Part I

FOUNDATIONS FOR COACHING

The Life Coach Operating System: Its Foundations in Psychology

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This chapter charts the course of some of the psychological theorists of the twentieth century who laid the groundwork for the emergence and evolution of personal and professional coaching. Relevant evidence-based research and theories will be noted along with their application and significance in coaching today. It is important for professional coaches to know that quality coach training and education is based in a multidimensional model of human development and communication that has drawn from the best of humanistic psychology, positive psychology, integral psychology and others in this field. Coaching also draws from other fields such as organizational development, adult learning theory, and systems theory, but they are not the focus of this chapter.

It is important to cite the theories and research from the established field of psychology and note how specific techniques and/or skill sets can be applied in coaching conversations so that coaches can develop a greater variety of tools in communicating with clients. Many of the same techniques that originated in clinical psychology are useful in assisting clients to reframe their experience and to discover their strengths. These techniques include powerful questions, guided imagery (Psychosynthesis), empty chair technique (Gestalt therapy), time lines and future pacing (NLP), and even techniques and theory from Transactional Analysis (Eric Berne), client-centred counselling (Carl Rogers) and life-stage awareness (Carl Jung, Frederic Hudson,

Carol Gilligan, and Robert Kegan, among others). This chapter focuses particularly on the philosophy and practice of life coaching as it relates to high-quality human communication that empowers the client. Some nuances require adaptations for various cultures, but since coaching is a co-created conversation to empower the receiver of the coaching, an *expert/client paradigm* is intentionally absent. Many of the theories and techniques cited in this chapter are unique to Western cultures but can be adapted for use in most other cultures as well.

Life Coaching as an Operating System

Personal and professional coaching has emerged as a recognized career in the last decade and it has created new options for people who seek help with life transitions in finding a *guide* to partner with them in designing their desired future. While coaching has grown to incorporate a variety of specialized applications, the case can be made that life coaching as a whole-person, client-centred approach is the foundational operating system. As an operating system, the whole life approach is always in the background of the conversation, just like an Operating System (OS) in a computer system. Invariably, any specific focus of a coaching relationship will be interconnected to other areas of a person's life. If you have a client who wants to be a better manager, or make a career transition, you will find that conversations about their significant relationships, or their personal wellness, or their stress level could and should come up in the conversation. They are all intertwined in a whole person approach. For your coaching practice, this means that you need to be willing to open up conversations through asking questions about other areas of the client's life. What is working well? What is less than in satisfying? How do *energy drainers* in one area of the client's life *bleed over* into effecting their stated goals?

Before about 1990, there was little mention of coaching except in the corporate culture. Although there were a few people who were doing personal work and calling it coaching before that time. Vikki Brock (Brock, 2008) who has written some research on the origins of coaching notes that Results Unlimited in the UK was begun in 1980 and was providing life coaching. And Sir John Whitmore helped begin one of the first training schools in the UK in 1988 based on the 'inner game' theories of Tim Gallwey. Mentoring and executive coaching were resources that many top managers and CEOs utilized, either informally from a colleague or formally through hiring a consultant or psychologist who became their executive coach. This chapter documents the rise of life coaching

within the broader movement of personal and professional coaching and its roots in psychology.

The rise in the profession can be seen in the following ways. The International Coach Federation was founded in 1995 but did not have a real presence until its first convention in 1996. The ICF has kept detailed archives of media coverage on coaching since the early 1990s. Two newspaper articles appeared in the US media in 1993 (there were reportedly earlier articles in the UK media in the 1980s), four in 1994 (including one from Australia), and seven in 1995. The majority of articles appeared in publications in the United States. Then, in 1996, a huge increase in publicity occurred, with more than 60 articles, television interviews, and radio shows on the topic of coaching. Every year since, media coverage has increased to hundreds of articles, radio programmes, and television venues such as *Good Morning America, Today,* CNBC, BBC, and others around the globe. The only books before 1990, that were written about coaching were geared to corporate and performance coaching. Since then, numerous solid books about life coaching, executive coaching, career coaching, wellness coaching and other specialties have been published, with more every year, and a few recent ones have even become national bestsellers. At last count, over 35 universities across the globe offer at least a certificate in coaching and an increasing number of universities offer graduate degrees in coaching. All of this is to show the rapid evolution of this profession globally with different roots in different parts of the world.

Life coaching was originally thought to have originated in the United States and has rapidly spread worldwide. But through more recent research and conversations with other coaches, it really started in the UK in the 1980s and then the work of Thomas Leonard and others in the US influenced its growth in the UK even more. I contend that coaching will soon reach a critical mass in society – people will have heard of coaching, know when they need a coach, know how to find a coach, and know the difference between partnering with a life coach versus seeking the services of a therapist or counsellor. Understanding coaching's historical roots provides current and prospective life coaches with a framework for understanding their profession and insights into future opportunities. This framework also helps life coaches place themselves squarely within the larger context of a profession that is still evolving. Life coaches will understand the present more accurately and become better prepared as life coaching expands in the twenty-first century if they looking across the diverse threads of the past upon which the work is based. An examination of the evolution of life coaching also helps counsellors and others from the helping professions to make the transition to life coaching by clarifying the similarities and

differences between life coaching and their professions (Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic, 2001).

What Are the Roots of Life Coaching?

Coaching has a unique paradigm, but much of the foundation of coaching goes back many decades and even centuries. The draw to pursue life improvement, personal development, and the exploration of meaning began with early Greek society. This is reflected in Socrates' famous quote, 'The unexamined life is not worth living'. Since then, people have developed many ways of examining their lives, some useful and some not; some are grounded in theory and evidence-based, while others are made up and inconsistent in their helpfulness. What persists, however, is that people who no longer need focus on the pursuit of basic human needs – such as food and shelter – are beginning to pay attention to higher needs such as self-actualization, fulfilment and spiritual connection. This is also why much of the world that lives in poverty and on the edge of survival does not concern themselves with dreams and big goals for their lives. Those have to be put on the back burner.

I have spent much time in Third World/developing countries and see that the coach approach can be helpful in empowering local villagers to be more resourceful, but they still need the resources to become available. The NGOs and nonprofit groups that supply food, water, housing etc., could benefit from a holistic coaching approach in order to create and empower sustainable changes that the *resource-poor* villagers can continue with assistance from *resource-rich* countries and foundations. Taking this global and integrative perspective for the power of coaching, we could do much for the view that coaching is mostly elitist and serves the rich and powerful primarily. Accordingly, more and more people have an intense desire to explore and find personal meaning, when the blocks to survival are eliminated and the ability to thrive supplants survival.

Coaching today is seen as a new phenomenon, but as a field it borrows from and builds on theories and research from related fields such as psychology and philosophy. So coaching is *a multidisciplinary, multi-theory* synthesis and application of applied behavioural change. As coaching evolved in the public arena it began to incorporate accepted theories of behavioural change as the evidence base for this new helping relationship (Williams, 2004). However, in recent years, more and more research has been done and evidence-based theories developed to begin creating a body of knowledge and evidence that coaching can call its own (Stober and Grant, 2006).

Contributions from Psychology

What has the field of psychology brought to coaching and what are the major influences? I would propose that there have been four major forces in psychological theory since the emergence of psychology in 1879 as a social science. These four forces are Freudian, behavioural, humanistic and transpersonal. Both the Freudian and behavioural models grew out of biology and were focused on pathology and how to 'cure' it. The humanistic approaches of Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow were a response to the pathological model; they attempted to make space in psychology for those elements of being human that create health and happiness (Williams, 2007a). Finally, the transpersonal movement arose in the late 1960s in a further attempt to include more of what allows human beings to function at their best. Its focus was on mind, body and spirit and included studies and experiences of states of consciousness, transcendence, and what Eastern traditions and practices had to teach Western theorists and practitioners. A more recent approach, the integral model of Ken Wilber and others, is emerging and may become a fifth force, integrating all that has come before and offering a holistic and even multilevel view of the various modalities for understanding human development and our desire to evolve mentally, physically, spiritually and socially.

In recent years, several other approaches have arisen as adaptations of one or more of the original four and have been taking up by many coaches. Cognitive-behavioural psychology grew from a mix of the behavioural and humanistic schools. I say this because much of cognitive psychology embodied wisdom and leanings from behaviourism and even operant conditioning. But when the humanistic aspect was included, it became a way to use those techniques and theories of change to increase *choice* for the individual. In coaching, then, you can utilize what we know about shifting mindset and behaviours by using a process of inquiry and powerful questions that guide the client to understanding their ability to respond rather than react to their personal situations. Responding comes from viewing the multiple choices available in cognition and behaviour rather than just reacting habitually. Positive psychology builds on two key principles from humanistic psychology: a non-mechanistic perspective and a view of possibility as opposed to pathology as the essential approach to the client. Humanistic psychology arose as a counterpoint to the view of Freudian psychology and behaviourism that people could be viewed as controlled by unconscious and conditioned responses Humanistic psychology arose to promote the emphasis on personal growth and the importance of *beingness* and the phenomenology of the human experience. Along with each revolution

in psychology, a changing image of human nature has evolved along with greater insights into how to effectively work with people. As noted above, Wilber's integral theory is adding to the holistic knowledge base upon which professional coaches can draw.

The Birth of Psychology

The field of psychology began as the investigation of consciousness and mental functions such as sensation and perception. *Webster's New World College Dictionary* (indexed 4th edition) defines psychology as 'a) the science dealing with the mind and with mental and emotional processes, and b) the science of human and animal behavior'. Much of the early influence on psychology came from the philosophical tradition and early psychologists adopted the practice of introspection used by philosophers. The practice of introspection into one's desires, as well as noticing and observing behaviours, thoughts and emotions are core practices for increasing client awareness and, as such, are cornerstones of a solid approach to coaching. Introspectionists were an early force in psychology in the late nineteenth century, with Wilhelm Wundt in Germany and Edward Tichener in the United States being two of the early pioneers of introspection as a method of understanding the workings of the human mind.

However, they eventually realized introspection was insufficient in the pursuit of validation for the young science of psychology because consciousness and mental functioning were difficult to study objectively. These challenges were part of the larger growing pains within psychology and echo many of the same challenges faced by coaching today. Psychology, like coaching today, went through many fits and starts and met with much debate in the milieu in which it developed. Even today, there is debate amongst various theories and approaches. So, the fact that this is occurring in the emerging field of coaching should not surprise us. It is healthy within coaching circles to have lively debates about what works and what is effective in order to increase our understanding of why various approaches work. Otherwise, it is just a fantasy and not backed up with evidence. The growing body of coaching-related research greatly assists the profession in meeting this need to have evidence that what coaches do with their clients actually works. Coaches today have a rich resource of studies and published research that can inform their practice and help articulate the efficacy of what they offer to clients. As a context for this research, let us take a quick tour of the growth of psychology and how its major thinkers set the stage for the coaching revolution.

William James was the father of American psychology. James preferred ideas to laboratory results and is best known for his writings on consciousness and his view that humans can experience higher states of consciousness. He wrote on such diverse topics as functions of the brain, perception of space, psychic and paranormal faculties, religious ecstasy, will, attention and habit. Because of his orientation, he gradually drifted away from psychology and in his later life emphasized philosophy, changing his title at Harvard to 'professor of philosophy'. Nevertheless, William James had a tremendous influence on the growth of the psychology profession, and he is still widely read today. One of his most historic books, *The Varieties of Religious Experience* (1994), is a treatise that offers much today on the topics of spirituality and transpersonal consciousness.

The First Wave: Freudian Psychology

Sigmund Freud influenced the first force in psychology. While psychology in the United States was struggling for an identity and striving for recognition by the scientific community, European psychology was being reshaped by the theories of Sigmund Freud. Freud created quite a stir in the medical community with his ideas and theories, but he finally gained acceptance in psychiatry with the 'talking cure' breakthrough – psychoanalysis. Freud brought us such terms as *unconscious*, *id*, *ego* and *superego*. His theories and practices soon began to gain acceptance in the United States as well. Some of Freud's followers went on to become well-known theorists as well – most notably **Carl Jung** (e.g., archetypes, psychological types, individuation and the shadow), **Alfred Adler** (e.g., the social self, compensation and inferiority/superiority), and **Karen Horney** (e.g., a neo-Freudian view of neuroses, isolation and helplessness as the root of anxiety). Over the years, as more people worked with Freudian ideas, the practice of psychoanalysis became more refined and more effective.

Many American psychologists began to combat Freudian theories as another non-verifiable, subjective pseudoscience of the mind. What was happening in almost parallel times were two major attempts to explain what 'a piece of work is man' and to understand what would explain pathological behaviour and what would prevent or create change in aberrant behaviours – the focus though was primarily still on the negative, the pathology and the problems of the human, not the positive drives that would come to be emphasized later in the twentieth century, especially with the rise of the humanistic theories and now in the twenty-first century the popularity of positive psychology (see Seligman, 2002).

The Second Wave: Behaviourists

As Freudian thought was taking shape in Europe and the United States, other theorists began to focus on measurable behaviour. Thus, the time was ripe for the emergence of behaviourism as the second major force in psychology, a movement led by **B. F. Skinner** and **John Watson.** Hundreds of years previously, Shakespeare had commented, 'What a piece of work is man?' The behaviourists took this literally and looked upon humans in the early twentieth century as *Homo mechanicus*, an object to be studied as any machine. *Homo mechanicus* was a machine whose mind was ignored and instead the focus was on behaviours that arose via automatic processes, leaving the humanity out of the equation. The behaviourists wanted an empirical psychology, one that could be tested and confirmed in a laboratory. Coming from more of a scientific background, these theorists felt that psychology would only survive if it were made more objective. They looked to create a model of human behaviour that could be shaped and moulded through conditioning and other techniques.

However, they were sharply criticized for neglecting the subjective realm of experience – personality, emotions and interior experience. It is worth noting, however, that the influence of the empirical model can still be seen in the emerging field of neuropsychology (most notably Daniel Dennett and William Calvin), an approach that reduces all of human experience to the functions of neurotransmitters and electrical signals. However, many of the cutting-edge researchers in neuropsychology are actually opening the door to considering such factors as *human energy field* and other findings that are allowing a blending of science and what previously made up parapsychology and spiritual practices that were the purview of the next two forces in the twentieth century.

The Third Wave: Humanistic Psychology

In the 1950s, **Abraham Maslow** and **Carl Rogers** initiated the third force in psychology, humanistic psychology, which focused on the personal, ontological and phenomenological aspects of human experience as opposed to the mechanistic and reductionist theories of Freudianism and behaviourism. Carl Rogers was more concerned with the 'fully functioning person' than he was with pathology. He believed that people needed love and acceptance from others in order to be fully functioning, and his work resulted in what came to be known as client-centred therapy. Likewise, Maslow was interested in how people find value and meaning in their lives, which resulted in his 'hierarchy of needs' model,

and his use of the term self-actualization. Two important books are *On Becoming a Person* (1989) by Carl Rogers and *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1962) by Abraham Maslow.

The Fourth Wave: Transpersonal Psychology

Transpersonal psychology was originally a major theme in the writings of Roberto Assagioli, who spoke of transpersonal consciousness. There are many who believe that psychosynthesis actually represents a fifth force, but for the purposes of this chapter, it is included as an influence of the fourth force in psychology (Assagioli, 1991). Maslow eventually posited the fourth force, transpersonal psychology, which included mind, body *and* spirit. It delved into altered states of consciousness that were both naturally induced by esoteric spiritual practices such as meditation, chanting and dancing and chemically induced by LSD and other hallucinogens (as experienced and researched by Stanislov Grof, Timothy Leary and Richard Alpert *aka* Baba Ram Dass) as a way to explore the transpersonal realm. This research opened up our knowledge of the human mind and expanded our windows of perception and possibility.

Abraham Maslow suggested this new model when he designated the humanistic approach as a third force. As he emphasized that humanistic psychology was a major development distinct from psychoanalysis and behaviourism, he also anticipated fourth and fifth forces, which he labelled 'transpersonal' and 'transhuman' (Goble, 1970). In recent years, transpersonal psychology has joined forces with humanistic psychology in studying states of consciousness, spirituality and positive aspects of human life. In fact when positive psychology emerged in the 1990s, it seemed that many had forgotten the early influences of these two schools of thought and their positive approaches to human understanding and change.

Ken Wilber's *The Spectrum of Consciousness* (Wilber, 1977) revolutionized transpersonal psychology by combining Western psychology with Eastern spiritual practices – especially Tibetan Buddhism and Vedanta Hinduism – to create a comprehensive model of human development from the lowest stages (prepersonal) to the highest stages of nonduality (transpersonal). Wilber and others have refined this model even more over the last 30 years.

Major Figures

So who were the major figures from these four forces in psychology and what do they bring to modern day coaching? What follows is a historical

review of the influence of psychology and the theories that relate to coaching. Through works such as *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life* (1901/1971), **Sigmund Freud** brought us the unconscious, transference, counter-transference, defence mechanisms and resistance. His theories, although strongly pathology-based, did allow the pursuit of our unconscious desires and unconscious mechanisms that influenced behaviour. Coaches, of course, today speak of the unconscious frequently, and probably often ask their clients to *look inside or at least to be more aware of thoughts, desires and motives just out of conscious awareness.*

Carl Jung made many important contributions to the development and terminology of psychology, including the spiritual realm, symbolism, the relevance of ancient wisdom, archetypes, life reviews, synchronicity, transpersonal consciousness, stages of life, individuation, the shadow and spiritual quests. Jung broke away from Freud in pursuing a more holistic, spiritual understanding of human motivation. He is quoted as saying 'who looks outside, dreams . . . who looks inside awakens'. That is a powerful quote for coaching today. Jung's views were often called teleological and future-driven. He became very much involved with what clients could learn from their life journey as they continued to create their desired future. They had more control over their lives than early Freudian theories would consider. Carl Jung is largely connected with the third and fourth forces of psychology because of his study of ancient and tribal cultures and the esoteric wisdom schools from around the globe. A major theory that tracks well with coaching is his concept of *individuation* – the process of becoming whole and realizing one's unique purpose and path. There is much literature on Jungian thought but for a good, short and easily accessible introduction to Jung's thought, see Chapter 1 of *Man and His Symbols* (1964), conceived and edited by Jung. Another good introductory text is *The Portable Jung* (Jung, 1976), edited by Joseph Campbell.

Alfred Adler worked on social connections, humans as social beings, the importance of relationships, family of origin themes, significance and belonging, and lifestyle assessment. His exploration of the big question ('What if . . . ?'), and the possibilities of 'acting as if' are techniques commonly used in coaching today. For coaches who work on issues related to social, corporate or family cultures with their clients, his theories of human nature are enlightening. He identified five key areas of influence on our everyday existence: social, love, self, work and spiritual; and three *life tasks* as he called them: (1) love and sexual relationship; (2) relationship to work and occupation; and (3) relationship to others and the culture. Both he and Jung believed humans had a teleological pull, a pull to create a desired future – a view at the heart of what professional coaches work toward with their clients! See *Understanding Human Nature* (Adler, 1998) for an introduction to his work.

Roberto Assagioli, the father of *psychosynthesis*, wrote about our ability to synthesize our various aspects in order to function at higher levels of consciousness. He introduced such terms as *subpersonalities, wisdom of the inner self, higher self,* and *the observing self*. He would be considered in the humanistic and transpersonal camps and major works to review from him are *Psychosynthesis: A Collection of Basic Writings* (Assagioli, 2000) and *Transpersonal Development: The Dimension Beyond Psychosynthesis* (Assagioli, 1991).

Karen Horney was an early, influential feminist psychiatrist. Her key theories involved irrational beliefs, the need for security, early influences on rational-emotive theory, and modelling the goal of 'self help'. She was a contemporary of Adler and an early influence on Carl Rogers. She was considered a theorist who supported humanistic theories and a work to read would be *The Collected Works of Karen Horney* (Horney, 1950).

Fritz Perls, founder of Gestalt therapy, worked with personality problems involving the inner conflict between values and behaviour (desires), introducing terms such as *top dog and underdog,* and practices such as *polarity* (black-and-white thinking), *the empty chair technique,* and *awareness in the moment*. Gestalt theory also valued the whole-person experience of the client, including mind, emotions, physicality and spirituality. Perls was influenced by Kurt Lewin's change theory and his work in figure–ground perspectives. He was a major influence in humanistic psychology and the holistic view of a person as a interaction of body, brain and being and that unconscious thoughts and feelings manifested themselves in many ways that could be understood with present focused inquiry. A major work for coaches to read would be *The Gestalt Approach and Eye Witness to Therapy* (Perls, 1973).

Carl Rogers developed a client-centred approach that suggested clients have the answers within them. He brought us the terms *unconditional positive regard* and *humanistic psychology*. He championed the practice of listening, reflecting and paraphrasing, and the value of silence and sacred space. The field of psychotherapy was strongly influenced by his works, *Client-Centered Therapy* (Rogers, 1951/2003) and *On Becoming a Person* (Rogers 1989/1996), and this influence carries over to coaching and its value for deep listening, co-creating the coaching space, client-driven processes, and viewing coaching as a partner to clients in their exploration of desired change.

Abraham Maslow introduced his hierarchy of needs and values. He reflected on *being needs* versus *deficiency needs*, the higher self, and our transpersonal potential. He is considered the father of humanistic psychology and did much research into the process of self-actualization. His theories apply well to positive psychology and coaching today leading toward an emphasis on *thriving* more than *surviving* or even just *striving*.

Virginia Satir can be seen as the mother of family therapy, as was experienced when I heard her say at Esalen Institute in 1970 that she could not explain the magic herself – she just did what she felt and intuited and let the family's issues surface in ways that she had fun with but also provoked deepening their awareness. She began to be called the Columbus of family therapy because she did not arrive where she started to go and did not really know where she was when she got there. She believed that a healthy family life involved an open and reciprocal sharing of affection, feelings and love. She was well known for describing family roles, e.g., *the rescuer*, *the victim* or *the placatory*, that function to constrain relationships and interactions in families. Her work, an early systemic look at relationships, has had a strong influence on coaching in the business context because many of the consultants at that time began to realize that her system theories and techniques for families were just as effective with dysfunctional work teams and managers. I personally used much of her techniques in my early executive coaching with executives at major corporations in the later 1980s and early 1990s. Her work, as seen for example in *Changing with Families: A Book about Further Education for Being Human* (Bandler, Grinder, and Satir 1976), was a key influence of the humanistic movement.

Viktor Frankl developed 'logotherapy' out of his personal experience during World War II. Influenced by existential philosophy and his own existential crisis, Frankl wrote *Man's Search for Meaning* (1959) while in a Nazi prison camp and later published it from the notes he had made on toilet paper. He is quoted as saying that the one freedom that could not be taken from him while in prison was his freedom to think, dream and create. Frankl introduced paradoxical intent into psychology – 'what you resist persists' or 'what you give energy to is what you manifest'. Coaches today use these same principles to assist their clients to focus on what they want and on creating desired outcomes. Frankl is cited today by many coaches as an exemplar of the importance of intention and the necessity of finding meaning in work and life.

Milton Erickson investigated hypnotherapy as well as *languaging* and the *double-binding* of the client. From his work, coaches have learned to focus on possibility and look for the uncommon approach to change, including the use of evocative and powerful questions as well as creative requests that were made of clients. Erickson is the father of American hypnotherapy and, along with Gregory Bateson, an early influencer of neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) created by Bandler and Grinder. They studied and recorded the techniques that made Erickson and Satir so creatively successful and masterful in a way that they did not even know what it was they did that created the magic, a framework that is used by many coaches.

Jeffrey Zeig and **Bill O'Hanlon**, students of Milton Erickson, introduced pattern interruption, the confusion technique, forced choice, assumption of the positive path, non-trance hypnosis, and unconscious competence. *Reframing* is another important coaching tool based in their work, used to help clients shift their view of a situation. O'Hanlon's works are particularly complementary to life coaching. A great new resource to read would be *Change 101: A Practical Guide to Creating Change in Life or Therapy* by Bill O'Hanlon (O'Hanlon, 2006).

In the 1970s, solution-focused approaches emerged; they put less focus on the problem and instead focused their energy into discovering and highlighting what works. Three well-known practitioners in this arena are **Insoo Kim Berg** and her husband, **Steve de Shazer**, and **Bill O'Hanlon**. Berg and Szabo (2005) wrote *Brief Coaching for Lasting Solutions*, which blends solution-focused theory and brief, short-term coaching sessions. The development of 'solution oriented therapy' has given rise to 'solution focused coaching' along similar lines.

Fernando Flores is a philosopher who took Austin and Searle's work (Solomon and Flores, 2001) on *speech act theory* and applied it to human interaction through conversations. One of the most useful coaching tools, making requests, is a legacy of his exploration of how language brings action into being. Flores was an early influence on Werner Erhard, and the EST training which later became Landmark Education, programmes which influenced Thomas Leonard and his early curriculum at Coach University and Laura Whitworth and the curriculum of the Coaches Training Institute. Both Leonard and Whitworth worked closely with Werner Erhard in his organization in the 1980s. Julio Ollala and James Flaherty, both early creators in the ontological coaching theories and practices, are important figures here as well.

Martin Seligman promotes positive psychology as a strength-based approach to human fulfilment. In doing so, Seligman brought new emphasis to principles from humanistic psychology in looking at positive and generative aspects for human living. Its consistent focus is on building and utilizing strengths rather than weaknesses, and it can be applied to therapy as well as coaching and education. Seligman's work is highly useful to coaches and it is based in decades of research to back up the theories. Life coaching can certainly be viewed as applied positive psychology. Read *Authentic Happiness: Using the New Positive Psychology to Realize Your Potential for Lasting Fulfillment* by Martin Seligman (2002).

In addition to the contributions of the theorists discussed above, a vast array of research into lifespan developmental psychology has created an understanding of particular developmental trajectories that can be very helpful to coaches. **Daniel Levinson's** early work on the life

development of Harvard graduates over their 50-year lifespan (*Seasons of a Man's Life* (Levinson, 1978)) yielded great insight into men's development within that age cohort. **Carol Gilligan's** work on girls and women generated insight into the ways in which women's moral, cognitive and personal development differed from men's development over the lifespan. **Robert Kegan** has developed theories and methods for assessing the development of levels of consciousness in human lifespan development.

Ken Wilber's integral approach to psychology built upon and went beyond the transpersonal approaches. Wilber synthesized the developmental models of several leading psychologists, including Freud, Piaget, Erickson, Kohlberg and Bandura for early development, and then added Jung, Graves, Gilligan, Aurobindo, Washburn, Kegan, Fowler, Underhill and dozens of others to produce a developmental model that generalizes 13 basic stages from birth up to total, nondual enlightenment. Wilber also proposes that all of human experience can be situated within a quadrant map, based on distinctions between the individual and the collective, and on the interior (subjective) versus the exterior (objective). A basic version of Wilber's quadrants in a coaching context might look like Figure 1.1.

Figure 1.1   The Client and The Context (Adapted from Wilber (2000); used with permission).

	Interior	Exterior
Individual	I Intentional (SUBJECTIVE) Emotional, Mental, Spiritual, Impulses, Perceptions Sensations, Level of Trust for Self, Other, World, Values, Beliefs, Moods, etc.	IT Behavioural (OBJECTIVE) Physical, Neurological, Body, Brain, Behaviour, Things Encountered, Neural Patterns, Physiology, etc.
Collective	WE Cultural (INTERSUBJECTIVE) Relationships, Community, Service, Morals and Ethics, Myths, Social Expectations and Rules, World View, Country of Origin	ITS Social (INTEROBJECTIVE) Systems and Institutions Rules, Patterns, Machinery

As coaches work with clients, Wilber's model can be very useful in understanding the origin and context of specific client issues. Although the quadrants are all interdependent, each one will present unique problems and provide the bases for unique solutions. For a basic understanding of Wilber's theories and their applicability to your coaching practice read, *The Essential Ken Wilber: An Introductory Reader* (Wilber, 1998).

Putting Theory into Practice

It is very important for those progressing as professional coaches today to understand how much of this theoretical foundation of coaching has become part of their ground of being rather than a technique they pull out of their pocket to use with a specific client, particularly those who transition into coaching from psychology or other helping professions (Williams, 2007). Some of this theoretical foundation has become infused in our culture as a whole, further deepening this ground of being. At the same time, the contributions of certain theorists (particularly more recent ones) offer a unique new lens through which to understand human behaviour and sometimes even help to shape an entirely new paradigm. The example below is an illustration of one such foundational influence as it applies to life coaching. I offer this here as a model that evolved from the field of addictions counselling to one that is prevalent in wellness programmes today. It is helpful for coaches to see how this model for assessing client readiness can be applied to coaching clients and what theory of technique for human behavioural change may be best applied depending on the client's stage of readiness for such change.

James Prochaska's theory of readiness for change can help coaches understand where they can most effectively enter the client's landscape of living. Prochaska's work emerged from the field of addiction counselling and research on which behaviour and style by the counsellor would best match the stage of the client's readiness for change. Prochaska (Prochaska, Norcross, and DiClemente, 1994) identified six well-defined, time-based stages that clients move through, although not necessarily in a linear way. This model can also be quite useful in coaching as a way to apply the appropriate strategies necessary to support the client's movement through the change and toward the desired state or behaviour.

What follows is a coaching example using the six stages. In it, the client's goals for coaching are that he wants to improve his health and begin an exercise routine.

(1) *Precontemplation*

At this stage, the client actually is not yet considering making a change. Clients sometimes are unaware of the need for a change or unaware of their current patterns or behaviours. If the coach sees that the client seems to be at this stage, the client is not ready to make big changes. When coaching a client at this stage, the initial exploration and assessment phases of coaching can be critical.

The client who wants to improve his health is already beyond this stage. It is not as if precontemplators cannot think of a solution – it is that they do not identify a problem. The client above has already identified a problem and has reframed it as a goal: to improve his health and begin an exercise routine. Coaches are unlikely to find clients at the precontemplation stage, unless perhaps they have been sent by their employer for a problem they have not identified on their own. Sometimes, however, a client comes to a coach for one reason and something else emerges over time. In this case, the client may be at the precontemplation stage around a particular issue.

It is important for coaches using Prochaska's model to recognize that the stage is related to the specific issue: a client may be at several different stages for several different goals, which requires flexibility on the part of the coach. The coach may be working with a client on work issues or on improving fulfilment in relationships when the client goes to the doctor and discovers his cholesterol and blood pressure are high, and the doctor recommends that he focus on his health. Here, the client has received *assessment data* from his doctor. Sometimes assessment data is utilized in coaching. These can be formal, as from a plethora of personality assessments available, or informal, as in the initial client interview, or use of the wheel of life model. In either case, a coaching strategy for moving a client from precontemplation to the second stage, contemplation, is to use assessment data. A coach would be looking to see if the client is accepting the information or denying that a problem exists that might need to be addressed.

(2) *Contemplation*

Clients at this stage are considering making a change and also may find themselves quite ambivalent about it, or they may not know what to do to make the change. They can endlessly weigh the pros and cons but not actually decide to get into action. The coach can assist the client at this stage to examine how the current situation and his habits, behaviours and patterns work for and against him. For this client who wants to improve health and initiate exercise, the coach might ask: 'What kind of exercise do you most

enjoy?' 'What will be the result if you keep things as they are and don't make any changes?' 'What are the pros and cons for you of initiating a regular exercise programme?' The client may be a busy executive who travels quite often and feels time-pressured. If so, the coach's role might be to help the client examine the consequences of allowing work to overtake his time and schedule to the detriment of his health. In addition, the coach helps the client explore the motivation to change versus the motivation to keep things as they are.

This is where a coach could use Perls' empty chair technique with the client. The coach would ask the client to map out the pros and cons of two poles of an issue – in this case, exercise programme or no exercise programme – and to identify the positive and negative aspects of each side. Then, the coach works with the client to have one part of himself take the pro side of the desire and then sit in an empty chair and give voice to the other side. This technique is a nonthreatening way to give voice to the inner dialogue that is just beneath the surface. The coach is an ally to help the client find a pathway for moving forward with more clarity and commitment. This technique of giving voice to different parts of the client is most often seen today as working with the *gremlin* or *inner critic* in coaching. The use of the empty chair technique could serve the client very well in not only making the internal dialogue external, but also to have some lively fun while they are at it. This does not have to be applied as it would in a psychotherapy situation but instead could be done in a lighthearted but profoundly insightful manner in coaching.

(3)   *Preparation*
At this stage, the client is preparing to change – gathering information, assembling resources, checking out possibilities and preparing to act. This is where the focus on accountability in coaching can be paramount. The coach can help the client discover resources, identify what is needed, co-create possibilities and choices and with them the willingness and desire to move forward.

Helping the client move from contemplation to preparation can be a significant accomplishment in itself. The client begins to overcome the inertia that characterized the previous stage, where the only action was *thinking* about action. Coaches sometimes feel that they have failed if their client does not jump into action. Instead, it is important to recognize that the preparation stage is critical. The coach's work is to help initiate change; if the client is seeking health, for example, it is researching on the Internet local resources for health clubs, trainers, classes, or other health and

fitness opportunities. This *is* movement – although sometimes the coach who is unfamiliar with Prochaska's work does not see it that way. With the model in mind, a coach can maintain the patience to allow the client to move through each stage, knowing that the client's ultimate success will be better ensured if each stage is addressed fully according to the client's unique needs.

(4) *Action*

This is the classic stage where the client actually takes actions, practises new behaviours, and tries new things. The coach's role is to ensure that clients' actions are congruent with who they are and what they want. The work in the initial three stages to identify their own ways of taking action is empowering for clients. The ideas for action do not come from the coach's preconceptions or advice but, instead, have resulted from the co-creative process of coaching. This client's actions may include hiring a personal trainer, buying a piece of exercise equipment and using it, setting up a regular workout schedule, changing his diet, and so on.

(5) *Maintenance*

At this stage, the client has maintained the chosen actions long enough to have created new habits and integrated them into the rest of his life. This usually indicates that new habits are being installed and are likely to last; coaching at this time continues to acknowledge and endorse the changes. The client's alliance with the coach increases the likelihood of enduring success, particularly with clients who may not have been successful at maintaining change in the past. If the client slips back into old habits or if circumstances change, the coach helps the client to reset his goals or recalibrate his actions.

Just as in car maintenance, occasional tune-ups and adjustments are needed to address the current situation. Clients sometimes believe that they can consistently maintain actions over time, no matter what. Yet life brings changes. This client may develop a health issue that requires that he change his preferred way of exercise and this may be more difficult than he expected. A new child in his family may require realignment of his use of time and energy.

(6) *Termination*

Prochaska used this term because it reflected the fact that the client no longer needs a programmatic approach to the behaviour that needed changing. The new behaviour has become a natural part of the person's life, and it happens without much thought on the part of the person. For the client above, the exercise programme has simply become a part of what he does each week – a new habit, perhaps even a new joyful habit.

In coaching, stage (6) may not mean an end to the coaching per se. It may simply mean that the coaching will no longer focus on a particular goal – it has been *terminated,* so to speak. Some clients may feel that they have achieved their coaching goals. The coach helps the client recognize when ongoing maintenance coaching or coaching for new issues will benefit him.

It is important to keep in mind that *change is a process, not an event.* On any desired change, the client may cycle through these stages in a nonlinear fashion. These steps are not linear – they are spiral. For example, coaches commonly see a pattern in which the client commits to taking action by the next session, yet when he appears for the next session has moved back from the action stage to the contemplation stage. The coach's role is to support the client's movement through the cycle and to accept the client wherever he is in the moment.

Conclusion

The core of the coaching profession is grounded in sound academic and scholarly theories that preceded coaching, and it will be strengthened by the validation of theories and evidence-based research as the profession moves forward. All the amazing tools that have grown out of modern psychology support coaches in assisting clients to change as desired. As the recent emergence of positive psychology demonstrates, new developments become available all the time.

The hallmarks of coaching are its synthesis of tools from other fields and its proclivity for innovation. With all the research going on today, coaching is developing its own evidence-based theories. It has borrowed from what has gone before, much as psychologists borrowed from philosophers. As coaching grows as a profession, it will develop its own research base of effective strategies and tools within the unique relationship that is the coaching alliance. This chapter and those that follow are an attempt to glean the practical from the scientific. How do all the knowledge and theories inform your coaching business? How do you know what skills work best and also fit your style? Knowing that the skill sets and competencies are not invented out of thin air adds credibility to an emerging profession, and finding practical uses for the theories in coaching relationships makes a difference in people's lives.

Professional life and business coaches support clients in the search for, and in walking the new path toward, desired change. They do so by being able to bring *multiple perspectives* to the client work. They remain fully appreciative of the unique gifts and strengths of each

individual client. At the same time, they can see how the client's work fits within the context of how human beings generally develop over the course of a lifespan.

Coaching has arisen as a profession, I believe, because of the shortage of real listening in our society today and for the lack of true connection that many people experience. All of these factors arise from the socio-economic conditions of rapid change, technology advances, and the instant availability of information. Carl Rogers said that counselling was like buying a friend; hiring a coach is similar. But, of course, it is much more than that. A coach is a partner who is hired to assist the client in going for greatness in any and all domains of his or her life. People may not always *need* a coach, but I believe they do *deserve* a coach. And like all true professions, there are different levels of mastery and competence. So in looking for a coach, interview several and do your research. You will be glad you did.

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