01

Introduction to this edition of *Coaching and Mentoring*

DIANE NEWELL

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

When Mel and Eric wrote the introductory chapter to earlier editions they titled it 'In the mainstream?' and commented on the rapid growth in publications and references to coaching and mentoring in the first decade of this century. The tide hasn't turned at all in the second decade; a Google search in mid-2021 (other search engines are available) on the term 'Coaching' returns an astonishing 1,740,000,000 results. When I started working as a professional coach in the early 2000s the industry was described in a *Harvard Business Review* article as 'The Wild West' (Sherman and Freas, 2004); now there are several professional bodies (listed in the Appendix), all offering standards of practice and accreditations for professional coaches and mentors. By 2015 the CIPD was reporting that in the majority of organizations managers and leaders are expected to coach (CIPD, 2015) and training courses for leaders, managers and professionals of all sorts in coaching and mentoring have proliferated. Despite the recent Covid-19 pandemic, which saw a large decline in the majority of formal and more traditional forms of learning interventions, organizations have maintained a focus on mentoring and coaching initiatives and programmes.

It might be easy to conclude then that coaching and mentoring must now be well understood, a part of the everyday vocabulary and behaviours of people and organizations. Sadly, this is not yet the case. Good training undoubtably gives managers greater understanding and access to skills, but my own observations and recent research show that only when that training is designed to support and embed coaching into a manager's habitual style do organizations really reap the benefits (McCarthy and Milner, 2020).

And anyone who has tried to identify a coaching supplier, or a mentoring training course, will be well aware that this is still a relatively undeveloped professional practice. There are many excellent sources of support and knowledge, but it is difficult to find your way through the mountains of information and misinformation to reliable guidance on best practice and effective implementation. That is what we hope to bring you here in a guidebook that can help you in your exploration of coaching and mentoring, whether you are simply curious about the value that coaching and mentoring might offer you or your organization, or you are an established practitioner seeking to deepen your understanding and find new ideas. The first part of the book is all about the practice of coaching and mentoring and the second about its applications in today's organization.

We start our guide in the next chapter with a look at what we are beginning to know about effective practice from one of the leading academics operating in this field, and Editor of *The Oxford Review*, Dr David Wilkinson. Coaching and mentoring are hybrids, collage disciplines taking their roots from a variety of academic areas and professions including psychology and neuropsychology, counselling and psychotherapy, sports and performance coaching, management and behavioural sciences, social sciences, philosophy and human resources. Like many hybrids, coaching can be dismissed by the purists, and it has taken time for serious and consistent research to emerge.

At their heart coaching and mentoring are simply conversations. But not just any conversations; they are conversations in which skilful use of human interaction supports and catalyses change, growth and development. I believe that this is at the very heart of why they have and continue to grow in scope and importance. As individuals, in our teams and organizations and communities, we are having to find ways to adapt to climatic, economic, market, technological, political and scientific change and uncertainty. We will either find positive ways to move forward or be forced into painful retreat. We will either find ways to cooperate and collaborate to overcome the challenges facing us, or we and future generations will pay the price for our lack of agility.

These are big societal questions, but for the most part coaching and mentoring conversations take place between individuals or in small groups. In general, but not always, at least one of the participants is openly and consciously taking the role of a coach or mentor acting in service of the other's growth. (To save confusion we will refer to this 'other' as the 'client' of coaching or mentoring throughout the book, unless we specifically call

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

them a mentee, as in Chapter 12.) In Chapter 3 I have shared a selection of key ideas about how human beings change, learn and adapt, and what gets in their way as a foundation to understanding how coaching and mentoring act to enable development.

Eric Parsloe, original author of this book and founding father of the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), often said that coaching and mentoring were simple, but that 'just because it's simple doesn't make it easy'. Much of coaching and mentoring practice takes moments to understand but a lifetime to perfect. In Chapters 4 and 5 Alison Williamson will look at the key conversational skills that underpin both coaching and mentoring, and at the frameworks and models that you can use to hold successful coaching and mentoring conversations. Alison is a practising coach and has developed and worked in the development of coaching skills for over a decade, training many hundreds of individuals to bring these skills and processes to work.

There are some key beliefs that underpin coaching and mentoring practice, and which also define its field of practice. The most fundamental are beliefs in the value of the clients' thinking and in the clients' capacity to adapt successfully. Coaching and mentoring enable clients to develop their own thinking and find their own solutions to the challenges they face, or to identify and seize opportunities to grow. One of the any areas of confusion and ambiguity in this field is around the difference between the roles of the 'coach' and that of the 'mentor'. We will work throughout this book with the understanding that both are rooted in what we will refer to as 'coaching skills' but that their roles differ.

When you take a role as a 'coach', you are invited into the conversation as an expert in being a coach, in catalysing change and growth in others. A 'mentor' uses the same skills as a coach, but brings to the conversation an expertise or experiences that are specifically relevant to the situation the client is working with, for example as an expert in a particular technology or process. Both coaches and mentors may offer their knowledge or experience in service of the client's thinking. They might give references that point clients to good sources of information, connect clients with new ideas and research or simply share stories and experiences. Neither coaches nor mentors are there to tell their clients what they must do. They are there to help the client discover what they could do, to decide what they will do and to act on that decision. A coach or mentor will help clients to learn both from their own experience and from that of others. Whether you are having a casual conversation at a bus stop or entering into a long-term mentoring

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

relationship at work, as soon as you start to coach or mentor someone, one of the foundations for success and a key element of good, ethical practice is to check that expectations are clear and shared. Contracting can be as simple as asking 'It sounds like you are worrying about that, would it help to talk it through?' or 'How can I best help?' We call that clarifying of expectations between client and coach or mentor 'contracting', and it will be explored in greater depth by Alison Williamson in Chapter 5.

A coaching approach is not the right way to work in an immediate emergency where you alone hold the key information. If you know the way to the fire escape in the burning building, then all I want is for you to show me the way! But genuinely clear-cut situations like that are infrequent. In today's working organizations and communities, we most often find situations where no one holds all the information or the one right solution, where multiple perspectives and collaboration, with adaptive solution building, is the best way forward. And in that environment a coaching style or culture, and coaching and mentoring conversations release, enable and foster positive adaptation in individuals and teams. A well-conducted coaching and mentoring conversation will catalyse change and development now and leave clients more resilient, capable and adaptable independently – not dependent on the coach or mentor to make future change.

This coaching and mentoring approach is rooted in what is often referred to as 'unconditional positive regard', a concept first explored by Carl Rogers (1902–1987), a psychologist and founder of the humanistic approach. To bring yourself into connection with others with that unconditional positive regard and in service of their growth but without assuming control of the outcomes takes self-knowledge, self-discipline and an informed empathy and understanding of others. In Chapter 6 I will take an introductory look at what makes us uniquely ourselves and shapes our perspectives and understanding.

The skills and frameworks of coaching and mentoring conversation are of use to all. They will make you a better listener, a more effective leader, consultant or advisor and a more open and connected human being. But the skills of coaching are open to abuse. Misused, without that unconditional positive regard, respect for the other's thinking and belief in their capacity to reach their own solution, they can be used to manipulate; the apparent coach who uses questioning to lead you to the thinking that suits their agenda is a salesman in coach's clothing. But how tempting it can be for even the best intentioned of us to think we know the right answer and can just nudge someone along the 'right path' without them being aware of it!

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

If you want to go further, to really integrate coaching and mentoring into your approach as a leader or make it your profession, then you need to think about how you do so consistently and safely, practising effectively and within ethical boundaries. Supervision, which Angela Keane and Angela Hill explore in Chapter 7, was seen even 15 years ago as the preserve of the few and is now required by most professional bodies, alongside regular CPD (continuous professional development). We explain supervision, the practice, skills and models in Chapter 7 and close this first part of our guidebook with some stories to illustrate how coaching and mentoring are experienced and practised in Chapter 8.

The second part of this book, which explores the application of coaching and mentoring in organizations, was first added to the edition published in 2016. We have updated some of the content for this edition and in some cases new editors have added to the original authors' work. In Chapter 9 Ed Parsloe (son of Eric and currently CEO of The OCM) sets out his views on:

- What is great coaching and mentoring in organizations?
- What is the focus of a coaching and mentoring agenda? Where will it have the biggest impact?
- How do you create buy-in and build a business case?
- What will you measure to demonstrate impact?

In Chapter 10 Graham Clark has updated the chapter he co-authored with Charlotte Bruce-Foulds and Katherine Ray in 2016 to explore the different forms that coaching and mentoring can take, how organizations are implementing them, the kinds of issues that coaching and mentoring can address, and the topic of a 'coaching culture'. Graham, who heads up The OCM's organizational coaching and mentoring practice, OCM Enable, goes on in Chapter 11 to look at how to implement your chosen coaching and mentoring strategy and the key success factors to ensure a successful implementation.

In Chapter 12 Jenny Whitfield has updated Katherine Ray's work on the people that are involved in implementing coaching and mentoring in organizations, their roles and responsibilities. Both Jenny and Katherine are not only practising coaches and mentors but have built and run coaching and mentoring schemes in international organizations. They bring their experience to help you build the effective collaborations that underlie great implementation.

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

In Chapter 13 Angela Keane returns to the discussion of supervision that she and fellow supervisor Angela Hill commenced in Chapter 7 – this time looking at the role group supervision can play not only in ensuring effective and safe coaching and mentoring in your organization but also in gathering the organizational learning that integrates the coaching and mentoring into your strategic process.

In Chapter 14 Jackie Elliott has updated her thoughts on team coach-mentoring – what it means to go beyond using coaching as a style of facilitation or to run a 'development event' and to truly partner with a team as a coach-mentor. Jackie works with Katherine Ray in heuristic group coaching, as well as being an individual and team coach-mentor.

In Chapter 15 I have updated Angela Keane's thoughts on working with the system and the impact of culture and I conclude in Chapter 16 with a brave (or perhaps foolhardy) attempt to look forward, to what you need to build in to your coaching and mentoring implementations now in order to make them resilient for the future.

COPYRIGHT MATERIAL
NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

References

CIPD (2015) 17th Annual learning and development survey, CIPD, London

CIPD in partnership with Accenture (2021) Learning and skills at work survey 2021, CIPD, London

McCarthy, G and Milner, J (2020) Ability, motivation and opportunity: managerial coaching in practice, *Asia Pacific Journal of Human Resources*, 58 (1), pp 149–70

Sherman, S and Freas, A (2004) The wild west of executive coaching, *Harvard Business Review*, November