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COACHING OR COAXING

COACHING PSYCHOLOGY | EXECUTIVE COACHING VS
PSYCHOTHERAPY | SPORTS COACHES | HEALTH COACHING |
POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND
MANY MORE

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COACHING OR COAXING

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EDITOR'S NOTE

According to the International Society for Coaching Psychology: "The practice of coaching psychology may be described as a process for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult and child learning or psychological theories and approaches." Research in the US by the International Coaching Federation indicates that millennials are more likely to be aware of coaching and more likely to have engaged with a coach than older generations. There also appears to be a growing demand for coaching services so we thought it was time to explore the psychology behind coaching practices. Given that behavioural science can be applied to enhance life experiences, work and sporting performance and psychological well-being for people who do not have mental health issues or undue levels of distress, what is it that's driving the demand for coaching services? Which attributes do coaching psychologists need (e.g., required knowledge, attitudes and behaviours) to establish a conducive coaching relationship and subsequent coaching results? And what is the difference between a coaching psychologist and a coach who is not a psychologist? So many questions open an opportunity for clarification.

In this issue, we had the privilege of hearing directly from several professionals involved in coaching practice, and they collectively and individually describe for us the similarities and differences between coaching and related practices. They also enlighten us as to the diverse range of practice even within the niche field of coaching; from executive coaching to sports coaching, and across to the new phenomenon of health coaching, our writers open up the conversation about evidence-based approaches to coaching. Read on to explore.

Dr Denise Dillon
Editor-in-Chief



VICE PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

What comes to mind when someone refers to themselves as a coach? The common answer is that of a sports coach—the tough, uncompromising, and singular source of inspiration for athletes to achieve greatness in the face of insurmountable odds. The field of coaching, however, is more complex and less homogenous than how media portrays coaches to be. Coaches are increasingly relevant in business (i.e., executive coaching) and in personal development (i.e., life coaching, career coaching), drawing the attention of psychologists who can provide evidence-based interventions in this field. Broadly defined, coaching is the partnership between coach and client to *encourage personal growth and to maximise professional competence of the client*.

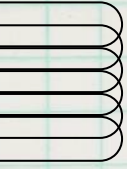
Coaching is often recognised as a mutual learning process that encourages self-awareness and individual development. It is not about telling people what to do, but about empowering them to find their own solutions—to flourish and to thrive. In the organisational context, executive coaching aims to move clients from moderate performance to peak performance (i.e., supra-performance). To do that, executives often require greater clarity in their leadership roles and better understanding of their red flag behaviours and idiosyncrasies (e.g., poor emotional regulation) that may hinder organisational effectiveness. Not only will this help the individual grow professionally, coaching will also drive critical organisational results.

As the field of coaching psychology grows, we must organise ourselves to better understand the role that psychology plays in coaching, and how coaching can, in turn, promote psychological wellbeing. Already there exists a range of coaching modalities, with some bearing close resemblance to treatment modalities used in the clinical setting. For example, coaches may utilise solution-focused, person-centered, and/or cognitive-behavioural coaching in their intervention strategies—each unique in the ways they are delivered. Central to solution-focused coaching is the emphasis on constructing future-oriented solutions through the discussion of the client's existing strengths and present resources, rather than the exploration of the client's problems and aetiology. The person-centred approach to coaching is characterised by a non-directive and positive psychological stance towards facilitating change. Finally, the cognitive-behavioural approach to coaching focuses on the identification and examination of maladaptive cognitive and behavioural patterns that may act as barriers to goal attainment. The key goal of coaching is to promote personal growth and professional competence of the clients; the coaching approaches are mere vehicles through which learning takes place. It is, therefore, critical that the chosen coaching approach(es) must be complementary to the client's context and not be rigidly prescriptive.

No one coaching approach is superior to another. What is important is consideration of the complex interplay of the coach (e.g., expertise), the client (e.g., preference, comfort level), and the context of the situation (e.g., skill deficiencies, interpersonal issues) before drafting out a comprehensive coaching intervention. An overemphasis on only one coaching approach runs the risk of missing out on some of the unique aspects that may be immensely beneficial for the client.

We invite you to delve into the articles in this magazine, learn more about coaching, and discover how it may also benefit you personally and professionally. Read on and get psyched!

Mok Kai Chuen
Vice President (Outreach)



A Primer to Coaching Psychology: An Evidence-Based Approach to Enhance Life, Work, Health and Well-Being

By *Christin Tan*

What is Coaching Psychology, and How Does it Differ From Coaching, Mentoring, Counselling, and Positive Psychology?

Coaching psychology is an applied field in psychology that optimises coaching and psychological principles to help individuals achieve their goals, improve their performance, and enhance their well-being. Coaching psychology typically involves a structured and collaborative approach, with the coach using evidence-based practice to help the client identify and overcome barriers to success (Grant & O'Connor, 2019; Passmore et al., 2018).

Coaching, mentoring, and counselling are related fields, but they differ in their focus, approach and goals (Passmore & Lai, 2019):

Coaching typically focuses on helping clients achieve specific goals, such as improving their performance at work or developing new skills. The coach and the client work together to identify areas for improvement, set goals, and develop strategies to achieve those goals.

Mentoring is similar to coaching, but it generally involves a more experienced individual giving advice or guidance to a less experienced person. Mentoring relationships often develop naturally, and the mentor may provide guidance on a range of topics, from career development to personal growth.

Counselling focuses on helping individuals overcome emotional or psychological challenges, such as anxiety, depression, or relationship problems. Counselling typically involves a more in-depth exploration of client's thoughts, feelings and behaviours, and the counsellor may use a variety of techniques to help the client achieve greater insight and awareness.

Positive psychology is a field of psychology that focuses on promoting well-being and resilience, rather than treating issues related to mental illness. Positive psychology interventions may include exercises to increase positive emotions, build resilience, and foster social connections. While coaching psychology may draw on principles of positive psychology, it is a distinct field with a specific focus on helping individuals achieve their goals and improve their performance (Ackerman, 2018).

From a practice perspective, coaching tends to be targeted, brief, short-term, solution-focused and results-oriented, whereas mentoring is more developmental in nature, and stretches over a longer timeframe (CMA, 2014). Both coaching and mentoring have a significantly lower barrier to entry, meaning anyone who has taken a short course on coaching or mentoring could potentially call themselves a coach or mentor, whereas the minimum qualification for a counsellor or psychologist is at least a masters or post-graduate degree.

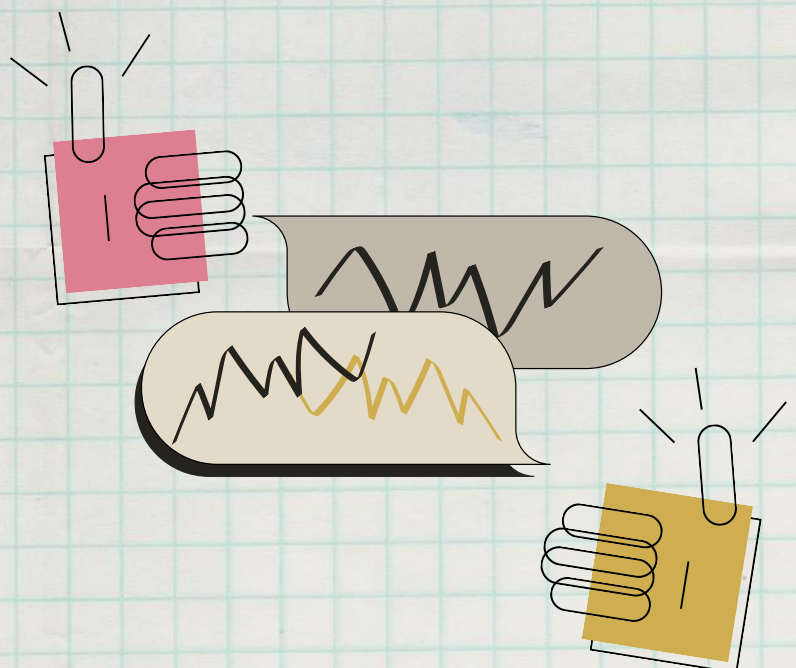
What Does it Mean to be Evidence-Based in Coaching Psychology?

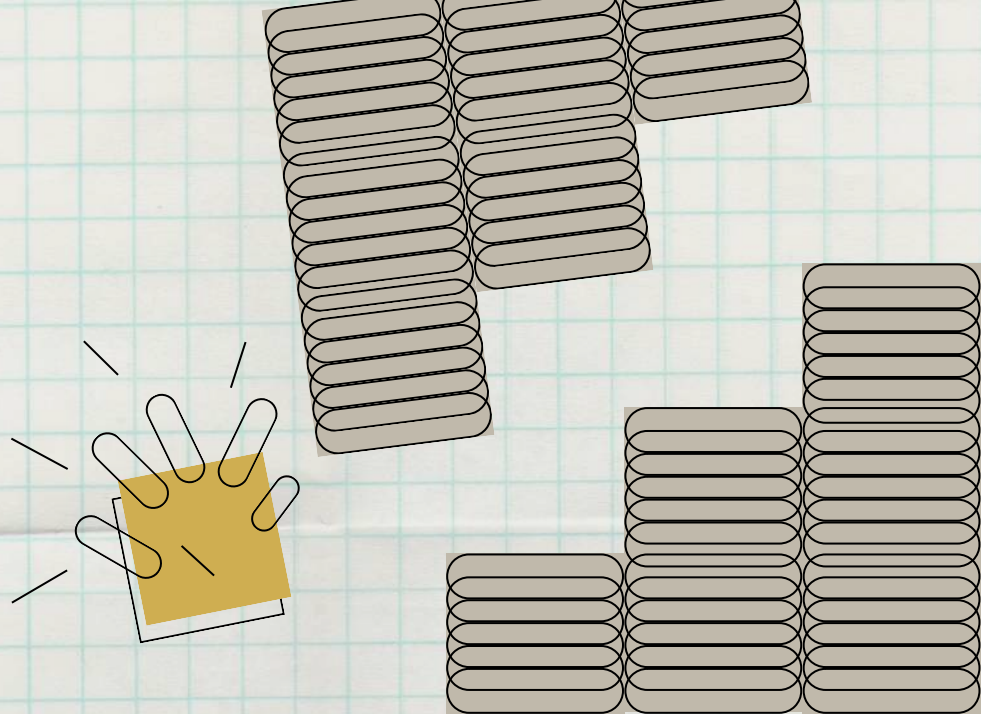
Being evidence-based in coaching psychology means using research and empirical evidence to inform coaching practice and interventions. Evidence-based coaching psychology involves **applying the best available evidence to inform decisions** about coaching goals, methods and outcomes, and using data to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching interventions (Barends et al., 2014; Briner, 2019).

Evidence-based coaching psychology draws on evidence from **multiple sources**, including empirical research studies, systematic reviews and meta-analyses, practitioner experience, professional expertise, and client feedback. It involves a **critical appraisal** of the evidence, weighing the strengths and limitations of different studies, considering the relevance of evidence to the specific client population and coaching context.

Evidence-based coaching psychology also involves **ongoing evaluation and feedback** to determine the effectiveness of coaching interventions, making adjustments as needed. This may involve tracking progress towards coaching goals, gathering client feedback on the coaching experience, and monitoring outcomes over time.

Overall, evidence-based coaching psychology emphasises the importance of using **rigorous and robust** research methods and data-driven decision-making to ensure that coaching interventions are effective, ethical, and tailored to the needs and goals of the client.





How Does Evidence-Based Coaching Psychology Add Value?

Evidence-based coaching psychology adds value in several ways:

- 1) **Increased effectiveness:** By using evidence-based practice and interventions, coaching psychologists can increase the effectiveness of their coaching practice. Evidence-based coaching psychology helps practitioners to tailor their interventions to the specific needs and goals of their clients, increasing the likelihood of a favourable outcome and success.
- 2) **Increased credibility:** Evidence-based coaching psychology can help practitioners build credibility with clients, employers, and other stakeholders. Clients are more likely to trust and value the coaching process when they believe that it is grounded in empirical research and scientific principles.
- 3) **Ethical practice:** Evidence-based coaching psychology emphasises the importance of ethical practice, including informed consent, confidentiality, and a focus on the welfare of the client. By adhering to evidence-based practice, coaching psychologists can ensure that their interventions are ethical and aligned with professional standards (SPS, 2019).
- 4) **Continuous improvement:** Evidence-based coaching psychology encourages practitioners to continually evaluate and improve their practice. Coaching psychologists can use data and feedback to identify areas for improvement, refine their interventions, and stay up-to-date with the latest research and best practice.
- 5) **Cost-effective:** Evidence-based coaching psychology can also be cost-effective. By using data and evidence to inform coaching interventions, coaching psychologists can reduce the time and resources needed to achieve results.

How can Coaching Psychologists Help to Enhance Life, Work, Health and Well-Being?

Coaching psychologists can enhance life, work, health and well-being in several ways:

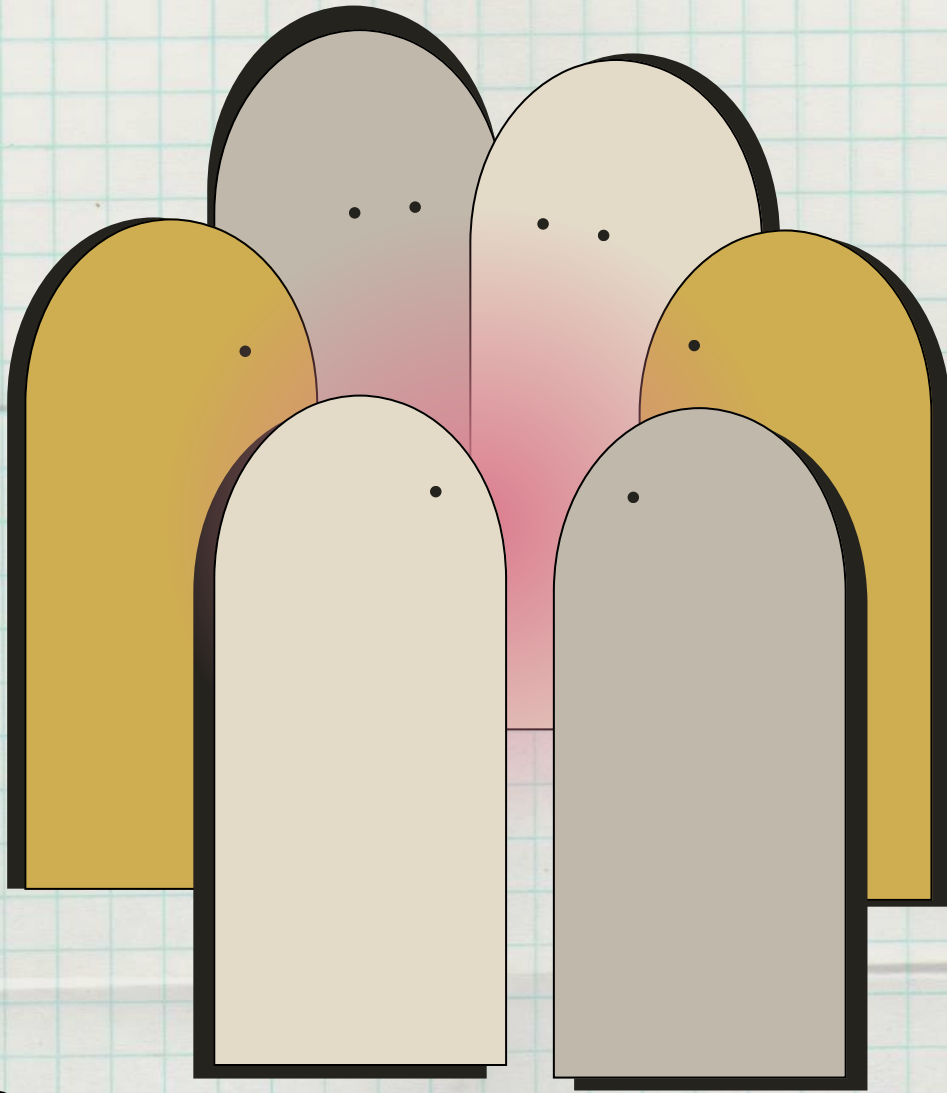
1) **Goal attainment:** Coaching psychologists can help individuals set and achieve goals in different areas of life, including career, relationships, health, and personal growth. By providing support, guidance and accountability, coaching psychologists can help individuals overcome barriers and make progress towards their desired outcomes.

2) **Improved performance:** Coaching psychologists can also help individuals improve their performance in various domains, such as work, sports, or creative pursuits. By identifying areas for improvement, developing strategies, and providing feedback, coaching psychologists can help individuals reach their full potential and achieve excellence.

3) **Stress management:** Coaching psychologists can provide tools and techniques for managing stress and building resilience. By developing coping skills, changing negative thought patterns, and cultivating positive emotions, coaching psychologists can help individuals cope with stress and reduce its negative effects on physical and mental health.

4) **Health promotion:** Coaching psychologists can also promote health and well-being by encouraging healthy habits and lifestyle changes, such as exercise, nutrition and sleep. By providing support and accountability, coaching psychologists can help individuals make sustainable changes that improve their overall health and well-being.

5) **Positive relationships:** Coaching psychologists can help individuals improve their relationships with others, including family, friends and colleagues. By developing communication skills, enhancing empathy and understanding, and resolving conflicts, coaching psychologists can promote positive relationships and social connections.



Conclusion

In conclusion, coaching psychology is a discipline that integrates the principles of psychology with coaching practices to promote personal and professional growth, goal attainment, and well-being. Coaching psychology emphasises evidence-based practice, ethical principles, and a client-centered approach that tailors coaching interventions to the unique needs and goals of each individual.

Coaching psychology can add value to individuals, organisations and society by promoting personal and professional development, enhancing performance, reducing stress and burnout, improving health and well-being, and promoting positive relationships. Evidence-based coaching psychology can increase the effectiveness and credibility of coaching interventions, ensuring that clients receive high-quality, ethical, and personalised coaching services.

As a recommendation, individuals interested in coaching psychology can seek out certified coaches who have undergone training in coaching psychology. Employers can also consider offering coaching psychology training and services to their employees as a way to enhance their professional development and well-being. Finally, researchers and practitioners in coaching psychology can continue to develop and refine evidence-based practice and interventions, and collaborate to advance the field and promote its benefits to individuals and society.

Psychologist and Coach: One Does Not Fit All

By Daniella Schreier

***"The only person who is educated is the one who has learned how to learn and change."
(Carl Rogers, 1961)***

Just as not every super athlete makes a good coach, not every psychologist has the *savoir faire* to be a proficient life, business, or relationship coach. The professional psychologist may have all the educational accolades and be beloved by their patients, only to fall flat when it comes to working with high-powered, demanding, and result-oriented coaching clients. Why is that?

Coaching and psychology have many shared denominators that give psychologists an edge over non-psychology trained coaches: Both approaches are client-focused, build on trusting client-service provider relationships, encourage clients' self-assessment, and focus on lasting change. Yet, there are plenty of challenges psychologists face with coaching:



01



Coaching is time-bound and result-driven. Coachees expect visible results within six weeks to three months, which doesn't allow for a lengthy exploration of the past and relies on the coach as an astute guide and pacesetter.

02



Coaching is a direct and straight-forward modality. The coach is outspoken and, as an accountability partner, actively involved in the process of goal achievement. Coaches are expected to hold coachees to deadlines and trace progress.

03



The coaching clientele looks and feels different compared to the therapy tribe: High-functioning coaching clients can be a tad high-strung. They likely appear intimidating to a traditional psychologist. Coachees are often from demanding business cultures: They are used to fast progress, are goal-oriented and competitive; they are very direct in their approach and expectations.

In summary, the well-trodden psychotherapy path and some general characteristics attributed to psychologists don't fit the demands of coaching. Henceforth let's lay out a road map that fits the coaching destination.

"There is no scarcity of opportunity to make a living at what you love. There's only scarcity of resolve to make it happen."

- Dr. Wayne W. Dyer (2017)



Colleagues and students alike often pose the question: "How do you pivot from psychotherapy to coaching? Can you practice both and what's the secret of mastering both?" As a coaching psychologist with a former career in international business and PR, coaching comes more intuitively to me than therapy. It's the dynamic interaction of two experts: The coach is the expert in strategy and execution. They are holding the coachee accountable; they are the expert guide and motivator. The coachee is expert in their own life experience, processes, and previous dynamic achievements.

Setting a goal and planning *how* to excel and reach new heights is very rewarding. It's a great pleasure to work alongside high-functioning coachees who are dedicated to their personal, professional, and relational development.

Coaching addresses *how* to reach new goals while therapy seeks to understand *why* psychopathology developed and is maintained and why patients behave the way they do. Coaching is present and future oriented while psychotherapy also incorporates the past. The goal of therapy is to move patients forward by filling their tool kits with new emotional and behavioral coping tools and by amending their worldview. A commonality of coaching and psychotherapy is that both focus on moving the client forward. High-functioning coaching clients face few emotional and behavioral barriers along the way. Hence coaching uses the most direct path to achieve new heights while psychotherapy takes the scenic route on the way to wellness to address and include obstacles such as trauma, anxiety, depression, or personality challenges.



To successfully pivot from psychotherapist to coach, psychologists must get comfortable working within a straightforward outcome-oriented framework. As a coaching psychologist with a former career in international business and PR, I can understand that certain hard-charging industries such as law, finance, and business may view psychologists stereotypically as a bit docile and conflict avoidant, slightly introverted, overly tolerant, and patient with clients' self-directed pace of change. In line with the above, it might be expected that psychologists would point out self-defeating behaviors very gently and be uncomfortable to call direct attention to patients' shortfalls and self-defeating behaviors. To be successful coaches, psychologists must become hands on, outspoken accountability partners who point out shortfalls and strengths without hesitation, assign responsibility and fearlessly yet

compassionately challenge their coachees while teaching and showing them what needs to be done to excel.

In summary, to become successful coaches, psychologists need to pivot from copy editor to pacer. In my view, therapists are patients' copy editors while coaches are coachees' pacesetters. By this I mean that psychologists assist patients to apply and achieve clarity, concision, and consistency (Lorna Partington Walsh, 2020) in their life stories and events of the past and present just as a copy editor does to assist a writer. Coaches instead are similar to strong pacemakers in a medium to long race. They set the pace and actively participate as advisers, road map creators, and motivators. They know the drill and assist their coachees to get over the finish line as smoothly as possible. Here are seven take-away tips to pivot from copyeditor to pacer.



Seven Tips to Pivot from Traditional Psychologist (Copy Editor) to Modern Coach (Pacer)

SIEW DAI (less sweet)

Pen And Paper Time:

Kindly take out a pen and paper; please answer the questions before reading on to create your Coaching Road Map.

S – Map your own **State of Affairs**. Before embarking on the potentially exciting journey of becoming a coach, take a good look at your personal, professional, and relational situation. Is your life structured and in order? What areas do you excel in? What areas do you need to develop further? Are you surprised about your findings? Which areas bring you joy and pleasant surprise and where do you sense disappointment? Now what do you plan to do about it?

Make a detailed list including your thoughts and feelings related to where you place yourself on the map at the time of the assessment. Now set some goals in terms of where you want to be and when. What's the next milestone or finish line you'd like to cross? How will you motivate yourself and keep up your energy? Tough exercise you think? This exercise fosters self-awareness, self-knowledge, and ultimately self-confidence. You will ask your coachees to work on themselves. Before you can coach others, you must be able to guide and know yourself, and to implement strategy and a plan to your own life journey.

I – Show **Integrity** towards yourself. You do not have to commit to psychotherapy and coaching or the integration of the two. Some colleagues are passionate about therapy and haphazard when it comes to coaching and its benefits. Don't convert or do something you don't appreciate. Yet, you owe it to yourself to learn more about coaching and why you may love and be good at it. As a psychologist you have a professional advantage: You are trained in personality development, behavioral change models, and motivation. These areas are important in the coaching process. Hence, coachees benefit from a professional coach trained in psychology.

E – **Energize, engage**, and strengthen your extroverted self! In therapy and coaching the energy and engagement levels of therapist/patient and coach/coachee determine the treatment experience and influence outcomes. Be active and energetic, engage in the process and strengthen your "extrovert" muscle. Get comfortable with discussing goals, road maps and redirecting coachees—it's part of your new job description.

W – The **Why** (explored in psychotherapy) in combination with the how (addressed in coaching) are a winning combo! You are trained to explore the why of behavior, behavioral development, and personality; you know how to take a proper look at someone's background to understand their foreground and to interpret and see nature versus nurture. Remember: Being a trained psychologist brings great value and rounds out the coaching profession and approach. You are an expert in Why—now be open to pivot and become an expert in how. But how? Become a coachee—so you see how the shoe feels on the other foot; sign up for a coaching seminar and consult with a coaching psychologist. Remember you get out what you put in!

D - Learn to be **Direct** and **Dare** to speak up and out. Address issues, do a status review with your coachees and remind yourself that coaching is a very direct approach. You were likely educated to be a great listener and a compassionate companion on the road towards change. That's a wonderful foundation for a trusting client-service provider relationship. Remember coaching requires some modification, so add one. It's a direct approach that requires you to get comfortable with speaking up and out. This is for the good of your coachees.

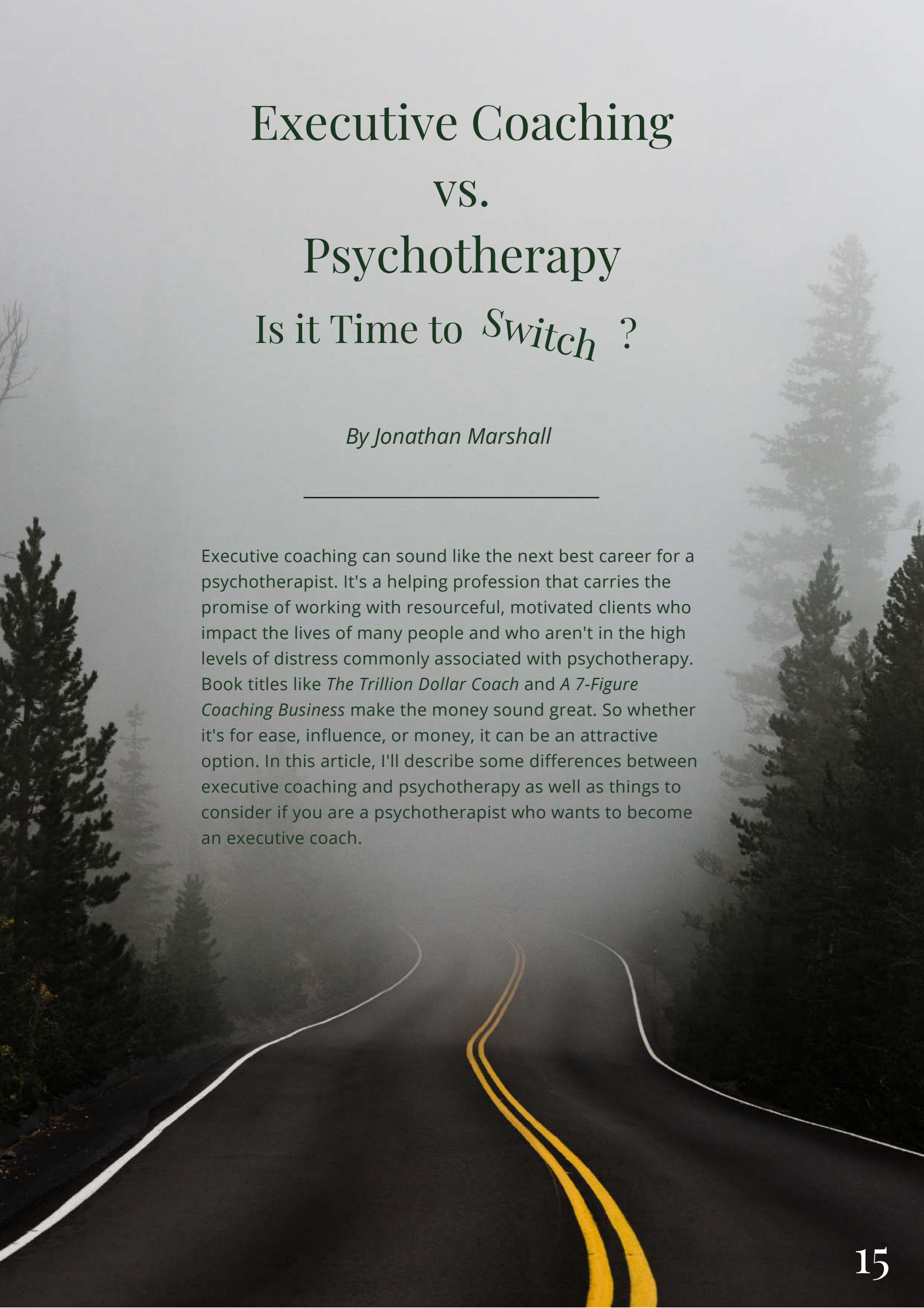
D

A - Be **Alert, Astute,** and **Assertive!** Coaches and psychologists must be vulnerable and approachable to be good treatment providers. Coaches are pacers and alert to changes in coachees' behaviors and astute observers of outside events. For example, if your coachee is attempting to land a new job in finance and within one month of working together the economy slows down and hiring freezes are predictable, strategy and goal timeline may have to be amended. Coaches assert themselves and their observations—hone this skill by practicing it in your personal life or your personal coaching sessions.

A



I - **Identify** your areas of coaching interest. Look at your expressed strengths in psychotherapy and areas of interest in your personal life. What population do you enjoy working with? For example, you are good at mending relationships and successfully work with patients through difficult relationships. Or you are superb at helping patients create good habits and life structure; intuitively these are good practical fits for starting your coaching endeavors. Dare to be passionate and seek coaching opportunities within the realm that you love!



Executive Coaching VS. Psychotherapy Is it Time to *Switch* ?

By Jonathan Marshall

Executive coaching can sound like the next best career for a psychotherapist. It's a helping profession that carries the promise of working with resourceful, motivated clients who impact the lives of many people and who aren't in the high levels of distress commonly associated with psychotherapy. Book titles like *The Trillion Dollar Coach* and *A 7-Figure Coaching Business* make the money sound great. So whether it's for ease, influence, or money, it can be an attractive option. In this article, I'll describe some differences between executive coaching and psychotherapy as well as things to consider if you are a psychotherapist who wants to become an executive coach.

The Similarities Between Executive Coaching and Psychotherapy

Contrary to popular belief, the line between executive coaching and psychotherapy is, at best, fuzzy. Colleagues who try to distinguish between these fields tend to claim that coaches focus on work-related performance, not well-being; they look only at the future, not the past; and that coaches never deal with psychopathology. They also claim that the primary executive coaching topics¹ simply don't require entering the realm of psychotherapy. Psychotherapists, they say, only focus on the past and don't consider current performance; instead, they focus uniquely on working with clients who are mentally ill. As if to create a territorial line between these professions, they may quote the American Psychological Association's definition of psychotherapy:

Psychotherapy, or talk therapy, is a way to help people with a broad variety of mental illnesses and emotional difficulties.



While coaches and therapists often focus on different areas, most coaches and therapists I know work with psychological injuries from the past, goals for the future, challenges in well-being, and performance. Many psychotherapists work with clients who do not have a DSM diagnosis and, contrary to the ethical guidelines for executive coaches, several coaches try to treat psychopathology. For example, one of the most prestigious international coaching firms I know trains its associates in EMDR to help coachees with their childhood trauma!

I've attempted to show the fuzzy line between these two professions in the graph on the next page. Coaches generally tend to work with clients who experience less distress and are more focused on performance. Contrary to the American Psychological Association's description, psychotherapists may also work in that space. For example, a highly acclaimed lawyer told me she could never have been so successful without regular psychotherapy to help her with her priorities and performance. She started psychotherapy to help with her loneliness, but her therapy quickly departed from the usual realm of psychotherapy and moved into peak performance coaching.

¹ Topics may include team leadership performance, sustainable organizational change, increased emotional intelligence among leaders, higher levels of leader resilience, and the development of strategic thinking skills.



The Differences Between Executive Coaching and Psychotherapy

While the practice areas overlap, these two professions have very different training requirements. Psychotherapists have much more training, and it is generally more rigorous. The exact amount depends on the country. I don't think I've met a psychotherapist with less than 5000 hours of formal training, and several of my colleagues (e.g., those with doctorates) received more than 16,000 hours before fully qualifying. The Singapore Psychological Society requires full members to have a bachelor's degree in psychology and two years of relevant working experience. By contrast, an executive coach needs only 60 hours of coaching education and 100 hours of unsupervised coaching experience to register with the International Coaching Federation (ICF). A large study conducted by the ICF in 2020 shows that only 43% of coach practitioners have received 200 or more training hours. That includes hours for registering and continuing education. While coaching programs offer some form of examination, many are conducted by for-profit organizations and are less likely to fail participants than universities that train psychotherapy students.

Despite the hype about how much money coaches make, the difference in income isn't large. Based on reviews at Glassdoor (2023), psychotherapists make more money from psychotherapy than executive coaches make from coaching. It reports that in Singapore, the average monthly income from executive coaching is SG\$3315 while it is \$4300 for psychologists. The ICF study comes up with a similar figure, stating that in Asia, coaches typically make \$3745 a month. It goes on to point out that 93% of coaches augment their income with other work, for example, consulting (60%), training (60%), and facilitation services (54%). So while executive coaches make less money from coaching, it's unclear whether their overall income is less than that of psychotherapists. From my experience, executive coaches have more volatile incomes, and those at the very top of the profession make more money than psychotherapists. But the majority of executive coaches I know make much less than the top-tier coaches and they augment their income with other work.

So Should I Become a Coach?

Psychotherapists can offer a lot to the coaching community. They have a substantial amount of relevant training and can treat psychopathology— something that shows up in coaching far more than most people realize. But I found real challenges when making the transition.

Boundaries


As psychotherapists, we're used to seeing clients at our clinics, starting and ending sessions roughly on time, getting paid for each meeting, and having minimal contact with clients between sessions. By contrast, coaches may have multiple unpaid meetings with a company representative before seeing a coachee. They may be asked to wait a long time in the coachee's waiting room or restaurant of choice and may be expected to be contactable night or day if their coachee regards an issue as urgent. The lack of clear boundaries can be uncomfortable and can lead to relationship misunderstandings (e.g., the coachee assuming a friendship).

Many psychotherapists starting out as executive coaches are not accustomed to third parties trying to pry confidential information from them. When I started out as an executive coach, I encountered the anger of multiple firms when I refused to divulge my client's information. "But we hired you to help our *company*. It's your job to tell us if you think your coachee has what it takes to be promoted, even if we previously agreed your coaching is confidential. After all, all the other coaches on our panel do it!" By sticking to the letter of the ethics code, I have been removed from the panel of coaches from two of my higher-paying clients, and my company may soon be removed from a third as an associate bravely faces the same battle.

Marketing

Compared to psychotherapists, executive coaches spend a lot of time marketing themselves. They may hunt for clients by approaching human resource departments, attending networking meetings for business professionals, and may feel the pressure to publish books. Even if these books are self-published, and never read, authoring a book helps a coach to sell their services because they can add it to their bio and therefore seem more credible. By contrast, many therapists regard self-promotion as unethical. In some countries (e.g., Australia), simply using a testimonial can lead to being professionally censured.





I fell into coaching by chance. I did my postdoctorate at a business school with highly ambitious students. The head of the clinic, a physician, kept referring clients to me who wanted the equivalent of gold medals for their academic, business, and sporting performance. His only instruction was "see what you can do." I felt miserably out of my depth. I wondered if my graduate school was meant to have trained me in getting clients into the national soccer team or if there had been a huge misunderstanding. As I worked out what I could do, I began to find the work exciting. I now have both a clinical and coaching practice, and much of my work is at the intersection of the two. I find the combination of these fields invigorating. While executive coaching and psychotherapy are different fields, they can combine to help many clients achieve greater well-being and performance.

Role of Sports Coaches in Singapore

Service Providers or More?

By Tan Xiang Tian

I start this discussion with a quote close to heart:

"Remember—you are an athlete." This was how my coach started the conversation, after a long pause, when I told him my thoughts on quitting the National Team after suffering from complete tears to my anterior-cruciate ligaments on both knees.

He continued: *"Injuries are prevalent in sports; sometimes we bounce back, at times we don't. Just like in life there are times you fail at a task, or you dread doing something as it seems daunting or impossible to attain. The question is—do you want to regret after you try, or regret not trying?"*





This started my long journey back to the competition arena; I was out for 5 years. Those words were etched on my heart as I crawled my way to clinch the title of World Champion in 2015. Eight years on, I look back and wonder what could have been different if my coach did not see it as a priority to instill the values of resilience & determination in me when I picked up the sport as a young athlete.

The Youth Sports scene in Singapore has seen a paradigm shift in the importance of sporting achievements in the past decade, for better or worse. For instance, the introduction of Direct School Admission (DSA) from Primary-to-Secondary Schools and to Tertiary levels (Ministry of Education [MOE], 2022), coupled with the buzzword of "holistic development" meant that students these days are compelled to do relatively more activities to "score points" for a better chance at entering their (or their parents') desired school. Sporting performance in competitions (especially National School Games) is being seen as a means to showcase a student's ability to develop in more than just academic domains, thus demonstrating "holistic" (colloquially) development. Sports coaches may therefore be seen by parents as service providers who simply coach technical skills.

Training for a competitive sport typically takes 2–3 days per week in school, about 2–3 hours per session, under the Co-Curricula Activities (CCA) program by MOE (2022), and more days if a student opts to continue training in a private club outside of school hours. Given the high contact time between students and coaches, and the perceived authority or power difference between both parties, a coach can be highly influential on students. To start this discussion, I examine the potential effects of a coach-student relationship from the perspective of motivational theories for youth-athletes' development.



A quick review of the literature on coach-student relationships suggests that positive experiences in sports are influenced by the high-quality interpersonal relationships between coach and athlete (Coutinho et al., 2018; Goldsmith, 2004). Conversely, a negative coaching relationship—one that is controlling or restrictive, may lead to high stress and eventually burnout for athletes (Quested & Duda, 2011). Looking at the current situation in Singapore, it seems that the focus of sports coaches points towards a controlling/directing coaching behavior rather than an autonomy-supporting one. Such controlling behavior runs contrary to the intrinsic need for autonomy postulated in self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985).

The self-determination theory posits that humans are motivated to fulfill three innate psychological needs (Ryan & Deci, 2000) of *autonomy* (need to be in control of one's own actions and choices), *competence* (need for achievements, knowledge, skills, and develop mastery in domains important to the self), and *relatedness* (need for connectedness with others and to establish secure relationships). The attainment of these basic needs is fundamental to achieving optimal well-being whereas the thwarting of these needs impairs it (Deci & Ryan, 2000). It is evident that coaching practices can potentially lead to the fulfillment of these basic needs.

Call to Action: How can sports coaches help athletes with their well-being?

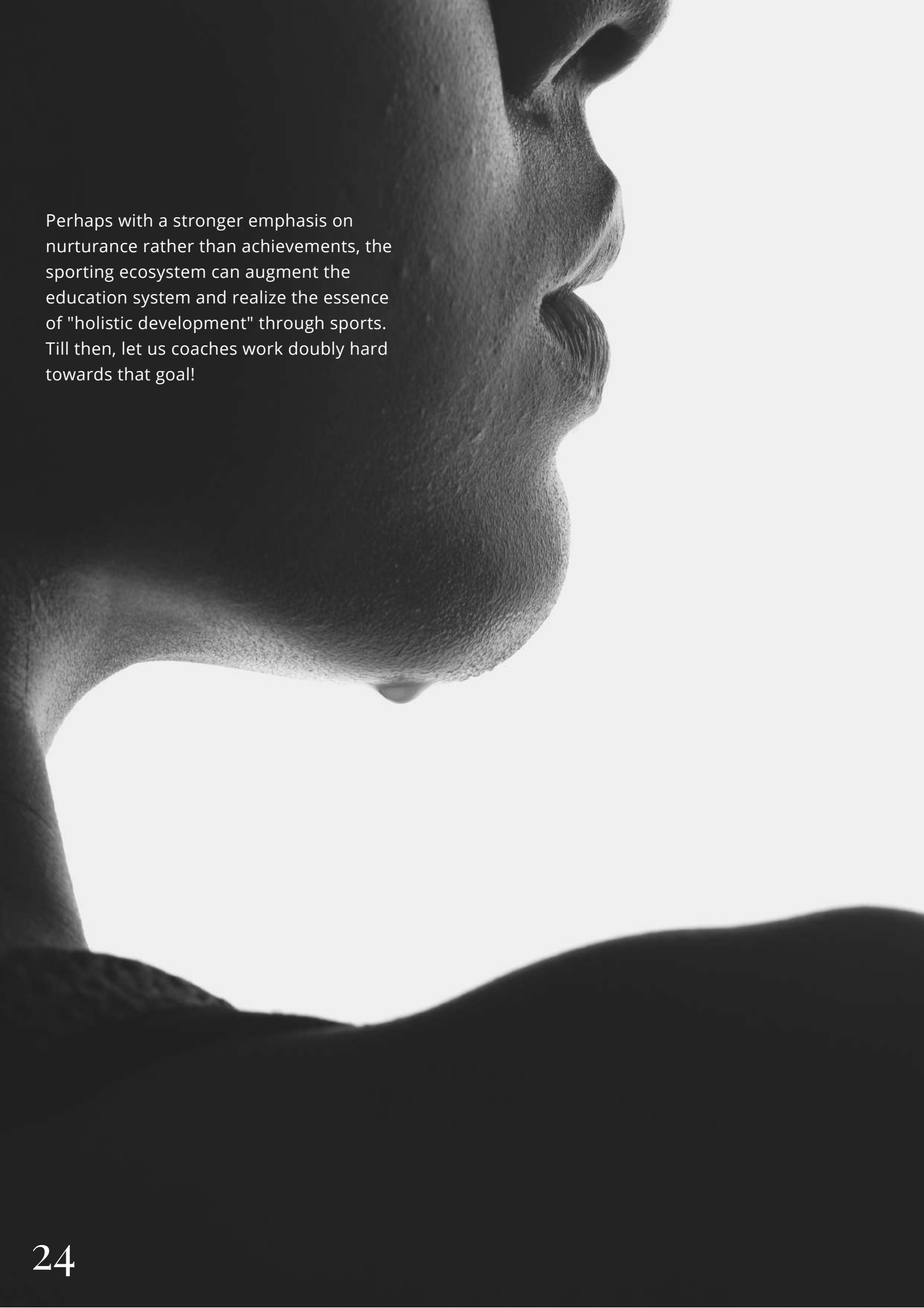
Perhaps from the lens of psychology, sports coaches can learn to see the relevance of sports in promoting an individual's well-being. This is a challenge to myself as a sports coach, and I hope to share this with fellow coaches:



I **Autonomy**—Consider using more open questions during each training session and give young athletes a say in their training or development plans. We may be pleasantly surprised at **what** they want to achieve and **how** they want to achieve it. One strategy I have been using is a mutual goal-setting exercise at the start of each term (3 months) by having individual athletes discuss with me and write down their goals. We will then review the goals together periodically.

II **Competence**—One of the main roles of a sports coach is to develop an athlete's skills towards mastery, gear athletes up for competitions, or simply to impart new knowledge. Do consider point (1) as we work towards developing an athlete's skills.

III **Relatedness**—Consider asking ourselves the question: "How can I build on or strengthen the relationship between athletes, coaches, peers, and their families?" I'm happy to share that prioritizing the value of *teamwork* in my session plans has helped my young team bond well with each other. My athletes love chatting about how they have helped their friends in school or their parents at home during our reflection sessions when we talk about *teamwork*.



Perhaps with a stronger emphasis on nurturance rather than achievements, the sporting ecosystem can augment the education system and realize the essence of "holistic development" through sports. Till then, let us coaches work doubly hard towards that goal!

Health Coaching

A Confluence of Competencies for Increasingly Burdened Care Systems

By Paul Victor Patinadan



"Did you understand what the doctor was saying to you?"

"Yes."

"Have the lifestyle changes they suggested been easy to make?"

"I'm...not sure."

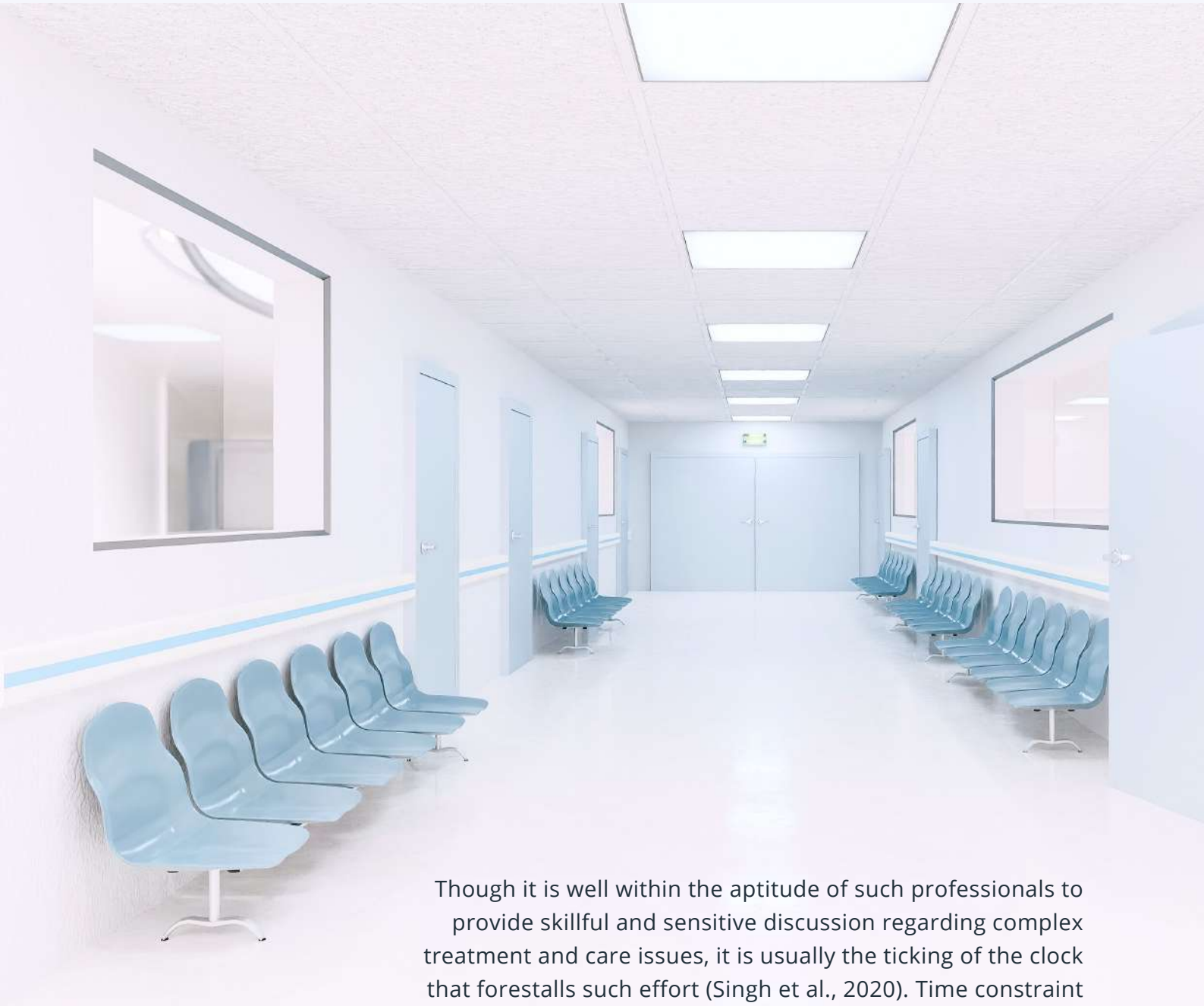
"Why is that?"

"Well, to be absolutely honest...I haven't really made any changes..."

Such dialogue expresses an often all too familiar scenario for many health professionals. After multiple attempts at patient education, providing distilled and succinct information and knowledge, care providers continue to be stumped at the seeming incongruence between patient affirmation and action.

The chronic diabetic continues to be haphazard with their diet, the individual with Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) refuses to cut down on their smoking, the youth with high blood pressure disregards their daily medication.

Chronic illnesses are prolonged and treated as lifelong, but early management improves the health outcomes of individuals manifold. Unfortunately, the fast-paced, top-down, "advice-giving" about clinical targets and expectations by nurses, doctors, pharmacists, and therapists (Jerant et al., 2005) characterise an overly rigid approach to health education that does not take into account a patient's personal goals or even capability for change.



Though it is well within the aptitude of such professionals to provide skillful and sensitive discussion regarding complex treatment and care issues, it is usually the ticking of the clock that forestalls such effort (Singh et al., 2020). Time constraint is perhaps the most immense obstacle to holistic discussions, as health professionals battle the clock and increasing queues of patients in the clinic's waiting room.

Health coaching is a new profession gaining ground within the care ecosystem globally. Having firm foundations in sport, psychology, and business, health coaches parallel their counterparts from other industries as they aid clients in applying their personal resources to overcome obstacles in the pursuit of mutually contracted goals (Biswas-Diener, 2009). The Health Coaches Australia and New Zealand Association (HCANZA) states:



"Health and wellness coaching is a patient or client-centred approach that focuses on assisting them (patients) to elicit and clarify their values, gain insights into their lifestyle practices and develop a deeper understanding of possibilities and pathways to resolution of their challenges."

This *realistic* goal-setting process allows patients a scaffolded and stepwise method to reach their behavioural change goals while supported by a trained professional. Health coaches often temper their coaching soft skills with psychological theories and empiricism, such as social cognitive theory or the transtheoretical model of behavioural change (TTM), both employed by health psychologists for behavioural change programmes (Lindner et al., 2003).

Coaches, thus, merge the art of dialogue and motivation with the social science of health behavioural change, journeying with patients personally on their unique terms guided by their values. The needs and goals of a diabetic chef, for example, are vastly different from that of someone in a differing non-food focused vocation. These nuances, usually lost in the current processes, instead inform and form the bedrock for health outcome shifts within a health coaching relationship.

For the above example, a health coach would work within the unique behavioural sphere of their client; the chef would be encouraged to perhaps have smaller tasting portions, or cut back on those post-service beers (an industry standard, if ever there was one), and seek impetus on how these changes can move from the "action" to the "maintenance" stages of the TTM.





Increasingly, studies are beginning to show the efficacy of a health coaching relationship for a variety of populations and chronic conditions, although a study by Dejonghe et al. (2017) revealed some long-term sustainability issues (these, however, might be due to the field's relative newness).

Health coaching in Singapore is a newly burgeoning field and, as such, is not yet meticulously defined or currently regulated (which comes with its own set of problems). Courses are available from a variety of institutions and third-party vendors, and these range in breadth and depth of curriculum, scope, and cost. A quick search for "health coach" jobs sees vocational options popping up in private and public sectors of fitness, wellness, and healthcare industries. The job role also spans a range of titles including but not limited to Health Coach, Care Coach, Well-being Facilitator, Lifestyle Coach, and is also subsumed into more general postings such as Care Coordinators or Health Executives. As healthcare becomes more patient-centred and holistic, leaving the vestiges of a purely biomedical model behind, health coaches can not only fill the gaps of care currently within overstressed systems, they can usher in changes in how the patient role is perceived and the lines of the health setting are demarcated.



Positive Psychology in Practice: A Conversation With a Coach

By Sameer Ehsaan

What comes to mind when you hear or read the word "coach"? Men with sports whistles and dad caps, instructing a group of people, with booming voices and strong arm gestures? Or for those already in the workforce, perhaps memories of facilitators guiding teams of colleagues to work more effectively towards ambitious KPIs (key performance indicators)?

For myself, a psychology undergraduate with hardly any exposure to sports or workplaces, I never knew much about coaches, save for the ones I saw in films and other multimedia. I knew nothing much about the coaching process, apart from the fact that coaches... guide, mentor, teach? As a student, I have always been interested in positive psychology, knowing that this sub-discipline celebrates the positives of the human mind. But my curiosity about coaching started to peak when I met a coach who was interested in positive psychology and used tools from that very sub-discipline in her own line of work. "These two things coexist?", I quizzed myself.

Ms Elizabeth Rachel Ong (Liz) is a positive psychology coach and consultant at The School of Positive Psychology (TSPP), with her own coaching practice as a freelancer. When Liz agreed to my request to interview her about her expertise and experience, I was thrilled to learn more about her multidisciplinary practice.



Who (Wants To) Get Coached?

Liz states that her past clients have included working adults, graduate students, and people who are in transitional periods, such as being between jobs, or going back to work after becoming a new parent. She elaborates that her clients are usually at vulnerable phases in their lives, having to face novel challenges and stresses. Anecdotally speaking, she reports that her clients have been mostly millennials (ages 27–42 inclusive), with the rest being either younger adults (in their early 20s) or middle adults (older millennials to persons in their 50s). All these clients are sourced from her growing personal networks or word-of-mouth from prior clients. She did emphasise that coaches, even those that are licensed by accreditation bodies such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF), cannot directly help clients from clinical populations (i.e., persons with mental health conditions). They are not certified to engage in professional mental healthcare, such as diagnoses and psychotherapy, and as Liz puts forward, such practice is unethical.

How Are They Coached?

Aims of Coaching. Liz guides her clients towards managing their own priorities and energy levels, such as through coaching them on sustainable self-care methods. The most common goal that her clients need guidance for is reaching a more ideal version of themselves, but she provided other examples such as creating and maintaining positive relationships, becoming more accountable to oneself or to others, and goals related to fitness and physical health. However, Liz does disclaim that a coach does not direct their client towards their goal, much like a mentor, consultant, or instructor might do. Since each client knows themselves and their ways of operating in different environments (e.g., home, work, school, etc.) best, Liz notes that her clients are therefore best suited to craft their own goals and methods of achieving them.

Modalities of Coaching. Before our interview, I was under the impression that positive psychology coaching happens between one coach and one client, but Liz recalled her experiences as a peer group coach with groups of clients. She has facilitated group coaching sessions where her clients get to interact and support each other in achieving their goals, even when the individual clients themselves may not have similar goals. However, neither coaching modality is inherently better than the other, and both boast their own benefits (Keystone Coaching, 2022). Individual coaching is personalised to the client's specific goals and needs, and how the client reaches their specified goals. Clients enjoy a closer and trusting relationship with their coaches, where the client can divulge their thoughts and worries to their coach, who in turn can hold their client more accountable in their progress towards their goals (Keystone Coaching, 2022). Group coaching, on the other hand, allows the client to be accountable to both the coach and their group member clients. Each client learns from the experiences of other member clients and can enjoy shared support from both the coach and the clients. Learning from others' experiences allows each client to problem-solve their own challenges better, and the group's larger aim towards achieving goals can foster positive social connections between each member client and the coach themselves (Keystone Coaching, 2022).



Strengths-Based Coaching

Clients and Their Strengths. Liz also explained that she helps her clients tap into their strengths to help them achieve their desired objectives. In line with the principles of positive psychology, strengths-based coaching shifts the focus away from one's negative traits towards one's positive characteristics, understanding that the latter can help people in realising their full potential without negating the existence of the former (McQuaid et al., 2018). One of the most popular "strengths" psychometric tools being used is the Values-In-Action (VIA) Inventory of Strengths. VIA character strengths are the product of a 3-year study with 55 scientists and helmed by prominent names in positive psychology: Christopher Peterson and Martin Seligman (VIA Institute on Character, n.d.). Character strengths include both what a person is (identity) and how they act in the world (behaviour) (McQuaid et al., 2018). For example, a person who has the character strength of bravery is not overly averse to any difficulty, pain, challenge, or threat. Bravery is one of the 24 established character strengths, classified under 6 broad categories known as virtues: (i) wisdom & knowledge, (ii) courage, (iii) humanity, (iv) justice, (v) temperance, and (vi) transcendence (McQuaid et al., 2018).

Strengths of The Approach. In line with the growth of positive psychology coaching, a strengths-based approach is emphasised for such coaching. According to Hammond (2010), this approach shifts a client's mindset towards what they can do (versus what they cannot do) and props up their confidence and self-esteem. The clients are viewed as works-in-progress, instead of people with defects. The approach also does not downplay clients' weaknesses, but it does help them to learn how to manage their expectations and deal with life's challenges using healthy coping skills.



Measuring For Strengths. Positive psychology coaches use character strengths-based questionnaires such as the comprehensive VIA Inventory of Strengths questionnaire (Peterson & Seligman, 2004, p. 627). It is a robust tool that positive psychology coaches can use to gain awareness of their clients' strengths and become more confident in their own strengths-based coaching practices (Burke & Passmore, 2019). In knowing and understanding her clients' character strengths, Liz comments that she enjoyed greater rapport with them, as they started to reach a state wherein "the coach [Liz] gets them"—a precursor to a more positive coach-client relationship.

She does assert the importance of not putting tools and measures such as this ahead of the client, as useful as they may be. Fundamentally, positive psychology coaching is about helping the client to grow and reach a higher state of well-being and flourishing in their lives, and that can also include engagement in one's daily activities, experiencing positive emotions, or even achieving for achievement's sake, as per Seligman's PERMA model (Falecki et al., 2018; Seligman, 2011). Identifying and developing one's strengths just happens to be one of the possible ways to get there.

The Outcomes

In Liz's own practice, her clients' goals are not a means to an end: it is near-impossible for a client to always be their ideal selves, maintain perfectly positive relationships, or be fully accountable to themselves or others. These "abstract" goals are more like journeys through each client's life. Liz helps to measure these goals longitudinally (over time) to track progress, and quantitatively (numerically on a scale) to translate their self-reports into a common language of progress between both parties. For instance, a client's "ideal self" would have the qualities that they desire or are working towards, such as assertiveness. They can use materials such as journals to jot down any incidents where they asserted their needs or boundaries to their loved ones, colleagues, etcetera, and this journal can be used to track their progress over specified periods of time (e.g., weeks, months).

Conclusion

I asked Liz for her own understanding of positive psychology, to which she replied that it is a "science and art of flourishing" and "[a way for oneself to attain the] best version of [themselves] according to [themselves]". That statement crystallised the relationship between positive psychology and coaching: in practice, both disciplines are measurable, evidence-backed, and are aligned towards making people's lives better, and one works better with the support of the other—a sum that is greater than its individual parts.

Even with all the work that she must put in, Liz is firmly set on the idea that her clients are fully responsible for achieving their goals. However, in my own opinion, coaches of Liz's calibre should credit themselves, knowing that they are impacting the lives of their clients and the people around them.





Are We Thriving Or Surviving?

By Faith Cheong

Ever had the feeling that you're simply floating through life, living day by day? Perhaps without any expectation for what tomorrow brings and an empty contentment with the way things are? Surely, we've all had our *meh* days, where we are neither struggling nor can we say that we are living our best possible lives. However, when our *meh* days begin to leak into everyday life, we begin to enter a state of *languishing*.

First coined by Keyes and Lopez (2002), there are 4 basic ideas in a concept known as complete mental health found in positive psychology: flourishing, languishing, struggling, and floundering. For the general population, we either flourish or languish. To bridge the gap between flourishing and languishing, most turn to coaching as it offers a structured, goal setting curriculum to increase mental well-being.

How do I know if I'm flourishing or languishing?

Of course, we must first identify if we are flourishing or languishing before deciding on whether coaching is right for us.

Firstly, meaning-making, purpose-finding, and goal setting are all hallmarks of flourishing. In fact, the ways we define our goals and our focus on the why rather than the how points towards greater meaning and intrinsic satisfaction. Goal setting is an indicator of the future-orientation of those who flourish—knowing what needs to be achieved, maintained, or avoided to reach their best possible selves as envisioned, while acknowledging the power and capacities of the present self.

Secondly, those who flourish in turn find meaning and purpose in different domains in life. For some of us reading, the most familiar domain would be our work or our career. Let's reflect on the mindset that we have toward our work and how we describe the work that we do. Do we do it because "we need money" and to "survive", or do we view our work as something beyond ourselves, because it is a "calling" and because it is "meaningful"? Indeed, the subtle ways in which we think about our work can reveal whether we are flourishing or languishing.

Lastly, flourishing is defined by the level of relatedness and connection we feel to our social networks and relationships, and most importantly, the "we-orientation" of our family, close friends, or partners. It refers to how there can be greater reciprocal processes between us and our social networks, and the mutual sharing of good news and uplifting, characterised by self-disclosure and positive reactivity known as capitalisation. For example, how well do we react to a friend's good news and small wins? Rather than relationships fulfilling their own needs, flourishers also aim to fulfill the needs of those they love and care about to the best of their capacities through affirmation and returning enthusiasm.



Despite the intimate and personal nature of relationships, it is also possible to set goals in this domain. For example, making sure to leave mom a text every day, or making sure to take 10 minutes to catch up with a friend. Relationships and friendships do take effort, and goal setting can help us to be more mindful in what improvements we want to see in our own relationships.

Implementation Intentions

Now that we know the characteristics of what it means to flourish, here is where coaching comes into play. Coaching provides structured facilitation in intentional goal setting and attainment, also known as *implementation intentions*.

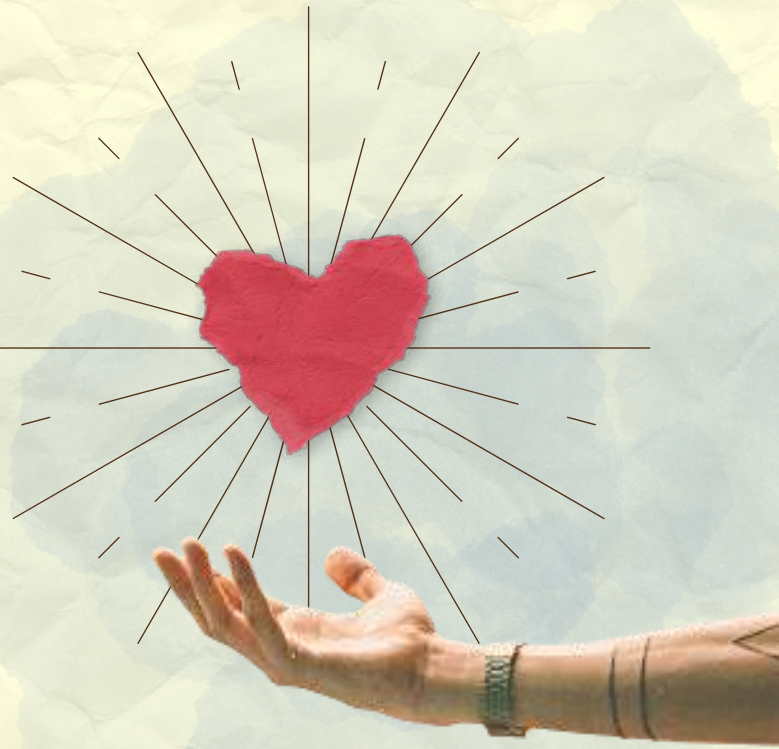
Implementation intentions have led to evidence of goal flourishing and coaching provides an added layer of accountability and effective strategies (Nowack, 2017). Implementation intentions are simply defined as 'if-then' plans, rather than just a focus on single or multiple goals. Implementation intentions can be applied across all domains of our lives from careers, to interpersonal relationships, and even to health and wellness.

If-then plans are structured as such: If event A happens, then I will adopt strategy A. Similarly, if event B happens, then I will adopt strategy B. Mindfully mapping out if-then situations can help us be more intentional in our actions, especially in planning for unforeseen circumstances or obstacles that may get in the way of achieving our goals.

For example, if one's goal is to be healthy, an example of an intentional if-then plan could look like: if there are stairs, then I will take them. On the other hand, if-then plans that help us work around obstacles could look something like: if I feel unmotivated to run alone, I will find an accountability partner who would run with me. By intentionally setting goals, we help our present selves to be more aware of the small opportunities in our daily lives that can bring us closer to our goals and work around what may stop us from achieving them.

Of course, one can always try implementation intentions in the comfort of their own home and by themselves. However, coaching could give greater insights into structuring more effective if-then plans and help us explore and discover what priorities are needed to flourish. Coaching could also provide a third-person insight into what goals are suited to our current situations, thereby enabling us to avoid setting goals that are too unrealistic or that may be counterproductive to us.

In sum, coaching is a fantastic way to bridge languishing and flourishing. Although goal-setting methods used in coaching can often be done on our own, such goals may be tainted by our own biases or expectations that may be unrealistic. Having a coach not only sets us in the right directions but also helps us to set the appropriate goals that are optimal for our situations and success. Further, coaching could provide extra accountability and support when goal attainment fails or falls short. After all, we are more than just pawns of our social situations: to flourish, we must adapt and cater to the many changes in our lives, which may continually shape our purposes and meaning-making process.



A Lesson Learned From a Careless Coaching Catastrophe

By Denise Dillion

I used to be a runner. That's a disappointing reflection for me because running was a huge achievement that took loads of my personal motivation and action to develop. After devoting several years of early morning and evening hours to pavements, paths and running trails, and to dozens of mass running events, I felt ready to step up a level to improve my timing. Enter my search for a running coach.

After working with a running group (no coaching provided) and a coached running group focusing on sprint laps of a running track, neither of which suited what I was seeking, I signed up with an online coaching company who offered personalised as well as group coaching experiences. Although personal runs were logged online, there were also opportunities to join in for group runs and other activities as well as for face-to-face advice. I'm in!

Feedback was provided on individual runs in the form of text comments in the online platform, which meant that feedback could be either very brief or detailed, and I received a mixture of both. What led to my downfall was a brief comment that many might have received without the negative effect it had on me. "What you're doing is junk miles." **Junk!?** I wasn't following a training plan to a T and rising earlier in the morning than usual to have my efforts described as junk. And no, I didn't take the feedback literally—I'd read enough running articles over the years to realise what this meant and to appreciate the context. "Junk miles" refers to wasteful running that exceeds what is needed to develop peak fitness. Nonetheless, that comment stuck with me more than any of the other feedback I'd received because it made me realise that the coach didn't know me at all and hadn't tried to explore anything about my past experiences, motivations or dedication. Despite all of my best efforts to the contrary, my running habit dwindled into slow walking and eventually into nothingness. Heavy sigh.



A systematic review of coaching psychology in 2014 (Lai & McDowall) underscored the importance of a coaching relationship, and particularly with respect to a coach having professional psychological training to adequately understand and manage the emotional responses of the person being coached. Drawing on their review of the evidence-based literature, Lai and McDowall outlined a Coaching Psychologist Competency Framework to identify required knowledge, personality/attitudes and skills/behaviours as important attributes for coaches. Ranking highest amongst the three key skills/behaviours was communication, including active and reflective listening, powerful questioning, giving and seeking feedback, and the use of suitable verbal and body language.

Based on my experience, I now realise the importance of having a coach who would acknowledge and draw on my strengths (e.g., my willingness to follow a plan, to sacrifice social/personal time, to rise early and to go out whatever the weather, etc.) and to apply those in the coaching relationship. A strengths-based approach is described by Linley and Harrington (2006).

"Within this approach, the coach is a keen observer of the ebb and flow of the coaching conversation, being finely attuned to the subtle nuances of language and emotion that might indicate the presence of a strength. The coach might then choose to reflect these observations back to the client, working with them to identify and celebrate the strength, to raise the strength within their consciousness, and to explore, develop, refine and apply the strength."
(Linley & Harrington, 2006).

The strengths-based approach recognises the importance of affective communication: "... this approach assumes that the coaching conversation would provide a suitably conducive environment for the natural display of strengths, and that the coach is then able to detect and identify these strengths". My own negative experience might possibly have been avoided if the coach had engaged with me to explore beyond those logged training sessions. And I could have been more proactive in letting the coach know that such a comment was not okay.



I take ownership of what I now consider a catastrophe. I could have just been satisfied with the fitness, running style and habits I'd developed over time rather than chasing improvement. No injuries had plagued me, and those runs in the early morning hours or in the quiet evenings were in equal parts joyful, challenging and personally rewarding. Each small achievement was pleasurable. In hindsight, it would have been better to avoid trying to fix what wasn't broken. Alternatively, it would have been better to query the training of the coach, who may very well have been extremely experienced in the practice of running or even in the mechanics of sports physiology, but not in the psychology of a coaching relationship. As I reinvigorate myself through a re-applied devotion to running, I take on board some of the precepts of a strengths-based approach with an aim to apply them through a self-coaching practice. Onwards and upwards!



Inspiring Oneself & Others: Let's Coach the ABC of Coaching Psychology

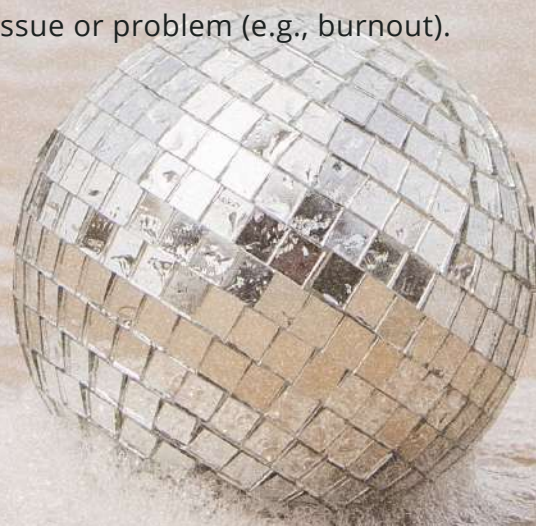
By Liliana Ferreira da Costa & Bernardo Corrêa d'Almeida

Coaching has been one of the greatest fields that transfers across different contexts when we talk about self-improvement. When we talk about self-improvement the line can be narrow and yet at the same time complex, with system-level interventions addressing different areas such as coaching psychology, organisational psychology, clinical psychology, mindfulness, and other different approaches related to coaching.

Thinking Outside of the Box

Let's think outside of the box and have the consciousness that nowadays the world has been focusing on coping strategies in multiple forms and spreading across different contexts. Coaching psychology has been increasingly applied in companies to help employees form positive coping strategies.

Coaching and psychology both offer insights to enhance and develop oneself, the team, and the company itself. Leadership effectiveness, psychosocial risks, burnout, and other constructs are the focus of coaching for organisations. The differences between these two fields of practice lie in the necessity to coach and help others to develop hard and soft skills in a specific role (addressing organisational psychology, as an example). Coaching psychology addresses the necessity for a deep focus on these constructs and involves working with the client, company, and team to heal, develop, and advance from a specific issue or problem (e.g., burnout).



The ABC of Coaching Psychology

According to Palmer and Whybrow (2019), coaching has been increasing all over the world, inspiring a variety of contexts, professionals, and approaches; including behavioural, cognitive-behavioural, humanistic, existential, being-focused, constructive, and systemic approaches. Coaching not only addresses organisational psychology. While clinical psychology and/or other fields work with strategies of coaching by developing some form of the self and improving some skills of the person, team, and/or company, coaching psychology has also been one of the important fields to work with a personal issue. This could be regarding some of the psychosocial risks that threaten the health of a person, team, or company.

Leadership has been one of the greatest themes of coaching—it inspires management from diverse contexts, leading to the improvement of the self, the team, and/or the company. Thus, it is also important to not forget the concept of emotional intelligence, which addresses the necessity to lead a person or a team. This is done by enhancing individual and/or team abilities, such as soft and hard skills, that in some part of the time can be out of their consciousness. In these cases, the role of a coaching psychologist is to understand what are the skills that can help to self-improve and culminate in a state of well-being for the person. This kind of process will culminate in more awareness and consciousness about the self and will increase knowledge and performance in the role of a team player. These kinds of system-level interventions also address the role of a coach, which can enhance the performance of a team by adopting strategies such as mindfulness, knowledge and consciousness about sustainability, among others.

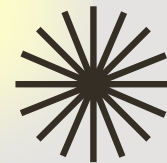
Inspiring Oneself & Others

Inspiring oneself by training self-improvement and then inspiring others by role-modelling their example is one of the key factors of the success of a company. When we talk about leadership, we talk about lives; lives that address the concept of a team that follows their leader or their colleague who delegates tasks. When the enterprise gives emphasis to the needs of a person, individually or in a group, it automatically gives the example of how to manage a team.

In this sense, the applicability of a coaching psychologist and a coach also addresses the context and sustainability, focusing on themes including individual transitions in life and work, and complexity regarding system-level interventions. Also, ethical practice is one of the good outcomes that enhances well-being inside of a company.

In this particular scope, this article about coaching psychology can hopefully be an important text for anyone seeking to understand the psychology underpinning coaching practice.





Coaching Psychology in Practice: Continuing Professional Development Pathways to Make an Impactful Difference in People's Lives

By Christin Tan

Lifelong learning and continuing professional development (CPD) are related concepts. However, lifelong learning is broader in scope and includes all forms of learning, while CPD specifically refers to professional development activities undertaken to maintain and improve professional skills and competencies (BPS, 2017).

Why CPD in Coaching Psychology

CPD is essential in coaching psychology to maintain high professional standards, enhance skills and competencies, meet regulatory requirements, keep pace with change, meet client needs, and advance careers. By engaging in ongoing CPD, coaching psychologists can continuously improve their practice and provide the highest quality services to their clients (HCPC, 2022).

1. Maintain Professional Standards

CPD helps coaching psychologists stay up-to-date with the latest trends, developments, and best practices in the field, ensuring that they maintain high professional standards.

2. Enhance Skills and Competencies

CPD activities can help coaching psychologists enhance their skills and competencies in areas such as coaching techniques, psychological assessment, and ethical practice.

3. Meet Regulatory Requirements

Many professional bodies and regulatory organisations require coaching psychologists to engage in CPD activities in order to maintain their certification or licensure.

4. Keep Pace with Change

The field of coaching psychology is constantly evolving, with new research, tools, and techniques emerging all the time. CPD helps coaching psychologists keep pace with these changes and remain relevant and effective in their practice.

5. Meet Client Needs

CPD activities can help coaching psychologists better understand and meet the needs of their clients, including those with diverse backgrounds, needs, and goals.



6. Career Advancement

Engaging in CPD activities can help coaching psychologists advance their careers by expanding and deepening their knowledge and skills, building their reputation and credibility, and opening up new opportunities for professional growth.

CPD Pathways in Coaching Psychology

Here are some possible CPD pathways in coaching psychology:

1

Continuing Education Courses

Continuing education courses can provide a structured way to deepen knowledge and skills in coaching psychology. There are a variety of courses available, including postgraduate degrees and qualifications, online learning, webinars, and self-paced programmes.



2

Reading and Research

Keeping up-to-date with the latest research in coaching psychology can help practitioners stay informed about new practices and approaches. Reading academic journals, books, and conducting research can all help coaching psychologists stay current and informed.

3

Ethical Reflective Practice

Coaching psychologists can engage in ethical reflective practice by reflecting on their coaching experience and identifying areas for growth and development. This involves a process of self-evaluation and self-awareness that can help practitioners improve their coaching skills, ethical practice, and effectiveness over time (BPS, 2017).

4

Coaching Supervision

Coaching supervision provides a structured and supportive environment for coaching psychologists to reflect on their practice, receive feedback, and enhance their skills. It is also a requirement for accreditation by some professional coaching psychology organisations (ISCP, 2019).

5

Collaboration and Networking

Coaching psychologists can collaborate with colleagues and other professionals in the field to share knowledge and expertise, and to learn from one another. This includes participating in professional organisations and activities, special interest groups, and communities of practice (SPS, 2023).

6

Attending Conferences, Seminars and Workshops

Attending conferences, seminars, and workshops related to coaching psychology can provide an opportunity to network with peers, learn about new research and practices, and gain new insights and perspectives. Many professional organisations offer conferences, seminars, and workshops throughout the year.

7

Developing Coaching Specialties

Developing a coaching specialty can help coaching psychologists to differentiate themselves from others in the field and enhance their expertise in a specific area. This can involve developing specialised skills and knowledge, attending conferences and workshops related to the specialty, and networking with other professionals in the area (CMA, 2020).

8

Mentoring

Mentoring can provide a valuable opportunity for coaching psychologists to receive guidance and feedback from more experienced professionals in the field. This can help practitioners identify areas for improvement and further enhance their skills.

9

Peer Coaching

Peer coaching provides an opportunity for coaching psychologists to receive feedback from their peers and practice their skills in a supportive environment. It can be a valuable way to develop coaching skills, ethical practice, and build relationships with other professionals in the field (BPS, 2023).

Opportunities for Coaching Psychologists to Make an Impactful Difference in People's Lives

A **critical applied understanding of psychological knowledge** can be a key differentiator for coaching psychologists to make a difference. Practitioners ought to have a deep understanding of psychological theories and research that are relevant to coaching psychology. This includes understanding concepts such as motivation, emotion, cognition and behaviour, as well as how they apply to inform coaching practice (BPS, 2022).

Coaching psychologists can tailor coaching interventions to meet the specific needs of individual clients and use **evidence-based** strategies to help clients achieve their goals. This includes questioning assumptions, identifying limitations, and recognising the cultural and contextual factors that have an influence on the client. It involves recognising individual differences in personality, motivation and learning style, and adapting coaching interventions accordingly (BPS, 2022).

Coaching psychologists are mindful of ethical considerations when applying psychological knowledge in coaching practice. They avoid the use of techniques or behaviours that could potentially be harmful or exploitative. They maintain appropriate boundaries and respect the autonomy and confidentiality of clients. In fact, coaching psychologists **regularly reflect on their own ethical practice** and behaviours.



This includes reflecting on their biases, assumptions and values, as well as their own strengths and limitations as a practitioner. Self-reflection can help coaching psychologists identify areas for improvement and ensure they are providing the best possible service to their clients (BPS, 2017).

In the event that coaching psychologists encounter ethical dilemmas in their work, such as conflict of interest, breach of confidentiality, or issues related to diversity and inclusion, they have strategies in place to deal with these dilemmas, including seeking guidance from supervisor, colleagues or professional organisations. By doing so, coaching psychologists can ensure their competence and effectiveness in providing professional, ethical, and high-quality coaching services to their clients, thereby increasing the **likelihood of a favourable outcome, and making an impactful difference in people's lives.**



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