

What will coaching and mentoring be like 'tomorrow'? Will we use algorithmic guidance and advice using computerised data mining, or human to human connection? Will this be an 'either or' or 'both and'? How will this transform individuals, work collectives and society?

70% of outperforming organisations envisage using cognitive computing to improve leadership and talent learning and development (L&D) through access to highly personalised options (IBM Survey) but see contact with a skilled and experienced living person as continuing to be preferable for more complex and personal issues.

As a coach or mentor in your current and envisioned future context, what does this mean for you? What will the focus of your work be? How when, where and with whom or what 'bot' will you be working?

Whether you take a pragmatic or existential view of the future, tomorrow is already here, bringing benefits to what people can achieve, alone or collectively. Simultaneously, there is a growing doubt about where technological advances are taking the human race. The debate is on:

- what is possible *and* desirable;
- and how can we adapt to co-create our future tomorrows' reality?

The upside of technological and bio scientific advancement already includes:

- Transforming our everyday lives with AIs: flying planes, driving, running banking and diagnosing our genetic disposition to illness.
- Freeing individuals from repetitive and mindless routine tasks.

- Connecting us globally 24/7, meeting our need to be accepted and receive feedback.
- Extending our reach economically and our awareness of the universe exponentially.
- Entertaining us through virtual reality with previously unimaginable experiences.

Benefits for coaching and mentoring

Innovative approaches

Many coaching and mentoring styles are built around an exploration and understanding of 'here' to

make the necessary shifts to reach a desired 'there'. The feedback of real time information by new technology will enable clients and their coach or mentor to monitor authentic change and identify the blockers to that change in an unprecedented way.

Whether through interactive enquiry or bio data feedback, clients and their coaches will have the information they need to focus on how to enhance performance and build capacity. Imagine a coach AI in the style of a Fitbit that listens to you and others speak, monitors your bio data during a business pitch and gives 'in play' feedback on your performance: valuable observation of the real you uninfluenced by a human coach being in the room or with the team. This coaching aid will provide instant feedback to help you adapt and

modify language and behaviour.

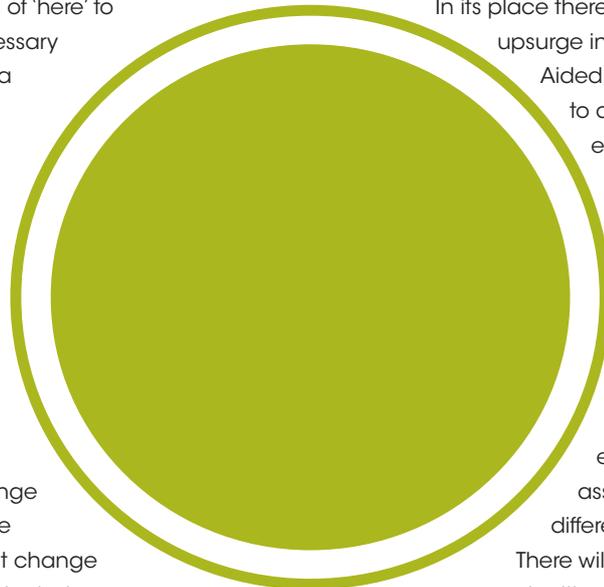
Coaching for all ages and pockets

As part of investment in talent L&D, increased availability and use of coaching via AI devices will enable individuals to self-coach, allowing leaders to tailor mentoring and their leadership to what individuals need to inspire innovation and transformation. We might anticipate the lucrative executive coaching market to shrink. Perhaps future business strategy will even be led by multi lingual AI Board members; already able to beat world champion chess players, AI is well ahead of humans in their capacity and agility to make strategic decisions.

In its place there will be an upsurge in Computer Aided Mentoring to develop entrepreneurial skills and challenge and support freelance workers working across a range of employment assignments in different languages.

There will also be work opportunities for 'pick up' coaching and mentoring as large numbers of displaced employees adapt and integrate new skills and roles where personal human contact is important, such as social care etc.

Soon we can envisage all work being home or community based. Our avatars will go to meetings in our place and virtual reality will be crucial in creating the sensory and emotional environment we want to project in order to connect, gain trust and win business. The same will apply to help home educate our



Coaching Tomorrow (cont.)

children. Drone delivery will fill the night sky while motorways and rail will be used for the driverless movement of products and waste. Under occupied cities will become a diminishing investment opportunity for the technocratic rich (think the equivalent of pine forests of the twentieth century), but will become the new workout zone for people wishing to physically and mentally enhance their bio data – the parkour craze is going to be big.

Reality check – it's already happening

Coaching and mentoring will take place outdoors and in unusual and artistic spaces. In the forest and fells there will be space and natural calm for retreat, contemplation and discovery. Individually or in spontaneous gatherings, participants from children to elders will focus on being; connecting with others outside their data comfort zones to rediscover what it means to be human; and challenging their EI muscles, somatic intelligence and survival instincts.

Coaching and mentoring will become even more creative in order to stimulate new ethical thinking in others, engaging clients fully in a 'real moment'. What is emergent as an output will be a key return on investment (ROI). Coach development will focus less on questions and more on sensing, using strategies that transform understanding through moving into different perspectives. A process virtual reality (VR) and gamification will accelerate but not replace. Stock lists

of coaching questions will become free on-line, so that the initial fortunes made as Computer Aided Mentoring rushed into licensing will go the way of the dot.com bubble.

CAM practitioners will need to be ever more intuitive and skilful, purposefully using increasingly less questions. There will be deeper conversation, with freedom to flow with uncertainty toward discovery. At the same time, more coaches will choose to train in therapy to support individuals through confusion, dysfunction and withdrawal from addiction to control and power, the drivers for large scale abuse now exposed within the media, charities and religion.

More time for sense-making and meaning

Downsides for coaching and mentoring

Warnings from history

Humans have a shadow side – see twenty-first century acquisitive capitalism: hunting our fellow humans to feed off their weaknesses; using the enforced requirement to earn a living to provide for our families, to gain acceptance and affirmation through employment, in order to profit personally; and setting up organisations that deliberately game the tax and legal systems that seek to provide a balance. This is a 'me first' culture, rife with tribalism and populism that judges 'others' as inferior. In groups, these tendencies harden and encourage all the negative 'isms': racism, sexism, ageism etc.

Revolutions in technology, in automation, AI, gaming and VR are often designed and engineered by people with the best of intentions, but which have the same potential for unintended consequences or misuse. A parallel in coaching would be the focus from 1990 onwards on the individual, with priority given entirely to

a persons growth or needs but lacking full consideration or critique of the system and the overall purpose of the organisation that contains individuals. Wilful blindness (Margaret Heffernan) arising from fear, conscious or unconscious bias is another flaw in the human psyche and one already being exploited

To fracture a well-known phrase, power and money corrupt and massive power and money corrupt beyond what anyone can imagine. The result: growing concern about the ethics and implications for humanity arising directly from power imbalances personified by the techno giants. This is compounded by the global scale hacking of digital systems to disrupt democracy; the blurring of what is true or not and persuasive advertising.

Disruption to disaster – in easy steps

Coaching and mentoring has started to focus more on responsibility and accountability. However, while this may be part of the discourse, along with ethics, as an aspiring profession there is much more to be done. Coaching especially has fallen down publicly in the last two years, in particular in sport, from the strategic use of bio chemical interventions to boost performance in world class cycling, to abuse of power and trust of young boys and girls sport.

A forecasted and welcomed outcome of the techno age is the reduction of meaningless repetitive work for humans.

Coaching Tomorrow (cont.)

Unfortunately, this means fewer jobs when the inequality of income is increasingly a social and economic issue. Historically, the counter argument has been that technological advances create new jobs. One new role being publicised by the techno giants is that of the tech ethicist: individuals who are much more attuned to what is going to happen tomorrow or within a very short space of time who are also now paying attention to the ethics, risks and the legacy impact of ill thought through tech application.

Just because you can doesn't mean you should

Benefits for coaching and mentoring

In the short term, trusted experienced coaches will continue to be in demand and work with downsizing, freelancers and organisations. Purchasers, however, will be much more likely to interrogate any mismatch between sales blurb and actions, using social media to check on actual impact, ethical maturity and sustainable difference achieved through coaching and mentoring. AI will become prominent in coach selection as in recruitment and on-boarding, with less intervention from intermediaries.

Coaching tomorrow – in conclusion

What are the skills and capabilities needed to thrive as a coach or mentor tomorrow?

A key resource differentiator to work with tomorrow leaders and innovators might include:

- Being the 'genuine article'.
- An ability to make sense of and taking meaning from the 'here and now' and the unconscious.
- Someone who models trusted leadership or 'skilful followship' (Goffee and Jones).
- Being comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty.
- Knowing when something is not working and is able to adapt.

How are you getting ahead of what's next?

We can expect CAM trade bodies to hasten collaboration or risk becoming inconsequential in tomorrow's world. Coaches and mentors faced with different work structures will need to integrate AI data and ethical supervision into their practice; look for stimulating Coaching Professional Development to free their practice from the mindset norms of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries; and be better aware of their assumptions, including bias. We will be active in diverse global networks and frequently take restorative time out to build up our resources and the courage needed to be provocative in our work.

"When things go wrong, he said, employees usually have a good idea how to fix them. You need to create a state in which they've got courage to do something. You want to build organizations where everyone sees provocation as one of their essential roles." (Heffernan, p. 303)

Coaching and mentoring will be even more personalised using a team approach from a coach stable for those

who can afford a live coach. Coaching and mentoring will generally be delivered digitally in groups and in restorative gatherings of strangers, with confidentiality much less de rigueur. There has been too much wrong done to the vulnerable in confidential forums for this CAM concept to survive when information is freely shared on social media and tested for being 'true'. Universal diversity of your coach pool or stable and your coach AI data software provider will be critical in enabling your clients to tap into worldwide wisdom.

The dialogue is running into what it means to be human. Rapid leaps forward in technology and the sciences are shaping different values and collective social behaviour which, if ethically engineered, (Asimov first law of Robotics "a robot may not injure a human being, or, through inaction allow a human being to come to harm") will help us to sustain our futures. The alternative tomorrow is not an option.

References

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IBM survey ibm.com/iibv

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