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## Introduction

This book is about the psychology of coaching, mentoring and learning. There are many books about learning and mentoring; there are even more about coaching. However, there are very few books that bring together these important, diverse and growing fields, making them intersect. The title of the book reflects the value I place on diversity in the emerging discipline of coaching and how the latter can be enriched by being continuously expanded so as to include mentoring, while it remains grounded in the solid foundation of the psychology of learning.

### Aims

The aim of this chapter is to help readers gain a rapid understanding of the nature of the book and find easily the information it offers. It provides a rationale for the book, together with a résumé of its overall structure and a brief description of each chapter. It also suggests how readers working at different levels can use the book to make it meet their interests, experience and professional competence.

### Whom Is It For?

The purpose of this book is to show how individuals and organizations can apply the theories and principles of psychology in coaching, mentoring and learning. To this end, the book is written for the following groups:

- coaches, mentors and trainers who would like to learn the general theories and principles of psychology that underpin coaching, mentoring and learning;
- psychologists who want to apply their experience to the coaching, mentoring and training of individuals and organizations;

- senior executives and managers responsible for the use of training budgets, who would like to realize their potential benefit and understand how to design and evaluate effective training programmes for their organizations;
- students of psychology who would like to consider their future career in coaching, mentoring and training.

I am aware that the emerging field of coaching and mentoring, coupled with the popularity of psychology in the UK, will attract a very wide readership. Thus my intended readership is not limited to the categories described above. Readers may well include teachers, instructors and anyone involved in coaching, mentoring, training or supervision.

With the rapid development of coaching and mentoring as an industry, much confusion exists between the psychology of coaching and mentoring and the psychology of counselling and psychotherapy. In comparison to the development of psychotherapy as a discipline, we have found in our disciplines a lot more sharing of practices, which has been promoted by various coaching and mentoring organizations (see Chapter 2).

## How This Book Differs from Others

There are many books on coaching and mentoring in the market. However, this book differs from others in the following aspects:

- As far as I am aware, in its first edition, this has been the first book in the UK to attempt to bring together the psychological theory that underpins coaching, mentoring and learning. It embodies a number of developments in coaching and mentoring, as well as in coaching psychology. It traces the development of the Special Group in Coaching Psychology within the British Psychological Society, which addresses coaching psychology as a discipline.
- It reflects the latest thinking, research and development in coaching psychology through high-level theories, principles and practical applications. This second edition ensures that the research and development are up to date.
- It applies psychology to *both* coaching/mentoring *and* learning, thereby blurring the boundaries between these disciplines and yet addressing the differences between them.
- It contains cross-cultural elements that make the theories universal and applicable across different cultures.
- It applies, to coaching and mentoring, the general psychology of learning rather than psychotherapy (Chapter 3).
- It demonstrates the know-how and exercises with step-by-step instructions, as well as with case studies from diverse organizational and community contexts (Chapters 7–9).
- It includes a chapter on evaluation that demonstrates the effectiveness of applying the psychology of learning to coaching, mentoring and learning (Chapter 10).

## Working terminology

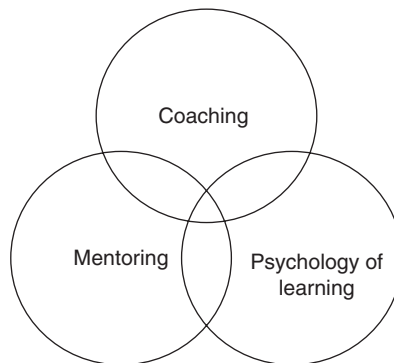
Before you get going, this section offers some pragmatic working definitions to those of you who have no knowledge of coaching, mentoring and learning. These definitions will be further refined in Chapter 4. Broadly speaking, the book talks about processes and activities that support learning. In this context, ‘learning’ can be defined as a cognitive process of acquiring skill and knowledge. ‘Coaching’ is often described as a process of offering support to an individual; this process is performance-focused and goal-centred and it results in action. A ‘mentor’ – a term used in mentoring – is a critical friend who oversees the development of another. All these processes are learner-centred and learner-driven. A theme running throughout this book is the cross-cultural application of coaching and mentoring. ‘Culture’ is broadly defined as the predominant attitudes and behaviour that characterize the functioning of a group, community or organization; we typically apply it to a whole range of contexts: countries, ethnic categories, professions, workplaces. The term ‘cross-cultural’ refers to the interaction between people or entities from two or more cultures. Theories, concepts and techniques will be tested cross-culturally, so that we can see if they are transferable to other contexts and hence valid beyond the original application setting.

### Towards the integration of terms

The material provided in this book represents the fertile ground of interaction between coaching, mentoring and psychology (in particular, learning). This triangular relationship can be represented in a simple Venn diagram (see Figure 1.1).

However, as the research and coaching or mentoring journey unfolded, one would discover that there are actually increasing overlaps between the three disciplines. Thus one could see the three circles of influence in Figure 1.1 gravitating towards each other (see Figure 1.2). The next question then becomes clear: How much overlap is there between the three disciplines in practice?

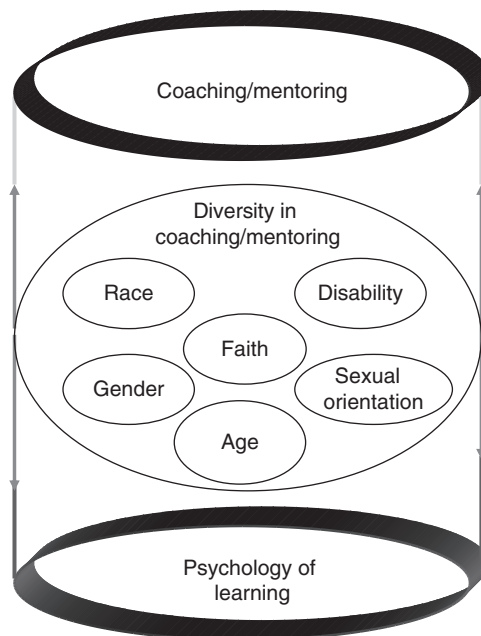
The three are in fact interwoven. Chapter 2 shows that coaching and mentoring are coming of age. It considers market forces, the development of the coaching/mentoring



**Figure 1.1** The ground of fertile overlap between coaching, mentoring and the psychology of learning



**Figure 1.2** Increasing the area of overlap between coaching, mentoring and the psychology of learning



**Figure 1.3** Working with a 3D model of coaching, mentoring and psychology of learning

industry and the global market place, and their roles in shaping practice. In order to bring the model of coaching/mentoring and psychology of learning to life, the orientation of this book can be rearranged as a three-dimensional (3D) working model (see Figure 1.3).

In this model, coaching and mentoring are viewed as an interchangeable continuum. Sometimes they may even be regarded as the same thing, depending on the context. For simplicity, the terms coaching, coach and coachee are used to

mean coaching/mentoring, coaches/mentors and coachees/mentees respectively (unless their specific meaning is stated explicitly). Whatever the context, due regard should be given to the diversity of all participants in this process. This understanding extends to their appreciation of sensitivities and of the respect that each one should have for the others' values, beliefs, faith, gender, sexual orientation, social barriers, disability, and racial and cultural backgrounds. To understand the universality and diversity of coachees within a diverse setting, it is important that coaches learn more about the principles and techniques grounded in the psychology of learning and applicable across cultures.

## **Content in a Nutshell**

Coaching and mentoring are different disciplines. Organizations and groups have been set up specializing in coaching and/or mentoring. These include the Association for Coaching, the British Psychological Society's Special Group in Coaching Psychology, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, and the International Coaching Federation (see Chapter 2). Coaches and mentors come from diverse backgrounds. While you may not need a degree in psychology in order to be a coach and a mentor, for coaching and mentoring to be effective, you need to understand the psychological principles on which the practice is based. Without this understanding, coaches and mentors risk not achieving their intended outcome.

Drawing on the comprehensive literature in the psychology of learning, this book focuses on linking theory to practical application. The core principles of positive psychology and learning are described in Chapter 3. The same chapter provides a literature review as well as highlighting the philosophy of positive psychology and the learning theories that are useful in coaching and mentoring practice within the tradition of epistemology. (When we refer to epistemology, we mean to question the nature of what we know: fundamentally, epistemology asks what knowledge is and how we distinguish it from our internal thoughts and beliefs.) Chapter 4 addresses key definitions of coaching, mentoring and learning, which are grounded in the psychology of learning from the previous chapter. Once we revised the psychology of learning and established our own key definitions within the intersecting domains of coaching, mentoring and learning, we set out here on a journey of enquiry, and we proceed logically to guide the reader through the chapters that follow. Chapter 5 describes how coaching and mentoring can be used as a vehicle to help organizations become learning organizations. From the consolidation of theory into coaching and mentoring practice in diverse settings, a universal integrated framework (UIF) is developed; and its revised version, the integrative learning system (ILS), is described in Chapter 6. The major classes of techniques and tools are described in Chapter 7. Chapter 8 supplements them with relevant practical exercises; I hope readers will find them useful. Chapter 9 provides a number of case studies in terms of the UIF and a reflective learning process to demonstrate that these theories and exercises work in the real world, in various organizations as well as in diverse communities. One of the major criticisms of the emerging coaching industry is that most theories and practices lack rigorous, evidence-based evaluation. Chapter 10 meets this challenge by providing an impact

evaluation of the UIF linked to a case study. Finally, Chapter 11 describes perceived future directions and work by incorporating the following key themes:

- matching between coaching/mentoring pairs;
- coordinator role;
- emotional intelligence cross-cultural competency;
- evidence-based research and impact assessment;
- supervision;
- training;
- coaching/mentoring standards, codes of conduct and ethics.

## **Book Research Approach**

Writing this book has been like riding two horses. I would like to ensure that it is easy to read and accessible to a diverse readership without compromising its academic rigour. Thus, wherever possible, the writing style is straightforward. Academic references are only noted at specific points in the text. They reflect the wide range of literature reviewed from online sources and the information obtained by attending international workshops and conferences – in the UK, Europe, Australia and Hong Kong. While the literature review casts the research net very widely, it also focuses on the deliverables that this book represents – that is, on useful guidance for learners and practitioners in the field of coaching psychology, coaching, mentoring and training. Although the UIF developed here is grounded both in established psychological theories of learning and in evidence-based evaluation for its effectiveness and efficacy, it has been continually refined and revised for this new edition.

## **Why Coaching, Mentoring and Learning?**

As globalization leads to more intense competition, organizations need to continue to recruit, develop and deploy the best people in order to stay ahead and survive. We have seen rapid and unprecedented change in our organizations and communities across the globe. This has taken place in the fast-growing communications industry as well as in public organizations. Repeated reconfigurations in search of service improvements have meant that leaders are required to work at the furthest bounds of their capability. Corporate leaders have begun to realize that traditional training methods may not be able to cope with the pace of change. Hence organizations have turned to coaching and mentoring to help develop their people, to deepen their talent pool and to enhance their organizational learning capability. Mentoring and coaching go beyond industry. Individuals from vulnerable communities need to be channelled to effective routes, towards learning in trusted partnerships; isolated groups need a mechanism for breaking down barriers and reaching out to mainstream communities; and any people who want to learn more about themselves, or increase their knowledge in targeted areas and in the wider environment, can benefit.

## **How to read this book**

Owing to the philosophy that underpins this book, the following terms are used interchangeably throughout this book:

- you and readers;
- coaches and mentors;
- coachees and mentees;
- learners, trainers and supervisors.

Each chapter is intended to be independent in terms of its topic and content. You may pick and choose which chapters are relevant to you. Nevertheless, throughout this book you will find that the chapters are interwoven, and some are clustered more closely around a topic than others at a certain juncture in the coaching journey. It is recommended that the chapters be read consecutively in pairs. For example, if you are a learner or a student who would like to know more about coaching and mentoring and about how they link to the psychology of learning, you should read Chapters 2 and 3. If you are a busy chief executive or a training manager who wants to find out about the relevance of coaching and mentoring to organizations, you may like to read Chapter 5. For experienced coaches and mentors wishing to refer directly to the techniques and exercises, Chapters 7 and 8 can be read together. Chapter 8 provides a things-to-do list for coaching; in addition, the exercises are organized in a systematic way, so that readers can refer back to the principles described in Chapter 7. Whether you are a beginner or an experienced coach or mentor, you will find these two chapters useful, as they provide pointers for you to begin your continuous professional development or to fine-tune what you already know. Readers who are interested in concrete examples, case studies and the evidence-based evaluation of coaching and mentoring programmes can go directly to Chapters 9 and 10. Throughout the book, each chapter highlights, through cross-referencing, concepts and ideas that are interwoven. In this way I hope that our ‘conversation’ will provide a sense of continuity as the story unfolds and will encourage a dramatic re-engagement with many of your experiences that may fill some of the gaps in this book. To help readers apply the theories to reflective practice, each chapter is written to a standard format. It begins with an introduction designed to outline its content and ends with a chapter summary and reflection, which summarizes the key concepts and reflects on practical implications.

