

# choice

the magazine of professional coaching

## Does Coaching Change the Brain?

Support for neuroscience in coaching

Coaching & Metacognition

Hacking the Brain

The Science Behind Those 'Magical' Changes



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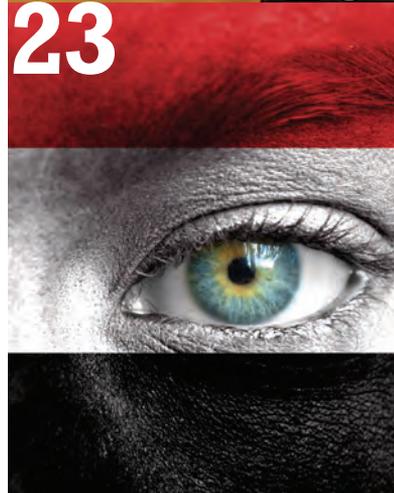
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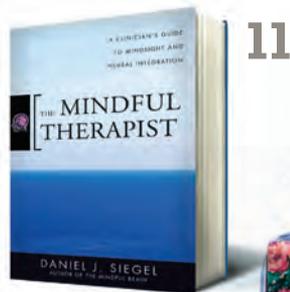
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**A**s our population ages, fear of cognitive ability increases.

Personally, I may not fear it as yet, but I am certainly aware of the possibility. Which is why I took up learning to play the piano last year.

It is well known that learning a language or learning to play an instrument are some of the ways to defer brain decline. In fact, activities like these not only increase brain function, but are also known to stave off Alzheimer's disease.

My husband, Patrick, started learning the piano 10 years ago. The bonus in learning from our piano teacher, June Caskey, is that she is also an avid learner of brain science and its relation to teaching and music. So much so that she wrote, and we published in this issue, an article about her findings

It is no surprise that the brain is adaptable. In this issue we see that the brain is fully changeable and even malleable. And we learn how as coaches, we can help our clients "change their brain"! What a great benefit of coaching! One that will no doubt help us market our services and make a significant impact for our clients.

This issue helps us understand the brain, how it functions and what we can do as coaches to help our clients through the work that we do.

What really makes me laugh about this issue, is that we can openly address the 'woo-woo' aspect of coaching with which we have for so long been associated, but which is now supported from a very practical neuro-science perspective.

What is equally exciting is the information I see inside this issue that relates to our body and in particular the other 'brains' of our body: namely the heart and stomach! Did you know that there are about as many neurons in the stomach as there are

in the brain? And yet we far too often discount our 'gut reaction' because it is not as factual and logical as the information from our brain.

I have learned so much from this issue that will serve both my clients AND me! For example, a lot of the things I do as part of my regular routine, like going to the gym for resistance training, walking more than 10,000 steps per day (at least that is my goal), learning and practicing the piano, getting sufficient sleep and eating properly, all contribute to my brain health and even its growth.

My hope is that you too will take this information personally and congratulate yourself on the things you are already doing, and start to add in the things that seem like fun and will support your brain health.

My biggest learning from this issue: change your behavior, change your brain.

Here's to your brain!

**Garry**  
PCC, CMC, CEO & Publisher

P.S. One of the ways I am building my brain recently is by learning more about the "New Media," aka New Marketing. I have been listening to Seth Godin's book on audio, *Meatball Sundae*, and learning how to embrace the "Sundae" of the new Internet Age and the "Meatball" of traditional publishing. I am certain it will impact how we move forward with *choice* Magazine and will also affect my coaching business and clients.



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**N**euroscience is a fascinating topic in its own right, and even more so in light of the scientific evidence it gives to the profession and practice of coaching. In this issue, we explore the wonders of the brain and how coaching is proving to be a valuable tool in changing our brains for the better.

Our opening feature, by Barbara Appelbaum, asks the question, “Does coaching change the brain?” and answers with a resounding “Yes!,” showing how changing our thinking changes our brain, and how coaching can help. Next up, Ann Betz explains how neuroscience makes the ‘woo-woo’ of coaching real (as Ann says, “There *is* no woo-woo. There’s just science.”). In our third feature, Vikki Brock explores the relationship between our three ‘brains’: head, heart and gut, and how coaching can address all three.

Our fourth feature, by Brenda Corbett & Justin

Kennedy shows how research makes the case for a marriage between neuroscience and coaching, followed by Robert Holmes’ article explaining why coaching is so effective at brain change. And, in our final feature Kate Michels explores the science behind those ‘magical’ changes.

Many of our columns and departments in this issue also deal either directly or indirectly with our theme of brain change through coaching. Because, in the end, that’s what coaching is all about.

So, next time someone asks you what you do, how will you respond? Maybe, after reading this issue of *choice*, you’ll have a new and exciting answer. •

Janet Lees, B.Journ.

## *I am a Board Certified Coach (BCC)*

*“I’ve always been an idealist. I’ve always had an interest in optimal living—developing the whole person, if you will—that which helps people to live fully.”*

**PATRICK WILLIAMS**, Ed.D., Board Certified Coach (BCC)  
and founder of Coaching the Global Village

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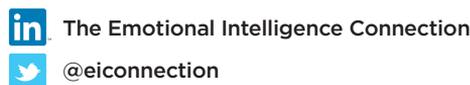
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# Innovative Toys & Tools

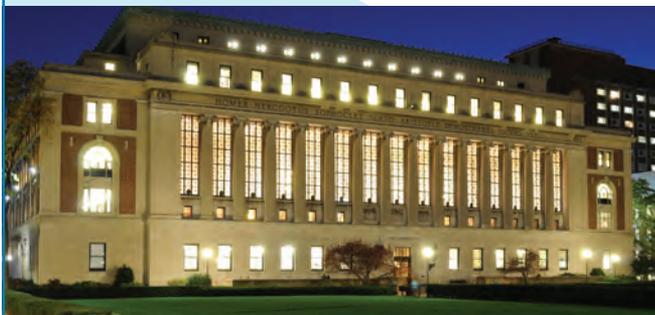
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## Therapy, Tweaked for Coaches

By Kat Knecht, CPCC, PCC

I have to admit that I ended up with a very different book than I had originally imagined for this book review. I have been hearing about the field of neuroscience and how it intersects with coaching for a long time. A colleague of mine, Ann Betz, is an expert in this field, and she has shared amazing and useful information with me over the years. She doesn't, however, have a book on the subject for me to share with *choice* Magazine readers.

I found an author on Amazon, David Rock, who has written many books (a couple specifically for coaches), but I chose another book because it is written by a man who is perhaps the top expert in the area that is being explored in this edition of the magazine.

I have set this context so the title does not immediately put you off: *The Mindful Therapist* by Daniel Siegel. Yes, I know you are most likely NOT a therapist, but consider that this book explores the brain and how it works. It is written for professionals who want to help people in a big way. It also offers wonderful examples of how to "coach" using this information, although that word is not actually used.

The book is broken down into chapters describing the distinct areas where we can understand how our minds and brains work in relationship with others to produce specific outcomes.

Just looking at the chapter titles alone in the particular sequence he put them allows my mind to relax! See what impact they have on your mind...

**1. Presence:** Fully grounded in myself, I become open and available to participate in the coaching conver-

sation that is unfolding here and now. I am present.

**2. Attunement:** As I tune into the mind of the other person in this conversation, I open to the neural signals that are being sent ... without being swayed by my own biases, assumptions or preconceived ideas. I connect with the other.

**3. Resonance:** As we align and connect with each other in this conversation, we create that safe and courageous space in which each "feels felt" by the other and transformation becomes possible. We connect with each other.

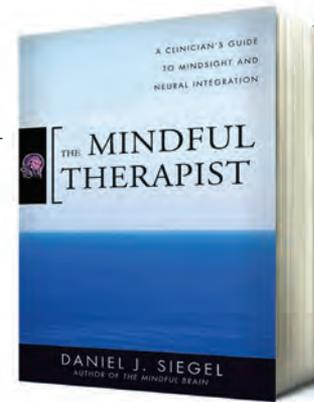
**4. Trust:** With resonance occurring, our neural pathways create a state of openness and trust which are the ingredients of brain stimulation and growth. We now can learn and grow in this conversation.

**5. Truth:** At this point, our brains open to the truth of what is, of "things-as-they-are" in our memories, per-

**"Yes, I know you are most likely NOT a therapist, but consider that this book explores the brain and how it works."**

ceptions, longings and desires. Truth being spoken permits deep and lasting change to begin. This is the juicy stuff at the heart of all coaching.

Then we skip to the title of Chapter 13: Transformation. This chapter reveals the nine domains of the transformative integrative process that governs lasting change in the overall



functioning of our mind, brain and relationships. If this isn't coaching, then I'm writing for the wrong magazine.

Each one of these chapters (and the ones I have left out of this short review) contains a treasure trove of information for coaches. There are stories, charts and in-depth explanations of how the brain works. I found it fascinating even though some of it is more scientific than my usual read.

In many chapters, the author has a section titled Brain Basics. I very much appreciate this! In each one, he offers clear insights into neuroscience that made sense to me (although, again, the language was a little heavy on the scientific side).

Near the end of the book, there is a chapter titled Training. This chapter addresses how we can train ourselves to control the flow of energy and information within and between minds. This is, for me, the "Mindfulness" in the title of the book, which is at the heart of Siegel's message.

There is a mindfulness we can develop that will help us to stay present to our lives and the lives of the people we love.

One of my favorite things about this author is the authenticity with which he imparts such great wisdom. I do believe that I came to understand more about how the brain works and how I might include this knowledge in my coaching simply from HOW Siegel writes as well as what he has to say. ●

## 17Hats

By Sandra De Freitas

Take the chaos out of your business with one brilliant service. As a business of one, you have to manage clients, invoices, quotes, contracts, projects and more. The folks from 17Hats help take a potential client on your site and take them through an automated sales process. The potential client, or lead, starts by filling out any questionnaires you have created for them along with any clarifying questions they may have. Then they are prompted to schedule a call with you. After the call you can send them one or more packages or a quote. When they are ready they can sign a contract online, then pay their invoice online immediately. It's a seamless automated process that not only eliminates the manual work you have to do; it also eliminates the need for multiple systems. All you need is 17Hats and a payment system like PayPal or Stripe (see below).

17Hats is your all-in-one CRM system including time tracking, bookkeeping, quotes, forms, calendar, invoicing, contracts, email, project management, to do lists and more. This system will not only save you time and money, but it will keep you on track to follow up with your leads and generate more sales.

Plans start at \$19/month, which is a lot less than what you would pay for separate contract systems, call scheduling systems and invoicing systems.



## Stripe

By Sandra De Freitas

If you are using a merchant account to accept payments, you may want to consider Stripe as a new solution. Why? To start there are no setup fees and no monthly fees (monthly fees usually range from \$40-\$50 per month). Next, Stripe's fees per transaction are low at 2.9 per cent plus 30 cents. Merchant accounts tend to charge a lot more and some even charge to deposit money into your bank account. Stripe does not.

Stripe integrates with various applications so you can accept and manage payments from within them like ecommerce systems such as UltraCart, invoicing and accounting systems such as FreshBooks, form building tools such as Typeform, book and ticketing systems, fundraising systems, mobile and card readers, POS systems, gift certificates systems and membership site apps such as the popular WordPress plugin WishList Member.



Stripe is available if you live in Australia, the US, Canada, the UK and Ireland, and many other countries are in beta testing

now. If you live in any of these countries you can accept payments from customers anywhere in the world.

Recurring billing is a feature many coaches will love. You can use it to automatically bill your ongoing clients in yearly, monthly, weekly or create your own custom billing intervals. Offer special deals for your clients or their referrals through their coupon feature.

## The Mood Lady Cards

By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

The Mood Lady Cards are a quirky and colorful collaboration between two sisters - one an artist, the other a life coach. The various "Mood Ladies" are painted in a broad range of styles and each evokes an emotional tone or quality. On the back of each card is a concept, a description of the concept and journey (coaching) questions.

Concepts like Boldness, Creativity, Energy-Fueled Action, Experiment, Celebration and Choice create powerful openings for a coaching conversation. I just pulled the card "Energy-Fueled Action." The image shows a woman enthusiastically dancing and the description talks about Energy-Fueled Action as the type of action that is effortless, that feeling of being propelled vs. being pushed. That's got juicy coaching conversation written all over it.

The Mood Lady Cards are a perfect tool to introduce to your female clients. The images are easy for just about anyone to relate to. You can draw a card to set intention, for a dose of inspiration, as a journal prompt or to explore a perspective. They would make a great client gift - or even better, use them to create ritual in your client sessions by beginning or ending a session with a card. For those working primarily with women, this is a unique and creative addition to your tool kit.





## Journey Circles™ Creative Mapping Kit

By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

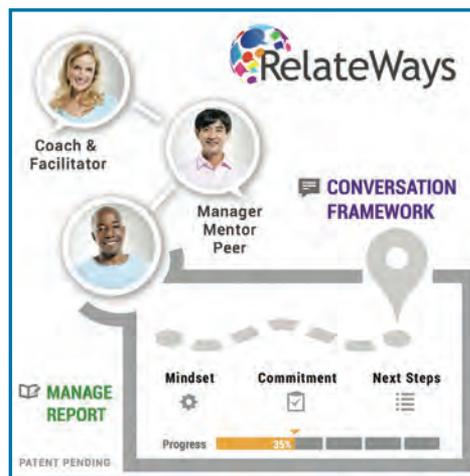
Collage has long been a powerful tool for visioning, self-exploration and personal expression. Cat Caracelo takes it to a whole new level with the Journey Circles™ Creative Mapping Kit. If you like to dive deep in your coaching or lead transformational workshops, you will love this tool.

Cat is a master at visual narrative, archetype and symbol as applied to transformational processes. While the kit is deceptively simple, the processes outlined in the guidebook can open the door to profound results.

The kit is made up of various sized templates for collage which become your canvas for visual expression. Each template shape has a unique energy to it and an accompanying guided process. The Spiral Path Cards invite you to share your stories. The Seven Transformation Cards allow you to explore principles like Authentic Truth, Mystery, and Sacred Power. The Spectrum Cards invite you to “unpack” your story and explore themes of shadow and light. The Compass Cards represent symbols or meaningful focus points that help you find your way. You can probably already sense that as you work each of these processes opportunities for powerful coaching will naturally emerge.

Besides the basic process for each template, Cat offers lots of alternatives for expanding and combining the cards for additional exploration. Fortunately, refills of the templates are available – and you will want them!

You and your clients are in for an amazing journey with the Journey Circles™ Creative Mapping Kit.



## RelateWays

By Marcy Nelson-Garrison, MA, LP, CPCC

There's a new kid on the block for cloud-based coach-client engagement called RelateWays. It's super easy to use, will boost your professionalism and has the power to shift workplace cultures!

When clients set up an account they are asked to identify three strengths and two areas of focus. They are then prompted to name goals and action steps, identify where they are with respect to that goal, access several mindset coaching questions and schedule an appointment with you. There is a section called Notes for private journaling and a place to access links to recorded or chat-based coaching calls.

As a coach, you can customize the strengths list and the focus areas that are most important for branding. You can set your schedule, track your clients' progress, review past sessions, keep track of your session notes and email your client from within the system.

What is really interesting about this program is that it can work just as sweetly for a life coach and client as it does for an internal peer coach and co-worker or a manager and a direct report. The strengths-based coach approach integrated into the system allows a 'coach' user to support change, performance improvement and learning implementation without full-on training as a coach. Imagine packaging RelateWays with a corporate training and/or executive coaching package to help implement the learning across the entire organization. Now that's exciting! What a great way to bring coaching to a larger audience. ●

Links to products reviewed by Marcy are available at [www.coachingtoys.com/choice.htm](http://www.coachingtoys.com/choice.htm) • Links for products reviewed by Sandra are available at <http://wpblogsites.com/choice>

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ELENA ESPINAL, MCC (MEXICO)

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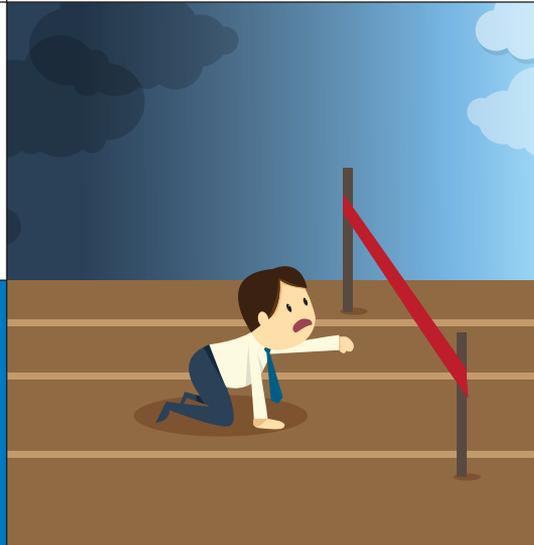
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# sticky situations

EXPERT GUIDANCE ON CRITICAL COACHING ISSUES

## “My client gives up just short of his stated goals”

“I run into a recurring issue with clients. The latest example is a client who hits a top in terms of achievement that is always just short of his stated goals. At a critical point he sort of gives up and goes through a ‘not good enough,’ ‘this always happens to me,’ ‘why bother’ syndrome. It looks like he self-sabotages his way out of being number one and either winds up in second position or marginalized out of the organization by those around him. How can I help him break this pattern?”



By Craig Carr, PCC, CPCC

Every self-aware person will at some point notice that recurring themes, or patterns become a prominent feature of life. What you are describing in your client is the culmination of a pattern that is nameable, far-reaching in its impact and, in a troubling way, may feel relentless and inescapable.

In addressing your sticky situation I’ll be taking a ‘meta perspective’ on the phenomenon of patterns, and trust you can take things from there. The first thing is that if you look closely at patterns you’ll notice that repeating obstacles, issues and symptoms increase in intensity over time. This is both good and not-so-good news. The intensification of a pattern over time is a beneficial gesture from our deeper Self that the balance of some unfinished business has not yet been met. Creating circumstances that are able to expose that which is incomplete is a hallmark of the Soul’s journey and feeling “this always happens to me,” for example, may be no more than a sign that there is something important to look at. Concurrently, it can also be a way a client resists change through a tried and true method, uses an ‘easy out,’ and unwittingly assures the return of the pattern in new dressing later on.

What you may also be sensing in the danger of intensifying, recurring patterns is the willful and creative manner in which they unexpectedly show up. Good coaches are on the alert for patterns and directly – and courageously – bring them to the attention of their client as clearly and as soon as possible.

Approaching patterns that sabotage can move in one of

two general directions. One is to go into the pattern with the client. Another is to go away from the pattern.

Going away from a pattern is facilitated by the skills in any trained coach’s foundational toolbox. For example, you name (identify) patterns and set up structures to develop new habits that counter old behaviors; you acknowledge wins, values and personal power and you build from them; you hold accountability to stoke progress; you motivate, inspire, champion. You hold the plan and the vision and see the bigger place the client wants to go.

You do all these things and expect the best. If you see the pattern re-asserting itself, what then?

Going into a pattern means looking closely at its operating parts. What is its language? Where did it come from? What happened in the family history to form it? What is NOT looked at – what is taboo – that by being kept secret has the potential to keep the pattern alive?

This conversation is very personal and some coaches get squeamish about it and see it as out-of-bounds for their kind of coaching. A lot of organizational coaching hits a limit here because the work goes deeper into personal history. If you are that coach and have exhausted your skill set, refer your client to someone who will look at the client’s whole life system while still holding the integrity of the coaching paradigm.

I want to emphasize that patterns are normal and malleable. Articles on Neuroplasticity in this issue will attest to this. Develop your coaching skills to expand your confidence in working with the whole system of your client’s life, and watch their satisfaction with your coaching grow.

Are you grappling with a sticky situation?

You don’t have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you some different perspectives to consider. Email your situation to: [submissions@choice-online.com](mailto:submissions@choice-online.com) and put “sticky situations” in the subject line.

By Carol Adrienne, PhD

**I**n coaching we try to identify the underlying issue of a problem – whether a faulty belief or negative attitudes and behaviors. We attempt to ‘solve the problem.’

Clients come to us with problem-laden stories. Our goal is to open up the space and support them in re-authoring and living more fulfilling stories. Our role is not to provide answers, but to make inquiries, allowing him to begin to reflect on himself, his activities and relationships beyond the problem-laden story.

Begin by deconstructing the story, perhaps with a question such as, “Once you start pursuing a goal, you seem to hit a point where something pulls you back from giving it your whole attention or effort. I’m wondering if you could think back to any specific idea or point that pulls you back in some way?” If he responds, explore the ideas in terms of his past (e.g., “Does the idea sound like it comes from anyone in your family or the way they used to talk to you?”).

Ask, “I’m wondering how these ideas affect other areas of your life?” “Is there a possibility that you might feel relief when something doesn’t work, as weird as that may seem logically?” “What does being second, instead of first, allow you to do or have?” “What is your belief about

what it’s like to be in charge of a business? To be looked up to as a leader?”

Reflections allow him to see patterns and connections. However, re-authoring begins when he can find times in his life when things did go well for him (finding a positive unique outcome, outside the problem-laden story.)

Ask, “Do you think if you were to be able to look back in time, that there might have been some sort of event that made you think you were good enough?” After a discussion along these lines, ask, “What do you think it means about you, to know that you have some unique qualities that do come forward when you need them?” “What does it say about what you value and who you are that you accomplished this?”

Name the problem and the new direction, so that in the future you can ask, “Does this align with the voice that says, ‘I always lose,’ or the part of you that gets things done?” This bifurcation helps him to notice that he has choices, and is not just the victim of an internal pattern. Reinforce by asking in your next coaching session, “We talked a lot about your ability to get things done last time. Is there anything you can see that you got done since we last talked?” Often, new behaviors just develop naturally, with more recognition of an emerging new story.

By Victoria Trabosh, CDC®

**T**his issue is sometimes described as the Imposter or Fraud Syndrome. It was actually researched in the 1980s when it was estimated that two out of five successful people consider themselves frauds. Other studies have found that 70 percent of all people feel like impostors at one time or another.

I’d begin by asking him if this resonates with him. Does he ever consider himself a fraud?

As reported in News.com on December 20, 2013, well-known people who have reportedly experienced the syndrome include screenwriter Chuck Lorre, business leader Sheryl Sandberg and US Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, to name a few.

Think about how much sense this makes. Many of us reach a level of success and then stop believing more is possible. Maybe your client knows he’s capable but unwilling to finish the race where often there is additional effort for the incremental gain of first versus second. He may not believe he can accomplish the final steps and it’s easy to stop.

The coaching technique I use looks at the thought processes to find out why the client admires success or brilliance. Help your client understand certain assumptions

he makes that turn into destructive or negative thoughts. For instance, he may believe that a single mistake reflects on his overall abilities. Coach him to realize that sometimes we win, and sometimes we learn.

Does he involve you in his success or wait to tell you when it’s all ended just short of the bigger goal? How does he want to be celebrated? What has he learned from looking at past ‘second place’ finishes?

Does he easily get to second place and then lose interest either because he’s projecting that it won’t matter or really hasn’t the energy to try and finish first? If you do it try, you don’t lose. It’s tough to throw 100 percent of your effort into something and then not win 100 percent of the prize.

As his coach, get him to DECLARE what he wants (to himself) SHARE what he wants (with you) and then ACT on it (through his thought processes, actions and course corrections).

You can help him see his potential but if he isn’t willing to Declare, Share, and Act, he will stay a victim to circumstances, imagined inadequacies and failure to ask for help.

Remind him he’s in good company; the solution isn’t years of therapy; and all it takes is for him to believe in himself as others believe in him. You’ve got the tools to support him crossing the finishing line. Enjoy the race! ●

By Sandra De Freitas

# 7 Habits of Highly Successful Coaches

Using technology to build your business

**Does the word** “technology” scare you? Are you a self-proclaimed technophobe?

I am sure I am not the first to tell you that if you want to be competitive in a crowded market and emerge from the crowd as a leader, then you must embrace technology. You do not have to learn all the bits and pieces or become a computer science nerd. Below is a list of different technology tools and systems for you to consider, and may I suggest you hire a person or a team to delegate these to? Let the technology professionals take care of the technology and you do what you do best: coach!

Here are seven ways to utilize technology to build your business, be competitive and emerge as a leader in your market.

## 1. Get a Blogsite

Traditional HTML sites do not cut it in a competitive and dynamic world. Using a blogsite (blog + site) to promote your business is the easiest, fastest and most effective way to get your content published and found on Google.

WordPress is the leader in blogsite software. Hire a team to install it on your domain name, customize a theme or have a unique design created for you, and start adding pages (e.g. About, Services, Contact, etc.) and blog posts (articles, videos, audios, etc). If you can write an email, you can publish a blog post in WordPress.

## 2. Provide Value

Create and publish content that your clients and ideal prospective clients need and want to read. The more valuable it is, the more often they will come back for more, refer you and share your content with their friends and colleagues.



Generate content ideas by:

- listening to the trending topics your clients talk about;
- listening for trends in the industry through magazines, the news, and new books;
- searching for key industry terms on <http://news.google.com> such as “corporate coaching,” “business trends” and “business book release.” Use Google Alerts <http://alerts.google.com> and have Google send you an email with the latest findings each day. Tip: Narrow down your search results and manage your alerts by clicking “show options.” This is a really important step that many people skip.

Combat “blog paralysis” by challenging yourself to create a list of 50+ future blog post topics. I’ll bet that once you sit down you will be able to fill all 50 spots and as a result you will never run out of content ideas. You will never sit and stare at a blank screen hoping a great blog idea hits you in the head. Just refer to your list of 50+ future blog post topics.

### 3. Leverage Your Content

Once you have written your blog posts, don't just let them sit there; market them on your social media profiles to make your social media aware of your content. You can use HootSuite.com to schedule your social media updates across your social media profiles

Take a series of blog posts, polish them up and use them as a basis to create an e-book, a published book or another product.

Share your latest workshop presentations on SlideShare.net. This site gets a lot of traffic from visual people and those looking for speakers to speak at their next conference.

### 4. Capture Leads

As soon as you have your site up and running, that is the time to start capturing leads. Leads are people who are interested in what you do, and although they may not buy from you right away, they may later once they've gotten to know you and you have built a relationship with them. Capture these leads by asking them to sign up for your newsletter list. Give them a juicy gift for signing up for your newsletter. The gift could be a few chapters of your book, an audio or video training or a valuable tool like a checklist or an assessment.

Use an email marketing system such as MailChimp or Aweber to manage the people on your list, to send them your gift and to email them your weekly or bi-weekly newsletter, filled with – you guessed it – valuable content!

### 5. Monetize

Making money is the reason why

we are in business. Otherwise we wouldn't call ourselves entrepreneurs, we'd call ourselves hobbyists. So we need to make it obvious on our site where people can purchase our products and/or services.

I suggest putting a button on your menu that reads "Hire Us", "Services", "Store" or "Products." Try not to stray from those options as they won't be obvious to your visitor and you can lose out on a new client or consumer. A confused mind won't be confident enough to spend time and money with you.

### 6. Accept Payments

Accept payments on your site easily by signing up for a merchant account and/or payment gateway. If you are new to this, start with a PayPal account. They take a few minutes to set up and just a few days to verify your banking information so they can send you your money. Clients can pay you using their own PayPal account or with their credit cards through PayPal.

If you want to sell digital products on your site, like e-books, PDF workbooks, audios, etc., I like the combination of PayPal with the WordPress plugin WP eStore. Once a product is purchased WP eStore will redirect the buyer to a page where they can download their digital goods. It will also email them links to the digital goods they have purchased.

If you feel like your business is busting at the seams and you need something more than PayPal, you can look into other systems. For systems like 1ShoppingCart and InfusionSoft you will need to integrate it with a merchant account. A mer-

chant account is what will process the credit card information for you, and it will communicate back a successful or unsuccessful payment.

There are so many other ways to accept payments, such as Square (squareup.com) for in person transactions and Stripe, which integrates with almost 200 systems and services (<https://stripe.com/docs/integrations>).

### 7. Provide Group Coaching

Group coaching programs are a great way to leverage your time and allow those who cannot afford your one-on-one coaching rate to work with you.

There are many online tools you can use to create a great learning experience for your coaching group. My favorite is WishList Member, a WordPress plugin that turns your WordPress site into a learning center. Add all of your training components (audio, video, PDFs, class schedules, etc.) into a WordPress page and let WishList know to protect it so only registered members can access it. WishList integrates with PayPal, InfusionSoft, 1ShoppingCart, Stripe and many more payment systems. This means that when someone registers for your class they pay through one of these systems and when that payment is successful they will immediately gain access to your content. You get to choose if they gain access to all of the course content or just the first lesson

Now that you have seven ways to utilize technology in your business, you have some delegating and hiring to do. Once these are in place you will see a shift in your business and your business mindset, and so will your clients. ●

By Lisa Murrell, PCC, BCC

# Coaching from the Heart

What horses have to teach us about the power of emotions

**Coaching from the Heart** requires one to move from simply ‘coaching’ to connection with all aspects of life, self and the coaching relationship. It involves specific skill sets and awareness.

First, you as the coach must have an intimate connection with your own heart before you can connect and empathize with your clients. This connection with self inspires a deeper level of awareness and reflection setting the stage for coaching from the heart.

## Coaching from the Heart

Although the phrase ‘coaching from the heart’ may be familiar, it is much more than a euphemism. The heart’s electromagnetic field (EMF) is actually 5,000 times greater than the electromagnetic field of the brain and can be detected anywhere on the surface of the body. This means that we actually experience life *through our heart* before we cognitively process what is happening to us. Many coaches are accustomed to working with Level III Listening. I call this interaction through the heart’s electromagnetic field Level IV Listening!

Coaching with this awareness is coaching with the most powerful rhythmic field produced by the human body, the Heart Field, according to research at the Institute of HeartMath.

## Three Skills for Coaching from the Heart

Although I’ve been coaching for over 20 years, I learned the following skills and how to use them in coaching through working with horses. Their 8.5-pound hearts, compared with our approximately 1.3-pound hearts, allowed me to see the impact of the heart’s EMF in large-scale action! While coaching with my students and clients, the equine interactions point to three aspects that



comprise coaching from the heart at its best.

**1. Using Emotions as Information** – Emotions are our body’s inherent intelligence and communication system with our brains. Somatic sensation and the limbic system connect with the brain for cognitive interpretation. In other words, they have something to tell us.

Before the development of the neocortex, our reptilian brains received information from the environment through our heart’s EMF. However, for cognitive-dependent humans, much of this information remains unconscious. This means that our hearts and bodies actually have information that our brains do not.

Coaching from the heart includes awareness of emotions, and through the coaching process, helping our clients ‘remember’ these feelings to help them find their own answers that they cannot find from only *thinking* about them. Understanding the messages behind our emotions is critical to coaching from the heart.

**2.** Master the Skill of Emotional Agility – Emotions don't often follow a linear process and have the propensity for taking over a situation, both for the coach and the client.

Therefore, as coaches, we must have what I call 'emotional agility': the ability to sit in uncomfortable emotions without *reacting, judging or analyzing*, developing sense and flow with the emotions of others, *without external or internal reactions*, and discern any information they may have for us and the coaching conversation.

Here is a simple process you can follow to develop emotional agility. In a coaching conversation from

the heart, this goes for both you and your client simultaneously:

- Be fully aware of what is going on around you.
- Feel your feelings and emotions in response to what is happening.
- Interpret the wisdom and messages behind these emotions.
- Respond accordingly.

**3.** Awareness of your Shadow Self – When I speak about shadow, I am referring to aspects of ourselves that are *hidden*; not 'bad'. I call this 'Shadow Wisdom': those unrecognized and unaccepted aspects of ourselves that hold important wisdom – wisdom that when acknowledged, often leads to self-love and fulfillment

Coaching from the heart involves helping clients to re-discover those parts of themselves that support them to find their own answers. To do this successfully requires using emotion as information and developing emotional agility as well as recognizing our own shadow and the part it can play in coaching.

Coaching from the heart is not just a poetic description of powerful and connected coaching. It is coaching using our entire bodies as a sensory device and recognizing that information as a powerful tool in supporting our clients to embrace their own wisdom. •

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By Ghid Mohammed Abolohom, BA, CEG

# Coaching in Yemen

People contribute; women contribute

**First of all** I would like to celebrate being in this coaching community. I do believe that the universe brings you to the right place at the right time. It has prepared me first and then brought me to coaching through some experiences in my life:

- education
- the Yemeni revolution
- difficult experience

I had the opportunity of getting a good education from early childhood. I went to an international school in my country from preschool to high school. It gave me the chance to mix with people from different backgrounds and cultures. I also travelled to many places throughout my life. This added value and promoted curiosity and growth in me. It's probably the main reason why I have passion for knowledge and development. After earning a bachelor's degree in English literature, I wanted to pursue a career in which I could help develop my people and country, but the fields or opportunities for women back then were very limited, so I chose to do so for my family and friends. I encouraged and supported them in every way I could.

**“I had a choice, to either continue living in the past or to move on. I chose to move on.”**

With time more fields became available for women, but they weren't suitable for me. After a few years, I decided to apply for an online MBA degree looking towards the possibility of opening my own business one day. But I didn't get the chance to begin the program because of the events that led to the Yemeni revolution in 2011. This revolution was one of a few that occurred in the period known as the Arab Spring.

These events were led by the educated part of soci-



ety. Then the majority of the population followed. The people were calling for their basic rights of equality, justice and freedom. They wanted to end the corrupt regime that prevented the development of the country.

For the first time in Yemen, women and men shared the same dream and the same roles. The contribution of each one of them was an expression of their unique skills and talents, through art, journalism, technology, first aid and medicine, and even as front-line revolutionaries. For me, I chose to explain the importance of changing the regime for a better life.

This revolution gave women the chance to stand out, and they certainly did. They received recognition and acknowledgement nationwide and in other parts of the world. One of these outstanding women, Tawakkol Karman, won the Nobel Peace Prize in 2011.

It was a peaceful revolution. The Yemeni people left their weapons and tribal traditions at home and went out to the streets and 'Change Squares.' They camped there for months, till the success of the revolution was achieved. But it was only peaceful from the people's side; about 3,000 people were killed. My brother Mohammed was one of them. He was 24 years old.

It wasn't the first loss in my family; I had already lost a brother five years before Mohammed. He was killed in an accident abroad, only one week after his graduation from university. So Mohammed's death reopened the wound. Although he died for a meaningful purpose; for the life of his people, it was just as painful. It was very difficult for all of us, but mostly for my father, who tried to be strong for us while he was heartbroken from the inside. He became ill and passed away one year later.

It was more than I could handle. I lived in depression and isolation for months. I was depressed to the point where I neglected myself and my responsibilities. But I had a feeling of guilt towards my family. I felt I owed it to them and to my father to take

care of myself and my family. So I had a choice, to either continue living in the past or to move on. I chose to move on, knowing that I was the only one who could truly help myself get out of the situation. I needed to help myself before I could help my family. I had to get in order to give.

I began personal research for rediscovering myself and my value in life, as well as the common value of life for everyone although we had a different number of years to live and different circumstances. Then I understood that it was the quality of life and not the quantity that matters. With more research on self-help and development, I found coaching. I felt that it was the answer but didn't know that it would become my life purpose.

When I started a coaching pro-

gram I realized that coaching wasn't only about knowledge and skills, but that it connects us to others as humans at the deepest level. It's a connection that embraces vulnerability and openness, which made me connect to more people, to circumstances and eventually to myself. It is a profession that raises awareness and develops people for a better quality of life.

My life purpose became clear to me; I decided to become a coach. I had to start preparing myself to be a coach and a role model. My challenge was to resolve any issues and emotions from the past so I could be fully present at the moment.

Finding a meaningful purpose and connecting with people had a positive effect on me. I feel happier, more peaceful and energetic. I eagerly get out of bed every morning looking forward to starting the new day. I am making the shift from being distracted with my own issues to being more ready and present for my coachees. My commitment is to make the transition from a person with no work experience whatsoever to a professional coach. And to prepare myself for creating my own practice in which I want to focus on three things:

- Help improve the education system in Yemen by including creativity and talent activities in its curriculum.
- Help develop my people and give special attention to women; to empower them through awareness and support to live a fulfilling and rich life of their choice.
- Help people have a better quality of life.

In conclusion I want to contribute to the same three things that brought me to coaching. •

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By Marcia Reynolds, PsyD, MCC

# Navigating the Emotional Minefield

How to be comfortable with discomfort

**In the book**, *Synchronicity*,<sup>1</sup> Joseph Jaworski wrote that the most successful leaders are those who participate in helping others create new realities. The leader engages in conversations that bring to light how a person frames a situation so they can see for themselves both gaps in logic and what else is possible. This changes what the other person believes is true – a necessary factor for the person to attain long-lasting and positive change. Jaworski wrote about this long before coaching became an accepted leadership competency, but the definition fits perfectly – the most successful leaders are those who coach!

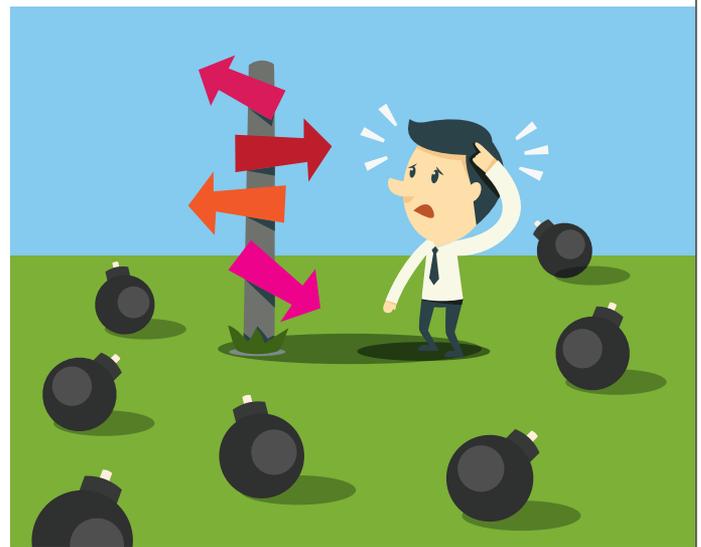
Much to the chagrin of most leaders (and coaches), emotions are integral to this process. When people actually observe their thinking and actions, they are often surprised and could feel embarrassed, sad, or angry. You have to be comfortable with this expression of emotion; it means they are trying to cope with the new awareness that is forming. The breakthrough experience is an emotional moment.

**“Give people space to express themselves and then work to help them understand what triggered the emotion in the first place”**

Here are some tips for staying present and intentional when someone expresses emotions while you are coaching:

To build trust, the person must feel that your goals and desires are in his or her best interest throughout the conversation and beyond.

Your purpose is to reveal a greater self to your clients, not to fix their problems or to make them into someone



else. Even if their actions are critical to your organization's success, do not make them feel as if they are just the means to an end. Stay focused on the other person's desired outcomes.

**Set an emotional intention for the session before you start.**

How do you want him or her to feel: inspired, hopeful, proud, or encouraged? You must consciously choose this tone before you speak; if you are angry or disappointed with the person from the beginning, you need to let this go, or choose to wear your manager hat instead of your coaching hat. Then continue to feel this emotion as much as possible throughout the conversation. Be careful not to lose your emotional grounding; the emotion you choose to feel is your anchor. If something unnerves you, say this word quietly to yourself to shift back to the feeling you want to express. You might also choose to feel other emotions such as calm, courageous or kind to

support your active listening, but your anchor word will keep you on track.

### Learn how to recognize when a distracting emotion emerges.

Vincent Van Gogh said, “Let’s not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives, and we obey them without realizing it.” Your own brain has automatic defense mechanisms that are naturally on alert at all times. When the conversation begins to feel risky, messy or emotionally unstable, you need to breathe and recall your emotional intention for the conversation. Notice when your body tenses up or your breathing shortens, so you can release the tension and return to being present. If you ask a question and the person isn’t ready to explore with you, you might back off and come around to the question later in the conversation or schedule another session to give him or her time to think.

### Do not try to save people!

Many leaders and coaches try to assuage people’s discomfort by telling them they shouldn’t feel something or telling them lots of people have similar reactions. Either way, these coaches are devaluing the emotional expression. Instead, give people space to express themselves and then work to help them understand what triggered the emotion in the first place. Emotions are the key to valuable information! Don’t send them away.

### Examine your judgments.

The moment you have the urge to tell someone what to do, this means you judge that person as inadequate and you won’t know what questions

to ask. Your brain will focus in on what you want to say. Then if you slip and tell him what he should do next, his brain will shut down. He might do what you say, but you haven’t developed his mind or helped him feel better about the future. Do you believe the person can figure out what to do and be more than he is demonstrating now, through good coaching? You have to believe in the person’s potential even if he doesn’t believe in himself to stay in coaching mode. Notice the urge to advise, take a deep breath, and let it go when you exhale. This will give the questions a chance to show up. You will never move beyond basic problem solving if you allow yourself to judge what the person is saying.

### Calm your mind and body so you can use silence effectively.

Silence allows the person you are coaching to form new thoughts and perspective. Silence is often an indication that your reflections and questions have penetrated the mind’s protective barrier. A new sense of self and reality is trying to emerge.<sup>2</sup> When the brain recombines information in a new way, it could take some time before the person you are coaching can articulate what she now understands to be true. Be quiet while her brain is working. Remember you are watching the brain of the person in front of you actually spark, shift, and develop new connections. How awesome is that?

Remember, insight-based learning often triggers an emotional response. When people see a different truth about themselves or the world

around them, they can’t help but feel something. Often sadness, anger, or embarrassment will precede hope or humor. It is worth it to you as a leader to be comfortable with discomfort. When people learn about themselves through coaching, they are much more committed to changing their behavior because it came from their

“Many leaders and coaches try to assuage people’s discomfort by telling them they shouldn’t feel something or telling them lots of people have similar reactions.”

own realization. This will help you not only be a leader who manages change well, but also a leader who coaches people to see themselves and their world more broadly. Leaders who grow people’s minds as well as their skills are the leaders who are remembered for life. ●

This article was created from excerpts in the book from Marcia Reynolds, *The Discomfort Zone: How Leaders Turn Difficult Conversation into Breakthroughs*. Berrett-Koehler, 2014.

1 Joseph Jaworski, *Synchronicity: The Inner Path of Leadership*. Berrett-Koehler, 1996. The description of how Jaworski defines true leadership is on page 2 of the introduction, written by Peter Senge.

2 Nessa Victoria Bryce, “The Aha! Moment: A Step-by-step guide to your next creative breakthrough.” *Scientific American Min*, July/August 2014, pages 36-43.



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# Does Coaching Change the Brain?

**Are we actually changing our clients' brains? Can we? What can we honestly say about how coaching may change a client's brain and what do we still not know? What is neuroplasticity, and what does it mean for coaching? What are lifestyle implications to brain change? How can we help 'prime' our clients' brains to be less threat sensitive and more open to joy? Join us as we take a fresh look at neuroscience and coaching.**

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By Barbara B. Appelbaum, ACC, CHC,  
CPC, ELI-MP, MBA, MAT

**A**s coaches we are trained to honor the client, recognize they are the expert in their life, and that when guided by empowering questions, reframing, etc., they can determine their appropriate life course. Coaching is a proactive process that is an important component to preventative care because it helps the client take ownership of his/her own well-being.

Richard Carmona, MD, MPH, FACS, 17th Surgeon General of the United States, in his book, *30 Days to a Better Brain*, discusses how avoiding stress, anxiety and depression play a part in keeping your brain healthy. This can be learned by changing your behavior (hello coaching!), which leads to a greater ability for the brain to be resilient – immensely important to long-term brain health.

We are an aging population fearful of cognitive decline. We are living longer, therefore need strong, agile minds to keep up with and maintain our strong bodies. Through simple lifestyle modifications encouraged by the coaching process, we are able to slow down degeneration or even enhance cognitive function. Research reveals that the mind has the capacity to grow stronger as we mature. Positive effects from proper exercise, nutrition, sleep, and spiritual faith can create brain reserve – the brain’s resistance to damage, also known as the brain’s resilience.

To understand the brain in basic terms, here are a few facts: The average brain weighs approximately 3-4 pounds, is 20-25 percent oxygen/glycogen and approximately 80 percent water, has the consistency of soft butter when healthy, consists of roughly 100 billion neurons, and is continuously changing.

Not too long ago the consensus among neuroscientists was that the brain was static. Currently, researchers are challenging this belief through the discovery that the brain remains malleable. According to Wikipedia, neuroplasticity, also known as brain plasticity, is “an umbrella term that encompasses both synaptic plasticity and non-synaptic plasticity; referring to changes in neural pathways and synapses which are due

to changes in behavior, environment and neural processes ... Neuroplasticity ... explores how, and in which ways, the brain changes throughout life.” Neuroplasticity is widely recognized as the brain’s capacity to create new neural pathways that are necessary to function properly as it adapts to everyday changes.

As a coach, you can play a supporting role in your client’s neuroplasticity. A few things to address with your client in order to develop new, healthy synaptic pathways include:

- **Adequate exercise:** When a person exercises, brain-derived neurotrophic factor (BDNF) is secreted. BDNF is a protein that supports the survival of existing

**“By using reframing, a coach can help shift a client’s thinking to the more positive.”**

neurons in the brain and encourages the growth and differentiation of new neurons and synapses. Encouraging clients to develop a fitness routine improves their learning, memory, and complex thinking.

- **Proper nutrition:** When a client has trouble focusing or remembering, as their coach you might want to examine their diet. There are certain foods, specifically those high in antioxidants, which promote neuroplasticity and a healthy brain. Some of the best brain foods are wild salmon, blueberries, green/black tea, whole grains, kidney beans, almonds, organic dairy, avocado, turmeric, and my favorite, dark chocolate 70 percent or higher.

- **Plenty of sleep:** Sleep deprivation is rampant in America. Sleep deficiency leads to a person being irritable, less productive, and unable to focus. It also leads to a smaller, weaker brain. Studies show that our brains actually grow when we are asleep; actively processing our thoughts thereby experiencing neuroplasticity. Ensure your client is getting their zzz’s in order to support proper brain health.

- **A spirituality practice:** At the U.C. Davis Center for Mind & Brain a study by research neuroscientist

# Feature

Clifford Saron revealed, "... it's remarkable that a sense of purpose in life, a belief that your goals and values are coming more into alignment with your past and projected future is likely affecting something at the level of your molecular biology" ("Stanford studies monks' meditation," Meredith May, *SF Guide*). Further studies at UCLA suggest that "meditating for years thickens the brain (in a good way) and strengthens the connections between brain cells...further proof of the brain's neuroplasticity, or ability to adapt to environmental changes." ("Evidence builds that meditation strengthens the brain, UCLA researchers say," Mark Wheeler, *Science + Technology*). Coaching a client to look inward helps foster that sense of life purpose.

• **Reduce stress:** Stress kills; we all know this. One way to avoid it is to reframe – a standard coaching technique. Reframing leads to substantial changes in behavior. Negative self-talk, the Gremlin, or false thinking all cause anxiety leading to oxidative stress, diminished brain health, and functioning at a negative energetic level of thought. By using reframing, a coach can help shift a client's thinking to the more positive, thereby helping them to feel more present in the moment, less fearful, and more optimistic which stimulates brain health as well as promotes neuroplasticity.

While a healthy lifestyle is the basic component to brain health, coaching promotes neuroplasticity and improved brain health by cultivating an awareness of the present moment with clients. Although it can include exercise, nutrition and sleep, this is particularly important when it comes to helping clients develop a spiritual prac-

tice as well as lower stress. Seasoned coaches do this by investigating the client's distractions, recognizing whether they are rooted in the past (anger and frustration) or whether they stem from the future (anxiety and fear). Worry is planning for a negative future. The coaching process shifts the client to possibility-thinking, thereby alleviating stress, promoting plasticity, and in-

**"As a coach, you can play a supporting role in your client's neuroplasticity."**

creasing positive energy to create new and strong neural synaptic pathways.

Coaching looks at the cause and effect in a client's thinking and behavior. By using the knowledge of what neuroplasticity is and how it works, a coach can use empowering questions to help shift the client from FEAR (False Expectations Appearing Real) to beliefs and perceptions that truly reflect the client's inner truth.

On average, a person experiences 3,000 thoughts per day, the majority of which are negative in nature. How a person thinks influences how they feel and, subsequently, affects their behavior. Coaching respects and uses this to guide the process. When done correctly, the client has improved brain health and more hopeful thoughts. Through the empathetic support of coaching, the client can transform thanks to neuroplasticity and the proven power of positive thinking.

To put it simply, healthy thinking equals a healthy brain; and a healthy brain equals healthy thinking. Change your thinking; change your brain. It's really that simple.

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# The Neuroscience of the ‘Woo-woo’

Why it's high time for coaching to stop apologizing for our most effective tools

By Ann Betz, CPCC, PCC, CNTC

Life begins at the end of your comfort zone.  
~Neale Donald Walsch

As a single footstep will not make a path on the earth, so a single thought will not make a pathway in the mind. To make a deep physical path, we walk again and again. To make a deep mental path, we must think over and over the kind of thoughts we wish to dominate our lives.

~Henry David Thoreau

You Can't do THAT ...

- in a business setting.
- with engineers, scientists, and IT types.
- with men.
- with women.
- with younger people.
- with older people.
- in other cultures.

Or CAN you?

It's high time for coaching to stop apologizing for our most effective tools.

Lately I've been asking coaches what tools and techniques in coaching are difficult or highly resisted in certain populations. In the fascinating discussions which ensued, it became clear that even though many coaches have discovered ways to get around certain challenges and resistance, there is a collective conversation in coaching that some things are too “out there” or (to use a classic Californian term) “woo-woo” for everyone.

One of the things I find the most powerful about neuroscience is that it makes the woo-woo real. In the case



of these recent conversations, for every objection, there was a neuroscience explanation as to why it works and is actually important in the process of learning and change. Over and over again I have seen that there actually *is* no woo-woo. There's just science. And when we, as coaches, understand and can explain this to our clients, they'll come with us into techniques that are unfamiliar and outside their comfort zones, achieving the breakthroughs and lasting learning they desire.

It's time to claim our effectiveness as a profession and kill the “woo-woo” conversation.

Here are some of the topics that came up in my conversations with coaches:

- Don't ask people in business to talk about emotions or where they feel something in their body. They'll think it is inappropriate. And be sure to avoid making them cry.
- Don't ask your clients to move around too much, especially at first. They'll think it's weird.

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## Feature

• Don't talk about failure, and certainly don't encourage it!

• Whatever you do, don't do anything silly or playful.

• Your client's lifestyle/health choices are off limits unless they bring it up themselves.

• If people want to just focus on getting things done, then who are you to ask them about meaning and purpose? It's the client's agenda, after all!

• Don't ask people who are logical and linear to do visualizations because it drives them crazy. Same with metaphor.

The question is, what does neuroscience say about the impact these tools and techniques have on change and learning? Let's start with neuroplasticity, the ability of the brain to grow and change throughout life.

Neuroplasticity is, simply put, the capacity of the brain to change throughout life. It can occur on a variety of levels, ranging from changes due to learning or growth, to large-scale changes in response to injury (see Norman Doidge's entertaining *The Brain that Changes*

**“When we rush past emotion and don't explore how something makes us feel, there is less likelihood the positive change that occurs in the coaching conversation will stick.”**

*Itself* for more on the latter). While for much of the 20th century, the general consensus among neuroscientists was that brain structure is relatively unchanging after early childhood, current understanding is that many aspects of the brain remain plastic – that is, changeable – even into adulthood.

And so, we can (and do) change. But what does it take? And why do some people succeed at developing

new habits where others fail miserably? Well, extensive research points to certain keys to neuroplasticity, without which it is more difficult (and sometimes impossible) for the brain to make neuroplastic changes. In addition to these keys, there are additional aspects which also assist with or enhance the process. In both cases, the more keys/aspects, the better.

What, then, does this mean in terms of our “You Can't Do THAT” list? Well, since people come to coaching seeking lasting change, it makes sense that as coaches we use tools and techniques that activate neuroplasticity.

### The Role of Emotions

Emotion is one of the most important aspects of memory and learning. The emotional content of an issue is what grabs the brain's attention and signals us that something is relevant. (This is why scary, dangerous or upsetting things get particularly burned into our memories, by the way.) When we rush past emotion and don't explore how something makes us feel, there is less likelihood

the positive change that occurs in the coaching conversation will stick.

And crying, by the way, is simply one of the body's mechanisms for releasing stress chemicals.

### The Role of Embodiment

Let's start with the fact that our brain is not just isolated in our heads. We have neurons in our hearts and guts, and an entire nervous system sending

information up the line. Checking in with the body can activate hidden learning that needs to be revealed.

Second, having our clients embody a particular emotional state can actually create that emotional state within. For example, Amy Cuddy's marvelous research on "power positions" shows that the body has a positive bio-chemical response to standing in positions of authority.

And third, the more neural pathways we have associated with a particular behavior, the stronger the network. Thus, when there is a body position connected to a behavior we want to change, it can help us remember on a physical level, thus strengthening the network and reinforcing change.

### The Role of Failure

From a neuroplasticity perspective, failure is fascinating. We have large and complex networks in our brain, and innumerable potential neural connections. Think of it like a path in the forest, except there are multiple paths and it is hard to know which one leads where we want to go. When we fail and realize we have failed, the brain tends to close that path. This means that next time we come to that particular place in the woods, choosing where to go is quicker and easier.

### The Role of Humor and Play

Humor relaxes and bonds us, and is a wonderful ally in helping to overcome the brain's strong negativity bias and deal with stress. Laughter has been shown to release oxytocin, which makes us feel more bonded, connected and trusting. Good humor also often plays

upon the unexpected, causing us to think in new ways. Similarly, being playful puts the brain in an open state for learning.

### The Role of Lifestyle

The food we eat, the amount of sleep we get (or don't) and the level of exercise we engage in all have implications for neuroplasticity as well. If a client is eating an unhealthy diet,

**“When there is a body position connected to a behavior we want to change, it can help us remember on a physical level, thus strengthening the network and reinforcing change.”**

not getting enough sleep, and never exercising, it will generally be much harder for the changes they want to make to get traction.

### The Role of Non-Task Focused Exploration

We have two dominant networks in the brain: one that is in charge of tasks (the Task Positive Network) and one that is involved in daydreaming, pondering and inspiration (the Default Mode Network). Both are needed for effectiveness (and sanity). When one of these networks is activated, the other is shut down. Staying solely focused on task severely limits creativity, while engaging the Default Mode Network opens up possibilities and innovation.

### The Role of Visualization and Metaphor

Our visual cortex is better developed than our auditory cortex. We understand things in images more easily and quickly than we do by

parsing linear sentences. Visualizations access hidden, non-verbal parts of the brain where there is often deep wisdom available.

### You Can't Do That Becomes You Must Do That

Based on neuroscience, I have thus turned the You Can't Do That list above into what I am calling (tongue in cheek) the "You MUST

Do That" list. For the most effective coaching and long-lasting change, you really MUST:

- focus on the emotional content of the issue
- get your client's body involved
- encourage and celebrate failure
- bring in humor and play
- check in on diet, exercise and sleep
- move away from a task-only focus
- use visualizations and metaphor

When you understand the science behind it all, none of these are woo-woo, odd or even edgy. They are simply how the human brain and body learn. And clients, no matter who they are – executives, male, female, young, old, in different countries, etc. – all have brains. And they all want to change, to become more effective. If they can understand that your techniques are designed to help their brains be in an optimal state for learning, growth and creativity, you'll find less resistance and more engagement. So bring it on.



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# The Triad

## How are our three brains impacted by coaching?

By Vikki Brock, EMBA, PhD, MCC

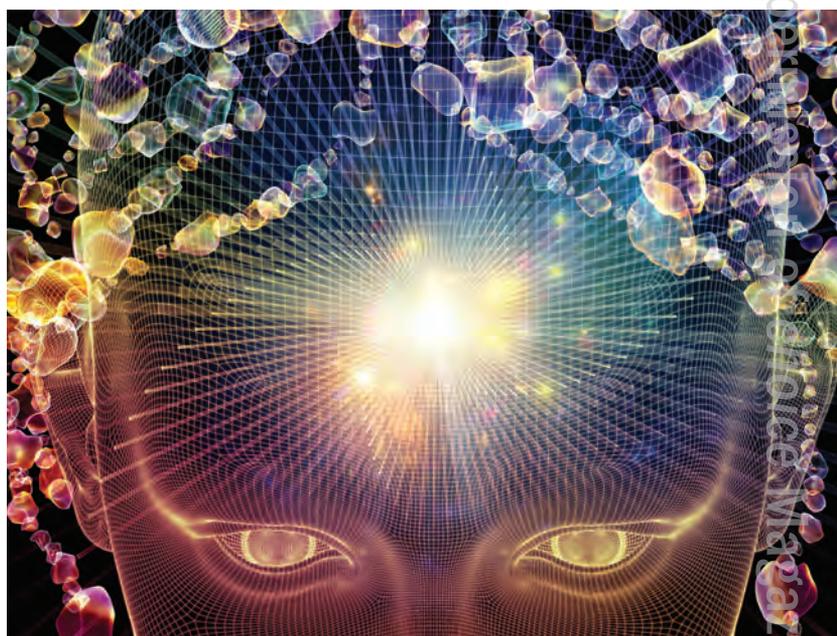
**Y**es, we all have three brains. Now that I have your attention, or at least the attention of your head brain, what do I mean by three brains? A brain is defined as a complex and functional neural network that has a memory, intelligence and control over the decisions we make. Scientific research has shown that we humans have three brains – the one in our head (cephalic or central nervous system), the one in our heart (cardiac nervous system) and the one in our gut (enteric nervous system).

Ancient philosophy knew of the presence of three brains. In Aristotle’s masterpiece *Rhetoric*, he defines three ways to persuade an audience: Logos (an appeal to logic or head brain), pathos (an appeal to emotion or heart brain), and ethos (credibility of the speaker or gut brain).<sup>1</sup> He is even quoted: “The brain is not solely in the head. The brain is in the heart and more.”<sup>2</sup>

Going even further back, we have the Tao practice which says: Train all the organs; train them how to do different things.<sup>3</sup> Scientists “approximate that the Upper Brain in the head can use up to 80 percent of the body’s energy, which means that there is only 20 percent remaining for the functioning of all of the other organs and bodily processes.”

Fast forwarding to more recent times, in 1900 L. Frank Baum published *The Wizard of Oz*.<sup>4</sup> Three characters in this book were the Scarecrow, who was looking for a brain; the Tin Woodsman who wanted a heart; and the Cowardly Lion who wanted courage – or head, heart, and guts.<sup>5</sup> This same triad is apparent when we reflect on what people say: trust your gut... listen to your heart... use your head.

“Since the time of the Enlightenment, Western culture



has increasingly valued the wisdom of the head-brain – conscious thought and control of thought – over alternative perceptual and integrative systems in the body. The Cartesian formula ‘I think, therefore I am’ is the sort of logical formulation that epitomizes Western thought, which gives the head-brain primacy over other neural systems – brains – that exist in our bodies. Our educational systems reinforce this prejudice...”<sup>6</sup>

In the late 20th century, science finally caught up with what we already knew. Though research on the gut-brain began in the late 1940s by Michael Gershon, it wasn’t until the publication of his 1998 book *The Second Brain* that the idea became mainstream and the field of neurogastroenterology was formed.<sup>7</sup> Research on the heart brain was published in the late 1970s and popularized by Paul Pearsall’s 1998 book *The Heart Code*.<sup>3</sup> Subsequent research proposes “that the heart’s

electromagnetic field provides a global synchronizing signal for the entire body. Even more interesting, this electromagnetic field also impacts the emotions of others within close proximity.”<sup>8</sup>

## What is the relationship of the brains?

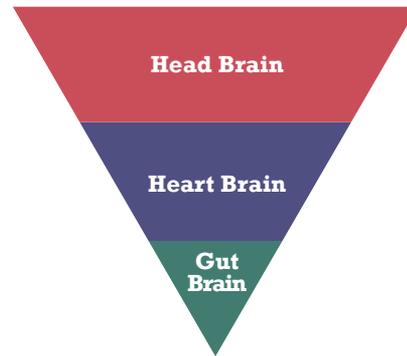
In the Western world we have revered the head-brain as the most influential followed by the heart and to a lesser extent the gut. According to Mark Chandler Taylor, “if we were to illustrate the relative value given to the brains of the head, heart, and gut according to the traditional Western point of view, we would have an inverted pyramid...”<sup>6</sup>

Taylor suggests a “realigned model – one that draws on both anatomic and experiential analysis – proposes that a better foundation for our humanity is to right the pyramid, acknowledging our gut-brain as our strong and stable foundation, our heart-brain at ease, resting on the wisdom of the gut, and our head-brain at the top, in a smaller, less dominant role than in the old model.”<sup>6</sup>

## What are the core competencies of each brain?

**Gut Brain:** “Is your core identity and contains the deepest levels of the self. You rely on your gut often for quick decision-making; that fight or flight response (safety or risk). You may find courage, fear, action, and grit down there.”<sup>9</sup>

**Heart Brain:** “Is used mostly for processing emotions (joy, jealousy, anger, hate, love, lust, compassion, empathy). It helps you to discover what is most important to you in life, priorities, and values. It helps you to connect or disconnect with



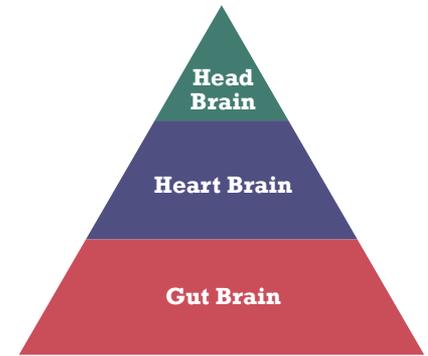
others based on similarities or differences in those values.”<sup>8</sup>

**Head Brain:** “Is primarily used for cognitive perception and pattern recognition. You use your head to reason, to analyze and to synthesize information that comes in. One way your head makes meaning of things is through language (verbal, written, body), telling stories and using metaphors.”<sup>8</sup>

Alignment of these three brains creates a ‘flow’ state where each brain is functioning at its efficient best. Gregory Stebbins proposes that this flow state is wisdom, defined as “an integration of head, heart and hunch [gut] tempered through the experience of the individual ... a state of being that emerges from within the leader from the experience of integrating head, heart and hunch [gut].”<sup>8</sup>

## What does this mean to me as a coach?

“Coaching is customized to the coach, the person being coached, the context, and the specific conditions that led to its initiation.”<sup>10</sup> Given that the coach and the person being coached each have three brains, and that alignment of these brains creates a ‘flow’ state, a holistic coaching approach is recommended. This calls for the coach and coachee to



use all three brains or at least consider the input from each.

Begin with deep listening from your gut, heart, and head. For example, your coachee is sharing with you a work situation (context) that involves a challenging assignment with a short deadline that may not be value-added (situation). As coach you have a hunch that there is more to this situation (gut), you feel compassion for the exhaustion in her voice (heart), and note the elements of short deadline for non-value-added task (head). You now have a choice to respond to one, two, or all three brains. An integrated response might be “I hear exhaustion in your voice (heart) at the challenge of this assignment (head) and yet I sense there is more going on here (gut). Next, pause for the client to take this in each of her brains.

What if your coachee makes decisions or responds to situations from only one brain and ignores the others? This can occur when under pressure or from habit, and may be likened to “overdrive” when one brain is overused or used inappropriately in exclusion of the other brains.

**Gut Brain Overdrive:** Reactive, impulsive, and action oriented. However, this is useful in an emergency, or when safety or survival is threatened.

**Heart Brain Overdrive:** Concern about self-image, impact on

others, and lives of others. May end up waiting, hoping, and dreaming – or show emotions too obviously and readily.

**Head Brain Overdrive:** Plan and prepare, focus on what could go wrong, too much visioning or try to do it all. May be viewed by others as cold, impersonal, and calculating.

As a coach, when faced with a possible overdrive situation, consider asking one of the following questions: What does your gut tell you? How does your heart feel? What does your head say?

A valuable resource for understanding the characteristics of each brain as a way to develop leaders is *Head, Heart, and Guts: How the World's Best Companies Develop Complete Leaders*. Each brain is effective in specific areas and activities (as described in the sidebar) and when the three brains work together a leader is said to be a complete leader.

Given that coaches are also leaders, your assignment is to look inside and determine if you have an over reliance on one of your brains. Remember, the “functions of the brain have been categorized in three levels. The first level governs a lot of your instinctual reactions, the second level is involved in the processing of emotions and memory, and the third level adds thinking, reasoning, and the ability to project into the future a plan.”<sup>11</sup> If you have an over reliance on one or two of your brains, practice and integrate trusting your gut, listening to your heart, and using your head. Remember the pyramid – from a solid foundation in your gut brain, you connect with others emotionally from the heart brain, and give your logical head brain a much needed rest.

## Head Leadership

- Rethinking the way things are done
- Reframing boundaries when necessary
- Understanding the complexities of a global world
- Thinking strategically without losing sight of short-term goals
- Looking for ideas inside and outside a company, wherever they can be found
- Developing a point of view<sup>5</sup>

## Heart Leadership

- Balancing people and business needs
- Creating trust
- Developing true compassion in a diverse workplace
- Creating environments in which people can be truly committed
- Knowing what's important
- Understanding and overcoming potential derailers<sup>5</sup>

## Gut Leadership

- Taking risks with incomplete data
- Balancing risk and reward
- Acting with unyielding integrity in spite of the difficult
- Tenaciously pursuing what's required for success
- Persevering in the face of adversity
- Not being afraid to make tough decisions<sup>5</sup>

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# Coaching & Metacognition

## Support for neuroscience in coaching

By Brenda Corbett & Justin Kennedy, PhD

**D**oes coaching change the brain? As the marriage of coaching and neuroscience approaches, the answer to this question becomes more important. Coaches want to prove that their service has real value. If proof can be developed based on scientific research, then coaching reaches a new level of credibility. Coaching becomes more widely accepted. We can actually demonstrate what effective coaching looks like. Does coaching change the brain? The best way to answer this is to follow through on a coaching conversation to see what happens.

### A Conversation With Duane

Meet Duane. He's the director of marketing at a mid-size clothing company in Hollywood, Florida. Duane has never been able to fire a single person in all his years at this company. He will 're-gift' his difficult employees. He will move them to other departments. It should be no surprise that conflict causes Duane to shut down

Shutting down the way Duane does – as with pretty much all people's negative behavior – is based on fear: fear of conflict, fear of rejection, fear of failure. How does coaching help Duane deal with conflict? How does Duane separate himself from the emotional complexity of fear and anxiety? How can coaching help?

Duane sees something coming. Perhaps he has to discipline an employee. The primitive part of the brain has an emotion associated with conflict. That emotion is fear. The decision-making part of the brain takes that information and goes to work.

Without coaching, Duane will always come up with the same solutions about a conflict. He will process the same information, handle the fear in the same way and



**“If you have behavioral skills that allow you to change your mind, you will then rewire your brain to become more plastic, more malleable, more agile.”**

arrive at the same conclusions. Coaching can provide an intervention. A coach can ask Duane to think about the way he is thinking. There's a word in neuroscience that describes “thinking about thinking.” The word is metacognition.

Coaching can put Duane in that metacognitive state. He can then see how exhausting it is to swim in these emotions of fear. Once he is able to see that, he can choose his emotions rather than getting lost in them.

When Duane learns how to do that, he can translate that into intelligent dialogue and better results: hiring the right person or sending the right messages to people or just being comfortable in situations that have conflict

### The QTIP Approach

So how does a coach get a client to take one step back, and think about their thinking? Clients need techniques, tools and tangible thought processes that can get them out of their emotions and into creative space. One such tool is the QTIP, which reminds clients to Quit Taking It Personally.

Duane thinks he is the center of the universe. People are fearful and they are afraid of conflict because they think they are immensely important. They think they have this huge role in everyone else's lives. They put a lot more energy into worrying about a conflict than they do dealing with the conflict. They need to Quit Taking It Personally (QTIP).

If you're taking it personally, you are turning fear into a feeling. When you take emotion and turn it into a feeling, it becomes ego heavy. It becomes more than the feeling. It becomes some horrible experience. It is partly driven by raw emotions, partly driven by a perception of self in the rational brain.

Can we get Duane to talk it through in his mind before he talks it through with other people? If we get Duane to Quit Taking It Personally, he's able to distinguish or separate the emotion that he's experiencing from what he would like to be doing. He can quit taking the emotions personally. Then, those emotions don't translate into feelings, which can be exhausting.

What is real is the emotion. The feeling is a perception of the emotion. Once a client enters into a feeling, it's very tricky to get out of that feeling state. That's when QTIP is the perfect opportunity to help him train his brain, to change his mind, to heal his heart before his work falls apart. Coaches can help clients find space to ensure they develop a flexible agile brain.

Can a coach teach a client to stop thinking personally? We can't directly change our brain. We can change our brain by changing our mind. That creates a feedback loop. When we change our mind – the activities of the brain – then we change our perceptions and thus change our brain. What happens when people learn certain skills through a coaching process? They learn to

self-regulate. They learn to QTIP in the moment so they can move back into a comfort zone so they don't ruin their health, or the work project that's on tap.

Research tells us that the brain you're born with is influenced by your experiences, so that you end up with a unique set of neural networks. A left-hander will have a larger right brain and vice versa. An artist would have a larger right brain, for understanding how to draw and enjoy esthetic experiences, while a mathematician would have a larger left brain for managing details.

### Changing Clients' Brains

From clinical neuroscience studies, we have learned that you can rewire your brain. You can take a neurotransmission highway that leads from A to B and either turn it into a country lane or turn it into a major freeway.

**“If you attend to your thinking and choose a new behavior often enough, you will change the landscape of your brain.”**

We have enough data to validate this fact: If you have behavioral skills that allow you to change your mind, you will then rewire your brain to become more plastic, more malleable, more agile in the way you end up thinking.

This is where coaching becomes a true behavioral science. If you attend to your thinking and choose a new behavior often enough, you will change the landscape of your brain. If you change the landscape, new things become habit. A new habit no longer has to be so conscious. It takes a while to do that, depending on the complexity of the problem.

Duane's habit is longstanding. He has lots of nice friends that support his habits. Having him create and reinforce a new way of doing things is exhausting. It's extremely tiring to rewire the brain. It can be done, but it takes a lot of intelligence from the coach to keep a client on track, to help them do the homework, to help them be effective in paying attention.

This is not an easy process, but it is a very rewarding process. When the reward system kicks in, people are 'good to go'. They have a new system locked down.

You can reformat any brain at any time and it's never too late.

## Getting Ego Out of the Way

We are all so caught up with ourselves. That may be the biggest problem in a coaching relationship. The person you are coaching is so full of themselves that they think they are the center of the universe. When they think they are the center of the universe, all these irrational behaviors happen. This is partly because they are so self-absorbed that they think they are incredibly meaningful and important. In fact, they're just one of seven billion people on the planet.

How can coaches direct their thought processes?

The primitive emotional center of the brain always does its work before the thinking and problem-solving part of the brain kicks in.

People think our thinking skills are *the thing*, but it's really just the icing on top of the bigger machine. As a result we 'take it personally' before we think it through.

QTIP technology helps clients dilute their egos so they can do the heavy lifting that is required to rewire the brain. If you get ego out of the way, you get to solve your problems. Coaching is right at the heart of that.

**“QTIP technology helps clients dilute their egos so they can do the heavy lifting that is required to rewire the brain. If you get the ego out of the way, you get to solve your problems.”**

Market research sees solid support for neuroscience in coaching. Clinical research says: “Coaching can change the brain.” As the marriage of coaching and neuroscience approaches, new research is breaking every day. Stay tuned. Things are happening.

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# Hacking the Brain

## Why do coaches make great brain hackers?

By Robert Holmes, ThD, PCC, BFac, BComm, MDiv, CSP, CALC

Around the world, teams of scientists with giant white machines are gazing into the living brains of volunteers. Their research focuses on questions like, “How does motivation work?” and “Why are people addicted to poker machines?” One research scientist, Eric Kandel, had a hunch that therapy caused changes in the brains of his patients, but he could not verify it. He theorized that “the therapist is not only making eye contact and voice contact, but the action of neuronal machinery in the therapist’s brain is having an indirect and, one hopes, long-lasting effect on the neuronal machinery in the patient’s brain.”<sup>1</sup>

The scientists at the University of Queensland in Australia have looked into how effective various kinds of therapies are at changing people’s brains. Their machines can now see down to the level of each brain cell: beautiful and complex structures called neurons. They watch the way a neuron changes its connection to neighbors as a result of each kind of therapy. Does change take place? If so, how much occurs between sessions? How much over the course of therapy? Kandel was right – therapy does change the brain, and “talking therapies” generate more lasting change than any other form.

A talking therapy involves having structured conversations with someone who is trained to help a person explore their feelings, thoughts, behavior and mood. The client or patient may be attempting to recover from trauma, regulate stress responses, overcome a mood disorder, deal with challenges at work, remove anxiety or set goals for the future. According to the UK Mental Health Foundation, psychotherapy, counseling and coaching are all talking therapies.



### Coaching is the Bomb!

Pieter Rossouw is a research scientist housed amidst the gumtrees and white buildings of the University of Queensland. His area of expertise is brain-based talking therapies – which share many commonalities with coaching. He says, “Molecular neuroscience has demonstrated how talking therapies are *the* preferred strategies to facilitate neural change. New patterns of neural activation can be facilitated through the unique qualities of talking strategies provided in an enriched environment.”<sup>2</sup>

There are many ways to set up brain change: learning, teaching, physical exercise, electro-shock ... but the most effective strategy is talking therapy provided in an enriched environment. (By the way, an enriched environment doesn’t mean leather couches and a latté! It means

a structured, highly interactive, co-created set of conversations.)

## The Coach Matters Most

Pieter's team has found that "the *person* of the therapist is more important than how much of a specialist they are, the knowledge base [they draw from] or the insight into bags of 'tricks'."<sup>2</sup>

Great coaching conversations will get great brain changes. The coach's ability to develop a strong relationship with the client, consider his or her own conduct and build trust are more important than whether the coach has an ultra-narrow specialty, boasts vast years of experience or

water, room temperature, seating arrangements and equal power positions are taken care of.

## 2. The therapeutic alliance

Our brains are social and need to be loved, to belong and to be understood. For effective brain change, the coach must be a master of making and breaking rapport, maintaining a respectful relationship and helping clients remain in charge of their own decisions, actions and outcomes.

## 3. The limbic mirror neuron effect

Our brains have special neurons that cause us to unconsciously mimic one another and enable em-

traumatizing the client and strengthening old pathways. By contrast coaching is outcome oriented, forward looking and solution focused. This demands the growth of new neuron connections and thinking pathways.

While just doing a few sessions with a client creates neural change, it does not create lasting change. The effects wear off, because old pathways are still strongly embedded. Neurons that have fired together for a long time begin to wire together. He advises at least 6-8 sessions and follow-up work, to create strong new networks in the brain that stand a strong chance of sustaining the change.

So talking therapies are the preferred strategy for lasting brain change. It is the coach that makes all the difference: his or her ability to develop strong relationship with the client, be self-aware, build trust & establish rapport. This effectiveness is ensured by remaining aware of environmental factors (safety and control), establishing a great alliance (therapeutic relationship) and mastering empathy (active listening, mirroring).

Coaching is so effective at brain change because it is outcome oriented and solution focused. This demands the growth of new neuron connections and thinking pathways. That's why coaches make the best brain hackers!

**"Coaching is outcome oriented, forward looking and solution focused. This demands the growth of new neuron connections and thinking pathways."**

wields the latest personality inventory tests.

The coach is important and so are the details of the way they conduct a conversation. Pieter says, "the therapeutic alliance, limbic mirror neuron effect and facilitation of safety and control are more crucial to facilitate effective neural change than anything else."<sup>2</sup>

That's three things coaches need to master:

### 1. Facilitating safety and control

Our brains have a guardian at the front door, which some refer to as the croc brain. Its highest concern is for our safety. For effective brain change the client needs to feel safe and relaxed, assured that environmental issues like: having a glass of

pathy. For effective brain change the coach must demonstrate empathy, listen actively and match language, breathing and body movement. This creates a strong alliance and improves learning.

## Where the Blood Goes, the Brain Changes

The brain changes are "facilitated by enhancing cortical blood flow to empower solution focused outcomes, and facilitating and strengthening new activation patterns to enhance long term patterns and reduce risk and relapse into default neural protection patterns."<sup>2</sup>

Here, then, is why coaches make great brain hackers. Other forms of therapy go into a person's story, repeating patterns of past pain, re-

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# Real Changes Come

The science behind those ‘magical’ changes

By Kate Michels, MCC, NLP

**D**oes coaching change our brain? How many times have clients told you they feel better after a coaching session? It isn't just that they feel better; they are in a very real sense functioning better and thus are actually better.

During the coaching session there are neurons firing in their brain, in their heart and also in their gut, at their core that are creating internal shifts that make a lasting difference. The important thing for you as the coach to know is that this is real and is not just a feeling.

When you share information with your clients such as the fact that neurons are firing and sparking new ideas you actually increase the reality of this occurrence. There have been scientific tests done to note the changes that occur as a person is going through transitioning questioning, and neuroscientists such as those at the Heart Math Institute have proven over and over again that there are physical changes occurring from shifting our thinking, so that the heart beats differently and the body functions at a higher level of efficiency.

When you as a coach share this type of information with your clients, the value of what you are actually doing goes up in your client's eyes and in your own perception. We are not just playing here; we are playing for real, and the lives we are impacting are truly evolving to function at a higher level.

When my clients say they feel better, I tell them they *are* better. The feelings they describe are sensations – part of their neural system adjusting and beginning to function at a higher level. This is how they move more consistently toward success: the conversations really are impacting them internally at their core.

What has been scientifically proven and is true is



**“When you share information with your clients such as the fact that neurons are firing and sparking new ideas you actually increase the reality of this occurrence.”**

that our heart has neurons that spark the same way our brain has neurons that fire and both of these systems are impacted on a regular basis by our thoughts. The stronger our beliefs are, the greater impact these neurons have on our system and thus awareness of our beliefs, and changing of our beliefs stimulates a shift that causes changes to actually occur.

The latest research in neuroscience confirms that emotion and cognition can best be thought of as separate but interacting functions or systems, each with its unique intelligence. Our research is showing that the key to the successful integration of the mind and emo-

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tions lies in increasing the coherence (ordered, harmonious function) in both systems and bringing them into phase with one another.

While two-way communication between the cognitive and emotional systems is hard-wired into the brain, the actual number of neural connections going from the emotional centers to the cognitive centers is greater than the number going the other way. This helps explain the tremendous power of emotions, in contrast to thought alone. Once an emotion is experienced, it becomes a powerful motivator of future behaviors, affect-

**“Does coaching change our brain? Yes, and the client experiences the changes.”**

ing moment-to-moment actions, attitudes and long-term achievements. *Exploring The Heart In Human Performance* goes into great detail of how this works and what neuroscience is exploring more and more every day.

As a Neuro Linguistic Coach with more than 10 years' experience in this field I have gathered my own evidence from the changes that my clients have experienced. The first change I note and encourage my clients to recognize is their voices change: literally their tone becomes stronger, the pitch shifts and there is more clarity. People who have experienced a life of long pauses and sometimes even stuttering conditions begin to speak more fluentl , with more clarity and with less long pauses. High-pitched and squeaky tones begin to decrease and the people literally sound different. They don't actually notice this until other people begin to point it out to them.

Some other changes that occur are people gain more conscious control of their breathing; instead of holding their breath or pushing out their breaths, they breathe in a more steady and consistent manner. I record all of my coaching sessions and encourage clients to go back and listen to our second or third conversation and then listen to the tenth conversation so that they are able to hear and acknowledge the changes for themselves.

Then of course there are the wonderful changes most of have experienced with our clients where their life realigns and they begin to get more of what it is they know they want. It is often described as magical or miraculous because the clients are not working that hard to achieve the changes, yet the changes just seem to be happening. This is because they are happening on a neurological level; the brain system is realigning.

There are neuron paths being created and the system is internally shifting to support a more positive attitude toward themselves and life in general. The heart is beating differently and the brain is functioning at a higher level.

Does coaching change our brain? Yes, and the client experiences the changes. With more information the changes occur more frequently because the intention goes where the attention flows When someone places their intention on the neuron paths, then the neuron paths get more attention.

I tell all my clients that I am not about them changing; I am about them acquiring more awareness, moving into acceptance and awakening to more resourceful choices. I do know that they will change at a core level and it comes so easily it almost feels miraculous. The focus is not on change; it is on information, and from this focus the changes will and do occur. ●

By Jeffrey Jans & Mickie Schroeder

# Stepping Off

Coaching the transition to the new retirement

**The old paradigm** of retirement was being told, “your time is up.” If you can afford it, you can travel, take the grandchildren to Disney and live where it’s warm. If you can’t afford to travel, volunteer opportunities abound.

The new paradigm for retirement is one that is self-chosen. Retirement is now what YOU make of it. Many Boomers will live 20 years more after they retire, yet they may have only vague ideas of what they’ll do. Thus, a new type of coaching debuts. It co-stars life and career coaching, with leadership playing a supporting role.

## Retirement Transition Phases and Issues

A major life transition, according to William Bridges in his book, *Transitions*, has three phases:

1. **Endings** – you retire from your job,
2. **Neutral Zone** – a time for exploration about what’s next, and
3. **New Beginnings** – the real start of your retirement.

Every life transition has issues that correspond to one of these phases. A coach who is aware of them can listen and ask if a particular issue is of concern for the client and to what degree. Also, awareness of the ‘typical’ retirement issues greatly enhances a coach’s ability to recognize when the client is experiencing something unique. It also enhances the coach’s ability to ‘see’ a typical issue masquerading as unique.

Knowledge of retirement transition issues greatly enhances the nature and timing of a coach’s questions. For instance, when a client says, “My boss is a blithering idiot! I am so ready to retire and get him/her out of my life,” a coach, unfamiliar with the issues, might empathize and respond with, “I get your frustration. It seems you’ve had all you can stand of your boss.” However, with knowledge of retirement issues, the coach might ask instead, “Is your boss the only reason you want to retire, or are there other reasons?”



Coaching people in transition usually involves asking the client to remember details of past transitions, utilizing what helped, and avoiding behaviors and thoughts that hindered. However, the transition to retirement has so many variables, it’s problematic to use past transitions as a guide.

What differentiates retirement from other transitions is a person’s perspective about it. Clients of ours have expressed watching their parents’ retirement in horror and thinking/feeling, “I will never do that!”

They’ve seen parents and friends become victims of the ‘Retired Husband Syndrome’ in which the father/spouse retires and becomes a couch potato, filling his days by watching TV. The reverse is, of course, possible. There are people who, like Jimmy Carter, seem to fare far better in retirement than in their professional life. Their image of retirement is far more positive and, from a coaching perspective, a much firmer foundation from which to build.

When a client’s perspective on retirement is not positive, we’ve found that to proceed with coaching in a constructive way, it’s important to help them find positives

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and build on these. For instance, in the case of the Retired Husband Syndrome, we asked the client if he could find a more positive role model. It could be a relative, a friend, an ex-president of the United States, or a fictional character.

Adopting a few of the traits of the client's role model now becomes a parallel focus of the coaching. When a thorny question comes up, our coaching response is often, "what would your role model think, do, or not do in this situation?"

An issue we've come across is Post-Retirement Depression. We write it similarly to post-partum depression be-

## “What differentiates retirement from other transitions is a person's perspective about it.”

cause the two are a lot alike. When people retire, they are supposed to feel joy at having passed one of life's milestones. However, like a new mother who is supposed to be over-the-moon happy at having just given birth but is instead depressed, newly retired people often feel adrift and rudderless. They put on a happy face but it's difficult to sustain.

Another differentiation about the transition to retirement is decision-making. For many people, retirement is the first time in their lives a parent, school or work-related institution isn't providing them with marching orders in the service of someone else's purpose. In retirement people get to decide for themselves – and with their partner – the destination of their lives and what route they'll take.

We thought people would do a happy dance at this newfound freedom. Instead, many of our clients find it so daunting that, even though many are financially ready to retire, they keep working. When it comes to their own life, their decision-making muscles have atrophied. Coaching gets them back into shape.

### Finding A Bigger “Yes”

Decision-making is made easier when you have, as Stephen Covey wrote in *7 Habits of Highly Successful People*, “a bigger Yes” – a self-chosen purpose that enables you to

say yes or no to temptations that come along. If something comes along that is aligned with your purpose you consider it. If it isn't, you easily say no.

To aid clients in discovering their purpose, we use a combination of several activities, completed by the client in between sessions. The coach's role is to ask clarifying questions and play devil's advocate with clients to ensure they've fully articulated their purpose.

As coaching progresses, there comes a time when clients brainstorm options for what they'd like to do. When the brainstorming is exhausted (it never really is) each idea is weighed against their “bigger yes.” If the connection isn't apparent, it is put on hold.

Occasionally, clients come to coaching with ideas about their retirement and don't want to work through the three phases. Their goal is to pin down specifics of what they have in mind using us as a sounding board. We go with this. We start where the client is.

However, often clients discover they've picked only low-hanging fruit. They realize there is more out there for them and to find it will take some searching, which involves entering the 'Neutral Zone'.

The Neutral Zone is the most difficult phase. It is here that clients determine their purpose and brainstorm ways to achieve it. Coaching helps clients appreciate the ambiguity of their situation and, as a result, clients give themselves permission to explore. As coach and client search deep within to find a purpose, the client's anxiety is converted into positive energy that builds momentum for what's to come.

### A New Beginning

Bridges uses a metaphor to quickly capture the essence of making a transition. He writes that it's like crossing a busy street. Stepping off the curb is an Ending. Pausing in the middle of the road to get your bearings is the Neutral Zone. Moving to the other side marks a New Beginning.

With a new perspective about retirement (an ending), a re-discovered purpose and options for pursuing it (from the neutral zone), retirement coaching now moves the client to trying out the options that most align with purpose (a new beginning). During these trials the client keeps discovering and, with coaching insight, will take a piece from one foray and combine it with pieces from other forays and, eventually, put all the puzzle pieces together. ●

By Lion Goodman

# What Lies Beneath

How to find – and change – core beliefs

**Your client arrives** and immediately explains why she didn't do the things she said she would do during her last session. You see that her pattern of procrastination will ultimately lead to failure of the coaching process, as it has affected her during her life. She doesn't do the work, isn't able to experience success in moving her life forward, and she will likely drop out of coaching, unsatisfied feeling like a failure. Worse, she may blame *you*.

## What tools do you reach for?

Many coaches respond with more enthusiasm and encouragement for the process, hoping the client will be inspired to engage and accomplish some of her goals. Hope is a great virtue, but a terrible strategy. It rarely creates real change.

Other coaches lower their expectations, and point to a smaller task she could actually accomplish. Perhaps she will get motivated to take more action. Some coaches reach for an accountability system, rewarding her success. Neither of these strategies creates much change, either.

**“It is possible to change beliefs directly, without the storytelling and psychologizing done by our licensed brethren.”**

There is another option: Get to the heart of the matter. Determine the *cause of the resistance to taking action*, and eliminate it. When you remove the source of the blockage, forward movement occurs naturally.

The *cause* of our behavior lies in the subconscious mind, deep beneath the surface. This is where the struc-



ture of the personality was built, and where you can find almost all causes of behavior.

We've been taught that this territory is owned and managed by psychologists, psychotherapists, and mental health professionals. "Focus on the present and the future," we are taught. "Don't enter the past – those are psychological waters. Leave that to the licensed people."

The problem is, of course, that unless we can shift consciousness at the most fundamental level, we are left powerless to evoke deep change in our clients. We are left with attempts to manage behavior from the outside, with planning, motivation, and the creation of new habits – instead of altering it from the inside, where it's sourced. We do the best we can, motivating our clients for a while, but they return to their old habits. Real change is rare. And yet, this is why they came to us – for deep and profound change in who they are and how they show up in their world.

There is an approach that works – one that does not tread on psychotherapeutic territory. This is changing

your client's *beliefs*.

Used here, the term 'belief' is not "a commitment to an idea," but rather the infrastructure of the human mind. Beliefs are the building blocks of the personality – the picture we hold of who we are, what we are capable of, and what we are supposed to do. Beliefs accumulate throughout our lifetime. They are indoctrinated into us, and we form conclusions from our circumstances.

It is possible to change beliefs directly, without the storytelling and psychologizing done by our licensed brethren. The result is the same as that achieved with successful psychotherapy: a shift occurs in the individual's point of view – their beliefs – about themselves, about others, or about the world. For example, when a person changes their belief about

al life is based on the beliefs he holds about himself and his life. When you can look beneath the surface of the 'presenting problem' and point to the cause in his belief structure, you can help him shift his viewpoint, and thus the possibilities that lie before him. This is true empowerment.

There are many methods of belief-change offered to professional coaches. The acid test of any methodology is this: *Is the old belief gone from the subconscious mind? Or does it re-appear later?* An ideal methodology would remove the belief completely, deleting it from the subconscious mind so that it never returns. Most methodologies fall short of this goal.

To change beliefs permanently, a methodology should impact not only the conscious mind, but also the

uncovered by asking questions that dive down, layer by layer, to the subconscious programs that motivate behavior. The answers to these questions will reflect your client's beliefs beneath the surface:

- What do you want to change, and why?

Their answer will point to their beliefs about themselves, their issue, and their circumstances.

- What beliefs are you aware of underneath this issue?

Many people are already aware of the beliefs that run them.

- What are the thoughts you have repeatedly about this?

Our inner voices often represent our core wounds and beliefs. For example, the voice that says, "There's something wrong with you!" is a direct expression of the belief, "There's something wrong with me."

**What is it that makes you feel that way?**

Beliefs are at the core of most feelings. Fear is an emotion most often associated with the belief that you can't handle something. Anger can be created by the belief, "I'm out of control in this situation." Ambivalence points to two or more conflicting beliefs, such as "I should do that," and "I don't want to do that."

Once you discover your client's core belief, you can use any belief-change technique: EFT, NLP, The Work, or my personal favorite, the BeliefCloset Process. When your client changes her belief at the core of her psyche, her perspective will change, and so will her world. ●

**“To change beliefs permanently, a methodology should impact not only the conscious mind, but also the subconscious mind and the superconscious mind.”**

*what they are capable of*, there is a fundamental change in their view of who they are and what is possible in their world.

Our beliefs act like colored lenses in front of our eyes, shaping what we can and cannot see. They drive our automatic behaviors and reactions to others. They shape, in large part, the circumstances we find ourselves in. Most importantly, they create our limitations, as well as our possibilities.

A client's expression of dissatisfaction with his personal or profession-

subconscious mind and the superconscious mind (or Higher Self). It should reach into unconscious patterns and also into the distant past to release inherited family, cultural and societal karma.

A coach who can evoke change at the deepest levels of their clients' programming is a powerful agent of change.

Regardless of which tool you use, the first step is to identify the core belief beneath the client's presenting problem or issue. Beliefs can be

## ICF Global Europe Inspires Courage to Create Change

**F**rom September 18 - 20, 2014, more than 400 coaches from around the globe gathered in Malmö, Sweden, for ICF Global 2014 – Europe. The event was the second of three ICF Global Conferences offered in 2014.

The conference theme was “Courage to Create Change: Coaching for a Sustainable Future.” The theme was chosen because in our current environmental and economic crisis, we need courage: courage to challenge conventional thinking, courage to live our best lives and courage to create change.

Three keynote speakers shared their wisdom with attendees. Alf Rehn, the chair of management and organization at Finland’s Åbo Akademi University, proved why he’s viewed as Scandinavia’s *enfant terrible* with a provocative



Story coach Lisa Bloom, PCC, narrated the proceedings of ICF Global 2014 – Europe and invited conference attendees to share their tales of courage and change.

distance Q&A session. Other special sessions welcomed Myles Downey and Meg Moore to the stage.

The format of ICF Global 2014 – Europe represented a departure from typ-

**“The format of ICF Global 2014 – Europe represented a departure from typical conferences, as it was built around a story.”**

look at the business of innovation. Stanford University lecturer and health psychologist Kelly McGonigal, PhD, provided a whole tool kit of techniques to help make stress work for you. Google’s director of executive coaching and leadership, David Peterson, PhD, looked at the qualities needed to lead – and coach – in turbulent times.

Twenty focus sessions covered a broad spectrum from neuroscience to edge-walking; from being truly creative to coaching effectively with linear thinkers. Entrepreneurial futurist Andrea J. Lee and leadership and transformation coach Alan Seale, PCC, joined proceedings virtually with high-energy presentations and a long-

ical conferences, as it was built around a story. Story coach Lisa Bloom, PCC, narrated proceedings and, during the three days’ StoryShare sessions, encouraged all participants to share their tales of courage and change.

This shared story became the central experience of the conference, which began long before attendees physically met in Malmö. An online social community was created to encourage conversations to flow; it will remain in place for several months to come. An extensive social calendar was also created to show delegates the delights of Malmö and neighboring Copenhagen.

Learn about upcoming ICF Global conferences at [icfglobalconference.com](http://icfglobalconference.com).

**February 16, 2015**

**World Coaching Congress 2015 – 3rd Edition “Connecting Minds, Creating the Future”**

Mumbai, India

[www.worldhrdcongress.com/WCC/index.html](http://www.worldhrdcongress.com/WCC/index.html)

**February 18, 2015**

**Leading Ourselves & Others From Overwhelmed to Flourishing**

Toronto, Canada

[www.gtacoaches.com/event-1752951](http://www.gtacoaches.com/event-1752951)

**April 30 – May 3, 2015**

**Gay Coaches Alliance Conference**

Easton, NY, USA

[www.gaycoachconference.com](http://www.gaycoachconference.com)

**May 7 – 9, 2015**

**2015 ACTO Conference**

Orlando, Florida, USA

[www.actoonline.org/acto-conference](http://www.actoonline.org/acto-conference)

**May 17 – 20, 2015**

**CAM '15**

(Conversation Among Masters)

Orlando, Florida, USA

[www.conversationamongmasters.com](http://www.conversationamongmasters.com)

**June 7 – 9, 2015**

**EXCO –**

**The Executive Coaching Conference**

Cincinnati, Ohio, USA

[www.sherpacoaching.com/executive-coaching-conference14.html](http://www.sherpacoaching.com/executive-coaching-conference14.html)

**June 18 – 20, 2015**

**ICF Global Midwest Regional Conference**

**“Getting to the Heart of the Matter”**

Kansas City, Missouri, USA

[www.icf-midwest.com](http://www.icf-midwest.com)

# ICF Wins Four APEX 2014 Awards

The International Coach Federation's (ICF) marketing and communications team has been awarded an APEX 2014 Grand Award for the organization's ongoing Credential Legacy Campaign ([icfcredentiallegacy.com](http://icfcredentiallegacy.com)), as well as three APEX 2014 Awards of Excellence.

"We are extremely proud that our Credential Legacy Campaign earned this honor," said ICF CEO/executive director Magdalena Mook. "The campaign recognizes the work of the 14,500-plus ICF credential-holders who work every day to advance the art and science of professional coaching worldwide. It is the story of their commitment to professionalism and quality."

Launched in September 2013, the ICF Credential Legacy Campaign shares the stories of ICF credential-holders from around the world. Collectively, these coaches' testimonials

illustrate the numerous personal and professional benefits associated with the pursuit and achievement of an ICF credential. The campaign also educates consumers about the value of partnering with a professional coach who holds an ICF credential.

ICF's marketing and communications team was honored with three APEX Awards of Excellence, recognizing exceptional works across 122 individual categories.

Former ICF director of brand management Lindsay Bodkin and Courage Media owner, director and DP Mike Benton were honored for their YouTube Media entry, *Julia's Credential Legacy*. (View the video at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIH0KuF\\_OdA](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zIH0KuF_OdA)).

ICF brand designer Stephanie Wright and communications coordinator Abby Tripp Heverin were recognized for their work on *Coaching World*

magazine ([icfcoachingworld.com](http://icfcoachingworld.com)).

Bodkin, Wright and former ICF marketing specialist (current North American Regional Service Centre manager) Kristin Kelly earned a Special Purpose Print Media award for ICF's "What Do You Seek?" social media brochure.

Now in its 26th year, the APEX Awards program is an international competition that recognizes excellence in publications work by professional communicators. APEX honorees are selected based on excellence in graphic design, quality of editorial content and overall communications effectiveness.

The 2014 APEX judging process was extremely competitive, with more than 2,000 entries submitted for consideration. A total of 100 APEX Grand Awards were presented to honor outstanding works in 11 major categories.

Congratulations to all of the APEX Award winners!

## Need to Know

### The 10th Annual Executive Coaching Survey

**EVERY YEAR, THOUSANDS** of coaches count on a new wave of research to help them build successful businesses. The Executive Coaching Survey is now in its 10th year, and data collection is underway. Survey sponsor Sherpa Coaching encourages your participation.

This survey reveals important trends in coaching, gathered from both coaches and clients. The report is offered free of charge, for the betterment of the industry. Karl Corbett, managing partner of Sherpa Coaching, says: "If there's something we can add to the industry, it's knowledge about where it's going. Working from a decade of history, we can spot trends ... we are seeing major moves in technology and growing interest in neuroscience."

Prof. Justin Kennedy, CEO of Sherpa Africa, says: "Coaches must get involved here. The more information we have coming in, the more information we will give back to you. If you want to know what coaching clients are looking for, send a survey invitation to all your clients, and

make sure they participate." Anyone can participate by visiting [www.qsurvey.net/coach](http://www.qsurvey.net/coach) by December 31, 2014.

The Executive Coaching Survey has earned praise over the years. Rey Carr, founder of Peer Resources in Victoria, BC, Canada, says: "This annual survey is the most reliable and method-sound in the coaching industry. In addition to being a leader in providing data about trends and issues in executive coaching, Sherpa has made its results available, in their entirety, at no charge."

Sherpa Coaching believes in creating leaders who guide and empower others. Sherpa provides process-driven coach training at major universities and leadership development at Fortune 100 firms. Further information from the survey and expert analysis on the results will be offered at EXCO 2015, the 10th annual Executive Coaching Conference in June, 2015. To download your free copy of the public report in early 2015, visit [www.sherpacoaching.com/](http://www.sherpacoaching.com/) ●

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## Change of Mind

Achieving helpful brain change through coaching

By June Caskey, BMus

In his book, *The Brain That Changes Itself*, Norman Doidge, MD, has given stunning case histories and scientifically proven evidence of the astonishing extent to which the brain can be altered. Even people who have suffered severe strokes 20 or 30 years ago, or have brain damage resulting from serious accidents, can gain full mobility again. More astonishing is the fact that brains missing some vital components since birth can build new pathways to modify the effects of such defects.

All of this is very comforting news for those of us who may be working with a person or persons who seem to be resisting the changes in thinking that would make life much better for them.

The question then arises, "That's fine, but how can I coach so my client begins to think differently?" We must ask ourselves if our client fully understands that true success requires changing old, inefficient thought patterns. Our client must come to realize the difference between wishful thinking and the active 'doing' that is necessary for the wish to come true. Sometimes 'doing' is blocked by fear of failure. If the client subconsciously fears that the goal is really out of reach, then wishing is the only activity that can be managed.

Wishing takes virtually no effort, whereas success requires confidence and determination. Both of these necessary states of mind can be developed by taking small steps in the right direction, and Dr. Doidge says it is vital to have a teacher, assistant or therapist who has the understanding and patience to encourage the "student" every step of the way along the path to improvement.

My own success as a piano teacher has given me deep insight into the difference between teaching and coaching, and also the link between them. I believe that any skill, whether at the keyboard or in the world of business, must be fully understood, or learned, before it can be effectively put into practice. It is easy for the teacher or coach to mistake lack of understanding for laziness. A piano student who doesn't practice between lessons may find the assignments overwhelming or simply does not understand how to do what is required to complete the assignment effectively and with pleasure. They may feel instead a mixture of fear, anxiety and 'stuckness'! If a business person does not feel really capable of presenting his product to a prospective

customer effectively, the emotions of fear and anxiety may very well block motivation and progress.

We must show (teach) our client how to think that the goal can and will be reached by taking many small, manageable steps, one at a time. At this point the coach might use an analogy to illustrate the steps to the goal. An important conversation might start something like this:

**Coach:** "If the goal were to climb up to the roof of a house, would it do any good for a person to stand on the ground looking up toward the roof and wishing to get up there?"

**Client:** "Not likely! They'd need a ladder."

**Coach:** "Aha! With a ladder, the climb to the roof could be done one rung at a time with relative ease, right?"

**Client:** "Right."

**Coach:** "Good! We are in agreement, so, together you and I are going to create a list of actions that we both agree would be necessary for reaching your business goal and then I will help you use that list like the rungs of a ladder!"

**"We must show (teach) our client how to think that the goal can and will be reached by taking many small, manageable steps, one at a time."**

Both the client's understanding of the barriers to progress and the agreement to make the list to overcome them were the result of teaching. Now comes the need for coaching. Without help to create that list the client would still be just like the person without a ladder. After the list is made the coach must help the client think of each item on that list as a sturdy, safe rung to success. Starting with the bottom rung, the coach must encourage the client to accept the responsibility to accomplish that rung. For example, if a phone call is required, when will it be made and how can the client help him/herself to make the call? The coach must keep encouraging the client to take that first step and then another, and another and another.

As each rung is climbed, it can be recognized as a valuable success in itself and celebrated by both client and coach as an important move toward the goal. Then the thought of the desired outcome will be an incentive to climb rather than a frightening barrier to action. ●

# The Future of Coaching is Now!

## With *choice* Magazine

Our upcoming issues will guide you towards a happy and successful coaching life

Here's what we're working on to keep you on the leading edge of what's happening in the coaching world:

### V13N1

#### Group or Team Coaching: Which, When & Why

What are the differences between group and team coaching? Which one works best and in what situation(s)? Can we cause transformation in a coaching relationship with more than one person at a time? How does a group or team (and its coach) leverage the energy of all its members? What is most important for a coach to know before getting started? How can companies use team or group coaching to achieve their most important initiatives more quickly and more cost effectively? This issue will uncover the secrets of successful group and team coaching experiences for both coach and clients, including how to design and launch programs to create engagement, inspiration, motivation and accountability for participants.

**Article Deadline: December 13, 2014**

**Advertising Deadline: February 15, 2015**

**Mail date: Late March, 2015**

### V13N2

#### Business Builder

Our annual business builder issue, supporting the coaching profession, one coach at a time. This robust issue gives the real "take-home" advice on how to be the best coach, attract your best clients, create a profitable business get more organized, face your technology fears, where to go for answers, best resources and everything you need to know to have a happy coaching life.

**Article Deadline: March 14, 2015**

**Advertising Deadline: May 15, 2015**

**Mail date: Late June, 2015**

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