Thinking Clearly Under Pressure
by Brian Tregunna (UK)

The Importance of Executive Coaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic
by Sai Blackbyrn (Germany)

To Finish First, You First Need to Finish
by Anna Grechishkina – iCN Journalist (Ukraine)

Where Life Coaching and Transformational Coaching Meet
by Keith Merron (USA)

Interview with Guillaume Martin, CEO of Pictarine
by Bob Larcher – iCN Journalist (France)
Welcome to yet another exciting edition of the International Coaching News (iCN) online magazine! In our 31st edition, our theme is Life Coaching – Personal & Professional Empowerment. This is loaded with content on a variety of relevant topics inspired by coaches to guide coachees to maximise personal and professional potential.

This edition is filled with interesting power tools toward greater well-being and approach to the many facets of Life Coaching. It focuses on enabling you as the coach to assist your clients to mastermind life transitions, manifesting anything (and everything) they desire, and includes tips & techniques used by seasoned coaches, to aid your coaching practices.

Look out for ‘To Finish First, You First Need to Finish’ by our very own International journalist Anna Grechishkina. Anna interviews Jesus Leon, where he shares his ideas about what it takes to be a winner, how to recognise the time when you should make a change in your life, and what the world would be like after the pandemic.

Another noteworthy article ‘Multilingualism and The Coaching Practice’ by another iCN journalist Maddalena Fumagalli. As Madda reflects and researches on the theme of multilingualism and its implications on the coaching practice, she came across the work of Prof. Jean-Marc Dewaele, a prolific researcher in applied linguistics, and his investigation of multilingualism in a number of contexts, including education, mentoring and psychotherapy, read further her interview with Prof. Jean-Marc. ‘Empowerment Through ‘Head & Heart’ Connection’ by our regular contributor Cristina Burca. In this interview with Loredana Vlădăreanu, discusses the role of Self-Understanding and in particular Feelings Understanding, as transformative keys in life. ‘Thinking Clearly Under Pressure’ by Brian Tregunna. Brian discusses the importance of self-control during highly-pressurised moments.

Each of our columnists, too numerous to mention individually, has taken some really interesting perspectives, and I would encourage a thorough read-through of this edition.

We are currently working with a series of video interviews with well known leaders, executives, entrepreneurs, CEO’s and people within the world of coaching. As a bonus to our loyal readers, here is our first video, The Future Leader. In this video, our very own Dr. Rupinder Kaur, iCN Journalist from India, interviews Sameer Chadha, CEO of KPMG Global Services. Sameer tackles the evolution of being a great & a successful leader in this challenging situation. Click HERE to know more.

Just like all our other editions, this is not just an interesting read, but it provides you with helpful personal development ideas and professional development techniques to grow your business and improve your lifestyle. I hope you enjoy this issue and do let us know if there are any topics you’d like to see covered in the future.

Lovelia

Lovelia A. Caracut
Editor, iCN Magazine
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COCO’s goal is to provide all children everywhere with a sustainable quality source of education. Currently, they focus on providing quality education opportunities for children in East Africa through their pioneering schools for life programme. In 2019 COCO positively impacted over 21,000 people in region. We will be raising for COCO using the ‘Tip Jar’ function on the festival site.
More and more people are leaving jobs and relationships, feeling trapped in the life they have created for themselves or struggling to find a balance, because their needs are not met. But how many of us actually know exactly what those needs are? One of the main questions to keep in mind is WHY we need something. There can be several answers to this, including:

- It's something we have been told we should have
- It's something that keeps us loyal to our family history
- It's something that ‘people like us’ are expected to have.

Being able to identify what we actually need can be complicated, especially when we have spent most or all of our life pleasing others and putting them before us.

It is a common pattern I find in the people who come to me for coaching, and this is why it was important for me to find a tool that really helps them to start putting themselves first and making those changes to create the life they really desire.

I had tried a few things before remembering Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs, and that is when I decided to combine it with a list of needs to be found at the end of Marshall Rosenberg’s book ‘Non Violent Communication: A Language of Life’. The results that my clients have obtained from working with what follows, are amazing and form the basis of the transformation that they are so desperately seeking.

Abraham Maslow was an American psychologist who is known in business circles for his hierarchy of needs, a pyramid-shaped model suggesting that humans have 5 kinds of needs that are interdependent.

He broke the mould in the 1950s, by studying mature, complete, successful and fulfilled people and concluding that we could all be that way. In his opinion, all we had to do was to overcome our inner blocks to development and maturity.

Maslow’s model suggests that our most basic needs are food and water, and that once we have secured such supply, we begin to look for shelter, clothing and safety. Once we have started to meet these needs, we turn our focus to our social needs, our need to belong to a group. These needs are partly met with our family, but are also completed by friends, colleagues and team players, for example.

After that, we seek to satisfy our desire for esteem from others. This refers to our emotional needs which are dependent on the presence of others, and are eventually replaced by a need for self-esteem, which is when we demand more of ourselves and measure ourselves by our own criteria.

The highest state is that of self-actualisation, when we are no longer driven by the need to prove ourselves, whether to ourselves or others. This need is associated with meaning and purpose, our life’s calling: we want our work and life to contribute to society in some way or another.

Rosenberg’s List of Needs

Here is a fairly exhaustive list of needs, taken from ‘Non Violent Communication: A Language of Life’.

Survival:
- Shelter
- Air
- Water
- Movement, exercise
- Food
- Rest, permanence
- Safety, protection

Autonomy:
- Self-affirmation
- Empowerment
- Making own choices
- Independence
- Freedom
- Solitude, calm
- Time/space for self
FOOD (in a broad sense)

- Accomplishment
- Self-control
- Participation, creation
- Growth, development,
- Creativity
- Learning
- Action
- Know own worth,
- Rhythm, time to
- Self-respect
- Self-esteem
- Balance
- Self-control
- Tenderness
- Touch

INTEGRITY

- Authenticity, honesty
- Aim, direction
- Self-knowledge
- Know own values, dreams, vision
- Balance
- Self-esteem
- Self-respect
- Rhythm, time to integrate things
- Know own worth, place in society

SELF-EXPRESSION

- Accomplishment, realisation
- Action
- Learning
- Creativity
- Growth, development, healing
- Participation, creation
- Self-control

CELEBRATION OF LIFE

- Communion
- Grief, loss
- Celebration
- Taste for experimenting life
- Humour
- Play
- Birth
- Showing grace
- Rituals

RELATED TO MIND

- Clarity, understanding
- Consistency, appropriateness
- Conciseness
- Conscience
- Exploration, discovery
- Information, recognition
- Accuracy
- Simplicity
- Stimulation

RELATED TO SOCIETY

- Acceptance
- Friendship
- Love, affection
- Belonging
- Appreciation
- Communication
- Company
- Trust
- Connection
- Contact
- Giving, serving, contribution
- Tolerance, accepting differences, openness
- Honesty, transparency
- Interdependency
- Intimacy
- Sharing, cooperation
- Presence
- Being close
- Receiving
- Recognition (peer feedback)
- Respect, consideration
- Fairness, justice
- Support, assistance, help
- Expression
- Security (reliability, confidentiality, discretion, stability, loyalty, permanence, structure, bearings, etc.)

The way I use these tools is to invite my clients to read through the above list, highlighting all the needs that are essential for them. The best results are obtained when they do not over-think things, and are sitting somewhere quiet and relaxed. They then put the list aside for a few days, before doing the exercise again, to see if anything has changed. They may find that some of the identified needs are not as important as they were first time round, or they may find themselves changing or adding other needs. The aim of doing this a second time is to identify what is really important – if it is on their list twice, then it is probably essential for them.

Once they have identified their essential needs, i.e. all those that they highlighted twice, I ask them what they are currently doing to satisfy these needs. This is the first step to seeing how well their essential needs are met. If they are doing nothing, they then go on to ask themselves what they can do in the future, to make sure that these needs are being met (future actions). The last step is to decide if they are able to implement the actions on their own or if they need help from outside (and if so, who can help them).

As you can see, this exercise leads perfectly into sessions focused on goal setting, how to take effective action, time management and decision making, which is why I tend to use this early on in our coaching relationship.

I hope you find this interesting and useful for both yourself and your coaching clients!

ABOUT SARAH HATÉ

Sarah Haté is a trainer, public speaker and certified professional life coach. She has a passion for giving her clients the space they need to reconnect with themselves and rediscover their authentic self, in order to transform their lives. She is the creator of a private, online community, Harnessing Your Potential, to empower coaches, therapists, teachers and small-business owners to heal their past and reach their full potential.

Sarah created So Free Coaching, to offer one-to-one sessions, group sessions and workshops. As she lives in the south of France, her clients are both French and English-speaking. She trained in Development Coaching with NLP (Neuro Linguistic Programming) with Simply Changing Limited, and is also a qualified EFT practitioner. During lockdown, she recorded several guided meditations to help her clients who were struggling with negative emotions, needing to calm their mind and get grounded. They can be accessed on her YouTube channel (see link below).

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Harnessing Your Potential:
facebook.com/groups/619590108500061

YouTube:
https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCmvICwJoILGh1yD6rbcM6xw
There once was a man who woke up one day to discover he was trapped in a 10-foot by 10-foot wooden box with no windows and only one door. Inside the box was nothing but an old, beat-up chair on which he sat, and he was overwhelmed with despair, dread, and emptiness. Outside the box was the rich fullness of life that was replete with love, family, friends, purposeful work, and all the successes and joys that are part of our earthly lives.

The man had the discomforting thought that during the night a group of dangerous men had abducted him and had informed him that he must live the rest of his life in this box. They said they would feed him enough food to survive but, if he ever tried to escape, he would be shot and killed immediately. He was told that they stood outside the door day and night with machine guns ready to fire.

The man struggled with his thoughts. Was what he remembered true? Was the threat real, or was his mind playing a trick on him? Was he destined to live trapped in the box for the rest of his life? Would the mere possibility of living a free, fulfilling life make escape worth the tremendous risk? Was there a way out that hadn’t occurred to him? Could he avoid the bullets? A decision was gut-wrenching. He sat frozen, unable to move, because he feared that what he imagined was true, but he didn’t know for sure.

Too often, our paradigms shackle us and bind us in a way of thinking in which there are few options. Within such a box, we make choices and live out our lives. While constricting, the box becomes familiar and comfortable over time. We know its contours and its boundaries.

Although the potential for a splendid, freedom-filled life exists outside the box of our paradigms, dangers lurk there as well—or so we fear. We can only experience the fullness that a new paradigm offers if we find a way to escape the boundaries of our current paradigms.

The problem is that we don’t know what awaits outside that box or how our present lives and identity might be threatened—and we will not know without risking that sense of certainty and stability that we now have. Our ‘inner abductors’ tell us not to leave the box of our own thinking—that if we do, others might ridicule or reject us, and we might even face failure. Our inner abductors ‘protect’ us from this possibility and, at the same time, prevent us from a more expansive set of choices—even a fuller life. To live a fuller, more satisfying life requires that we let go of the limits and possibilities that are imposed on us by our current paradigms.

No true paradigm is created because of those wounds. That is often the result of spiritual excavation. In so doing, we have to face ourselves. Transforming our fundamental patterns of behaviour almost always requires that we do some psycho-emotional or psycho-spiritual excavation. In so doing, we have to face our wounds and the deeper patterns that were created because of those wounds. That is often painful and difficult to do. That is why the ‘how-tos’ are so appealing—they don’t require much, and they are often pain free.

There are many life coaches out there in all walks of life and many are very good. They have worked hard to improve some or many features of their lives and want to pass this on to others. They help people find better careers, find their purpose, learn how to eat well, find a good life partner, etc.

The best life coaches I know have recognised that to impart a skill well to another requires knowledge of adult learning theory, good listening, psychological understanding, and a high degree of sensitivity and intuition. With those capabilities, a life coach can be an essential partner in the journey of life.

By definition, people ask for help when they are stuck and too often, we helpers respond, ‘It’s easy, just do X.’ If it were so easy, though, they would not ask us to help them.

Implications for Life Coaching

Most good life coaches are people who have figured out the key to a successful life, or some portion of life, and they want to help others do what they did. In some ways, this is simply a variation of skill-building coaching as it could be the skill of a healthy life. Or it could be a variation of problem-solving coaching, the problem of living well. So, the skills of being a life coach are similar to the skills of other coaches.

Every person in their life, I believe there is something much deeper going on. How to X and how to Y is easy, just do X. If it were so easy, though, they would not need help. Whenever someone asks another for help, they are facing something that feels like an intractable problem or they want to make a difficult change.

The problem is created within the personal paradigm in which the person relates to the world—the paradigm that created this particular problem in the first place. If the paradigm created the problem, and the paradigm is invisible to the person asking for help, then the coach’s job is to help the client to see their paradigm. Einstein said it best:

‘You can’t solve today’s problems from the same level of thinking that created them.’

Once someone sees how their problem—their box—was created, then and only then do the images of an enduring solution have the potential to reveal themselves.

When someone wants a fundamental change in their life, I believe there is something much deeper going on. How to X and how to Y is easy and does not necessarily require us to face ourselves. Transforming our fundamental patterns of behaviour almost always requires that we do some psycho-emotional or psycho-spiritual excavation. In so doing, we have to face our wounds and the deeper patterns that were created because of those wounds. That is often painful and difficult to do. That is why the ‘how-tos’ are so appealing—they don’t require much, and they are often pain free.
Would not it be nice if we could take a pill and lose weight, and then take another pill to keep the weight off? And, can I have an order of ‘no side effects’ with that, please? Would not it be nice if we could snap our fingers and the perfect partner would show up? Would not it be nice if we could make a simple shift and magically have balance in our lives?

Instead, life coaches need to also be transformational coaches to do enduring work. Transformational coaching, as I define it, is distinct from many solution driven forms of coaching in that the goal is not to fix a problem per se. Nor is it to learn how to do this or that. It isn’t in search of a short-term solution, although it can certainly have the effect of fixing a problem or learning how to do something. The goal is to shift the fundamental way in which we approach a problem such that the solution of the problem endures. This requires that we facilitate the client in doing their own paradigm detective work in order to find and psychologically own alternative and better solutions to all kinds of problems.

ABOUT DR. KEITH MERRON

Keith Merron is the Managing Partner of Leadership Pathways, a consulting firm dedicated to helping organisations with bold visions achieve sustainable high performance and industry leadership. As an organisation’s effectiveness and an executive development consultant, he has more than 35 years of experience assisting executives and managers in business, government, and education.

In the context of his consulting, he works with the C-suite as a transformational coach. In addition, Keith has designed and led over 100 seminars and workshops for leaders. He has helped create some of the most innovative leadership training programs in the country. Through his consulting firm, he regularly offers a workshop for coaches called: The Art of Transformational Coaching. See his website: https://www.artoftransformationalcoaching.com for more information.

Keith received his Doctorate from Harvard University in 1985, where his studies spanned the fields of human and organisational development. He is the author of five books on human and organisational change and is putting the finishing touches on a new book, tentatively titled: The Art of Transformational Coaching.

Jesus Leon became a champion in the powerboats sport in Mexico at a very young age and for more than ten years had been collecting medals on podiums.

He lived fast and high enjoying the sense of being the winner and the best, until a big crash and a near-to-death experience made him reconsider his life values. A Couple of years later He stepped away from the professional racing career towards peace of mind and his true self, enjoying simple and most important things in life.

He shared his ideas about what it takes to be a winner, how to recognise the time when you should make a change in your life, and what the world would be like after the pandemic.

Q Anna Grechishkina (AG): You became a winner and a champion very fast, because you started racing so young. Was it actually your goal to become a champion or did it just happen?

JL: It started like a game, but then turned into a very competitive business. I was fortunate to meet some sponsors who believed in me and who found a way of doing business. At that time, I was turning from 17 to 18 years old, so I was stepping into college. I never thought of dropping out of school, but certainly I adjusted my schooling to this. I committed completely. It turned into my job 24/7 but I was still going to college.

Obviously, it was more fun at the beginning. When the first races of the season started it was more enjoyable feeling – I beat myself, I did it just changes the way we see it and it turns into the highest feelings in my life, especially when you watch for timing the laps. We say that it is not a matter of going faster, it is a matter of not slowing down in turns, turning as fast as possible, and keeping it as smooth as possible in every lap. It just changes the way we see it and it turns into more enjoyable feeling – I beat myself, I did it faster, this part is very fun.
Sometimes with maturity you drive smarter, you start collecting points to win the championship, and you probably don’t want to risk everything for nothing. So, there is a time when champion knows when to back off a little bit. Going slow you are going faster because in order to win the race you have to finish. There is a saying – to finish first, you need first to finish. When it comes to some rookie, like what I was when I turned into a champion, you are starving to win but sometimes you need just to back off and take it easy. You have to push hard but you should not push in excess and lose control of what you are doing.

**Q AG:** Were you afraid of not to win because that’s what was expected from you by your sponsors?

**JL:** Exactly. When you are sponsored, you are committed to do well. Obviously, you have a plan and you have a goal, you want to do it between this place and that place, being in the top 10 or top 5, even on the podium. Once you hit first place, it becomes more difficult. You’re kind of obligated to be in that spot because you know that you can do it. Then why should you not be there every weekend? It was obviously challenging.

**Q AG:** How many times have you been on the podium?

**JL:** I lost the count but probably around 40 times in ten years in my power boat career. Sometimes I shared podium with my father and my brother, so the whole family was on the podium. It didn’t last long of course because of my father’s age. I was on the peak of my career and he was on the decline.

**Q AG:** You cannot be the winner all the time, eventually somebody will come who is faster, stronger. How did handle it emotionally when you were no longer the champion?

**JL:** I think it’s a very personal question. You have to be very analytical. I always say that I learned more from the races I lost than from the races I won. It is more educative when you lose than when you win. Because when you win you take many things for granted but when you lose you have to analyse the things which did not work out. It could be you, even if the equipment was perfect but maybe you didn’t have enough sleep, you didn’t train well, you had some emotional breakdown like a normal human being. You are not all the time at the top. So, you take it as a learning experience.

**Q AG:** You mentioned that you had a near-to-death experience. How did it affect you emotionally?

**JL:** It changed me radically. It was 360 turn. I started analysing, as there was more chance for me to be dead than to be alive. I was under water without breathing for 9-10 minutes, when they pulled me out, I had a heart attack, a respiratory breakdown and things were just getting worse. They started doing manual CPR but they could not do the electric shock because it was a wet environment. To make the long story short I survived, with a big number of bones broken. The amount of force involved to bring me back to life was huge. That’s how I said to myself that I must have a plan in life. It’s not a coincidence that I’m not dead. I had the need to do something. After I quit racing, in the meantime my mom tried to get me into the meditation course and I kept refusing and saying that I didn’t have time for it. But eventually I started doing it and I started to like it, I was more and more involved. She showed me a way and I got addicted because meditation took me to a place where I found peace. I lived too fast, and meditation changed my life.

It was always at the back of my mind that I will stop before I wanted because I had several racing accidents. And then one day I had a big accident at the race which my father was watching and my brother was competing against me. I had a big crash, and my father suffered a heart attack just from seeing my accident. My brother witnessed the whole picture – he saw my accident, I was under water for many minutes, and my father with a heart attack. At that accident I had the near-to-death experience. So, once I came out of this story I was in a hospital and they started to tell me the entire story because I did not remember anything. After that I raced another two years but then I noticed that my family was not happy, the stress level was too high and I thought that it was not fair that my passion would keep my family in constant fear.

Also, it was very painful for me physically, I had a lot of broken bones from racing and I was still very young. So, I decided to step away at the age of 27 years old. I thought that I would race until 40 but it did not happen.

The big crash was in 2006. I healed up in 2007, my race team was rented to some international driver, Roberto Sanso from Costa Rica, this was important because I was still in the game, but in the side line.

I rejoined the 2008 Mexican championship, out of focus, without a good pace, mainly mindset, that caused me to push too hard on racing, and having some contacts, rubbing, crashes, I raced my last official race in 2009 and retired. I had an opportunity in 2016 to go back into a F1 boat with a good friend of mine , Tim Seebold. He was the champion in the USA and we went together to a race in Texas in his retirement Tour. He offered me to do some laps on his boat but the boat had minor damage without me being in the water yet. The only time I tried to go back, there was a small electric fire on the engine.

It was a kind of sign for me and I never stepped in into the boat.

**Q AG:** You just know it. Deep in your heart, it’s like as if you were guided. You just wake up in the morning and know that you want to do this or that now, it’s a kind of feeling or message you receive.

**JL:** It was obvious challenging. It was 360 turn. I started analysing, as there was more chance for me to be dead than to be alive. I was under water without breathing for 9-10 minutes, when they pulled me out, I had a heart attack, a respiratory breakdown and things were just getting worse. They started doing manual CPR but they could not do the electric shock because it was a wet environment. To make the long story short I survived, with a big number of bones broken. The amount of force involved to bring me back to life was huge. That’s how I said to myself that I must have a plan in life. It’s not a coincidence that I’m not dead. I had the need to do something. After I quit racing, in the meantime my mom tried to get me into the meditation course and I kept refusing and saying that I didn’t have time for it. But eventually I started doing it and I started to like it, I was more and more involved. She showed me a way and I got addicted because meditation took me to a place where I found peace. I lived too fast, and meditation changed my life.

**Q JL:** You just know it. Deep in your heart, it’s like as if you were guided. You just wake up in the morning and know that you want to do this or that now, it’s a kind of feeling or message you receive.

**AG:** And what can happen if you don’t follow this message? Like in your case, what would have happened if you didn’t stop at that time?

**JL:** I know exactly because I crashed and crashed and crashed again until I realised that it was the time. In those following two years I had more accidents – it was a horrible circle; I was out of shape. I still wanted to win; I still had a good equipment but it does not mean that having all this will result in the same. So, I crashed again and again. I remember my last race in 2000. I won from winning the race to an accident. Someone crashed into me. And I had a planned trip to Europe backpacking for two months with my brother. And every time I was pulling my bag into the train and back, I was feeling the pain, because three or four of my ribs were broken, and at that moment I said that I’m done. I know exactly that it was time to stop.
**AG:** Did competitiveness remain in your life? Do you continue trying to be the best in other spheres of your life?

**JL:** Certainly. Everything you do reflects your personality. Two or three years after I quit racing, I started motorcycle business, and I try to treat my customers the way I would like to be treated. This business is managed on the same professional principles as I had in the powerboat racing. Your personal signature is engraved in everything you do.

I am trying to be the best knowing my resources because you have to know exactly where you’re standing, the tools you have around – I mean the human resources, the economic moment you are in. We have dealerships in the USA, and several here in Mexico but they are completely different. The only similarities are the name ‘Sportsmotorcycle Center’ and the passion. But the resources are different. It could be really disappointing to try to make a store in the USA as fun as in Mexico or in the opposite way, to try to have all the commitment that the USA store has versus the Mexican. Mexico is always more Latin, more laid back, more relaxed. That’s the way people are around here. So, I could be really stressed and disappointed if I would want to have a copy-paste from the USA to Mexico.

It’s all about the balance, in life, in racing, in business.

**AG:** What did you bring from your racing career into your present life and what did you leave behind?

**JL:** I brought the method, the way of doing things. There’s no difference between how motorcycles are prepared in our shops from how we prepared our racing boats, system of going from A to Z, using check lists and not leaving anything. There’s no difference between how JL: I have the goal to have the most of fun. I’m not interested in selling more. Selling more and having fun are not the same things for me. Because to sell more, sometimes you have to sell cheap bikes or probably you will not see customers again so you don’t add value on the chain of experience. What I believe in is to sell the experience with the bike we sell to a client, or with the service we provide. There’s a story behind it and that is; more is not always the best.

**AG:** What is your goal in business now? Is your goal to win, and to sell more?

**JL:** One of the challenges is to be really true to yourself, be aware of what you want. With this pandemic we are experiencing in the world, we have to prioritise on the value chain what are the important things in life. My family and I have other businesses which were very heavily punched by this pandemic. But the motorcycles have been really strong. It’s a sort of a ticket for traveling at least in your mind. We have sold bikes in these last 3 months that were not even picked up from the warehouse. People just bought them because they are waiting, they are very anxious to go traveling when it’s possible. I think that people take more decisions by intuition than by mind these days. They may not be reasonable.

What I left behind is the world being flashy. Sometimes in racing you have to put on an act, be a showman and say things which you really don’t feel. And this is what I just left behind. I try to be true to myself, more authentic and to say what I feel or not to say anything at all.

**AG:** What is your goal in business now? Is your goal to win, and to sell more?

**JL:** The whole world is in the transit period. What do you think the world would be like after the pandemic?

**JL:** I think that we learned to live very essential. The world will be essential. We realise that we might not need lots of clothes, last several months we learned to live maybe with one pair of shoes, one pair of jeans. But what about your camera? Maybe you would want to capture more pictures because you want to collect more moments for you and your family. Friendship, family time, memories, experience, enjoyment are the things that are going to trend. I don’t think somebody missed their luxury watch being in the lockdown. We will pay more attention to the things which are really important in life.

When I had this near-to-death experience I really had a movie of my life in front of me. The frames which you remember you will be amazed how simple they are, your first bicycle, your birthday cake. I started to recollect those happy moments, and most of them were connected with family and friends, and not with podiums and championships.

**AG:** The whole world is in the transit period. What do you think the world would be like after the pandemic?

**AG:** The whole world is in the transit period. What do you think the world would be like after the pandemic?

**JL:** It’s not essential. I can reverse the question. What do you think about other 29 guys who didn’t win the race? Did it make them really unhappy? Are their lives miserable because of that? No. I think they got the same fun as I did. We were all players, all part of a circle.

**JL:** We should!
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Thinking Clearly Under Pressure
by Brian Tregunna (UK)

Experienced Life Coach and former Chief Fire Officer Brian Tregunna discusses the importance of self-control during highly-pressurised moments.

We are probably all familiar with that moment when something happens that makes your heart sink. You are planning to do something familiar and for which you are well prepared when, suddenly, the unexpected happens – a crisis, an emergency, something which puts you into a state of shock. Your mind goes blank, your mouth becomes dry and you struggle to think or to know what to do.

Such unexpected events can range from something relatively small, such as a tough question in a job interview, to a serious life-threatening medical emergency or even a major global crisis such as a Covid-19 and subsequent lockdown. In drawing upon my own personal experiences and training as both an emergency responder and Life Coach, I recognise that unplanned events will definitely happen at some point in our lives. We can therefore plan and prepare for them, so that we not only survive but thrive in pressurised situations.

The detail of events will vary, but the impact upon our minds is much the same. When we feel stressed our brain becomes overloaded; it reacts by retreating into a more defensive mode (fight, flight or freeze) and that limits our ability to think, assess and makes decisions.

Handling pressure, however, is a skill that can definitely be learned and developed. It’s important to think about possible events before they occur. Expect the unexpected. Then we can plan and rehearse what we will do in any eventuality.

Learning from practice and past experiences, training our minds to respond well to everything that life throws at us. Becoming mentally tough and resilient. Instead of panicking and making mistakes, we are able to maintain our composure and make good decisions.

One of the key characteristics of mental toughness is the ability to perform well under stress and pressure, whatever the circumstances. This ability comes from an assertive mindset, where we have self-control, are able to think clearly, then manages a situation calmly and decisively.

Most people see pressure situations as threatening, and that makes them perform less effectively. Seeing pressure as a threat undermines self-confidence, elicits a fear of failure, impairs short-term memory, concentration and decision-making skills. It also saps mental energy and spurs impulsive behaviour. It is therefore important to take control of our thoughts and what we say, rather than letting our unconscious mind control us. Think opportunity not threat. It is important to shift our thoughts so that we see opportunities and challenges that are to be relished. We are then stimulated to direct the attention and energy that is needed to achieve positive outcomes. To sharpen our skills, it helps to build opportunity-thinking into our daily lives, forming new habits and traits.

During a crisis or difficult challenge, it’s then important to take control and stay ‘in the moment’. Focusing on the task, not the outcome. That means developing tunnel vision, where we concentrate on the task at hand and all we see is the steps that are necessary to achieve success.

No amount of scenario preparation will help if, at the crucial moment, we can’t put it into practice. There is a brief period of time between an event and the response. In stressful situations that space can seem incredibly short. Our unconscious mind takes over, producing aggressive, defensive or passive responses. Nevertheless, it is possible to learn to recognise that space and use it as an opportunity to gain control of our response. In that brief moment we have the freedom to choose our own attitude, as Viktor Frankl famously wrote in ‘Man’s Search for Meaning’.

In a pressure moment, there are factors we can control and those we can’t. When we focus on factors beyond our control, we intensify the pressure, subsequently increasing our anxiety and ultimately undermining our self-confidence. So, instead, we must focus on the factors that we can control, such as our thinking, planning, decision making and communication.

Remembering our previous successes tends to refresh self-confidence. We did it, or something similar, before and we can do it again. Once we’re feeling good about ourselves, we are better able to deal with our nervous energy and make the right things happen. Belief in a successful outcome prevents wasteful anxiety that can be both draining and distracting. Enabling us to use all of our personal resources to good effect.

When we are in a high-pressure situation, it’s natural to speed up our thinking. Don’t do it! Moving too fast often leads to acting before we’re ready. We don’t think as clearly as we normally would. We miss key information and sometimes make inappropriate decisions.

So, slow down. We need to give ourselves a little time to breathe and formulate a plan. To think flexibly and creatively. Then our actions become stronger and more effective.

It helps to slow down our breathing, thinking and pulse rate. Then we can reset our minds, focus, plan and act. This need only take a few seconds, but it will probably be the difference between success and failure.

I encourage my coaching clients to use the following 7 Cs to manage the process:

1. Clarity
2. Creativity
3. Clear Plan
4. Commit
5. Communicate
6. Control
7. Celebrate

Stay calm and in control. Then frame the challenge in positive terms. Clarify the outcomes that you want to achieve from the current circumstances. Then translate this into a clear picture of what success will look and feel like.

Use your imagination to consider all the possible options, together with the advantages and disadvantages of each. If possible, take the time to quickly reflect. Keeping asking yourself, ‘Are there any other possible creative solutions?’
By understanding what is happening to our minds during pressurised events, it is perfectly possible to be well-prepared, stimulated and excited by the challenge. We become keen to put our skills to the test and to achieve a successful outcome. The situation is no longer a crisis or a threat, it’s a massive opportunity!

We need professional coaches to facilitate our new online programme to empower parents with an evidence based, an unconventional personal development programme for today’s children and parents.

To appreciate where we are coming from, we explain as briefly as possible how Develop Your Child CIC has evolved to where it is today.

The idea for this body of work started at some point during 1993-2002 after my world collapsed. My business in advertising and marketing went bankrupt, divorce and mental breakdown followed, together with loss of contact with my newborn.

This gave me time to find answers to ‘what is my purpose?’ and ‘why am I here?’ I went deep within exploring alternative therapies, personal development techniques and, ultimately, spirituality.

I woke up in 2002 with the realisation that everything we do and everything that happens to us is a learning opportunity, a chance to better ourselves and our future. Once we realise this, our life changes for the better, we become mentally resilient and invite coincidences into our lives.

Discovering the power of life coaching to build self-esteem, a growth mindset and self-responsibility, I realised that my passion was to holistically empower children across the world, making their lives and their families’ lives better.

That became my purpose - to allow children to be themselves. Children are wonderful, creative, curious and resilient when they are babies; then they go to school and learn to be something they are not, programming that with them for the rest of their lives.

Looking deeply within, our core belief was born: all children have innate gifts abilities and wisdom but don’t necessarily have the confidence or language to express themselves. In frustration and perhaps to get attention, they exhibit ‘bad behaviour’ and press a parent’s ‘hot button; this creates a downward spiral of negative reaction and more turmoil.

As a starting point, I contacted the local Headteacher where my children had been taught. I offered to speak to the children about having a USP (a fundamental concept in advertising to differentiate yourself from the competition), light bulb moments and the idea that life coaching creates a downward spiral of negative reaction and more turmoil.

Moving at the present - other interesting things happened.

Further information and contact details go to
https://developyourchild.co.uk/about/

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I was talking to my friend and a Director of Develop Your Child, Linda, about the state of our education system and society and exploring what I needed to do next. She shared what she’d learnt recently from the sequel to the book mentioned below.

‘Children born after 2000, will be teaching their peers and adults too and vice versa. Learning will not be by rote or with any set curriculum, but undertaken by those who are interested in a subject - whether pottery, free energy creation, nurturing plant life, neuroscience or astrophysics - and these children have expertise, understanding and awareness well beyond our comprehension.’

If you have children in your life and would like to understand how and why expanding your consciousness could be the start of transforming your world and ours, (depending on your belief system) read on, but you need to have an open mind and accept that anything is possible!

I recommend you read this book: Christina – Twins Born as Light If you feel a bit disconnected with your children, it will offer some real insights. (BTW I’m not associated or affiliated with the book in any way; I just feel it’s important that everyone reads it.)

If you have seen references to our evaluation by Canterbury Christ Church University, which proved the effectiveness of our unconventional approach with parents, you will have read their comment: ‘The concept of energetic connection is difficult to explain in physical terms and clearly has spiritual dimensions but is not linked here to any particular religion or ideology.’

If you read Christina – Twins Born as Light the term ‘spiritual dimensions’ will become clear to you; it is this that Linda refers to in her comment about children born after 2000.

Because our passion is to unleash the innate gifts, abilities and wisdom in children, we’re always looking at possible risks to their mental health. Currently we believe the biggest threat is from those including parents in their research work - answer none.

The AIED 2020 conference and EduAI-20 workshop focused on what’s happening and what should be happening in education in the UK. Our real concern is about the possibility that AI will just ‘educate machine operatives’ repeating the agenda of the 1st Industrial Revolution.

Is our educational system creating academic sausages instead of creative young people who can right the wrongs we have committed on this planet?

To be independent citizens contributing to their community and transforming our society, young people today need higher order thinking skills, such as problem solving and information evaluation. They need to be empowered to fully express themselves, developing abilities currently not in the curriculum.

Three important things came out of those Conferences:

1. One research presenter suggested that babies learned AI from their experiences with Siri - for me that was another reinforcement of our core belief.

2. My wish to connect with a primary school teacher researching AI and children - this happened through a connection with one of the conference participants.

3. From a moral and business perspective, I asked the conference presenters if they were including parents in their research work - answer none.

If this approach resonates with you please email alan@developyourchild.co.uk

The OED 2020 conference and EduAI-20 workshop focused on what’s happening and what should be happening in education in the UK. Our real concern is about the possibility that AI will just ‘educate machine operatives’ repeating the agenda of the 1st Industrial Revolution.

The Oxford Language dictionary defines values as: ‘principles or standards of behaviour; one’s judgement of what is important in life.’ Based on our values we decide what is right and what is wrong. They are the basis of how we act in various situations. And they are an essential component of coaching.

The behaviours on the surface can be changed with simple actions and tools. However, if those actions are not in line with our values the change will be temporary. One of my clients was asked to improve her selling technique and increase her sales figures. She did what she was shown and advised to do, and applied more aggressive selling methods. However, it didn’t feel comfortable and despite all her efforts, her sales numbers did not increase. The chosen action was not in line with her underlying beliefs and motivations and thus didn’t yield the expected results.

In our sessions, we went deeper into understanding the reasons behind her uncomfortableness about more assertive selling. One of the exercises we did was to uncover her core values. She looked at selling through the lens of her values and identified new ways to build strong relationships with her clients. By doing that, her sales figures increased. She could achieve this because her actions were aligned with her values and underlying motivations.

Many life coaching programs work with finding meaning and purpose in our lives. The clients have good jobs, but they feel that something is missing.
Another client had a great job in business development but also had a nagging feeling that he wanted something different. He could not point out what it was. Based on his values it became obvious that his passion lay in helping others.

Further exploration and brainstorming followed and led to the finding that he would like to see himself more in the training space. He was passionate about supporting others in their self-development. He found training delivery opportunities in his job and fulfilled his sense of purpose in alignment with his values.

Our values change over time. Our judgement of what is important in life is different when we are children, young adults, adults, and so on. Therefore, it is important to discover the client’s values when the coaching process will go deep below the surface.

They are essential in providing the foundation for the coaching work and they enable finding the real answers and solutions the client is searching for. Working with values is one of the key ways to help the client find their true motivations and reasons for their behaviour to be able to change them.

How does uncovering the client’s values work in coaching?

**Choose a list of values:**

There are numerous lists of values available for free to download and use. While they vary in length, I recommend choosing one which has no more than 60 items. While longer lists can be tempting to provide more choice, however, it can be more overwhelming to read through them and to be able to choose.

**STEP 1** Ask the client to go through the list and without contemplating long, highlight the values they agree with, which resonate with them. Those which are not highlighted could also indicate certain behaviours and internal conflicts.

**STEP 2** From those which are highlighted, ask them to circle the top 5 values. They can combine values that they perceive to be similar and equally important.

**STEP 3** Ask them to prioritise the top five values. Seeing their top five values in priority order can clarify what drives their behaviours, action, choices, and feelings. Sometimes, it is difficult for a client to decide between two values. In those cases, a hypothetical question can help: ‘if the client were in a situation where they would need to give up one of the values to be able to keep the other which one would they choose?’

**Multilingualism and The Coaching Practice**

by Maddalena Fumagalli – iCN Journalist (Switzerland)

Like many of us, I am a multilingual. I typically juggle several languages in my daily life, switching between different vocabularies that sometimes overlap, other times complement and, often, don’t communicate, leaving me stuck in a lost-in-translation void. I find that some things make more, different or no sense at all to me, depending on the language in which I hear or say them. I feel that the Italian-me is not quite like the English-me, or the German-me, and I believe that even though my mother tongue is Italian, I do not fully identify with it. This can’t be just a matter of vocabulary, can it?

As a coach-to-be, I began reflecting and researching on the theme on multilingualism and its implications in the coaching practice. I came across the work of Prof. Jean-Marc Dewaele, a prolific researcher in applied linguistics, and his investigation of multilingualism in a number of contexts, including education, mentoring and *psychotherapy*. He very enthusiastically agreed to answer some of my questions and curiosities about the topic.

**JMD: Prof. François Grosjean**, one of the pioneers in bilingualism research, explains that bilinguals are not necessarily equally proficient, fluent, or at ease in all languages in all their discourse domains. That is, they don’t use all their languages in all their life situations: there are things they can discuss in one language but struggle to discuss in another language. However, it is dangerous to create categories because everything, especially in multilingualism, is always fluid, forever changing, depending on who you are interacting with, what you are working on, where you are living. For all of us, but especially for children, all the languages are constantly changing in activation level, to use a psycholinguistic term. I would say that one’s multilingualism is in fact the reflection of the use of languages in the previous couple of months. This is true also for non-verbal aspects. I find the non-verbal behaviour, particularly interesting.

We can code-switch easily between one language and another, but our behaviour does not necessarily switch in the same way. When this happens, we can find ourselves out of sync with those around us, and this can create identity issues: we thought of ourselves as belonging to that culture but, when we talk to people belonging to that culture, they don’t recognise us entirely as one of them.
**Q** Identity issues. My multiple me immediately pricking up ears. Who are we then? Can we really feel, or actually be, different persons in different languages?

**JMD:** I do not feel any different in any of my languages, but I seem to belong to a minority. Based on our research, about three quarters of multilingual report feeling different when switching language. My opinion is that one can be superficially different, but not deeply different. Does feeling unsure and clumsy in a foreign language make you a different person in that foreign language? I think it is still the same you. This is a very subjective experience, though, and it’s rather hard to control all the variables when doing research on that topic.

**Q** Perhaps there really is only one true, authentic Me... but I think I belong to the majority: the different linguistic versions of Me approach the world, interpret reality and manifest in different ways. Is that possible?

**JMD:** There is a really interesting paper about this by Alexia Panayiotou in 2004. She did an experiment with Greek and American English bilinguals and she found that the same individuals found a hypothetical story about egocentric behaviour more acceptable when it was presented and discussed in English, than when this was done in Greek. So it is clear that, as we use a language, this also activates cultural values. We are not necessarily a different person, but we may interpret what we hear slightly differently, within that particular set of languages, cultural rules and customs.

The languages have also different emotional resonance, another of my topics of investigation. It seems that, even if bilinguals use both languages continuously and feel equally proficient in both, the first language they acquire typically has more emotional resonance (the language of the heart). The implication is that they can move to the second language, which has slightly less emotional resonance, to talk about painful topics because it allows a certain degree of detachment. They might then switch back to the language with more emotional resonance to say something that has deep emotional connotations or that is untranslatable, because not all emotion words or expressions can be easily translated.

**Q** Being able to switch from one language to another can indeed be really a powerful asset. One could bypass taboos and limitations embedded in one language identity, and create the detachment needed to process a challenging situation. The benefit is clear... but what is the price to pay? Frustration at not finding the words to get ourselves, and our thoughts, fully across? Misunderstandings?

**JMD:** This is a problem that any foreign language user may encounter at some point, and I don’t think this is a dramatic problem. You need to engage in a process of mediation and negotiation of meaning. What exactly is it that you want to express and you cannot seem to find the word for? For a coach, this is an interesting strategy to interact with your client and showing them that you are not omniscient, that there are things that you are struggling with, just as they are.

This is also a discussion that clients have sometimes with their psychotherapist before a session. If they are doing it in a foreign language, will the therapist be able to uncover the real person through the foreign language? I think yes, they would. There is one true you and a good coach, a good therapist can see through language issues to the real issues that the client is struggling with. Language is an instrument we use, like a knife. It may be slightly more blunt in one language than in another, but we still will know what to do with it. We may have to cut a bit harder or longer, but we will get there.

**Q** Jean-Marc had done a great job at destroying my unfair and negative focus on the limitation of being multilingual. There was one more thing I wanted to discuss with him: the creative potential of the language gap. I loved this expression since I first read it in one of his and Beverly Costa’s excellent works.

**JMD:** This is a very subjective experience, though, and it’s rather hard to control all the variables when doing research on that topic. I did an experiment with Greek and American English bilinguals and she found that the same individuals found a hypothetical story about egocentric behaviour more acceptable when it was presented and discussed in English, than when this was done in Greek. So it is clear that, as we use a language, this also activates cultural values. We are not necessarily a different person, but we may interpret what we hear slightly differently, within that particular set of languages, cultural rules and customs.

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**JMD:** Beverly loves the idea of dealing with the unknown, of not being prescriptive and allowing people to come up with unique stories and ideas. I think that being multilingual helps to being creative, because multilinguals are inherently creative with language. They are also creative with concepts. They can - and there is research on this - come up with original ideas, and do things that nobody thought about before. This is really the crucial bit about multilingualism. We must get rid of the deficit view of multilingualism as people who don’t know their languages well enough. This is totally stupid and outdated, but unfortunately a lot of people still have that.

**Q** And I was one of them, apparently. But not anymore! All my self-limiting thoughts swept away. Adieu forever. I grew so much engaged in the topic of multilingualism that I really look forward to Jean-Marc’s upcoming projects.

**JMD:** I would be happy to keep working with Beverley, because we can make a small difference in trying to spread good practice and some insights from multilingualism research into circles where people have typically not thought much about language use. It is important to raise issues and ask questions. We need more work on multilingualism in different professions and I think that, if you could do something like what I did with Beverley within the coaching world, it would be really useful.

This article is a short patchwork of elements emerged in a much longer and comprehensive conversation between me and Jean-Marc. If you would like to read more about multilingualism and attitudes towards accents, parallelisms between PhD supervision and coaching, teacher/student emotions and emotional labour, get in touch for a full transcript of the conversation.

The theme is indeed immense and incredibly interesting from many perspectives. What is your experience with multilingualism in coaching? Feel free to email me or connect on LinkedIn to share your thoughts.

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The Importance of Executive Coaching During the COVID-19 Pandemic
by Sai Blackbyrn (Germany)

‘A coach is likely to be every leader’s secret weapon to COVID-19 recovery’

You don’t have to look very far to see that it’s anything but business as usual right now.

Organisations across a host of sectors are battling to redesign and restructure their operations to navigate through the uncertainty of a world in which COVID-19 remains. IT systems capable of connecting hundreds, even thousands, of employees at the same time are now a necessity, as are finding ways to keep communications channels flowing, whilst maximising work at home productivity. These are some of the issues which are keeping our nation’s business leaders awake at night.

For some leaders, it will be easy to seek out help from external coaches to address these challenges. There are a number of skills gaps that have been exposed by the corona virus pandemic, which realistically, leaders are not going to be able to fill themselves, or through their existing teams. Calling in the experts in areas such as digital adoption, change management and developing remote teams are likely to be par for the course in an environment where speed is of the essence and there is little margin for error.

Naturally, those coaches who have already developed and implemented online coaching programmes or courses are likely to be the first port of call, as the vast majority of organisations are going to need to deploy solutions which can be delivered digitally to teams working from home. In fact, at Sai.Coach, we found that many of our coaches had been able to grow their businesses exponentially during the pandemic, simply because they had already taken the time to digitalise their coaching offerings prior to the lockdown.

For others, however, the path to gaining assistance will be slightly more complex. There will be leaders for whom calling in external help is neither welcomed nor budgeted for, with the Board fully expecting the leader to tackle the challenges head on with their own bare hands and the resources they have available. These leaders may find that their very reputation is now on the line and how they tackle these next few months could influence the direction of their future career. The pressure facing these leaders will be immense and they’ll be the ones who need to seek out the help of an executive coach who can work with them on a one to one basis.

With their support delivered ‘in secret’, leaders will willingly pay for their coaching from their own pockets, if it means they will be able to wow the Board with their troubleshooting abilities and newfound focus to guide the organisation through a period of immense uncertainty.

In both situations detailed above, coaches need to be ready to seize the moment and capitalise on the opportunities to help businesses transition to a COVID-secure world. Issues such as change management, digital transformation and employee engagement have long been on the agenda, but have had varying priorities over recent years depending on the specific situation of the company in question. Now, however, these issues have been brought to the forefront and there are likely to be many clients, both old and new, that are going to be in need of coaching assistance. Having a digital presence is going to be an absolute necessity for business coaches in the coming months, as organisations seek to implement new ways of working and coping with change.

Most leaders are going to be working in a highly reactive manner for the foreseeable, as fears over second waves, local lockdowns and variable quarantine periods add further challenges to managing daily business operations. Decisions are likely to be made quickly and solutions must be ready to implement in a matter of hours. Having the right coaches on speed dial isn’t going to be a nicety, it’s going to be a necessity.

ABOUT SAI BLACKBYRN

Sai Blackbyrn - Best Selling Author, Coach and Trainer at .Coach

Sai Blackbyrn is a multiple-time #1 bestselling author. Over time he has amassed an impressive following in the personal development space - close to 6 million followers on Facebook, co-owning the 3rd largest business meetup group and managing LinkedIn pages with over 200,000 members consisting of coaches, authors and speakers. He is the CEO of .Coach, which specialises in establishing coaches online. He regularly writes in-depth posts on the Sai.Coach blog, one of the top blogs in the coaching space.
Empowerment Through ‘Head & Heart’ Connection
by Cristina Burcă (Romania)

‘Life is about you, your actions, decisions, gestures and emotions’, and only when you realise this, you start searching for alternative ways of being, thinking and feeling, in order to be authentically happy and fulfilled.’

Loredana Vlădăreanu, Personal & Professional Coach and Trainer based in Romania, and Author of the ‘Diary of Happiness’, spoke with iCN magazine about the role of Self-Understanding and in particular Feelings Understanding, as transformative keys in life.

You will find inside:
• Unsupportive thoughts-emotions-behaviour patterns and their root causes,
• Benefits of self-understanding and effective coaching tools,
• 2 transformation stories through head & heart connection, plus
• The impact of covid-19 pandemic to people's self & emotional understanding.

‘Why does he say that? | Why did she do something like this? | Why do they do that?’

Loredana: When people approach me, they ask questions about others, not about themselves. They tend to find the sources of their unhappiness outside their inner selves, into society, times, other people, so they only try to understand the outside world.

Whereas the process is vice versa: it’s not about others, it’s always about ourselves.

People do or say things as they choose. Even if it is intentional, it is not others’ responsibility about how we feel. Meaning that you can realise that life is about you, your actions, decisions, gestures and emotions only when you are 100% accountable for them. Only then, you start searching alternative ways of being, thinking, feeling in order to be authentically happy and fulfilled.

Where does this thinking - feeling pattern spring from?

Loredana: The primal cause for which people do not understand their feelings is their education about emotions. Many of us learnt in school about everything else, but emotions. Moreover, the family education was not about emotions. So then, how to understand something you know nothing about it?

When Mara, my 11-year-old daughter, started to learn about emotions, I was so happy and congratulated myself for enrolling her in a school based on Finnish education model.

At that time, she was only 3 years old and she started to talk to me about emotions and describe them in colours.

Nowadays, we have so many books, workshops and online resources, which can explain emotions and many of us read about them, but this is not enough. We must integrate it in our daily life in order to develop our emotional intelligence, to understand our feelings and ourselves.

Q Connection between feelings/ self-understanding and limiting beliefs.

Loredana: There is a very strong connection between feelings/ self-understanding and limiting beliefs. We all have hundreds of beliefs and behavioural patterns from childhood, that we follow subconsciously. Therefore, we need to become aware of them, as we become adults, in order to understand ourselves and allow positive emotions to provide us with joy and happiness.

For example, a child who has not been appreciated during his childhood will tend to consolidate his self-esteem in his personal and professional adult life by obtaining others’ respect and appreciation. As a typical behaviour, this person could become an arrogant and superior leader, demanding respect from his team.

These limiting beliefs lead and influence our lives on a long-time perspective, so we end up asking ourselves later on why we did not live a happy and fulfilled life.

Q How does a Coach support a positive transformation?

Loredana: I often see that people live so much time «on automatic pilot» and a lot of their behaviour is marked by patterns and limiting beliefs learnt in childhood. Therefore, my first step as a coach is to help people become aware of these aspects. After they understand and accept the reality of who they are now and why they are like that, I help them find their behaviour’s root-causes and develop their proper solutions for making some positive changes in their lives.

Q Effective coaching tools to overcome such challenges

Loredana: As I was studying at both coaching schools (‘Academy of Executive Coaching’ and ‘Coaching and Leadership International Inc., Canada’), I learnt about so many tools useful in overcoming any personal challenges when people want to understand themselves and their feelings.

Therefore, I cannot say that one tool is more effective than another, but one tool can be more suitable for one person than another can.
The easiest method to better understand yourself is to

- Become more aware and present in your life and to observe yourself: how you do and why you do things in a certain way, what are your feelings in different situations and why you feel like that, how much of your actions are based on your beliefs or other’s etc.

Other useful self-coaching tools:

- Keep a diary – in order to observe your evolution from time to time, to be accountable about your life/ behaviour changes and to spend time with ‘the most important person in your life’ = YOU.
- Write every evening about how you did and felt that day. This exercise is a valuable way of thinking/analysing/ becoming conscious about yourself.
- ‘I AM’ exercise: write on a piece of paper all good things about you and every day look on that paper and try to add something good about you.
- ‘1 Minute Awareness’ exercise: at every 3 hours stops from what you are doing and write for one minute ‘everything you think and feel right now’.

There are so many books and online resources where you can find coaching exercises, but you need to make a daily habit to work with yourself.

The purpose of this book is self-development for readers, in their own intimacy and timing, for their personal and professional fulfilment. The book is only in Romanian for the moment and can be bought on my site: http://vladareanu.ro/rasfoieste-cartea/ I hope to have it soon available in English on Amazon.

Q Long-term benefits of Self-Understanding.

Loredana: Self-understanding is very important for stepping into a happy and fulfilled life, both personally and professionally.

- you raise your self-awareness
- you become more independent and more responsible
- your communication skills and interpersonal skills are continually improving
- you increase your interest in learning and development
- you learn and practice new skills and competencies
- you become more dedicated and more motivated in achieving professional and personal objectives.

I helped him understand himself and what his life purpose was. Nowadays, he has his own company based on a very dear hobby he had, and lives a fulfilled life.

Other client, human resources director, came to me after a project run in her company (training and executive coaching with board members) with a personal life challenge: her husband often told she was working too much and was not enough involved in their personal life. We started an individual life coaching program for 5 months and during this time she understood the root-cause of her behaviour, her limiting beliefs and patterns, her life purpose etc. Eventually she decided to start her own professional project (coaching and counselling teenagers) and now she lives a life full of motivation, passion and fulfilment, both professionally and personally. She also found ‘the woman’ inside and let her express, be authentic and be present most of the time.

Final Q: Impact of covid-19 pandemic to people’s self & emotional understanding.

Loredana: Despite of being hard and unpleasant, I see that restrictions happened in our favour. People started to be more aware and concerned about themselves, and that led to a higher participation at online personal development workshops organised during the lockdown. For many of us it changed our lives for the better: reconnecting with our families, children, recreating certain relationships, closer inner look. Certainly, in other cases, there were fewer positive outcomes, in cases with complex relational issues. For parents, it was a real challenge to stay home with their children and work at the same time.

However, we must continue what started with covid-19 pandemic period, because when we give precious time to ourselves, to our family, to our children, to our lives consciously lived, we actually live. Presently and authentically. And just living like this we will write day-by-day, hour-by-hour and second-by-second our Diary of Happiness.

Thank you, Loredana, pleasure to interview you and wishing an insightful read to our audience.

Loredana can be found online, below:
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- Loredana Vladareanu
- Jurnal de fericire

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- Loredana Vladareanu
- Personal Development & Coaching Group

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Q Transformation stories through coaching | head & heart connection.

Loredana: One of my clients, sales director for 15 years at a company, came to me at the advice of his wife. His challenge: he did not feel motivated in his work-life even if he was appreciated and had excellent results. In fact, he was looking to find his life purpose. We worked for 3 months.

One of my clients, sales director for 15 years at a company, came to me at the advice of his wife. His challenge: he did not feel motivated in his work-life even if he was appreciated and had excellent results. In fact, he was looking to find his life purpose. We worked for 3 months.
Why Almost Every Life Coach has a Virtual Assistant?

Most life coaches chose that career because they liked helping people. When they decided to take that path, they probably did not expect that they will actually be spending most of their time searching for clients, preparing contracts, invoicing clients, writing blogs, managing social media channels and all those other things that are necessary in order to attract a client and actually do some business as independent coach.

Coaches like Tony Robbins have the whole team of experts working in the background; PR Manager, Digital Campaign Manager, Sales Specialist, Office Manager, Event Organiser etc. The ones who are just kicking off their life coach career, and who are not rich and famous (yet) might want to start with hiring one person that can handle whole bundle of various tasks – Virtual Assistant.

Experience virtual assistants are helping coaches, speakers, and other busy professionals with finding speaking gigs, shortlisting suppliers, attracting clients, managing marketing and even remembering their wife’s birthday. There are many freelancers and agencies that are offering virtual assistance, but usually they require detailed instructions for each task, and that can be time consuming almost like doing it on your own. Whether a person is searching for a Virtual Assistant on Upwork, Freelance.com, People per Hour, from agency like Boldly, or some other provider, it is important to take several things into consideration before making a final decision.
Virtual Assistance Hub Remote Bob is specialised for VAs who are supporting life coaches. They work based on goals, what means that instructions like 'I need more speaking gigs' are good enough because they already have an action plan ready.

We asked founder of Remote Bob to tell us what is the secret and why is this agency so different than other ones?

"While I worked as a Go-to-market Consultant, I met a lot of people who are absolutely amazing at what they do, but when they decide to launch their business, they don’t even realise that it means they will have to spend 80% of their time with regulatory, admin, marketing, instead of doing what they used to do. I simply thought there has to be a better solution than struggling with tasks you don’t like or hiring a team of 10 people so I trained Virtual Assistants to take the workload off our shoulders."

- Barbara Maheshwari, founder of Remote Bob.

For everyone who wants to know more, here is a complete guide for life coaches and speakers about working with a VA.

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Get in touch to business@remotebob.co.uk with a code ICN2020 and claim the offer

My personal social media links (Barbara Maheshwari):
https://www.linkedin.com/in/barbaramaheshwari/
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https://www.instagram.com/ceo_in_heels/

Our business pages (Remote Bob):
www.remotebob.co.uk
https://www.linkedin.com/company/remote-bob/
https://www.facebook.com/remotebobuk
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Interview with Guillaume Martin, CEO of Pictarine
by Bob Larcher – iCN Journalist (France)

After finishing his undergraduate studies at the University of Poitiers, Guillaume completed a Master’s Degree in Cryptography at the University of Bordeaux.

Following his studies, he joined an SSII working for France Telecom. In 2009, at the age of 29 he decided to create, with a friend, a start-up that was to become Pictarine. The creation was initially for the fun and then, after approximately 5 years when the company started to develop traction they started to recruit seriously.

Founded in the United States and developed in Toulouse, Pictarine creates mobile applications in the world of photography to give a second meaning to people’s photos. Today, Pictarine is a profitable and independent company, without any capital investment funding and a long-term vision of the founders.

At its creation Pictarine consisted of Guillaume and Max, today the company has a workforce of 20 people (and is recruiting) and a financial volume of 20 million dollars; the company has experienced 50% financial growth per year for the last 3 years.

Having developed a network of almost 20000 sales outlets in the USA through their partnership with Wallgreens, CVS and Wallmart, Pictarine is now concentrating on developing its European footprint.

Guillaume: Clearly, not only am I someone who likes to be one step ahead, but I see it as part of my role as CEO to keep a look out for potential storms and ensure that we can ride them out. In fact, when I announced to my C-Suite that I would like us to be coached the reaction was surprise and doubt.

The company was growing, we started to need structure and I could see that this was going to create problems for us both collectively and individually. For me personally, my job changes almost every year and the ‘steps’ become more and more difficult to climb alone.

As Pictarine developed I did not just want to apply other people’s solutions I wanted to find my own solutions; it also became clear to me that I needed help in my role of CEO to fully incarnate my leadership.

The company was growing quickly and I was moving rapidly away from the technical side of the business and more to being the leader of the business. Although I still maintain my informal network, it became clear to me that I would need to expand my network and decided to engage an experienced and professional coach; something that my CEO contacts had been obliged to do by their investors. As we had no investors I was not obliged to do so, but I chose to do so; I wanted someone to be able to both challenge me and support me in my development.

Bob: If I have understood correctly you took more a proactive ‘preventative’ approach to be coached as opposed to a reactive ‘curative’ approach.

Guillaume: I was looking for someone not only to help me in terms of my leadership, but also to help the members of the Pictarine C-suite (both individually and collectively) to be seen as the leadership of the company. We are all in our late-thirties, or very early forties, we are all very good at our ‘function’ (finance, development, etc.) but we lacked leadership presence and cohesion.

On a personal front, I am very aware that I have a certain leadership capacity; I know that I can energise, motivate and influence people to work for something I believe in. However, I did not want to be seen as the ‘sole’ leader of the company with a leadership team beneath me; I wanted us to be seen as the leadership team – engaged in the same direction and supporting each other in our communication.

Bob: Your first coach was a leadership coach, could you say a few words about this experience?

Guillaume: I have always enjoyed teamworking and I like having people around me to exchange ideas with. When I created Pictarine I realized early on that although I understood IT, business was very new to me. I quickly developed a network of informal advisors and mentors; people I had come across who were willing to share both their technical and business knowledge with me.

As everything was new for me, my initial tendency was to follow their advice; to apply their recommendations like a ‘good soldier’ – after all, they knew what they were talking about.

Bob: When did you first start considering being coached.

Guillaume: When did you first start considering being coached.
I am very proud of what I, and we, have achieved at Pictarine, but I have a vision of Pictarine being a ‘great’ company and not just a ‘good’ company; likewise, I feel I am a good leader but was asking myself the question, ‘can I become a great leader’ – not just within Pictarine but within in a wider sphere and have a real impact on the world.

The coach worked with both myself and the other three members of the C-suite over a period of about six months; we had both face-to-face sessions (individually and collectively) and screen-to-screen sessions during the Covid lockdown.

Personally, I have always been interested in personal development, especially my own, and this coaching helped me to clarify my leadership strengths and blind points; how to play to my strengths, how to develop my ‘weaknesses’ and to understand how I could deploy my full leadership potential in order to drive the transformation and growth I was looking for.

Collectively, the coach observed us working together and helped us to understand how we could more effectively integrate our different ‘styles’ and be seen as a collective motor for development; it also helped us to prepare for the repercussions of the company’s growth on the functioning of the C-Suite.

**Bob: In parallel to your leadership coaching, you also started a group coaching with other CEOs**

**Guillaume:** Yes, I felt the need to be in a formal environment with other CEOs; not just having a chat but being guided by a coach to achieve specific outcomes. I enrolled in a group of 6 CEOs being led by two coaches; we meet every two months, in Paris, where we engage in both peer coaching and co-development activities.

Being a CEO is quite lonely and it was important for me to be with other CEOs with who I could share my doubts and vulnerabilities; sharing with a coach is one thing, but being able to share with those who are in, or have lived through, a similar situation I found to be very powerful. The coaches challenge us, but we also challenge each other on our actions and decisions.

I have a fairly clear vision of what I want to be and I see this life coaching as an opportunity to become who I want to be; something that in the day-to-day I sometimes lose sight of. I know that I want to find time to help other startups, I know that I want to do more sport, I want to be a good father, I want to be a good CEO, I want to be a good citizen and all of that in a kind of ‘unity’

**Bob: Being, seems to be a very important word for you, you talk about what you want to ‘do’, but want you want to ‘be’ comes up often in your comments.**

**Guillaume:** This paramount for me, I am aware that I need (and maybe still have to learn) to behave differently in different situations, but I want to be ‘me’ in those situations, I don’t want to have to pretend that I am someone else. I’m clearly not there today but I honestly think that in facing up to my fears and my doubts that this will help me get there.

**Bob: What recommendations would you give to a young entrepreneur in a similar situation; a successful company that is making money and doesn’t think that she/he needs coaching?**

**Guillaume:** If the person does not need coaching, great! Coaching is expensive and time consuming.

**Bob: No comment**

**Guillaume:** More seriously, I know some start up CEOs who have not gone for coaching and I think it is a mistake. You may have all the answers within you, but it is arrogant to think that you can access those answers alone. A coach is not going to give you the answer to all your problems. In fact, it is almost the opposite in that the coach will help you to ask yourself the right questions and find your answers to your questions – I see coaching as a kind of ‘accelerator’ and in this fast-moving world, it is an accelerator that can make the difference between success and failure.
Creating Teamwork and Trust

As part of our programme

‘Intelligent Thinking, Intelligent Action’ in Private Banking

by Maria Biquet (Greece)

In my previous article I shared our experience with our programme INTELLIGENT THINKING INTELLIGENT ACTION in Private Banking. The purpose of the programme was to bring Energy, Innovation and Action to the team in order to increase financial results. The goal was achieved with an increase in results of up to 25% in transactions.

In this article I want to share our experience with the managers of the Division we received amazing feedback about the change in teamwork:

- How the people are better bonded,
- Work better together,
- Are more efficient
- And have more trust and support.

People working together usually call themselves a team. In fact, they are just a group of people that work full time or part on the same project and occasionally collaborate.

The idea of Teamwork is very significant for most organisations although it is not the reality of work. Most people simply form groups because they have to deliver on a specific project. Each person works individually and delivers their part of work without connecting or supporting the next person to deliver a common outcome. They miss the essence of the ‘team’: trust and shared goals.

From my experience with the people it is a big challenge to create, and sustain, real teams out of groups. Looking back at history and where we are today, we are in our individualistic era where people are used to work for themselves, pursuing their personal dreams, goals and targets. In our current civilisation’s doctrine work is either what I must do to survive or the space where I can thrive. There is no such idea as common goals for the community or achieving something for the common good without individual recognition. Such ideas belong to the past of the human civilisation and although people talk about them, the world is perceived through individual achievements and success.

So our task was to create a culture of Teamwork within each ‘team’.

Identifying strengths and points to work on

Our first task was to run a simple poll across all teams to measure their sense of ‘teamwork’, ‘energy’ and ‘freedom’ in their environment. We then asked everybody the same question in an open conversation and recorded their answers.

Preparation for a conducive space was critical, especially as it was the first time that the people in the company were asked openly how autonomous they felt there.

Everybody had to give an answer and they could also discuss between themselves their opinion. We facilitated and maintained that safe space to let everybody say what they believed, and then rudimentary calculated the average as a baseline to work from.

We received interesting answers to most of our questions and took them all into account as we developed the programme. However, there were two questions when used in combination which we believed that indicated to us that there was a potentially willingness and a sense of readiness to work on the essence of being a team:

1. ‘How would you rate your relatedness?’ Most people rated their relatedness very high about 8.5/10 because they had been at the same company for ten years or more.
2. ‘How would you rate your feeling of autonomy?’ the average was low about 5.5/10.

Their answers were a strong indication that the people had a lot of potential to build real teamwork because they were feeling related (familiar, connected) but not so autonomous (free to act, responsible).

Our strategy was to (1) build on the existing relatedness and (2) work on developing a sense of responsibility and the right to make choices in that environment which would lead to a higher sense of autonomy.

After a couple of months the results were fantastic: all the people understood the importance of getting to know each other personally and connect with their colleagues as human beings.

They have started asking for advice, ideas and feedback from their peers in the teams and sharing their knowledge and ideas between them. In this way everybody knew that they could ask for help from the others when they faced a difficult and that they could count on each other.

The more extroverts started sharing information they had picked up from other Business Units with all the others in order to be better prepared for new projects.

In fact, everybody increased communication with others in the Unit; the morning coffee with a different colleague every day became a habit and resulted in an efficient way of preemption problems because everybody knew which project was in progress and was prepared.

The next step in our process was to suggest a number of simple ways to incorporate some basic habits in their everyday work, like:

- Having coffee for 5 minutes with a different person every day talking about anything but work
- Visit 1-2 colleagues per day at their office to solve an issue instead of making a phone call.
- At every session they were asked to bring cases from their everyday work. We asked them to share the issue and then we facilitated the process of getting ideas.
- The managers of each team were asked to organise a ‘Superlinear Meeting’ once a month for 30-60 minutes to ask for new ideas from all the members and discuss completely new ideas for improvement.
- We trained them in ‘asking for feedback’ on how to improve on specific tasks.

Preparing a conducive space was critical and resulted in an efficient way of preemption problems because everybody knew which project was in progress and was prepared.
People felt much more supported between them and would trust each other more; the habit of sharing their issue and asking for ideas expanded and became a common practice.

The realisation that EVERYBODY worked to achieve ONE result as ONE TEAM was now clear in their perception.

Final thoughts & my key learnings:

• Building sustainable Teamwork in our era of Individualism is an ambitious and very complex goal. Most ‘team building’ exercises offer a lot of fun for a weekend but zero results when the fun weekend is over not to mention medium to long term.

• Teamwork requires Trust and Connectedness among other qualities and the culture of individual achievement is by itself against the very essence of the Team.

• Highly competitive cultures may achieve great results, but not Teamwork and Trust because it is always about individual achievement and reward.

• The purpose might be a good ground for building Teamwork but how often can people see the real purpose in their organisations except for charities and a few non-profit maybe?

• My experience as a Coach and Consultant is that there must be some specific traits in a culture (like relatedness for example) that create a basis for the Trust and Connectedness which may lead to successful and sustainable Teamwork.

In our case, we used our diagnostic tools to find out about the Culture and develop a specialised programme. We applied our Code 15 methodology to build new habits that ended up in a successful bonding of the people and their true intention to be and work as a Team! I will be happy to share tips and ideas with any colleagues who undertake similar projects.

ABOUT MARIA BIQUET

Maria Biquet is an experienced multilingual Business Consultant and Executive Coach with vast experience from diverse business fields, such as Banking & Financing, Automotive, Telecommunications and Education.

Maria has long experience in Strategic Marketing and in establishing companies in new markets. For more than 20 years she has studied various methodologies for self development and change including Neuroscience in Coaching, Systemic approach, Appreciative Inquiry Approach, NLP and mindfulness techniques.

She holds a University degree in Language & Linguistics, an MBA-International Marketing and is a Neurocoach certified by the NBG – Harvard School and a Master Coach certified by the CAC.

Vice President of Marketing & Communications of HCA (Hellenic Coaching Association) EMCC Greece, member of the EMCC (European Mentoring & Coaching Council). Works as a volunteer with Non Profit Organisations: Mentor at Orange Grove for startup companies and at Cherie Blair Foundation. EMCC Accredited Senior Practitioner Senior Researcher on Ethics: ‘the actual Ethical Dilemmas in Coaching today’ in collaboration with EMCC. Works in Greek, English and French.

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Tarot – A Life Coaching Technique to Create Better Wellbeing

by Ian Pilkington - iCN Journalist (UK)

They are a team, and individuals in their own right. Their partnership spans many years, each having complementary specialisms. A double certified trainer in NLP, Jan brings many years of experience of evidence-based coaching, helping people to sort out their own intuition. Keziah is best known as a meditation guide on global meditation app Insight Timer, and she teaches courses on Tarot, Intuition, and Reiki Precepts.

Ian: Who are Jan Russell Dexter and Keziah Gibbons?

They are a team, and individuals in their own right. Their partnership spans many years, each having complementary specialisms. A double certified trainer in NLP, Jan brings many years of experience of evidence-based coaching, helping people to sort out their own intuition. Keziah is best known as a meditation guide on global meditation app Insight Timer, and she teaches courses on Tarot, Intuition, and Reiki Precepts.

Jan: How would you explain ‘life coaching’?

It’s a deliberate, collaborative timeout where people can reflect on themselves, their issues, their strengths, so that they can develop and harness their motivation, their resilience and their energy. With those in place, it enables them to move to a place of optimum performance and maintain a place of equilibrium.

Life coaching will be purposeful and intentional in order to move forward. Some people look to understand themselves better or make sense of what happened or explain how I came to be how I am.

Coaching is outcome focussed, because it is about also maintaining that best state. As a coach, I am here to help you find ways to explore what you would like your life to be like. So, it’s structured, because this is the story of your life, you are creating your future story. There is structure to it. There is narrative to it. There’s some spontaneity. You are going to develop points of interest. And all through that, its collaboration with your coach.
Ian: Are there any specific techniques (for life coaching) that you specialise in?

Keziah: What I have done is blended my Tarot practice with coaching skills, and it’s by far my preferred method of working. When I have a client for a Tarot reading, often we’ll frame the reading using coaching skills, and use the cards as a collaborative attempt to discover meaning and plan next steps. I also designed a Tarot course which is essentially a personal development programme using the Tarot as a reflective tool.

Tarot reading usually has spread. It is the number of cards that you put out in certain positions and they relate to each other and that spread might be creative based on a particular coaching tool or framework.

The cards are very useful both at discovering the meaning and making plans. And that is something that the clients can recognise when they’re outside of the session and out in the world that they might say, oh, such and such an archetype from the tarot came in today, and I noticed it.

I have two main Tarot courses and they are both very much designed around life coaching. People work with the cards and all the way through they are being asked to reflect, to be intentional and to use these frameworks and these tools to help them to achieve whatever it is that they want to achieve. Whether that’s just self knowledge or something that they want to move towards.

We have used it to find ways to create a space to have communications that either were not going on or were going on in a slightly different way. So, it is just kind of an extra communication tool for them. And I have even used it to explore company culture, tying the tarot into an existing company culture and set of values. And using it to really dig into those patterns of where the company culture is very much aligned already, how individuals and teams within the company were processing and understanding that the company culture and how else can they access a shared vision of that culture. So, it’s really very versatile. You can use it in lots and lots of different situations.

One of the very cool things about Tarot is that you can use it to deliberately choose images, for example in intention setting, creating a possible future. And you can also use a coaching framework to create a spread and draw cards blind. There’s a little bit of magic here. I don’t know how the right cards always come out for the right person, but I’ve been doing this for long enough to know that they do!

Ian: What benefits would you expect from using Tarot as a Life Coaching intervention?

Keziah: You can create a tarot spread which is a vision board, and you can create steps all the way through. From my experience Tarot helps people to put the pieces of the puzzle together in a very unique way. There are some people that it really speaks to - they can look at the cards and see in the beautiful, powerful images there, exactly what it is that they need to understand.

And so for people who think in images or people who think in metaphor, particularly the tarot really, really speaks to them. You know, they look at the card straight away. They have a very personal meaning for it. And they can also understand that meaning and context within the culture that they are from, the culture that we’re living in. There are some people for whom it’s just it’s like a piece of magic.

J an: I had a client and I had a very vague story of what she wanted, and we began with a Tarot reading and she got in touch with me after that tarot reading probably a day later and said, actually, you’ll never know how powerful that was for me, Jan. Because when I first came to see you, I really was choosing whether I wanted to continue living or not. And I have contemplated all the things I saw in front and around me. And now I have chosen to live. I had not expected that. But also, it just shows you in terms of outcomes about what it can do for people as a life coach.

Keziah: Every so often someone will come to a session or have a series of sessions and they will be in a process where they are really learning to trust themselves. People can be in circumstances where they are receiving lots of messages from outside. So, the messages that are programmed into the culture and all the different narratives that we have gone around us. The messages that someone’s family or colleagues or loved ones might be giving to them about how they should be, and who they should be.

And what I have seen Tarot do is that it really reminds people of their core truths. You know, ‘this is who I am’ and ‘this is what I want’. And ‘yes, it’s OK, for me to be that person and to want those things’. I have seen people make really powerful changes, I have seen people custom make their own big funky boots and step into them and stomp around in them. It’s really wonderful to watch; to be involved in and to be part of.
Belief Relief: A Periodic Mental Overhaul to Facilitate Life Mastery

by David D McLeod (USA)

A Story

When I was about three years old, my mother said eight words to me that had a powerful impact on the next four decades of my life. I wish I could tell you it was a positive impact, but alas…

I don’t remember the specific details of the situation, but I suspect I was behaving in a somewhat rambunctious manner that was getting on Mom’s nerves. Exasperated, she released a loud sigh of frustration, grabbed me by the arms, and lifted me onto the changing table.

‘Listen to me, young man!’ she exclaimed. ‘I am your mother! I am in charge! You are supposed to do what you are told!’ Apparently, my attempts to squirm out of her painful grasp were interpreted as even more rebelliousness.

‘Stop!’ she yelled. ‘Just stop and pay attention.’ Tears began to overflow my eyelids, but I tried to hold them in as I stood as still as I could. Without letting go of me, she released the pressure on my arms and gave me a stern look. ‘I want you to understand something here, David Douglas.’ She only ever used my two given names when she was about to say Something Really Important. So, I met her eyes as attentively as I could.

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‘I know you better than you know yourself.’ She said these eight words with absolute conviction, so I had no doubt that she believed them. I am not sure what my 3-year-old mind actually thought of these words as they bounced around in my head, but in my adult mind of today I imagine my processing went something like this:

‘Well, you are my mother, and you certainly know me better than anyone else does. You love me, you take care of me, you always seem to ensure my wants and needs are met, even if I am not sure what I want. And of course, you always tell the truth, you never lie to me. So, I guess it must be true: you know me better than I know myself.’

At that moment, I accepted my mother’s words as gospel truth. But it wasn’t long before I made an obvious leap.

‘Daddy must know me better than I know myself too. And Grandma and Grandpa must know me better than I know myself, too!’ Since the number of people who actually knew me at that age was pretty small, I quickly came to the inevitable conclusion that ‘Everybody knows me better than I know myself.’

Jan: I would leave people with the thought that we’re always mentally rehearsing and life coaching is very much about helping us make sure that we’re always mentally rehearsing what we want and not what we don’t want.

Keziah: I would like to draw a card for your readers.

And we have got the Three of Wands, which is an absolutely lovely card. You can see this person standing under a tree next to three saplings, looking at the road ahead of them. Those three saplings are already growing and they are growing under the shelter of that big tree. So, there is something in there as well about how the coaching process can help to support that growth. It is a nice, gentle card. It is very positive. And there is a lot of road still to walk, but you can see it unfolding ahead of you. You can see where it is going, and you have the knowledge and the capabilities to go on that path.

Ian: Are there any final thoughts you would like to leave the readers with?

Jan: I would leave people with the thought that we’re always mentally rehearsing and life coaching is very much about helping us make sure that we’re always mentally rehearsing what we want and not what we don’t want.

Keziah: I would like to draw a card for your readers.

Ian is an authentic and motivational executive coach & mentor. With a successful 30-year industry career working in several major blue-chip organisations, across wide market sectors.

With a proven track record of helping organisations achieve consistent sustained results, Ian has used his expertise in change management and coaching to enable shortening the change management curve and deliver increased value in the short, medium and long-term.

An ILM Level 7 Executive Coach & Mentor, an NLP Practitioner, and an EQi (Emotional Intelligence) Profiler, all adding to Ian’s deep pedigree in Organisational Excellence, delivering significant results for Shareholders, Customers and Employees.

My website is keziah-gibbons.com, and I’m on Insight Timer www.insighttimer.com/keziahgibbons

Both Jan and Keziah are on Linkedin
linkedin.com/in/keziahgibbons
linkedin.com/in/drjanrussel
Well, as you can imagine, this belief soon disappeared into my subconscious mind, and in its own weed-like way, began creating other similar beliefs:

- ‘I have to look to others to figure out what I want and need.’
- ‘I cannot trust myself to make my own decisions.’
- ‘I don’t know myself at all; I must look to others to guide me.’
- ‘I’m not allowed to make my own choices.’

Because I had taken on these beliefs, and many others like them, over the following 40 or so years, I grew less and less satisfied with my life, and as a result my level of resentment and anger grew. However, the process was so slow that I did not realise it was happening. It was not until shortly after my mother passed in 1992 that I began to see my anger leaking out sideways and beginning to cause damage to the people I loved the most—my three children. In my search for a solution to what I feared was a gradually worsening issue, I looked to religion, friends, and counselling. But when none of them seemed to work for me, I came to the painful conclusion that my only option was to escape my surroundings altogether. In July of 1995, I skipped town and headed for a new job in California. As it happened, this turned out to be one of the most healing decisions I could have made.

Over the next 10 years or so, I was connected to teachers, gurus, workshop leaders, coaches, therapists, and healers of every description who collectively helped me to understand and unravel the complex dysfunctional belief systems I had created for myself. I began to understand that what my mother had told me so many years earlier had not been intended to get me to behave according to her wishes; it wasn’t truly real at all! And yet, in my childhood zeal to please the people I loved, I had inadvertently cultivated a complex belief system that had me looking outside myself in order to know who I truly am. This had led me to become a people pleaser—so much so that I was making myself totally miserable in the process. Talk about a convoluted and dysfunctional way to live your life!

I’m sure that there are far less dramatic ways to learn important life-lessons, but for some reason, I chose a path that took about 50 years to complete. There are many things I learned from this journey, but for today, I want to focus on just one.

Everyone has beliefs, all kinds of them! We have beliefs about politics, science, health, relationships, money, and many other things that we consider important. We have beliefs about massively big things like the universe, galaxies, matter and energy. We have beliefs about massively tiny things too, like cells, molecules, atoms, subatomic particles, bacteria and viruses, to name just a few. We have beliefs about things we generally accept as real; we have beliefs about things we generally consider imaginary. The range of possible beliefs is boundless.

All of these beliefs help us navigate the physical world. We know now that they are extremely powerful forces within our consciousness. Shaped largely by past experiences, beliefs contribute to how we perceive our reality going forward. They also have the power to motivate us in ways that influence future experiences. At the same time, they exert a powerful bias on the choices we make in each moment—and most of the time we don’t even realise that we are being influenced in this way. But we must all remember that every belief, no matter how supportive or empowering it might seem, is by its very nature a limiting belief. This is because the moment we believe something, we automatically tend to filter out anything that contradicts it! In other words, the moment we choose to believe something—consciously or unconsciously—we automatically activate biases in our ego-minds that become more selective about evidence as the belief grows stronger. This is why it is so important to do periodic belief reviews, so that we can keep what works for us, and modify or delete the rest. Let me explain how to do that.

**Today’s Lesson**

**The Belief Relief Process**

Grab yourself a journal and find a quiet place where you won’t be disturbed. Set aside a minimum of 30 minutes for this—although you can certainly spend more time on it if your schedule permits.

**STEP 1** Ask yourself this question: What do I believe about the world? Write down as many answers as you can think of. Don’t judge the answers that come up; just write them down. Leave several lines of blank space after each belief so that you can make notes in the next step. Keep doing this until you can’t think of anything else.

**STEP 2** Go through the entire list and rate each belief statement on a scale from 1 to 10, where 1 represents little or no reactive energy associated with the belief, and 10 represents the case where you would practically die to defend that belief. This really helps you to understand how strongly the belief influences you.

**STEP 3** Now focus your attention on all the beliefs with an energy rating higher than six, and for each one, answer the following questions:

- *Where did this belief come from?* Is it something I was taught by one of my childhood teachers, or is it something I developed on my own?
- *What kinds of consequences do I create by allowing myself to be influenced by this belief?* How do I feel about those consequences?
- *What does this belief say about who I am choosing to be?* Am I okay with showing up that way?
- *What kinds of consequences would I prefer to create going forward?*
- *With all that I have uncovered about this belief, do I want to keep it, or do I want to replace it with a new one?*

**Recommendation**

Review and revise your beliefs at least twice a year. At the same time, try to remain aware of your beliefs all the time so that you can make more frequent adjustments as necessary. Remember, every belief has its own energy which tends to move you in a particular direction. Make sure it truly leads you where you want to go.

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**ABOUT DAVID D MCLEOD, DD, PHD, CMLC**


As a Certified Master Life Coach with a PhD in Metaphysical Sciences and a DD in Holistic Personal Coaching, David shares his wisdom, insights, personal lessons, and expertise in countless ways that help people all over the world to become true Masters of their lives.

Find out more at: https://www.thewellnessuniverse.com/world-changers/davidmcleod/
Unconscious Bias
Blocking Career Success
by Chris Delaney (UK)

The biggest barrier to professional success is the job interview. During the job interview, an interviewee must highlight how they meet the job criteria as well as overcoming the employer’s unconscious biases.

A structured job interview is an analytical process to determine a candidate’s potential job performance. Impressions, initially, are made through the interviewer’s unconscious biases – an emotional process not a logical one.

At a basic level, the unconscious bias will create a ‘like or dislike’ impression of an applicant based on a number of reasons that the interviewer may not be consciously aware of. The initial impression can be created pre-interview; a positive application form can create a ‘halo’ effect. Or the initial impression is created at the interview start; a person’s sex, ethnicity, height and even a candidate’s body mass influence their ‘likeability’ factor which impacts the interviewers scoring.

Interviewers Reactions to Their Prejudices

Hiring decisions are made in two distinct ways through 1) the fast-intuitive emotional brain, this includes being influenced by long-held beliefs, stereotypes and prejudices and 2) via the slower analytical mind; analysing the interviewer’s answer against the job criteria.

An example of the two decision making processes is a male interviewer meeting a female applicant applying for a traditional ‘male’ role. Initially an unconscious thought pops into the employer’s mind ‘I don’t think women should work in masculine roles, but I know I should not be thinking this’

There are 3 types of reactions to a stereotype:

Aware and Don’t Care – in the female applying for a masculine role example, if the interviewer believes that women cannot do male roles then nothing in the world will change this opinion; these are your sexist, racist, ageist interviewers - aware of a prejudice without wanting to change their belief.

Aware and Care – the prejudices pop into their mind even if they don’t believe the stereotype, often through the culture or environment, they grew up in. The interviewer is aware of the bias but knowing they should not be thinking this way they will attempt to conduct a fair interview using the structured interview process. Even with conscious effort, this bias will affect the scoring of applicants.
Not Aware and Not Affected – the interviewer does not have a bias when they meet, in this example, a female applying for a masculine role resulting in an interview not affected by that prejudice (but could be affected by a second prejudice).

Positive Biases

When an interviewer finds any similarity with an interviewee, they are likely to unconsciously score the candidate higher. Similarities can be trivial, from sharing a similar sounding surname, supporting the same sports team, or from attending the same university.

Research also shows how attractiveness increases likeability. The more beautiful you are the more an employer will find you suitable for the advertised position. But not for high skilled roles. For skilled positions it is the applicant’s skill base which has been proven to be more important, showing that the analytical process within a structured job interview can trump the opinions made by the initial bias.

But not always. An experiment was conducted where an application form was sent to employers with either an attached photograph of an average weight individual or that of an overweight applicant. Evidence showed that being obese, even though all applicants had a higher skill set, resulted in fewer job interview offers.

The bias for ‘aware and care’ employers can be altered. Within the first questions on a job interview an ‘interview identity’ can be created which will either reinforce the bias or can override the prejudice.

Returning to the ‘females can’t work on masculine roles’ example, a female with a low level of confidence could reinforce this stereotype, but a confident female expressing her high level of knowledge and experience could create a new positive perception that challenges the initial limiting belief.

Interview Prediction Grid © 2020

It is an applicant’s perceived level of knowledge and experience vs their level of confidence, when combined, creates the ‘interview identity’ which future interview answers will be filtered through.

The ‘interview identity’ is the employer’s perspective; how the interviewee is viewed in the interview.

Within the workplace a career professional may be confident completing industry related task, but if the candidate self-disclose weaknesses, avoids eye contact and uses excess filler words throughout the interview they may be perceived as an anxious individual.

There are 16 interview identities – to identify how an interviewer may perceive you, take the interview prediction test:

Read the 4 statements under each sub-heading and choose the one that most sounds like you. Total up both points and for an odd number result round down to the nearest even number.

LEVEL OF CONFIDENCE

Self-worth

• 4 Points – A self-promoter fully aware of their expertise. Demands to be treated with authority and respect, and will challenge anyone with contradictory opinions

• 3 Points – Believes in their ability, recognises an own skillset and will discuss strengths when questioned

• 2 Points – Aware of both strengths and areas of development, but can easily disclose weaknesses and mistakes without prompt from others

• 1 Point – Has a negative view of their abilities and lacks self-appreciation

LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE/EXPERIENCE

Specialist Knowledge/Experience

• 4 Points – 10yrs+ sector experience; able to build on industry-related academic research contributing to the field.

• 3 Points – 3-10 years sector experience; experienced in the implementation of proven theories and models into business as usual

• 2 Points – 1-3 years relevant experience; academic level of industry knowledge without experience of applying concepts to day to day tasks

• 1 Point – No experience; possesses soft skills; communication, teamwork, problem-solving

Academic Ability

• 4 Points – Masters – Doctoral Degree/Post-grad Qualifications (Level 7-8)

• 3 Points – Degree Level Qualification up to Bachelors (Level 6)

• 2 Points – Graduate – up to Higher National Diploma (Level 4-5)

• 1 Point – GCSE/A-Level (Level 2-3) or below

Again, read the 4 statements under each sub-heading and choose the one that most sounds like you. Total up both points and for an odd number result round down to the nearest even number.

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Communication Style

• **4 Points** – Commands attention and dominates meetings. Complex ideas are explained clearly and competently combining statistics with examples. Able to influence others to take on a new point of view, using logic and reasoning to overcome barriers to objections.

• **3 Points** – Speaks with authority, presents ideas within a structure and uses vocal variety to maintain interest. Able to debate a technical subject, arguing points clearly while expressing their own ideas.

• **2 Points** – Can discuss a familiar subject when asked, but finds it difficult to respond when challenged. Feels strained explaining new concepts, however, with comfortable topics speaks clearly and varies pitch/volume.

• **1 Point** – Feels nervous when being the centre of attention. Communication is weak due to hesitations, excessive filler words, low volume and short snappy sentences

To access a full overview of your interview identity, click the Interview Prediction Grid link www.employmentking.co.uk/ipg

Interview Prediction Grid © 2020

6/6 - Self-assured

All high/high interviewees are employable. The 6/6 - self-assured applicant will easily build rapport with a job interviewer as their ‘medium’ confidence level and knowledge/experience is expressed with industry-related anecdotes and detailed examples. Being ‘medium’ in both knowledge/experience and level of confidence, the 6/6 - self-assured individual is aware of their own abilities and expresses this well. Within the high/high segment, the 6/6 - self-assured applicant is the lowest high/high quadrant, but this does not always mean they will be unsuccessful against other high/high interviewees as some applicants with an 8-level of confidence can overplay their hand. But the reality is that a 6/6 self-assured career professional is often at the beginning of their senior-level career, applying for roles against other, more experienced, high/high applicants.

Together, this score indicates your interview identity.

Once an interview identity has been chosen, a description is given that explains how an employer’s view this interview identity, and their strengths and areas of development.

**by Dawn Ann Campbell (France)**

**Bulletin from IAPC&M**

CPD is an important benefit of IAPC&M membership, learning and taking action from these regular webinars represents a massive ROI. To better understand what we mean by CPD, see [HERE](#).

Here is a summary of what you have missed out on so far:

- Write From Your Heart and Discover Your Author Voice
- 5 Mistakes That Can Stop You Achieving Your Goals and How To Avoid Them
- The Brand of You
- Effective Virtual Conversations
- How to Become Your Own Health Coach
- How Photography Enhances the Coaching Experience
- 3 Reasons Why Coaches Stay Broke Forever
- How to Coach Adolescents in an Engaging Way
- How to Gain the CoachVantage in a Noisy Digital World
- Sales is just a Conversation by Any Other Name

**January**

- **Coach on Fire**

**February**

- **Coaching Agreement**

**March**

- **4 Steps to Better Time Management**
- **Establish Trust**

**April**

- **3 Fabulous Strategies to Create Your Own Business**
- **Use of Self in Coaching**

**May**

- **Missed Out On the Amazing Smorgasbord of ICW Webinars**
- **Becoming an Infopreneur is More Important than Ever!**
- **Coaching Through COVID19 and Beyond**
Why Life Coaches Need to Invent their Own Methodology

The gap between what you want and need and how to communicate it confidently and assertively

by Alessandra Patti (Switzerland)

Coaching is powerful. It is a powerful tool, and now the industry seems to be growing at unprecedented speed. And yet, it still seems that anybody can be a coach. Basically, when you do not know what to do, instead of pause and reflect, become a coach. I do not particularly agree with that, since I do not think that anybody has what it takes to become a coach, such as particular empathy, intuition, sensitivity and at the same time the business strategy that shows the client how to get from A to B.

But, at the same time, why not? Isn’t it the same thing, when there was like a boom in the IT industry around the beginning of the year 2000 and everybody suddenly wanted to know how to program? Funny enough, the IT and the coaching industry are the fastest growing industries now! The bigger freedom that people experience in their professional journey, and social media, contribute to having more people expressing what they can do, how they feel and how they can help people. Then why does life coaching have a such lower reputation sometimes?

I think because it is something that belongs to the humanities. Whatever people are studying that is difficult to put in a box, and therefore more intangible, has lower reputation. Because selling the intangible is equally hard, whereas programming (that for me is equally hard and intangible) has tangible results.

Therefore, in my experience with my own coaching practice, I think that the best tool that life coaches can use, it to create methodologies, whose heart is the client. However, creating methodologies takes time, and you need to have experienced success in those methodologies during a certain number of years, to be able to sell them confidently.

I’d like to make an example of my own methodology that fills an important gap, as mentioned in the title of this article: your needs and how to truly communicate them.

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All CPD and business building webinars count towards your CPD log, and if you need a log to capture your key learning, you can DOWNLOAD HERE or contact rhea.VA@coach-accreditation.services

PS: We have been having technical issues with the links recently. If any of your links don’t work, you will find all the webinar recordings available here: https://coach-accreditation.services/blog/. Just key in the title of the webinar in the search box. Thank you!
If we were to give a class of assertive communication, I might just use the main skills and techniques and teach them. But that is precisely where the beauty of life coaching kicks in: I take you there in a deeper, meaningful way, operating a transformation that starts within. If I were to only teach the assertiveness techniques, the risk would be that people use them for some time, but they might not truly embrace or believe them. So, the change will not be possible under these circumstances.

For all these reasons, my coaching methodology has 5 steps:

1. **Self-esteem and self-acceptance work:** If I accept my needs, my wishes and believe that what I need is valid, my self-esteem and confidence will increase. Creating a great basis for great communication.

2. **Boundary setting:** this has to do with an unconscious (or conscious) people-pleasing attitude. If I base my self-esteem on external factors, I will try to please others in order to feel worthy. If I nurture my self-esteem, I will be able to place healthy boundaries in all areas of my life, without feeling a tremendous guilt. And you actually become more open to others.

3. **Communication:** how do I usually communicate? Do you get feedback on your way of communicating? Or have you ever asked others how they feel when you give them feedback? If you are conscious about your communication style, and at the same time open to challenge it, then assertive communication will be fascinating for you.

4. **Communication 2:** Ok, maybe your communication style is getting better and you are open to improvements. However, do you still find it difficult to disagree? Hold the discomfort of a difficult conversation: you can learn a lot. Use non-violent communication.

5. **Make it stick:** make assertiveness your routine and habit, believe in yourself and check-in with yourself often. Creating a new habit can be hard for others to take, and they might make you feel like you have changed. How to make this change sustainable? We do that together.

This is what I love about life coaching. It is practical, it’s targeted, it’s hopeful. It’s just that not everyone sees it that way. And that can be our mission as coaches: to make the world understand the journey and transformation we create. We seem to belong to the intangible services world, but if you look at it closer, we actually create tangible results for individuals! Never stop studying and research the science behind your coaching method: you will own it!

When I first had my own coaching session as a client, I really noticed how my mind was “cluttered” with assumptions, with fears and ancient clichés, and how the coaching questions opened infinite possibilities.

In the last few months there has been a tremendous worldwide movement, revealing the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. The ‘Me too’ movement was in the news, in social media, in newspapers, in hundreds of television discussions and this gave the opportunity to discuss openly what everybody already knew: that women are very often victims of the predatory behaviour of men.

We are watching women sharing their unpleasant experiences of being offended or even attacked by their bosses without the possibility to protect (or knowing how to protect) themselves from their powerful boss.

This phenomenon is not new; it is as old as the human race and has always been happening in different shapes or forms in every society. Until recently, even in the Western civilised countries, women were legally considered inferior to men — for example, they did not have the right to vote – therefore, a man could offend “an inferior” without any consequences; it was a ‘natural’ behaviour that the society could accept.

Fortunately for us women things have changed for the better and we are considered equal citizens to men and have the same rights, at least legally. But what really happens in everyday life? This idea about ‘natural’ manliness behaviour still exists in the minds of both men and women, which makes men consider that behaviour acceptable and women consider it unpleasant but likely to happen. It is considered ‘natural manliness behaviour’ for men to be more ‘assertive’ when flirting and showing interest in women. The problem is that ‘assertive’ is really aggressive or is perceived as aggressive in different circumstances and contexts.

**ABOUT ALESSANDRA PATTI**

Alessandra, originally from Italy, resides in Zurich, Switzerland, where she leads her coaching practice (FindYourWay Coaching), facilitate workshops on assertive communication and mental health first aid. She is a certified assertiveness coach and university lecturer, and she also loves writing. Her chapter ‘The Assertiveness Companion’ in the book that she co-authored (Activate Your Life; 50 transformational exercises from coaches around the world) contributed to make it one of the best sellers on Amazon self-help category. Her hobby is latin dances, reading and writing.

**We Can Prevent Sexual Harassment at Work and We Should. My ‘Me Too’ Story…**

by Maria Biquet (Greece)

In the last few months there has been a tremendous worldwide movement, revealing the problem of sexual harassment in the workplace. The ‘Me too’ movement was in the news, in social media, in newspapers, in hundreds of television discussions and this gave the opportunity to discuss openly what everybody already knew: that women are very often victims of the predatory behaviour of men.

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**Yes, it happened to Me Too!**

At this point I would like to share my personal experience about eight years ago. The ‘Me too’ movement is complex, and in some cases, we rationalise the behaviours as ok until they are not ok. I share a personal experience from eight years ago, and whilst speaking to close friends about how to handle the situation, only after introspection and self-coaching could I find how to counter unwanted advances and attention. At the end of the piece I share questions that, with hindsight, guided me through it. It takes courage and strength, it’s messy, yet there is a silver lining at the end when you learn how to take back control. Also, as I share my experiences, I appreciate that this is just one of the many ways this can be dealt with, and I encourage you to share yours to continue what’s been started.

I was employed by a very large organisation and reporting to the General Manager of that Division. He had hired me to work with him on various projects and since the beginning of our cooperation I could feel that there was something strange in the atmosphere. He would keep me at his office for hours after everybody else had left talking about anything but work.
At the beginning I was puzzled because I couldn’t understand his intentions and couldn’t explain why he would spend so much time with me having social conversations instead of working productively!

At some stage he started making advances and then I understood why he was wasting so much time with me talking nonsense instead of business. I was surprised and a bit shocked because I wasn’t expecting that or... I thought I wasn’t expecting that.

The situation was unpleasant and difficult because my resistance affected my cooperation with him. Gradually he started blocking my projects and isolating me. My career in the organisation was doomed.

I started asking myself why this was happening and what I could do. In that organisation, it was impossible to speak up because there was no way to prove what was happening. I discussed about this with friends and a lawyer and they all said that unless I can prove it, it is better to find another job. The reality was that I needed the job and couldn’t afford to be unemployed in a market with over 20% unemployment.

There is something important here though: my personal introspection disclosed that deep down I was feeling flattered to spend time with that good looking, well-educated, successful guy who happened to my manager. Although I resisted, my behaviour ‘allowed’ this to happen. Initially, I was shocked, then scared and always polite because my upbringing dictated that I should always be polite to my superiors.

That aha moment was a big revelation! I realised that if I changed my behaviour and started being a really strong person that doesn’t need to feel flattered and doesn’t need to look polite if the other person breaks the rules, then I could stop the harassment immediately. And I did.

Feeling shocked-flattered-scared

When I knew that I didn’t need flattery and didn’t have to be polite just because he was my manager, my attitude changed. It didn’t stay at his office for social conversation anymore and stopped answering any questions not related to work; my body posture changed and even my tone of voice sounded harder because I wasn’t scared anymore. I was there as a professional. That was a conscious, clear and solid image. Eventually he stopped because he couldn’t shock me or scare me anymore.

I did not save my career though and some months later I resigned... Stronger, more confident and with an important lesson.

Be the strong Queen not the fragile Princess!

We cannot stop a person from being aggressive, but we can always protect ourselves and be proactive in order to prevent harassment at least to a degree. My experience taught me that we should be strong and clear about our attitude and about the messages we give in the environment.

Check the environment

• When you start working in an organisation, check what is happening in the culture; is this usual behaviour? Allowed? Unacceptable? Are there rules and processes that will support you if such an incident happens? Who could you report that to?
• Check behaviours: identify possible risks and threats from specific people and be strictly professional with them. Being friendly could be risky to people who are used to break the rules.

New thinking new attitude

Set a clear goal about your image

• Who are you in this environment? Define what messages you want your behaviour to pass in your environment. Be clear and solid. Be professional in all aspects. You are there to do a job; if you are too friendly and open some people might misunderstand it.
• Lack of self-esteem, low self-confidence, need for flattery might give the wrong message to aggressive people who are prone to harass women.

Be sure about yourself. Be strong.

• You may feel flattered by the handsome manager who talks to you nicely, but you don’t feel flattered! You are strong enough to feel confident without that.
• Know what you want and how you want to relate to your colleagues and managers. If you feel strong your attitude will radiate that.
• If something feels strange, it probably is. If you feel that someone’s behaviour makes you feel awkward, think about it and keep a distance until you understand their intentions.

React immediately.

If there is any indication of harassment react. Don’t accept it.

• Report them to the HR department or to the responsible person in the organisation. Ask a lawyer, discuss it with your family and friends and take advice. Think about your options.
• And most importantly: Don’t feel vulnerable and offended. Don’t be fragile. Speak up. Be strong and take action.

ABOUT MARIA BIQUET

Maria Biquet is an experienced multilingual Business Consultant and Executive Coach with vast experience from diverse business fields, such as Banking & Financing, Automotive, Telecommunications and Education.

Maria has long experience in Strategic Marketing and in establishing companies in new markets. For more than 20 years she has studied various methodologies for self development and change including Neuroscience in Coaching, Systemic approach, Appreciative Inquiry Approach, NLP and mindfulness techniques.

She holds a University degree in Language & Linguistics, an MBA-International Marketing and is a Neurocoach certified by the NBG – Harvard School and a Master Coach certified by the CAC.

Vice President of Marketing & Communications of HCA (Hellenic Coaching Association) EMCC Greece, member of the EMCC (European Mentoring & Coaching Council).

Maria is a volunteer with Non Profit Organisations: Mentor at Orange Grove for startup companies and at Cherie Blair Foundation. EMCC Accredited Senior Practitioner Senior Researcher on Ethics: ‘the actual Ethical Dilemmas in Coaching today’ in collaboration with EMCC. Works in Greek, English and French.

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Coaching - Secret Sauce of Resilient Organisations? An Interview with Santosh Ghate

by Rupinder Kaur – iCN Journalist (India)

Santosh is a passionate & performance driven CHRO with 21 years of Business experience in fast paced & high growth organisations. He has proven capabilities in setting up & scaling up of businesses across multi-cultural & complex business environments. An astute HR Leader with strong consulting skills coupled with expertise in developing and executing organizational interventions to meet business priorities. In his current role with Gartner, he is the Managing Vice President – HR and serves as a strategically oriented leader for India. He is responsible for designing and developing the people strategy with a focus on engagement, retention, employee experience and building a high-performance culture.

He is a certified Solution Focused Coach, and firmly believes that coaching is a powerful tool to build strong leaders and agile & innovative organisations.

I would like to introduce myself as an optimist, traveller, amateur long-distance runner and a cricket enthusiast. I am a Production Engineer and completed my MBA in Human Resources and Marketing.

I am a passionate & performance driven CHRO with 20 years of Business experience in fast paced & high growth organisations. Proven capabilities in setting up & scaling up of businesses across multi-cultural & complex business environments. HR Leader with Strong consulting and coaching skills coupled with expertise in developing and executing organisational interventions to meet business priorities.

Do share about your journey - you started with people development, moved to head business unit for Experian and back to people role. What lessons did you learn and how did that benefit you?

I consider myself fortunate to have had the opportunity to work in reputed organisations under the guidance and leadership of some fantastic leaders. Each organisation was on a different maturity stage and the learnings were very different. While my first stint at Honeywell focused on hiring, as we grew from 300 to 3000 in a short period of time, my stint at Experian as India Country head for HR focused on change management, building organisational and leadership capability and partnering with the leaders for organisation restructuring and business transformation.
In 2016, I was again fortunate to have been offered a P&L role within Experian. I set up the business from scratch and by 2019, we were the leader in this space. We built products that consumers wanted in a fast, agile and responsive manner and entered new segments and created novel models that were never explored by the industry earlier. The team grew from a handful to over 60 passionate and enthusiastic members who would go on to crush targets month on month, quarter on quarter and year on year. With benchmark People Survey and Net Promoter Scores, this business is well on its way to become a premium and sustainable high growth business for Experian.

Some lessons learnt from the business stint:

• Team composition: Having the right people in the right roles is the most important aspect for the success of any team. Organisations either have high potential talent in low impact roles or low potential talent in high impact roles that limit their ability to deliver.

• Impact of HR processes: As a consumer of HR services, I realised how at times, HR processes seemed to be followed for a tick in the box, with minimal positive impact on people or the business. This has helped me look at HR processes with a very different lens.

• Managing your own emotion: As they say, people don’t leave organisations, they leave managers/leaders. As a result, it was vital for me as a leader to know what my reactions to situations are and how that could impact my team. If I carried negative emotions, the team would be impacted negatively as well.

• Clarity of thought: As a leader, communicating your vision to the team is important and having their buy-in and commitment to it, is even more critical. It is easy to create visions, but difficult as hell to get their buy-in.

• Be on the lookout for signs of distress in your employees: Use both direct conversations and indirect observations to get visibility into employees’ challenges and concerns.

• Equip employees: Make sure employees have the technology they need to be successful, which may be more than just a mobile phone and laptop.

• Promote dialogue: Two-way dialogue between managers and employees ensures that communication efforts help, rather than hurt, engagement.

• Trust in your employees: “The best thing you can do as a manager right now is to suspend your disbelief and put utmost trust and confidence in your employees that they will do the right thing

• Reinforce organizational values: Even before this crisis, employers were increasingly treating employees as key stakeholders. During this crisis, you can show employees that you plan to look out for them for the long haul,

• Focus on outputs does not processes: In the remote landscape, where many people are juggling work and family commitments in their own homes, enable employees to complete their work in ways that are easiest and most productive for them.

• Increase recognition

Fear, worry, and stress are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and it is understandable that everyone is experiencing anxiety in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Added to the fear of contracting the virus are the significant changes to our daily lives as our movements are restricted in support of efforts to contain the spread of the virus and the new realities of working from home, home-schooling of children, and lack of social contact with other friends and colleagues.

Gartner Research shows that ‘55% of employees admit to feeling lonely as a result of the coronavirus outbreak and 62% of employees feel burned out’

While most organisations have the right intent to address stress, their approach isn’t effective as it is ‘one key fits all’. Coaching on the other hand is very personal and the coach is able to help individuals to evaluate their lives across several domains (i.e., work, home, emotional, and physical well-being) and develop positive coping strategies. A coach will help:

• Understand the stress response

• Identify the triggers

• Better manage energy and thoughts

• Learn stress management techniques

• Create long term positive changes

As part of my role, I have been coaching leaders and team members for years now and over time I’ve created my own style and technique of coaching, I have seen the effectiveness of coaching, especially in the workplace. It’s a powerful tool that knocks down barriers, empowers employees to take action, and improves morale.

During some situations, I would hit a wall and did not know how to proceed further and add value to the coachee. That is when I considered incorporating more coaching philosophies in my current approach. The certification will introduce me to tools and techniques that will prepare me to handle different situations effectively.

I believe that all humans have the potential to be best versions of themselves. This certification will help me be the catalyst who helps them on this journey.

What are the common blind spots that leaders exhibit when they want to drive a learning culture in the firm and what role can coaching play here?

With the COVID impact, many companies have started feeling the pressure to learn faster than their competitors or risk losing the business altogether. This is apparent in companies keep churning out new models of products at a fast pace to outperform competitors who are doing the same.

As a result, developing a learning culture is no longer just another fanciful idea but is becoming more imperative for companies to cultivate a learning culture if they wish to stay in business. And this in the workplace begins with the leaders as they are reinforcing training initiatives.

Some of the blind spots and the reasons I have seen why leaders fail to drive this are:

• Not ready to embrace such a radical concept

• Needs too much time and effort

• Not open to unlearn competition among groups and individuals, and replace it with cooperation, openness and dialogue

You got yourself certified on solution focussed coaching- how do you think certification equips you?

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Coaching is a great way to help leaders be successful in driving this culture change as they are guided through these changes:

- Identify and create ambassadors who can exhibit coaching skills and a coaching mindset on their own. These ambassadors need not necessarily be from the HR fraternity. Also actively seek out employees with coaching experience or choose adaptable employees willing to train for the role.
- Make coaching, training, and development regular opportunities by using classroom or virtual lessons. The more you coach, the better you become.
- Coaching will help leaders to role model the changes and behaviours with consistency throughout the transformation and beyond.

Over the past few years, we’re starting to hear

- The idea of being alone terrifies me… makes me feel ashamed. I feel abandoned, like it’s the end of the world. I feel dead... unseen, unheard…. like I don’t exist.’

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Her earliest memory is of being a baby, around one and a half years old. She feels alone. Her parents are in the room, but do not pay any attention to her. They are shouting, arguing among themselves, and fail to notice that she needs them.

Today is our second session.

She explains to me that she has woken up in the middle of the night with a sense of panic. She feels terribly alone and has the feeling that everyone has disappeared.

When I hear of such strong emotions in a person, I immediately know that these feelings are not new and have very little to do with what is actually happening in the present. For emotions to be so strong and be triggered so easily and so often, there is only one reason: they are the result of deep trauma experienced in early childhood.

So, I invite her to do an exercise with me.

She removes her eyes, and I guide her to relax and in her mind go back to a time when she was a small child and she had this feeling for the first time.

The worst part? They can be triggered by the

- ‘The idea of being alone terrifies me… makes me feel ashamed. I feel abandoned, like it’s the end of the world. I feel dead... unseen, unheard…. like I don’t exist.’

Her feelings at that moment in time - as a baby - are exactly the feelings she regularly experiences as a 37 year old!

As I suspected, this strong association with loneliness was created in her life at a very early age... and she has been dragging these awful feelings with her throughout her entire life.

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In her words, this makes her feel ‘unseen, unheard, disconnected, lost, alone... as if I don’t exist... as if I’m dead.’

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‘The idea of being alone terrifies me... makes me feel ashamed. I feel abandoned, like it’s the end of the world. I feel dead... unseen, unheard.... like I don’t exist.’
What we did next, allowed Emmi to experience things she had never experienced in her life.

You see, our nervous system does not know whether something is real or is ‘pretend.’ That is why, when we are in a movie, we feel exactly how the director wants us to feel.

In Emmi’s case, I had her imagine that her mother was doing something she never did before: her mother came over when Emmi needed her, took her in her arms, held her tightly against her bosom and told her how much she loved her.

As I described this new situation, Emmi started to sob. She was hearing her mother tell her things she had always wanted to hear: that she loved Emmi to the moon and back, that she was so proud of her, that she thought the world of her, that she admired her talents, her strength, her sensitivity, her intelligence…

She told her that she was going to have a brilliant future and would become a terrific mother… exactly addressing one of Emmi’s fears.

As Emmi heard those words and felt her mother’s love, she sobbed loudly.

For the first time of her life, she felt loved and secure. She not only felt seen and heard, she felt important and precious. She not only felt that she existed, she felt that she mattered deeply.

Instead of feeling dead, she now felt fully alive.

The next time Emmi was alone, she had a different feeling. The overwhelming sense of desolation and abandonment was gone.

Loneliness were starting to feel like independence and freedom now.

Would you like to experience something like that for yourself? Then let’s find out what you need: [https://www.emotional-strength.com/appointment](https://www.emotional-strength.com/appointment)

In Emmi’s case, her fear of loneliness had several immediate effects:

1. It prevented her from taking advantage of alone time (which can be extremely productive);
2. It prevented her from having a healthy relationship with a man; and
3. Although she desired fervently to be a mother, she felt she would not be able to connect emotionally to her child, so she could not make up her mind about it.

Now, let me ask you: what are your repeated feelings? Are they self-pity, insecurity, fear, sadness, frustration, desperation, loneliness, abandonment, overwhelm? Do you experience them with regards to romantic relationships or financial abundance or professional success… or everywhere?

Do you want to know how to heal them?

Many people spend their lifetime repeating affirmations or reading books on the subject or talking to a therapist or trying to control their behaviour through will power… unfortunately these things yield very little change. The reason: these actions take place at the conscious level.

However, the only way to heal trauma is through the subconscious mind. This is what I did with Emmi.

Once we explored her feelings at that moment in time and the circumstances surrounding it, I guided her into having an energetic (quantum) conversation with her mother.

In it, she found out that her mother had always taken care of Emmi’s physical well-being, but she failed to take care of her emotionally. The reason for this was that her mother did not know how to deal with emotions: she had been a Holocaust survivor and the way she had coped with the traumatic events in her own life had been to shut down her emotions completely.

As a result, she had lost her ability to connect emotionally to anyone, including her children.

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