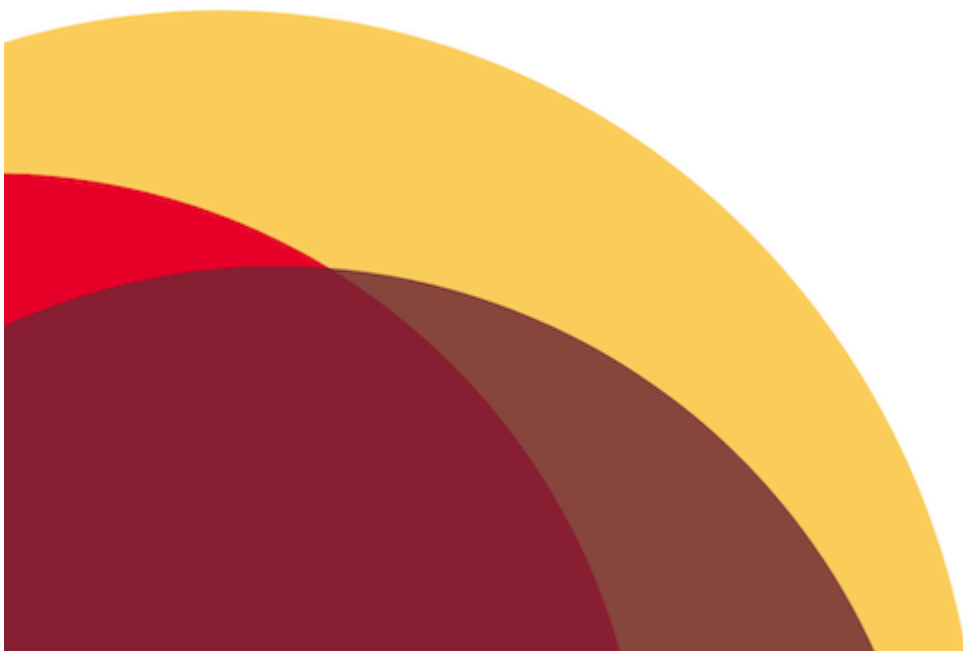


Frameworks & Theories

READING



Frameworks and Theories

COURSE OVERVIEW

This course provides an introduction and understanding of often complex theories and breaks them down into easily digestible chunks. Here you can discover some of the key theories and philosophies that have influenced coaching, and still do. You will also learn how each of these theories can be practically applied to coaching, using the ICF competencies.

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Emotional Intelligence

LEARNING OUTCOMES

To understand the basic theories and models of emotional intelligence

- To understand the relationship between emotional intelligence and coaching
- To be aware of one's own emotional intelligence
- To be aware of strategies to develop emotional intelligence as a coach

SUMMARY

Emotional Intelligence (EI) is the general catchphrase for the ability to know our feelings and manage our emotions, and to recognize the feelings of others. EI involves the capability to balance feeling and thinking, to sense your emotion without becoming overwhelmed by it, which can obscure your judgment and affect your ability to see choices. The more emotionally attuned you are to your feelings and those of people around you, the more appropriately you can respond. Responding empathetically, appropriately, and thoughtfully has important consequences in our relationships and in resolving challenges.

Do you know what feelings you are experiencing at any given moment? When you sat down to read this module, did you think about what you were feeling? What was your mood? Perhaps not, but that doesn't mean you didn't have any feeling. Your feelings are still there and are influencing your decisions and actions, for better or worse.

Definitions of Intelligence

Western society has traditionally used a continuum to explain intelligence. Rational thought is usually placed at one end of the spectrum while emotions are at the opposite end. The concept of 'intelligence' is most associated with intellectual and cognitive abilities.

Most people today would acknowledge that intelligence is a complex construction that is harder to define, similar to notions such as, 'happiness', 'beauty' or 'sexism',

For example, there is a general agreement that you need to be 'smart' to be a doctor, lawyer or engineer but how would you consider the role of a comedian? Does a sense of humour and timing count as intelligence? Where would social workers, actors or politicians sit on the continuum? What about a coach?

Since the early 1900s, the IQ test has quantified intelligence. Based on the assumption that there is only cognitive intelligence, such tests were not a predictor of a person's future success. However, there has been an unprecedented amount of research into the human brain in the years following. The results tell us about the differences in brain functioning. We now know cognitive abilities are in the neocortex - the thinking or rational brain. This part of the brain learns by fitting new information and insights into existing frameworks of association and understanding, extending and enriching the corresponding neural circuitry.

In short, your IQ is only part of success. Your ability to cope with everyday situations and to get along in the world includes both your EQ and your IQ.

Emotional Intelligence (EI)

From the mid-1950s, the notion of intelligence generally opened up to include concepts such as:

- multiple intelligences (linguistic, visual, musical, physical, etc)
- creative thinking
- emotional intelligence
- social intelligence



All of these areas incorporate an emotional dimension. The theorists behind them, such as Howard Gardner and Daniel Goleman, argue that emotions are necessary for change and growth and that learning to recognize, manage and understand emotions in others and in ourselves enables individuals to guide their thinking, cope with stressful situations, achieve goals and make wiser life choices.

Models of Emotional Intelligence (EI)

There are currently three main models of EI:

1. Ability model

The ability-based model views emotions as useful sources of information that help in navigating the social environment. The model proposes that individuals vary in their ability to process information of an emotional nature and in their ability to relate emotional processing to a wider cognition.

2. Mixed model

The model introduced by Daniel Goleman, whose 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence* popularized the term, focuses on EI as a wide array of competencies and skills that drive leadership performance. Goleman's model outlines four main EI constructs:

Self-awareness – the ability to read one's emotions and recognize their impact while using gut feelings to guide decisions.

Self-management – involves controlling one's emotions and impulses and adapting to changing circumstances.

Social awareness – the ability to sense, understand, and react to others' emotions while comprehending social networks.

Relationship management – the ability to inspire, influence, and develop others while managing conflict.

3. Trait EI

Trait EI refers to an individual's self-perception of their emotional abilities. This definition is measured by self-reporting, as opposed to the ability-based model which refers to actual abilities and has proven highly resistant to scientific measurement.

Goleman includes a set of emotional competencies within each construct of EI. He suggests that individuals are born with a general emotional intelligence that determines their potential for learning emotional competencies. However, emotional competencies can be learned, developed and practised to achieve outstanding performance.

COACHING APPLICATION

Developing Emotional Intelligence in Clients

Individuals are increasingly seeking new approaches to help them set, manage, communicate, and achieve goals in many aspects of their lives (career, relationships, finances, parenting, etc). Strong interpersonal, coping, creative thinking and anger management skills are important in achieving such goals and coaches are the ideal partners to work with on emotional intelligence. Through a process of self discovery and increasing self awareness clients can develop their emotional intelligence and consequently benefit in all areas of their lives

Developing Emotional Intelligence as a Coach

Strong emotional intelligence is almost a non negotiable requirement for a coach. The ability to manage emotions and maintain a “coaching presence” while working with clients is essential. A coach needs to be able to put their own thoughts, feelings and judgements aside while they are listening to a client. They need to have awareness of their own ‘inner dialogue’ and be able to move it to one side and refocus on the client. The need to be able to move flexibly and swiftly in any direction, always following the lead of the client and not being held back by their own inner ‘stories’ or thoughts. They need to listen and act intuitively whilst maintaining a strong ‘coaching presence’.

These are all skills that come from having high levels of emotional intelligence, and they are all skills that can be developed. Often it is a matter of training your conscious brain to be aware of, and able to manage your subconscious brain. This story illustrates the differences and interdependent functions of the emotional subconscious brain and the thinking conscious brain



The thinking brain is like a lion tamer and the emotional brain is the lion. Through careful, patient and repeated efforts, the tamer can learn to tame the lion and manage the beast in an effective way. However, ultimately, the lion is always the more powerful animal, representing the thousands of automatic operations we carry out every second outside of conscious awareness. We must always remember that the lion has been around much longer than the tamer and is always capable of taking command of a situation. The tamer must always treat the lion with respect, working in harmony with it in order for things to operate smoothly and safely. The consequences of the tamer and the lion not being in harmony could be catastrophic.”

Emotional Intelligence Coaching

by Stephen Neale, Lisa Spencer-Arnell and Liz Wilson

Coach Supervision has grown as a practice over recent years with more and more coaches employing their own Coach Supervisors in order to make sure they are on a path of continual development when it comes to their own emotional intelligence and coaching presence.

Appreciative Inquiry

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand the history and influences of Appreciative Inquiry as a theory
- To understand the relationship between Appreciative Inquiry and other theories of coaching
- To understand how Appreciative Inquiry is used in a coaching context

MODULE

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) encourages us to notice and specifically identify what is working and what is strong in ourselves and in our organizations. It does not deny negative data or information but chooses to notice it and then move on. Appreciative Inquiry accentuates the positive, the strong, the excellent; to put individuals and organizations to work observing, experiencing, defining, describing, and dreaming these.

Sometimes we forget to reflect on what we do well. Most human beings have a tendency to dwell on negatives and deficits and to believe that change is about eliminating problems and removing negatives. Appreciative Inquiry (AI) encourages us to notice and specifically identify what is working and what is strong in ourselves and in our organizations. It does not deny negative data or information but chooses to notice it and then move on. Appreciative Inquiry accentuates the positive, the strong, the excellent; to put individuals and organizations to work observing, experiencing, defining, describing, and dreaming these.

AI believes that it is powerful and productive to focus on what we do well and explore how we can build on these qualities or skills or services. It comes from a place that is creative and life-affirming – and so generates energy for change and growth. It avoids giving energy and attention to the fearful, cautious and doubt driven. According to theories of Appreciative Inquiry, change comes from a place of passion and strength, not from dwelling on what has not worked.

Coaching is, in essence, a strengths-based model of bringing about change and growth. In this way, it has strong alignment and connection to the field of Appreciative Inquiry (AI). AI is more frequently employed in working with organizations or groups, though there has been much made available on its implications for work with individuals. This makes AI theory and approaches worth exploring for organizational, leadership, and individual coaching.

Coaches do not enter a coaching relationship with the belief that their clients are broken, but with the belief that their clients have limitless potential and can achieve great things. Positive psychology is easily seen to be a compatible influence, in this way, on both AI's positive focus and coaching's deep belief in client potential for discovery, growth, and full and effective living and achieving. Coaches tend to believe that their clients know the answers they seek (even if this is at a deep and buried level of consciousness), so the AI technique of asking very powerful questions (inquiry) is also at the heart of coaching.

Coaches look for the secret of clients' energy to motivate action and change in the directions they desire. They are curious about what brings energy and notice changes in tone or language in sessions that inform what moves clients forward and what stalls them. AI is also interested in moving away from spending time 'circling the drain', and its methods and structure may provide a helpful perspective as well as tools for coaches.

AI may also assist coaches themselves in the process of discerning and developing business and client streams compatible with the strengths they bring to the work.

Appreciative Inquiry Resources

We have selected a number of resources that provide additional information about Appreciative Inquiry.

Wikipedia Entry - Appreciative Inquiry

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Appreciative_inquiry

"Appreciative Inquiry" (sometimes shortened to "AI") is primarily an organizational development method which focuses on increasing what an organization does well rather than on eliminating

what it does badly. Through an inquiry which appreciates the positive and engages all levels of an organization (and often its customers and suppliers), it seeks to renew, develop and build on this. Its proponents view it as being applicable to organizations facing rapid change or growth. David Cooperrider is generally credited with coining the term 'Appreciative Inquiry'.

As a self-defined 'asset-based approach', AI starts with the belief that every organization, and every person in that organization, has positive aspects that can be built upon.

Some researchers believe that excessive focus on dysfunctions can actually cause them to become worse or fail to become better. By contrast, AI argues, when all members of an organization are motivated to understand and value the most favourable features of its culture, it can make rapid improvements.

Appreciative Inquiry utilizes a cycle of 4 processes, which focus on what it calls:

1. DISCOVER: The identification of organizational processes that work well.
2. DREAM: The envisioning of processes that would work well in the future.
3. DESIGN: Planning and prioritizing processes that would work well.
4. DESTINY (or DELIVER): The implementation (execution) of the proposed design.

The basic idea is then to build - or rebuild - organizations around what works, rather than trying to fix what doesn't. AI practitioners try to convey this approach as the opposite of problem-solving. They take a positive focus on how to increase exceptional performance instead of improving poor skills and practices. AI assumes that this line of reasoning is motivational. Progress does not stop when one problem is solved: it naturally leads on to continuous improvement. The method draws from

Five Theories of Change Embedded in Appreciative Inquiry

Gervase R. Bushe, PhD

<http://www.gervasebushe.ca/ai5.pdf>



All social organization is an arbitrary, social construction. Our ability to create new and better organizations is limited only by our imagination and collective will. Furthermore, language and words are the basic building blocks of social reality. Rather than seeing language as a passive purveyor of meaning between people, postmodernists see language as an active agent in the creation of meaning. As we talk to each other, we are constructing the world we see and think about, and as we change how we talk we are changing that world.

...social systems evolve toward the most positive images they hold of themselves. These images are not necessarily conscious in that they may not be discussable by the members of that social system...

The change theory is: If you change the stories you change the inner dialogue. Nothing the 'rational mind' decides it wants will actually happen if the 'inner dialogue' is resistant to it.

Appreciative process theorizes that you can create change by paying attention to what you want more of rather than paying attention to problems.

The Appreciative Inquiry Summit

An Emerging Methodology for the Whole System Positive Change Diana Whitney, PhD and David L. Cooperrider, PhD.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/David_Cooperrider

“It is instructive to consider that the word ‘health’ in English is based on an Anglo-Saxon word ‘hale’ meaning ‘whole’: that is, to be healthy is to be whole. . . All of this indicates that [man] has sensed always that wholeness or integrity is an absolute necessity to make life worth living.

What is it about the experience of ‘wholeness’ that brings out the best in people, teams and organizations? This question has been with us since the inception of the Appreciative Inquiry

Summit as we have watched over and over again, tension turns to enthusiasm, cynicism to collaboration and apathy to inspired action.



...the experience of 'wholeness' is akin to John Glenn's spiritual experience as he looked upon the whole planet earth from outer space. When the 'consciousness of the whole' is evoked in us, we human beings want to organize our life and our work to serve the highest good of humanity."

From Deficit Discourse to Vocabularies of Hope

The Power of Appreciation By James D. Ludema, Benedictine

<https://www2.mvcc.edu/shn/pdf/presentations/appreciative-inquiry-overview.pdf>

"We can live three weeks without food, three days without water, and, yes, we can even live three minutes without air, but we cannot live without hope."

Mumford

When people inquire into the unexplored reaches of their collective norms, beliefs, and assumptions; values, mores, and purposes; plans, desires, and wishes; visions, ideals, and dreams, they engage in the act of hoping by prefiguring a valued and vital future that they hope someday to build, inhabit, and enjoy. These hopeful images of the future, in turn, become powerful catalysts for change and transformation by mobilizing the moral, social, and relational energies needed to translate vision into reality and belief into practice.

[Man], like every living being, is concerned about many things, above all about those which condition [his] very existence, such as food and shelter. But [man], in contrast to other living beings, has spiritual concerns--cognitive, aesthetic, social, political. Some of them are urgent, often extremely urgent, and each of them, as well as the vital concerns, can claim ultimacy for human life or the life of a social group.

Vocabularies of hope come in all shapes and sizes-theories, ethnographies, case studies, vignettes, empirical data, personal narratives, rhetorical speeches, stories told in the classroom, boardroom, or around the kitchen table. One of the most famous and influential vocabularies of

hope in the United States is Martin Luther King Jr.'s speech given at a civil rights march in Washington, August 28, 1963. The speech, and particularly the sentence,

"I have a dream that my four children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the colour of their skin, but by the content of their character," gave voice to the aspirations of an entire nation and has served as a hopeful harbinger of cultural change for more than a generation."

Martin Luther King Jr

Positive Psychology

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To understand key concepts in positive psychology
- To understand the relationship between positive psychology and coaching
- To understand how positive psychology might be blended in to your coaching

MODULE

“If you plan on being anything less than you are capable of being, you will probably be unhappy all the days of your life.” —Abraham Maslow

Positive Psychology; the science of what makes life worth living, provides a key theoretical and scientific backbone for coaching. This field of study has produced resources, theories, principles, assessments, and tools that are used in various forms of coaching and enrich the coaching experience.

Positive Psychology Coaching (PPC) is a type of coaching focused on helping clients increase their total well-being with a forward focused approach.

What is Positive Psychology?

There are a multitude of formal definitions for positive psychology. Peterson offers the simplest:

*“Positive psychology is the scientific study of what makes life most worth living”
(Peterson, 2008).*

Positive psychology has four major aims:

1. To transform life's trials and tribulations
2. Your relationship with other people
3. Use creativity and productivity to find fulfillment
4. Finding your altruistic motives to find lasting meaning.

According to the Positive Psychology Center, positive psychology is grounded in the belief that people desire to experience meaningful lives, living up to their highest potential and enhancing their life experiences.

Positive psychology also has a focus on happiness. Not only does it seem intuitive that happiness is a catalyst for good things, scientific research and studies confirm that happy people have a longer, healthier and more social life enjoying both their work and home life.

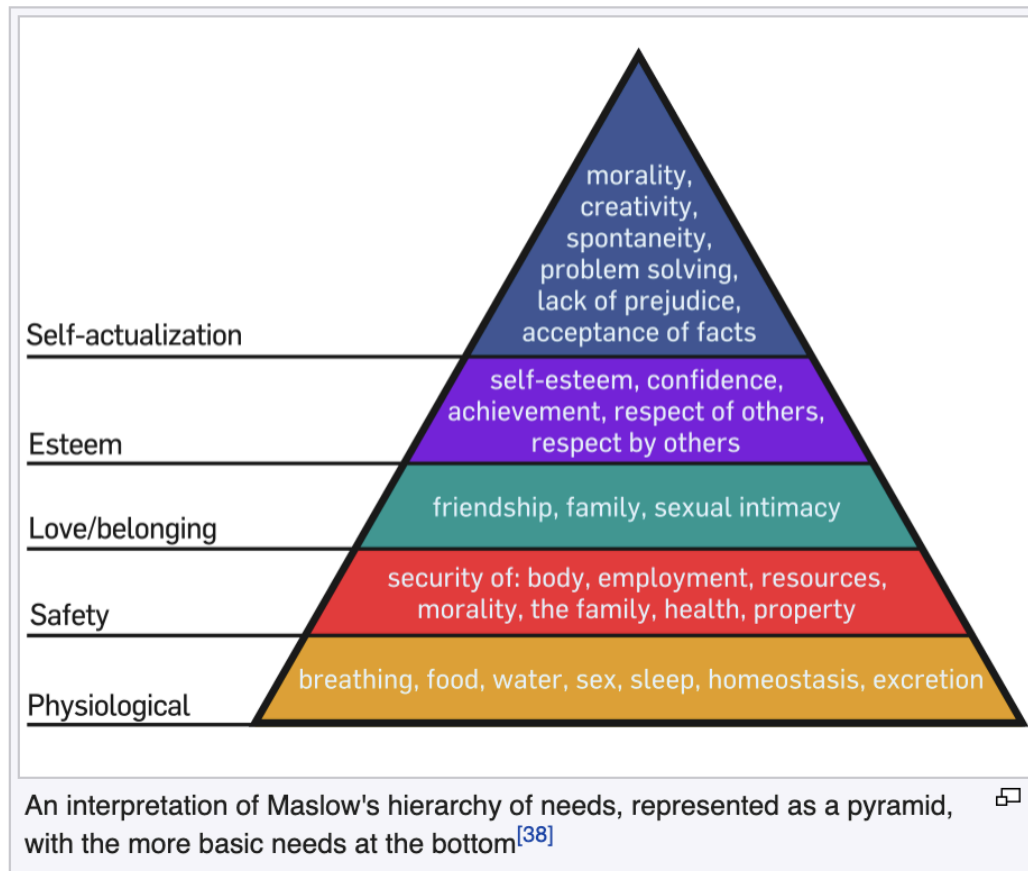
Happy people tend to exhibit the following characteristics:

- They have meaningful life goals that they strive to achieve
- They proactively manage their relationships - be they with family or with friends
- They are mindful and grateful for all of the positive experiences in their life
- They have an optimistic view of the future

A BRIEF HISTORY OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

The term positive psychology was coined by the great psychologist Abraham Maslow, best known for creating Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs; a psychological theory that suggests a hierarchical path of human needs, moving from basic needs towards self-actualization.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEED



Though Maslow created the term, it was Martin Seligman, American Psychological Association President who popularized it. He conducted extensive research in the 1960s into the 1970s. His studies concluded that happy people satisfied with their lives exploited their “signature strengths.” Seligman’s research concluded that there are three dimensions of happiness that can be cultivated:

1. The Pleasant Life (pleasure and gratification)
2. The Good Life (Embodiment of strengths and virtues)
3. The Meaningful Life (Meaning and Purpose).

Notice the graduation as you move to each dimension. You can also see the influence of Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs.

Seligman reconciled the dualistic idea of happiness, taking two competing forms: the Individualistic Approach vs The Altruistic Approach and illustrated how they are related to each other. They are not in conflict as previously believed, together they work towards experiencing a Meaningful Life, one with a deep sense of meaning and fulfillment, resulting from using unique strengths for a purpose bigger than the Self.

This idea was quite revolutionary in the 1970s. Up until this time, most bodies of psychological work were based on an underlying premise that happiness was external and happened based on circumstances. Methods were focused on alleviating shortcomings, deficits, and pain. But Seligman proposed that happiness could be developed, actively by working towards a goal. This was a fundamental change in the field and a theory that now empowers millions of people to choose happiness and then create a system to experience it. It also empowers the work of most coaches.



[Positive Psychology] takes you through the countryside of pleasure and gratification, up into the high country of strength and virtue, and finally to the peaks of lasting fulfillment: meaning and purpose.”

Seligman 2002

The PERMA Model

Seligman created the PERMA Model to describe the meaning of well-being. He broke it down into five measurable facets:

- (1) Positive Emotion
- (2) Engagement
- (3) Positive Relationships
- (4) Meaning
- (5) Accomplishment.

Seligman used his position as President of American Psychological Association to change the direction the field of psychology was moving. He wanted psychology to take a holistic approach

to helping and healing clients. He, along with Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, the “father of flow” made great strides soliciting research, doing studies, and establishing a new base for psychology. In 1998 Seligman suggested the field of psychology shift toward understanding and developing human strengths.

People outside of the field of positive psychology are often surprised to find out that a blind eye is not turned towards negativity. Understanding the triggers of negative thoughts, and how they affect performance, is at the heart of this field. There is an understanding of the complex relationship between positivity and negativity, like the ying and the yang. Both always exist in relation to the other, but the one you focus on will influence your perception.

In this way, negativity becomes a function of positivity, like an algebra equation. Like in the example of the ying-yang. Are the ying-yang opposites of each other, or are they different expressions of the same energy? In positive psychology, negativity is embraced because it carries valuable information that can be used for insight and a base for reframing.

COACHING APPLICATION

Positive Psychology and Coaching

The relationship between positive psychology is so close that there is a model of coaching called Positive Psychology Coaching. PPC focuses on values, strengths, and resourcefulness and clients to be more precise about their goals and desires, and by focusing on their strengths, they can see clearer paths to achieve them.

Positive psychology offers an endless field of resources to coaches. This includes, practices, assessments, interventions, models, and theories. These pieces can be implemented into your coaching practice to provide superior results. For example, three resources that are used in PPC:

1. The Positivity Ratio

The positivity ratio was created by Fredrickson, 2005 and measures how much positivity a person has versus negativity. The equation is:

$$3P (3 * Positivity) / N (1 * Negativity) = Flourishing$$

While the equation looks complex, what it translates to is: To be in a flourishing state, a person must feel 3 times more positivity than negativity regularly. It is not faultless but it is a great tool that stimulates awareness and conversation.

2. Active Constructive Responding (ACR)

ACR is a tool that focuses on how a person responds to information shared with them. Proper use of ACR can help clients improve the communication they have in their relationships, and can help them pivot away from circular negative thoughts about situations to a more positive outlook.

3. Best Possible Future Self Exercise

This exercise employs the power of creativity, imagination, and visualization. It is best used when a person is uncertain about what they want to be, do, or have. This technique can help them stimulate ideas by projecting versions of their best Self, imagining what this best self-version will be doing, and identifying the strengths of their future self. This exercise can be used throughout the coaching process. Much research has proved it to be effective.

Also, understanding the theories and principles presented in positive psychology help you understand the drivers of your client, helps you identify their strengths, and then focus on these strengths to help them achieve their goals.

For example, at the beginning of your coaching relationship with a client, you can have them take a positive psychology based assessment test, like The DISC Profile or the VIA Character Strength Survey to get a baseline idea of their character strengths.

Goals of Positive Psychology In Coaching

The goals of positive Psychology in coaching are similar to the generic goals of coaching, with a heavy focus on positivity and strengths. They include:

- To improve your client's life

- Increase the client's positivity ratio
- Give clients the tools and support needed to develop their strengths and talents
- Nurture gratitude in the client
- Help clients build and maintain healthy relationships.

Practical examples of positive psychology practices that can be used in your coaching

➡ **Experience sampling Method (ESM) or Daily Dairy Method (DDM)**

What are you feeling at this moment? Using the ESM or DDM, this is the question that you would answer at random times during the day. A method used to check-in with how you are feeling, akin to a stimulated positive intervention.

➡ **Gratitude Journal**

Journaling about all the good things that happen primes the journaller for positivity and gives them the time and space to reflect on all the good that happens in their life.

➡ **Building personal Strengths**

Focus on strengths instead of weaknesses.

➡ **Well-Being Therapy and Positive Psychotherapy**

Similar to cognitive behavioral therapy, but shifts focus from negative things that are occurring to promoting more positive experiences.

COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY

Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) focuses on the relationship between thoughts, behaviours and feelings. It concentrates on the “here and now” rather than the past or the unconscious. It is goal-oriented and highly structured. This form of therapy is derived from behavioural scientists who studied behaviour and the relationship between stimulus and reaction. There is a great deal of research to support the efficacy of CBT, particularly in health contexts where it is used to treat

depression and anxiety. It is recommended for use by the UK National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE Guidelines).

Coaching is, of course, not psychotherapy – but it does benefit from its interaction with many fields of study. Cognitive behavioural theory and the therapeutic techniques and strategies that have arisen from it are very compatible with coaching. Although CBT is most commonly associated with the therapeutic context, it is also true, as the Mayo clinic website points out, that “not everyone who benefits from cognitive behavioural therapy has a mental health condition. It can be a very effective tool to help anyone learn how to better manage stressful life situations.”¹

A CBT sensitive coach will encourage clients to think about their behaviour and identify alternative ways of seeing the problem. They believe that events or situations in themselves are not problematic, rather it is the client's explanation of these events or situations that are critical. The task of identifying inaccurate, faulty or negative thinking is key.

A CBT approach tends to be short term and collaborative. Socratic questions form an important part of this process and allow clients to form insights and make discoveries. In therapeutic CBT settings, clients are commonly asked to undertake a series of talking sessions and complete homework. This encourages clients to pay attention to their thoughts and the emotions that surface and to see how these impact their behaviour.

A coach whose practice incorporates a CBT perspective provides clients with structure and support, as clients practice new and more positive ways of thinking that, in turn, impact their emotional lives and are expressed in behaviour. This gives clients skills to make changes in their own lives. It is proactive and breaks less productive or healthy cycles as it creates new ways of thinking and behaving. Clients perceive sessions as a useful exchange where clear goals and strategies are discussed, techniques for moving towards better thinking are brainstormed, and insight is gained on what various thoughts produce in an individual or organization. Many coaches may find CBT approaches useful in areas where improvement is hampered by low self-esteem, anxiety, procrastination and avoidance. Some coaches find the approach particularly useful because it allows clients to develop practical skills and strategies to manage on an ongoing basis without the need for lengthy intervention or support

Systems Theory

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Understand the defining features of a system
- Explore systemic coaching models
- Explore ways of incorporating systems theory into your coaching

MODULE

You've probably encountered numerous systems throughout your life. These systems can either be a set of things working together, or a set of principles or procedures that detail how to do something. In the context of coaching, systems thinking refers to the complex dynamics in which clients operate. The 'system' could be referring to an organisation, a family or a community. A system leads to certain behaviors, which can lead to certain events. The best way to change an event or outcome is to change the system. Changing the system in this way leads to different behaviors.

[‘Systemic coaching’](#) is defined by coach and author, John Whittington, as an approach to coaching which, “coaches the individual client or team with the system in mind—exploring the part in the whole, and the whole in the part—so as to unlock the potential and performance of both.”

We are surrounded by systems. The metric system classifies measurement and is an example of principles and procedures. Your human body functions because of a vast network of systems working together to form you. Nature is made up of ecosystems in which various elements such as air, water, movement, plants, and animals work together to survive or perish. Even our global political and economic systems are interconnected, with events happening in one country (war,

disease, stock market crashes etc.) affecting the economies of countries over the other side of the world.

You might have heard of the **butterfly effect** where a butterfly flaps its wings in Chicago and a tornado occurs in Tokyo. The butterfly effect is an analogy from chaos theory used to describe the idea that small things can have non-linear impacts on a complex system. **Peter Senge** was one of the first people to introduce the idea of systems in his book, *The Fifth Discipline*. Senge mentions that a system leads to certain behaviors, which can lead to certain events. The best way to change an event or outcome is to change the system. Changing the system in this way leads to different behaviors.

Senge uses an interesting metaphor to describe the way systems thinking works in organisations. He says “When you split an elephant into two, you do not have two small elephants which you take care of. You can only take care of the one complete elephant. An organization is like a living organism and should be managed as one.”

It is important to remember that the term ‘systems thinking’ can mean different things to different people. It’s more than just a collection of tools. Its underlying structure is a sensitivity to the circular nature of the world, a recognition that there is a powerful system of laws operating that we are unaware of, and a realization that our actions have resulting outcomes that we can be oblivious to.

The Benefits of Systems Thinking

Organizations sometimes employ a systems approach to gain a more evolved understanding of how things are interconnected. Here are some of the benefits to a systems thinking approach:

- Surfaces and tests assumptions, theories and anecdotes.
- Broadens the number of available solutions.
- Builds understanding of how solutions impact other parts of the system.
- Locates the root causes of problems.
- Achieves long-lasting improvements.

Systems thinking is a powerful way to understand ourselves, one another, and our environment. With systems thinking clients are able to see how the forces in their internal and external systems influence their ability to create what they want and what they can do in their system to increase their success rate.

APPLICATION IN COACHING

In the context of coaching, systems thinking refers to the complex dynamics in which clients operate. The 'system' could be referring to an organisation, a family or a community. It's a bit of a mix of principles and functions. The thinking part of systems thinking refers to the coach's perspective. The coach focuses on working with all of the client's relationship systems.

 *So what does coaching from a systems perspective look like?*

According to Steve Wolinski, who wrote an article on a “*Systems Approach to Coaching Leaders, Coaching*” most broadly and deeply means being aware of three worlds and how they interplay to produce outcomes:

The first world is the Individual Interactions World—our interactions with our client, and their interactions with other key people.

The second world is the Larger External World, for example, our client's organization, their business, their customers, and their marketplace.

And the third world is The Deeper Internal World: How/what our client leaders think and feel, their mental models/underlying assumptions, their deeper beliefs, and in some cases, their deep story.

Systemic coaching is about helping our clients “see” the key variables from these three worlds, how they interact, how they help or get in the way, and what our client leader can do to change the system in favour of their leadership vision and desired results.

When an organization, family or community has multiple individual members being coached, the performance growth of each individual is strengthened. However, the individual is part of a larger whole. For growth that is aligned with the organization’s broader goals, a coach should employ a systems thinking approach.

Take a sports team as an example. Personal performance results from the development of personal competencies. Standout individual performances alone are unlikely to sustain long term success. Sustained success is more likely when a team’s members learn to totally cooperate when implementing collective strategies. Conversely, if a coach were to solely focus on the mission and ignore individual strengths, then team performance is also not optimised. The perfect blend is a team that identifies and utilises individual strengths while individuals operate within alignment of the team’s mission. It’s also important to note that both individual and team coaching can be systemic coaching. It would be an error to conclude that systemic coaching applies solely to collective systems.

In systemic coaching, the client and the coach also make up a “system”, and as such coaches must also consider their personal and professional issues, their behaviours, feelings, thoughts, ambitions and goals as they can be intimately linked to those of the client. During any particular session with a client, coaches can ask themselves ‘what is the client proposing that I face in my personal and professional issues?’ We are all active participants in the reality that we observe rather than neutral or external observers.

STRATEGIES FOR COACHES TO ADOPT SYSTEMS THINKING

1. Everything is Interconnected

When we say that everything is interconnected, we are defining a fundamental principle of life: the acknowledgment of dependency. A coach with this mindset shifts thinking from the mechanical and linear view to the dynamic and interconnected array of relationships and feedback loops. Senge mentions that embracing interconnectedness acknowledges the

complexity of the system and the uncertainty that comes with trying to understand it. The system has both the issue and the solution embedded within it.

2. Alignment to Desired Outcomes

An organization must be designed to match the intended or desired outcomes. If an organization's actions and results don't align with its mission and purpose, then there is a misalignment of desired outcomes. Another way to look at this is through behaviors. The behaviors of the people within the organization will reinforce the desired outcome. Then, this desired outcome will reinforce the behavior. It is a feedback loop, and an organization wants to make sure that the loop reinforces its mission.

3. Identification of Root Causes

Systems thinking is about helping clients 'see' the key variables in their machine. Identifying these variables involves speaking with the relevant people and looking at the evidence together to diagnose root causes. Ray Dalio describes root causes through adjectives and not actions. For example, I missed the train because I am forgetful (adjective) versus I missed the train because I didn't check (action) the timetable. Once a root cause is illuminated, the resulting action and procedures are put in place to correct the course.

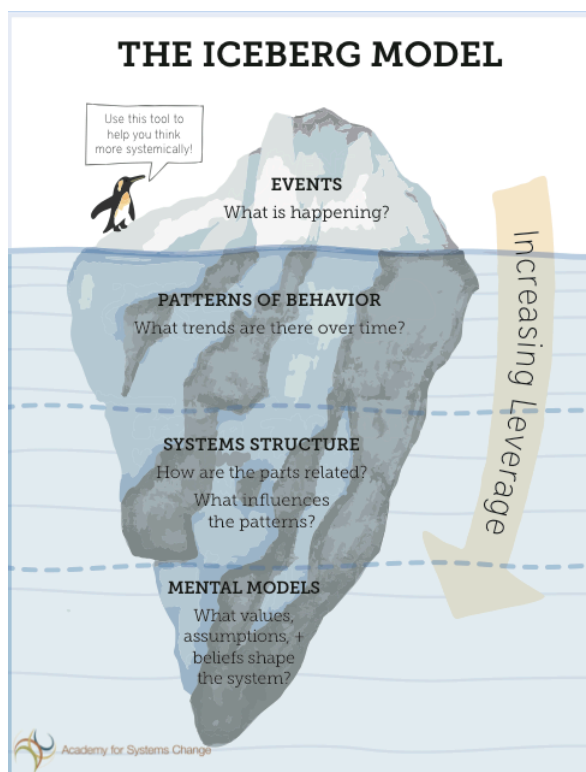
A habit is a useful illustration to understand this process. Say you want to form the habit of flossing your teeth because your existing outcome, tartar build-up, isn't desired. You would need to adapt your current oral hygiene system to include this action. For the habit to be formed, specific procedures must be put in place to encourage the outcome. That includes buying the floss, making sure you have enough stocked and placing it in view around the time of teeth brushing. Modifying the system to include flossing (the behavior) improved oral hygiene (the event or outcome).

The best times to employ systems thinking are when the issues are important or chronic, the problem is familiar and has a known history, or people have unsuccessfully tried to solve the problem before. Coaches can illuminate the invisible dynamics at play that can entangle people, their thinking and resulting action. Coaches work with organizations to develop strategies that improve the performance of the organization.

SYSTEMIC THINKING MODELS

The Iceberg Model

[Systems Thinking Resources](#)



This model is useful to help get the full story out. The group describes the problem from three different angles: events, patterns, and structure. The event is a single incident or occurrence. The patterns describe the behaviors of the system structures and mental models. This process shows the structures underpinning the event.

Like the iceberg, much of the underlying structure is hidden from view. If you can identify these hidden structures and connect them to events that you see, you may be able to develop lasting solutions that target the whole system.

Ray Dalio's 5-Step Process

Source: [Principles: Life and Work](#)



In his book, Principles, Ray Dalio outlines a 5-Step process to approach getting what you want out of life.

These 5 steps include:

1. Have clear goals.
2. Identify and don't tolerate problems that stand in the way of achieving those goals.
3. Accurately diagnose the problems to get at their root causes.
4. Design plans that will get you around them.
5. Do what's necessary to push these designs through to results.

Ray mentions that individuals are rarely capable of completing all 5 steps well and will need to seek the support and objectivity from outsiders. Ray offers an iOS app that steps individuals through this process.

Causal-Loop Diagrams

These diagrams can be thought of as sentences that are constructed by identifying key variables in a system and indicating the relationships between them via links. These links create a concise story about a particular problem or issue. A causal-loop diagram comprises four basic elements: the variables, the links between the variables, the signs on the links and the sign on the loop.

Source [Causal-Loop Diagrams](#)

U Process

U Process is a useful methodology for collectively approaching difficult problems and developing innovative, appropriate solutions. This process guides participants through a series of steps:

- 1) Co-initiating: Uncover the common intention.
- 2) Co-sensing: Observe and connect with people and places to learn the system.
- 3) Presencing: Go to the place of silence and allow inner knowing to emerge.

- 4) Co-creating: Prototype the new in new examples to explore the future.
- 5) Co-evolving: Embody the new systems that facilitate acting from the whole.

Source: [U Process](#)

Biomimicry

Coined by Janine Benyus, Biomimicry is the concept of using natural forms, materials, and processes as models to drive human innovation. Because it has been evolving and perfecting its systems for millions of years, nature can provide powerful examples of sustainable solutions. This article from thenatureofbusiness.com lists 6 principles from nature that can be applied to the business context.

1. Build Resilience
2. Optimize
3. Adapt
4. Integrate Systems
5. Navigate by Values
6. Support Life

Senge defines [11 laws of systems thinking](#). Each law reads like an aphorism that's immediately relatable. For instance, *the harder you push, the harder the system pushes back*. And *faster is slower*. The insight of systems thinking in this situation is to invite people in, engage the stakeholders and create a safe environment where ideas can grow.

Source: [Biomimicry](#)

FURTHER READING

John Wittingham: [Systemic Coaching and Constellations](#)

Neuroscience

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- To be familiar with the key concepts in the Neuroscience field
- To be familiar with the key thinkers and authors in the Neuroscience and Coaching area
- To understand the way Neuroscience has influenced the coaching field
- To understand how Neuroscience can be leveraged in coaching

MODULE

Neuroscience is the scientific study of the body's nervous system. It combines many branches of science to understand the fundamental properties of neurons and neural circuits. The concept of the brain changing is now well established in neuroscience and is often referred to as neuroplasticity. Just like the stretch of an elastic band, our brains flex and adapt throughout our life. Both genetic and environmental interactions shape our brain and influence new behavior. Brain Based Coaching incorporates findings from Neuroscience and has gained traction in recent years.

As a field, coaching is relatively young, so the number and diversity of researchers and publications is not as extensive as some other fields of study, and in some ways the research field was slow to take off. In the journal article “Coaching Research: who? what? where? when? why?”¹

¹ P. Alex Linley, Coaching Research: who? what? where? when? why?

One of the key researchers in this Coaching and Neuroscience space is David Rock, who is a leadership coach from Sydney, Australia. Rock combined his coaching experience with the neuroscientist Jeffery Schwarz to form insights into how the brain works in a coaching context. Rock coined the term Neuroleadership in 2006, which refers to applying the findings from neuroscience to the field of leadership.

In a conversation with Jeffery, Rock makes a case for brain-based coaching when he refers to senior executives as being academically trained and analytical. He suggests they want a theory base with evidence and research to support any new way of thinking into their organization. Rock saw a brain-based approach to coaching as being a way to get Executives and Corporates to accept coaching as a valid and successful method of Organisational Development.

Neuroscience is one way to provide an explanation of how and why coaching works. The four main areas of scientific research that combine to form a central explanation of how coaching impacts the brain include: attention, reflection, insight and action. Rock offers the acronym 'ARIA' to recall these areas. Refer to the resources section below for Rock's 'Four Faces Model' as a tool to support this solutions-focused approach to making new connections.

KEY ELEMENTS OF BRAIN-BASED COACHING

In his book, *Quiet Leadership*, Rock mentions six insights about the brain that have helped shape brain-based coaching as a new approach to thinking, learning, developing and creating lasting change.

Insight 1: The Brain Is A Connection Machine

The underlying function of the human brain is to find links, associations, connections and relationships between whole concepts often stored in different regions of the brain. These processes continually reshape our brain's circuitry. Each thought, memory, skill and attribute is not a single stored entity in a single region of the brain. Rather, it's a vast and complex set of

connections between high-level cognitive centers, deeper level hardwired skill centers and many other regions of the brain.

Insight 2: No Two Brains Are Wired The Same

At a distance, the brains may look the same, the brain is hugely complex. It has 300 trillion constantly changing connections and these connections are continually reshaped by each thought, feeling and experience we have throughout our lives. The result is a near unlimited way the brain can encode experiences, learning and new information.

Insight 3: The Brain Sees The World According To Its Own Wiring

Any idea of experience gets broadly the same treatment from our brain: A lightning-quick comparison with our existing mental maps to see where all the connections are located. This process of perceiving our world through our hardwiring is there out of necessity. It enables us to cope with the sheer volume of information we encounter throughout the day. However, this efficient process has its consequences. While familiar inputs are processed neatly, when the data doesn't fit, we can sometimes go to extraordinary lengths to make connections. In other words, it requires effort to form new connections.

Insight 4: The Brain Hardwires Everything It Can

Since the brain has so much information to process, it must take any repetitive or otherwise important thought or activity and hardwire it. Unsurprisingly then, lasting change takes effort and a whole new approach.

Insight 5: It's Practically Impossible To Deconstruct Our Hardwiring

Maybe you've come across the idiom, he's "set in his ways." An image of someone who has a particular way of doing something comes to mind. This reference helps us understand the connections in the brain that are too deeply embedded to be unwired. In addition, any attempt to understand the source of the habit just serves to deepen the very circuitry we're trying to undo.

Insight 6: It's Really Easy To Create New Wiring

Rather than rewire old thinking, we are best to establish new habits of thinking. Everything we think and do influences the connections and layout of our brain, as it's continually finetuning its pathways. The upside of this is our extraordinary capacity to form new connections.

Dan Beverly wrote an article that neatly summarizes these 6 insights. You can read more about them [here](#).

APPLICATION IN COACHING

Brain-based coaching can be thought of as a strategic and purposeful environmental tool that can facilitate change and shape new neural pathways. The insights mentioned in the previous section have their applications in coaching.

The Brain Is A Connection Machine

In the coaching context, brain-based coaching supports the client in their thinking. The coach helps the client break themselves out of their own impasses on the way to making new connections for themselves. The best way to bring about insight is not to think about people's issues for them, but to help people reflect more deeply and support them in their ability to generate connections

No Two Brains Are Wired The Same

Not only is it a waste of our energy to think for others, but it's also a significant obstacle to the other person's understanding of their thinking. Brain-based coaches, respect the subtle differences between people's brains and focus on helping the client think for themselves. Coaches are the facilitators and watch to highlight a client's insight. Once illuminated, the coach helps the client with that energy.

The Brain Sees The World According To Its Own Wiring

Brain-based coaching makes positive changes in our faulty thinking. This ensures that the client's internal reality does not lag behind the external reality. The coach inspects the client's mental map to see that it's based only on updated and relevant experiences. This is so the internal representation does not omit any critical information.

The Brain Hardwires Everything It Can

Brain-based coaching leverages the brain's preference for hardwiring. It deepens connections around insights and embeds learning on the way to establishing new habits. This is of great benefit to the client, as the brain's hardwiring is more dependable and more able to deliver results than your conscious brain.

It's Practically Impossible To Deconstruct Our Hardwiring

Neuroscience tells us that it's better to leave the hardwiring connections where they are.

Brain-based coaching transforms performance results by maintaining a focus on solutions and creating whole new habits that are backed up by attention.

It's Really Easy To Create New Wiring

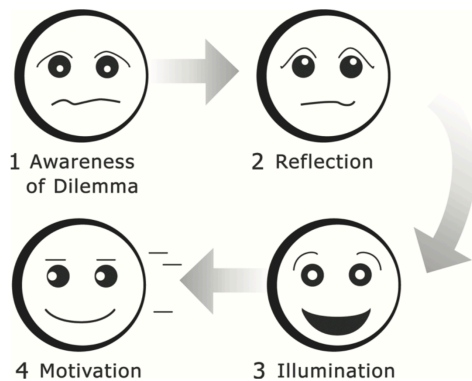
The brain is an attention economy. Brain-based coaching helps to hardwire new behavior by giving the behavior enough attention. For instance, if you have an intention and you bring with you your intention to a new experience, then you will likely behave in a way that's in alignment with that intention. This attention or thought provides the new mental map to increase depth and density. Brain-based coaching focuses on moving the client from an impasse to an insight then to an ingrained behavior quicker than any other form of self-improvement.

Dan Beverly comments on the application of brain-based coaching through six distinguishing features that include:

- Self-directed learning
- A solutions focus
- Challenge and stretching of the brain
- Reinforcing new connections through positive feedback
- Creating process and structure
- Developing the client's agenda

Rock comments that the best way to bring about insight is not to think about people's issues for them, but to help people reflect more deeply and support them in their ability to generate connections. It is important to note that working within a brain-based coaching framework, much or all of the neuroscience will be invisible to the client. The coach has a deep knowledge of

Four Faces of Insight



practice that serves to develop a brain-friendly coaching environment that will focus on the client's thinking.

The Four Faces of Insight

The Four Faces of Insight Model is a guide to the moments just before, during and after and insight occurs. Rock comments on his inspiration for this model recounting that...

"...my most compelling personal realization came when I pictured how people's faces changed considerably when they had an insight. I felt strongly that if coaches could see which 'face' people had on at any one time, it might make them more effective at creating change."

This model is useful for reminding coaches to focus on the other person and on how their thinking is going, instead of doing too much thinking ourselves. The model comprises four steps:

1. **Awareness:** Identifying a problem to be solved looking confused or uncertain.
2. **Reflection:** People will look up and get a slightly dazed look on their faces.
3. **Illumination:** A rush of energy with eyes wide and mouth open in amazement.
4. **Motivation:** Eyes are racing and ready to take action, though momentum can easily be lost so it's important to define action at this moment.

The SCARF Model

The SCARF Model® assesses the differences in people's social motivation. Some people are more sensitive to status threats and rewards, others to certainty and relatedness. Having SCARF needs satisfied drives engagement and retention. SCARF stands for the five key "domains" that influence our behavior in social situations. These are:

- Status – our relative importance to others.
- Certainty – our ability to predict the future.
- Autonomy – our sense of control over events.
- Relatedness – how safe we feel with others.
- Fairness – how fair we perceive the exchanges between people to be.

The model is based on neuroscience research that implies that these five social domains activate the same threat and reward responses in our brain that we rely on for physical survival.

Visualization

Rock advocates visualization as an important tool in information management. Visuals are information efficient and we have a long history of visualizing. Visualization is using the power of your own imagination to see, feel and experience something in your mind without actually experiencing it.

Brain-Balance Worksheet

Dan Beverly has constructed a brain-balance worksheet that looks similar to a wheel. The tool focuses on 8 domains that one can use to self-assess.

Adult Learning Principles

LEARNING OUTCOMES

- Explore the elements of Adult Learning Theory
- Identify the connections and shared principles between Adult Learning Theories and coaching
- Apply Adult Learning Theory in a coaching context

MODULE

One of the things that sets coaching apart from consulting or training is the notion that our clients know what is best for them and have their own answers. We see our clients as being self-directed individuals who are in charge of their journey. So it is not unusual then, that adult learning theory has many points of intersection with coaching. Adult learners have a mature understanding of themselves. They are self motivated and able to discern between people and ideas. Adult learners are able to self reflect and incorporate and add to their own life experience and understand the social, cultural and history context of what they learn.

You might have come across the term andragogy when looking into adult learning theories. The word is synonymous with adult learning theories. Its roots are Greek, and the word literally means “man-leading”(sic). Typically, adult learning theories are self-directed and hands-on and not so reliant on the coach or instructor.

One of the key figures in adult learning theories is Malcolm Knowles. Knowles was convinced that adult-learning had to be self-driven. Rather than education being teacher-centric, adult learning should be centered around the student and teaching them the power of self-motivated learning.

Between 1970 and 1980, Knowles moved from an “andragogy versus pedagogy” position to a continuum ranging from teacher-directed learning to self-directed learning. Knowles recognized

that some of the principles he wrote on education also applied to children. He later emphasized how each situation should be assessed on an individual basis to determine how much self-direction would be helpful for students.

BENEFITS OF ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

According to Knowles, adult education produces six outcomes. These include:

1. A mature understanding of oneself

Adult education assists adults to objectively understand themselves. Adults grasp their motivations, needs, interests, goals and capacities.

2. Acceptance, Respect and Love Towards Others

Adult learning theories increasingly lead adults to accept, respect and love others. Adults must be able to discern between people and ideas. Adults who can discern between the two are able to critically understand ideas without attacking or threatening the people who hold them.

3. A Fluid and Dynamic Attitude Toward Life

People are always changing and each experience in life is an opportunity to learn. When these two ideas are integrated, adults learn to create a dynamic and even passionate attitude towards life.

4. Understanding and Reacting to Causes, not Symptoms

Typically, when a situation arises and people respond, they usually respond to the symptoms. Through curiosity and reflection, adults learn to see beneath the surface of symptoms to get at the root cause of the situation or problem.

5. Understanding Human Experience

People tend to have a bias towards what's more recent over what's been done in the past. Adult learning theories shift this perspective through teaching people to understand and appreciate the ideas, experiences and traditions of the past.

6. Ability to Understand and Change Society

Adults must be able to understand the society in which they live and bring about effective change. Adult education educates people on the social order and how that order is shaped.

KEY ELEMENTS OF ADULT LEARNING THEORIES

There are several theories that all explain—from different perspectives—how adults learn. Some of these include:

- experiential learning
- self-directed learning, and
- transformational learning.

Even with their differences, these theories all have one goal: **they are focussed on creating effective learning experiences for the adult learner.** Let's look at some of the features of adult learning.

In 1980, Knowles made 4 assumptions about the characteristics of adult learning and a few years later added a fifth. These 5 assumptions form the key elements of adult learning.

1. A Maturing Self-Concept

As a person moves from childhood to adulthood their dependency on others for learning reduces and shifts toward becoming self-driven and independent. Another way to look at this is that maturity leads to growing independence and autonomy. Knowles described the maturation this way:

“...in which individuals take the initiative, with or without the help of others, in diagnosing their learning needs, formulating learning goals, identifying human and material resources for learning, choosing and implementing appropriate learning strategies, and evaluating learning outcomes.”

2. Increasing Experience

Firstly adults are seen as fully formed human beings with a lifetime of experience to draw from. They are not merely “empty vessels” to be filled up with knowledge, rather they bring their own diverse experience and knowledge and are able to apply it to new learning. Adults build an increasing reservoir of experience. This increasing experience becomes a deepening resource

for their learning. As children mature into adulthood, their experience increases and certain things become more intuitive.

3. Increasing Readiness to Learn

As the roles of an adult expand into employee, spouse or citizen their readiness to learn becomes directed towards these roles. The learning needs to be relevant to these roles. Adults are often juggling their learning around other commitments such as work and family, so they need their learning to be efficient. They need to know *why* they are learning and they need to be able to see the practical or even conceptual application of what they are learning to their lives. They are goal-focused and want timely learning. Their training must meet their needs, be relevant and help them achieve their goals.

4. A Shifting Application and Orientation

As a person matures, the application of their learning becomes more problem-centered and relates directly to their context. A familiar exclamation to hear from a young student in high-school or university is how is this relevant to me? Adults encounter problems, learn how to solve them, reflect and then apply the knowledge gained to solve the problems.

5. An Internal Motivation to Learn

The drive to learn is intrinsic for the self-directed learner. The pursuit of learning is for the sake of learning itself and an understanding that growth comes as a result of learning. In contrast, when learning is extrinsic, it is projected onto the person with rewards offered as an exchange for learning. Adults find themselves in unfamiliar situations and need skills and knowledge to overcome these situations. Adults pursue this education.

APPLICATION IN COACHING

Michelle Lubin's paper on *Coaching the Adult Learner* provides some useful insights into what coaches can do in practice with their clients. The first insight relates to understanding the why behind the learning process. The coaches talked about the importance of needing to know the goals the clients had set for themselves. What is it that the client is bringing to the table? If the client is unsure, then you may need to assist the client to inquire deeper into the why by offering up a suggestion or tool to use. If you offer up a suggestion, then space must be made for the

learner to explore how it is relevant to them, how it is important to their situation and why it might be a significant action for them.

In her paper, Sharan Merriam mentions it is crucial that this process is self-directed as adults prefer this. They need to be in charge of their own learning, to be offered choice and be encouraged to set their own learning goals. Clients need to figure out for themselves what the benefits of learning are instead of the coach telling them. People aren't so open to being told what to do without the invitation to do so. It can feel a little intrusive. A useful approach is to be curious about the dialogue of the client and reflect back that dialogue in a way that shows understanding of the client and their context. If the client is stuck, then asking to offer a suggestion is a gentle point of entry. Knowles also has an "androlgical design process" that coaches may find useful to employ. This process is as follows:

1. Session or Life design setting;
2. Involving clients in mutual planning;
3. Involving clients in diagnosing their own needs for Life/work;
4. Involving clients in formulating their Life/work; objectives;
5. Involving clients in designing Life/work; plans;
6. Helping clients carry out their Life/work; plans;
7. Involving clients in evaluating their learning.

Given these features of adult learning, it is easy to see why so many schools are now employing coaches alongside teachers, or even adopting a coach approach to their teaching. Adults are self-directed and ready to learn with important contributions to offer.

IMPACT Model

This process has six elements: identify life chapters, make sense of transitions, plan, act, consider and track. The power of this model is in the foundations of the process. At the beginning of the process, clients are asked to identify life chapters and make sense of their transitions. These components form structured reflective practice and have great potential for transformative learning. The model then provides opportunities to explore life experiences in more depth.

Visible Thinking Routines

Project Zero from Harvard University aims to understand and enhance learning, thinking and creativity for individuals and groups in the arts and other disciplines. While directed more at classroom environments, some routines will relate to the thinking and reflection of the individual. Take the “I used to think.... but not I think” routine. This routine helps learners to reflect on their thinking about a topic or issue and explore how and why that thinking has changed.

Mistakes — The Best Way to Learn

Thomas Edison (the inventor of the light bulb) famously said "I have not failed 1,000 times. I have successfully discovered 1,000 ways to NOT make a light bulb." This tool asks the client to come up with 5 events in their life where a mistake was made and some learning resulted from it.

Blended Coaching

In a blended coaching approach, the coach works with clients using a blend of pure, non-directive form of coaching with some other modality. Common examples of this are coaching and consulting, coaching and therapy, or coaching and training.

Blended Coaching is a style of coaching that incorporates coaching skills or a coaching mindset with some other discipline or service. For example a manager might use coaching skills to motivate staff or improve performance. A trainer might deliver a training session with a group then add some individual coaching sessions to help with integration and skill implementation.

This style of coaching is also sometimes referred to as a “coach approach”. A coach approach uses the transferable elements of coaching to enhance other conversations or engagements. It seeks to get better outcomes by replacing traditional modes of achieving results like directing or telling with more client driven modes such as questioning, collaboration and reflection.

Not everyone was a supporter of Blended coaching, especially in the early days when coaching was first establishing itself as an industry. Understandably one of the key challenges at this time was to differentiate coaching from other forms of ‘helping’ such as consulting, training, mentoring and counselling. And for this reason the ICF, and many of the early writers - Downey (1999), Whitmore (2002), and Flaherty (1999) - pushed for a “pure” form of coaching that was tightly defined.

Coaching, in its purest form, and the form defined by the ICF, is a wholly client driven experience. The coaches’ role is to partner with the client in a “thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”²

² ICF Definition of Coaching <https://coachfederation.org/about>

This definition of coaching leaves no room for the coach to give the client advice or in any way influence the direction the client takes. And, in fact, even now the ICF competencies are very strict in this regard and in order to achieve ACC, PCC, or MCC credential you are required to demonstrate pure 'client driven' coaching. However in a blended coaching context this might not always be the case. The coach might blend the pure, non-directive form of coaching with some other modality. Common examples of this are coaching and consulting, or coaching and training.

HOW COACHING CAN BE BLENDED

1. Structurally

Coaching can be added or inserted into some other program or service. One of the core features of coaching, and one that differentiates it from other modalities is accountability. Services such as therapy or training finish when the client walks out the door, same with accountants, financial planners, physiotherapists etc. In fact most other 'helping' professions offer advice and value in the session but very rarely follow up or set accountability structures in place. Coaching on the other hand has accountability built in; if you don't leave your client with an action plan at the end of a session it is not coaching.

There is research to show that by adding coaching to other modalities you can strengthen the service being added and provide better outcomes for your clients. Training is a perfect example of this. By giving each person a coach at the end of the training you can ensure the skills and knowledge they learned in the sessions can be implemented and integrated into their lives outside the sessions. So for example, you might run an 8 week training program with a group of 30 students, then include a weekly one on one coaching call with each individual student. Or you might run a 4 day leadership program and include group coaching as one of the elements of the program.

2. Inside the Sessions

This is sometimes called using a "coach approach" to service delivery and it is when you leverage coaching skills to enhance your service. Skills like active listening, powerful questioning, giving effective feedback etc, can increase the likelihood of success with clients.

As a financial planner, clients come to you for financial planning advice. As a financial planner with coaching skills, you can really get to the core of what someone wants out of life and what financial stability looks like for them and then you will advise your client on the best way to go about achieving their goal. As a personal trainer or nutritionist, you will tailor an exercise or eating plan to suit your client based on your expertise but you can also use your coaching skills to uncover and help with roadblocks to achieving weight loss or a balanced diet.

In her article “Blending Consulting and Coaching for Real Value”, Cheryl C. Belles describes it like this:

“Consider this a bell curve. At one end of the curve is pure consulting, at the other end is pure coaching. In the middle, for each consultation (or meeting with a client), there exists an optimum blend of coaching and consulting behaviours.”

COMMON BLENDING COACHING SCENARIOS

Blending Coaching and Training

Training is the ability to impart specific new knowledge. Blending training and coaching will allow for better training where the trainee takes responsibility for their own learning, see how that learning is beneficial to what they are doing and be a willing and active and engaged participant in the training. For example training staff on new software or training staff in a new or different process but combining that with coaching so that staff understand why change is needed, how it will impact them, how they feel about the change and how they can see a change in a positive fashion. Combining training with coaching especially in the context of organisational change will help change be accepted and embraced in a positive fashion.

Blend Coaching and Consulting

Consultants are hired for their expertise and specific knowledge. Consultants that blend coaching with their consulting skills will be able to get buy-in for new ideas and change. They will be able to actively listen and ask the right questions to then be able to give recommendations that are more likely to be accepted.

Blend Coaching With Your Current Profession

Every student who comes to ICA comes with their own unique blend of skills, knowledge and experience. Often this can come from a workplace or profession but it can also come from travel, parenting or general life experiences. You have enormous potential to blend your knowledge and experience with your coaching to reach a very unique market.

You may also like to consider blending coaching when you develop your coaching model. Are you drawing on any other philosophy or expertise when you coach? Can it be developed into a unique blended coaching model?