

From the desk of Patrisha Anne Honorary Editor

Dear Readers

Summer has been and gone leaving many of us with happy memories of soaring hitting temperatures reaching an all time high and days that were long and sweet. It was exquisite and perfectly peaceful. I even managed to fit in a few days mingling with the holiday makers and out of town visitors on my local beach. By the amount of sun, sea and sand worshipers lying around or swimming in the sea I guess they too were having fun. Oh those lazy, hazy days of summer!

Phew, but since then I've been ever so busy teaching and lecturing all over the United Kingdom and Ireland on the topic of professional coaching. The word is spreading and coaching is definitely growing. Television and radio researchers regularly seek not only my assistance with the interpretation of coaching when putting together lifestyle documentaries or chat-show style programmes but other professional coaches too. Everyday, in at least one of the selection of newspapers I read there is an article about the benefits of hiring a coach and the measurable difference it will make.

The run up to Christmas and the New Year will be traditionally busy for coaches the world over. It's the time when Jo Public decides to make new resolutions and create a different lifestyle.

Now, let's fast-forward to the structure of coaching, the process that makes coaching work. What are the strong points that help to move the process forward? What is it that we need to do to help our clients meet their own agenda? Read the article 'The Coaching Process' to learn more about the reasons for coaching and some of the techniques used by experienced coaches.

Do take a look at the AC Diary the team have been busy organising events around the country. I hope that many of you will support our programmes.

In the summer issue I asked you all to consider a 'catch phrase' for the AC Bulletin. The number and quality of entries was very en-lightning, so I've extended the deadline till the end of 2003. If you have a burning catch phrase you'd like to share with other AC Bulletin readers please send me your entry, no more than 5 words with your name and Email contact.

One more thought, we can consciously decide to take control of our lives. In our profession as professional coaches we do just that – we Walk The Talk.



COACHING LEADS TO SUCCESS

Yours in Coaching
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THE COACHING PROCESS - a simple tool

A major function of helping our clients move forward is having the skill to coach them.

It's all very well undergoing a coach training but what about the application of coaching and actually putting all the taught theory into working practice.

Many students of coaching dread the idea of actually holding their first real live coaching session.

The session could be face to face or by telephone. It doesn't really matter. What is important is that the fear the novice coach is experiencing of the process of employing their newly learned coaching knowledge with a client is speedily abated.

The most successful way of dealing with this is for the coach to choose to acknowledge those initial fears, and then to reframe them into a positive working tool. The

coach training would have dealt with this.

A simple technique is to focus on the desired outcome, which in this case is to hold a successful coaching session with the client. The process of focus can easily be achieved when the coach takes the decision that the client session is important, that it is a priority and that it is imperative to give the client value. By assigning the task in hand as a priority a positive shift will happen. A decisive plan of action will appear in your mind as if by magic and you will recognise that anything could happen. What actually happens is that you as coach harness the tools that were taught to you while in training and you switch to automatic pilot. The automatic pilot in you plays out the coaching process. You will also be able to draw on the memory of just how you played out the coaching process when you worked through the coaching case studies.

A question of CPD - Continuing Professional Development

The coaching industry is growing yet at the same time it's becoming progressively more split in terms of coaching competencies growth.

Coach training as we know it is en-lightning and any training provider worth their salt will facilitate in-depth training, yet at the same time it's increasingly difficult to benchmark. The whole evaluation process is inconsistent. Could this be due to the fact that we are as yet not able to identify what is required?

Trainee coaches seek a qualitative qualification that is universally recognised and understood by all. As the industry develops, there is a demand for transparency

to be there. How can we orchestrate that?

CPD could be the answer. It could guarantee a level standard of quality to perform exceedingly well as a coach. CPD would give commitment to develop further and provide the very best in coaching services.

If you have a burning issue you would like to discuss about your CPD as a coach I would be interested in hearing from you. I am particularly keen to establish a form of coaching CPD and procure coaching standards.



A BRIEF LOOK AT THE HISTORY OF COACHING INTELLIGENCE

Where did coaching originate from? Is it a form of instruction that allows the participant to come out on top? Do you know the answer?

Some say coaching originated from America during the early 1980's. Other sources tell us that coaching has been around since human society began.

Who can tell us the true answer? I'll take a guess that no one can.

Coaching, be it sports coaching, life skills coaching, performance arts coaching or business performance coaching comes from the starting place from the concept of winning.

Who were the first coaches? Was it our mother's who gave us those first insights into playing a winning game? What about our teachers at school. Did they really understand how we ticked and what our true dreams were? As to our peers, did they really know us? And then our work colleagues and bosses do they appreciate what we are made of and how we can contribute to the process of succeeding as a corporate entity.

I'm sure there are many guises to coaching experts. I know many people over the years who have willingly listened to me when I've needed to voice my feelings

about a specific situation in my life. Today I have a coach and have done so since the seventies. My coach is someone I can trust enough to tell my inner most thoughts and beliefs too. My coach is the person who gives me support to continually move to my next level. They understand where I am coming from. They know how to remind me of my goals. Have you got a coach?

Many individuals are basically designed to imagine what it could be like from their comfort zone. Thankfully there are many others of us who can take that fundamental idea one step further and build a winning future. We do this by adding colour to the primary picture and then organising on-going productive steps that move us to the next level.

An overall view of coaching in the twenty-first century is the knowledge that anything is possible, and the know how to identify where our actions are leading us too as individuals of the future.

One coach couldn't provide all of the answers and as we know the coach doesn't provide the definitive answers. In fact we are just beginning to discover how limitless the mind in actuality is. This suggests that there is so much more to learn. I say cheers to the coaching community and let's lay down the next part to our coaching foundations.

EXTREME SELF CARE

Separation from the controlling influences of our daily lifestyle is important. The decision to ignore the idea of extreme self care is thoughtless.

As coaches we Walk The Talk. But this can be difficult at times. Therefore it's important to claim responsibility for ourselves and acknowledge that we need some TLC as well.

In order to maintain a stress-free living environment we are very conscious of what needs to be done.

Extreme self care is only part of the package of coaching. Consider an athlete training his or her body. They follow a schedule to make separate improvements to the whole. Slowly but surely each part of the whole improves. Therefore as coaches we need to have in place a schedule of our own that purports to Walking The Talk.

Many years ago I made a discovery that changed my life for ever. I had just come away from an extremely stressful business meeting. The outcome was as I had expected. Not an exciting conclusion, rather a



EXTREME SELF CARE - Cont.

more serious one that if not handled correctly from the outset would cause complications in the future. As soon as that meeting came to a close I knew from that moment on I would take extreme self care of myself. I knew that I would do whatever it took, ethically, morally and honestly to achieve the outcome I truly wanted – not the expected historical outcome.

Today I do just that. I harness the power of emotion and direct it to where it needs to go to achieve a

realistic and productive outcome. Part of that direction is being acutely aware of what is happening around the situation, that I have a complete knowledge of the relevant circumstances and the ability to access resources appropriate to deal with the challenge in hand. The other half of that direction is to personally practice extreme self care.

GOALS AND DIRECTIONS

Beginning any journey requires a plan. As a qualified coach you would have already have been taken through the process of defining goals and understanding direction.

The principle of goal setting is not to fall into the trap of wavering back and forth between goals, but to have a specific and practical plan in place.

Sometimes the mind cannot be made up and focus is elusive. Clarity is one foggy mass and a singleness of mind is no where to be seen.

Learning to harness the whole rather than just a part is easy once you know how to. You can do that by simply understanding your own moral foundations.

The basic values you hold your life by. Your true worth. Your core principles.

In other words how much do you respect yourself?

If you wait for someone else to make changes you could be in for a long wait. It would be by far the better option to deal with the situation as it's happening, because life being what it is, it tends to give you the exact opposite, especially at the precise moment you don't need something 'negative' to happen. So, be warned when trying to hide away, because without a doubt the dreaded fear will find you. Give yourself what you truly deserve and extend your thinking to a focused goal or goals and carry through with the apposite action.



COACHING TIPS

- Build rapport with your client at the outset of the coaching partnership. Without rapport you don't have a coaching partnership.
- Employ your listening skills at all times. It's important that you hear what your client has to say, not what you believe you heard. Ask your client to repeat what they have told you using a different tense. This exercise will help them to truly understand what they mean when they are speaking with you. After all it's always the client agenda that we coaches work with.
- Review your goals daily and encourage your clients to do the same. Daily review throws a positive light onto the situation and helps to implement a working plan.
- Recently the Irish Times covered an event in Ireland I delivered. The talk was on the topic of LifeCoaching. After the presentation I was asked what one coaching tip would I offer to the audience. My answer was and always is – PMA, positive mental attitude. PMA is a great tool and is a major part of a coach's life.

SMART

The objectives of using the SMART model to work harder.

- S – Specific** Clearly defined objectives with learning and completion criteria.
- M – Measurable** Identified metrics are in place to understand the outcome.
- A – Achievable** Within the current environmental framework and existing skills.
- R – Realistic** Acknowledging what is possible and choosing the relevant resources available to obtain the desired result.
- T – Time scale** The real amount of time to be had is clearly identified.

The SMART tool can be used for both short term and long term goals. The trick is to work with the objectives of SMART.

Communication is paramount to effective coaching. It can sometimes be forgotten that communication is a process performed not in a uniform manner, but rather each individual is unique and they give out many helpful clues and signals as they speak to what is really taking place. When the coach is not fully aware of what the client is saying difficulties arise.

Those barriers can easily be eliminated by understanding the viewpoint that the client is coming from. Also to take into consideration their feelings and not to assume certain situations, particularly to assume that the real problem is one thing, when it could very well turn out to be something completely different.

The failure to listen to the emotional content of what the client is saying is a common mistake in effective communication.

To avoid the breakdown of communication it's important that the coach listen more and speak less. That way an awareness of non-verbal communication such as facial expressions and mannerisms can be taken into account as the client speaks. Particularly as many clues can be gleaned not just from what is said but also how they carry their body, physiology, in other words body language. A failure to acclimatise to the client is a sure barrier to competent listening.

Once effective communication is in place rapport is established bringing a harmony of its own to the communication. Mutual respect and trust fall naturally into place and confidence builds between the parties concerned.

8 Pointers towards effective listening.

- Filter Don't fall into the trap of hearing only what you want to hear.
- Identify You may have experienced something similar, but it could never be the same.
- Judge The professional coach does not form a judgement.
- Compare Drop the idea of comparing your lifestyle with theirs.
- Mind reading Listen carefully to what your client says and don't decide to read their mind to satisfy your imagination.
- Advice Never offer advice, always work to client agenda.
- Placate The points raised by the client are important to them; don't brush them aside in an effort to move on.
- Day dream That's OK, we all day dream!



CASE STUDY

Sylvia was only eighteen when she first decided she wanted to experience coaching. She'd read about life coaching in one of her monthly glossy magazines. The article extolled the virtues of hiring a coach to work with them and move on to the next level in life. The idea appealed to Sylvia even at her young age. She decided to investigate the costs involved in having her own life coach.

The plan was to avoid leaving full time education at the end of the coming academic year to work in an ordinary job with no interest, no motivation nor prospects. Sylvia was no great scholar and the extra two years at school had been a real challenge. What she did enjoy and exceed at though was a gift for interior design and the assistance of a small nest egg left to her by her grandmother.

Sylvia found and hired a LifeCoach. They worked on Sylvia's bigger picture. The coach deployed many of the tools learned at coach training school to help Sylvia clarify and focus on realistic goals. During the initial coaching session it was agreed that Sylvia would speak with an independent mortgage

consultant to find out if it were possible for her to put her nest egg to work and obtain a mortgage to buy a starter home. After much financial calculation and searching a mortgage lender was sourced who would be prepared to lend Sylvia the necessary money. Terms and conditions were set, an offer made and accepted. The contract drawn up and Sylvia was on her way to realising her dream of purchasing a small property with a view to designing its interior and renting it out while continuing to live at home and finish her education at Interior Design College.

Eighteen months later just before completing her course Sylvia was able to purchase a second property from the residual money ploughed back into a top earning savings account and utilising the appreciation of her initial property purchase.

Today, Sylvia is still a teenager, she'll be twenty in a few days time, and is busy organising the purchase of her third property.

Anything is possible if you have the knowledge and the courage to follow your dreams.

THE FINAL WORD

Coaching is a constantly evolving industry and this bulletin is our way of sharing with you just a few of the ideas, tools and tips involved in practicing as a professional coach. But to help us provide you with what's new in the world of coaching we need your help. You can do this by sending in your contributions, your coaching stories, your tips and your comments on books, courses or seminars. They are all welcome and will be considered for printing within these pages on its value to our readers.

I look forward to hearing from you with your views and insights into coaching. Please email me at publications@associationforcoaching.com

Yours in Coaching,

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