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Introduction

Hello! A very warm welcome to the introduction of this book – *Coaching Psychology: A Practitioner's Guide*. I assume that you are reading this book because you have either trained in coaching psychology (or related disciplines such as coaching, mentoring, counselling and psychology), or are a seasoned practitioner. The purpose of this book is to provide a guide for practitioners within the field of coaching psychology and its allied professions in coaching and mentoring. Or perhaps you are simply interested in the subject; that is OK too; and I welcome you to this 'journey' of coaching psychology in practice. While based on the key text *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, this is a book in its own right and does not assume any prior knowledge. Accordingly, while *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning* is recommended as a valuable companion read, you will find that this book stands alone for use as a practical guide or workbook for your practice and/or continuous self-/professional development. In some ways this book can be seen as the 'inverse' of *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, in that the latter offers a detailed account of theory with an overview of practice, while the former offers an overview of theory with a more detailed account of practice. It is anticipated that many practitioners will want to read both books.

Historically, coaching psychology was applied in the domains of sports and exercise. Recent debate on coaching psychology seems to be around the following areas (Cavanagh and Lane, 2012a,b):

- coaching models
- professionalism
- evidence-based practice.

This book will address each of the above areas.

Aims

While this book follows the same overall structure as *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning*, its emphasis has shifted firmly to coaching practice. It aims to show you how theories and principles of psychology can be applied in coaching, mentoring and learning for individuals and organizations, and also offers extended examples and practical, step-by-step exercises for you to complete.

Who is it For?

This book is written for the following groups:

- Readers of *The Psychology of Coaching, Mentoring and Learning* who would like a more practical guide, dedicated to implementation of the ideas.
- Coaches, mentors, trainers and other professionals who may not be psychologists and do not want detailed theoretical material, but require a guide for practice along with a grounding in the psychological theory that underpins the techniques and approaches.
- Psychologists who want to apply their experience to coaching, mentoring and training.

Whoever you are – coaches or psychologists – I hope you will find this book an invaluable resource for your continuous professional development and as a reference for your coaching practice.

Content in a Nutshell

Chapter 1 aims to guide readers to gain a rapid understanding about the nature of the book and to find the information easily. It provides a rationale

for writing this book with an overall structure and brief description of each chapter. It also provides suggestions of how to use the book for different levels of readers according to their interest, experience and professional competence. Chapter 2 provides a brief outline of the developments of the coaching and coaching psychology professions. It then describes the practical steps of coaching psychology in practice with emphases on awareness of ethical and practical issues.

Chapter 3 provides an overview of the core principles of positive psychology and learning theories. The definitions of coaching psychology and its related concepts: coaching, mentoring and learning, are discussed in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 describes how you may introduce a coaching programme into an organization. Chapter 6 first describes the differences between models and techniques, with two examples – GROW and Universal Integrative Framework (UIF); it then provides guidance on how to build your own model and apply it in practice. The techniques and their related practical exercises that fit within the structure of the UIF and the revised Integrative Learning System (ILS) are described in Chapter 7 and Chapter 8, respectively. Chapter 9 provides a number of case studies and invites you to collect your own. Chapter 10 describes how you can take steps to evaluate your coaching practice within the evidence-based framework. Finally, Chapter 11 provides a personal reflection and further tips and resources for coaching psychology practice.

How to Use this Book

Depending on who you are, and your level of experience in coaching psychology, you can use this book in many different ways. For the first reading, you may like to skim through and then return to those elements that you are particularly interested in at a later time. Whoever you are, I recommend Chapter 2 on ethics as a ‘must-read’ before anyone practises coaching with other people. Once you have understood the ethical principles and relevant theories or concepts, you can pick and choose your exercises to suit your need.

Exercise boxes focus on linking theory to practices. Unlike many other coaching or psychology books, this book contains many exercises to help you to apply your learning into practice. These coaching exercises are relevant to the topic of each chapter.

For those who just want a few ‘how to do’ tips using coaching psychology, you may simply look at the techniques that you want to learn and practise the ‘guided’ exercises in Chapters 7 and 8, respectively.

If you are a coaching trainer or tutor and wish to use this book as a training guide, you can first read the whole book to make sure that you

understand all the essential elements, and know where to find things as a reference. Divide your training programme into three parts (beginning – middle – end). Chapters 2–4 can be used as an introduction to your training course. This is an important and yet quite a non-trivial task. You need to succinctly describe the history, epistemology and definition of coaching psychology without going through the details and ask your participants/students to read the chapters afterward as references; explain ethics (using the 6Rs principles in Chapter 2) at an early stage of the training programme and certainly before any exercises are commenced.

If you are a novice, you may like to read this book from start to finish, following its logical progression. Don't attempt to read the whole book in one go. Some of the chapters are quite 'heavy' and even a trained psychology practitioner would find it thought provoking and demanding. Try to devise a reading plan that fits into your personal development, for example, preparing for an examination, or doing a training course, say, over a three-month period.

When reading this book, you may find it useful to make notes along the way of techniques to use in your own life and work. Keep practising and keep a reflective log (a template is included in the Appendix to this book).