

Coaching for Creativity, Imagination, and Innovation

By

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Abstract

The Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD) has acknowledged the rise of coaching, and has developed a set of standards to guide the coaching profession. The aim of this discussion paper is to explore the potential of creative coaching. What it could offer professional practitioners, and to investigate what professionals understand to be the components of creative coaching. In order, to reach conclusions and recommendations on how the professional coach can practically engage with creative coaching within existing coaching frameworks creatively.

The research methodology supporting the investigation is evidence-based research, both quantitative and qualitative. This is based on conducting a questionnaire of Middlesex University Business School Master Business Administration and Human Resource professionals, and conducting a focus group with a group of Human Resource professionals studying developing individuals and teams, and the innovative practitioner. One-to-one creative coaching sessions with trainee coaches studying at the i-coach academy, and then a further in-depth case study with one of the trainee coaches using creative competencies.

The objectives of the investigation are to ascertain: creative coaching goals and beliefs; expectations on the creative tools, techniques, and processes that could be used both individually and organisationally; qualities of a good creative coach; the outcomes and evaluation of the creative coaching relationship. A case for the contribution of creative coaching: to achieving goal-setting creatively; applying creative techniques within existing models of coaching; leaders as creative coaches; creative team coaching for organisational innovation has been made. Creative coaching based on an expertise in theories, processes, tools and techniques of creativity, as well as an understanding of adult education principles, and can make a valuable contribution in coaching training and educational programmes, as well practicing coaches.

Introduction

Coaching is the fastest growing training practice. CIPD, the leading body in the management and development of people conducted research which showed there was a high level of usage and belief in the power of coaching and belief in coaching. However, few organisations have a strategy.

CIPD is encouraging centres¹ to provide professional standards at two levels: Certificate in Coaching and Mentoring; Coaching and Mentoring at Professional Development Scheme level. The later standard will introduce a strategic approach within an organisational context, which will be applicable to:

- Internal/External consultants
- Learning and development managers
- Personnel practitioners
- Operational managers

In the standards, under the section on the delivery of effective coaching and mentoring, within the indicative content on tools and techniques for change², several creative techniques are mentioned, such as:

- Acting ‘as if’
- Reframing
- Visualisations
- Mental imagery
- Relaxation

The creative offering in the delivery of coaching is limited to offering suggestions for using several creative techniques in the coaching sessions which engages the imagination. The potential of creative coaching has yet to be fully realised.

Coaching

The CIPD survey of 2005³ indicates that coaching in organisations is on the increase, 88% of organisations reported coaching by line managers, and 64% coaching by external practitioners. Coaching took place within the following categories:

- Performance - improved performance by the individual and the team
- Confidence and Motivation - improving confidence and performance at work
- Behaviour Change - change in managers work style in terms higher commitment, more focused on actions
- Culture - improved relationships, promotion, greater responsibilities and new roles
- Leadership – more confident and effective leadership being demonstrated

¹ Middlesex University Business School is a CIPD Centre.

² CIPD Standard in Coaching and Mentoring – PDS level Second Draft August 2004.

³ Jarvis, J. Does Coaching Work?, CIPD Coaching at Work, 2005.

CIPD (2005) found out from its survey that the process of coaching helps to support learning and change, in the following ways:

- A focused form of development
- Support for change
- Support for other learning and development initiatives
- Tailored, flexible support for the learner
- Evidence of an organisation investing in their staff
- The ability to address a broad range of interconnected issues
- Confidentiality and trust

Jackson (2005), states that to speak more meaningfully about the effectiveness of coaching, it must be more accurately defined. So what is coaching, presented below are three definitions:

- Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another – a facilitation approach (Downey, 1999)
- Coaching is directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by form of tutoring or instruction – an instructional approach (Parsloe, 1999)
- Coaching is a pragmatic approach to helping people manage their acquisition or improvement of skills – pragmatic competency approach (Clutterbuck, 1998)

At present approaches are differentiated using terms such as ‘behavioural’, ‘cognitive’ the underlying theories involved:

- Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches (Grant and Palmer, 2002)
- Cognitive Behavioural Coaching enables clients to identify and subsequently modify the cognitive, behavioural and emotive blocks that impede the execution of their goal-directed activities (Neenan & Palmer, 2001)

Grant (2003) definition suggests the model of coaching is facilitative as well as a solution-focused, result-oriented and systematic process, whose foundations are in brief solutions-focused therapy and cognitive-behavioural counselling psychology. On a practical level Hudson (1999) identifies what coaches must ‘be’ to ‘do’ good coaching as: generalists; change agents and good communicators, irrespective of their approach, and describes what they do as:

- Working with the whole person or organisation
- Working from Core Values
- Connecting Short-term strategies to Longer-term plans
- Seeking Balance and Promoting Workable Futures

Hudson (1999) identifies eight specific reasons why coaches are needed in Corporate America:

- Help adults manage change effectively
- Model mastery
- Provide ongoing training in Technology
- Elicit core values and commitments
- Renew management systems
- Sponsor future generations
- Model collaboration and consensus
- Tap the genius of all workers

This divides itself into ‘being’ coaching with the emphasis on values and beliefs, suitable in exploring individual creativity, and ‘doing’ coaching with the emphasis on reaching goals, performing well, choosing the right action suitable in exploring organisational innovation. Grant & Zackon (2004) in large-scale survey of the demand for executive, workplace and life coaching from the members of International Coach Federation found that the type of coaching most offered, is: life/personal, followed by career, corporate and executive, small business, internal, to non-profit organisations.

Creativity

Professor John Kao (1996) stated that the business world is seeking a new advantage – the creativity advantage. The Nomura Institute⁴ classifies four eras of economic activity: agricultural, industrial, informational, and the fourth, being creative. Kao (1996) summarises the era of creativity, as:

- Next step for information technology
- Creativity adding value to knowledge
- Companies re-inventing themselves to achieve growth
- Workers feeling entitled to creative jobs
- An emphasis on good design as good business practice
- Realisation that customers are discerning and demanding
- Global competition is about mobilising the ideas, talents, and creativity
- Management is changing from ‘command and control’ to a more facilitative approach

The DTI report on ‘living innovation’⁵ supports those assumptions. It reported the critical attributes that enabled the companies to capture new markets and capitalise on significant business opportunities, as:

- A clear mission that all employees understand and support
- Constantly, reinforcing the importance of innovation, design and creativity
- A culture of trust and respect
- Celebrating success and providing support in failure
- Give people the freedom to perform against stretching goals
- Develop people to meet the needs of the organisation
- Reward and recognise talent and commitment

⁴ Kao, J. (1996), *Jamming: The Art & Discipline of Business Creativity*, Harper Collins Business.

⁵ DTI and Design Council (2000), ‘living innovation’ report.

Effective leadership is critical to the culture of innovation, neither ‘hands-on’, making all the day-to-day decisions, or ‘hands-off’, leaving the project entirely in the hands of the team. But ‘hands-ready’ where people leading the innovative projects feel supported and trusted, but also have the freedom to get with the job, i.e. creatively leading with a coaching style. The changing attitudes towards creativity over the last 50 years Henry (2001) is away from:

- A chosen few being creative to potentially everyone being creative
- Creativity being associated with radical insights rather than incremental change
- Individuals generating original ideas to ideas that are new to you
- Invention to encompass also implementation in the problem-solving cycle

has opened up the potential of coaching creativity. As yet untapped market, Hudson (1999) does not mention creative coaching in his list of specialised coaching areas. However, he does acknowledge the entrepreneurial nature of the profession.

Creative Coaching

Zeus & Skiffington (2000), identify three main types of coaching: skills coaching, business coaching and executive coaching. The DTI report on ‘living innovation’⁶ has already identified the need for coaching in enabling companies to capture new markets and capitalise on significant business opportunities, by giving people the freedom to perform against stretching goals. The need for creative coaching is further strengthened by linking the era of creativity Kao (1996), to why coaches are needed Hudson (1999):

Era of Creativity	Hudson – Why Coaches are needed
Creativity adding value to knowledge	Help adults manage change effectively
An emphasis on good design as good business practice	Model mastery
Next step for information technology	Provide ongoing training in Technology
Realisation that customers are discerning and demanding	Elicit core values and commitments
Management is changing from ‘command and control’ to a more facilitative approach	Renew management systems
Workers feeling entitled to creative jobs	Sponsor future generations
Companies re-inventing themselves to achieve growth	Model collaboration and consensus
Global competition is about mobilising the ideas, talents, and creativity	Tap the genius of all workers

Figure 1: Linking Why Coaches are Needed to the Era of Creativity (Jagiello, 2006)

If the case for coaching creatively or the birth of creative coaching can be made, what is creative coaching? Adapting the two previous definitions of coaching by linking into the theories of creativity, the following two definitions can be formulated:

⁶ Ibid. p8.

- Coaching Creatively is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established creative approaches
- Creative Coaching enables clients to identify and subsequently modify the relationship between the right-brain and left-brain approaches to remove creative blocks that impede the execution of their goal-directed creative activities

And the reasons why an individual would require creative coaching can be summarised as follows, the:

- Removable of creative blocks in their creative professional lives
- Leading a more creative life through play and creativity
- Creatively problem-solving to improve individual performance
- Improving business performance through innovation

Research Methodology

Evidence based research in its simplest terms is where research and theory relate to practice, and where according to Stoker, Wildflower, & Drake (2006) ‘artful’ practice meets ‘scientific’ evidence. In other words, the practitioner uses the best available knowledge in their field, and integrates this knowledge with their expertise:

Practitioners using an evidence-based approach must be able to evaluate theory and research for applicability and utility in their coaching, integrate this knowledge with their own expertise in practice, skilfully weave their approach with their client’s needs, values and preferences and finally assess their intervention’s effectiveness for the client and the coaching relationship (Stober et al., 2006, p.2)

The maturation of the coaching profession is being driven by the development of a common body of empirically tested knowledge. As industry matures and grows it needs an established set of empirically tested knowledge, and a minimum industry-wide skill sets. The adoption of the scientist-practitioner model of coaching training and practice is essential for the ongoing maturation of the coaching industry.

At present, no existing profession holds a corner on the market of coaching knowledge. Grant & Cavanagh (2004) have witnessed five key trends in coaching-related research and theoretically grounded approaches to evidence-based research. These being:

- (a) discussion articles
- (b) academic research on coaching
- (c) research on coaching by professional coaches
- (d) coaching as a process involved in human and organisational change
- (e) theoretical literature aimed at the professional coach

The emphasis of this research is very much as a discussion paper on the contribution that creative coaching can make to the coaching profession. Links have been made between the academic theory on coaching and creativity, as well as drawing upon research with trainee coaches, and organisations that have creative process in place to enable human

and organisational change. The integration of this knowledge with the practitioner's expertise in practice, skilfully applied is aimed at the professional coach who wishes to work creatively.

The practitioner-based research is as a coach applying skills and knowledge from other fields such creativity and innovation, using structures and techniques learned on i-coach academy training programme. Evaluating known evidence regarding practitioner expertise in the field of creativity and innovation has enabled the design of the research to confirm and modify competencies already proposed for coaching. The research methodology supporting the investigation is evidence-based research, both quantitative and qualitative. This is based on conducting a:

- Questionnaire of Middlesex University Business School Master Business Administration (MBA) and Human Resource (MA HRM) professionals
- Focus group with a group of Human Resource professionals studying developing individuals and teams, and the innovative practitioner
- One-to-one creative coaching sessions with trainee coaches studying at the i-coach academy
- Case study with one of the trainee coaches using creative competencies

A related question for the evidence-based practitioner is, at what level does the research evidence apply to practice. In this case the application is to: general principles of change; models of intervention; and specific techniques.

Research Methods

Questionnaire Design

The researcher has worked with the postgraduates who answered the questionnaire. They participated in creative thinking exercises before the questionnaire was administered. In total 51 postgraduates completed the questionnaire: 13, MA HRM, 21 MBA full-timers, and 17 MBA part-timers. The objectives of the questionnaire, is to identify the respondents views on:

- Coaching goals
- Beliefs on creativity
- Expectations on the creative tools, techniques, and processes that could be used
- Credentials of a creative coach
- Outcomes of the creative coaching relationship
- Evaluation of creative coaching

This is achieved by designing a questionnaire with 12 questions, the answers being either to rank categories, or tick those most appropriate, or use the Likert scale from 1 to 4 representing 'Not Important' to 'Very Important' or 'Not Competent' to 'Very Competent'. The respondents were also asked whether they had been coached before; and whether they would like to receive more information on creative coaching. The questions are organised to elicitate, the:

- Purpose of coaching based on six basic core values⁷
- Attitude to creativity as identified in the literature view, to ascertain whether the respondents perceive creativity as the right of everyone and therefore can be coached
- Identification of roles in organisations that are responsible for innovation, this will establish who to target in organisations about creative coaching
- Establishing a link between personal goals facilitating creativity and organisational goals enabling innovation
- Skills, competencies and credentials required of a creative coach
- Creative processes, techniques and tools a creative coach is expected to use
- Outcomes of the coaching relationship and its evaluation

Focus Group

The objectives of the focus group with 8 of eight innovative practitioner students (potentially coachees) running for 3 hours, was to get feedback on the value of:

- Creative thinking exercises to enable individual creativity inspiring organisational innovation
- The use of metaphors to elicit personal identity, and superheroes and their words of wisdom to work intuitively
- The application of one of Six Creative Competencies (Paying Attention)⁸ in the form of the construction of a 3D model to map the communication channels in the individual's organisation or your own life

One-to-One Creative Coaching using Metaphors

A group of 8 trainee coaches training to be coaches with the i-coach academy, who had all developed their models of coaching were coached using metaphors expressed as images on postcards. The issues that were addressed fell into the following categories:

- Job-Related
(Change of Organisational Culture, Beyond Redundancy, and Problems at Work)
- Balancing Different Aspects
(Coaching/Work Balance, and the Work/Life Balance)
- Coaching Framework
(The Coaching Model, and their Coaching Identity)

The one-to-one coaching sessions illustrated how closely linked the sessions are to components of Symbolic Modelling⁹ – metaphor (the postcard), modelling (their layout), and Clean Language (the questioning style).

Case Study: Application of Six Creative Competencies

The case study included coaching the client for 4 sessions of 2 hours, and applying the Palus & North (2002) Six Creative Competencies in the following manner:

⁷ Hudson, F. (1999), 'The Handbook of Coaching', Jossey-Bass, p.129.

⁸ Palus, P. & Horth, D. (2002), 'The Leader's Edge', Jossey-Bass, p.12.

⁹ Lawley, J. & Tompkin, P. (2000), 'Metaphors in Mind', The Developing Company Press.

- Session 1 – Pay Attention – shifting between different modes of attention (Client modelled the department, projects, management steps, and staff motivations)
- Session 2 – Personalising - use all possible resources to make sense (Client emotionally mapped areas of least and most concern at work, prioritising issues, examining power relationships, team dynamics, stakeholder analysis)
- Session 3 – Imagining & Co-inquiry - making use of metaphors, experiment (Client imaged a different future and new possibilities, linking the job, family, and their ambitions into a whole)
- Session 4 – Serious Play & Crafting – conducting dialogue, crafting decisions (Client played with the idea of formulating a new future, the what, who, how, why)

Research Findings

The questionnaire findings were analysed using Excel to generate bar charts and pie charts for the quantitative data. The mode was used to calculate the average when the Likert scale has been used to answer a question. Content analysis, identifying categories and frequencies, were employed to analyse the quantitative data collected from the focus group. The one-to-one coaching was analysed through verbal feedback from the trainee's coaches. Case study was analysed session by session for its outcomes according to the application of the six creative competencies, and the completing of an evaluation form.

The Organisational Context for Creative Coaching

In an organisational context the roles that were identified as those supporting innovation in the company are, ideas generator, innovator; and networker, with the MBA full-timers also identifying project leaders as responsible for innovation. These are the personnel to target to authorise creative coaching, and to ensure the right conditions for a successful intervention. The respondents acknowledged a link between enabling creativity and innovation in an organisation, and individual creativity. An organisational climate should encourage, the:

- freedom to play
- generation of opportunities and ideas
- invention of new products to ensure company survival.

Whether, through originality, performance, or managing resources effectively, this is seen as an encouragement to creative people, acting as a spark for proliferating creativity company-wide.

Currently creativity is perceived slightly more of ability than competence, except with the MBA part-timers. Context and experience played a lesser role. The organisational culture towards creativity is changing away from a chosen few being creative to potentially everyone being creative. This expands the number of people potentially receptive to creative coaching, and this could precipitate the rise in creative coaching.

Planning a Creative Coaching Intervention Appropriate to an Organisation

At organisational level the results confirmed that managing effectively is still a top priority, and so coaching could be built in as a strand of leadership development. The most important activities enabling organisational creativity were:

- managing creatively
- generating ideas
- creative thinking
- building creative teams

The respondents indicated that most important goals to facilitate individual creativity is to future vision, and be inventive, which matches well with managing creatively and generating ideas on an organisational level.

The analysis shows that the two most important personal coaching goals focused on achievement, and personal identity. There were differences in the rankings for the next goal: search of meaning chosen by MBA part-timers; play and creativity chosen by MBA full-timers; and compassion and contribution chosen by MA HRM postgraduates. The MBA full-timers are predominately overseas students who value new techniques and methods that are not so readily available in their own countries. The UK-based students are more likely to see play and creativity as a means to achieving results.

Therefore, it would seem appropriate that creative coaching links into performance, career, and self-directed coaching using play and creativity as a tool until the point where it gains enough credibility to branch out as an independent specialism.

Delivery of Effective Creative Coaching

The delivery of effective creative coaching is based on the coach's competence in facilitating creativity, and creative thinking. The results of the Focus Group supported the findings on the value of creative thinking exercises by:

- thinking outside the box
- challenging boundaries
- generating creative ideas
- inventing new ideas and products
- problem-solving

The top two methods creative techniques that the respondents expected in a creative coaching session were brainstorming, and visualisations followed by mind-maps and role-playing. This supports the CIPD view on adopting visualisations and mental imagery as a tool and technique for change.

In the focus group it was decided to explore metaphors, acting 'as if', which were only rated in terms of expectance at 5 to 7%, to see how the respondents reacted. They found them helpful in exploring their inner selves to reveal their personal identities, as well as learning about each other in a safe environment. Further work with metaphors enabled them to listen to their intuition and dreams. This gave them more confidence and courage.

The focus group elicited positive responses to a technique that was less familiar to the respondents, and showed the importance of experiencing the technique before reaching any conclusions. This finding supports the CIPD recommendation of using acting 'as if' tool in its indicative content for the delivery of effective coaching.

The case study using the Six Creative Competencies as its basis of delivery focused on eliciting the following outcomes from the 4 sessions:

- Strategy formulation in terms of the emergent versus the planned strategy and the management of meaning
- Problem-solving: realising the initiator, imposer, implementer, evaluator of the solution are all different personnel with varying motivations
- Change, recognising a need for it
- Vision the change, what it could look like and be like

Evaluation of the Creative Coaching

The most important outcomes of a creative coaching session in the respondents' view, was to improve performance and be more creative. The least important was to lead a less stressful life. Surprisingly, gaining a promotion did not appear in first 2 or 3 rankings for the MBA students. It may be perceived that this can be achieved through improving your performance. Setting performance related evaluation criteria appears in the CIPD standards for evaluating coaching, and they suggest both quantitative as well as qualitative assessment.

However on further investigation with the respondents quantitative assessment was the least favourable choice. The most popular was learning followed by qualitative, the latter being more popular with the MBA full-timers. Even scoring and measuring was considered more favourably than quantitative assessment. All the respondents are in education and are familiar with the production of individual learning reports, as a way of self-assessing their progress.

Managing and Developing the Creative Coach

Track record was rated as the most important credential of a creative coach followed by being an expert for the MBA full-timers, and being a facilitator for the MBA part-timers. Qualifications were not ranked as highly as expected, this maybe because it is not clear to respondents what qualifications exist and which professional body accredits them. In the perceived absence of one professional body, the respondents only other reliable measure is track record. According to the CIPD standards the coach needs to be aware of the UK and international coaching scene – qualifications, standards, professional bodies, and research bodies.

Being creative and innovative followed by being mentally sharp and action-oriented was ranked as the most important qualities of a creative coach. The MBA part-timers choose being creative and innovative, followed by being action-oriented, and then emotionally competent. From the respondents' point of view keeping up your skills, knowledge, and qualities in your chosen specialism in coaching was paramount, and was also listed in the

CIPD standards. The trainee coaches found they could use the outcomes of the one-to-one creative coaching sessions in three ways, to:

- model strategies and states
- facilitate change
- create new metaphors and insights

Four of the coaches modelled strategies and states, whilst the other four used the one-to-one sessions to facilitate change. All the coaches found the creative technique: powerful; insightful; a quick route into the subconscious; and created new metaphors and insights. All the coaches said that they would integrate the technique in their coaching practice.

Conclusions

Creatively Coaching Core Values

The priorities of MBA professionals in the questionnaire as identified by their two top basic core values, achievement and identity, can be achieved through means of play and creativity. Hudson (1999) after examining 250 biographies of successful adults over the past 20 years, ascertained that successful people measure their lives with one or more of the 6 basic core values, often in combination:

- Personal Identity – Claiming Yourself
In terms of, your self-confidence and self-esteem
- Achievement – Proving Yourself
Reaching Goals, running projects, and getting results
- Intimacy – Sharing Yourself
Making relationships work personally
- Play and Creativity – Expressing Yourself
Being playful, spontaneous, imaginative, and intuitive
- Search for Meaning – Integrating Yourself
Finding inner wisdom, peace, and spirituality
- Compassion and Contribution – Giving Yourself
Making a difference, striving for a better world, and volunteering

Cameron (2) has been facilitating creative workshops aimed at freeing people's creativity which value: creativity as the natural order of life; the underlying creative force in everyone, and if people open themselves creatively then powerful changes will occur. The creative process focuses on a creative recovery or discovery of the basic core values, encompassing reclaiming (every week) a sense of:

- Safety – to pursue your purpose and promise creatively
- Identity – to trust your creative self
- Power – to enable creative action
- Integrity – to remain true to your feelings, values, and beliefs
- Possibility – to remove blocks and make changes
- Abundance – to make money

- Connection – to connect to self and others
- Strength – to carry on despite setbacks
- Compassion – to acknowledge emotions and feelings
- Self-protection – to resist overwork and being out-of-balance
- Autonomy – to be independent and free to make choices
- Faith – to be committed to the change

Cameron (1992) advocates the use of a technique called ‘morning pages’ similar to ‘automatic writing’ to clear and unblock the mind ready for the process of creative recovery or discovery. Linking Hudson (1999) basic core values to the Cameron (1992) creative process creates a powerful framework enabling the recovery of the coachee’s creativity to be utilised in the exploration of all of their basic core values in combination.

Basic Core Values – Goals	Recovery/Discovery	Creative Exercises and Tasks
Personal Identity - What is my sense of purpose?	Safety and Identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Core Negative Beliefs • Positive Alternatives • Creative Affirmations
Achievement – What are my gifts?	Power and Abundance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wants rather than Shoulds • Natural Abundance • Money Madness
Intimacy – What matters most to me?	Connection and Self-protection	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perfectionism • Risk • Work
Play & Creativity – How am I creative?	Possibility and Autonomy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Virtue Trap • Forbidden Joys • Wish list
Search for Meaning – What am I doing here?	Integrity and Strength	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Honest Changes • Buried Dreams • Wheel of life
Compassion & Contribution – What is my legacy?	Compassion and Faith	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blasting the Blocks • Creativity Contract • Artist Dates

Figure 3: Linking Hudson’s Basic Core Coaching Values to Cameron’s Creativity Workshops (Jagiello, 2006)

Cameron (1992) describes the journey her participants take when on the creativity workshops from: commitment, defiance and giddiness, to emotional low of anger and grief, see-sawing between resistance and hope, to re-emerging autonomy, resilience, expectancy and excitement, and the ability to execute concrete creative plans. With the overwhelming comment being “Before I took this course, I was completely divorced from my Creativity... then gradually the miracle started to happen ...” p.xvi.

The cycle that Cameron (1992) describes her participants go through matches Hudson (1999) theory of life chapters and life transitions. Where, the adult learner goes through four phases from Going for It (feelings of challenge, euphoria, and courage), Cocooning (experiencing sense of decline and being stuck), Doldrums (expressing anger, grief and

sadness), Ready to Go (with feelings of joy, trust, creativity). The linking of Hudson’s basic core values and Cameron’s creativity workshops provides the coachee with an integrated creative coaching process of creative tools and techniques for looking at the clients basic core values creatively as a whole. This is underpinned by theory and practice, and evidence that it works in removing blocks and leading to a more creative life through the execution of concrete plans.

Creatively GROWing Performance and Potential

In Downey (1999) opinion the best model to structure an effective coaching session is the GROW model. Developed through observing coaching sessions and noticing a pattern. The GROW model is essentially problem-solving to enhance performance by removing interference i.e. Performance – Interference = Potential. The first stage of the model is the topic, what is the context, the scale, importance and its significance to the coachee. The rest of the model follows the following stages:

- G is for GOALS – What would like to get out of this coaching session?
- R is for REALITY – What has worked/What hasn’t worked?
- O is for OPTIONS – What options will help us move towards the goal?
- W is for WRAP-UP (WILL) – List specific tasks to achieve goal with a commitment to a written action plan

The GROW links well to the Osborne/Parnes (Parnes, 1997) Creative problem-solving (CPS) was again ‘discovered’ through observation this time of the creative problem-solving process.

GROW model	Osborne/Parnes Creative Problem-Solving
G – Goals	Problem, Opportunity, Challenge
R- Reality	Fact Finding & Problem Finding
O – Options	Idea Finding & Solution Finding
W- Wrap	Acceptance Finding & Action

Figure 3: GROW model linked to CPS (Jagiello, 2006)

Synectics (Ceserani, 2003) is more expansive than the simple Osborne/Parnes Creative Problem-Solving model. Synectics is defined as ‘bringing different things together to create a unified connection’ was developed by William J.J. Gordon in the early 1960s. It is a Creativity and Problem-Solving process which not only uses the SCAMPER technique but brainstorming and random input, as well as 22 possible other triggers, to try and break free of existing thinking patterns.

GROW model	Synectics Creative Problem-Solving Process
G – Goals	Referring – Gather information and define problem
R – Reality	Referring – Understand what solutions have been tried up to this point
O – Options	Reflecting – Using a range of ‘triggers’ and springboards
W- Wrap	Reconstructing – Bringing ideas back together to create a solution

Figure 4: Creatively GROWing (Jagiello, 2006)

The exciting part of Creatively GROWing is that the reality can be altered through excursions (to another location e.g. Wild West) and springboards (to another time e.g. Swinging Twenties) to increase the number of options together with the SCAMPER technique. A solution which is not ideal or yet set in current reality can be reframed into a sub-problem and send around the reality and options stages of the model until finally a solution is reached which is ideal and can be mapped back to the current reality. Triggers can be used from Von Oech (1992) Creative Whack Pack which can serve as a creativity tool, ‘workshop in a box’, and a coach. The 64 triggers (specific creativity strategies) are organised into four types of creative thinking evident in the creative process, with 16 strategies each. The four roles are:

- Explorer - discovering the resources to create new ideas
- Artist - transforming your resources into new ideas
- Judge - Evaluating an idea and deciding what to do with it
- Warrior - Implementing your idea

Creatively Competent Leaders as Coaches

Respondents of the questionnaire and the Case Study recognise the value of a creative approach to management and coaching: ‘Managers with a creative approach to work give more freedom and therefore encourage employees to be innovative and creative’, and ‘By identifying the individual activity in the area of creativity, the individual can be managed by introducing outside support through training to improve skills for the betterment of the organisation’.

Palus & Horth (2002) outlined six creative competencies for leaders to navigate complex and challenging problems. The belief is that: ‘You can’t get out of a problem with the same thinking that got you into it’. An effective coach uses a solution-focused approach which enables the client to look at there situation differently in order to come up with solutions. By linking each questioning style in the solutions-focused approach (Greene & Grant, 2003) with the knowledge and skilful application of one of the six creative competencies, a powerful creative coaching questioning style can be practiced

Six Creative Competencies	Six Questions from Solutions-focused Approach
Paying Attention – shifting between different modes of attention	Coping Question – See positive aspects of situation
Personalising – use all possible resources for making sense of challenges	Exception Question – Recognise Underutilized skills
Imaging – making use of metaphors	Miracle Question – What if it was solved?
Serious Play – improvising, experimenting, prototyping	Scaling Question – Given situation on a 1 to 10 scale then start playing

Co-inquiry – conducting dialogue, crossing boundaries	Relationship Question – Outsiders Perspective
Crafting – crafting decisions, thinking in wholes, building scaffolding for learning	What else Question – building on the answers to the other questions

Figure 5: ‘Creative Leader as Coach’ Questioning Style (Jagiello, 2006)

Fundamental to a creative ‘Leaders as Coaches’ training programme in helping coaches to break old patterns of thinking and turn the focus to positive change. By the coach weaving into their practice the six types of creative questions each informed one of the six creative competencies this would enable effective creative coaching to take place.

Creative Coaching Technique

The one-to-one coaching sessions introduced a way of working with metaphors expressed as images on postcards. The sessions follow the 5 stages of Symbolic Modelling whose emphasis is on ‘Clean Language’, and this can be mapped onto the one-to-one session using images in the following way:

- Stage 1: Entering the Symbolic Domain
(Choosing the postcards from the table)
- Stage 2: Developing Symbolic Perceptions
(Attributing meanings to the postcards you are choosing)
- Stage 3: Modelling Symbolic Patterns
(Laying the postcards out)
- Stage 4: Encouraging Conditions for Transformation
(Enabling a dialogue about their meanings, relationships and groupings)
- Stage 5: Maturing the Evolved Landscape
(Facilitating a change through the movement/replacement of postcards)

Postcards are great way to illustrate the power of Symbolic Modelling through image-work. Six approaches were used with the trainee coaches to vary the way they attend to, and work with, the inherent logic of what is termed as the Evolved (Metaphor) Landscape¹⁰. This enabled the trainee coaches to reach a deeper understand of their issue and through the introduction of new postcards a solution to their problem:

- Concentrating attention on lower, more fundamental levels of organisation
- Attending to higher, more significant patterns of patterns
- Broadening attention to outside or beyond existing spatial boundaries
- Lengthening attention to before or after a sequence of events
- Identifying the logical conditions necessary for change
- Introducing one symbol to another so that information or resources can be transferred or exchanged

¹⁰ Ibid. p.43.

This is a powerful adaptation of the creative technique ‘Symbolic Modelling’. The CIPD has already recognised the potential of this technique by offering a ‘Using Metaphors in Coaching’ session by Penny Tompkins and James Lawley at the Cutting Edge Coaching Techniques day as part of the CIPD Annual Coaching at Work Conference, 12-13 September 2006.

Masterful Innovative Team Coaching

Respondents to the questionnaire on the link between individual creativity and organisational innovation, commented that: ‘The Businesses who survive are those that continuously innovate themselves, innovation is linked to creativity’, ‘Creativity acts as a spark for proliferating creativity company-wide. It also facilitates innovation’, ‘Creativity is linked with performance, managing resources and running a business with high value of originality’. Teams, networks, partnerships and alliances are essential to successful innovation-led companies. And this lends itself to team coaching by adapting the individual definition into one for a team as, ‘unlocking a team’s potential to maximise their own performance ... is helping them to learn’, (Whitmore et. al., 1998). The DTI report noted:

Maverick and ‘crazy guys who think outside the box’ are valued and their contribution harnessed to the companies goals. And because people are so important, their learning and development is important too. Innovative companies are learning organisations. (DTI, 2000, p.8)

When asked in the DTI report what it was like to work in business of high value of originality, one member of one company replied: ‘Its demanding, empowering, inspirational, motivational, challenging and supportive’. Hargrove (1999) masterful coaching model is very seductive approach to coaching to tap into people’s greatness in creating an extraordinary future. It’s an ideal model for supporting employees by giving them the freedom to perform against stretching goals. The coach, coachee, and organisation succumb to powerful declarations that ‘stretch’ the coachee and the organisation. The stages are Concentration, Momentum, Breakthrough, and Stability.

The timescales are long 12 to 18 months, with formulation lasting 1 to 3 months, Concentration 2 months, Momentum 2 months, Breakthrough 2 months, and Completion 3 to 6 months. The business challenge, leadership challenge and career challenge is to create an extraordinary future for your organisation. The ‘What If! Innovation process (Kingdom, 2002) describes its ‘Innovation Equation’ as: Ideas + Insight + Impact = Innovation¹¹. Only those creative ideas based on real insight will see the commercial light of day, and benefit the business. Team coaching for innovation through the application of masterful coaching stages is a way forward:

Masterful Coaching Stages	?What If! Innovation Process
Concentration – high pressure,	Freshness – Quality and uniqueness of stimulus, break

¹¹ Kingdom, M. (ed.) (2002) *Sticky Wisdom: How to Start a Creative Revolution at Work*, Capstone, p. 112.

<p>high energy, introduce new stimuli, create an opening.</p> <p>Coaching style is creative and resourceful.</p>	<p>out of conventional thinking, the 4R's: Re-expression, Related Worlds, Revolution, Random links.</p> <p>Greenhousing – protects young ideas. More SUN: (Suspend judgement, Understand, Nurture) rather than RAIN (React, Assume, INsist)</p>
<p>Momentum – take on stretching goals, set targets, iron out conflicts, agree objectives.</p> <p>Coaching style is to leave them to play.</p>	<p>Realness – How can we make it real right now? Realness is a idea builder, momentum maker, emotional engager, prototype inventor</p>
<p>Breakthrough – a phenomenon, an unpredictable outcome from sustained momentum, introduce real and lasting organisational change</p> <p>Coaching style is learning and transformational</p>	<p>Momentum – Art of bringing an idea to life through: Creativity, Motivation, Belief, Energy management, Innovation roller-coaster. Momentum is driven by alignment and creating crisis.</p>
<p>Stability – consolidates results and change creates a norm waiting for another breakthrough</p> <p>Coaching style is consolatory</p>	<p>Signalling – Tune In + Choose to Act + Propose a Response. Signalling tells others how you want them to react to the ideas, by developing a signalling language, to Seize the creative opportunity, Plan the 'creative' journey, and Sustain creativity in the organisation</p>

Figure 6: Masterful Innovative Teaming Coaching - ?What If! Innovation Equation (Jagiello, 2006)

The team coaching approach is particularly powerful when it requires the buy-in of a group of creative individuals involved in brainstorming activities, responsible for culture change programmes in the organisation, and who get together once a year for the annual planning process. Each masterful innovative team coaching session works best over two or three days, a big enough time to exhaust the agenda and let the magic begin. 'Agendaless' conversations i.e. Learning Conversations are guaranteed to provoke creativity, and organisational innovation. Understanding what coaches do to be effective in building coaching relationships, engaging in coaching conversations and achieving coaching results is important as how they develop their expertise in the innovation equation.

Summary

Evidence-based coaching involves the best use of current knowledge in making decisions on how to design, implement and deliver coaching interventions to clients. Evidence-based practice holds much promise as an approach to increase the credibility and quality of creative coaching, and in designing and teaching coach training programs. The balance of scientific integrity and practical utility is integral to the expert coach engaged in self-reflection and continuing education. It requires the creative coach to have the ability,

knowledge frameworks, and skills to find information, determine its applicability, implement it, and finally evaluate its effectiveness.

Well-conducted, peer-reviewed coaching-specific research into creative coaching will enable the transition of coaching from a service industry to cross-disciplinary profession with a solid research base. One of aims of this paper has been the integration and application of knowledge on creativity and innovation into a coherent body of knowledge that can guide creative coaching. It is hoped that this paper has gone some way into evaluating creative coaching in terms of goal-setting, specific techniques, and underlying processes of organisational change.

Ultimately creative coaching involves achieving meaningful positive change with clients and organisations, creatively. Even for those who do not think of themselves as creative: 'Being creative is a gifted art. Not, everyone can be creative. Yes, but through creative coaching, opportunities can be utilised'. Managers who wish to adopt a creative coaching style: 'Managers with creative approach to work give more freedom and therefore encourage employees to be innovative and creative'. Organisations wishing to seize new business opportunities: 'An organisation that allows for creativity and innovations gives individuals' opportunity to express their creativity, which helps remove limitations and acceptability of these ideas'. Creative coaching has a contribution to make to the emerging field of coaching education and training, and to the coaching profession as a whole.

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