

Mentoring for Change

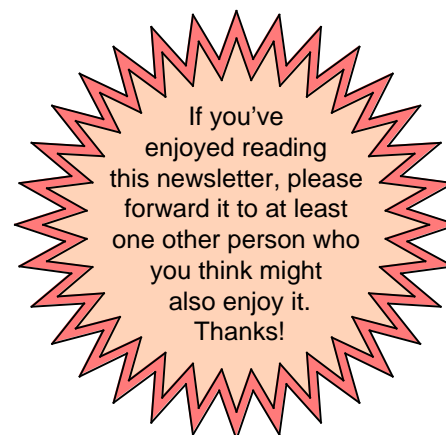
executive mentoring and coaching, values management, storytelling

Welcome to the Mentoring for Change newsletter. In this issue:

- Bifocal Vision
- Presence
- Classic Models – Psychosynthesis
- New Coach Training Programmes

With best wishes

Mike the Mentor



Bifocal Vision

In a recent metavisitation session (a quality control process in which I help a coach review their client work and coaching effectiveness), the question came up about whose agenda to follow in a coaching session. The immediate answer is of course that it is the client's agenda that we should follow. But it's often not quite as simple as this.

When we ask a client what they would like to get out of the coaching, or out of a particular session, we discover what the client's explicit agenda is. But there is also a larger context within which the coaching happens. This larger context concerns the journey our clients are making through their lives to the fullness of who they can be. But the nature of this journey is often elusive and unfolds only gradually.

A key role we can play for our clients is to notice these signs of unfolding and help them come into being. We act as a mirror, reflecting back to the client what is emerging so that they can see more clearly and then cooperate with what is happening rather than work against it. Thus, in working with clients, our goal is to help them achieve their explicit agenda whilst at the same time to support them in bringing into being those things that are seeking expression in their lives. In terms of Psychosynthesis (see over) these can be thought of as emerging from our unconscious – either the lower unconscious when patterns that no longer serve them are ready to be resolved and transcended or the higher unconscious when some aspect of their potential and

future is ready to be embraced.

So as coaches we focus on two things: the topic that the client is directly presenting to us and the journey through life that the client is travelling. This "bifocal vision" enables us to serve both who the client is and who they are becoming. If we can manage this effectively then we enable our clients to achieve their immediate coaching goals – and to do so in a way that is aligned with their larger purpose.

Presence

It can be tempting, especially when starting out as a coach, to use lots of techniques, tools, psychometrics etc. But over time what most of us notice is that some of our very best sessions occur when we seem to have done very little and some of our least satisfactory when we have been very busy doing things with our clients.

In this, we can see a key quality of effective coaches, Presence. Presence is defined as "the ability to be with someone in such a way that that person comes to know themselves better". When we are fully present to someone we create a space where they are able to more fully be themselves and to have the experience of being valuable not for what they do but for who they are. You rarely see "Presence" on a list of coaching competencies but it is probably the most important of all.

New Coach Training Programmes

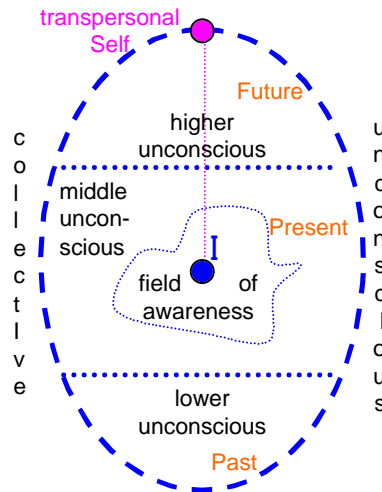
Two London-based organisations are launching new accredited coaching training programmes in the next few

Classic Models – Psychosynthesis

Fifteen years ago I was becoming increasingly curious about both my personal development and my spiritual growth. To find a way forward, I read widely, went to a variety of workshops and classes, and spoke to a lot of people – but without finding what I was looking for. Then one day I read the first chapter of the book Psychosynthesis first published in 1965 by Roberto Assagioli and had an epiphany – here was a path that could help me discover my true spiritual nature and increase my ability to live this in the world.

Since then, the philosophy and models of Psychosynthesis have strongly influenced my life and my work as a coach and mentor, none more so than Psychosynthesis's central model - "The Egg of Being" (see diagram). This is a map of who we are. At the heart of the diagram is the personal self, our individual "I" or self that experiences itself as having thoughts, emotions and sensations. Becoming more aware of this centre of our being is a primary goal of Psychosynthesis for this is the place from which we can manage and direct our personality – rather than be directed by it – and take responsibility for our process of becoming.

Becoming more fully integrated human beings (which Warren Bennis asserts is also the route to becoming a great leader) involves enabling the self's attention to more freely range across the whole of who we are (represented as the interior of the egg). The *middle unconscious* represents our present and contains those aspects of ourselves that can easily be brought into our *field of awareness*. Our field of awareness is constantly changing in shape as what we attend to



changes. The *lower unconscious* stands for our past and includes repressed complexes, long forgotten memories, instincts and physical functions over which we ordinarily have no conscious control. The *higher unconscious* represents our evolutionary future and is that part of our psychological space from which we receive inspiration and illumination and is where our intuition and potential lie. We are immersed in the *collective unconscious* in which all beings play a part.

When we incarnate, our self is clothed in a physical body and a personality, both of which develop as we grow enabling us to be and act in the world. But both can also limit us. Our personality with its particular configurations of thoughts, beliefs and emotions may come to bind us too tightly. As we learn to disidentify from the contents of our consciousness and expand our field of awareness, so we come to know our essential self and to express the fullness of ourselves in the world.

Assagioli expresses it very eloquently; "Psychosynthesis is a method of psychological development and Self realisation for those who refuse to remain the slaves of their own inner phantasms or of external influences, who refuse to submit passively to the play of psychological forces which is going on within them, and who are determined to become the masters of their own lives."

For an excellent introduction to Psychosynthesis read "The Elements of Psychosynthesis" by Will Parfitt (available at www.willparfitt.dial.pipex.com) or, for its application to leadership, read "Inner Leadership" by Simon Smith (Nicholas Brealey).

months:

- **The School of Coaching's Professional Business Coaches Programme:** The programme is designed for individuals who intend working as professional business coaches, either in an external, consultant capacity or as an internal change agent within an organisation. The programme is composed of nine workshops (1 x 3 days, 1 x 2 days and 7 x 1 day) over 12 days and will have a participant-to-programme leader ratio of 18 to 2, with a maximum of 18 participants. Starts late May and costs £5,000. More on +44 20 7479 2203 or at <http://indsoc.netxtra.net/soc/profBusCoach.htm>
- **The Academy of Executive Coaching's Advanced Programme:** The programme is designed for experienced executive coaches and focuses on

developing skills in performance coaching, therapy/psychology, and business management/leadership within the context of operating within a client system. It consists of six workshops (5 x 2 days and 1 x 4 days) over 14 days. Starts March 18 and costs £7,000. More on +44 1727 864 806 or at www.AcademyofExecutiveCoaching.com

Both programmes run over a six-month period.

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