.

Enabling Leadership: Developing a leader coach mindset

Introduction

Over the last ten years leadership has changed dramatically. The 2018 Global Leadership Forecast[1] identified that only 14% of companies have good bench-strength (individuals who are ready to take up leadership roles). One reason may be because what a leader needs to be able do today, has changed so much from ten years ago. For example, today's leaders need to understand the impact of technology on their business, be capable of integrating different perspectives to drive change, and perhaps most importantly, be able to respond to, and be comfortable with, disruption and uncertainty.

Add to that the fact that many more teams are remotely located; that younger employees have differing expectations of leaders compared to their older counterparts; together with the fact that the external influence on an organisation of social media, society, and global issues is greater than ever. This all means that it's almost impossible for a leader to keep pace with the speed of change and remain in control.

This is where a coaching style of leadership – sometimes termed 'leader coach' - comes in. This style is characterised by partnership and collaboration, rather than command and control. A leader coach: adopts a coaching mindset to ask questions instead of giving answers; supports employees instead of judging them; offers feedback rather than attributing blame; and facilitates team members' development instead of telling them what to do.

However, a leader's role must not to be confused with that of a coach – both use the skills of asking questions and listening, but to accomplish different outcomes. The leader's role is to inspire, communicate the vision and help connect the individual's role to the overall objectives of the organisation. By contrast, a coach's role (either internal or external) is to raise awareness and encourage responsibility in their coachee, and to do this with a level of impartiality and objectivity which is quite different from that of the leader.

So, what does a leader coach approach look like? And how can executive coaches who work with leaders help them adapt to this style of behaviour? These were some of the questions that I sought answers to, as I believe that the more leaders and executive coaches can be inspired by role models of good practice, the easier it becomes for them to adopt new ways of behaving.

Over the last five years as Deputy Editor of the Association for Coaching's *Coaching Perspectives* magazine, I interviewed sixteen inspiring thought-leaders from around the world, who I believe provide insights into the mindset and behaviours of leaders who use a coaching style of leadership. Interviewees range from **Margarita Mayo**, Professor of Leadership at IE Business School in Madrid, who discusses authentic leadership, to **Dr Robert Gass,** co-founder of The Rockwood Leadership Institute, who provides insights into leadership in the social change sector.

Other aspects of leader coach resources are discussed with **Maya Hu-Chan**, executive coach and co-author of *Global Leadership – the Next Generation*, who describes how being a global leader is really about one's mindset; **Tiffany Gaskell**, co-founder and Managing Director of Performance Consultants International, who talks about what it takes to build a coaching culture in organisations; **Kaj Hellbom**, co-founder and Chairman of BCI Business Coaching Institute in Finland, who explains the concept of organisational coaching; and **Julie Paterson**, CEO of Tennis New Zealand, who highlights why role models are vital to inspire behaviour change. The combined insights of all sixteen thought-leaders create a picture of the coaching style of leadership that is much needed in today's business world.

The interviewees' willingness to open up and share their knowledge and insights was especially heart-warming. This was most evident in the contribution of Britain's most decorated Olympic rower, **Dame Katherine Grainger**. Having won medals at five consecutive Olympic Games, Grainger then embarked on a new leadership role for which she was untried and untested. In her interview, Grainger outlines the learning she was able to bring from life as a high-performance athlete to her role as Chair of UK Sport, the UK's high-performance sports agency.

Meanwhile, **Carl Sanders-Edwards**, founder and CEO of Adeption, based in USA, describes why he is passionate about using technology to revolutionise leadership development. Sanders-Edwards believes that in future machines and artificial intelligence (AI) will take away much of the predictable work that people have done for the last two hundred years: which leaves only the volatile, complex stuff for humans to address. 'That's why the space of coaching, leadership development and building people to be adaptive and have a growth mindset is so important,' he says.

Sharron L McPherson, co-founder of The Centre for Disruptive Technologies in South Africa, speaks about why leaders have to reflect on their mindsets and be prepared to embrace a new way of being. ‘We see many leaders who are really keen to learn about digital transformation, but don’t realise that if they, or their people don't want to change, then there's really nothing that you can do. We encourage them to reflect on their limiting thoughts and behaviour and assumptions they are making about the status quo. We call it *hacking culture*. From there leaders can make better choices about what to retain and what to let go or change within their culture.’

Finally, I also had conversations with a number of **executive coaches and academics** including **Marshall Goldsmith**, world-renowned coach and business educator, and **Professor Alex Hill,** co-founder and Director of The Centre for High Performance, which works with some of the world's top leaders to get their views on what coaches must attend to within themselves if they are to continue to support leaders effectively in the future.

The updated interviews, together some new discussions, form the basis of this report. The interviews are arranged in three sections: **Leading with a coaching approach; Building coaching capability and culture**; and **Executive coaching mastery**. This should enable readers to consider the subject from the perspective of a leader - what they can do to develop as a leader coach; an organisation - how to create a coaching culture within an organisation; and a coach – how to improve their own performance.

My hope is that this publication will provide food for thought, and more importantly, will be a catalyst to action. And I hope that by producing this special report, the Association for Coaching will have positively impacted on the quality of future leadership and coaching around the world.

Sue Stockdale
Master Executive Coach, Coaching Supervisor and Podcast Host

Section 1

Leading with a coaching approach

Disrupting human capacity

Sharron L McPherson, *Co-Founder, Centre for Disruptive Technologies, explains why leaders have to reflect on their mindsets and be prepared to embrace a new way of being.*

Sharron McPherson is one of Africa's leading experts on the impact of technology disruption for emerging market growth and development, future work and the disruption of education. She teaches Project Finance at University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business and is a member of the Faculty of Singularity University (Silicon Valley). Sharron is also Co-Founder and a Director of the Centre for Disruptive Technologies. A former Wall Street investment banker/ attorney turned serial social impact investor, Sharron is an advocate for the disruption of corporate and traditional educational systems that are failing to equip people with the knowledge and skills needed to thrive in the age of disruption.

www.cdtafrica.com

It's fair to say that Sharron McPherson wouldn't be described as someone who plays it safe. In fact, she has spent most of her career disrupting the status quo in one way or another. As a former Wall Street investment banker and attorney, and now a serial social impact entrepreneur, she has raised over $1 billion in investment, and has had a positive impact on over 1 million people in terms of creating wealth and sustainable jobs. McPherson now has her eyes on impacting 1 billion people in her lifetime, which will be no mean feat. This lofty goal was formulated after she studied at Singularity University, in Silicon Valley, California, where McPherson went to discover the next generation technologies that could be used in the Smart Cities Projects, which she invests in.

In 2017 McPherson set up The Centre for Disruptive Technologies in South Africa. The business model is network orchestration – bringing incredible technologists from across Africa and around the world to swarm on challenges that governments, institutions and businesses are facing. Having produced over 450 case studies about how digital transformation works, McPherson suggests that '…we should really call ourselves the Centre for Disruptive Human Capacity because we know that the winning formula is always going to be human ingenuity, the right strategies and technology as an enabler.'

> ***'Disruption is really about the personal journey of the people within organisations and if they are not willing to be uncomfortable, it takes a lot longer than anyone anticipates.'***

McPherson spends the majority of her time tackling issues on a grand scale, and believes that in order for people within organisations, businesses and governments to be ready to adapt to this technological revolution (often referred to as the *Fourth Industrial Revolution*[2]), leaders need to focus on their own transformation journeys.

McPherson reflects: 'Disruption is really about the personal journey of the people within those institutions and organisations and if they are not willing to be uncomfortable, it takes a lot longer than anyone anticipates. If people don't have the will, and the desire to go through that process of transformation with high degrees of consistency, which is a really key ingredient, then then it's very difficult. As human beings, we love comfort, and in the world of innovation and disruption, it requires that you are willing to be uncomfortable. No matter how great a strategy is, without leadership influence from those leaders who themselves are willing to tolerate discomfort and a certain level of internal conflict and friction within the organisation, the execution of their strategy is not possible.'

McPherson is no stranger to personal discomfort herself, having gone through a number of breakdowns in her life, some of which she would describe as 'very public.' And as a result of experiencing these massive public failures that took her right to the bottom, she was forced to evolve as a person in order to survive.

Through her work at the Centre for Disruptive Technologies, McPherson is a strong advocate for leaders to set the tone for disruption within an organisation, through their influence with direct reports and peers. She recognises that whilst leaders encourage their teams to be risk takers because that's where innovations and breakthroughs occur, it can be more difficult to be comfortable accepting the consequences when those risks don't all work out perfectly: the price to be paid for disruption is too high for some.

Disrupting human capacity

Sharron L McPherson

McPherson believes that leaders themselves can benefit from understanding more about the brain and its capacity to change. 'Their journey towards transformation begins with understanding self-directed neuroplasticity' - a term derived from the researcher Dr Jeffrey M. Schwartz in his book, *The Mind and The Brain*[3]. She says, 'Once a leader becomes aware that they are in the driving seat and can actually play a decisive role in influencing their own brain's structure and function by deciding where and how to focus their attention, it is extremely helpful.

'We see many leaders who are really keen to learn about digital transformation, but they don't realise that if they or their people don't want to change, then there's really nothing that you can do, because you can't supplant a person's will. We encourage them to reflect on their limiting thoughts and behaviour and assumptions they are making about the status quo. We call it *hacking culture*. From there leaders can make better choices about what to retain and what to let go or change within their culture. Once they have identified this, it's down to using that new awareness to develop different ways of behaving and measuring the results, which in itself increases motivation and the likelihood that they will continue with the new behaviours.'

Much of the work at the Centre for Disruptive Technologies is based on Cognitive Behaviour Therapy (CBT), which focuses on challenging and changing unhelpful cognitive distortions (for example in thoughts, beliefs, and attitudes). McPherson encourages leaders to explore cognitive dissonance – the mental discomfort experienced by a person when holding two or more contradictory beliefs, ideas, or values at the same time, such as: 'Can we develop vision where there's uncertainty and the situation is unlikely to change?' The question therefore becomes: 'How do we obtain clarity in the face of ambiguity?' Or, 'How can we develop agile thinking when we may desire to have consistency? Helping people to become more comfortable at accepting seemingly contradictory views is not just an important part of their work; it underpins the whole ethos of the Centre for Disruptive Technologies.

'Disruption requires people to move beyond 20th-century theories on leadership and management,' says McPherson, 'and into a willingness and a capacity to explore how these theories have served us.' McPherson believes that leaders have to reflect on their mindsets and be prepared to embrace a new way of being. This is what will be required given the rate of change that society is experiencing, which is unprecedented in human history, and which in turn is being driven by a host of factors including globalisation, climate change, pandemics and population growth.

One way to address these challenges is through collaboration – people coming together and exchanging information and ideas in ways that validate other people's contributions, based on openness and a readiness to recognise that the *whole is much greater than the sum of its parts*.

McPherson and her colleagues take boards and top-level management teams through a process of understanding about the culture of their organisation, after which they are challenged, for example to review the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) they measure. She says 'Most organisations are using KPIs from another century to incentivize people, so we help them reimagine KPIs. We find that if they can collaborate to develop performance indicators where people actually have input into what they are being measured on, and make them fun and interactive, there are much higher levels of buy-in and higher levels of awareness around what the measure is accomplishing.' The Centre for Disruptive Technologies also encourages organisations to measure more broadly than just financial results to include such measures as health and wellbeing, and relationships with colleagues.

The challenges that Africa faces in developing smart solutions using technologies do not seem to dent McPherson's spirit or enthusiasm. She is unwavering in her motivation to affect many people's lives, stating: 'I truly believe in the indomitability of the human spirit. If we can help people to raise their awareness around their unique contributions and their personal value, then I think we help them become disruptors. And that's critical for the long-term future of our society.'

Becoming an authentic leader

One of the mantras that authentic leaders focus on is 'doing well by doing good,' says ***Margarita Mayo,*** *Professor of Leadership, IE Business School, Madrid.*

Margarita Mayo PhD is Professor of IE Business School. She is recognised as one of the world's top management thought leaders by Thinkers50, an award-winning author for her book *Yours Truly: Staying Authentic in Leadership and Life* which won a 2019 Business Book Award in the UK. She is a Fulbright Alumna of Harvard University and has taught at some of the world´s leading business schools. Her work has been featured in Harvard Business Review, Financial Times, Fortune, the Guardian, Forbes and other publications. She is a keynote speaker on authentic leadership worldwide.

www.linkedin.com/in/margaritamayo

Building trust can be one of the most difficult issues that leaders face in developing effective teams, because employees are now less willing to trust leaders just because they hold a certain title or position. One way to tackle this is by developing *authentic leadership*, a concept that has been researched for the past twenty years by Spanish academic Professor Margarita Mayo.

'Authentic leadership' is about cultivating your unique personality and life story to serve the needs of multiple stakeholders – customers, employees, investors and society in general. A psychologist by training, Mayo grew up in a small town with a humble background and her fair share of adversity. Having taken the opportunity to study in the USA by gaining a Fulbright scholarship, Mayo began to observe those around her. She admired leaders who were being true to themselves and doing good for others, and this inspired her to research further into what makes an authentic leader.

In her book *Yours Truly*[4], Professor Mayo states that authentic leaders have three distinguishing characteristics. These are:

- Heart: These individuals follow their heart
- Habit: They make learning a habit
- Harmony: They operate in harmony with others

Heart

Authentic leaders have a purpose that is bigger than themselves, and they can motivate others through their emotional appeal. These individuals are passionate about what they do and where they come from, using their respective life stories to teach their values and philosophy of management. By sharing their passion, it becomes contagious and sparks creativity in others.

By sharing their personal stories and providing a balanced view of both their strengths and weaknesses, these leaders are able to win the hearts of others. They regularly seek honest feedback from others, and are they are not afraid of giving recognition to those who have helped them.

One of Mayo's examples of such a leader is Facebook COO Sheryl Sandberg, who has shown an active interest in supporting women and who was willing to be open and honest and share the difficulties that she faced when her husband passed away.

Another individual showing authentic leadership is Jake Millar, a 23-year-old originally from New Zealand, and now based in New York. As co-founder and CEO of Unfiltered.tv. Millar sees his purpose as providing inspiration for others by enabling business leaders and entrepreneurs to learn directly from some of the world's greatest business minds. The impetus comes from his own personal circumstances, as his father tragically died when Millar was a teenager. Through sharing his personal story about what drove his business start-up, his passion is congruent and meaningful.

Showing vulnerability, however, can be difficult for some leaders. They are fearful that it will result in a loss of power and be seen as weakness. But the upside is that by being prepared to reveal vulnerability, leaders can develop trust with employees, stakeholders and a wider audience. It's really about *what* you reveal, as well as *how* you do it.

> ***'Authentic leaders are constantly asking questions because they want to improve.'***

Habit

Another facet of authentic leadership is the power of habit - the habit of learning. Mayo has found from her research that most authentic leaders have a *growth mindset*, a term coined by psychologist Carol Dweck to define an individual's underlying beliefs about learning and intelligence. When people believe they can get smarter, and that effort makes them stronger, they put in extra time and effort, which in turn leads to higher achievement. Mayo says 'Authentic leaders are constantly asking questions because they want to improve. Many of the authentic leaders I have met have faced and overcome many difficulties in life and through these critical events they have developed resilience and set themselves new habits.'

For example, when the late Steve Jobs, CEO of Apple, presented his famous commencement speech at Stanford University in 2005, he shared a heroic narrative about his life. He explained that when he dropped out of college, he trusted that it would all work out okay in the end and saw this 'failure' as an opportunity to learn, following his curiosity and intuition in place of a formal syllabus. One class that piqued his interest was calligraphy, where he learned all about fonts, and it was only years later, when he was designing the first Mac computer, that this knowledge came into its own. The important message from Jobs' story is that when leaders have to deal with adversity, they do so with an optimistic outlook and overcome adversity with resilience.

Harmony

The third characteristic of authentic leaders is their preference for operating in harmony with others in their work environment. They are not secretive and are willing to share information, and lead by example, often sparking an epidemic of goodwill and interest in developing others' potential. Their mantra is focused on *doing well by doing good*, and they tend to have a long-term perspective. For example, many of the leaders Mayo has interviewed have a concern for how they are going to be remembered 20 years on. These leaders build a context for others to grow. As Mayo says, 'Authentic leaders are architects. They build social scaffolding, with a caring mindset, and put employees first. This can translate into policies in their organisations that are going to last and be their legacy. One example of this is Indra Nooyi, ex-CEO of PepsiCo and now on Amazon's board of Directors. Nooyi believes it is her obligation is to 'pull others up and to build the future.'

Developing authentic leadership

While I agreed with Mayo's ideas about authentic leadership, I wondered if the true assessment of authenticity comes from third-party feedback rather than one's own self-perception. There is a role for coaches in encouraging leaders to become more learning oriented and ready to seek out feedback so as to gain a balanced view of both strengths and areas for development. There is evidence that self-awareness impacts companies' bottom line. In a study of the stock performance of 486 publicly traded companies, Korn/Ferry International found that companies with strong financial performance tend to have employees with higher levels of self-awareness than their poorly performing counterparts.

Mayo reflects: 'There is usually a gap between self-perception and other perceptions. However, the smaller the gap, the more authentic you are. We tend to be over-estimators. When we receive the feedback from others, some people then realign their views to the views of others. My research shows that women tend to do this more, whereas men keep inflating their views of themselves. The implications are that women may be more in touch with who they are and therefore more willing to learn and adapt, but the downside is that with getting feedback their self-confidence can go down, and this may result in them being less willing to take on new positions. Men, however, with their higher self-esteem are more likely to engage in action-oriented behaviour to take on new positions.'

Is authentic leadership always helpful?

Whilst being true to yourself and to others is laudable, there can be times when being completely honest as a leader may not be a prudent approach to take. For example, a leader of a large organisation had the job of telling the workforce that the company was likely to be sold in the near future, with resultant redundancies due to streamlining of jobs. Whilst feeling demoralised herself, the leader considered the following questions before speaking to the employees:

1. What would I, the team, and the company gain by my telling the members of the team how I really feel?
2. What does the team or organisation need the most right now from me as a leader?

This prompted the realisation that the leader's role was to provide clarity, and to give the employees confidence that all possible options were being considered to minimise any future job losses.

In this situation, the leader realised that when she was able to put her true feelings aside and focus solely on what was in the best interest of the team and organisation, she found the motivation and vision she needed to take action and get things back on track: in fact, it helped her connect with her greater purpose, about making a difference in people's lives.

Leaders don't need to have a 100% positive outlook and attitude every single day, but it is their job to be a role model and create a positive working environment. Honesty is laudable, but in this situation, the employees needed a leader who could look past the current challenge and consider how to serve the team most effectively.

Summary

Leadership is an opportunity and a responsibility. Being an authentic leader requires an individual to be clear about their values and what is important to them, and then to find a way of bringing out their passion, purpose and sense of connectedness to those they lead.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 14, July 2017.*

Embracing vulnerability as a route to growth

*Showing vulnerability is a key skill according to **John Mattone**, author, coach and leading authority on Intelligent Leadership who was shortlisted for the 2017 Thinkers50 Leadership Award.*

John Mattone is the world's top authority on Intelligent Leadership (IL) and the creator of the IL Executive Coaching Process and Certification. He was named as one of eight finalists for the prestigious 2017 Thinkers50 Leadership Award recognising the world's top leadership authority and thinker. John was also honoured by his executive coaching peers (The Association of Corporate Executive Coaches), with the prestigious 2015 International Executive Coach Thought Leader of Distinction Award, in recognition of his thought leadership and his work as a global executive coach.

www.johnmattone.com

The most important element of personal growth, according to John Mattone, is having the courage to be vulnerable. Mattone, the world's top authority on Intelligent Leadership, and a former coach to the late Steve Jobs, co-founder of Apple, believes that when a leader has the willingness to look inside, it's the first step on their journey to growth.

Many leaders equate vulnerability with weakness, but, Mattone maintains, the difference between these comes down to two things, the ability to self-regulate, and how you manage fear. Weakness happens when a leader is emotionally and physically drained. Vulnerability is not about showing weakness; it's about being relatable, showing humility and considering how you present your challenges.

I spoke with John Mattone about his views on vulnerability. Mattone believes that greatness in the outer core – as in the behaviours and skills that people come to admire you for as a leader - really comes from the *inner core* – your self-concept, your character, your values, your emotional makeup, which he describes as the engine that powers great leadership. If these facets are strong, vibrant and mature, you have a much better probability of executing the outer core at a higher level.

Mattone describes how he talked with many successful business leaders and asked them what they want to be remembered for. 'They said it has nothing to do with cars, or how much money you've got,' he recalls. 'It was about if you are touching hearts, minds and souls. That seems like intelligent leadership to me.'

'We have a lot of leaders – there's no shortage of intellect in the world. Yet when you look at leadership, that's not yet good enough. Most leaders have a pretty strong mind, but when you look at the heart and the soul, the gut – those tend to fall short.'

Many years ago, Mattone developed an assessment tool, the Mattone Enneagram Leadership Inventory (MLEI). This helps an individual to chart their own thinking patterns, emotional make-up and feelings, and provides an accurate picture of their overall inner-core maturity.

There is one trait Mattone calls the *Helper* trait, the trait of altruism. And Mattone noticed that in the world of business this has the lowest average score (29). The trait of *Driver*, by comparison, is 86. This tells Mattone that leaders are not developing the trait that can bring abundance to families and organisations.

In order to cultivate growth on the inside, Mattone recognises that you need the courage to be vulnerable. He says: 'If you're not willing to raise your hand and acknowledge "I'm pretty good in these areas, but I know I've got things to work on," there's no way you can instigate growth and become the best you can be. It's a willingness to look inside that is the way to growth.'

Mattone always begins his work by helping leaders see that their vision for themselves is bigger than what they have become. Mattone believes that disrupting leaders' self-perceptions is a first step to disrupting established thinking about their organisations, and accelerates the desire to change. 'It's about getting leaders to open up and understand the concept of thinking big. Ultimately, the aim is to help them understand that whatever is currently bringing pleasure to their life and work, there can be a greater level of abundance when they connect with their core purpose.' He adds, 'I've worked with lots of really successful CEOs who've never done that before. Recently I spoke to a 65-year-old CEO in Switzerland who reflected that whilst he was successful, he should still have done this 25 years ago.'

> ***'If you're not willing to raise your hand and acknowledge you've got things to work on, there's no way you can instigate growth and become the best you can be. It's a willingness to look inside that is the way to growth.'***

Role-modelling vulnerability

The approach that Mattone takes in encouraging leaders to change is to talk about the importance of role-modelling vulnerability. Every time he meets with a client, he shares a little of his personal story, talking about the highs and lows that he has experienced. He explains: 'I learnt a lot between age 30 and 40 years old. I learned that having a big ego and not surrounding myself with great people was not the right way to go. For the first ten years, I was driven by my ego but when I looked at the financial results, it was not working. So, I went back into the corporate world for fifteen years. I learned so much as a Vice President of Sales.

'I got fired twice, I got laid off, and on one occasion I got fired just before Christmas when I was 48 years old, with my family relying on me. So it has not been all successful. Then I announced to my wife when I was 55, I'm going to do what I was put on earth to do and she said don't do it. We talked and she agreed that you have got to follow your purpose. So now I role-model what I encourage leaders to do. I tell stories during the coaching journey, and when we explore a leader's core purpose, I share my core purpose with them. I let them know I've done this work, and continue every day going back to my core purpose statement. As a leader and coach, you have got to be a role model and share your stories.'

However, embracing vulnerability takes some leaders longer than others to arrive at, says Mattone. Some are happy to reveal their vulnerability during the first coaching session, whereas others, who profess that they show vulnerability, simply don't demonstrate it. He acknowledges that, as a coach, it's important not to let this disrupt you, and to continue to build rapport and trust with the leader, so that you make the environment as secure as possible and thus encourage them to feel okay to open up.

Where Mattone's coaching approach may differ from others' is that he does not involve stakeholders too early on in the coaching process, when the leader may not be prepared to show vulnerability. Instead, he aims to use the first month of working with a leader to build rapport and trust, and only at around six weeks into the process is a 360-degree assessment tool introduced. At this point, Mattone sends a template email to the leader, who then has the option to amend this before forwarding it to his or her stakeholders and inviting their feedback. The email states:

> *I will be following up with you in a few weeks once my coach and I have looked at all the information. I will come back to you with my individual leadership development plan ensuring that strengths have been identified, as well as development needs addressed. I will share with you some of the areas where you could assist me in improving.*

Once Mattone and the leader have reviewed the assessment report, usually in the second or third month, they then build the leader's development plan together.

'By now the leader is keen to go and see their stakeholders,' Mattone says. 'It's at this stage where the leader feels confident to show vulnerability with their stakeholders. Most people have never experienced an executive who has the courage to stand up and acknowledge what they need to change, and it can be very powerful.'

Mattone cites an example of Armando, a client he worked with in Mexico City. During the meeting-with-stakeholders stage of the process, Armando stood up in front of his team of eighteen and said: 'I can't become the best leader I can be without your help, so I have been working with John and we have developed a plan. I want to give you the highlights along with the strategy today and if you want to come and talk to me later that will be great.' Armando went through the areas he planned to work on, with conviction and pride, and at the end his stakeholders gave him a standing ovation. Armando was deeply moved, to the point of tears. Afterwards he said, 'I can never let these people down, ever.' Mattone believes that this was true vulnerability being demonstrated there in front of everyone.

Mattone cites another example of the courage that is needed to demonstrate vulnerability. This time his client was a highly successful leader in the Middle East, and one of the richest people in the world. Mattone thought *This person does not need to be working with me* – so he was courageous enough to ask the question why. The client's response was: 'I wake up every day and think, there's nothing I want, but I know I'm not the best I can be.' In this situation both parties were willing to be vulnerable, because each was driven by the desire to keep learning and growing.

According to Brené Brown in her book *Daring Greatly*[5], vulnerability is 'uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure,' but it is also, 'the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy and creativity.' If coaches and leaders are going to encourage others to be vulnerable, they need to operate from a place of trust, where both parties can 'allow themselves to be seen.'

Summary

Mattone offers three key points to help leaders embrace vulnerability:

1. Help leaders to think big and connect with their core purpose – doing this encourages people to accept that the culture they are currently existing in may not be good enough, and that disruption and change is necessary.
2. Encourage leaders to embrace their strengths as well as development areas. Focusing on both can enable a leader to become stronger and at the same time demonstrate to others that there is room for growth and improvement.
3. Stay focused in the present and help executives to understand the privilege they have to touch the hearts and minds of their employees and their families as well. Remind them how important it is to keep their eyes open, be vigilant – and use their ability to positively impact other peoples' lives.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 16, January 2018.*

Katherine Grainger is Britain's most successful female Olympic athlete, winning rowing medals in five consecutive Olympic Games. Originally from Glasgow, Katherine studied at Edinburgh University, where she took up the sport in 1993. Alongside her rowing career, Katherine attained an honours LLB, an MPhil in Law and a PhD in the sentencing of homicide. She is currently Chair of UK Sport where she is building on the commitment to excellence that she witnessed as an athlete.

When you have achieved a long run of positive results and developed a reputation for success, it can feel risky to take a new direction which is untried and untested. This is what Dame Katherine Grainger felt when she was appointed as Chair of UK Sport, the UK's high-performance sports agency, in 2017.

Grainger, a former rower with medals from five successive Olympic Games, had no previous experience as a leader in sports administration. It was a risk, she says, for both herself and those who recruited her. 'It relied on those making the appointment to have faith in me – it was all about taking risks because there had never been an athlete in this role before, so there was a chance it might not work for any of us.'

She recalls that Liz Nicholl CBE, the CEO of UK Sport at the time, expressed initial surprise when hearing of Grainger's interest in the role, given her inexperience in this field. But Nicholl quickly thought about the advantages a former athlete could bring to the role, and since Grainger's appointment she has been a great ally. Grainger reflects, 'She has never questioned anything that I wanted to get involved in, and just encourages me to be the best I can possibly be. Obviously you have to be a very fast learner and prove your capabilities early on, but with the credibility I brought from my sporting success it gave me confidence to acknowledge that I was not the finished product and to be open about the areas that I needed to develop.'

Grainger believes that great leaders are people who constantly improve themselves, and that it sends a powerful message within an organisation for the people at the top to acknowledge they are still learning and to admit when they've not got things right. But it's not always an easy thing to do. 'It's quite a vulnerable conversation to have – especially when you're coming into a leadership position – to confess early on that there are areas where I think I'm not good enough yet.'

This is where coaching can be particularly helpful. 'I think great coaches are good at helping athletes and leaders to be open about their weaknesses. They recognise when to push people on and say there's more we need to do here, but also when to say that's enough for now, you are doing a good job. They find a way of making that a very positive experience, because of how they help you understand the situation. Then you can see it as a positive step to add to your knowledge and learning and become better every day.'

Staying at the top of your game in any sport these days is a relentless pursuit of improvement. Katherine reflects that what she loved about being an athlete, and still loves about working in a sporting environment, is the constant search for more and for better. She believes that creativity is needed to constantly generate ideas and create new opportunities.

Having had over twenty years of training, feedback and a focus on performance, Grainger readily acknowledges that there is always more to learn – and it's rare that she ever feels like the finished article. In sport, she says, you can't just repeat the result you got last time, because everything moves on so fast. You need to be creative in your thinking to find the next way forward.

'That need to push yourself constantly can be overwhelming, so you sometimes need to be allowed the freedom to be creative,' says Grainger. 'I have observed people who are brilliant at being creative, and they do it by opening up their thinking instead of reducing it. Rather than believing that there is only one way to do something, they ask: "What if we did something different?" And it's that *What if?* question that makes it really exciting. I think sport is a brilliant example of a place where art and science can come together at their best.'

Grainger continues: 'The science side of sport is lots of valuable detail and number-crunching analysis. Sometimes it can feel quite rigid because it is fact-based. But the people I admire the most can take that incredible scientific knowledge and interpret it creatively. Regardless of whether it's instinct, good judgement, knowledge or experience, it's how you integrate this thinking with the science to take risks and make decisions.'

I also spoke to Gareth Southgate, the manager of the England national football team, about this issue, and he takes a similar view to Grainger. He adds 'It's often not until the performance analysts question you about some aspect of an instinctive decision you took that some of the factors in your subconscious come into your conscious awareness.'

It's with the skill of creating awareness that a coach can help their client. By providing a safe and trusted space to help a leader reflect on their behaviour and explore why they took particular actions and identify different options, a coach can help the client to develop more creative solutions for dealing with future challenges.

Maintaining the habits of challenge, analysis and feedback

> *'If I feel I am getting too involved, I have to check myself and step back a little, because the only way I can be creative and challenge what's going on is to be dispassionate.'*

In many organisations, challenging accepted ways of doing things is not the most comfortable place for any leader to be, because maintaining the status quo is often easier and causes less conflict. Grainger believes, however, that part of her role as Chair is to challenge and question how things are done. Having lived for twenty years being challenged every day to improve, it is a discipline she is familiar with.

While her role is part-time, she says it can be easy to get pulled into doing more when you enjoy working with the people, when you care about the role, and are passionate about sport. Grainger believes it is her duty to avoid becoming embedded in the day-to-day detail, but instead to bring a viewpoint from a very different perspective. 'It's my job to bring other inputs from worlds beyond my own office. If I feel I am getting too involved, I have to check myself and step back a little, because the only way I can be creative and challenge what's going on is to be dispassionate and draw on a broad range of information. My job is about seeing the connections between seemingly unrelated pieces of information and put it all together. That might mean just taking time to read the newspaper while I am travelling or being able to meet a broad range of people from different backgrounds to get some new perspectives.'

Another practice from the world of high-performance sport that translates into business is that of performance review and feedback. As a rower, Katherine was used to having every element of her technique, psychology and physiology examined and questioned on a daily basis with the aim of seeking improvements. 'I used to get frustrated at times with the level of review we would do but having left that now I realise it was an absolute gift to have people looking at and questioning my performance every single day. I realise now that while we can have time built in after board meetings to review, other things can get in the way and you don't ever catch up. There's no one there to ask, "How did that go?" or "What could you do better?" This is where you get your performance advantage by having the ability to clearly and objectively assess your performance. In sport it's bread and butter, but not always in business.'

This is another area where coaches can support leaders by encouraging them to build time into their schedules to do a proper critique of their own performance. This doesn't have to be an onerous activity. Grainger recalls that when the rowing team came out of the boat, the athletes, along with their coach, could critique their own performance in less than fifteen minutes. 'Within minutes, we could score our own performances, capture what went well and what we would do differently. We had all already agreed on what we were going to judge ourselves on, so it was a quick process. It can be important to capture this in the moment and then look at it in detail later, but if you don't review straight away you rarely remember the key points later.' She adds: 'In a boardroom, one way of doing a quick review can be to ask those attending a meeting how they rated it on a scale of one to ten, and to state one thing that was good and one thing that could be improved for next time. That way it keeps the process short and snappy, but everyone has to want to do it.'

Results v ethical leadership

As a public body, UK Sport has a responsibility to demonstrate that it delivers good value for money in creating Olympic and Paralympic success. This means that everything must be accountable and be seen to be measured. More recently, the agency has come under greater scrutiny after some sports hit the headlines due to athletes' complaints about negative culture, unacceptable behaviour, and the relentless pressure to win medals.[6] This led the organisation to put in place a series of Culture Health Checks, following an extensive consultation and survey with athletes, staff and stakeholders in the high-performance system in 2017.

The UK Sport survey found that more than 90 per cent of athletes and staff felt proud to be part of their world class programme, while more than 80 per cent of athletes and staff said that their programme encouraged them to be the best they can be[7]. But the survey also found key areas that could be improved, including easier whistleblowing and reporting procedures, and more support for mental health.

I asked Grainger about how she balanced the need for results against having a healthy culture. She believes that the best results come because of the environments the athletes operate in, and

that it's wrong to say that if you have a healthy culture you won't get good results.

She recalled: 'I remember when we first started really talking about this very publicly within high-performance sport, and some of the first reactions were: "Does that mean you don't want to win, because you want to focus on culture instead?" For me, it's such an instinctive thing: if people are looked after and supported, and are able to follow their passions, they will get better results, they'll continue for longer, and they'll encourage more people to come into that sport.'

Grainger reflects how sometimes it's the athletes themselves that add to the pressures. 'I've witnessed it and done it myself; having such strong personal ambition and drive can mean athletes very willingly push themselves, sometimes too far.' She adds that support is crucial. 'What you need is a support system around them – to know when not to hold them back, but also to make sure that they are looking after themselves. Certainly, with everything I've done the goals often really did seem impossible at the beginning, but those really big, scary, exciting goals are what get you out of bed in the morning. But you also need to have the right people to help you get there. And when you are having those bad days, you need to know you have the right places to turn to. I think now that the importance of culture has been promoted back up to the right level, results and culture should develop together at the same time to achieve sustainable results.'

Grainger believes that the general public are also interested in how Olympic medals are achieved, and that when they look back at an exciting, inspirational moment they want to know that it's also been a positive experience for the athlete.

As we closed our conversation, Grainger was keen to point out that, while it is right that high-performance sport is lauded for its medal successes and achievements, it's also a story about humanness. 'Understanding the realities of what it takes to achieve success in high-performance sport, including the lows as well as the highs, can help to bring a broader perspective and understanding. Every athlete will be dealing with their own issues at some point. And that's because we're all human beings. We all have amazing strengths and weaknesses, and we're all trying to cope with life. And that's what unites us as human beings. This should be celebrated.'

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 22, July 2019.*

Role-modelling leadership - 'You have to see it to be it'

Role models play a key role in providing inspiration, says ***Julie Paterson,*** *CEO of Tennis New Zealand and co-founder of Women in Sport Aotearoa.*

Julie Paterson is an experienced sport administrator with over twelve years in CEO roles and is currently CEO of Tennis New Zealand. She is also one of the founders and current Co-Chair of Women in Sport Aotearoa (WISPA), launched in March 2017. Julie's interest in sport administration is driven not only by a love of sport, but also a strong interest in understanding and extending the community benefit of using sport as a vehicle to drive positive change.

https://womeninsport.org.nz

As tennis legend Billie Jean King once said,[8] 'You have to see it to be it,' emphasising the importance of girls being inspired to participate in sports by seeing other women and girls do so. This sentiment resonated with Julie Paterson when working as CEO of Netball Northern Zone in New Zealand, often with clubs in low socio-economic areas with mainly Māori and Pacifica populations. She saw the girls observe other girls come through and get opportunities to go into franchise teams and start to get paid to do something that they were talented at. Paterson recalls, 'Becoming a professional netball player gave these girls a chance to fully live and see what they were capable of. When I can contribute to something that has a positive impact on people's lives, that is what really drives me in sport.'

Paterson didn't get into sports administration in the traditional way of many who have come up through the ranks of the sport itself before moving into administrative roles. Perhaps because of this, she brings a strong degree of objectivity to her leadership. As a youngster she played netball, but as she grew older became more interested in making sure that sports were run efficiently. Making a shift from her developing career in tourism, she took on a role as CEO of the professional netball team Southern Steel, as well as community netball development and support.

Global Sports Mentoring Programme

As Paterson's career blossomed, she moved up to North Island to take on the role of CEO of Netball Northern Zone, handling an annual operating budget of $2.5 million and nine full-time staff. It was at this point she gained a place on the Global Sports Mentoring Programme, a one-month programme set up through a partnership between the US Department of State, espnW and the University of Tennessee. The focus of the programme is on women's empowerment, bringing emerging female leaders from around the world to be paired with female senior executives at leading U.S. organisations in the sports sector. It was a programme that would profoundly change her approach to leadership and connect Paterson to a higher purpose. She recalls 'I went over there without any clear idea of how to turn the thoughts about women's sport that were swirling in the head into something tangible. As the programme went on, I spent a lot of time with the Women's Sport Foundation, a US organisation founded in 1974 by Billie Jean King, dedicated to creating leaders by ensuring girls have access to sports; and realised that we had nothing like that back in New Zealand. Perhaps if we created something like that as an advocacy organisation, it could make a positive impact.'

At the end of the month-long experience, Paterson stood up in front of all her peers on the programme, presented her strategy, and talked about how she planned to achieve it. She then realised that she had a huge responsibility to go back to New Zealand and deliver on what she had committed to do.

One thing that Paterson had been advised by the CEO of the Women's Sport Foundation was the vital importance of having a research partner to provide data to back up her advocacy for change. Serendipitously, Professor Sarah Leberman from Massey University got in touch on the same day as that conversation. Leberman is a leader in the field of sports management, having helped to establish Massey's academic programme, and has conducted considerable research into women and leadership in sports and academia. The two women discussed Paterson's ideas, and as a result Leberman became co-founder of Women in Sport Aotearoa (WISPA).

> *'Sport can help people learn about leadership discipline, and the importance of turning up on time, playing by the rules, listening to the referee and playing within boundaries.'*

Role-modelling leadership - 'You have to see it to be it'
Julie Paterson

Since only limited research data existed in New Zealand, Paterson explains how they initially used a report published in the US by consultants Ernst and Young (EY). This report[9] showed how sport is a major influence in helping women to advance their careers. For example, sport can help people learn about leadership discipline, and the importance of turning up on time and playing by the rules, listening to the referee and playing within boundaries. All of these skills are also vital in today's business world – so perhaps forward-thinking organisations should encourage their future leaders to play sports together instead of embarking on the usual team building programmes!

Gaining political and media interest

By 2017 it seemed that it was the right time to launch WISPA because there had begun to be a greater level of interest in this agenda, both in the political arena as well as in the media. For example, Sports Minister Grant Robertson has made women in sport his number one priority, and following a competitive bid in 2018 led by WISPA alongside many other partners, New Zealand was honoured to be chosen as 2018-2022 host for The International Working Group (IWG) on Women and Sport. The IWG is the world's largest network dedicated to advancing sport by empowering women and girls, and their status as host has significantly raised the profile of WISPA, with former New Zealand Prime Minister the Rt Hon. Helen Clark becoming Patron of both WISPA and IWG in 2019.

Shortly after WISPA was launched, Paterson was appointed as CEO of Tennis New Zealand, leading a team of fourteen people. This was a chance to utilise more of the leadership learning from the mentor programme, particularly at a strategic level. One of her first activities was to draft a strategic plan. Consultation on this had already begun prior to her appointment, and so her task was to ensure that all those involved in tennis were clear of their roles and responsibilities and knew where they fitted in to the overall mission, rather than sometimes operating independently of the national body. She explains, 'I had to get people aligned and acknowledging that what we were developing was not a Tennis New Zealand strategy, it was a tennis *in* New Zealand strategic framework, in which everyone had a part to play. Some of the feedback we had got through the consultation process was that people wanted Tennis New Zealand to show much stronger leadership, which is what resulted in the strategy we have now.'

She continues 'I've seen a number of sports in New Zealand get into trouble because they focus too much on the sport and forget about the business. Moving on from netball into tennis has meant I brought different insights. For example, netball is a team sport, and largely volunteer driven, compared to tennis that is an individual sport and mostly involves professional coaches. I've been able to shake the tree and challenge some of the traditional thinking in tennis, to explore why we do things. I can ask, "Why do we do it like this? Is that right?" because I believe that fresh thinking can be a real asset.'

Customer focus

So how does coaching play a role within sports administration? While it may not be consistently embedded as a leadership behaviour across the sport, Paterson believes that what is taking hold is the concept of continuous education. She says, 'I believe that in Tennis New Zealand we've got a very clear understanding around this now. Previously we struggled with some of the coaches who do not belong to national programmes and tend to do their own thing. We've tried to engage clubs to help them understand that they should contract a coach who is going to deliver what the people in the community want, rather than the coach deciding what is going to be delivered. That means educating the clubs about what people want. It's about getting people – the customers - at the centre of the conversation and focusing on what they want to achieve.'

One of the ways that sport can influence wellbeing in the community is to keep teenagers engaged. For example, there is research[10] that shows girls drop out of sport significantly between the ages of 11 and 18, and so Tennis New Zealand are now targeting teenage girls with a product called Cardio Tennis. Paterson explains that this is just like tennis exercise, but it's not competitive. Instead the girls use a tennis racket and a ball to do a whole lot of aerobic exercises over a one-hour period with music and heart rate monitors. So it's more about fun, rather than being competitive, which some teenagers find off-putting.

Whether it's in her role as CEO, or as co-founder of WISPA, Paterson believes that sport has a vital role to play in society because of its high visibility. 'We have the ability to influence using sport as a vehicle to deliver messages, such as health and well-being,' she says. 'Sport has the ability to go from government level to deep into the community and it's a vehicle to change people's perceptions.'

That was certainly what happened to Paterson as a result of going to USA for the mentoring programme: she came back with changed perceptions about what's possible and has taken steps to make it happen ever since. Paterson had to 'See it, to become it'!

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 23, October 2019.*

Global leadership isn't about geography: it's about mindset

***Maya Hu-Chan**, executive coach and co-author, Global Leadership – the Next Generation, discusses the communication challenges of leading a global team.*

Maya Hu-Chan is a globally recognised speaker, executive coach, and author. She helps leaders excel through cultural agility, inclusion, and a global mindset. Maya was ranked in the top eight Global Solutions Thinkers by Thinkers50; World Top 30 Leadership Gurus; and Top 100 Thought Leaders in Management & Leadership. Her book Global Leadership: The Next Generation was recommended by Harvard Business School. She is also a contributing author of ten business books and writes a monthly column on INC.com. Her new book, *Saving Face: How to Preserve Dignity and Build Trust* will be out in 2020 (Berrett-Koehler).

http://mayahuchan.com

I was recently delivering a coaching skills workshop to a group of managers from a small London-based business. We discovered that there were over twenty nationalities represented among the staff. Although English was the common language, the managers had to understand and adapt to all the different cultural nuances in order to maximise team performance. This phenomenon is no different in many cities around the world, where the term 'global leader' has now come to represent leading people in your local team, because there is so much geographical and ethnic diversity within one city.

When I met Maya Hu-Chan, an executive coach based in San Diego, California, who specialises in global leadership, she agreed with this view. With a first degree in journalism and business, Hu-Chan moved to the US from Taiwan to attend the University of Pennsylvania's graduate school in 1985, and soon discovered that she would have to choose between two paths. Not knowing anyone, and with just a basic understanding of English, she knew that the more comfortable path would be to join the school's Chinese student association. There she could meet plenty of students – many from Taiwan – find a Chinese roommate, and be part of a bustling group of like-minded peers. It would feel like home.

But after meeting a few Chinese students who had already been at the university for a number of years, she found that most of them spoke very little English except when in class, and their experiences of the USA rarely extended beyond their circle of friends.

Realising that her dream of experiencing the West would never come to pass unless she took a risk, Hu-Chan found a roommate who was not from Asia, and in doing this chose a different path. As the US poet Robert Frost wrote in his world-famous poem, Hu-Chan '...took the one less traveled...' And that has made all the difference.

Learning about different cultures

Rated as one of the top eight Global Solutions Thinkers by Thinkers50, Hu-Chan uses her early experience of coming to the US to encourage her clients to push themselves to grow. 'When it comes to global leadership,' she says, 'leaders need to be curious and adaptable. You don't have to leave your country to do this, but just find opportunities to learn about different cultures, how people live, how they do business and how they communicate. This can provide a tremendous growth opportunity in terms of personal development.'

Taking time to step into other people's shoes builds empathy and understanding. The small business I was working with in London organised social events where employees took the opportunity to learn more about their colleagues' backgrounds and what life was like in their respective countries when they were growing up.

This characteristic of appreciating cultural diversity is one of five highlighted by Hu-Chan and her co-authors Marshall Goldsmith, who is featured in a later interview, Cathy L. Greenberg and Alastair Robertson in their book *Global Leadership - The Next Generation*.

The five characteristics are:

1. Thinking globally
2. Appreciating cultural diversity
3. Developing technological skills
4. Building partnerships and alliances
5. Sharing leadership

These characteristics, says Hu-Chan, apply to any leader who works with a team either virtually or globally. She defines a 'global mindset' as: '…to realise that there is *more than one way of doing things.*' It's as simple as that. Global mindset is not about being right or wrong, or the need for someone to accommodate another's view – it's about *exploring*. If we listen to each other and understand where another is coming from, we can come up with the best solution. There is always more than one way of doing things when it comes to business.

Communication challenges

Hu-Chan's university studies in journalism helped her realise the value of asking questions. 'I'm interested in people,' she says, 'what they care about, what their challenges, successes and aspirations are. It's this curiosity that has served me well as an executive coach. For example, when clients initially describe their issue, it is often not the real issue they have. You have to be curious enough to explore it further.

'Typically, clients come to me with challenges in leading diverse or multi-cultural teams. Perhaps they are missing important business objectives or losing clients, or their employees are disengaged and unmotivated, or perhaps good people are quitting, all of which can negatively impact the organisation's bottom line. You have to be able to help them step back and look at the big picture to understand what's going on.'

Hu-Chan relates the story of a client in a financial services firm. One floor of the firm's offices housed compliance, while another was for sales and bankers. A habit had arisen of communicating by email between the two divisions, rather than meeting in the building. As is so often the case in a hectic work environment, emails would be misinterpreted, leading to conflict. Hu-Chan worked with the team helping them see that their issues had little to do with substance and much more to do with straightforward communication skills.

The result was a commitment from both teams to meet their colleagues face-to-face when issues arose. Reviewing things, a month later, the teams realised that talking over a cup of coffee led inevitably to getting to know each other better, meaning that issues could be resolved in a matter of minutes. More generally, instituting regular cross-team meetings has helped build more cohesive teams and better working relationships – and has had a positive impact on the bottom line.

While communication usually improves when employees engage face-to-face, this is in itself challenging for a global team that communicates virtually. And it's in the virtual environment where paying attention to small details can have a positive impact. For example, considering various time zones when scheduling a conference call or outlining expectations at the start of each call as to how it will be run, can all help keep things running smoothly.

Power and control challenges

Another challenge when leading a global team is the question of power and control. Hu-Chan believes that the ability to share leadership is one of a global leader's core competencies. In some countries, however, this may also mean relinquishing control, which can be uncomfortable – particularly for leaders operating in a culture where they are expected to have all the answers, and team members who never challenge upwards. But Hu-Chan has also observed over the last twenty years in her work with global organisations that the command and control style of leadership is becoming increasingly ineffective.

'It's not about undermining your own value system so much as being flexible and prepared to adapt your style to bridge the gap. That's being influential.'

Today, many people are knowledge workers. They are paid to think and solve problems, so they want to be heard and to make a difference. If a leader represses that and retains control of everything, it discourages others from thinking for themselves, and over time you lose them.

'When I am working with a leader who has a "command and control" style,' explains Hu Chan, 'I go deeper with the client to explore their need to be in control. I enquire: "Where does it come from?" "How does it impact the team?" "How do they want to show up as a leader?" I also ask them what their team really needs from the leader in order to perform at their best. This helps the leader to understand their behaviour from the team member's perspective and realise what is causing them to display the need to control. I can then help them look at other options they may have. It takes time, but I think it is the coach's responsibility to bring awareness and help leaders to see the impact of their style on their team.

'Leaders also need to learn to "style shift",' Hu-Chan adds. This means that they may look at a situation where there are certain cultural expectations and, for example, be more direct rather than being polite and not saying anything. 'It's not about undermining their own value system so much as being flexible and prepared to adapt their style to bridge the gap. That's being influential.'

Challenge of global business ethics

What are acceptable business ethics in one country may be viewed negatively in another, which can make the task of leadership even more difficult when operating with a global team. Leaders need to reconsider the realities pertaining to each culture and realise that what constitutes ethical behaviour in one individual's mind will depend on their life experience as well as their cultural background.

Hu-Chan's view is that when companies set global ethical practices, they should explain clearly where the boundaries are. For example, outline what is unethical, what is appropriate, where there can be flexibility and where there is no room for negotiation. 'It's the difference between *doing things right* and d*oing the right thing*. Ethics will always win over short-term gains, so it's really important leaders set the right tone and lead by example.'

Leaders should ask more questions and listen to different perspectives, she says, to be able to form their own views about broader global issues. 'To be well informed, leaders need to learn about other viewpoints. With all the algorithms on the internet we tend to only get to read what we agree with, and we don't hear, see or read about different perspectives. I encourage leaders to pick up a publication they have never read before, and talk to people with different backgrounds – they don't have to agree with it, but it helps them to think more broadly, and they may find out something that surprises them.'

Finally, while there are many challenges that global leaders regularly face, Hu-Chan identifies three that she sees occurring most regularly:

1. Managing the complexity of a global business environment
2. Leading virtual teams
3. Inspiring and leading change

Hu-Chan encourages leaders to focus on being present. 'It is important for leaders to learn to be in touch with their emotions, manage their physical and mental wellbeing in order to show up at their best. The pace of change and uncertainty is not going to slow down. As a leader, your team looks to you, and if you are solid, calm and present, that will positively impact the people around you. Ultimately, that can be what makes the difference.'

Back in London, the managers in the small business I was working with now view themselves as global leaders. By developing their coaching skills, which heightened their ability to listen to their colleagues, not make assumptions and to develop patience to identify what the real issues are, they have learned that being a global leader takes effort but brings greater rewards in terms of engagement and morale.

Global leadership isn't about geography: it's about mindset
Maya Hu-Chan

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 19, October 2018.*

Orchestrating success

*Being a CEO is like being the conductor of an orchestra, reflects **Sharon Birkman**, President and CEO of Birkman International.*

Sharon Birkman, President and CEO of Birkman International, is the second generation to be at the helm of the family-owned behavioural and occupational assessment company and has ushered in a new era of product development and growth. Sharon, who has an M.A. from the University of Texas and completed the Owner/President Management programme at Harvard, assumed her leadership role at Birkman in 2002 following a career as a professional musician and musical director. Sharon's passion for creativity, client relations, community giving, and integrity are defining features of her leadership style that have helped shape Birkman's company culture and mission.

www.birkman.com

The similarities between a professional musician-cum-musical director, and the CEO of a family business, may not at first be obvious. Yet Sharon Birkman successfully made the transition between these two careers in 2002, when she took over the running of Birkman International, a Houston-based company specialising in behavioural and occupational assessment, which had been founded by her father some fifty years previously.

'As a musician you always want the chords to harmonise, and you need to tune up each individual note in the chord,' Birkman reflects. 'Now I realise that being the CEO is very much like being the conductor of an orchestra. You are the one who stands up there, you are not playing any instrument, but how you set the tempo, keep them in tune and sustain the morale of the whole group will impact on the sound. I only saw this more clearly with the passing of time. It began to dawn on me how valuable my experience had been putting together an ensemble and designing a whole musical piece from the costumes to the set. In fact, I think it was the perfect training for what I am doing now; even just to get along with people and get them to do what you want them to do.'

Getting started

When Birkman took over in 2002, the focus for the business was primarily research-based, as her father was a psychologist. While keen to keep the core of his legacy intact, Birkman also wanted to use her entrepreneurial skills to make the company more commercially viable and enable it to grow.

The late Dr Birkman had become interested in personality differences while serving as a U.S. Air Force pilot in the 1940s. Dr Birkman's experience led him to study psychology and measure the human characteristics that he saw as influencing perceptions, behaviours and motivations. By 1950 Dr Birkman had developed a unique method of assessment that is now used globally. To date over 50 million Birkman behavioural assessment reports have been run, and the tool has been translated into 23 languages.

Birkman recalls that dinner-table conversation at home was often about personality and behaviour, a situation she thought was the norm in all households. She saw the passion and energy in both her parents to get her father's ideas out into the world. 'There were times when my father would question whether he should give up and get a real job – it was my mother who was persistent and encouraged him, because she wholeheartedly believed that the Birkman assessment tool he developed would make the world a better place, through helping people better understand themselves and others.'

Developing the business

In 2002, regardless of how successful the family business had become, when Birkman took on the role of CEO she faced the challenge that many second-generation entrepreneurs experience: how to maintain the core of the business whilst also introducing their own ideas? Birkman's focus has been on innovation while still maintaining the family ethos.

> *'People feel they have so many responsibilities, and so little time, that they want something they can pick up, that is easy to use and understand, and that will be at their fingertips.'*

In the past few years the market for assessment tools has changed quite dramatically, with a greater focus on technology, a desire for instant feedback and shorter assessment reports more targeted to participants' immediate needs. Companies in the sector have

had to adapt in order to meet these requirements. Birkman likens this to developing cake mixes. 'If I were a gourmet cook I could bake a cake from scratch using 38 quality ingredients, but most of the time I am in a hurry and so I grab a cake mix where I can add egg and water and it's going to turn out pretty well. It's the same in corporate organisations. People feel they have so many responsibilities, and so little time, that they want something they can pick up, that is easy to use and understand, and that will be at their fingertips.

'Much of the innovation Birkman are doing now is about adding in options where you don't need a consultant to spend hours debriefing each individual one at a time. This is still relevant for senior leaders, but if you want scale, to offer something to 500 people in an organisation, it needs to be more practical. We recognise that as a coach you just need an easy entry point to get a conversation started, and then you have something to offer where you can go deeper.

'The market wants applications, things that are immediate and practical to address the challenges that employees and supervisors face. They need to resonate with people: if they understand that this information will help them be better at communication or manage a difficult person then it makes sense. People don't always see the need for a psychological assessment and can be nervous about it. With a more topic-based approach, the assessment becomes a tool to facilitate a conversation. The role of the coach becomes even more important when employees realise that the coach is the person holding up the mirror and helping them interpret the information a report provides. It's in the dialogue between two human beings that the real magic takes place. We all naturally see the world through our own eyes, and what a coach can do is help you see that 75% of the world is different to you – whether a behaviour or another person.'

As with many assessment tools, there is ongoing scientific validation, and re-norming if necessary, to reflect altering societal norms. One noticeable change, says Birkman, is the use of much less formal language in the workplace. While outwardly we have learned different socialised behaviour, the Birkman research shows that what remain constant across countries, cultures, and genders at a deep-rooted level, are our common underlying motivational needs as human beings. Whilst across countries and cultures there may be external differences in ethnicity and gender, the similarities between humans are within each person in terms of their character.

Birkman comments: 'This is relevant for coaches since they can help clients differentiate what is socialised or learned behaviour (the part of us which is highly malleable) which can be changed through conscious thought, discussion and intention; and what are their individual needs at a deeper level (which is part of who they are). This means the coach can also help them focus on what is good about the innate parts of their personality, which make them unique.'

Where next?

Birkman has been successful in leading the business over the last eighteen years, but she believes the pace of change will not slacken. She would like to see Birkman develop in a similar way to how wearable technology has evolved. 'If we could offer people self-care and self-management tools for staying out of stress and minimising the time they spend in personal stress, it could benefit an individual's mental health in a similar way that current devices are doing for physical health.'

She has a strong desire to maintain the family atmosphere of the company. 'I think for many decades being a family business meant we had a boutique quality; while there were many positives it did also inhibit growth. When I started there were seventeen employees. We have now grown to at least double that number, but it still feels like an extended family. There are a lot of policies and internal practices that we take for granted, which do seem to create a very strong connection between our employees and the company.

'For example, every employee receives $5000 a year for their own professional development, including fully paid time off work for this. We offer lunchtime learning which gets everyone together, and offer flexible working hours from 6 a.m. to 7 p.m. There is also a 20% bonus if they meet their own revenue goals, and the overall business meets its goals.' These practices were recognised nationally when Birkman won the EY Entrepreneur of the Year Gulf Coast award for family business in 2016 and was commended for the company's global outreach and service-oriented approach. She believes that you can do well by doing good. This seems a fitting tribute to the legacy handed on from her father, whilst adapting this to the needs of today's market.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 13, April 2017.*

Section 2

Building coaching capability and culture

What it takes to build a coaching culture

Introducing a coaching culture requires a system-wide view, according to ***Tiffany Gaskell,*** *Co-Founder and Managing Director, Performance Consultants International.*

Tiffany Gaskell is a thought leader and international authority on coaching and leadership development. She worked with the pioneer of coaching, Sir John Whitmore, for 14 years and led the revision of the 25th Anniversary Edition of Coaching for Performance, the 'bible' of coaching, published in 2017. As Managing Director of Performance Consultants International, she continues Sir John's legacy working with leading businesses around the world to create high performance cultures that benefit people, profit and the planet.

An ex-banker as well as an expert in creating high performance in the workplace, Tiffany developed the Performance Curve model to measure organisational culture and created the evaluation tool Coaching for Performance ROI which show how the investment in people development benefits the bottom line.

www.performanceconsultants.com

Coaching cultures create high-performance cultures. That's the view of Tiffany Gaskell, Managing Director of Performance Consultants, a company that's been at the forefront of coach training and leadership development globally for decades. During that time Gaskell has observed the changes in leadership style within organisations from one of *telling people what to do* in order to get results, to that of creating a more collaborative culture.

Gaskell believes that many people in the workplace are out of touch with their own humanity, and quotes a powerful message from Mary Robinson, former President of Ireland: 'We all need to become human again.' When Gaskell watched her first example of coaching, she recalls observing how the person being coached appeared to put down the emotional baggage they had been carrying around for years and begin to flourish before her eyes.

Gaskell holds a great deal of respect for the founder of Performance Consultants, Sir John Whitmore, and speaks with warmth and pride about his work. 'We stand on the shoulders of a giant who moved the whole business world in a different direction. John first went into organisations in the late 1970's and he wasn't shy about telling home truths. He was quite happy to walk into board rooms and tell the leaders that they needed to become more human. The body of work that he left behind is immense – including *Coaching for Performance*, his book that became the "bible of coaching." Our team updated it before his death because we want to carry on John's work of professionalising the coaching industry. There are all types of coaching out there, with lots of people calling themselves coaches, but they may not have any qualifications or training. We want coaching to have rigour and also for coaches to show the benefits they are bringing to the organisation.

Measurement and a focus on the bottom line were imperatives for Gaskell, a former derivatives trader. She is adamant that it is possible to measure the return on investment (ROI) in coaching, one of the factors that can help to reinforce the benefit of creating a coaching culture.

'I'm really keen on encouraging companies to do this, but sometimes they don't have the appetite for it. This is where we use our process – the coaching performance ROI. The process traces the impact that has been made within an organisation as a result of leaders changing their behaviour. For example, we worked with Linde, one of the largest industrial gas companies in the world, in the area of health and safety. Bringing a coaching approach into health and safety was easily measurable. Linde saw a 74% reduction in safety incidents and accidents. John championed the idea that human beings should change their relationship to the planet. At Linde they understood this through the positive impact on their people, who are now less at risk; through an impact on performance; lower costs; and a positive outcome for the planet as well because there are fewer leakages, slips and spills.'

Another example Gaskell cites is of a manufacturing company where Performance Consultants took 150 global leaders through a coaching programme. These individuals learned to integrate coaching into their leadership style and in doing so the manufacturing company was able to show an impressive 800% return on investment. Gaskell says 'When the company had a dispute with a customer, past behaviour would have been to fight with them. Instead, rather than being defensive or aggressive, the leaders now were curious and listened. They gained an understanding of the customer's perspective, and the customer was able to also work through their own issues – so the matter was resolved without getting into a dispute. This meant that the manufacturing company was able to save millions on that particular contract.'

Another way of measuring impact and return on investment is through engagement surveys. For example, credit card company Mastercard wanted to bring in more of a coaching feedback approach and used a survey to measure engagement both a year before the initiative started and again one year later. The level of engagement had moved significantly in a positive direction.

Adopting a systemic approach

Introducing a coaching culture requires a system-wide approach, as noted by Dr Robert Gass in a later interview. Gaskell believes that changes from introducing coaching will have only a minimal impact if other systems within the business are not transformed at the same time.

Gaskell compares the introduction of a coaching culture to the McKinsey Consulting 7-S framework, which involves seven interdependent factors categorised as either 'hard' or 'soft' elements:

Hard Elements	Soft Elements
Strategy	Shared Values
Structure	Skills
Systems	Style
	Staff

'Hard' elements are easier to define and identify, and so management can directly influence these: with strategy statements, organisation charts and reporting lines, and formal processes and IT systems.

'Soft' elements, on the other hand, can be more difficult to describe and are less tangible. Developing a coaching culture involves identifying what needs to be changed in both 'hard' and 'soft' systems to be able to support people in the new behaviours.

Getting started

The first activity that is vital, Gaskell says, is obtaining sponsorship from the top. Companies need a big vision to make this happen, and she cites an example of the global car and engine manufacturer Volvo. The company has a vision for how their leaders should behave, but instead of telling their people how to act, they empower and develop them on the job. Performance Consultants are now working with Volvo to make this happen in 40 countries around the world.

Any initiative needs to be led and communicated in the right way, because when coaching is introduced, it needs to be set up so that people are excited about it and understand its enormous benefit.

Gaskell says 'It's like having a tailor-made leadership development programme for those individuals and this has to come across to the audience. Recently we launched a big programme in the United Arab Emirates. The CEO introduced this at a company conference and we also spoke, explaining what the coaching programme was all about. There were a few people who already knew about coaching and leadership who were talking positively about it, and as a result of all of this the programme was a huge success.'

> *'Coaching cultures create high-performance cultures.'*

With the need for demonstrable commitment from the top, Gaskell is also aware that in the early stages of introducing a coaching culture, it is vital that things are stable, and that people stay in place, which can be challenging in today's rapidly changing business environment. The medical technology company Medtronic, which has 80,000 employees worldwide, tackled this by setting up a coaching centre of excellence, and training internal coaches. They realised that to have people inside the business who are trained to the equivalent level of AC Professional Executive Coach made a noticeable difference.

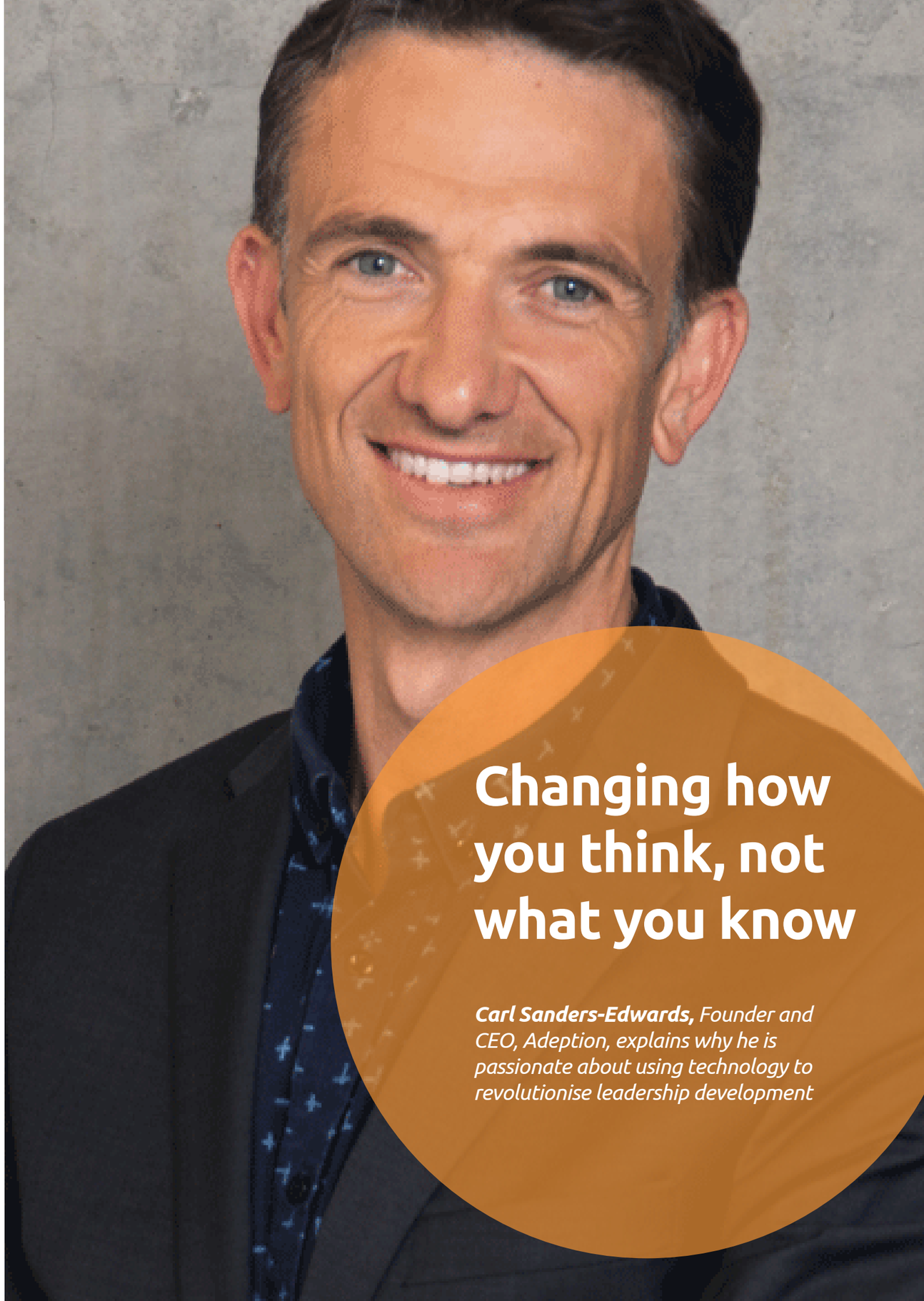
Gaskell explains the Performance Consultants International approach: 'We believe one of the fundamentals of coaching is creating inspiring goals. This skill is especially important in an organisational context. Then there is asking powerful questions, and active listening. Within organisations it's particularly important to offer challenge as well as support, and to pay close attention to the context of the organisational culture. In the recent edition of *Coaching for Performance*[11], and through the work we've been doing in health and safety, we've created something called *The Performance Curve*. The idea is that people can look at the Curve, which goes from low performance to high performance, through different *mindsets*. They can look to see what mindset their organisation has. When we show this to clients and use it with coaches and leaders in organisations, it helps leaders think about what type of culture they are creating and then what type of performance it relates to.'

Summary

Gaskell believes that organisations have the opportunity to lead the way in terms of setting direction and the agenda for future generations by both being inspiring and also harnessing the potential of their people. To do this, they need to evolve and become different from the organisations we see in the world so often.

She comments 'The essence of a coaching culture is that it's the way to lead the world in the 21st century when we are grappling with huge challenges like climate change, our human impact on the planet and also our relationship with ourselves'.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 20, January 2019.*



Changing how you think, not what you know

Carl Sanders-Edwards, *Founder and CEO, Adeption, explains why he is passionate about using technology to revolutionise leadership development*

Carl Sanders-Edwards is the CEO and Founder of Adeption.io, an AI powered leadership coaching app. His mission is to make leadership development that works available to everyone. Carl's passion for leadership development formed from over 20 years working with global organisations and start-ups. Carl holds an MBA from Babson College, Boston, as a Fulbright Scholar, graduating top of his class. He has a Bachelor of Technology (Hons.) from Massey University, in NZ, and received the 2011 Massey University Distinguished Young Alumni award.

www.adeption.io

'Leadership and leading is a collective responsibility, not an individual one,' according to New Zealander Carl Sanders-Edwards, founder of Adeption, an artificial intelligence (AI) powered leadership app used by some of the world's most successful organisations. The technology platform aims to revolutionise leadership development and make it accessible to all, not just for those already at the board table or reaching the peak of their careers.

Sanders-Edwards believes that the one of the biggest challenges for leaders today is constant change and reinvention, amidst what many describe as a VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous) working environment. However, he is optimistic that leaders can thrive in this environment, since constant change is in fact a more natural state for people to operate in.

'The human species is well-evolved to deal with change,' he says, 'but the last two hundred years of stability through the industrial revolution have given us this illusion of predictability, stability and certainty in our environment.'

Like many in the technology space, Sanders-Edwards has the view that the future role for machines and AI will take away much of the predictable, stable, and certain work people have done for the last couple of hundred years. That only leaves the volatile, complex stuff for humans to address. 'We should look forward to this with hope, rather than fear,' he says. 'I think that's why the space of coaching, leadership development and building people to be adaptive and have a growth mindset is so important.'

Continuous improvement

It seems that Sanders-Edwards' passion to democratise leadership development was born out of his early experiences of total quality management and learning about the work of the quality gurus including W. Edwards Deming and Joseph J. Juran. As a mechanical engineering graduate, Sanders-Edwards quickly became aware that much of good engineering practice could only work well when accompanied by teams that operated effectively.

Whilst working at car manufacturer Toyota, Sanders-Edwards observed first-hand the transition of his workplace from one of the worst factories in the world, to one of the best. Whilst there was no new capital equipment, and no extra expenditure, what had occurred was a cultural change that was driven by leadership, and this greatly impressed him. Sanders-Edwards also observed that in his small town, many people who worked at Toyota ended up progressing from the shop floor. Several became significant leaders who applied what they had learnt. Others set up their own businesses, thus helping their community, and this in turn made a positive impact on the wider society.

Fast-forward a few years into his career, and Sanders-Edwards, an ambitious young man, gained a Fulbright scholarship to study for an MBA at Babson College in Boston, USA. This two-year experience was pivotal in opening up access to new thinking, new ideas and new contacts, and subsequently Sanders-Edwards moved to the USA permanently in order to develop Adeption.

> ***'If you are to survive in a complex volatile world, you need to know what you stand for, and what you value.'***

'In Adeption our focus is on helping leaders to think and act differently,' Sanders-Edwards reflects. 'This translates into encouraging them not to just rely on being told what to do by others.' His view is that leaders need to stimulate their curiosity, activate their own minds, and figure things out for themselves. But in today's workplace leaders face a paradox: people want to be told what to do, because it's easy and safe, but they rarely want to do what they are told. Added to that, businesses want leaders who are able to think for themselves and use their initiative to be able to keep up with today's business challenges. It's an interesting tension.

To address this paradox, Sanders-Edwards believes that creating well-designed and well-constructed leadership development interventions will ultimately help to develop *good humans*. 'If you are to survive in a complex, volatile world, you need to know what you stand for, and what you value. You need to be able to move beyond just being reactive to everyone around you, by standing for something and then even beyond that, standing for something bigger than yourself. That in itself makes you more resilient, and less likely to be stressed by the environment, making it easier to collaborate and coordinate with other people.'

Vertical development

The aim at Adeption is to use technology to introduce a support structure whereby people can continue developing habits (without prompting from others), enabling them to be more adaptable and effective at work. Sanders-Edwards compares this to brushing your teeth. 'Most people brush their teeth every night, but we are not born naturally wanting to do so. It's what we learned over time. When we become adults, if you are lucky enough to work in an organisation that is *deliberately developmental* it helps you seek out experiences that are going to stretch you; helps you reflect on what's happening, and gives you alternate perspectives – you can make new sense of the world you are in. And if you experience this, you'll keep developing. But if you don't get that support, you need to find a way to build that habit.'

This relentless focus on helping leaders to activate new thinking by moving round the learning cycle (action - reflection - learning - planning) has been integrated into the Adeption model. Sanders-Edwards describes it as *Vertical Development*, '…which is not *changing what you know*, but *how you think*'.

The concept of Vertical Development came out of research carried out at Harvard and Cambridge Universities which shows that adults move through stages of development[12]. At each new stage, they develop new capacities for thinking, acting and leading. Vertically developed leaders can think more systemically, see long-term possibilities, embrace challenges from multiple perspectives, and lead as interdependent collaborators. These capacities are crucial for leaders who operate and make decisions in complex environments, that is to say most modern leaders.

With the Adeption platform Sanders-Edwards is aiming to combine behaviour change science, micro learning and AI to offer targeted content, along with regular follow-ups and support to enable leaders to build new habits through deliberate practice. In essence, it's the continuous improvement philosophy enacted through an app – and perhaps a nod to the insights that Sanders-Edwards gained many years ago from the early Quality gurus he so admired.

'Deliberately Developmental Organizations'

Professor Robert Kegan, Lisa Lahey and their collaborators at Harvard Graduate School of Education found and studied companies they described as *Deliberately Developmental Organizations*. A DDO is based on the simple but radical conviction that organisations will best prosper when they are more deeply aligned with people's strongest motive, which is to grow. This means creating a culture in which support of people's development is woven into the daily fabric of working life and the company's regular operations, daily routines, and conversations.

Horizontal Development is about adding more knowledge, skills, and competencies. It is about *what you know*, which we can be measured through traditional evaluation and feedback approaches.

Vertical Development refers to advancement in a person's thinking capability. The outcome of vertical stage development is the ability to think in more complex, systemic, strategic, and interdependent ways. It is about *how you think*, which we can measure through stage development interviews and surveys.

Sanders-Edwards continues: 'There are big development shifts that we move through as adults in our lives. There is a *socialised* or *dependent stage*, when you are dependent on the viewpoints of others and the general environment that you're in. You seek information, you take on board other people's ideas, and put them into action. You can then move on into an *independent* or *self-authoring state*, which is where you can think for yourself and have your own viewpoints and you're not so reactive to those around you, which is a really classic leadership space to be in. Then you continue to develop into a more *interdependent* or *self-transforming* state, where you realise you need to exist in that bigger environment and that's when things like collaboration at a strategic level become possible.

'It's at this stage where you can be more objective. For example, rather than getting frustrated because a colleague did not listen to you, you think about the system you are both operating in, and why that person didn't listen to you and what's going on for them. As a leader, you can now make small interventions that actually have a big impact for people just because you can see things differently.'

By introducing leaders to a learning process whereby they are having experiences, seeking different ways to view those experiences to make sense of them, and then reflecting on what happened, the aim is that it will ultimately help them step out of their habitual ways of thinking and doing.

The role of coaching in vertical development

Adeption's technology-led approach does not, however, do away with the need for coaching support. Sanders-Edwards believes that coaches can add value by being involved in various ways to support the learning. One way is to build the reflective scripts that are used by the app in the first place. Another is to work with leaders who may want to explore any insights they have gained by using the app, or who seek additional support.

'Technology can work alongside coaching, and we want to encourage more coaches to think about how it can help them to scale what they do,' says Sanders-Edwards. 'If you are really honest, every time you have a coaching conversation with a new client, probably about 80% of the questions you ask are the same every time. We can get people thinking about those questions before you even meet them, which saves time. Also, coaches can't always be with their clients, so we're experimenting with some AI technologies that can tell a leader in real-time whether they are talking too much in a conversation. With this instant feedback, the technology acts rather like a really good mentor or colleague would do in real life, when they would give you a kick under the table.'

Looking to the future, Adeption want to have contributed towards making leadership development, coaching and vertical development vastly more accessible to people in the workplace. But Sanders-Edwards' bigger hope is that by 2025 it will be normal for people in any role to get quality coaching and leadership development, because machine learning and AI will have been integrated with human interaction. Surely that's a win-win all round.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 24, January 2020.*

Why ‘being unalike’ is beneficial in business

*Talking to **Barbara Annis,** CEO, Gender Intelligence Group about how businesses can gain advantage from women and men working and leading together.*

Barbara Annis of Gender Intelligence Group has worked with Fortune 500 companies and numerous organisations worldwide for over thirty years. Her insights have pioneered a transformational shift in cultural attitudes on the importance of gender unity to organisational success. She is Chair Emeritus of the Women’s Leadership Board at Harvard Kennedy School and was recently conferred the International Alliance for Women, Lifetime Achievement Award.

https://www.genderintelligence.com

Leadership teams in organisations should be encouraged to think ‘unalike’, says Barbara Annis. For over twenty-five years Annis has been at the forefront of research into *gender intelligence*, working with many of the world’s top companies to help them build diverse workplaces where the talents of both women and men are valued. Gender Intelligence® focuses on the understanding of, and appreciation for, the naturally occurring characteristics beyond the obvious biological and cultural traits that distinguish men and women, to include attitudinal and behavioural differences.

Annis, who is Chair Emeritus of the Women’s Leadership Board at Harvard Kennedy School, believes that ‘It is important for an organisational culture to be one where people feel valued and are welcome. These days, if any business wants to retain and attract women, men, and millennials, the future of work is about collaboration and inclusivity. Otherwise people will not stay, and the organisations will not have a pipeline of talent.’

She cites the example of a Scandinavian technology company who were on a massive recruitment drive in response to a staff turnover level of over 30%, particularly among women and millennials. However, the company still operated a predominantly white, male culture – that of the baby boomer* generation; unless they became more inclusive, their ability to recruit and retain talent was unlikely to improve.

Annis became interested over 30 years ago in the idea of valuing difference, when she was the only woman in Sales within the global electronics company Sony, and had to take on ‘sameness’ to fit in. She realised that focusing on equality can evoke blame, and if a culture wants to change it needs to include women and men and focus on recognising and appreciating difference.

Annis subsequently left Sony and began to run workshops to help women develop their leadership skills. One day a participant in one of her women-only programmes, asked her: ‘If the objective is to empower women, why is it focused only on women?’ This question made Annis realise that she also had to involve men in the education process.

Change takes time

With many boardrooms still dominated by men, and with comfort with a command and control culture among some existing leaders, it takes time for change to happen. However, there has started to be an impact from the field of brain science research, which is providing evidence about the differences between male and female brains.

Annis is excited about this field of research, which she says ‘...was actually first discovered in 1892 but did not really emerge until 1990, when there were fMRI scanners that could see the brain. Before this, scientists and researchers assumed that women and men were more or less the same, so they only tested male brains and male animals. That led to a huge blind spot.’

For example, research now shows that women use different parts of their brain when problem-solving or brainstorming, and they also tend to use *divergent thinking*. In other words, when thinking through a problem the female-type brain expands the field of view to take account of broader issues. This slows the down the thinking process, and for those whose brains tends to use *convergent thinking* (narrowing down to essentials) to get to the issue quickly, this can be frustrating.

But don’t be mistaken into thinking that all women have female brains and vice versa, as Annis also challenges this generalisation. Her research finds that up to 20% of women and men have *bridge brains*, where females have a ‘male’-type brain, and males the ‘female’ type.

Whether male or female, both problem-solving approaches are valuable in Annis’ view. This is because getting to a solution too quickly can sometimes mean a particular customer group is overlooked, or new ideas don’t get a chance to emerge. On the other hand, taking more time in broadening the decision-making process may not always be feasible, and time spent on too much discussion could mean losing a competitive advantage.

* Those born between 1946 and 1964.

Several global tech firms have now woken up to the value of Gender Intelligence and are trying to get a more even gender balance on their respective management teams. Annis cites the example of the CEO of a global tech business who now prefers more gender-balanced teams because he has seen how this improves the ability of teams to work together.

Nature vs Nurture

Annis also believes that we need to focus on both - nature and nurture. She discusses the work of Helen Fisher, an anthropologist who studies brain evolution and who argues for studying the hard wiring of the brain. Otherwise, Annis contends, we develop blind spots. Boys and girls tend to learn differently, and if we understand that boys typically stand and move around a lot, this does not mean they have attention deficit; they just learn differently from girls. For Fisher and for Annis, it’s about recognising and valuing difference.

There are some perspectives of Judith E Glaser’s work on *Conversational Intelligence* (outlined in a later interview) that have a synergy with Annis’ ideas. Annis believes that both approaches complement one another. Glaser’s work is on language, whereas *Gender Intelligence* is focused on hardwiring differences, and how men and women communicate differently. Both approaches, however, share a common theme of *inclusiveness*. Whether it’s in how people converse or take action – the key message is that we can all learn to be accepting of other perspectives.

How can coaches help clients become gender intelligent

> *‘To be inclusive we need to value diversity of thought and embed that in the culture.’*

From a coaching standpoint, if a coach wants to help a client to gain more perspective about inclusive leadership, Annis believes they should start with a conversation around gender diversity and move away from a focus on quotas and numbers.

‘To be inclusive,’ she says, ‘we need to value diversity of thought and embed that in the culture.’ She continues, 'The one thing that a coach should be able to do is to coach people on authenticity. One of our clients in New York had been using an external team of 30 coaches for a number of years. The company went through gender intelligence training and then realised that their senior women were being coached to behave like men. I don’t think that’s what coaching is about - coaching women and men to fit in.’

Annis is critical of the prevalence of ‘formulaïc’ coaching. This is when coaches take a model they have learned or been trained in and use this indiscriminately. In her view, coaches need to let go of this ‘fit-in’ approach and unleash the real power of diversity. ‘That’s where the inclusion breakthrough will occur. People don’t want to put on a certain suit of armour and go to work. They want to bring their whole selves’.

As a leader or coach, we should empower both women and men to be their authentic self and take them through their own journey of enquiry. Both men and women can produce better results in all areas, and that’s what makes the competitive advantage in business. It appears that Gender Intelligence has the capability to impact positively on all aspects of our lives. How we are as parents, how we coach and mentor, how we lead, how we relate and how we behave in our relationships, and something we should value in its own right.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 10, July 2016.*

Using the power of conversation to transform culture

An interview with ***Judith E. Glaser****, Founder and CEO, Benchmark Communications Inc., about Conversational Intelligence, a concept she developed to help leaders enhance relationships and change organisational culture.*

Judith E. Glaser was an organisational anthropologist and one of the most pioneering and innovative change agents. She was an executive coach to Fortune 500 Companies, and the world's leading authority on Conversational Intelligence®, WE-centric Leadership, and Neuro-Innovation. She wrote a number of best-selling books including Conversational Intelligence: *How Great Leaders Build Trust* and *Get Extraordinary Results*. She sadly passed away in 2018.

www.creatingWE.com

'Words create worlds,' said Judith E Glaser, CEO of Benchmark Communications and author, when I spoke to her in 2016, before she passed away in 2018. Early life experiences combined with a career as an organisational anthropologist and consultant to Fortune 500 companies led Glaser to develop her best-known area of work, *Conversational Intelligence*[14].

As a child, Glaser was aware that some conversations lifted her up and made her feel good, while others left her feeling discouraged. This personal experience caused her to be curious about what made the difference. Neuroscience played a key role in her research, and using fMRI scanning, some of her findings showed that how we assess the capacity for effective conversations begins with facial expressions.

'It takes 0.07 seconds for our brain to work out if another person is listening to connect, or to judge, and that's before they have even spoken,' Glaser explained. 'If it's to judge, the speaker's amygdala (situated in the "primitive" brain) is activated, causing the "fight-flight" reaction. As a result, the individual's brain closes down and they are less likely to be open or share their thoughts. Conversely, if the listener's facial expression is open and trusting, the pre-frontal cortex (the area responsible for higher-level cognitive functions) of the speaker is stimulated and trust can be developed.'

> ***'It takes 0.07 seconds for our brain to work out if another person is listening to connect, or to judge, and that's before they have even spoken.'***

Levels of Conversational Intelligence

Glaser was keen to help coaches learn how to use the power of conversation to transform their clients' organisations and culture, a legacy that lives on through the consulting business her husband Richard D Glaser PhD, continues to lead. She said, 'Leaders need to learn how to develop conversational intelligence because they often confuse monologues with conversations. If coaches can help leaders become more self-aware that is of great value.'

Typically, there are three levels of conversational intelligence that create the capacity to take relationships to a deeper level:

Level 1 - Transactional

Listening to confirm what we already know.

Level 2 - Positional

Advocating our point of view or persuading others.

Level 3 - Transformational

Willingness to be influenced. At this level we are likely to ask questions for which we have no answer.

It is in the Level 3 type of conversation that Glaser believed co-creation is encouraged, because in this level both parties may move into new areas of thinking or develop innovative ideas. However, the environment they operate in, in addition to an individual's readiness for connection, can also influence their effectiveness.

Glaser described T. Gary Rogers as a role model in demonstrating Conversational Intelligence. Rogers was the former Chairman of Levi Strauss and Co, who acquired Dreyers Grand Ice Cream in California and built it into a billion-dollar business. 'He would walk into a room with team members who were a couple of levels lower than him, and in order to establish the right kind of contact with them, he would take off his jacket, loosen his tie; and he made sure that the tables they sat at were circular, not rectangular - he knew that hierarchy is so hard-wired in us, that it's hard to erase that and the round table removes the power position at the table.

'As humans we are similar to animals: you see dogs marking their territory, well it's just the same instinct for humans. We can't erase what our brain is doing, because it is hard wired, but we can learn to create the environment that mitigates against the unexpected consequences of activating other people's positional power instincts.'

Glaser continued 'Coaches and leaders need to help people understand that if you want to have a really good conversation, you need to take away internal barriers and threats, and learn how to design the environment to achieve the kind of results that you want. If your intention is good, you have got to create the right setting.'

Mapping another person's reality

Glaser also suggested that leaders should pay attention to how we interpret the actual words in a conversation. 'When two people are experiencing the same physical reality,' she said, 'they are interpreting it through the words used in the conversation.'

'Inside each of us, there are maps of what words mean and we carry those maps with us. Every time you hear a word – for example, "mother" - what comes up in your brain are all the mothers that you have known, whom you have synthesised into what "mother" means for you, not the person you are speaking to. If you grew up in a home where your mother was extremely caring, that's the mother you are going to think of, and that impacts the rest of the things you talk about.'

To guard against these assumptions Glaser encouraged leaders and coaches to 'double click' – that is, not automatically assuming that you know what the other person is thinking. 'When you ask a question, the answer is often surprising. So learning new things is very addictive, because surprise is read by the brain as a reward which reinforces the dopamine ("feel-good") circuitry. That's the simplicity of this work,' said Glaser. 'When leaders who were prone to do nothing but tell get a surprise, the dopamine reward will start to change their behaviour.'

Glaser further explained that Level 1 of Conversational Intelligence is about listening to understand, by taking what another has said, connecting this to what you already know, and confirming what you already know. This takes the focus back to you, with the risk of tuning out from what the other person is saying.

However, at Levels 2 and 3, the purpose of listening is to stay in the conversation with the other person in order to connect with what they are thinking. This means we need to slow down and be willing to listen for longer than usual, in order to connect at a different level. When you hear others say 'Ooh, that's what you meant, I had it all wrong,' then you know they have got it.

Moving from 'I' to 'WE'

Glaser's work also encourages leaders to move from an 'I' to a 'WE' perspective. She observed that we can get caught in the limbic brain, where positional conversations lead toward win-lose. By learning how to create a space that is much bigger, however, we can connect to new ideas instead of defending and confirming what we already know.

Former NFL player Fran Tarkenton in conversation with Judith E Glaser

Glaser also believed that in coaching we need to become more 'WE'-centric. For example, 'Most of the existing psychometric assessments and tools are "I"-centric – they help you understand yourself. But if we had assessments that helped us understand the "WE space", it would enable us to put our energies together in new ways to more fully to utilise what our brain was set up to do for us.'

Glaser was keen to see coaches becoming deeper, more patient observers of the nuances of the things that they see in their clients' worlds, and then take time to stop and explore these with their clients. 'When I was doing my studying many years ago,' she recalled, 'I had a professor who asked me to observe for six months and write down what I saw, and then she would respond to what I wrote. I could not believe how many judgements I had, in what I thought I was just seeing. I would love there to be a revolution in the coaching world where people slow down and capture what they are seeing; to allow their instinctive sensitivities to another human being to bubble up, and not be so trapped in the neo-cortex part of the brain. We need to be able to hold the space, otherwise we just let these observations breeze by because we did not know what was happening. I want us to know what these things are.'

She added: 'I have a list of amplifying questions that I give to clients that help them develop their discovery skills, innovation and thinking skills. I have my clients think about which of these questions is the most mesmerising for them, that they have never used, and why? And then live with that. If you focus on the tool, you give your client the questions and they get to use them. However, if you are really exploring, slowing things down and observing, you find out so much more about the inner world of that person'.

Summary

It was Glaser's hope that coaches become better at non-judging of their clients, as well as non-judging of themselves. She believed that utilising our natural instincts of listening to understand without judgement helps each of us become more human, tap into higher levels of creativity and innovation, and make the world a better place.

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 8, January 2016.*

From coaching the person to coaching the system

*Why coaching the organisation is the next evolution in coaching according to **Kaj Hellbom**, Co-Founder and Chairman, BCI Business Coaching Institute in Finland.*

Kaj Hellbom is the founder and chairman of the BCI Business Coaching Institute and a renowned expert on coaching and leadership. Hellbom and BCI provide professional coach training for individuals and development services for companies. He has been central in building up the coaching industry in Finland and in Northern Europe. Hellbom served as the president of the first coaching association in Finland. He is also a Coach Trainer and an activist in the International Coach Federation (ICF) having been president of ICF Nordic and a member of the ICF global board.

http://www.bci.fi/english/

There's been a natural evolution in coaching over the past few years, according to Kaj Hellbom, co-founder of BCI Business Coaching Institute in Helsinki and a practising coach for over twenty years. Coaching has developed from one-to-one coaching, through group coaching, and team coaching, to its latest application, organisational coaching. Here, all the earlier forms of coaching are used in a wider setting. 'It's the next step in the development and evolution of coaching,' says Hellbom.

Hellbom's career has been mainly in executive education at Helsinki's business school; and this is where in the early 2000s he first became interested in coaching. Hellbom was subsequently part of a group who introduced coaching to Finland, establishing the Finnish Coaching Federation in 2004 and becoming its first president.

He recalls 'When we started the Federation, we realised it was important to make sure that we had well-qualified coaches in Finland, so along with a colleague, we also started a coach training business, BCI Business Coaching Institute. Over the last fifteen years it has become an ICF accredited school and we have trained thousands of coaches in Finland.'

Organisational Coaching

When Hellbom started working in companies in Finland, he began with individual coaching of the leaders. Soon he recognised that it was no use developing individuals if nothing positive changed for the organisation around them. So Hellbom and his colleagues began to focus more on how to help move the entire culture in a positive direction. As someone who was interested in positive psychology and organisational development (OD), Hellbom found that both concepts worked along the same lines as coaching. This led him to think that perhaps there was an alternative description which included both disciplines, which would be *organisational coaching.*

'Organisational coaching combines organisational development with a coaching mindset.'

'If you want to help create a sustainable organisation and it's not going to be dependent on you as an outside consultant, you need to create a self-governing organisation,' Hellbom reflects. 'And in traditional OD sometimes you end up creating dependencies with the organisation that you're developing, so that you can sell more business in the future. However, organisational coaching combines *organisational development with a coaching mindset.*'

Hellbom's focus on organisational coaching encompasses the concept of *positive deviance*, a strengths-based approach that first appeared in the 1970s, based on observations that in any community there are people whose uncommon but successful behaviours enable them to find better solutions to problems than their peers are able to. He quotes examples from developing countries, from the book *The Power of Positive Deviance*[15], where a lot of major interventions have been undertaken with the goal of creating a sustainable result that includes the ability of an organisation to develop itself in the future.

There are also examples of this approach from the Ross Business School at the University of Michigan, which has a positive psychology research group led by Professor Robert Quinn. Quinn's team took on a project working with the leadership team from a large US hospital that had a range of problems including poor customer satisfaction, challenges with recruiting staff, and a negative culture. Professor Quinn and his group started from the premise that there is always *positive deviance* in every organisation. Even if all appears bad, the group believes that somewhere within the organisation, something will be working well.

So the group went into the hospital and started to look for examples of this 'positive deviance'. Sure enough, they found a

small department where in contrast to the issues described above, everything was working well: there was a successful recruitment process, high customer satisfaction, and a supportive culture. From here the team modelled this deviance and in making things visible, they were able to teach the other departments in the hospital how they, too, could operate in a different way.

Quinn and his team were called in by the leadership team of the hospital because they were really concerned about the overall performance of the entire organisation. They were aware that the resources Quinn's team brought to the problem were far wider than pure coaching skills, and they also knew that Quinn's team had experience of working with top-level executives and handling large-scale organisational challenges.

When Hellbom recounted this example of organisational coaching, he explained that those using this approach had additional skills to those developed in 'traditional coach training'.

'Any individual providing organisational coaching needs to have a systemic approach and understanding of organisational change, as well as having worked in large organisations before because this brings an understanding of organisational dynamics, for example the power games and tensions that often exist with the entire system.' In addition, Hellbom suggests that a grounding in social psychology is vital for the coach in order that they understand the system dynamics.

Whilst this may appear like a long shopping list of knowledge and experience, the *organisational coaching* approach does not necessarily exclude newer or younger coaches. Hellbom is more concerned that a coach using this approach has the ability to think systemically and not be hidebound by fixed paradigms or norms.

'It's young people who represent the future and have ideas that will become the general ideas in the future. So, I think in in every sort of change process, you absolutely have to have involve and include thinking from people of all ages.'

Getting started with organisational coaching

In order to introduce an organisational coaching process, Hellbom believes it begins with the securing executive level support, a key step similar to that outlined by Tiffany Gaskell in the earlier interview on coaching culture.

Securing this executive-level commitment to the coaching helps to ensure support to develop the internal coaching capacity in the organisation. This in turn means that the organisation can start to coach itself.

However, it does mean that if top-level leaders are asked to 'walk their talk', they have to show through their behaviour that they are committed. If this does not happen, any change is less likely to be sustainable, nor will the change move in a positive direction.

'With top level executives,' says Hellbom, 'we always have the challenge that they have a lot at stake and have often been fighting through their careers to reach these positions. This means they are not often very keen to take risks like these. That's why top leaders often like to use traditional consultants because they can always blame consultants when things don't work. And that's a game that we don't want to get involved in when we do organisational coaching. We need managers who really take responsibility for the changes they want to make.'

Often it comes down to money and the amount of financial investment a company is willing to make, which means that organisational coaching has to show a strong return on investment in terms of key performance indicators within the business. When the coaching intervention is able to connect directly to these measures it is a much easier sell.

Organisational coaching seems to have been well received in Finnish companies, perhaps because of their existing structures, which are fairly flat.

'The concept of organisational coaching is developing, at least in Finland,' he says. 'Many companies already have a good awareness about business coaching and a systemic approach to change. I would say that the Northern European and Nordic countries are really leading the way, because the culture tends to be flatter and more egalitarian in our organisations, which is a better starting point.'

As organisations and coaching evolve, coaches in turn will need to adapt where they focus their attention, and bring a wider range of skills to their interventions. To Hellbom it seems only a matter of time until other training organisations begin to develop coaches in this approach.

Section 3

Executive coaching mastery

Think courage, not risk

*Talking to **Marshall Goldsmith**, executive coach and world-renowned business educator about how risk influences coaches, their clients and the coaching profession.*

Marshall Goldsmith is an executive educator, coach and author. His work has been recognised by almost every professional association and publication in his field. Marshall is one of a select few executive advisors who have been asked to work with over 150 major CEOs and their management teams. His coaching process is currently being used by thousands of internal and external coaches around the world. His books have sold over two million copies and his articles, blogs or videos have been read or viewed tens of millions of times.

https://www.marshallgoldsmith.com

'Most coaches tend to be risk-averse.' That's the view of Marshall Goldsmith, world-renowned business educator and coach. His singular ability to help top leaders improve performance has inspired over 150 global CEOs and their management teams to address change in the workplace. And as a result of their being risk-averse, Goldsmith believes that some coaches end up taking on clients who may not be committed to the coaching process, which damages the reputation of the coach, as well as that of the coaching profession.

Goldsmith believes that if coaches were more entrepreneurial and willing to be paid on results, rather than time spent with their client, they would make a lot more money. 'Most coaches have zero measure of results other than *amount of time spent with the client* and *my client likes me*,' he says. When you begin to focus on results you take a risk - because your client may not achieve these. And even if you don't decide to get paid by results but just start to measure results, this is still a risk because if you *measure*, you can end up documenting failure. Most coaches are deathly afraid of measurement,' he contends, 'but if you don't measure you can pretend success. You can come up with anecdotal stories to justify your success.'

> ***'Instead of looking inwardly and saying you are going to get better because of me, I tell clients you are going to get better because of you. I facilitate the process of change.'***

Goldsmith's approach to working with clients could be seen as risky. Goldsmith only gets paid on results, and these are measured by evidence of positive, long-term change in the client's leadership behaviour, as measured by key stakeholders. This approach turns the traditional view of a coaching relationship on its head, because now the coach does not make the financial case with the client: it is the client who makes the financial case with the coach.

Goldsmith adds 'Instead of looking inwardly and saying you are going to get better because of me, I tell them you are going to get better *because of you*. I facilitate the process of change.'

The importance of client selection

This might seem like a high-risk approach for many, but not for Marshall Goldsmith. He has operated like this since he started out as a coach. And one of the things he learned early on was the importance of working with the right clients.

'I only trust myself to get results if I work with the right clients. For example, the client I worked with that changed the most, was the person I spent the least amount of time with. It was Alan Mulally, who was CEO of the Ford Motor Company, and at the time was CEO of the Year in the United States and listed in *Fortune* magazine as the third-greatest leader in the world. Alan improved more than anyone I ever coached, and I spent the least amount of time with him. I explained how it worked and he understood the process and he did it. Not only did he get better, but 200 of his people also got better.' That experience taught Goldsmith two lessons:

Lesson 1 – Your biggest challenge as a coach is called *customer selection*. If you pick the right customer, your coaching process will always work. If you pick the wrong customer, your coaching process will never work.

Lesson 2 – Never make the coaching process about your own ego and how smart you are. Make it about the great people you work with and how hard they work and how proud you are of them.

It's the opposite of what many people teach about coaching, where the orthodox view is that the coach is the most important variable. In Goldsmith's view, however, the most important variable is the *person being coached*.

The key ingredient for the coach in client selection, is *courage*. That is, the courage to believe in yourself and your capabilities as a coach, and the courage to say No to clients who don't care. It's only a risk to get paid on results if you don't have 100% belief in your own capabilities and 100% belief in your client.

I challenged Marshall to consider that many coaches might find this difficult to do. His response was: 'This issue is not about money; it is about courage – do you have the nerve to do it or not? It is not a function of age or experience because courage can be developed over time. There is a definite risk to this approach as there is no guarantee that I will get paid, so I do take a risk. However, the risk assessment is my own. If I think the client is a bad risk, then I should not be working with them.'

Understanding your value

As a young man, Marshall learned the importance of understanding your value. He was brought up in Valley Station, Kentucky and his family were poor. He recalls, 'There was a hole in the roof of our house, and we had to get it fixed. My father hired a man named Dennis Mudd to help us put on the roof. Because we did not have much money, I had to help Dennis Mudd put on the roof. I didn't know anything about roofs, but he trained me to help him.

'It was hard work and it was hot, but Dennis Mudd was very serious, and he wanted to do a very good roof and he wanted everything to be just right. So, I worked with Dennis and we built the roof. When the roof was finished, I was very proud.

'Dennis looked at my father and asked him to inspect the roof. He told my father "If the roof is of high quality, please pay me. If the roof is not of high quality, it is free." Dennis Mudd was poor and needed the money, but he believed in payment on results.'

This was key moment in Goldsmith's life because it was when he decided 'I want to be like Dennis Mudd when I grow up.' Goldsmith realised that while Mudd may have been poor, he had class. He understood, too, that Dennis Mudd was taking the biggest risk of all, because he needed the money. It was this experience that taught Marshall a powerful lesson about risk-taking and courage.

Minimising risk

Careful client selection and knowing your value are key in enabling a coach to minimise some of the risks they may face when taking on a new commission.

When Goldsmith takes on a new client, he works to engage stakeholders in the process from day one. If he works with a CEO, then the board have to agree what is to be focused on. Similarly, if it is a leader lower down the organisation, then the CEO has to agree which measures are important. This process ensures that stakeholders are part of the process of evaluating results in the longer term.

Goldsmith's criteria for working with a client include:

- The issue must be behavioural - not intellectual, technical or functional.
- The person has to be willing to try.
- They have to be given a fair chance.

There are also some considerations that help Goldsmith reduce the risk of not getting a positive result:

- Never coach integrity problems. You don't coach a lack of integrity – you *fire* a lack of integrity.
- Don't coach people who don't care, and don't coach people who have been written off by the company. Sometimes a company hires a coach to work with one of those people. But everyone knows they are not going to get better – it's just a seek-and-destroy activity.
- If you are a behavioural coach, don't provide coaching on technical areas because you can't turn a bad engineer into a good engineer, or a bad scientist into a good scientist.
- Only provide coaching where you have expertise to provide coaching. Most coaches know nothing about strategy - so don't get into strategy.

As a coach you are in a good position to assess the motivation of the potential client. Goldsmith's approach is all about making sure that the client is truly committed to the coaching process at the outset. Otherwise it will be difficult to trust that they have the ability to change, which in turn will undermine your planned measurement of success.

Marshall Goldsmith has trained thousands of people around the world to be coaches using his stakeholder-centred methodology. And throughout the training he emphasises that the key to effective coaching is the customer, not the coach. One of the things that Marshall Goldsmith is particularly proud of is that he came up with the idea of coaching successful people, rather than using coaching to fix problems. The extensive number of Google references to Marshall Goldsmith in relation to 'coaching successful people' are evidence of this.

Organisational attitude to risk

Our conversation then moved to the subject of risk from an organisational perspective. I was curious to know how Marshall, whose best-selling books, including *What Got You Here, Won't Get You There* and *Triggers*[16], viewed the role that risk plays within organisations that are involved in selecting coaches. As selection becomes more commoditised and price sensitive, this has the potential to dumb down the value of coaching across a business.

As I expected, his view was clear: 'It's generally purchasing or HR that are more risk-averse – because they measure hours worked, rather than behavioural change. At the end of the day it depends on who you talk to. Line managers are quite comfortable with risk because they are used to risk. Also, when I work with CEO's they understand risk because they take risks every day; I have not found any CEO who does not like my *pay for results* approach. It is because they think that way anyway. They have a bottom line to focus on, stock prices and a board of directors, so they know what it's like to get measured.'

I then expanded the topic to the coaching profession and what Goldsmith considered future risks would be. Goldsmith believes that the risks are already being played out now, because there are too many coaches. This means that some individuals are prepared to work for very little, which damages the reputation of the profession. Nor does he expect this to change in the short term. 'I'd suggest if you want to be in the coaching field, take the high road, not the low road,' he says. "Get a good education, coach high-level people, get paid for results.'

Goldsmith also believes that coaches need to stop talking about themselves and begin talking about their clients instead. He is proud that he can give you the names of every one of his clients. He says, 'Many coaches say they can't give me the names of their clients. Why is it a secret? I only trust myself to get results if I work with the right clients, so a coach needs to consider who is the right client for them.'

I then asked Goldsmith what he thinks the professional coaching bodies can do to address the supply-versus-demand issue in the future. Goldsmith was sceptical about the degree to which the coaching bodies will change. He believes that these bodies are also part of the problem because professional bodies have vested interests which preclude them from taking too many risks. 'Professional bodies generate revenue from training and accrediting processes and as long as people have money to spend, they are unlikely to change in the short term,' he believes.

Goldsmith's final comments were pragmatic and recognised that not all coaches may be confident enough to adopt this approach immediately. He suggests: 'If coaches want to adopt this approach, they should try it with one or two clients. Explain to your client that you really believe in them, and that you won't get paid if they don't get better. If you truly believe in the value of your coaching, and your client's capacity to change, then it's a no-brainer.'

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 5, April 2015.*

Coaching leaders in the social change sector

*Some of the most important gifts that a coach can bring to a leader are non-judgemental attention, presence and deep listening, says **Dr Robert Gass**, co-founder of The Rockwood Leadership Institute and The Social Transformation Project.*

Dr Robert Gass is formerly a coach and consultant to CEOs of global corporations. He is currently dedicated to leadership development and movement building for social change. Co-founder of the Rockwood Leadership Institute and the Social Transformation Project, Robert works with several global environmental, social justice and human rights groups, as well as having been executive coach for six years to the Obama White House. He also trains coaches and consultants in a transformational approach to change.

www.robertgass.com

Most leaders feel isolated. As their level of responsibility grows, there are fewer and fewer people in whom they can confide. It follows that some of the most important gifts that coaches can bring to leaders are non-judgemental attention, presence and deep listening. This oasis from the daily onrush of events and the companionship in self-reflection can often be enough to help a leader find a way forward with the issues they may be facing.

This is a core part of Robert Gass' transformational approach to working with leaders, in which the most important job of a coach is to help leaders deepen into their own sense of power and agency so that they can generate and implement their own solutions to the challenges they face.

For the past twenty years, Dr Gass has dedicated his work to supporting social change leaders, their organisations and movements. In Gass' experience, most social change leaders naturally orient towards the strategies they believe will best address the pressing needs of injustice, economic inequality, climate and human rights. What these passionate and committed leaders are less likely to focus on, however, is how their own behaviour and that of their colleagues may be one of the major barriers to their success.

Gass co-founded the Rockwood Leadership Institute in 2000 with an aim to help leaders understand that who you are affects the results you get in the world – that, in the words of Mahatma Gandhi, to change the world, we have to be the change we want to see. As great leaders have always demonstrated, we need to lead with vision and hope rather than fear and anger. And importantly, successful social change demands collaborative skills even more than individual performance.

At the time the Institute was founded, any type of psychological or spiritual work was often viewed with indifference or suspicion in the USA. Not only did the Rockwood Leadership Institute pioneer making this approach acceptable, but it is now also one of the most respected places for training social change leaders in the USA, with over 8000 graduates. In recent years, Gass has also begun demonstrating the power of this approach globally, with social change leaders from over twenty countries having participated in his programmes.

While the heart of this work with leaders has been focused on training and individual coaching, Gass and his partner Jodie Tonita have also recognised the powerful opportunity to leverage the relationships and shared approaches among these trained leaders so as to build stronger social movements. Gass and Tonita later launched a second non-government organisation, the Social Transformation Project, with the aim of building collaboration within and between the social movements in the USA. The Project now works in close partnership with Rockwood, building networks of influential leaders across all the broad social groupings to raise the collective impact of the social change sector in the United States.

The success of both the Rockwood Leadership Institute programmes and the Social Transformation Project has helped to create great demand among leaders for bringing this transformational work back within their organisations: to link up the inner work (working on oneself) with the outer work (the focus of the organisation). Gass has trained over 300 consultants and coaches in his 'Art of Transformational Consulting' programme, whose alumni have formed a network and online community of practice. 'We have been reshaping the notion of consultants and coaches as simply vendors who supply whatever clients want, to seeing ourselves as the healers, shamans and midwives with our own vision and agenda to create more powerful leaders, organisations and movements for social change.'

A transformational approach

Many well-intentioned change efforts fail. For example, gym memberships double in January, but, as New Year's resolutions fade, numbers return to normal by March. Similarly, research by management consultants McKinsey has shown that 70% of organisational change efforts fail. And it is likely that failure rates of social change efforts will be even higher.

'Trying to change behaviour usually fails if you don't look at what drives that behaviour.'

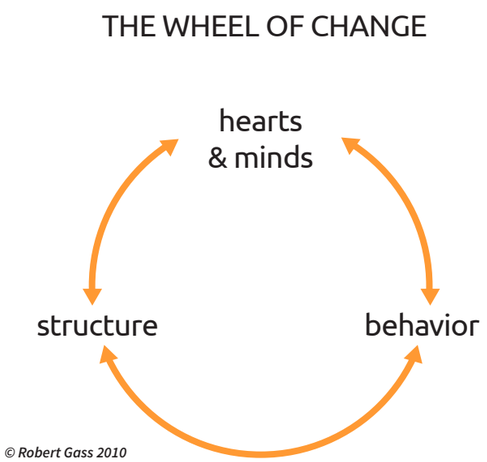
Gass promotes a transformational approach to change that strives to address one of the primary causes of these failures: the lack of a truly systemic approach. 'Individuals, organisations and societies are systems, but most change efforts focus on one aspect of a system. While the change effort pushes on this one variable, we often see what looks like change begin to happen; an individual we're coaching begins to try a new behaviour; a team begins to communicate better. But the thing we're seeking to change is usually connected to a larger system, and systems to tend towards maintaining a homeostasis. That is, once the effort to change relaxes, other elements in the system that are intimately connected to this change begin, like a stretched rubber band, to pull back the system to its original shape. The elements of systems are interconnected and interdependent. To create change, we must attend to all the key elements that impact the desired change.'

Gass trains leaders and also their coaches and consultants in a very simple model, *The Wheel of Change*. This asserts that in order to change anything that involves human beings – whether it be a change in an individual, team, organisation, or society – we must attend to three dimensions of that system:

Hearts & Minds: all that goes on inside people; their motivations, beliefs, emotions and perceptions.

Behavior: all the choices that people make to act or not act.

Structure: the external world in which people inhabit; the structures, processes and rules that so greatly impact on both people's 'Hearts & Minds' and 'Behavior'.



Many coaches and consultants tend naturally to orient more towards one of these domains, but The Wheel of Change invites and challenges change agents to ensure that they attend to each of them. 'In working with people, we engage with their belief systems, what they feel, their dreams and aspirations, the meaning they make and how they construct their own internal reality. Using transformative tools, it is often possible to help create real breakthroughs in the domain of *Hearts & Minds*.

'But helping to shift *Hearts & Minds* is usually not enough. Out of our inner reality, we make choices about how to act and not to act, about what to say and not to say. Trying to change *Behavior* without looking at what drives that behaviour usually fails. But, conversely, unless our discoveries in how we think and feel are translated into new behaviour, our world does not change.

'We see the same phenomenon when trying to make changes in the structures of our lives. Many change efforts seek to make shifts in external reality: to improve performance by reorganising reporting relationships, to change individual behaviour by creating new work processes or scheduling, and so on. But attempts to make these external changes are stymied again and again by failing to address the inner life and behaviour of the human beings that have to implement and interact with the external changes. Then, it is equally the case that the *Structures* in which we live have huge impact on our inner life and behavior. Trying to coach people without helping to address the structures of their lives is usually but a partial solution to their needs.'

Non-profits vs. for-profits

With regard to coaching, while the tools used by the coach are similar regardless of environment, Gass emphasises the critical need to be appreciative and understanding of the culture and context in which coaches work.

Having served equally in both worlds, Gass has observed that there is much that non-profit and corporate leaders can learn from one another. Business leaders, if they're successful, know how to get things done. The need to make profit and the ever-present threat of competition demand disciplined performance and innovation. If they fail to perform, companies die. But many businesses and those who work in them lack a sense of purpose beyond profit; they lack social contribution and personal meaning. Furthermore, large corporate systems can generate a sense of powerlessness in those who work there; they are bureaucracies where individuals lose their sense of agency and become too accepting of and obedient to authority.

By contrast, most non-profits have very clear and meaningful purpose, and those who work in them are quite often passionate about what they are doing. However, the income of non-profits – derived from grants and contributions – often bears little connection to the actual results they create, resulting in little useful economic incentive to drive performance. While most people in non-profits work extremely hard, their activity is not necessarily well-targeted or efficient. And unlike employees in large corporations, many social change activists, whose external work is all about challenging authority, often have trouble both wielding and accepting leadership inside their own organisations.

Coaching in the social change sector

For coaches wishing to support leaders and organisations working on our most pressing social issues, Gass urges involvement. He says: 'You can make a difference. Your gifts and experience are very much needed. Along with the obvious needs to help build strength and capacity, many non-profits are needing to learn how better to collaborate with both business and government in tackling issues such as economic development, human rights and climate change. Your experience in these sectors can position you to be a bridge in supporting more effective partnerships.'

But having mentored many coaches from the corporate world seeking to offer their services to non-profits, Gass stresses that coaches should be prepared to learn about how to be effective in this radically different environment.

A. Understanding what drives non-profit leaders

The normal pressures that all people experience tend to be magnified for leaders because their successes and failures play out on a public stage and can have an impact on so many people. While in business there's the relentless pressure of needing to make a profit, in the social change sector leaders feel immense pressure from the needs of the communities and missions they serve. This pressure is what causes so many activists to try continually to do more than they can realistically achieve in a sustainable manner. To be of use to social change leaders, a coach must be able to empathise with the way in which their clients wake up every day feeling the pain of their refugee community, for example, or the looming threat of climate change.

B. Being aware of limited resources

One of the first shocks to corporate coaches coming to work with non-profits is the relative scarcity of resources. 'Most non-profits are already trying to do way too much with too few resources,' says Gass. 'Being so mission-driven, their resource priority is always their service or campaign. A social change client may not have an executive assistant or chiefs of staff to whom to delegate tasks. Corporate coaches will probably need to let go of corporate-world assumptions about the degree of tech support, materials, travel budgets and overall organisational capacity. Those coming from for-profit environments run the risk of seeming naïve or impractical, with recommendations not well-attuned to non-profit realities. (But at the same time – coaches should be prepared to be inspired by how hard activists work in service of their mission).'

Gass warns coaches: 'In contracting with non-profit clients, be careful not to fall into their own pattern of setting unrealistic expectations of what can be achieved with what resources. (Or be willing to donate lots of free time to make up the difference).

'In hearing non-profit leaders talk about limitations, coaches with a transformational approach may err by assuming that the main problem is limiting beliefs or lack of imagination rather than real limitations and unacceptable trade-offs. These limitations are on the one hand real, but it will also be the opportunity and the gift of coaches with for-profit experience to be able to mindfully challenge the self-limiting mindsets that actually are prevalent among NGO leaders and their organisational cultures.'

C. Engaging with cultures of urgency

According to the decision matrix of post-war US President Dwight D. Eisenhower, most social change organisations spend most of their time fighting fires with deadline-driven campaign work in **Quadrant 1** (*Important and Urgent*). While the need for coaching and capacity-building may be apparent, the necessary time and attention can easily get lost in the intensity and urgency of non-profit work. Gass suggests that part of a coach's role will be to keep making the case for **Quadrant 2** work (*Important but not Urgent*). Coaches need to continually remind people that part of the reason they are getting stuck in 'Urgency' is a lack of investment in visioning, planning, capacity-building, relationship-building, evaluation and leadership development (including coaching).

D. Calling out unsustainable ways of working

In Gass' training programmes, probably the greatest complaints from social change leaders are overwork, stress and burnout. When Gass began working with activists decades ago, people would talk about how exhausted and burnt out they were – almost as a badge of honour to show they cared. Gass found that simply making the case for better work-life balance was insufficient motivation to get people to change. Activists were too ready to sacrifice their own well-being for the causes they believed in. It was only when he began to talk about balance (or 'personal ecology' as his training calls it) as a *performance* issue that people began to listen. Stress, lack of sleep, overwork – all these reduce the quality of strategic thinking and lead to frantic activity that may or may not yield results. Teamwork goes down. People become emotionally reactive and un-resilient. Gass reminds leaders that their issues are not going to be solved today, and they must model training for marathons rather than trying continually to run sprints year after year.

He suggests 'This is an area where social change clients can really use a coach's help to shift their beliefs about balance, create a vision for change, and change the behaviours and structures that promote overwork in which social change leaders habitually operate. But, as a coach, also understand how deeply embedded these attitudes and habits are in most non-profit cultures. Be compassionate and patient… yet persistent in addressing them.'

Coaching leaders in the social change sector
Dr Robert Gass

E. Acknowledging the need

While many businesses can fulfil their missions with the resources within their organisations, this is not the case with most social change organisations, where the challenges are huge: poverty, climate, injustice, hunger. And most non-profits are relatively small, competing with other organisations for limited and inadequate resources. What's required is collaboration – and lots of it. Ideally, organisations working on the same issues would synchronise strategies and pool resources. Non-profits need to learn to partner, when appropriate, with business and governments. It would be even more important for non-profits to learn to collaborate across the usual silos that separate social change missions, as many issues are inter-related. Climate change, for example, will not be solved while economic injustice drives unsustainable development; immigration will not be solved while violence continues to drive whole populations from their homes.

Building collaboration is classic 'Quadrant 2' work, and as such rarely gets prioritised if measured against its actual importance to the success of mission; collaboration skills tend to be under-developed among activists; and even when leaders have the skills, appetite and desire to collaborate, they are usually torn between what it takes to run their own organisation and the time and energy needed to build successful external partnerships. There is a potentially valuable role for coaches and consultants in helping to advocate the value of collaboration, support the development of these skills, and help to make and nurture connections with potential partners.

F. Recognising the lack of training and development for leaders

Gass reminds coaches that they need to be aware that non-profit leaders often have had considerably less training, mentoring and investment in their development than their for-profit counterparts. 'Their learning has more often than not come from being thrown into situations and succeeding purely by innate intelligence, sheer will and perseverance. Be prepared to offer more teaching and training in basic skills to many non-profit clients. They will most likely be deeply appreciative, as they are usually aware of their limited formal leadership and management training.

G. Managing the issue of money and coaching in the non-profit world

To state the obvious, for-profit organisations pay more. Most non-profits are financially stretched, chronically trying to do too much with too few resources to meet the critical needs of their mission. Coaching may seem like a luxury, and funders are often more interested in donating money to visible programmes and services than to capacity-building. Gass notes that many of the corporate coaches he knows use a 'Robin Hood' approach: charging for-profit clients higher rates, thus allowing them to charge non-profits on a sliding scale or even offering *pro bono* services.

A three-stage process

Because leaders in the social change sector face so many immediate problems, it can be tempting to jump right in with solutions. In Gass' training for coaches and consultants, the approach is 'more about teaching leaders to fish rather than providing fish dinners.' In other words, while problem-solving is obviously important, he believes that the greater gift of a coach is to support leaders by helping them both to solve the immediate problem, and at the same time learn to develop their power and confidence to carry forward into the future.

Gass' transformational approach to coaching is a three-stage process:

Stage 1. Attending

First and most important: 'Before we start focusing on solutions, we begin with the simple yet profound gift of deeply paying attention to another person.' Being listened to, Gass believes, is one of the most basic human needs. 'Before anything else, your first job is to really be with them. Leaders are isolated – there are few if any people with whom it is completely safe to be fully transparent, people who have no other agenda than the other person's well-being. Your presence, empathy and compassion have tremendous power. In our rush to fix things, we often skip this part. If we do, we may fail to build needed rapport and trust, our solutions may not be right, or even if they are the client may not feel sufficient ownership of them. We may have created unwanted dependency rather than helping to empower and grow the capacity of our client. A surprising percentage of the time, our being fully present is actually all that the client needs. In the quiet space created by your deep listening, the person often can more fully access their own inner wisdom and life experience, then solve their own problem. What a gift!'

Stage 2. Shifting

At other times, more is needed. 'Sometimes your client's sense of agency, their mental clarity, their ability to access their inner wisdom, is occluded. Now is when it becomes tempting for a coach to come in with a solution, to tell them what they need to see or do. We suggest that the coach's job here is actually to assist the client in finding their own sense of power, their clarity and their own wisdom. There is a wide range of transformational coaching tools to help people get centred, get clear, deal with emotional triggers that may be in the way of their inner power, to calm the waters of the mind and to unpack self-limiting beliefs. When this has been successful, you no longer have a client dependent on the coach for solutions, but rather the client experiences being resourceful, finding pathways they can later revisit to access their own inner power.'

Stage 3. Planning

In transformational coaching, only now do coaches do what some believe is their main job: planning and problem-solving.

'If we have actually successfully done the first two stages, this part is often surprisingly easy. The full intelligence and power of the client is now available to meet the particular challenge of the moment. As coach, you have an empowered partner with whom to co-create. And most importantly, your client comes away from the interaction with not only a solution to a particular problem but also with greater leadership capacity and faith in themselves.'

Summary

Gass believes that along with their experience and technical skills, the greatest capacities of both coaches and leaders are their own state of being, their own qualities of authentic power, their presence, their mental clarity, and access to their own inner wisdom. At our best, it's as if we become a walking agent of transformation. None of us lives in this state every hour of every day, but with dedicated commitment to our own spiritual, emotional, psychological and professional development, we can grow greater capacity to show up more of the time in what Gass calls our 'zone of leadership.'

'I think both coaches and leaders are privileged to have jobs that serve others and ask us every day to wake up. For so many people, the need to make money requires work that at best is uninspiring, and at worst is mind-numbing, toxic or spirit-killing. Coaches have the opportunity to do work that not only has the possibility of providing a sense of meaning, but actually asks them to learn and grow. To be a great coach, you are invited to be present, to access your compassion and your inner wisdom, and to come more fully alive. What an opportunity!'

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 18, July 2018.*

Paying attention to your heart makes intuitive sense

***Deborah Rozman** PhD, President and co-CEO, HeartMath, explains how the heart is intimately involved in how we think, feel and make choices.*

Deborah Rozman PhD is President and co-CEO of HeartMath Inc, and a key spokesperson for HeartMath and the HeartMath System around the world. Along with helping develop, oversee and conduct HeartMath training programmes since their inception in 1991, she has 30 years of experience as an entrepreneur, business executive and educator. She is author of over twelve books, including the award-winning *Meditating with Children*, and has co-authored the five-book 'Transforming' Series with HeartMath founder Doc Childre, and *Heart Intelligence: Connecting with the Intuitive Guidance of the Heart*. If interested in HeartMath programmes, visit

https://www.heartmath.com/programs/

Whether you are aware of it or not, the heart has its own complex nervous system known as the heart-brain, which directly affects mental and physical performance. Many published research studies and hundreds of client results confirm that when people learn how to align the electrical activity in their brain, heart, and nervous system, they have more access to their higher capacities, which are the key to fully maximising potential.

As a result of their research in this area since 1991, HeartMath Institute has developed a set of science-based tools and technology designed to measurably improve decision-making, resilience, performance, health and productivity, and emotional well-being, and dramatically reduce harmful stress.

Deborah Rozman, PhD, a behavioural psychologist, initially became interested in finding out more about the heart when she realised that metaphors of the heart – such as 'put your heart into it', or 'listen to your heart for an answer' – are not merely figures of speech. Rozman found that one of her most successful techniques was to get a client's heart talking to their head, and vice versa.

'It was like two different people,' she says. 'I would have them go back and forth until the two came together with an "Aha!" – this is when they would get intuition or insight.' Then she met Doc Childre, founder of HeartMath, who referred to the *intelligence of the heart*. 'I knew he was talking about something real, because I had validated it, and when he said he wanted to start an institute to research the underlying physiology of heart intelligence, I was ready.'

Rozman also recognised the need for business executives and coaches to understand more about these ideas. She encountered many stressed leaders looking to improve their health as well as optimise their own performance and that of their employees. Rozman knew that 'listening to your heart' was not a message that would sit comfortably with these people. However, now that she had a large body of research to support the importance both of listening to the heart, and also of learning to distinguish between the mind's opinions and the heart's intuitive discernment, she found corporate executives eager to take on the HeartMath methodology.

Rozman explains, 'When we are triggered by a stressful situation, our heart rate rhythm is often irregular and scattered. The heart sends the pattern of this rhythm to the brain, which triggers a stress response. In fact, the heart communicates to the brain through several pathways. One of these pathways is to the *amygdala*, where we store our emotional histories. One of the main functions of the brain is pattern-matching, and when it receives the scattered or incoherent heart rhythm signals, this pattern triggers the memory of previous stress responses. The heart rhythm has different patterns for anxiety, for anger, or for love. The amygdala responds based on a previous memory related to the emotion. It creates a closed-loop response and that soon becomes familiar, creating for example an anxiety habit.

'Unmanaged stress responses like anxiety, frustration, or anger cause fatigue. We feel drained, and start to have a sour view of others or of life. The empowering news is that we can learn to shift the pattern of the heart rhythm right in the moment to a more balanced rhythm. Then the amygdala does not throw up the stress memory.' If we can activate compassion, or care, or love instead, Rozman explains, '...this creates a smooth *sine-wave* or *coherent heart rhythm* that bypasses the stored stress memories and can broaden our perception and thinking as well as activating our intuition. Practising heart rhythm coherence techniques creates more ease and flow in our interactions and creativity in our work and life.'

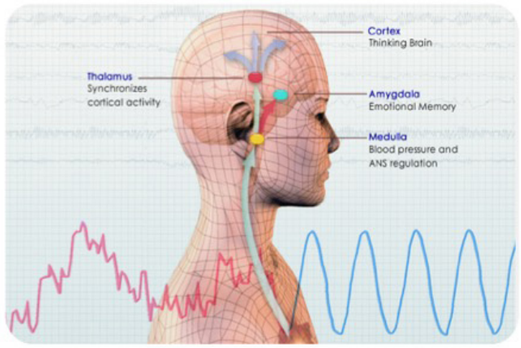
Sine-wave: a curve which shows a consistent pattern of oscillation.

Flow states: complete absorption in an activity (usually pleasurable), which promotes greater creativity.

Getting in sync

Heart signals affect the various brain centres involved in emotional perception, decision-making, reaction times, social awareness, and the ability to self-regulate. The heart has its own '...intrinsic nervous system of neurons that can sense, feel, learn and remember – its own heart-brain that is independent from the brain in the head. When the heart and head brains are in sync, that's when we have access to *flow states*.'

Deborah adds, 'With the heart rhythm coherence technology now available, such as the emWave device or Inner Balance app, it is possible to actually observe this. People can see in real time their heart rhythm pattern change when they shift from frustration to compassion. Assessments show they can achieve measurable results in improved health and performance in just six weeks of practising HeartMath techniques.'



© HeartMath Institute

Connecting heart science with other approaches

It seemed to me from this explanation that there is a strong correlation between heart rhythm coherence and some other popular stress management approaches such as yoga and mindfulness that are promoted by coaches. Rozman confirmed that success in these other forms of relaxation correlates well with how well your heart and brain are in sync. For example, if you are coaching your client and you are present, but not 'really present' because your subconscious is processing something else, it's unlikely you will be operating at your best. And if you were hooked up to a heart rhythm monitor, you would see you weren't in a coherent rhythm.

> *'We are all key influencers and can facilitate others to achieve higher potential and be who we truly are by bringing the heart back into the workplace, the home, the school, and in life generally.'*

Rozman believes that HeartMath importantly provides significant science behind the range of embodiment approaches, and helping clients understand how being 'in sync' with their heart is likely to help them be more effective and is therefore of great value. Becoming more aware of the heart-brain connection helps coaches activate their own intuition when working with clients, as well as helping their clients to raise their own awareness.

Rozman's parting message was a call to action for coaches and leaders. 'More and more we are experiencing connectedness across the globe, and by paying attention to heart intelligence, we will add more intuition and value to that connectedness. Understanding heart intelligence will inform the next level of human evolution, because it's when the heart is left out of the equation that we find ourselves in the mess we are in today. We are all key influencers and can facilitate others to achieve higher potential and be who we truly are by bringing the heart back into the workplace, the home, the school, and in life generally.'

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 11, October 2016..*

Sustaining excellence over time

If coaches gain wider perspectives, it can help them to make more useful interventions with their clients, says ***Professor Alex Hill****, Co-Founder and Director, The Centre for High Performance.*

Professor Alex Hill is Co-Founder and Director of The Centre for High Performance and has been identified as an 'up and coming management guru' by Thinkers50. He has written several books and published articles in leading academic journals such as the *Harvard Business Review* and *International Journal of Operations and Production Management*. His research has been widely discussed by the media in publications such as the BBC, *Daily Mail, Economist, Forbes, Guardian, Huffington Post, Independent and Schools Week.*

https://www.kingston.ac.uk/staff/profile/professor-alex-hill-71/

Coaches measure their effectiveness in many ways. For some it may be client satisfaction, for others it's about how much revenue they generate, or the degree of change that has been observed by the stakeholders in the coaching relationship. Yet coaching can be quite insular, because it's not often that coaches get to observe their peers in action, and learn from them, to improve their own performance.

This idea piqued my interest and led me to interview Professor Alex Hill, who carries out research on what it takes to achieve, and sustain, high levels of performance. Professor Hill is co-founder and Director of the Centre for High Performance (a collaboration between senior faculty at the Universities of Kingston, Oxford, and Duke in North Carolina, USA and the London Business School).

I was curious to find out how Professor Hill got involved in this topic. He explained that the idea for the centre was conceived in the run-up to the London 2012 Olympics. Hill spoke to Peter Keen, former coach to UK Olympic cyclist Chris Boardman, and Performance Director at the time for British Cycling. Keen believed that it was possible to predict how many medals a team would win, and these data could be used by the official funding body, UK Sport, to decide which sports should receive financial support. Keen then played a key role in gaining funding for the British cycling team and developed the investment model now used by UK Sport. However, the big question was: could high performance be sustainable over time?

To answer this question, Professor Hill and his colleagues decided to learn from the UK arts sector, which has been very successful in developing sustainable high performance. Several pieces of research were then carried out with The Royal Shakespeare Company, The Royal College of Arts and The Royal Academy of Music. Hill defined 'being sustainable' as: doing mainly the same activity for over 100 years; constantly outperforming your peers; and being admired by everyone in your sector.

Alongside this, Hill and his team carried out another piece of research that looked at how to transform a failing organisation[17]. Their focus was on schools, and what happens after a school is put into 'special measures' by OFSTED, (the UK government inspector of education), because the school is failing to deliver high levels of performance. From this study, they realised that failure was much easier to define than success. Achieving high performance in a school is measured by high exam results relative to those of its peers and being able consistently to outperform its competitors. In the world of education, there are league tables which make such comparisons easier, but in the world of leadership and coaching, performance is much more difficult to measure.

Hill reflected that too often coaches and business leaders measure performance by looking at historical trends. They do not, however, carry out any competitor analysis, which Hill believes would be much more useful. 'I do a lot of work with businesses to compare cost structures, profits, sales, customers, and so on, to give them an insight into whether they are performing better than their peers. But the problem with most organisations is that failure hits due to external factors that they are unaware of. For example, it might just happen that the business is operating in a growing sector, say coaching. Their sales increase 10% year on year, so the company or coach thinks it's doing well. What they don't realise is that their peers are growing by 20% year on year, and the coaching market itself is growing by 30% year on year. So, in effect, they are doing worse.'

What Hill discovered is that consistently high-performing individuals and organisations are prepared to look outside their sector to learn what it takes to improve. For example, when British Cycling wanted to improve how the team operated on tour, they looked to the Royal Ballet, rather than another cycling team.

Another example of this approach, says Hill, is the process that used by elite UK school Eton College to recruit new teachers. The school doesn't start by looking for the best teachers but instead asks: 'Who is the best in the world at this?' Eton call these individuals 'irregulars' because they want people who are interesting and creative; the school then works out if they can help these people learn to teach. It's about seeing your organisation within a much bigger picture.

Sustaining excellence over time
Professor Alex Hill

'The real learning comes from looking at people who don't need coaching or looking at other sectors that are doing things completely differently and thinking about what you can learn from them.'

In addition to comparing their performance with that of others, organisations need to analyse their successes. Perhaps they need to follow the example of film director Woody Allen and see success as exceptional, nicely captured in Allen's quote: 'I only go to see my psychiatrist when I'm happy because I want to know why.'

Hill comments 'Most people don't analyse success, but they do unpick failure,' and his own research uncovered just how important it is to analyse our successes. US space agency NASA, for example, can take up to 18 months to unpick one of their missions, and this includes successes as well as failures: 'If we don't know what has helped us succeed, it's difficult to replicate the success'.

The value of introducing new perspectives

In coaching, supervision can be the route that coaches use to evaluate their performance. The benefit of this is that the coach, together with their supervisor, can reflect upon the coach's practice, both the successes and the failures. The supervisor provides a valuable third perspective, to help the coach become aware of any blind spots.

The value of seeking out, and sharing, new perspectives is not to be underestimated. There are many instances of coaches sharing different perspectives with their client from their experience of coaching in a variety of different business sectors, which generates new insights. For example, a client, who was struggling to ensure their team was being consistent in their approach, learned about surgeon Atul Gawande's concept of checklists from his coach, and realised this could be a useful way of tackling his issue. Gawande, author of the *Checklist Manifesto*[18], took the concept, proven to help airplane pilots reduce errors, and applied it in the operating theatre. As a result, there was a dramatic reduction in post-operative issues with patients.

However, benefits of this type are less likely if a coach is not constantly keeping their skills and knowledge up to date, across a *broad range* of areas. More recently, David Epstein's book, *Range*[19], explains how generalists are now becoming 'more triumphant.' As many sectors become more and more specialised, those who are expert in a very limited field of knowledge struggle to adapt when change, ambiguity and uncertainty hit.

If coaches can gain wider perspectives, Hill believes, it can help them to make useful interventions or to generate new ideas. Hill was impressed with the opinion of George Lois, a successful graphic designer responsible for many covers of *Esquire* magazine in the 1960's. As Lois put it, 'What goes into you, comes out of you,' which Hill interprets as the need to constantly expose yourself to new perspectives, so as to avoid getting stale.

'The real learning,' says Hill, 'comes from looking at people who don't need coaching or looking at other sectors that are doing things completely differently and thinking about what you can learn from them. I think you must ask yourself, "Where do I get my learning and inspiration from?" Coaches are in the business of selling new perspectives and ideas. So you need to keep helping yourself, to be able to provide help to others.'

That help can come from a variety of sources, which may include surrounding yourself with a good group of people who will challenge you. Hill does this by putting himself into environments and situations that he knows nothing about and being prepared to learn in new ways. Perhaps strangely for an academic, Professor Hill does not think that books are always the best medium for learning. Working in a university, he can see how the younger generation now engage in a completely different way compared to when he was a student. Hill thinks that there is often more to learn from magazines, newspapers, videos and films, or other art forms.

Professor Hill's final thoughts were that coaches need to create some habits around how they evaluate and improve their practice. 'We all need to revisit the habits we have adopted around self-development and consider if they are still useful. Then ensure that you build time into your life to reflect and think "How do I do that?" I've spent time with some amazing people, and they are surprisingly systematic about how they reflect and learn, although they may not realise it. If you build in a habit of continual reflection, be willing to take in new perspectives and accept challenge, you can develop and sustain high levels of performance over time.'

An earlier version of this interview appeared in ***Coaching Perspectives*** *magazine Issue 15, October 2017.*

Points to note for leaders and coaches

The interviews in this report raise several points for coaches and leaders to consider, and these are summarised here for easy reference.

Leader Coach	Points for leaders to note	Points for coaches to note
Embrace your personal story	It's bringing a balance of humanness and part of your personality to how you communicate. When you share something about you, and why you do what you do, it builds a stronger connection with your team.	This is your opportunity to explain your 'why' – what got you into coaching, what's your purpose, what is your coaching niche, what makes you a great coach.
Demonstrate vulnerability	The difference between vulnerability and weakness comes down to two things, the ability to self-regulate, and how you manage fear. Weakness happens when a leader is emotionally and physically drained. Vulnerability is not about showing weakness; it's about being relatable, showing humility and considering how you present your challenges. You may wish to share past struggles and how you overcame them, or to be open about your current challenges, describing them from a place of strength. Rather than sounding vague or helpless, describe what you are doing to address difficulties, as it is this honesty that can captivate and engage others.	As a coach, it is not a requirement to have all the answers. A coaching relationship is a joint exploration which reinforces the coachee's own ability to identify and solve problems. However, sometimes it can seem that your coachee wants you to tell them what to do, tempting you into the role of rescuer, rather than remaining neutral, and demonstrating that you are ok with 'not knowing'.
Develop greater self-awareness	The ability to become more self-aware can be done in a variety of ways including asking for feedback, identifying what triggers you to behave in certain ways, writing down your own goals and objectives, undertaking 360° and other personality assessments, staying curious, and understanding your behaviour in light of your values and priorities.	Continue to develop your self-awareness by, for example: writing reflections after a coaching session, asking for feedback from coachees, writing down your own goals and objectives, taking personality assessments, and understanding your own life story that got you where you are today. Use supervision to support and review these activities.
Ask better questions	Questions are at the core of how a leader coach behaves. What is the purpose of asking questions? To inform, influence, or to find out something for which you have no answer? Begin to become more aware of how you construct your questions – are they open or closed? Consider what assumptions may be within the questions you ask, as well as how you could encourage fresh thinking by the type of questions you use.	As coaches we know that questions hold the key to raising awareness. Reflect on how and when you use questions, and who needs to know the answer. A great coach will consider the intent of the question and where its focus is aimed. Is the question probing for detail, or expanding horizons for new possibilities? Pay attention to what you observe in the client – maybe silence, a deep breath, or a change in their physiology/body posture. What could that mean?

Leader Coach	Points for leaders to note	Points for coaches to note
Generate feedback from others	Make generating feedback a habit. Include both positives and improvements. Ask team members to rate each meeting on a scale of 1 – 10, and then ask for one thing you can do next time to make the meeting better. It takes less than five minutes. Once team members get into the habit, and see feedback being acted on, they are more likely to do more of it – and to be more truthful.	Start by asking what the positives were before following up on areas for development. Example questions - What did I do well? What did you notice? What could I improve next time?
Think about your legacy	Leaving a legacy is not about what you leave FOR people, it's about what you leave WITHIN people. According to Lolly Daskal[20], author of *The Leadership Gap*, there are various ways your legacy is likely to be remembered: your character, the choices you make, your conduct at work, the consistency of your actions, the confidence you display, and the compassion you show for others. These six pillars of your leadership legacy can determine how you build, how you create, how you grow, and how you will be remembered.	As a coach your legacy may be the difference your coaching intervention has made to the organisation. Be clear in your contracting as to what the benefits will be to the client as well as the organisation. You may also want to mentor coaches who are starting out on their coaching journey.
Be a role model	Demonstrate the skills of a leader coach in all your interactions including building rapport, communicating effectively, raising awareness and insight and helping others to maintain forward momentum. Become known for 'how you lead'.	A coach can be influential in the life of a leader, and it's easy to underestimate the impact that you can have. Make sure you 'walk the talk' and demonstrate, through your behaviour, the power of coaching by asking great questions, being present, and deep listening.

About Sue Stockdale

Sue Stockdale is a Master Executive Coach, accredited coaching supervisor, speaker and author. As a coach Sue draws on her notable achievements in business and adventure to encourage and inspire thousands of leaders to explore what they are capable of.

Sue began her career in corporate training and development and included a period with the United Nations in a war zone. An executive coach and consultant since 1997, Sue has worked with over 15,000 leaders worldwide in 300 organisations, including FTSE 250 and Fortune 500 companies and elite sport, public sector and non-profit organisations, in addition to speaking at leading business schools on motivation, risk and leadership. In 2014 Sue received a Global Coaching Leadership Award at the World Coaching Congress in Mumbai.

In 1996, Sue became the first British woman to ski to the Magnetic North Pole and followed this success with expeditions to Chile, Antarctica, Greenland, and the Geographical North Pole. In 2005 she was recognised as a Pioneer to the Nation by HM the Queen.

Sue has an MBA in Entrepreneurship from the University of Stirling, and an MSc in Quality Management from Nottingham Trent University. She is the author of several books including *Risk: All that Matters*, *The Personality Workbook*, and *Cope with Change at Work*. Her recent commitments include hosting the *Access to Inspiration* podcast. As a long-standing contributor to the Association for Coaching since 2012, Sue currently hosts the podcast that accompanies *Coaching Perspectives* magazine.

References

1 https://www.ddiworld.com/glf2018
2 https://www.weforum.org/about/the-fourth-industrial-revolution-by-klaus-schwab
3 Schwartz, J.M., and Begley, S. (2004). *The Mind and the Brain: Neuroplasticity and the Power of Mental Force*. Harper Perennial (Reprint edition).
4 Mayo, M.(2018). *Yours Truly*. Bloomsbury.
5 Brown, B. (2015). *Daring Greatly*. Penguin Life.
6 https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2017/10/24/uk-sport-statement-on-culture
7 https://www.uksport.gov.uk/news/2018/05/17/new-steps-to-improve-athlete-welfare-including-enhanced-british-athletes-commission
8 https://www.aspeninstitute.org/blog-posts/billie-jean-king-title-ix/
9 https://assets.ey.com/content/dam/ey-sites/ey-com/en_gl/topics/entrepreneurship/ey-why-female-athletes-make-winning-entrepreneurs.pdf
10 https://www.stuff.co.nz/sport/113355381/national-sporting-body-warns-of-drop-in-pupils-playing-sport
11 Whitmore, J.(2017). *Coaching for Performance* 25th Anniversary Edition. Nicolas Brealey Publishing.
12 Petrie, N. (2014). *Vertical Leadership Development–Part 1: Developing Leaders for a Complex World*. Center for Creative Leadership (CCL): Colorado Springs
13 Glaser, J. (2016). *Conversational Intelligence: How great leaders build trust and get extraordinary results*. Routledge.
15 Pascale, R.,Sternin, J., & Sternin, M. (2010). *The Power of Positive Deviance*. Harvard Business Review Press.
16 Goldsmith, M. (2008). *What Got You Here, Won't Get You There*. Profile.
17 Goldsmith, M. (2015). *Triggers – Creating Behavior That Lasts*. Currency.
18 Hill, A., Mellon, L., Goddard, J. and Laker, B. (2016) How to turn around a failing school, *Harvard Business Review.*
Hill, A., Mellon, L., Laker, B. and Goddard, J. (2016) The one type of leader who can turn around a failing school, *Harvard Business Review.*
Hill, A., Mellon, L., Laker, B. and Goddard, J. (2017). How the best school leaders create enduring change, *Harvard Business Review*.
Hill, A., Mellon, L., and Goddard, J. (2018). How winning organisations last 100 years. *Harvard Business Review*.
19 Gawande, A. (2010). *The Checklist Manifesto*. Profile Books.
20 Epstein, D. (2019). *Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialised World*. Macmillan.
21 Daskal, L. (2017). *The Leadership Gap*. Portfolio.

About the Association for Coaching

The Association for Coaching® (AC), established in 2002, is a leading independent and not-for- profit professional body dedicated to excellence, mastery and ethics in coaching, worldwide. With members in over 80 countries, our vibrant, diverse community is made up of professional coaches, leader coaches, mentors, training providers, educators, coach supervisors and organizations building coaching cultures. Our vision is to advance the science and practice of coaching and promote a coach approach to leadership so that coaching 'ripples' out in business and society as a key enabler for performance, responsibility and fulfilment.

www.associationforcoaching.com

Advancing coaching in business and society, worldwide.

AC Vision and Strategy

Purpose

To promote coaching excellence, ethics and mastery in coaching, and make a sustainable difference to business, individuals and society, world-wide.

Vision

Our vision is to inspire and champion a coach approach so that coaching 'ripples' as a key enabler for performance, wellbeing and responsibility. We do that through building, developing and supporting an international professional community of 100,000+ members, made up of coaches, leader coaches/mentors, training providers, educators, coach supervisors and organisations building coaching cultures.

The Association for Coaching Values

Objectives

- To actively advance education and best practice in coaching
- To develop and implement targeted marketing initiatives to encourage growth to the profession
- To demonstrate accountability and credibility through role-modelling a coach approach
- To encourage and provide opportunities for an open exchange of views and experiences

To collaborate and build a network of strategic alliances and relationships worldwide, to maximise the members' and the profession's potential

Membership

We are an inclusive body for the coaching profession, not just for coaches themselves. We offer a full array of membership types - from coaches through to providers of coaching and coach training, academic institutions, not-for-profits, and large global organisations, or corporates, building coaching cultures. Each type of membership offers its own type of benefits and services.

How does being an AC member benefit you?

Connect: Our members network with their peers at events, enjoy learning development opportunities and benefit from co-coaching and supervision opportunities

Promote: Through our online member directory, those searching for coaching services are able to view and connect with members

Advance: Our accreditation schemes have been developed so that purchases of coaching can be assured that in working with an accredited coach they are adopting a service that is fit-for-purpose and committed to standards of excellence

Learn: Our members have access to a range of resources including *Coaching Perspectives* – the AC Global Magazine, Academic Journals, AC books, groups, blogs and much more

Enjoy: As a member you will benefit from discounted rates on in-person and online CPD events and master classes, all with speakers who are leading coaching experts

Association for Coaching

About the Association for Coaching

The Association for Coaching® (AC), established in 2002, is a leading independent and not-for- profit professional body dedicated to excellence, mastery and ethics in coaching, worldwide. With members in over 80 countries, our vibrant, diverse community is made up of professional coaches, leader coaches, mentors, training providers, educators, coach supervisors and organizations building coaching cultures. Our vision is to advance the science and practice of coaching and promote a coach approach to leadership so that coaching 'ripples' out in business and society as a key enabler for performance, responsibility and fulfilment.

www.associationforcoaching.com

Advancing coaching in business and society, worldwide.

ISBN 978-1-916345-01-0

9 781916 345010