

# Mentoring for Change

executive mentoring and coaching, leadership, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- Working Identity
- Classic Models – Solution-Focused Coaching
- Time Management

With best wishes

*Heike the Mentor*



## Working Identity

Our increasing affluence coupled with the ever-increasing rate of change in the world of work gives us the opportunity, or sometimes the necessity, of changing careers several times during our lives. As Herminia Ibarra points out in a recent article in HBR (*How to Stay Stuck in the Wrong Career*, Dec 2002, pp 40-47), the conventional approach to this is to try to work out which career to follow and then go off and do it.

The problem is that this “plan and implement” approach doesn’t work for significant career transitions. Ibarra suggests that this is because what we do is strongly determined by our Working Identity – our sense of self in our professional roles, what we convey about our selves and others, and ultimately how we live our working lives.

If this is true then changing careers means redefining our Working Identity. We often think of ourselves as having a single monolithic identity but, as psychologists such as Roberto Assagioli, the originator of Psychosynthesis, have suggested, we are actually a multitude of selves. These selves, or sub-personalities, co-exist within us. Some get a lot of air-time, others less; some we are comfortable with, others we fear or deny; some inspire us, others keep us wedded to routine. But in all their variety and diversity, they contain the seeds of who we can become and of new Working Identities.

To explore these possible selves we should use instead a “test and learn” model of change in which we seek opportunities to experience different aspects of ourselves and make our alternative futures more vivid, more tangible and more doable. Ibarra identifies three basic techniques:

- **Crafting Experiments:** The only way to figure out what we really want to do is by giving it a try and

discovering if the reality matches our fantasies. Most people create new identities on the side at first, for example by getting involved in extracurricular activities and weekend projects.

- **Shifting Connections:** Who we spend time with influences who we become. So another thing we can do is to find people who can help us see who we are becoming and help us grow into our new selves. This may be an individual mentor or coach, or a group such as a new professional community.
- **Making Sense:** We are the stories that we tell about ourselves. Therefore key to redefining our Working Identity is finding a new, more meaningful story to tell about who we are and who we are becoming. We must tell and retell our story, allowing it to evolve.

Each of these approaches will require many iterations – we try some activity and discover that we love one part of it but can’t stand another part so we craft a new experiment; or we try telling a different story about what we’re doing with our lives and notice which parts resonate.

Ibarra gives an example of Gary, a former investment banker, whose possible selves included a “ditch it all and open a tour-guide business with my wife in the south of France” self; a socially respectable “junior partner” self that his parents would have endorsed; a youthful, outdoorsy “follow your passion” self who renounced convention and wanted to open a scuba business; a “responsible spouse and future parent” self who wanted to make good dual-career decisions; and various others.

Gary dabbled in wine tours and flirted with buying a scuba diving operation; he used his alumni and company networks; and he also grasped the opportunity to work

## Classic Models – Solution-Focused Coaching

Many of our approaches to change are problem-focussed – in that we attempt to move forward by exploring the problem: we try to understand what the problem is, what has caused it, and what we need to do to get rid of it. This works well in many situations, particularly those involving machines and other man-made artefacts. For example, we may notice that our car seems rather sluggish which prompts us to inspect the wheels. We discover that one of the tyres is flat and so replace it – problem solved!

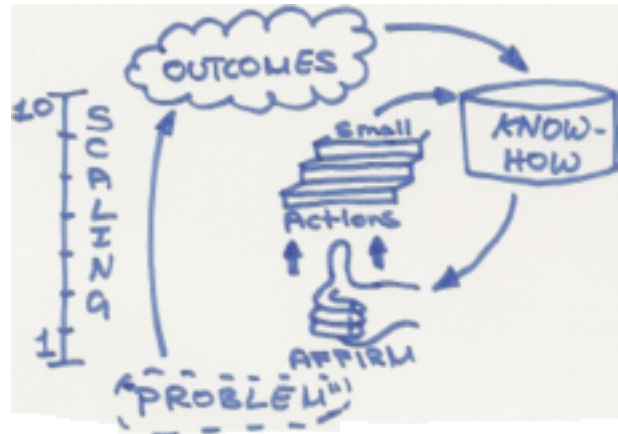
But when we are working with people, diagnosing the problem often gives us little indication of the solution and indeed may even make the situation worse! Fortunately there is another way – we can focus on solutions instead. At heart this solution-focused approach involves:

- finding out what works and doing more of it
- stopping doing what doesn't work and doing something else.

It doesn't mean that we refuse to discuss the problem but it does mean that we use any problem discussion to discover what the person wants to do, to learn about their commitment and passion, and to unearth evidence of skills and resources they are already using

**OSCAR** is a framework for solution-focused coaching:

1. **O**UTCOME:
  - What is the objective of this coaching?
  - What do you want to achieve today?
2. **S**CALING:
  - On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing the worst it has ever been and 10 the preferred future, where would you put the situation today?



- You are at n now; what did you do to get this far?
  - How would you know you had got to n+1?
3. **K**NOW-HOW & RESOURCES:
    - What helps you perform at n on the scale, rather than 0?
    - When does the outcome already happen for you - even a little bit?
    - What did you do to make that happen? How did you do that?
  4. **A**FFIRM AND ACTION:
    - What's already going well?
    - What is the next small step?
    - You are at n now, what would it take to get you to n+1?
  5. **R**EWIEW:
    - What's better?
    - What did you do that made the change happen?
    - What effects have the changes had?
    - What do you think will change next?

More at [www.thesolutionsfocus.com](http://www.thesolutionsfocus.com)

for a long admired role model. His exploration finally led him to a job as an internal venture capitalist, a role that allowed him to use his skill set in consulting and finance but granted him creative latitude and total ownership of his results.

### Time Management

Over the years I have tried many different ways to improve my use of time and be more productive at work. Whatever I try, I find that initially the new technique makes a real difference – but only for a short while.

I've finally realised that this is less to do with the technique itself and much more to do with the thoughtfulness that applying a new technique requires. Applying any new technique initially forces me to think about my priorities and focus on where my time is going. But then, as I become more skilled in using the technique, so I stop thinking about it.

And so I've come to a much simpler – but more challenging – approach in which I keep asking myself "What do I do now?" Tim Gallwey, in his book (*The Inner Game of Work*) has a neat little process (which he calls "The tool of all tools") for this called **STOP**:

- **S**tep back – from action, emotion and thinking
- **T**hink – about what's most important here
- **O**rganise your thoughts – to create coherence
- **P**roceed – when purpose and next steps are clear.

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- Classic Models – Core Qualities
- Parallel Worlds
- Endings

With best wishes

*Mike the Mentor*



## Parallel Worlds

I spent a few days last month walking along Offa's Dyke, the ancient boundary between England and Wales built by King Offa in the 8<sup>th</sup> Century. In May, the border country is stunningly beautiful with the fresh growth, the extraordinary range of greens and the delicate hedgerow flowers. When all I had to do each day was to walk to my destination for the day, life became very simple, divorced as I was from the everyday complexity that I, like most of us, am usually immersed in.

Having finished the walking, I was on a bus travelling home gazing at the passing countryside and I noticed my mind turning back to my everyday life and to the tasks and obligations awaiting me – the 'musts', the 'shoulds', next week's schedule, and so on.

And then I saw through the window a path leading across a field to a stile and beyond the path continuing into the countryside. And, for a few seconds, I was on that path, stepping over the stile and disappearing back into the simpler, carefree world I had inhabited the last few days.

What I learned in that moment is how thin the line between the different ways we approach our lives are – and also how wide the gulf between them! Back in my everyday life it is so easy to fall victim to the complexity of my outer life – and it is possible, even in the midst of this – to choose the path of simplicity.

*"Asceticism is not that you should not own anything, but that nothing should own you." Ali Ibn Abi Talib*

## Endings

We tend to avoid endings, to rush over them, to pretend there're not really happening and try to avoid experiencing them fully. But endings in coaching and mentor-

ing are potentially one of the most powerful parts of the relationship. They offer the opportunity not only to review the journey and consolidate the learnings but also for the coachee to reclaim and revitalise parts of themselves.

One of our aims in working as coaches and mentors is to evoke from our clients the fullness of who they are. And one way we do this is by embodying qualities that the coachee is not yet able to fully manifest. So the coachee may see us as having insight, understanding, balance, etc but not recognise these qualities within themselves – though they must have these qualities themselves to some extent since how else could they recognise them in us? In psychological terms, this is "projection" whereby one's own traits, emotions and qualities are ascribed to another. It is most commonly encountered when looking at unwanted feelings but applies equally with positive qualities.

One thing we are continually doing throughout the coaching is helping clients re-own these projections – helping them see and develop their strengths and recognise their own developing insight, balance and so forth. But it is likely that, at the end of the coaching, our clients are still lodging parts of themselves in us, and are still projecting onto us qualities which they don't realise that they also possess.

I therefore use a simple ritual to return these projections and bring to a close the coaching relationship. This is done right at the end of the final session. It is designed particularly to help clients own their ability to self-coach but also provides the opportunity to re-own other qualities too. I start by explaining that we are about to complete the coaching process with a short ritual.

The next and key step is to uncover at least some of the remaining projections. I ask the coachee what qualities they have noticed me bringing to our work together and

## Classic Models – Core Qualities

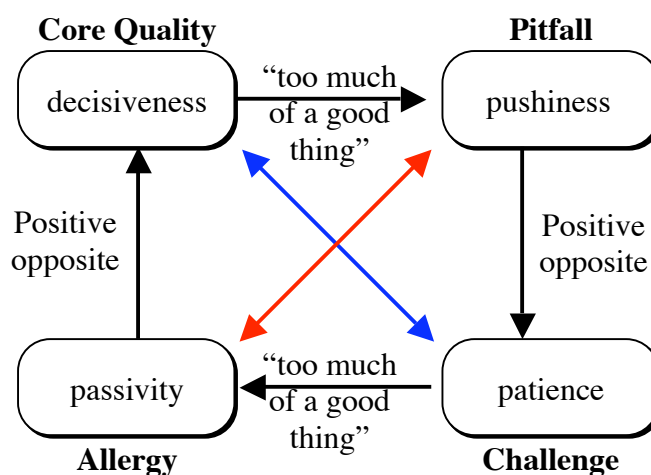
One way of enabling a person to become more aligned with their true nature is to help them recognise their Core Qualities and see the dynamics behind them. Core Qualities (CQs) are attributes that form part of our essence (core). We often take them for granted, not realising that these natural abilities are part of what makes us uniquely who we are.

Examples of CQs are determination, consideration for others, precision, courage, receptivity, orderliness, empathy, flexibility, etc. The more we are tuned into our CQs, the more inspiring and motivated we become.

If this were all that there was to it, life would be straightforward. But every CQ has a dark side or *pitfall* - the result of overdeveloping the CG. Jim, a senior salesman in a corporate bank, saw himself as decisive. But he often over-played this decisiveness and was generally seen by his colleagues as pushy. So too much of a good thing becomes a person's *pitfall* and turns a strength into a weakness.

Besides a *pitfall*, a person's CQ also comes with a *challenge*. The *challenge* is the positive quality which is the opposite of the *pitfall*. For Jim the *challenge* was to develop patience. Jim had to find ways of striking the right balance between the CQ and the *challenge*, for example by being both decisive and patient at the same time. It was not a matter of being less decisive out of a fear of being pushy, but of developing a "patient decisiveness". (This is the same idea as Psycho-synthesis's "synthesis of opposites" which is part of the process whereby we can become more whole)

However what makes this challenging to do is that people are typically allergic to an excess of their own



*challenge* (particularly when it is embodied in another person). And when we are confronted by our own *allergy*, we tend to fall into our own *pitfall*. For example Jim was infuriated by others' passivity and reacted by becoming increasingly pushy (his *pitfall*). But he eventually came to see that what he was allergic to in others (passivity) was actually an excess of the quality he most needed (patience).

In this model, to heal yourself is to become more whole. Jim did this by practicing the synthesis of his CQ (decisiveness) and his *challenge* (patience). As they came into balance so they began to merge and he found that he not only fell into his *pitfall* less often but he also started to value more the patience of others. Jim had moved to a new level of integration.

An excellent free introduction to Core Qualities can be downloaded from <http://www.kernkonsultusa.com/html/menu/products.htm>

what skills and strengths they have seen in me. I encourage them to be as exhaustive as they can. I also suggest qualities that I believe they may see in me based on our work together over the course of the coaching. (When I first started doing this, I was afraid that I would be seen as being self-indulgent so I would explain the process in advance. But this dilutes its effectiveness and I now risk being momentarily seen as seeking praise for the much greater impact the ritual can have.)

Once these projections are clear, I come clean on the process and explain that these qualities that the coachee has identified are actually their own. I also explain that we are about to perform a ritual to enable the coachee to reclaim these qualities and the resources they bring.

I ask the coachee to be as aware as they can of the qualities they have seen in me (I will have noted them earlier and now say them back to the coachee). I tell the coachee that I am going to get up from my chair but will leave these qualities behind.

I get out of the chair reminding the coachee to see the qualities as being left behind in the chair. I then ask the coachee to, with consciousness, sit in my chair and as they do so, to "sit into" the qualities and absorb them. I ask them about the experience to check it has worked.

This process of re-owning these projections can be a powerful experience for the coachee and they often report a very real and visceral experience of feeling these qualities within them. The coach too will notice a tangible shift in their relationship with the coachee and a clear sense that the relationship has now changed.

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*In a reflective mood as I approach my 50th birthday, this newsletter contains some thoughts from the midpoint of what I hope will be a personal century! It also features a story from John Fowles' *The Magus* which I have long enjoyed and which has a particular resonance for me now.*

With best wishes

*Mike the Mentor*



## Reflections

Ten years ago my 40<sup>th</sup> birthday came and went with barely a trace. I was focused on building my business and on my four year old son and ten month old daughter. Another year on the clock, even if it took me into another decade, had no meaning or significance for me.

Ten years on, as I approach my 50<sup>th</sup> birthday, it all seems very different. Becoming 50 feels like a major transition, a significant staging point on my journey though life. Why? What is it about this mid-life transition (whenever it falls for us each personally) that gives it such force? One aspect is eloquently expressed by the poet John O'Donohoe:

*"There is a presence who walks the road of life with you. This presence accompanies your every moment. It shadows your every thought and feeling. On your own, or with others, it is always there with you. When you were born, it came out of the womb with you; with the excitement of your arrival, nobody noticed it. Though this presence surrounds you, you may still be blind to its companionship. The name of this presence is death."* (Anam Cara, 1997, page 243).

This blindness, aided by a younger me's belief that I was going to live for ever, has begun to lift as my parents age, my children grow, and my body, as Leonard Cohen so starkly puts it, "*aches in the places where I used to play*". There are other factors too. As I write this, I am sitting in a train in the Vale of Evesham which an hour

ago hit a van full of fruit pickers which was crossing an unmanned level crossing. We have just heard that at least three are dead. There are always reminders of the fragility of this life. So, although there is (probably) quite a bit of time left, for me it is visibly running out.

We try to blot out death, to never grow old and to stay young forever – because we (or at least our egos) fear death. We believe that if we let in an awareness of death it will obliterate us. And yet, as many writers have observed, it is precisely this awareness of death that can allow us to live life to the fullest – to be most alive.

Carlos Castaneda explains how to approach this awareness "*To be a warrior a man has to be, first of all, and rightfully so, keenly aware of his own death. But to be concerned with death would force any one of us to focus on the self and that would be debilitating. So the next thing one needs to be a warrior is detachment. The idea of imminent death, instead of becoming an obsession, becomes an indifference.*"

Easier said than done! But, as I approach my half-century, I find myself drawn to the challenge of not just being aware of death but seeing it as an ally. If I can prevent myself from overwhelmed by it, being able to live with the awareness that I will die creates the impetus to align my life with what is fundamentally of importance to me. Just as the oft used coaching question "What would you like your epitaph to be?" connects me to a bigger context, so the awareness of the presence of death

## ***The Prince and The Magician***

Once upon a time there was a young prince who believed in all things but three. He did not believe in princesses, he did not believe in islands, he did not believe in God. His father, the king, told him that such things did not exist. As there were no princesses or islands in his father's domains, and no sign of God, the young prince believed his father.

But then, one day, the prince ran away from his palace. He came to the next land. There, to his astonishment, from every coast he saw islands, and on these islands, strange and troubling creatures whom he dared not name. As he was searching for a boat, a man in full evening dress approached him along the shore.

'Are those real islands?' asked the young prince.

'Of course they are real islands,' said the man in evening dress.

'And those strange and troubling creatures?'

'They are all genuine and authentic princesses.'

'Then God also must exist!' cried the prince.

'I am God,' replied the man in full evening dress, with a bow.

The young prince returned home as quickly as he could.

'So you are back,' said his father, the king.

'I have seen islands, I have seen princesses, I have seen God,' said the prince reproachfully.

The king was unmoved.

'Neither real islands, nor real princesses, nor a real God, exist.'

'I saw them!'

'Tell me how God was dressed.'

'God was in full evening dress.'

'Were the sleeves of his coat rolled back?'

The prince remembered that they had been. The king smiled.

'That is the uniform of a magician. You have been

deceived.'

At this, the prince returned to the next land, and went to the same shore, where once again he came upon the man in full evening dress.

'My father, the king, has told me who you are', said the young prince indignantly. 'You deceived me last time, but not again. Now I know that those are not real islands and real princesses, because you are a magician.'

The man on the shore smiled.

'It is you who are deceived, my boy. In your father's kingdom there are many islands and many princesses. But you are under your father's spell, so you cannot see them.'

The prince returned pensively home. When he saw his father, he looked him in the eyes.

'Father, is it true that you are not a real king, but only a magician?'

The king smiled and rolled back his sleeves.

'Yes my son, I am only a magician.'

'Then the man on the shore was God.'

'The man on the shore was another magician.'

'I must know the real truth, the truth beyond magic.'

'There is no truth beyond magic' said the king.

The prince was full of sadness.

He said, 'I will kill myself'.

The king by magic caused death to appear. Death stood in the door and beckoned to the prince. The prince shuddered. He remembered the beautiful but unreal islands and the unreal but beautiful princesses.

'Very well,' he said. 'I can bear it.'

'You see, my son,' said the king, 'you too now begin to be a magician.'

*From "The Magus" by John Fowles, published by Jonathan Cape, 1977.*

connects me to my sense of purpose and brings that purpose into the present moment.

If I also recognise that death is inevitable and unavoidable, then I realise too that there is no point in wasting my energy in worrying about it. Instead I can use its presence to sharpen my thinking and connect me to what is of real importance in my life.

Again, as Casteneda says: "A warrior thinks of death when things become unclear."

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- Energy
- “A Mind Once Coached Never Returns To Its Original Shape”
- In Praise of Ignorance!

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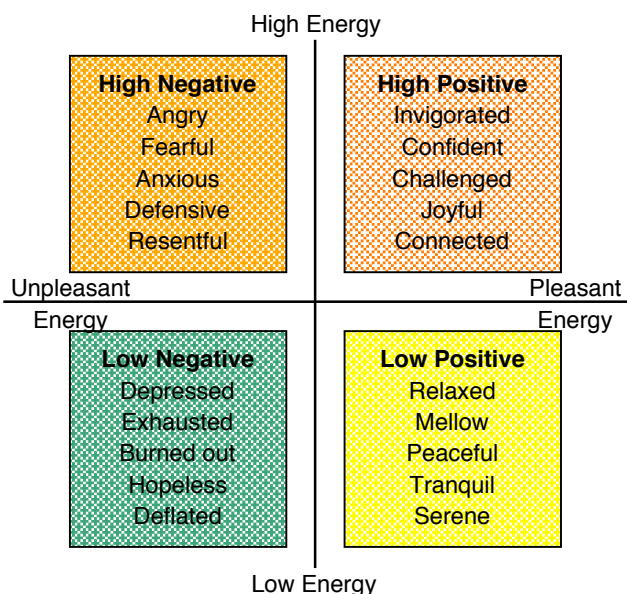


## Energy

A recent book by Jim Loehr and Tony Schwartz (*On Form*, Nicholas Brealey, 2003) asserts that “managing Energy, not Time, is the key to high performance, health and happiness”. They identify four separate but related sources of energy we each have access to:

- physical energy - the *quantity* of our energy
- emotional energy - the *quality* of our energy
- mental energy - the *focus* of our energy
- spiritual energy - the *force* of our energy.

The chart shows the dynamics of energy for the physical and emotional dimensions. Full engagement and maximum performance are possible only in the High



Positive quadrant. To sustain this and maximise our available energy we must:

- renew our energy to replenish our energy reserves - most of us are over-trained mentally and emotionally (not enough recovery)
- increase our capacity to store energy – most of us are under-trained physically and spiritually (not enough stress/stretch).

### Energy Renewal

Core to energy renewal is recovery. Following a period of physical activity, the body must replenish fundamental biochemical sources of energy to recover the energy that has been expended. If we don't do this, our performance deteriorates. We can maximise our available physical energy by breathing deeply, smoothly and rhythmically; eating five to six low calorie, high nutrition meals to sustain our energy throughout the day; drinking 4 pints of water a day; ensuring we get enough quality sleep, doing regular strength and cardio-vascular training; and taking a recovery break every 90 to 120 minutes.

Recovery is just as important in the other energy domains.

- **Emotional:** In order to perform at our best, we must access pleasant and positive emotions. Any activity that is enjoyable, fulfilling and affirming serves as a source of emotional renewal and recovery.
- **Mental:** Mental capacity is what we use to organise our lives and focus our attention. The mental energy that best serves full engagement is realistic optimism - seeing the world as it is, but always working positively towards a desired outcome or solution.

## **“A Mind Once Coached Never Returns To Its Original Shape”**

Shortly after I sent out the September edition of the newsletter, I received the following email with the title above from one of my subscribers:

... Anyway, my purpose for writing was to say that having spent many years in banking I discovered through coaching that my destiny lay elsewhere. (Myles and The School of Coaching course (including you) acted as the catalyst). After I completed that course I drove home very disturbed. I realized that working in banking had changed me, I had adapted to my surroundings, but I knew now that deep down I was not happy, I felt a long way from home. It took me a little while to pluck up courage and leave. By the time I left I was a managing director in a huge investment bank. A job many would dream of having, I hated it, particularly being away all week from my wife and family, we were slowly growing apart.

I left in 2001 with no real plan. My wife fixed up for me to spend some of that summer and some time each summer ever since working for a small circus

([www.giffordscircus.com](http://www.giffordscircus.com)), a long held dream come true. I did some coaching for a small Coaching and Leadership organisation and explored the world of NLP and even became an NLP practitioner.

At about the same time my wife and I imported some alpacas from Peru and started to breed them. We are now in the process of selling everything we have in the UK and buying a small ranch in Oregon where we will breed alpacas as our only source of income. I will miss the circus but not the bank.

If you ever want to tell my story to anyone who thinks that coaching can't achieve significant and lasting change in your life feel free.

You can't have everything you want but you can have anything you want.

All the very best

Adrian

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- **Spiritual** energy provides the force for all action in all dimensions of our lives. It fuels passion, perseverance and commitment. Spiritual energy is derived from a connection to deeply held values and a purpose beyond our self-interest.

### Increasing Capacity

Whichever the energy modality, the way we increase our energy capacity is by pushing past our current limits and then allowing time for recovery. To build muscle strength, we must systematically stress the muscle, expending energy beyond normal levels. If we then allow the muscle to rest, it will grow stronger and better able to handle the next challenge. This principle is well known in developing physical strength, but it is just as relevant in building “muscles” in the other areas – from empathy and patience, through focus and creativity to integrity and commitment. The challenge in building emotional, mental or physical strength is that many of us shy away from the discomfort that pushing past our current limits causes.

### **In Praise of Ignorance!**

I've written in an earlier newsletter of the virtues of incompetence – now its time to laud ignorance! As a recent article in Harvard Business Review (“Wanted: Chief Ignorance Officer”, November 2004) points out, ignorance is a precious resource. Whereas knowledge is infinitely re-usable, ignorance is a one-shot deal: once it has been displaced by knowledge, it's very hard to get back. And once its gone, we tend to follow the well worn paths in our thinking rather than striking out into the

unknown. But if we can cultivate a healthy ignorance, then we can increase our ability to be creative and innovative. So, how to do this? The article suggests four principles:

1. **Deferment:** Delay jumping to conclusions – or even to hypotheses. Instead hang out in not knowing.
2. **Prematurity:** Be willing to act before you have complete knowledge since critical learning often comes from adjusting to unforeseen circumstances.
3. **Irrelevance:** Seek inspiration from the seemingly irrelevant and look at things from unexpected vantage points.
4. **Waste:** Be like the natural world – expect only a few of your seeds to blossom.

Of course, to claim to be trying to develop our ignorance may not go down too well with our boss so instead we can talk of developing our “nescience” - which merely means the lack of knowledge but sounds so much more impressive! Paying attention to ignorance/nescience can remind us that, if we want knowledge that is worth managing, we have to create it first.

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- The Star Diagram
- Classic Models – The 7 Eyed Supervision Model
- Emergence and Coaching

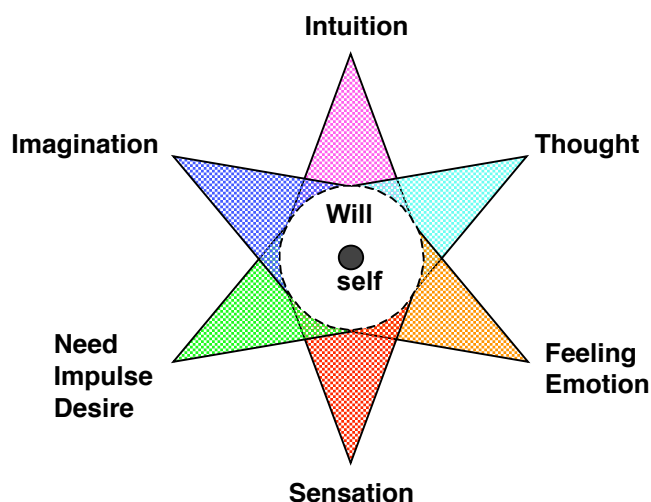
With best wishes

*Mike the Mentor*



## The Star Diagram / Personality Functions

There is one model that I draw for my clients more than any other – and that's The Star Diagram:



It pictures us as being a conscious I or self with a number of personality functions which the self relates to through the agency of Will. I use this model to help people realise that they are more than their thoughts feelings, bodies and so forth – and that they have a centre from which they can orchestrate and direct these various functions of their personality.

For example my mind often runs off on its own thinking about upcoming meetings, imagining what to say and what might go wrong – and this in turns evokes worry and even indigestion! In situations like this my mind is effectively out of control – it is determining my experience and not serving me well. When I recognise this is happening and, critically, when I recognise that I

can choose not to listen to my mind, I start to choose my experience and my reality.

Any of these different functions can take control –our fears, by our pursuit of physical pleasure, or by our need to be loved can all control us. I know one person who is controlled by their intuition. When faced with a choice, his intuition often 'tells' him what to do - and though this is frequently something that he doesn't want to do and thinks is not the right thing to do, he still does it - because he 'knows' that to not do it would be disastrous!

The challenge is to be master or mistress of our personality, not a slave to it. We need to develop the skill to choose and act from that central place – to be able to exert our Will – rather than have our choices and actions determined by functions such as our thoughts, feelings and so on. And the first step is to recognise our own centre distinct from our thoughts, feelings, and all the other aspects of our personality. So that when I say, "I choose this" it really is me who is choosing and not some rogue part of my personality! (More in any standard Psychosynthesis book. Two excellent handbooks on liberating ourselves from our feelings and thoughts are Susan Jeffers' "Feel the Fear and Do It Anyway" and Eckhart Tolle's "The Power of Now".)

## Emergence and Coaching

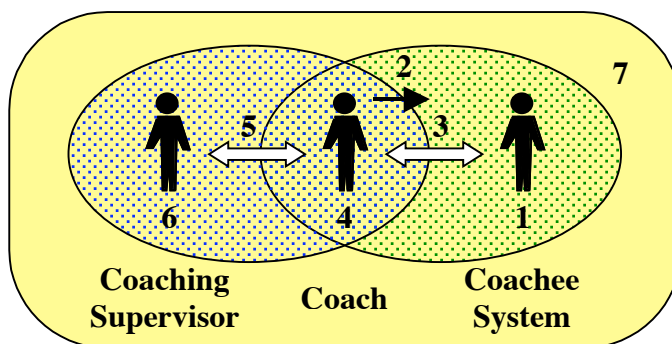
I was recently reading an article by my next-door neighbour on security in military communication systems (he is a senior scientist at Qinetiq, the former MOD facility here in Malvern which was privatised a few years ago). The paper makes the unexpected point that systems engineering can no longer be the tool of choice in producing the secure systems the military needs. Instead he says "... if we do not learn how to exploit

## Classic Models – The 7 Eyed Supervision Model

Coaching Supervision is about ensuring high quality coaching provision and takes the form of ongoing meetings between the supervisor and the coach. With the increasing professionalisation of coaching and mentoring, the importance and role of coaching supervision has become a hot topic.

One way of looking at the process of supervision is provided by the 7-Eyed model. Originally developed for use with psychotherapists and counsellors, it is now being applied to coaching and mentoring. It specifies the 7 areas that supervision can focus on:

1. **The Coachee System:** The focus is on the coachee situation – the problem the coachee wants help with, how they present the issues and the choices that they are making.
2. **The Coach's Interventions:** The focus is on the interventions the coach made, how and why they made them, and what else they might have done.
3. **The Relationship between the Coach and Coachee:** The focus is on neither the coach nor their coachee but on the conscious and unconscious interactions between the two of them so that the coach develops a better understanding of the dynamics of the coaching relationship.
4. **The Coach:** The focus is on the coach's own experience as an instrument for registering what is happening beneath the surface of the coachee system.
5. **The Parallel Process:** The focus is on what the coach has absorbed from the coachee system and how it may be playing out in the relationship between coach and supervisor.
6. **The Coaching Supervisor's Self-reflection:** The focus is the supervisor's "here and now"



experience with the coach and how this can be used to shed light on the coach/coachee relationship.

7. **The Wider Context:** The focus is on the wider organisational, social, cultural, ethical, and contractual context within which the supervision is taking place.

In focussing on areas 1-3, the supervision is concerned with reflecting on the coaching session itself – its content, the interventions made, and the dynamics of the coaching relationship.

In areas 4-6, the supervision is concerned with the coaching session as it is reflected in the here and now experience of the supervision session.

The value of this model is that it maps the areas that supervision can focus on, making it easier to ensure that we have covered the ground. And by changing the labels in the diagram above, we can equally well use it as a model for what we can focus on in a coaching session!

More on this model and supervision in general in "Supervision in the Helping Professions" by Peter Hawkins and Robin Shohet, ISBN: 0 335 20117 2.

[emergent phenomena] then we may never know about some of the capabilities that are waiting to be used because they exist at a higher level of abstraction, of which we are currently unaware - one that conventional approaches will never reveal to us, but that an opponent could exploit."

As I read this, I started to wonder what I do to encourage my clients' unknown capabilities to emerge in our coaching sessions. It can be tempting to try and 'engineer' coaching sessions so as to ensure consistent, predictable outcomes. And the tools we use, the GROW model, goal setting forms, developmental models, etc) do clearly have value (just as systems engineering has value for parts of the security system infrastructure). But I also know that some of my best coaching occurs when I move beyond the known into the space where the unknown can emerge. And its not just about moving into

the unknown. It's about creating a space in that unknown for newness (new insight new ways of seeing, new ways of being) to occur. But, given the unpredictability of emergent phenomena, how can we do this in such a way as to encourage and enable creative and productive emergence?

Let me know of any ideas you have – I'll collate and publish them.

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# Mentoring for Change

executive mentoring and coaching, leadership, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- Guilt is Good for You!
- Classic Models – The Internal and External Model of Development
- The Coaching Study 2004

With best wishes

*Mike the Mentor*



## Guilt is Good for You!

Well, it can be. I have a client who always puts others first – and its ruining his life! He wants to value himself and feel self-confident – but whenever he puts his needs before those of his family, fiends or colleagues – or even thinks of so doing – he immediately feels guilty. So I suggested that he first accept that he will feel guilty when he puts himself first - and then choose to put himself first and feel the guilt anyway. Which is fine as far as it goes – but it’s a difficult instruction to follow. No one finds it easy to choose uncomfortable or painful feelings which you may have spent a lifetime trying to avoid.

So here’s the reframe we found which changes the guilt from an enemy to an ally. When he feels the guilt, this is a clear indicator that he is putting himself first – so the more guilt he feels, the more he is achieving his goal! By choosing to hold this way of experiencing his guilt as information rather than emotional state he has been able change his behaviour and then his self-image. And in doing this, the guilt is gradually dissolving in the light of his growing self-confidence.

## The Coaching Study 2004

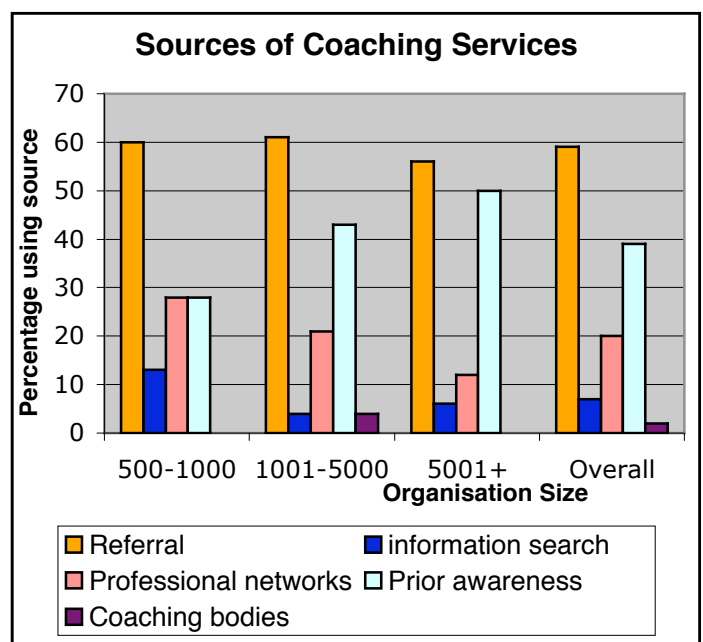
The recently published Coaching Study 2004 reports on research undertaken on the provision of coaching in the UK. 110 organisations participated in the survey including organisations such as RBS, Unilever, Cadbury Schweppes, Bank of England, and MG Rover.

As a provider of coaching services, the following findings particularly struck me:

- The main way in which purchasers source coaching services is through word of mouth – though the chart

(below) would suggest that using known coaches is the preferred options when it exists.

- The research shows that coaching is still seen primarily as a means of supporting individuals’ needs rather than as a strategic intervention – though the results do show that large organisations are increasingly recognising the potential of coaching to support strategic initiatives. The closer integration of coaching with organisational change initiatives is something I believe we will see much more of.
- The selection criteria that purchasers apply in buying coaching are (starting with the most important): coaching experience, track record, personal style,



## Classic Models – The Internal and External Model of Development

A recent piece of research on coaching managers explores when coaching is the best choice for management development and what are the developmental areas it targets most effectively. The results are presented as a 3-part model:

- internal qualities - which are essential to on-going growth and development
- external competencies – which are key to creating change at work
- mediating skills – which act as a bridge between internal development and its external implementation.

### Internal Qualities

- **Self-awareness** consists of four elements: the ability to understand one's past and learn from it; openness to one's own and other's feelings; the ability to reflect on situations before moving to action; and the ability to make appropriate choices.
- **Confidence**: enables people to bring more of themselves into the workplace, to feel stronger and more rounded, to be more able to link their beliefs and values to their work, and to make 'tough' decisions.

All the managers in the study reported an increase in their own self-awareness and self-confidence.

### External Competencies

- **Leadership and Management**: The managers reported changes made across three areas:
  - **Individual Presence and Purpose**: Developing a wider perspective, commanding greater respect, and a greater clarity and motivation.
  - **Team Leadership**: increased openness and honesty and a greater awareness of process and content leading to more effective meetings.
  - **Task Effectiveness**: Better objective setting, more effective leadership skills, increased business performance, and a greater ability to understand systems and analyse situations.
- **Assertiveness**: Managers were more able to understand and describe their needs, skilfully express their opinions, stand up for their beliefs,

culture fit, structured approach, costs, professional standards, knowledge of organisation, issue fit, evidence of CPD, line management experience, experience of the industry, coaching qualifications, scalability, supervision of coach, presentation and materials, and finally geographic coverage.

A summary of the Study's key findings can be found at [www.originconsult.com/research.html](http://www.originconsult.com/research.html)



and to challenge and accept challenge.

- **Understanding Difference**: Many of the managers reported an increased ability to allow, accept and work with differing ideas and opinions.
- **Stress Management**: The coaching relationship provides a safe environment in which to explore fears and anxieties, to identify coping skills and strategies, and to test out new behaviours. Many managers reported feeling calmer and less angry by the end of the programme.
- **Work/Life Balance**: Managers in this study took more ownership of decisions affecting themselves and close relations, and became more pro-active in managing the various roles in their lives.

### Communication Skills

Effective communication is the channel for interactions between inner and outer development. It provides both the language for describing internal and external experiences, and the means of translating human experiences into learning and development. All the managers in the research described significant improvements in their communication skills.

What I like about this model is that it provides a framework for presenting the management development benefits that coaching can offer in a simple and readily accessible way. For a copy of the research contact Suzy Wales on [suzywales@aol.com](mailto:suzywales@aol.com)

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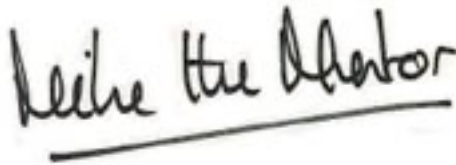
# Mentoring for Change

executive mentoring and coaching, leadership, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- The Coming Shake-Out in the Coaching World
- Classic Models – The Act of Will
- Which Mentor?

With best wishes




## The Coming Shake-Out in the Coaching World

Coaching is very much the flavour of the month at the moment. It seems that every executive has a coach. There are dozens of coach training organisations; thousands of coaches; more and more conferences; there are articles in HBR; hundreds of books on coaching; and flattering articles in the press. So shouldn't we coaches be pleased. Well, yes and no – because all the indications are that we're heading for a major shake-out. We saw the same thing happen in the counselling field a decade ago – over-expansion followed by retrenchment. In the long run it was good for the profession but in the short-term it was painful for many of the people involved. Coaching is following the same path and the profession will emerge leaner and fitter from this shake-out, but without many of its current practitioners. My view? – “Quality always sells”.

## Which Mentor?

When we speak of mentoring, we usually assume that our role model is Homer's Mentor who, in the epic poem *The Odyssey*, is left by Ulysses to take care of his household and son, Telemachus, whilst he was away fighting the Trojan War. However, *The Odyssey* relates that Mentor largely failed in his duties, neither taking care of Ulysses' household (which was overrun by suitors of his wife Penelope) nor of Telemachus (who set off without Mentor to find his father). It was the goddess Pallas Athene (goddess of War and of Wisdom) who helped Telemachus, appearing throughout *The Odyssey* in a variety of human and animal forms, including that of Mentor. As Mentor she acted as a wise and trusted

advisor and counsellor to her favourite Telemachus, helping him grow in experience, maturity and courage so that he became a credible ally for Ulysses on his eventual return from Troy.

However Homer's Mentor (whether as himself or as the embodiment of Pallas Athene) is not the model for modern mentors. The word actually didn't feature in the English language until 1750. Its appearance resulted from the story *Les Aventures de Télémaque* by the 17<sup>th</sup> century French writer Fenelon in which Mentor was the main character. *Les Aventures de Télémaque* went on to become the most reprinted book of the 18<sup>th</sup> century and led to the word mentor being resurrected after a gap of nearly three millennia. It is Fenelon's Mentor, not Homer's that forms the basis for modern usage of the word. (More on this in the article by Andy Roberts at [http://home.att.net/~nickols/homers\\_mentor.htm](http://home.att.net/~nickols/homers_mentor.htm))

The word mentor soon came to mean "a wise and responsible tutor" - an experienced person who advises, guides, teaches, inspires, challenges, corrects, and serves as a role model. With the more recent upsurge in the use of mentoring a 'development-focused' view of mentoring has emerged. For example Megginson and Clutterbuck in their book *Mentoring in Action* define it as "Off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking".

As the definition of mentoring continues to evolve I'm increasingly interested in an ecological view of mentoring. As we grow and mature we make the transition through a series of predictable developmental stages. At its simplest this series can be reduced to three stages, named egocentric, sociocentric and worldcentric; or “me”, “us” and “all of us”. The initial

## Classic Models – The Act of Will

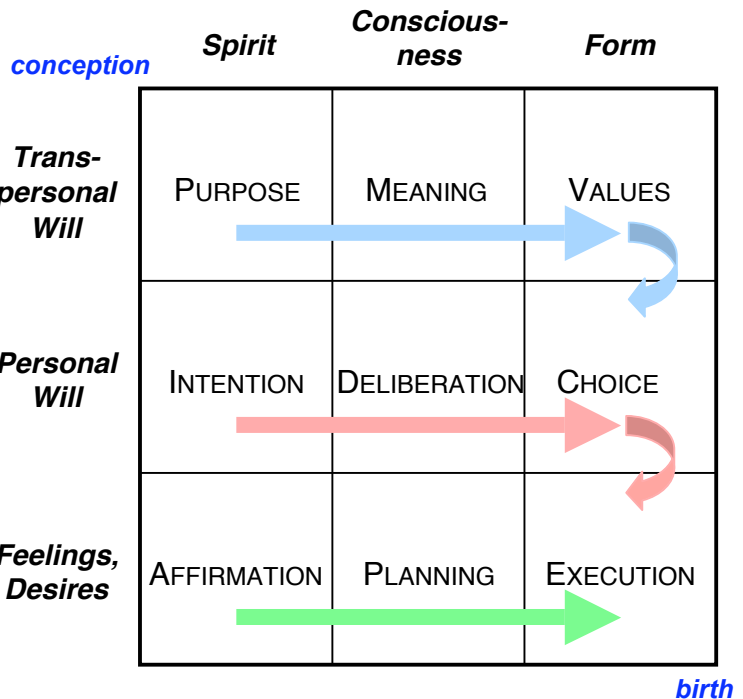
ONE OF THE MOST powerful ideas that Roberto Assagioli, the founder of Psychosynthesis has left us is that of the Will. Will in Assagioli's work is a much broader and more powerful concept than our everyday concept of will-power. This Will is ultimately concerned with how we express who we are – how we transform spirit into action.

In the introduction to his classic book "The Act of Will" Assagioli suggests that, if an ancient Greek or Roman were to suddenly appear among present day humanity, he would initially be dazzled by the material wonders created by advanced technology and would probably regard us as a race of magicians and demigods. But he might also notice that, although we have acquired a impressive degree of power over nature, our knowledge of and control over our inner world is very limited. Despite our technological magic, we are largely ignorant of our true Selves and incapable of dealing with our own emotions, impulses, thoughts and desires. He goes on to say that "this wide gulf between man's external and inner powers is one of the most important and profound causes of the individual and collective evils which afflict our civilisation and gravely menace its future".

Assagioli suggests that we can seek a remedy to these evils through the simplification of our outer life, and the development of our inner powers. Fundamental among these inner powers is the tremendous and unrealised potency of our own will.

Assagioli developed a framework for the process of willing – the version shown here is as refined by the Institute of Psychosynthesis. It consists of nine sequential stages from Purpose to Execution and makes clear that deciding is a more complex process than we often realise. The stages are like links in a chain; the chain itself – the act of willing – is only as strong as its weakest link.

For instance, a person may be deciding on her next career move. Ideally, she would start by connecting to her sense of purpose and what inspires her, she would explore what is meaningful to her, and she would



clarify what was important to her and give this tangible form in terms of her values. She would then evoke her intention, her energetic willingness to work towards her purpose or goal. From this place of intention she would deliberate on the situation, formulate alternatives and explore each before choosing one. She then affirms her choice by mobilising her emotional state in support of her choice, plans the road to follow, and acts.

In practice, the process may not be as sequential or as explicit as this and not every stage of the will may be important in any one willed act. But we need to be proficient in all the stages if we are to act effectively in different circumstances. Typically, I find that there are stages that clients are adept at and others that they struggle with. And when they do get stuck, I use this map as a diagnostic tool to help them get unstuck by backing up through the stages of the model. For example, if they have made a choice but are failing to do anything about it, I would explore the precursors to the choice – have they deliberated fully on the options, have they evoked strong intention, and so on.

focus of most mentoring is on the individual mentee (egocentric). If the mentoring continues (and much mentoring is long-term) then the focus will move beyond the individual to supporting transitions in the larger groups to which the mentee belongs, in the wider society or even at the global level. As the mentee makes this journey from focusing on the self to focusing on the wider world in which they exist, the fundamental question they seek to answer is "What is it that the world of tomorrow needs that I am uniquely able to provide?"

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# Mentoring for Change

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Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- The Paradox of Choice
- Classic Models – The Creative Process

With best wishes

*Heike the Mentor*



## The Paradox of Choice

I'm a long-term Apple computer user. When I came to buy my latest laptop, I had a choice from 6 models (the entire Apple laptop range) and was able to easily and quickly choose the model that best matched my needs. If I had been a Windows user, it would have been very different. I would have had a choice of thousands of different laptops from hundreds of manufacturers. To make the best choice then would have been almost impossible – I'd have had to spend ages comparing and contrasting before making a decision – but that, as I've discovered from Barry Schwartz's book *The Paradox of Choice* (HarperCollins 2004) is because, at least when buying technology, I'm a maximiser.

Maximisers want to know that they've made the best choice that could be made. The only way to do this is to check out all the alternatives. As a decision-making strategy, maximising works fine when you only have a few options but quickly becomes impractical as the number of options increases.

The alternative is to be a satisficer. To satisfice is to settle for something that is good enough and not to worry about the possibility that there might be something better. So a satisficer decides on her criteria and standards, searches until she finds an item that meets those standards, and at that point she stops.

Being a maximiser has several drawbacks. After they have made a selection, maximisers are nagged by the options they haven't had time to investigate. Not only are maximisers likely to say "If only I had gone to one more shop / listened to Mike's advice /.." they are also likely to experience regret in anticipation of making a decision,

imagining how they will feel if they discover that there was a better option available! Also the more options they look at, the easier it is to imagine alternatives that don't exist but which combine all the best features of each option. In the end maximisers are likely to get less satisfaction out of their choices, even though in objective terms they may have made a better choice. Indeed, maximisers experience less satisfaction with life, are less happy, are less optimistic, and are more depressed than satisficers.

But whilst maximisers in particular suffer more from a surfeit of choice, too much choice is a problem for us all.

As Schwartz points out, when we have no choice, life is unbearable. As choice increases, as it has in our consumer culture, the autonomy, control and liberation this variety brings are powerful and positive. But as the number of choices continues to increase, negative aspects of choice appear and, as the number of choices increases further, we no longer are empowered by choice but tyrannised! Just because *some* choice is good, it doesn't mean that *more* choice is better.

The paradox is that, whilst with limitless choice we produce better results with our decisions than we would in a more limited world, we feel worse about them!

So, what we can do to be more satisfied with our choices and help our coachees to be more satisfied with theirs?

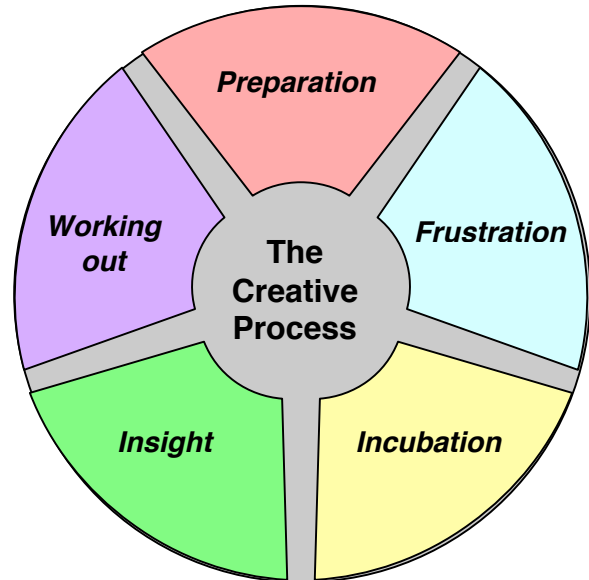
- Recognise that what is most important to us most of the time is not the objective results of decisions, but the subjective results. Since an overabundance of options is likely to lead to worse subjective results we must pass up opportunities to choose and restrict the options we consider.

## Classic Models – The Creative Process

I first came across this model fifteen years ago, and have regularly used it since to facilitate my own creative process and that of my clients.

Creativity is often seen as being only about the moment of insight – the moment of inspiration when the answer comes to us. What this model recognises is that creativity is a process in which insight is but one of the stages. There are five main stages:

1. **Preparation** is concerned with analysing the task, gathering data, looking for patterns, trying out ideas, and questioning assumptions. It's where we bring to light everything we already know about the situation and gather all the resources we can. Sometimes this will be enough to solve the problem – but often it won't be and then we will start to feel increasingly frustrated.
2. It is easy to experience this **Frustration** as a sign of failure and lack of ability. But in fact it indicates precisely the opposite. It is a signal that our habitual ways of thinking about the problem are breaking down and that creativity is becoming possible.  
  
To be creative, by definition we need to get beyond our current beliefs and mindsets, to explore new territories, and to bring what is outside of our consciousness into our awareness. But our rational mind wants to stay with what it knows and tries to hold us back from moving into the unknown, the only place we can be creative! This feeling of frustration is actually the feeling of our conscious mind recognising that it doesn't know the answer and beginning to let go control to our unconscious mind.
3. **Incubation** is the time when we give up trying, put our conscious problem solving on hold, and hand over to the unconscious mind. We do this by 'sleeping on the problem', by doing the washing



up, by staring out of the train window, by having a bath or just by getting on with something else that needs to be done – what I usually do is spend a couple of hours walking along the Malvern Hills.

4. Having done all the groundwork, we then wait for the moment of **Insight** – the 'aHa' moment when we give birth to a new idea, see things in a new way, or create new possibilities. Whilst the insight often appears to have come from nowhere, the creative person knows that it actually occurs as a result of everything that has happened before.
5. To have an insight is one thing; to turn it into form is quite another. The final stage, **Working Out**, involves testing the insights and turning them into something in the world.

For more on this model and creativity in general read *The Creative Manager* by Roger Evans and Peter Russell, Unwin Hyman, 1989.

- Shorten or eliminate deliberations about decisions that are unimportant to you
- Learn to accept "good enough" (be a satisficer, not a maximiser)
- Limit how much we think about the attractive features of options we reject
- Unless we're truly dissatisfied, stick with what we always buy
- Practice an "attitude of gratitude" - consciously strive to be grateful for what is good about a choice or experience, and to be disappointed less by what is bad about it.

I heard the radical architect Christopher Alexander speak. His criterion for choosing one piece of architecture over another? He asks himself "In the presence of which do I feel more whole?" or "Which is more like a picture of my soul?" Now that's a way to make great choices!

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At the Schumacher Lectures in Bristol a few weeks ago

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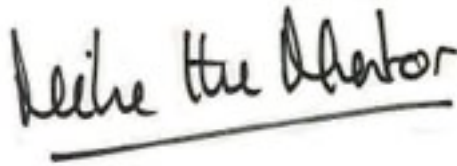
# Mentoring for Change

executive mentoring and coaching, leadership, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- Value Priorities
- Classic Models – The CLEAR Model
- Transformational Coaching

With best wishes




## Value Priorities

Understanding values is of critical importance to a coach working with individuals and especially teams. A clear understanding will enable a coach to work out and then address why a team who appear to be all buying in to the same set of values are not getting on. The reason is to do with value priorities.

Values exist and have meaning only within a web of other values, not in isolation. For example, if I say that honesty is important to me, then you might expect that I will always tell the truth. But in fact just knowing that honesty is important to me will give you little idea as to whether I will always tell the truth unless you know the priority I place on honesty relative to my other values. For example, if I place a higher priority on being liked, then I may not give you honest feedback if I fear doing

so would alienate you.

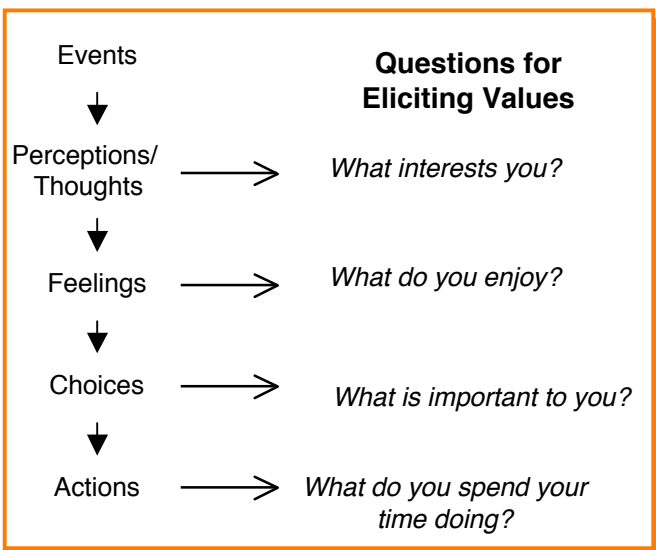
This is an example with just two values – the situation gets much more complex when our top ten or twenty values are in play. It also means that people with shared values, but with different value priorities, may often behave in radically different ways. Thus, in working with an individual or an organisation, it is not enough to know what their values are – you must also explore their value priorities. And, if you want to help that individual or organisation change, then the best strategy is to help them reprioritise their most important values, not for them to more highly prioritise their less important values.

## Transformational Coaching

I've recently written a number of articles for the Fenman part-work Coach the Coach. The one on Transformational Coaching identified the following ways in which coaches, mentors and other professionals can help others make the transformational journey:

**Be a Guide on the Journey:** One thing that makes transformational learning difficult is that we are traveling into the unknown. However, others have traveled there before us and the maps they have drawn can at least give us some idea of what to expect, even if we each have to make our own unique journey. But it is helpful to know that this impulse to set off into the unknown is not the fantasies of a mad person but a well trodden path to the future.

**Be Present:** In supporting someone to make the learning journey, one of the most powerful things we can do is to be with them as they make the journey and to be fully present for them. Presence involves being with someone in such a way that that person comes to know



## Classic Models – The CLEAR Model

The GROW model for how to structure a coaching session is so widely used that its easy to forget that there might be other great models. So I was intrigued to come across the CLEAR model which provides a different perspective on what to focus on in a coaching session. The CLEAR model was developed by Peter Hawkins ([peter.hawkins@bathconsultancygroup.com](mailto:peter.hawkins@bathconsultancygroup.com)) in the early 1980s and so pre-dates the GROW model (see newsletter 12). CLEAR is an acronym for:

- **C**ontracting: Opening the discussion, setting the scope, establishing the desired outcomes, and agreeing the ground rules.
- **L**istening: Using active listening and catalytic interventions the coach helps the coachee develop their understanding of the situation and generate personal insight.
- **E**xploring 1: Helping the coachee to understand the personal impact the situation is having on themselves. **E**xploring 2: Challenging the coachee to think through possibilities for future action in resolving the situation.
- **A**ction: Supporting the coachee in choosing a way ahead and deciding the next step.
- **R**eview: Closing the intervention, reinforcing ground covered, decisions made and value added. The coach also encourages feedback from



the client on what was helpful about the coaching process, what was difficult and what they would like to be different in future coaching sessions

What I particularly like about this model is its top and tail. Firstly, it makes explicit the importance of not just having a goal (as does the GROW model) but also of the wider contracting issues, encouraging questions like “How would you like me to coach you today?”, “What helps you learn?” and “What blocks your learning?”.

Secondly the CLEAR model emphasises the importance of reviewing the session. This is one of the most powerful tools we have for tuning our coaching to the evolving needs of our clients (Thank you Laura!). Its easy when using the GROW model to feel that when we have done the wrap-up (W) we’re finished. Making reviewing the coaching effectiveness one of the basic steps, as the CLEAR model does, reinforces the value and importance of this stage.

themselves better. When we are fully present to someone we create a space where they are able to bring and express more of who they are and to have the experience of being valued not for what they do but for who they are. To do this, we need to be able to bring the fullness of who we are to the relationship.

**Encourage Critical Reflection:** We are often unaware of the assumptions and presuppositions we hold, particularly about ourselves. By challenging someone to become aware of how these assumptions and presuppositions constrain the way in which they perceive, understand and feel about the world, the opportunity arises to reformulate these assumptions to permit a more inclusive and integrative perspective.

**Evoke New Stories:** The stories we tell about who we are shape, limit, and define our way of being. We can help people to tell more generative stories about themselves, stories which lead them into the future rather than keep them in the past. By helping people realise that they are the authors of their stories they can choose to tell stories that open up new possibilities for themselves and support them in fulfilling their potential.

**Map Values:** Use instruments like Bristol’s LJMap ([www.LJMap.com](http://www.LJMap.com)), Hall’s Values Management Inventory ([www.knowandrelate.com](http://www.knowandrelate.com)) or other less formal methods,

to identify those of your values which are pulling you into the future and then seek ways to more fully embody and realise those values; and identify those values which are keeping you stuck in the past and unhook from them.

**Identify Travelling Styles:** We can help someone look back over their lives and reflect on those earlier times when they have made the transformation journey. What caused them to embark on the transition? How did they navigate it? What can they learn from these earlier transitions to guide them now?

**Follow in Others Footsteps:** We can be inspired by and learn from others who have made the journey – friends, colleagues and the famous (Mandela, Ghandi) - as well as by stories, myths and fairy tales; films (Lord of the Rings, Star Wars); and, as my teenage son is, by epic video games (Metal Gear Solid, Zone of the Enders).

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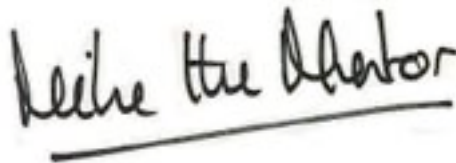
# Mentoring for Change

leadership, coaching, mentoring, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- The 6 Levels of Coaching
- The Stories of Mullah Nasrudin
- Charisma

With best wishes

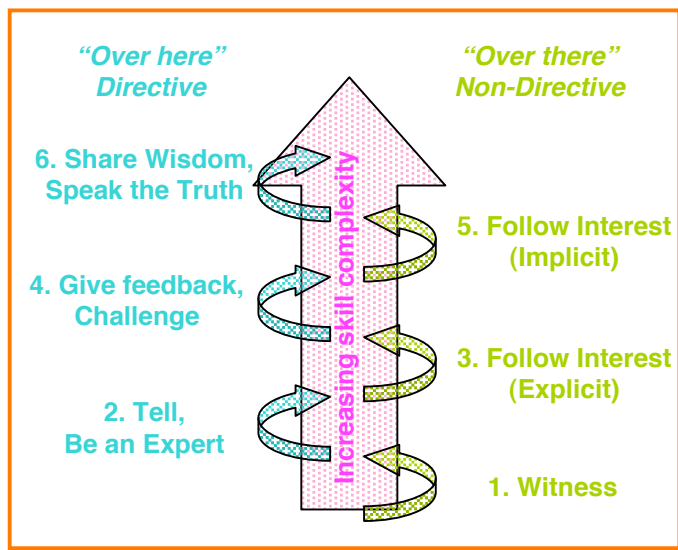



## The 6 Levels of Coaching

One way of looking at different types of coaching intervention is to place them on a spectrum from Non-Directive to Directive:

- **Non-Directive** interventions are those in which the coach uses what is going on for the coachee to help the coachee move forward – ie following the coachee’s interest by using what is “**over there**”
- **Directive** interventions are those in which the coach uses what is going on for them (the coach) to help the coachee pursue their agenda or achieve their goals – ie, using what is “**over here**”, for example by sharing knowledge or giving feedback.

However, I find it more helpful to think of the range of possible interventions to not merely be a spectrum but



an ascending path of increasingly complex interventions.

On the coach training programmes I run at the School of Coaching ([www.theschoolofcoaching.com](http://www.theschoolofcoaching.com)), most of the participants come on the programmes already very comfortable with the Telling and Being Expert style of coaching (2). They are very familiar with using their own expertise and experience to tell others how to solve a problem or approach a task. This is an important skill, but one that has clear limits. For example, it can be demotivating and disempowering. But its most fundamental limitation is that it means that the coach can never coach someone who knows more than they do – to do this the coach has to learn to help the coachee use their own resources, for example by following the coachee’s interest (3). One way we do this at the School is by taking participants onto the tennis court for a day where they have the powerful, and often transformative, experience of successfully coaching a fellow participant to improve their tennis despite not only knowing nothing about tennis coaching, but in some cases despite having never played tennis before!

Only when an aspiring coach has mastered the ability to use the coachee’s experience to inform the coaching can they really start to use their own “over here” experience effectively. The next level of complexity is when the coach is able to use what they are observing and thinking to give feedback, to challenge, and to create and apply hypotheses (4).

This ability starts to sensitise the coach to the interests the coachee has which they are not expressing and which they may be unaware of. Following this implicit interest (5) requires a higher level of skill and sensitivity since it is more easy to get this wrong than when following the coachee’s explicitly stated interest.

## The Stories of Mullah Nasrudin



The Mullah Nasrudin stories originated as Sufi teaching tales in the Middle East but their appeal is universal. Nasrudin is the wise fool who says the unsayable, plays the fool, tricks us into seeing clearly, and turns our thinking upside down.

The Nasrudin stories can seem rather inane and shallow – a statement of the obvious – but that is where their strength lies. They invite us to see every day reality through fresh eyes – the reality that is always in front of us but which we forget to notice.

Peter Hawkins has updated the Nasrudin stories for the world of the modern organisation and corporate advisors in "The Wise Fool's Guide to Leadership", O Books, 2005. Here is one of his stories:

### To What End

The board of a large company were working on their mission statement.

"What is your fundamental purpose?" asked Nasrudin.

"Our mission is to create constantly increasing dividends for our shareholders," they declared.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin.

"So they make increased profits which they will want to reinvest in our company," they said.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin.

"So they make more profits," they said, becoming somewhat irritated.

"To what end?" asked Nasrudin nonchalantly.

"So they re-invest and make more profits."

Nasrudin pondered this for a while and thanked them for their explanations.

Later that week they had arranged to visit Nasrudin's house to work further on the Mission Statement. They found him in his garden stuffing oats into his donkey.

"What are you doing?" they asked. "You are giving that poor beast so much food that it will not be able to go anywhere."

"But it is not meant to go anywhere," Nasrudin replied. "Its purpose is to produce manure."

"To what end?" they asked.

"Because without it I can not grow enough oats in my small allotment to feed this greedy beast."

More information, and another story, at <http://www.nasrudin.org>

The ability to discern the coachee's implicit intent provides the basis for the next more complex level of intervention where there is scope for powerfully sharing our wisdom and insights (6). And there is the danger that, if we misjudge our intervention, we may deny the coachee the benefit of having the insight themselves.

And sometimes the most powerful thing we can do for our coachees – and the simplest – is to witness them and see them as they are (1).

As is usually the case with these multi-level models there is no one best intervention – that depends on what the moment calls for. But the more flexibility we can have in using the different interventions the more effective we can be as coaches.

### Charisma

Famelab, a recent Channel 4 TV programme, was exploring charismatic communication. It equates charisma with being emotionally contagious – that is with having an exceptional ability to induce one's own feelings and emotions in others. This is an ability we all have though it is often unconscious. We've all had the experience of coming home after a good day at work or wherever feeling great – and within 5 minutes of walking

in through the front door being in a foul mood because our partner or spouse has had a terrible day and has 'shared' this by evoking the self-same emotions in us (or maybe this just happens to me!).

This set me thinking about charisma and coaching. Humans are emotionally open loop – we close the loop by resonating emotionally with others. This happens in our coaching sessions – we are affected by our coachee's emotional state which can allow us to pick up what is going on for our coachees even when they are unaware of. And we also affect their state. We can try to be emotionally neutral (does such a state exist?) or we can use this connection for the coachee's good. Our ability to use our emotional state then becomes another intervention to add to our repertoire. In a future newsletter I'll present the Sentic States model which explores the 7 fundamental emotional rhythms we can express.

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