

REINVENTION • OPPORTUNITY • FUTURE OF WORK • RECIPE FOR CHANGE

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the magazine of professional coaching

REIMAGINING *Coaching*

How our profession is
pivoting



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In what ways are you reimagining your coaching business? In what ways does our industry need reinvention? What part of your business is not serving you? What do you have to deconstruct in order to pivot to what is needed? What are the indicators that reinvention is needed?

How do you know? Join us as we explore this exciting topic.

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TIPPING POINT

The opportunity for reinvention

By Paul Crick, BSc, MBA, EMCC SP

Without exception, the current pandemic has touched everyone's lives in some way. The last two years have resulted in our world being knocked off its axis, and our lives are no longer what they once were.

Many of us had concerns about how best to respond to world events and the impact on clients and stakeholders. Looking through the business lens, questions such as whether clients will still buy coaching services and what

challenges our services need to serve have surfaced to top of mind.

Quite naturally, our energy has been focused on pivoting or adapting our coaching business models to the prevailing conditions.

The enforced pause has provided many of us with the opportunity to become more aware of how we spend our time and energy, to question the nature of our ingrained habits and routines, and to consider what is most important to us.

Perhaps more importantly, this situation has forced us into learning how to accommodate the more pressing human matters of family illness, home schooling, and the consequences of restrictions in movement on our professional and personal lives.

It has become clear that all of us have been impacted in different ways and with varying degrees of severity; this has, over time, led to seismic shifts in our thinking and behavior.

As the pandemic has continued, one of the key requirements to come to the fore has been the need for greater compassion and empathy towards those around us – clients, colleagues, family, and friends – and for courage and perspective to enter uncharted territory.

The enforced pause has provided many of us with the opportunity to become more aware of how we spend our time and energy, to question the nature of our ingrained habits and routines, and to consider what is most important to us.

The relationship we have with ourselves determines how well we apply the “use of self” in coaching situations. If we are not grounded, centred, and well resourced, then our impact in coaching contexts may hit the target but miss the mark.

Underneath all of this, many sense this is a time of unprecedented opportunity to adjust and centre ourselves, to reconsider how we live life, what we want and consider what we’re no longer willing to tolerate.

From a professional perspective, we are still in a dynamic where no-one has the answer, and we are all continuing to learn how to navigate our way through the current uncertainty.

Historically, we have relied on turning to others to help us see round corners to limit the risks of setting off on a course that is either unfulfilling or unrewarding both professionally and personally.

However, even the “experts” can’t see round corners. No-one can.

We are at a tipping point where there is opportunity for reinvention. Knowing this creates a frisson of possibility as it places a responsibility on our shoulders to step back and think through how we show up and serve the greatest number of people possible, making coaching more inclusive, more accessible, reaching deeper into our organizations, our public institutions, and our communities.

The process takes time, but can be kick-started in several easy ways:

CONNECT

Avoid being seduced into “gaming” social media platform algorithms in a faux attempt to be present to your clients; instead, be present to them by picking up the phone and connecting at a human level.

A simple, authentic “how are you feeling” question will go so much further than any social media post, uprated by a software program.

LISTEN

Listen to clients much more closely, with what Dr. Mark Goulston calls “surgical empathy” – the act of “feeling them” – through the lens of simplicity and genuine concern for the person or people in front of you.

Set aside a rehearsed sales pitch in favour of a genuine conversation and be ready to accept that clients may be in a place of wanting to be seen, heard and have their lived experience witnessed and believed. Often, that is enough.

SPEAK TRUTH

We continue to live through a time where the need to say what needs to be said has become increasingly essential to enable us as collective to address the gnarly problems we face and make our thinking processes transparent to engender greater trust between and among us.

Speaking truth requires us to lean into the tension of conflict to explore the unacknowledged, hidden issues that manifest as loss of meaning, low morale, cynicism, and gaps between an organisation’s aspirational vision and what happens in day-to-day life.

Doing this in a psychologically safe way enables us to arrive at more creative, more robust solutions co-created by all voices in the conversation.

DELIVER VALUE

A key question for all coaches to consider is to think through which elements

of the coaching experience can be made more tangible in ways that support clients 'just in time' and without overloading them with information.

How can we check in to confirm that these additional elements of coaching in-between coaching sessions have caused the client to have a "felt sense" that they are making progress to the outcome that's important to them?

In our hybrid world, digital platforms enable coaches to use their creative imaginations to maintain contact in-between sessions by creating relevant and practical online exercises that support key themes emerging within coaching conversations. Deploying simple metrics enables clients to measure and make transformative change visible through time.

LIFT OTHERS

The coaching profession continues to welcome a considerable number of

new, qualified coaches into its circle around the world.

Some might choose to view this dynamic through a lens of scarcity, protecting their knowledge and relationships for fear of not making a sufficient living or having their status challenged within their field of expertise.

If current conditions have taught us anything so far, it is that working together and looking through a lens of abundance accomplishes far more than working against each other.

There are many ways to be helpful to other coaching professionals in our industry either by being part of mastermind groups, creating a study group or simply providing referrals to other coaches to lift them up and support their development and growth.

Lift others. There is room for everyone.

By collaborating and lifting others, we continue to develop and strengthen the connective tissue throughout the

profession in ways that serve our clients in more timely and relevant ways to produce greater interdependence, resilience, and value for their stakeholders.

CONCLUSION

As the new zeitgeist emerges and evolves, coaches are uniquely placed to support and influence those charged with making decisions that impact many lives. Charged with that responsibility, there is a need to recognize that the value and impact of our work relies on our quality of being.

As the author Richard Rohr notes, it is "the people who hold the contradictions and resolve them in themselves are the saviors of the world. They are the only real agents of transformation, reconciliation and newness."

This aspiration is a potential "north star" upon which to keep our gaze throughout 2022. •



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