

CONVERSATIONS...

IN SEARCH OF THE INNER SELF

ICF Bengaluru
Charter Chapter

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Consciously Coach Self, Others and Teams



From the Editorial Desk

Consciously Coach Self, Others and Teams

In the journey to be coaches, we try to become as invisible as possible in the coaching process while focusing our attention fully on the coachee. This takes a lot of experience and self-observation. To do this, one must consciously shift focus to observing ourselves in order to keep developing. In this instance, charity begins at home: This edition is rich with insights and musings on coaching the Self, the Client and Team.

Increasingly, eminent coaches such as Peter Hawkins talk about systemic coaching or coaching which will benefit the entire ecosystem. Team coaching is a good first step in moving towards this objective. Inward reflection and self-work is important. So is an effective coaching process and listening with all our senses. Team coaching has its own challenges, structures and processes. What helps perhaps is learning by example, with an eye on the dream that is masterful coaching, not to forget keeping a laser like intention.

We are pleased to present a medley of contributions from our coaches which touch upon all these above aspects. We hope you read, enjoy, and comment on them and we also hope that this spurs you on to pen your thoughts and share your learnings with us and this robust community of coaches as well. We thank Vidhi Vala, our production and design partner who has designed and supported the past several editions from her remote locations whether Mumbai or Canada.

We look forward to hearing from you. Please note our new email address is communications@icfbengaluru.org.

With best wishes,

Gayatri Krishnamurthy
Editor, *Conversations...In search of the Self*

Amita Bharath
Co-editor.



Gayatri Krishnamurthy (ICF-PCC)

Gayatri is a leadership coach and consultant who believes that what you come in with is important but what you do with it is the defining difference. She has over 30 years experience and is an alumna of XLRI Jamshedpur and a Senior Practitioner (EMCC) and a PCC (ICF).

She writes regularly on HR issues for SMEs in Moneycontrol.com and general interest articles for TimesOnline. She heads the Research and Publications Division for the ICF Bangalore Charter Chapter, and co-edits the Chapter's digital magazine, Conversations...In search of the Inner Self.

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From The President's Desk

Dear Members,

I take this opportunity to congratulate our Research & Publications Director Gayatri Krishnamurthy & her Team in opening the year of 2024 with inspirational articles by eight Authors under the banner of *Consciously coach Self, Others & Teams*.

Sunil Kumar Vaya writes about *Navigating The Coach Inside: Meeting Clients where they are on their Journey*; Sunil Satyendra aka Poet-Coach Pungi Dasa has shared his insightful thoughts with *Listening*. Rajeshwari MS has written a heartfelt and poetic *A Coach's Prayer*. Shanti Sharma has contributed her musings on co creating a client- led, coach- supported transformation in *Content & Process in Harmony*. Sreenivas Nagappa has shared his concern about the inherent limits created by labels that we may ascribe to others and situations. His contribution is the *Tyranny of Labels*. Preeti Kumari has shared her in-depth knowledge on Team Coaching as an intervention and how it is distinct from other team focussed activities. Her article is entitled *Team Coaching is complex yet Critical in the Global Workplace*. Rachel Gojer has leveraged her considerable experience to unpack the potential of team coaching to break down the uncomfortable issues (The Elephant) in the team. Her article is headlined *Use Team Coaching to Tame the Elephant in the Room*. Rashmi Saran has written a fictionalized account of Coaching entitled *The Transformation*. She has focussed on the art of effective Leadership in setting healthy boundaries, and in this way inspiring others, shaping Visions and guiding Teams towards achieving common goals.

The benefits of Authoring and Publishing certainly increases one's credibility, Increasing prestige, visibility & potentially bagging Speaking Engagements.

As you know, we—the current MC-- will be handing over charge. I urge the Bengaluru Charter Chapter members to consider volunteering their time and putting their names up in the upcoming elections for a new MC team. It has been an exciting 2 years and we have sown the seeds for a more vibrant and inclusive chapter.

With warm regards and Best wishes for a successful 2024!



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Navigating The Coach Inside: Meeting Clients where they are on their Journey

By Sunil Kumar Vaya

As a seasoned corporate leader transitioning into the realm of coaching, I carried with me a wealth of experience, a repertoire of leadership skills, and a robust toolkit for problem-solving. Little did I know that the journey from executive suites to coaching sessions would demand a significant paradigm shift—one that involved shedding preconceived notions and learning the art of meeting the client where they are on their unique journey.

The initial stages of my coaching journey were marked by a subtle struggle. My inclination was to draw parallels between the intricate challenges of the corporate world and the dilemmas presented by my clients. It seemed almost intuitive to apply my extensive

Coaching is the crafting of a bespoke journey of transformation and co-creation, writes Sunil Kumar Vaya. This recognition has been critical in his evolution.

experience to swiftly diagnose issues and prescribe solutions. However, this approach proved to be an obstacle to the essence of coaching—the profound understanding that each client's journey is inherently unique.

The breakthrough came when I recognized the importance of not superimposing my experiences onto the narratives of my clients. Coaching is not about projecting my solutions

onto their canvas but rather co-creating a masterpiece where the client's unique colors, strokes, and shades take center stage. It demanded a conscious effort to step back, unlearn the reflex to provide immediate answers, and embrace the uncertainty that often accompanies a client's personal or professional journey.

This shift in perspective required a genuine commitment to understanding the client's context, challenges, and aspirations without the bias of my own professional background. It meant being fully present in their narrative, listening with empathy, and asking the right questions that would illuminate the path they wished to explore.

One pivotal lesson was that the corporate boardroom and the coaching space are distinct arenas. While my corporate journey armed me with valuable insights, it was imperative to recognize that coaching is not about showcasing my expertise but about empowering the client to unearth their own solutions. This realization marked the beginning of my mastery of the art of meeting the client where they are on their journey.

The transformative journey included developing the skill of active listening, a quality often underrated but indispensable in coaching. It meant creating a safe space where clients could express their thoughts, fears, and dreams without the fear of judgment. By embracing this vulnerability, a deeper

connection was forged, enabling a more profound exploration of their goals and hindrances.

Over time, I learned to appreciate the beauty of diverse journeys. Each client's narrative became a unique tapestry, woven with individual threads of experiences, challenges, and aspirations. The art of meeting them where they are evolved into a dance—an intricate choreography where I followed their lead, respecting the rhythm and tempo of their progress.

Today, as I reflect on this journey of evolution, the significance of meeting clients where they are resounds more than ever. It's about recognizing that coaching is not a one-size-fits-all endeavour but a bespoke partnership crafted to honour the client's narrative. It's about understanding that the client's journey is the compass, and my role as a coach is to guide, illuminate, and empower them to reach their destination.

In thoroughly practicing the art of meeting the client where they are, I've not only enriched the coaching experience for my clients but also deepened my own understanding of the profound impact that can be achieved through genuine, client-centric coaching. This journey continues to be a testament to the transformative power of embracing each client's unique story—a narrative that unfolds not in the shadow of my corporate past but in the vibrant light of their aspirations.



Sunil Kumar Vaya.(ICF-PCC)

Sunil is a CXO coach, a behaviour and Growth architect : Building leadership consciousness, and facilitating personal & Professional Growth. He helps clients rediscover themselves at their core and gain clarity, confidence and focus on what's most important to them. He partners with them to find their purpose, passion, and growth trajectory.

Sunil worked for 27 years as Corporate executive and 2 years in the development sector. He loves coaching youngsters and practices positive Consciousness and designs transformation through stress free success and fulfillment.

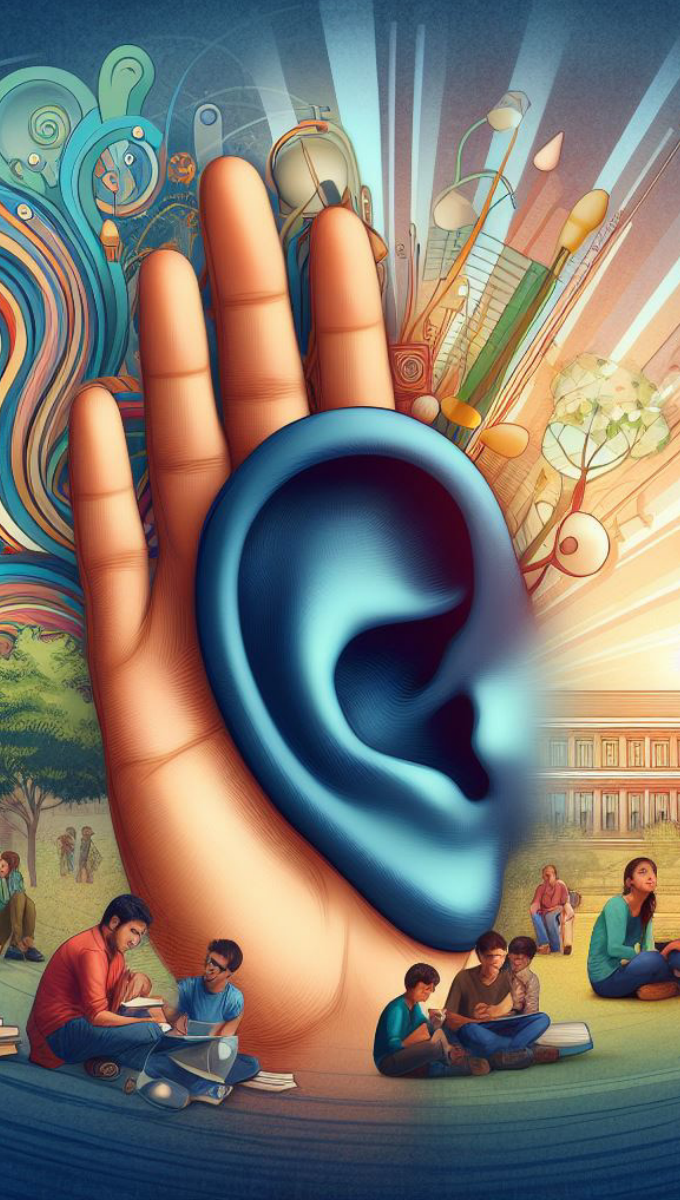
In his professional life, he has combined deeply informed coaching with a humble corporate journey of 15 million minutes spent on a growth path. He has experienced Success, Joy, struggle & Challenges in Leadership with MNCs.

He finished his Post graduate degree from IIM Bangalore with Gold Medal and also ACMA & ACS. Sunil did his masters in Advanced-psychology and Neuro linguistic programming.

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Listening

By Pungi Dasa

I am listening with my eyes,
I am seeing with my ears,
The words being used, the stories weaved and
the lores being sung when she goes to sleep.

I share what I hear,
I offer it back.
And wait in silence.

I am still hearing, listening,
Tuned in to smiles, twitches, seat shifts,
eye movements, voice, tempo, diction, energy,
vibes and persona!

The coach with the thousand ears and eyes,
Curious, double tapping stories,
zooming in to make new discoveries.

There is no attachment to the stories,
but a definite subscription to what they are sharing.

To adventures, challenges and more that are shared -
My eyes and ears are open like Meerkats
on the lookout, akin to Elephant ears sensing things far away...

At times, navigating the unknown, unseen,
and unheard wisdom of Sanathana existence.

I listen in silence, whilst the spoken and
unspoken build jigsaw puzzles to the other side.

And just like that, all that I have listened to is let go.
It's not mine to hold onto.

I am an observer,
I listen with my eyes
I see with my ears.

*Sanathana – denoting the eternal



Sunil Sathyendra

Sunil Sathyendra is famous in writing circles as Pungidasa and in coaching circles as NimmaCoach, (Your Coach) in Kannada.

Sunil's passions include writing, podcasting, philately, photography and more. He has been into writing for more than 12 years and has penned more than 5000 poems and 150 short stories in English.

Connecting with people through words, emotions and stories is one of his favourite pastimes. He is also interested in volunteering, fundraising and currently raises funds for rural scholarships via his annual poetry subscription.

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A Coach's Prayer

By Rajeshwari MS

In her anguish she stands, lost;
And I feel the burden fall on me.
To get her through her darkest hour,
So she becomes all she can be.
The darkness she needs to walk through
To get to the other side.
The inner journey that's hers to make,
As scars heal and tears subside.

I walk on Nature's path, lost in reverie.
This gushing river I liken to her life,
As it charts its way to the sea.
How to help her brave rough tides?
Help her climb the mountain so high?
And achieve her lofty goals?
For every time I see her stumble,
I fear she'll go off course.

But looking up at the vast blue sky,
I ask myself searchingly.
To move her to her highest goal,
Is that really on me?

I see the gardener tend his patch
"Look" he says, pointing to the mango tree
"Three long years since I planted the seed
And watered it long into the day.
I prayed and willed it to quickly grow,
But for years I waited in vain"

"Here's what I know now" he continued
I only had to nourish the tree,
Leaving the rest to nature's way
My job was just to plant the seed"

"Because there are myriad trees, you see
And each its own time needs;
Some one day, some a hundred years.
It's not my place to rush, because of my fears"

Reflecting on his words so wise,
I walk back home in the warm twilight.
I think about what she really needs,
Can I release my burden to make it right?
When I let go of the need to save her,
This need I have to heal and help her
To show up each day as fully me,
Then I can truly be what she needs.

Like a butterfly with its cocoon behind,
She sheds the old; new wings she finds
She knows on her own, the truth profound
That there will come another dawn.

And with that she'll move forth
Not taking her life's gift for granted
Embracing change, strength renewed
She will bloom where she's planted.

The truth is neither the garden nor water we need be
Without expectations and whole-heartedly
Working with surrender brings its own bliss
As the gardener does the Maker's work
In a garden that's not his.



Rajeshwari MS (ICF-PCC)

Rajeshwari has 15 years of experience in the People Development space –Leadership Coaching, Training, Business HR and Cross-geo engagement. She currently works as a Leadership Coach, helping leaders in organisations build world-class people leadership practices. Her key focus areas within leadership are in Emotional Intelligence, Managing Transitions and Performance Coaching.

With an MBA in HR and a Masters in Psychology, Rajeshwari holds a PCC credential from the International Coaching Federation. She is also a certified Master Practitioner in Neuro-Linguistic Programming [NLP] with a Richard-Bandler certified 'Advanced Diploma in NLP Coaching' Rajeshwari conducts 360 assessments for Leaders and is certified in EQi 2.0, EQ360, Hogans, DiSC and Belbin frameworks. A strong believer in Positive Psychology, Rajeshwari takes a strength-based approach to building competencies, changing behaviours and achieving goals.

In her free time she enjoys singing, playing the piano, reading and working on her wellness goals.

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The Dance of Coaching` ***Process and Content in Harmony***

By Shanti Sharma

In the realm of coaching a captivating dance unfolds, where the coach orchestrates the steps and the client brings the music to life. Just as a choreographer guides a dancer's movements, the coach guides the coaching process, while the client provides the content, weaving together a transformative journey. This dance beautifully illustrates the symbiotic relationship between the coach's role in shaping the process and the client's role in creating the content.

The Client: Artist of Their Life Canvas

Imagine a blank canvas awaiting the artist's touch—a canvas filled with possibilities, waiting to come alive with colour and imagination. In coaching, the client brings their

Shanti Sharma captures the co-creation of personal growth and transformation through the metaphors of dance and music.

experiences, dreams, and challenges to the coaching canvas. They paint their life's portrait with the brushstrokes of their unique story.

The Coach as the Architect of the Coaching Landscape

Imagine an architect designing a structure, carefully considering every element for functionality and aesthetics. Similarly, the coach crafts the coaching process, blending techniques, tools, and methodologies to create a safe and supportive environment. Like an architect who ensures a building's stability, the coach ensures the coaching process's integrity.

"A coach opens the door; the client must enter." By Diane Menendez

The coach introduces a variety of doors, but it's the client who chooses which to open. The coach facilitates exploration, but it's the client's voice that resonates in the corridors of their own growth.

Let us look at an example:

Smita: The Aspiring Writer

Smita came to coaching with a passion for writing but was clouded by self-doubt. In this case, the coach takes on the role of process architect by designing the coaching sessions, setting the structure and creating a supportive space for Smita. The coach brings in various techniques, tools, and methodologies, just as an architect considers every element in building design.

During the coaching sessions, the coach doesn't provide answers or content for Smita. Instead, they guide her through a series of questions and activities. This is where Smita, the client, takes center stage as the content creator. She brings her thoughts, feelings, and experiences into the coaching conversations. The coach encourages her to explore her self-doubts and fears, much like an artist uncovering the hidden details in a painting.

The transformative journey unfolds as Smita reflects on her life and aspirations. The coach's role is to support this exploration. Together, they craft a unique narrative that helps Smita gain clarity about her career path. The coach ensures the coaching process remains on track, just as an architect ensures the building's integrity. However, Smita's self-discovery and growth are the result of her active participation, making her the primary content contributor.

"The client's voice guides the melody of coaching; the coach conducts the symphony." By Richard Strozzi-Heckler.

The client's insights, reflections, and revelations form the heartbeat of the coaching journey. They, the client, are the storytellers, and the coach, the listener, who helps them amplify their narrative.

In a coaching partnership, both roles are pivotal. The coach sets the stage, establishes

trust, and offers guidance, while the client enriches the experience with their unique perspective and aspirations. This interplay creates a dynamic, collaborative space where personal transformation flourishes.

A coach provides structure and direction and the client adds the colors and textures, resulting in a masterpiece of self-discovery and growth. It's a dance that combines the coach's expertise in facilitating change with the client's wisdom in navigating their own path.

So, whether you step into the role of a coach or a client, remember that this dance is a beautiful collaboration. Just as a choreographer and dancer create a harmonious performance, the coach and client co-create a symphony of personal development, where process and content meld to craft a profound journey of transformation.

Navigating the Coaching Journey: The Symbiosis of the Coach and Client

Have you ever heard the saying, "It takes two to tango" ? Well, the world of coaching is no different. Imagine coaching as a dance between two partners, each with their unique roles and responsibilities. In this graceful pas de deux, the coach orchestrates the steps, while the client brings the music to life. This is the captivating world where the coach is largely responsible for the process, and the client takes the lead in creating the content.

The Coach: The Choreographer of Transformation

Picture this: a dance choreographer meticulously plans the dance routines, selecting the right moves to express the story and emotions. Similarly, a coach designs the coaching process, creating a safe and supportive environment for the client's growth journey. Just as a choreographer's guidance shapes the dancer's performance, a coach's skillful questioning and active listening guide the client towards clarity and self-discovery.

"The coach's role is not to teach, but to facilitate learning and growth." By Unknown

The coach is like a compass, helping the client navigate the vast sea of possibilities. The coach brings powerful tools and techniques to the table, but the magic lies in their ability to empower the client to discover their own path. It's like handing over the map and compass to the adventurer, allowing them to choose their route.

The Client as the Composer of the Personal Symphony

Imagine a composer crafting a symphony, choosing each note and instrument to create a harmonious masterpiece. In coaching, the client is the composer of their life's symphony. They bring their unique experiences, aspirations, and challenges to the session, setting the tone and direction.

Sarah's Entrepreneurial Journey

Meet Sarah, a determined aspiring entrepreneur with a burning desire to launch her business. She sought out a coach as she recognized the need for strategic guidance to navigate the complex terrain of entrepreneurship. Just as a conductor brings together various instruments, sets the tempo, and ensures harmony among musicians, the coach in Sarah's life shapes the coaching process. The coach introduces Sarah to the world of strategic planning and business development, aligning the techniques and tools required, much like the conductor selecting the right instruments and setting the rhythm. The coach provides a framework, guidance, and a supportive environment where Sarah can explore and develop her business idea.

Sarah, on the other hand, is the composer of her own personal symphony, which is her entrepreneurial journey. She brings her unique experiences, aspirations, and creative vision to

the coaching sessions. Her passion for her business is the driving force, similar to how a composer infuses emotions into each note of a musical composition.

The Synergy: The coaching sessions serve as the stage for this symphony. The coach acts as the conductor who sets the stage for Sarah's performance. While the coach introduces Sarah to the elements of strategic planning, Sarah infuses her unique melodies – her dreams, her determination, and her vision – into the composition of her business venture.

This dynamic interplay between coach and client results in a harmonious symphony of entrepreneurship. The coach ensures that the process is orchestrated effectively, just as a conductor guides a musical performance to perfection. At the same time, it is Sarah's creativity, commitment, and unwavering passion that become the notes in this entrepreneurial masterpiece.

Ultimately, Sarah's entrepreneurial journey is a symphony she composes, with the coach as the conductor who ensures that the elements align and harmonize.

John's Story as the Canvas

John's career experiences, dreams, and doubts form the canvas of this artistic journey. Just like a blank canvas holds the potential for a captivating painting, John's career change situation held the potential for a new chapter in his professional life. It was in this space that he began to draw out his uncertainties, his aspirations, and his hidden passions.

The Coach as the Guiding Brushstroke: The coach, acting as the guiding brushstroke, helps John explore these uncertainties and hesitations with a sense of purpose. Much like a painter's stroke on the canvas brings life to the artwork, the coach's questions act as sparks, igniting John's dormant ideas. Through introspection, John starts to see the hues and

shades of his true calling.

The Synergy: In this creative process, where the coach's reflective mirror and John's career narrative merge, a remarkable transformation takes place. It's like a master artist collaborating with a guide, each contributing their expertise to craft a meaningful piece of art.

As John unravels his hidden passions and aspirations, the coach, as the guiding brushstroke, helps him refine and define his career path. The canvas, once marked by uncertainty, now is painted with John's true passions and a sense of clarity.

Together, they create a career masterpiece that's both a reflection of John's inner world and the result of their collaborative efforts. It's a testament to the power of coaching and self-discovery, much like an artist finding inspiration and purpose in their art.

"The client is the expert of their life; the coach is the facilitator of their journey."

By unknown

In this dance of coaching, both partners are essential. The coach creates the space, sets the rhythm, and offers guidance, while the client contributes the raw material and sets the pace. Together, they create a masterpiece, an exploration of self that leads to growth, change, and meaningful outcomes.

So, next time you step into a coaching session, remember this enchanting dance. As the coach gently leads, and the client gracefully engages, they co-create a beautiful symphony of transformation, where the process and content intertwine to compose a unique melody of growth.



Shanti Sharma (ICF-PCC)

Shanti is an ICF PCC certified coach and a Coach to Transformation Certified Mentor Coach (CMCC). She is also pursuing Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) certification and Transactional Analysis (TA). Her intention is to use these tools and techniques to transform as many lives as possible through coaching. She is on the ICF Bengaluru Charter Chapter Board as the Director of Learning and Events.

Shanti is also a certified Harrison Assessor, Belbin Assessor, and Interaction Styles Assessor. She leverages the holistic awareness derived from these reports to complement several learning interventions.

She has been a Learning and Organizational Development professional for over 26 years. Her experience ranges from end to end management of the L&D function to supporting organizational development initiatives.

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The Tyranny of Labels

By Sreenivas Nagappa

Imagine walking into a shop to buy a shirt and the shelves have a great range but the individual shirts have no labels; no sizes are indicated. So how do you know what to buy? Trust your eyes to pick the right size? Or try on lots of them until one fits? And of course, you wish the shop would have the sense to put a simple label on the merchandise so that you easily find your collar size 41.

Labels are ubiquitous in our lives – from what we buy to how we view people. As we all know, labels can be hugely useful – in certain situations. And these are typically when there is an absolute truth e.g., ‘Length 15 cm’ or ‘Contains

Nuts’ or ‘Date of Manufacture xxx.’ And they allow us to process information quickly e.g. head straight for the ‘Dairy’ section when we need to buy yogurt.

And while very useful in buying merchandise, their use in how we interact with people is fraught with danger. I can recall numerous instances of telling someone not to be “defensive,” only for them to get upset and for the conversation to go nowhere. In this case, clearly the label was seen as being unfair, unjust, and just wrong. (By the way “unfair” is also one more label!). And this is simply because there is no absolute truth about how people behave, about who they are, about their aspirations – in fact anything about people. And since we use labels to pigeon-hole people, and therefore how we treat them, (the forerunner of the Diversity debate), this leads to a lot of angst. I remember, one of my early coaching clients whom I had mistakenly labelled a ‘Climber,’ whereas she wished to be seen as an ‘Expert’ and had no interest in promotions. And I

Sreenivas Nagappa writes about the need to cultivate an awareness of the limits that are inherent in labels. They may blind us to aspects of individuals that do not conform to the labels, he cautions the reader.

kept pushing for what she needed to do to get promoted until she just walked away from the coaching – because she rightly concluded that I did not understand her.

Labels are also what we often use to judge ourselves and justify certain courses of action. One of my highly successful clients told me that he suffers from 'Imposter Syndrome.' He has had this for years even as he kept moving up the corporation with enviable speed. And he uses this label almost as an excuse - for being a pessimist , for being low on confidence- in effect for self-sabotage.

How often have we heard our Coachees talking of not networking because they are Introverts. While I guess, genes do contribute to our mental make up to some extent, we are largely, through adult life, shaped by our experiences. So just because I was a shy kid with no friends when I was growing up does not mean that I cannot begin to reach out to people and build a network. But we do not do this because the label we have given ourselves constrains us.

In addition, many labels denote 0 or 1, i.e. binary situations. But life, business, relationships, likes, dislikes...almost anything is not binary. It is very possible to be a football fan and also like motor sports; just as it is possible to be a non-vegetarian but really enjoy a dish that has no meat in it. Indeed, even the management gurus exhort us to be either 1 or 2 in our industry in order to be labelled successful – which must mean that even the 2nd company

is successful. So, being 2nd does not mean anything bad. In fact, many years ago Avis, the car rental company, made a virtue of being no.2 through their wildly famous ads 'We are number two. We try harder.'

As coaches, what can we do to liberate both ourselves as well as the people we work with from this Tyranny of Labels? To my mind, the starting point is in the way we think. And think about these facets:

- Why should our definitions and standards necessarily be the way everyone needs to think?
- What gives me the right to define someone else's efforts as 'Success' or 'Failure'?
- Am I labelling a particular event (e.g. use of an expletive) or am I labelling the person?
- Will the label I am applying to the other person restrict my ability to process new information about them?
- In what way do the labels I use to describe myself act as a straight jacket and determine how I think and act?

While we recognize the utility of labels, we need to be aware of how they can also be ineffective or even detrimental to our objectives. They may even serve to blind us to the many positives of the relationships we nurture. With this awareness, we can liberate ourselves from attaching a label to ourselves and others. And, as a result, we can all flourish and grow, free from the tyranny of labels.



Sreenivas Nagappa (ICF-PCC)

Sreenivas is a CEO turned Coach. He brings the experience of having worked with large corporations like Unilever & Office Depot as well as with family-owned companies to help Leaders be successful. He is passionate about Thriving in an era of Disruption, Conflict Management and Running.

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Team Coaching is complex yet critical in the global workplace.

By Preeti Kumari

In today's complex and interconnected world, teams have become pivotal for organizational success, transcending geographical boundaries, and embracing diverse perspectives. A team is a cohesive group of individuals with complementary skills, committed to a common purpose and performance goals. They collaborate on tasks with shared responsibilities and interdependencies to achieve a collective goal.

In response to these demands, the rise of virtual collaboration as the new norm underscores the imperative for effective teamwork, fostering interdependent and trust-based partnerships

among multifunctional teams. The dynamic corporate landscape has shifted people management towards optimizing, managing, and measuring team performance. This has pointed up the increasing significance of team coaching.

The evolving corporate landscape has made the importance of team coaching even more apparent. This movement illustrates the growing importance of team coaching as an essential tool that unleashes the team's potential and cultivates a collaborative approach, strengthening the organization and ensuring an investment in its future.

Preeti Kumari differentiates between Team coaching and other interventions. Effective Team coaching releases the transformative potential of the collective entity, she writes.

In the current era, where teams are regarded as a major factor for achieving organizational goals and targets, recognizing that a team is more than a collection of individuals makes team coaching a strategic imperative. Its shared strengths, weaknesses, skills,

knowledge, and culture combine to create a single entity. Coaching teams is significantly different from coaching individuals due to the greater exposure and impact on the collective entity. Essentially, this entity becomes the "client" with whom the coaching relationship is established, focusing on the team as a cohesive clientele, not just the individuals within it.

Given its intricacy, team coaching is sometimes confused with other team development interventions, such as:

Team building - a short-term intervention aimed at fostering team cohesion and establishing a foundation for collaboration.

Team facilitation - focuses on guiding teams through specific problem-solving or capacity-building exercises. The facilitator steers the conversation towards a predetermined outcome, often addressing immediate team challenges.

Training - imparts specialised knowledge or skills to a group to enhance their collective performance. It's a targeted approach to equipping teams with the necessary tools to tackle specific tasks or processes.

Consulting - involves an expert providing external guidance and insights on a particular problem or situation. The consultant acts as a knowledge repository, offering recommendations and solutions.

By contrast, **team coaching** serves as a transformative force, releasing the full potential of teams through reflection, interaction, and actionable strategies. This collaborative approach involves the coach, leader, and team working together to tap into their collective capabilities, fostering sustainable and cooperative achievements.

The unique approach to the team coaching provides immense benefits to the teams by improving their productivity and performance. Beyond immediate performance gains, team coaching empowers organizations by

enhancing communication to build robust relationships. equips teams to effectively navigate interdependencies. It is an investment that instills resilience, adaptability, and innovation, enabling teams to thrive in the evolving landscape and make a lasting impact on growth and success.

The journey starts with identifying the teams or situations that require team coaching:

- **Varied Team:** Applies to executive, cross-functional, intact, new, and matrix-based teams.
- **Impactful Transition:** Valuable during significant changes in leadership or team composition.
- **Tackling Critical Needs:** Excels when fresh perspectives, reflection, or improved decision-making are essential.
- **Addressing Common Issues:** trust deficits, communication breakdowns, conflicts, burnout, and organizational challenges.

Following this, the deliberate steps are designed to improve team dynamics:

- **Foundation** - Define goals, establish a coaching relationship, and set timelines.
- **Phase of Diagnosis** - Examine team dynamics through individual meetings and assessments.
- **Kick-off Phase** - Create a team contract, define focus areas, and commit to the coaching process.
- **Coaching Sessions** - Regular, monthly meetings for continuous learning and growth.
- **Assessment and Sustainability** - Review progress, measure success, and sustain reflective practices.

Organizations can assess the benefits of team coaching through these indicators:

- **Cohesiveness** - This takes place when all

- members of the team feel like they belong and are respected for their contributions and voices in a psychologically safe environment.
- **Resilience** - A team's resilience is its capacity to accept new members, deal with loss, adjust to change, and handle pressure.
- **Healthier environment** - Reduces the number of HR issues and achieves peace among the staff and community.
- **Clarity** - This is the collective, comprehensive understanding of the problem or situation and its contributing factors. After this is accomplished, a workable solution can be created.
- understanding.
- **Buy-In and Time Commitment:** Securing buy-in, comprehending session durations, and facilitating collaborative effort are crucial, given the significant time commitment.
- **Regular Check-ins:** Conduct regular check-ins on team objectives, performance, and stakeholder views to ensure measurable outcomes co-created with the entire team.
- **Grasping Team Dialogues:** The coach must skilfully grasp team dialogues, promoting reflection on both spoken and unspoken aspects, fostering safety, trust, and a culture that encourages genuine and challenging conversations.

Other common indicators may include:

- Increased team productivity
- Improved interpersonal relationships.
- Reduction of conflicts within the team
- Increased employee satisfaction
- Improved individual performance of team members.
- Develop a positive team culture:
- Increased innovation
- Boost employee retention

These measurable indicators underscore the importance of specific skills and readiness, not just from the coach but from the entire team and organization.

- **Coach Competencies:** The coach should possess individual coaching skills along with a deep understanding of team dynamics and organizational intricacies.
- **Team Awareness:** Teams lacking a full understanding of team coaching, exhibit resistance to change and may diminish the potential impact.
- **Team's Willingness:** The team's willingness, identified needs, and the readiness of the team, leader, and executive sponsor are vital for successful coaching.
- **Project Clarity:** Project effectiveness is tied to extensive data gathering during clarification, including why team coaching is chosen for this team and their current

Despite its transformative potential, team coaching comes with inherent complexities due to the involvement of multiple individuals and the inherent dynamism within a team. Complexities such as:

- **Managing Interpersonal Relationships:** Complexity arises from managing interpersonal relationships, intra-team dynamics, and considerations of rank and hierarchy.
- **Diverse Stakeholders:** Teams operate within a broader system, often with diverse stakeholders and competing perspectives.
- **Challenging and Unpredictable:** Team coaching lacks guaranteed outcomes, emphasizing the need for experimentation.

Confidentiality Challenges: Reporting regarding the coaching process to the larger organizational structure requires careful consideration of confidentiality. It is crucial to define and strongly contract what constitutes confidentiality within the team. Decisions on whether the team coach will discuss the themes that come up in the team sessions with another external stakeholder, or not. What information about the entire experience would the team provide to other stakeholders?

A team coach must strike a balance between maintaining confidentiality in one-on-one sessions and broader team discussions.

In Conclusion:

The purpose of team coaching extends beyond the immediate objectives of enhancing team performance and addressing

current challenges. Recognizing teams as complex, adaptive systems, team coaching becomes a strategic catalyst for building robust connections within both internal and external systems. An effective team coaching approach should seamlessly integrate into the broader HR management strategy, leveraging complementary mechanisms to foster accountability and sustain team momentum.

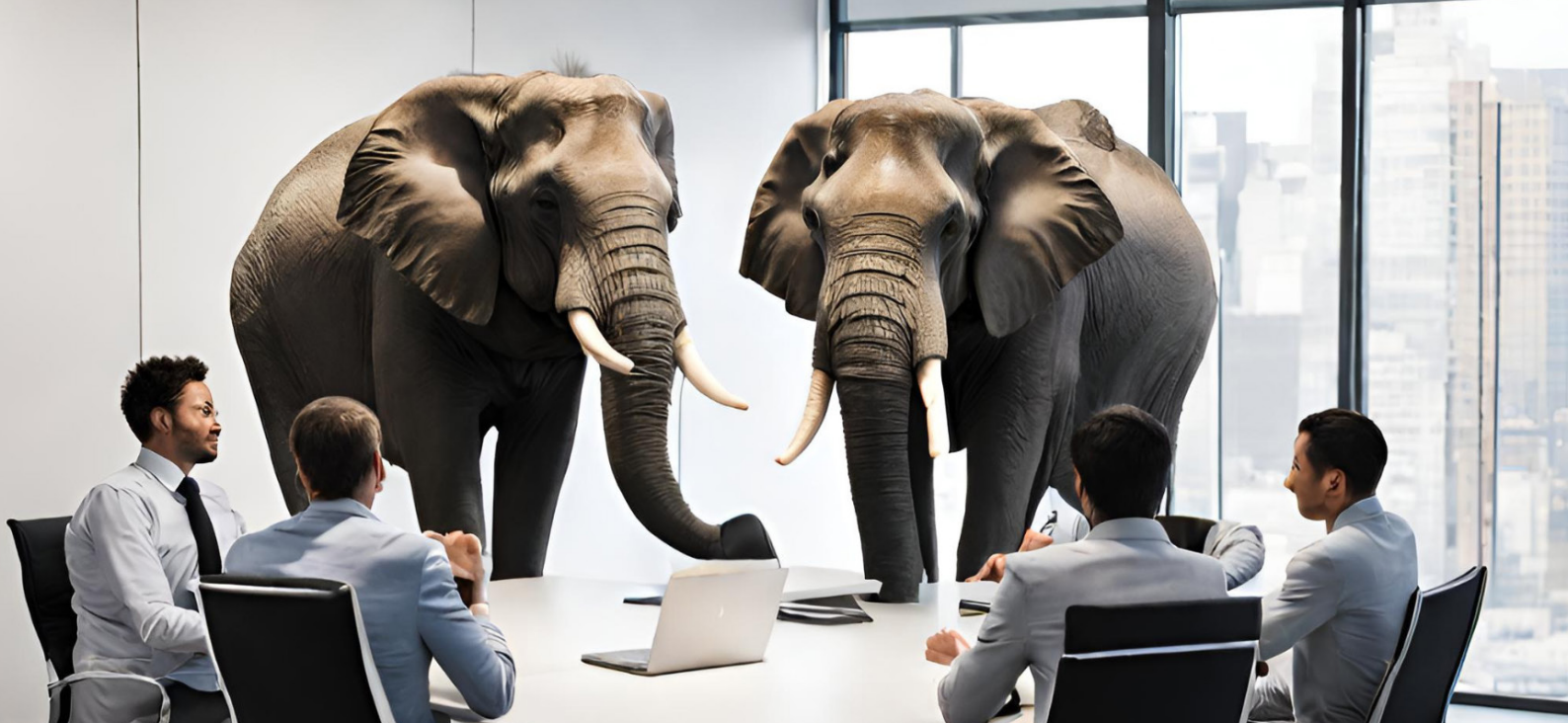


Preeti Kumari (ICF-ACC)

Preeti Kumari, an ICF ACC-credentialed and PCC-level certified coach, also holds an Advanced Certification in Team Coaching. She specializes in Executive Leadership and Systemic Team coaching. Her background spans roles as a University Professor, researcher, artist, and founder of a mentoring-focused company. With a global perspective gained from living in 5 different countries, she brings diverse experiences. An avid art enthusiast, Preeti also integrates art into coaching sessions to foster innovative thinking, problem-solving, and self-discovery. She believes in the unique potential of each individual and team for success. Her coaching philosophy emphasizes uniqueness and our integral connection to various systems. Passionate about continuous growth, she explores systemic thinking, design thinking, and innovation. Moreover, Preeti engages in long-term one-on-one and group/team coaching, addressing needs such as emotional intelligence, self-management, holistic development, managing workplace conflicts, fostering team cohesiveness, and navigating diverse team dynamics. She is also associated with an NGO dedicated to assisting career-lapsed women in returning to their careers.

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Use Team Coaching to Tame the Elephant in the Room

By Rachel Gojer

Most employees spend as much as 50% of their time every week in meetings.

At least half of that time is spent interacting with their team members. While this may lead to many productive outcomes, there will be behaviours, habits and individual traits that emerge that may not be agreeable to everyone. This is inevitable when human beings interact.

These behaviours often become the biggest challenge to team effectiveness. Some of these behaviours are:

1. The team member who never prepares for the meeting;
2. The boss who constantly sets unclear goals and then gets upset when they are not met;
3. Or the team member who rarely shows up for the work but needs to get all the credit.

Behaviours like these often go unaddressed and at some time become the elephant in the

Use the coaching approach to empower team members to have the necessary uncomfortable conversations, writes Team Coach Rachel Gojer

room. They irritate team members and make it hard to work together. Yet most teams rarely speak about these issues because:

1. Speaking about them can upset people.
2. May not lead to any change
3. People often don't have the skills to talk about these uncomfortable issues.
4. They expect the team leader to fix these issues.

But when such issues go unaddressed, they build up and at some point lead to disconnection and disengagement which in turn starts impacting the team outcomes.

One of the hallmarks of high-performing teams is that they can have candid conversations

about the uncomfortable issues, share feedback and develop ways to work that maximise individual strengths and compensate for individual drawbacks.

Team coaches are uniquely positioned to help teams create the space for uncomfortable conversations and enable teams to develop the skills to have these conversations because conversations around the "uncomfortable" are exactly what teams need to have to be more effective

The ability to empower a team to engage in uncomfortable discussions is a key part of a team coach's job. This is also documented in the ICF's Team Competency 4, Cultivating Trust and Safety, which states that *"In order for each team member to participate freely and meaningfully, the team coach must build a safe space within which each team member feels free to disagree with teammates or raise sensitive topics. A team coach challenges the team's assumptions, behaviours, and meaning-making processes to enhance their collective awareness or insight. A team composed of many individuals brings a multitude of assumptions, experiences, behaviors, and meaning-making processes to the collective effort. The diversity in these factors, if left unchecked, can lead to team dysfunction, but if harnessed properly, they can greatly enhance team performance."*

Here are some ways that team coaches can enable teams to speak about the Uncomfortable.

1. Create a space for uncomfortable conversations: Most teams meet frequently to discuss targets, strategies and other work-related activities. They also meet occasionally to share meals or have an away day. Yet they rarely create intentional time to speak about "how" they work together. A team coaching session can become the time that a team invests to have conversations about how they work with each other and how their habits

and behaviours affect each other.

2. Create norms for a safe conversation: Teams rarely have the skills to speak about the uncomfortable. This is why they don't. To facilitate a safe environment where sensitive and uncomfortable issues can be voiced, a good practice is to create norms. One way is to ask the team members at the start of the session, "What do each of you need from the team to be able to have this conversation openly?" Or "What would allow you to have this conversation without feeling unsafe?"

3. Create norms for feedback. Difficult conversations can also include negative feedback from some team members. Helping team members articulate how they would like to receive feedback for their improvement from their teammates is another respectful way that allows people to choose how to get feedback without feeling hurt or upset.

4. Hold space as people speak about what bothers them. Once the norms of safety and the feedback process have been established, the team is generally ready to move into a conversation on the uncomfortable. The team coach at this point can enable the team to speak to each other about things that they are unhappy about. Even with norms established for safety, it can still get uncomfortable for people to voice their concerns so it is the responsibility of the team coach to hold the space for the conversation as well as hold the team accountable to the norms of safety and feedback that they have created.

A Word of caution: This process can get directive and there is a high possibility of the coach starting to lean into facilitation or training over coaching.

Taking a coaching approach, by not becoming a mediator or problem-solver for the team, enables the team to use its potential and to develop the capacity to have these

conversations on their own in the long term. The thing about having hard conversations in the team is that it is almost like developing a muscle; the more the team does it the more

comfortable they get doing it. And as coaches, our job is to enable the team to build safety, capability and space to have these conversations.



Rachel Gojer (ICF-PCC)

Rachel Gojer is an Executive Coach for High Achieving Individuals and Teams. She has over 3000 hours of international coaching experience. Before becoming a coach, she worked in technology and has 14+ years of leadership experience in managing technical delivery and operations in multi-product and multi-geography environments.

She is certified by EMMC and ICF as a Coach and a Team Coach. She is also an NLP Master Practitioner and Certified in Positive Psychology

Rachel works with high achieving individuals and teams to help them to stay focused, manage overwhelm and move ahead with confidence and power.

She has worked with CEOs, Business Owners, Executives and Entrepreneurs and their teams globally to help them create their unique success formula for themselves and stay on top of their game.

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The Transformation

By Rashmi Saran

Mrs. Thomas was pacing up and down in her room. A mixed bag of emotions - anger, anxiety, stress and fear... What was she supposed to do? How could she salvage this difficult situation?

For the last one hour she had been getting nonstop calls from various internal stakeholders - all livid with anger and disappointment.

Mrs Thomas was the procurement Head for the manufacturing unit of this huge organization. She had a team of twenty young executives who looked after the logistics of procurement. Most of them were very driven and passionate about their role. Mrs Thomas had empowered them, and they felt a strong sense of ownership.

That morning, one of her team members - Julie,

A shift in the mindset of a leader can lead to better results for the individuals in the team as well as for the organization. Adopting a coaching mindset leads to a thriving and learning organization. Read Rashmi Saran's short, fictionalized account.

got an email from one critical vendor about his genuine inability to supply some vital raw materials which would negatively impact production, thereby impacting commitments made to customers.

The repercussions were huge, and Julie was alarmed. She wanted to alert the stakeholders and take some interim measures to overcome and tide over this situation. So, she immediately forwarded this email from the vendor to all stakeholders along with her interim plan.

However, a grave mistake happened! In her hurry to alert all stakeholders, she had pressed "reply to all" and had forgotten to remove the vendor from the list.

The vendor turned hostile when he saw this internal alternate arrangement and the language used for him. He immediately stopped all efforts to provide interim relief and sent a reply mail to all accordingly.

The damage had been done!

Mrs. Thomas started getting desperate calls from

her internal Stakeholders. She felt more and more triggered with each call. How does she salvage this situation? Why did this girl - Julie, make such a mistake?

She took some deep breaths, allowed her emotions to settle down, and then called for Julie.

Julie was in a panic mode. She knew she would be facing some serious ramifications of her mistake. What if she lost her job? She was the sole breadwinner of her family. With her heart pounding, she walked towards Mrs. Thomas's room.

She stopped as she reached the entrance of the room. Mrs. Thomas motioned her to come in and sit. Then she started speaking in a balanced tone:

"Julie, what has happened has happened! We cannot change it. I am very curious to know what made you make such a mistake. You had never done such a thing earlier"

Julie felt a wave of relief at Mrs. Thomas's normal behavior and friendly tone.

"Mrs. Thomas, let me tell you what happened. When I received this unprecedented email from the vendor, I got so alarmed. This had to be tackled super-fast. I didn't want to waste any time and hence in my haste, I pressed "Reply to all", without removing the mail id of the vendor. By the time I realized it, the harm had been done."

"So, what do we do now?"; Mrs. Thomas sounded worried.

"Don't worry Ma'am! I have been handling this vendor for very long and have developed a very good rapport with him. I'm sure I'll be able to find a solution. Let me go and do it immediately!"

"Sure, Julie. Please keep me informed as I am getting so many calls."

"I surely will! Thank you for listening to me and being patient. I will surely prove that your trust in me is absolutely correct."

In the next hour, the problem had been resolved. Things were back to normal.

Mrs. Thomas smiled. Had this situation occurred two months back, she may not have been able to create this outcome. Her emotions would have got the better of her and she would have surely passed them on to Julie, thereby, making the situation worse.

She was being coached on how to become a Coach leader and convert such situations into learning moments. She had applied her insights and learnings from her coaching sessions in creating a win - win scenario and handling the challenging situation very effectively.

What were some of her new learnings applied here?

1. We need to take a pause when triggered and not react instantly. When we allow our cognitive brain to think, we respond more logically. What would have happened if she had given to her emotional triggers and had yelled and screamed?
2. Believe that behind unproductive behaviours too, there can be a good intent. Uncover this intent and build more trust.
3. Ask the right questions and enable the other person to come up with solutions. As seen in this case, Julie was very resourceful and was able to bring in the best solution. Mrs Thomas had helped her realize her true potential.
4. Listen to the other person empathetically, the battle is half won here itself.
5. Provide a safe space for the person to open - give them psychological safety. Mrs. Thomas had done this with the right body language and an encouraging voice tone.

And there emerged a Coach Leader! Mrs. Thomas had initiated the transformation!



Rashmi Saran (ICF-PCC)

An ICF certified Executive and Leadership Coach (PCC), Mentor, Motivational speaker, and HR Leader, Rashmi brings in an overall industry experience of 29 years. Her passion and forte lie in developing leaders and helping them create an engaged and happy workplace. She is also very passionate about bringing in positive changes in the lives of people by coaching and empowering them. She has coached leaders from renowned organisations across Industries like Meta, Google, Colgate Palmolive, Accenture, British Petroleum, Chevron, American Express, Visa, Lego, SalesForce, Hilton, Autodesk, Grab, Gnetech, Roche, Pfizer etc. As of now, she has more than 2500 coaching hours to her credit. Her coaching sessions have been found to be very impactful by her coachees, who rate her high in their growth journey.

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