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The Impact of the Inner Game and Sir John Whitmore on Coaching

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this article is to raise issues concerned with "coaching psychology" and the tension between psychologists and non-psychologists in the field of coaching. In particular, it will be shown how coaching has been influenced by Timothy Gallwey's Inner Game approach – the prominent disciples of which are non-psychologists - and, in turn, by the Human Potential Movement. The Inner Game, as applied and developed by Sir John Whitmore and others, appeared to flourish in the business world of the 1980s and 1990s when "empowerment" became a buzzword. Whitmore has continued to develop his career well into the new millennium, particularly through his passionate desire to make a difference in the world, which goes hand-in-hand with his advocacy of transpersonal psychology and coaching.

Key words: Coaching Psychology, Empowerment, Evidence-Based Coaching, GROW Model, History of Coaching, Humanistic Psychology, Human Potential Movement, Inner Game, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, Scientist-Practitioner, Transpersonal Psychology

INTRODUCTION

The new millennium has seen the emergence of psychologists in the fast-growing area of coaching in business. The work of psychologists Anthony Grant in Australia and Stephen Palmer in the UK has been particularly influential. The *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* (2007) is billed as an "essential resource for practising coaching psychologists, coaches, human resource and management professionals, and those interested in the psychology underpinning their coaching practice" [1]. It includes chapters on the application of eleven different psychological approaches to coaching practice (e.g., behavioural coaching, NLP coaching, and Gestalt coaching).

Reviewer: Sir John Whitmore (Performance Consultants International, UK)

It is edited by Stephen Palmer and Alison Whybrow, who were co-proposers of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching, which was launched in 2004.

In considering whether there is a difference between "coaching" and "coaching psychology", Palmer and Whybrow first present descriptions of coaching from three "well-known authors and practitioners" [2, p. 2], two of whom (Sir John Whitmore and Myles Downey) are Inner Game disciples (although Palmer and Whybrow do not state this). Common to the descriptions by Whitmore [3] and Downey [4] is that coaching is "a facilitation approach". The third description, by Eric Parsloe [5], appears to be at odds with those of Whitmore and Downey in that it relates to an "instructional approach". However, a recent book on coaching psychology distinguished between a facilitation approach ("helping them to learn rather than teaching them") and an instructional approach ("directly concerned with immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction") [6, p. 51].

Palmer and Whybrow state that "definitions of coaching psychology which have developed since the beginning of the new millennium usually include attention to psychological theory and practice" [2, p. 2]. It is shown how the definition of coaching psychology by members of the British Psychological Society evolved. Common throughout was reference to enhancing well-being and/or performance in personal life and work domains. Whereas the initial definition referred to "normal, non-clinical populations" and "established therapeutic approaches", the second definition stated by Palmer and Whybrow excluded reference to any particular population and referred to "established adult learning or psychological approaches" instead of "established therapeutic approaches":

> Coaching psychology is for enhancing performance in work and personal life domains with normal, non-clinical populations, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established therapeutic approaches.
> [2, p. 2; underlining added]

> Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches.
> [2, p. 2; underlining added]

Palmer and Whybrow state that "the foundations of modern day coaching psychology developed from the Humanistic movement of the 1960s" at the same time that cognitive-behavioural therapies were also developing [2, p. 3], but note a difference in terms of the qualifications of practitioners in these two areas:

> The Humanistic approach did not put up barriers on who could practise client-centred or person-centred counselling or other forms of Humanistic therapies whereas the cognitive behavioural training centres in North America and the UK expected trainees to be qualified health professionals. [2, p. 4]

Having laid bare the issue of qualifications, the authors proceed to highlight the distinction between psychologists and non-psychologists with reference to the GROW model. In doing so, the authors make no explicit reference to Whitmore, who popularised this model, even though the authors had earlier cited Whitmore and his statement that, "In too many cases they [coaches] have not fully understood the performance-related psychological principles on which coaching is based." [[3, p. 2; cited in [2, p. 1]]:

> Non-psychologists are more likely to use the GROW model (**G**oal(s), **R**eality, **O**ptions, **W**ay forward) without having any underpinning psychological theory taught to them on their training programmes whereas coaching psychologists report using a wide range of therapeutic approaches that have been adapted to the coaching arena… [2, p. 4]

Having stated that "modern-day coaching and coaching psychology has its roots back in the 1960s", Palmer and Whybrow argue that "the formal systematic study of the psychology of coaching goes back to the 1920s, if not earlier" [2, p. 4]. Furthermore:

> The study of the psychology of coaching should be seen as distinct from the development of the profession of coaching psychology… [2, p. 4-5]

In discussing the work of Coleman Griffith, who is regarded as the 'father of sport psychology' [7] and carried out research on coaching in sport, Palmer and Whybrow state that Griffith's "great contribution, which often goes unrecognised, was to emphasise the importance of the psychology in coaching" [2, p. 6][1]. Later in the chapter, the authors state that Dr. Anthony Grant is "often considered as the father of modern coaching psychology" [2].

Having left school at the age of 15 with no qualifications, Anthony Grant trained to become a carpenter and ran his own contracting business. He later embarked on a second career in direct sales and marketing before enrolling on a psychology degree at university in 1993 at the age of 39 [9], because he wanted "to learn theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated ways of working with people to help them…create change, and better reach goals" [10, p. 117]. When he completed his Ph.D. in 1999, he approached the Dean in the School of Psychology at the University of Sydney with the idea of a Coaching Psychology Unit, where he is now the director.

PSYCHOLOGISTS VERSUS NON-PSYCHOLOGISTS

Coaching psychologists argue that most coaches do not have a background in psychology and that most commercial coach training programmes are based on "proprietary models of coaching with little or no theoretical grounding" [11, p. 26] or with "little published research underpinning its efficacy" [2, p. 8]. In advocating

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[1] The reference to Coleman Griffith is testimony to the importance of sport psychology in the development of coaching psychology, but it is one that should be regarded critically. The labelling of Griffith as 'the father of sport psychology' has been described as a disciplinary "origin myth" [8, p. 267] in that there is no direct connection between Griffith and those who developed sport psychology from the 1960s.

coaching psychology, Palmer and Cavanagh state:

> We bring more than just a framework for a conversation with a client, such as the famous GROW model. We bring a host of <u>psychological theories and models that underpin, and bring depth to, the coaching relationship</u>. These include an understanding of mental health; motivation; systems theory; personal and organisational growth; adaptation of therapeutic models to the field of coaching; research into effectiveness, resilience and positive psychology. [12, p. 1; underlining added)

Grant couches this issue in terms of professionalism and the following criteria of professional status: i) significant barriers to entry; ii) a shared common body of knowledge rather than proprietary systems; (iii) formal qualifications at university level; iv) regulatory bodies with the power to admit, discipline and meaningfully sanction members; v) an enforceable code of ethics; and (vi) some form of state-sanctioned licensing or regulation [13, p. 3].

The statement below concerns the second and third criteria:

> The main difference between coaching psychology and coaching, is that the coaching psychology is explicitly grounded in psychological theory, psychological science and psychological research, and its practitioners have had rigorous university level training in psychology, [and] use the 'scientist-practitioner' or 'informed practitioner' approach. [10, p. 118]

Grant notes that there are a number of universities that offer programmes in coaching. With regard to the criterion of formal qualifications at university level, however, John Whitmore has been quoted as follows:

> ...coaches with psychological knowledge are better equipped to deal with [the psychological side of personal development]. I am cautious though of purely academic psychology: there is a difference between the intellectual understanding of psychology and the practice of it. People who are trained in applied psychology practices such as psychotherapy are more able to use psychological principles in coaching. [14, p. 13]

Grant could respond to Whitmore by pointing to the notion of a 'scientist-practitioner', by which is meant a "consumer of research"; i.e., a practitioner who has been trained in how to use research [13, p. 4]:

> Movement towards a scientist-practitioner model required that coach training programs explicitly address the theoretical and empirical foundations of coaching, and provide training in sound research methodologies, basic statistical and data analysis skills, and foster informed critical thinking skills in student coaches. Such an approach

would form the basis of an <u>evidence-based</u> coaching paradigm. [13, p. 4; underlining added]

The concept of "evidence-based coaching" needs to be elucidated, especially as Stephen Palmer has indicated that more research is needed to inform practice in coaching:

What has been noticeable is the gradual increase in the number of published papers showing the effectiveness of using solution-focused and cognitive-behavioural coaching approaches with non-clinical populations. There are plenty of published research papers highlighting how effective these approaches are with clinical populations but the real challenge has been to prove that they are effective with non-clinical populations. [15, p. x]

In clinical psychology, the concept of scientist-practitioner appears to have been in circulation since the Boulder Conference on Graduate Education in Clinical Psychology in 1949 when a call was made for clinical psychologists to be trained both as scientists and as practitioners. However, there was a lack of consideration given to the integration of science and practice in everyday clinical work. Monte Shapiro [16] originally expressed the scientist-practitioner model in terms of it being a model of the discipline of clinical psychology rather than a model of education and training [17]. Later, Shapiro [18] discarded the notion of clinical psychology as an applied science. In the words of his son, David Shapiro:

He now considered there were insufficient well-validated methods of assessment or treatment for these to form the mainstay of the discipline. He therefore emphasised more strongly than before the value of applying the findings and methods of psychology to understanding clinical problems. He also highlighted the use of scientific method in every aspect of clinical work. … As before, the clinician must work scientifically, but this is now defined exclusively in terms of strategy, rather than relying upon (previously validated) procedure. [17, p. 232-233]

With regard to the priority of strategy over procedure, David Shapiro states:

The evidence base will always be incomplete, and its application to many clinical situations uncertain. The most compelling need for scientist-practitioner skills arises when the evidence is equivocal or lacking…
[17 p. 232-233]

The criterion of "a shared common body of knowledge rather than proprietary systems" stated by Grant would provoke a response such as the following from a coaching practitioner concerned with marketing of coaching and making psychology accessible to the lay person:

> Many successful techniques used in coaching are based on sound psychological research but have only been made accessible through the efforts of disciplines such as neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) which have very successfully encapsulated, labelled and marketed ranges of insights into human relationships and behaviours. For example, it is infinitely more attractive for a layperson to discuss anchoring and its use in advertising than to review data about stimulus-response theory. [19, p. 19-20]

NEURO-LINGUISTIC PROGRAMMING (NLP)

NLP can be regarded as "a method for understanding the structure of subjective experience of human beings, and for utilizing that knowledge in communications" [20, p. 108-109]. It claims to be "a methodology through which effective practices from other fields can be identified and coded" [20, p. 108-109]. The initial NLP work of Richard Bandler and John Grinder [21] was based on observational studies of 'excellent communicators' - Gestalt therapist Fritz Perls, family therapist Virginia Satir, and hypnotherapist Milton Erickson. Bruce Grimley indicates that NLP is informed by a number of theoretical and philosophical roots:

> Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) coaching is an <u>atheoretical</u>, pragmatic approach which shares a philosophy with constructivist, behaviourist and experiential psychology. It is unashamedly <u>eclectic</u> in its orientation drawing on many psychological approaches. The founders of NLP unlike Kurt Lewin would not say 'there is nothing so useful as a good theory'. They made no commitment to theory, regarding such as being more complex and not as useful. Instead they described NLP as a meta-discipline. As they studied the structure of subjective experience, their prime concern was *description* of how somebody worked without needing to understand why they worked that way. [22, p. 193; underlining added]

Michael Hall has discussed how NLP arose in the early 1970s during the heyday of the Human Potential Movement (HPM) as one of many new therapies and fields [23]. HPM has been described as "a psychological philosophy and framework, including a set of values" [24] that grew out of humanistic psychology and is a term that was first used for humanistic psychotherapies that became popular in the 1960s and early 1970s in the USA. HPM was associated with 'growth centres' such as the Esalen Institute, which was founded in 1962 at Big Sur, California by Michael Murphy and Richard Price. Abraham Maslow became affiliated with the Esalen Institute in 1966. [25] Along with Carl Rogers, Rollo May and Charlotte Buhler, Maslow founded the American Association of Humanistic Psychology. The *Gale Encyclopedia of Psychology* has stated that while "the flashier and most eccentric aspects" [26] of HPM, such as Erhard Seminars Training (est) have been largely relegated to fads of the 1960s and 1970s, it endures in other forms. In fact, est and related practices continue under a variety of new names such as the Landmark Forum. Founded by Werner Erhard in 1971, est has been described as drawing from "a highly eclectic

variety of spiritual and psychological development theories and models, apparently the personal selection of Erhard" [20, p. 56].

While stating above that NLP is "atheoretical", Grimley states that theories which NLP draws from include general semantics, systems theory, reattribution theory, social comparison theory, cognitive dissonance, clinical hypnosis, family therapy, ego state theory, cognitive theory, and psychodynamic theory [22, p. 199].

Grimley notes, for example, how goal setting theory is essential to NLP coaching:

> For the NLP coach goals need to be stated in the positive, based upon sensory evidence, measurable, within a timeframe, owned by the coachee, and they need to be something which really accords with the beliefs and values of the coachee. For NLP coaching the most important aspect of goal setting is to ascertain whether or not the coachee really wishes to obtain this goal, compared with them being obliged to do so because of societal, organisational or parental approval. [22, p. 195]

It will be seen in the following section that goal setting theory is essential also to coaching based on the GROW model.

GROW

A number of definitions of coaching are centred around 'conversation' [27, p. 4; 4, p. 99; 28, p. 8; 29, p. 24; 30, p. 177]; albeit a conversation that is qualitatively different to a coachee's everyday conversations [29, p. 24]. Myles Downey indicates a range of different conversational approaches that a coach might take during a coaching session: instructing, giving advice, offering advice, giving feedback, making suggestions, asking questions that raise awareness, summarising, paraphrasing, reflecting, and listening to understand [4, p. 23]. These conversational approaches sit well with the International Coach Federation (ICF) Professional Coaching Core Competencies [31].

The GROW model has been widely used to structure a coaching conversation. This model was developed by Graham Alexander in 1984 [32] and popularised by Sir John Whitmore, who summarised it as follows:

> GOAL setting for the session as well as short and long term
> REALITY checking to explore the current situation
> OPTIONS and alternative strategies on courses of action
> WHAT is to be done, WHEN, by WHOM and the WILL to do it
> [3, p. 54]

Downey has noted that the first stage of the model is identifying the *topic* for the session ('What do you want to talk to me about?') before asking about the *goal* for the session, but that "attempts to include this stage in the mnemonic have, without exception, been clumsy – the best was the To Grow model, borrowing the 'To' from topic" [4, p. 26]. Downey provides insight into how the GROW model developed:

> The practice of effective coaching was already in place before the GROW model was 'discovered'. The early practitioners of coaching

worked more or less intuitively. Over time it became apparent that in the more successful sessions there was a certain sequence of key stages. The pattern was discussed and formulated as the GROW model. The model grew out of best practice and not theory. [4, p. 25-26]

A number of models with "a useful acronym as an aide mémoire" [33, p. 71] have developed from the GROW model; e.g., ACHIEVE[2], POSITIVE[3], OSKAR[4], SPACE[5], and PRACTICE[6]). Citing his earlier work [38, 39], Stephen Palmer recommends that clients who are experienced at using the seven-step, PRACTICE model can use shorter models such as STIR or PIE[7] but "the outcome may be less satisfactory" [33, p. 75].

Ho Law and his colleagues show how different approaches to coaching can be mapped on to each element of the GROW model to serve as a guide for coaches in applying different techniques in different contexts [6, p. 136]. Similarly, Jonathon Passmore, who places the GROW model within "behavioural coaching", argues that:

…coaching practice in reality integrates a range of different models and processes. Thus, the behaviourist coach uses humanistic elements to build rapport, create empathy and operate non-judgementally towards their coachee. They may equally draw on cognitive coaching elements; encouraging the coachee to reflect on the beliefs which enhance or inhibit their performance. The coach may also challenge client motivation, or encourage reflection on past experiences and bring into conscious awareness issues from the unconscious. [40, p. 79]

MODELS AND THEORIES

In the above sections, the terms theory and model are used in various ways. Coaching psychologists Carol Kaufman and Tatiana Bachkirova define theories as "coherent, scientifically based descriptions and explanations of phenomena we are interested in exploring":

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[2] ACHIEVE represents: Assess the current situation; Creative brainstorming of alternative to current situation; Hone goals; Initiate options; Evaluative options; Valid action programme design, Encourage momentum. [34]

[3] POSITIVE represents Purpose, Observations, Strategy, Insight, Team, Initiate, Value and Encourage. [35]

[4] OSKAR represents Outcome, Scaling, Know-how and resources, Affirm and action, Review. [36]

[5] SPACE represents Social context, Physiological, Action, Cognitions and Emotions. [37]

[6] PRACTICE represents Problem identification; Realistic, relevant goals developed (e.g., SMART goals); Alternative solutions generated; Consideration of consequences; Target most feasible solutions; Implementation of Chosen solutions; Evaluation. [33]

[7] STIR: Select a problem; Target a solution; Implement a solution; Review outcome.
PIE: Problem definition, Implement a solution; Evaluate outcome.
[33, p. 75]

> …theories of coaching try to describe and explain the coaching process and outcomes, how change happens, how it can be sustained, what forces keep change from occurring and what galvanises growth.
> [41, p. 2]

This definition fits with the view in science and academia that a theory is not simply a hypothesis, but rather an explanatory structure that is supported by empirical evidence and can be used to make valid predictions.

In science, models are often used along with analogical reasoning as the basis of theories. For example, Charles Darwin generated his theory of natural selection using an analogy to artificial selection through a model of how stock breeders and gardeners produce new breeds of animals and new plant forms by selecting stock and plants with the characteristics they desired. [42]

Alberto Greco notes that while clinical psychology tends to construct big theoretical systems, experimental psychology tends to use models:

> …these "models" frequently are interested in a single cognitive process or even in some particular aspect of a cognitive process, rather than in old general issues such as the relationships between perception and motivation or memory and intelligence. [43, p. 1]

What Greco refers to as "big theoretical systems" are more commonly known as 'schools of thought in psychology'; e.g., behaviourism, psychoanalysis, cognitivism:

> The psychological schools are the great classical theories of psychology. Each has been highly influential, however most psychologists hold eclectic viewpoints that combine aspects of each school. [44; underlining added]

In coaching, the GROW model can be regarded as a simplified representation of a complex real world process; i.e., 'coaching conversation'. A model in this sense is simple in order to have practical utility. It is what can be referred to as a "heuristic device", which is:

> …a map or model that does not purport to be true, but which enables a learner to explore and discover. It may be a rule of thumb that allows for exploration through trial and error, or a model such as Maslow's hierarchy of needs.[20, p. 74]

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is arguably the most familiar model in the whole field of personal and professional development, but as a number of authors have pointed out "it is not only poorly understood but also promulgated as established theory rather than as the speculative map of human development that Maslow originally seems to have intended." [20, p. 74] As Maslow himself pointed out, his theory lacks empirical support. [45] Maslow's [46, 47] theory of motivation, represented by "the ubiquitous triangle" has been grossly simplified and decontextualised from Maslow's original vision:

Presented as a tool for understanding and thereby motivating employees, the hierarchy barely resembles Maslow's vision of the hierarchy as a ladder, ultimately leading to societal change and the empancipation of humankind… . His self-acknowledged theoretical placement between Freud and Marx seems far from evident in this pared-down version of what was initially a comprehensive theory of motivation… [48, p. 149]

While Maslow is most closely associated with humanistic psychology, the so-called 'third force psychology', he believed in theoretical eclecticism in that other psychological schools have contributed to human understanding:

I consider Humanistic, Third Force Psychology to be transitional, a preparation for a still 'higher' Fourth Psychology, transpersonal, transhuman, centered in the cosmos, rather than in human needs and interest, going beyond humanness, identity, self-actualization, and the like. [49, p. iii-iv]

Transpersonal theory was pioneered by Carl Jung, who was originally in the 'second force psychology' with Freud. Along with Robert Assagioli, Maslow was a major contributor to the emergence of transpersonal psychology, after which Ken Wilber, Stanislav Grof and David Levin have been influential, according to Michael Washburn, who has provided a potted history:

Transpersonal theory came into its own as a movement with the founding of the *Journal of Transpersonal Psychology* in 1969. In the early years, transpersonal theory was predominantly humanistic in its psychology and Eastern in its religion, a synthesis of Maslow and Buddhism (primarily Zen). These identifications, however, have loosened over the years, and transpersonal theory is now more open to a diversity of psychological and spiritual perspectives. [50, p. 3]

THE INNER GAME

Sir John Whitmore, Graham Alexander and Myles Downey are all disciples of Timothy Gallwey, who is author of the Inner Game series [51-54]. The Inner Game can be understood in the context of both humanistic and transpersonal psychology. Indeed it has been shown by Jenkins [55] how Gallwey used ideas from Zen and Yoga.

The influence of Gallwey and his disciples is captured in Peter Bluckert's list of seven "sound coaching principles' of which the first four are: "From tell to ask" [facilitated learning], "Performance and Potential" [unlocking potential], "Awareness and Responsibility", and "Building Self-Belief" [56, p. 4-5]. Furthermore:

[The importance of awareness and responsibility] is the common ground between most, if not all, coaching authors and is captured in the proposition that awareness is the starting point for growth and change. As people become more aware of their assumptions, belief systems,

> attitudes and behavioural patterns they move into a position of choice – to stay with them or to change. The responsibility for this choice is with them. … The coach may facilitate the heightening of a client's awareness through running a 360-degree feedback exercise providing an ocean of rich data but if the individual doesn't own any of it, then the prospect of learning and change is low. …[The coach has] to help people to believe and trust in themselves and others. [56, p. 5]

Downey refers to the facilitation approach as "Non-Directive Coaching", which was developed by himself and other Inner Game disciples, as relying not on "the knowledge, experience, wisdom or insight of the coach" but rather on "the capacity of individuals to learn for themselves, to think for themselves and be creative" [4, p. 9-10]. Downey describes this 'school' of coaching as being "an offshoot of The Inner Game" but having "borrowed much from other sources, not least Carl Rogers" [4, p. 20]. He notes, however, that he has never heard Gallwey use the term 'non-directive' and that, in any case, it is neither possible nor desirable to be completely non-directive [4, p. 37]. Downey also notes that using the GROW model is "a directive act" [4, p. 188]. In the terms used below by Sir John Whitmore, the GROW model is part of the *context* of coaching:

> When you call your coaching non-directive, you are pretending if you believe that you are 100% responsive to the coachee agenda. The mere fact that you are present has an influence. The *content* is what the coachee wants, but the *context* in which it takes place is the presence of the coach. So if I have a global vision, or spiritual vision, I will ask different questions, even about something mundane.
> [14, p. 15; italics added]

Downey distinguishes between 'off-line' and 'on-line' situations in coaching. Off-line situations such as planning and reviewing are where the GROW model is applicable. On-line situations, which are concerned with consideration of performance issues such as making a presentation, bring the Inner Game into place; especially what Downey refers to as the "model" of 'Potential minus interference is equal to performance' [4, p. 11]. This model is the basis of what can be referred to as the Inner Game *theory*, which is based on the premise that a person has two selves, Self One and Self Two:

> Self One is the internalised voice of our parents, teachers and those in authority. Self One seeks to control Self Two and does not trust it. Self One is characterised by tension, fear, doubt and trying too hard.

> Self Two is the whole human being with all its potential and capacities including the 'hard-wired' capacity to learn. It is characterised by relaxed concentration, enjoyment and trust. [4, p. 45]

The aim of the coach is to help the coachee get into Self Two, especially in critical situations such as making presentations.

SIR JOHN WHITMORE

The remainder of this article will examine the impact of the Inner Game through the career of John Whitmore[8]. The account that is given appears to have a good fit with Lucy West and Mike Milan's analysis of how coaching developed. These authors make a distinction between "supply" and "demand" factors. The supply factors are: i) the role of psychology; ii) social trends (the personal development movement and the sports analogy); and iii) business trends (outplacement and career management). The demands factors are: i) the diminishing of corporate and individual security; ii) the growing imperative for continuous organisational and individual learning; iii) and the need for new leadership. [31]

The account of Whitmore's career bears heavily on the second of the supply factors and the third of the demand factors. West and Milan [31] refer to the rapid growth of the 'human potential movement' (HPM) that originated in the USA during the 1960s and role of the Inner Game in the concept of coaching being transferred from sport to business. With regard to the third demand factor, West and Milan state that, "The notion of leadership that derives from a 'command and control' model does not work in a world that has become substantively unpredictable." [31, p. 24-25]

WHITMORE AND THE INNER GAME

Born in 1937, Whitmore was educated at Eton College, Sandhurst Royal Military Academy, and Cirencester Agricultural College. His first career was in motor racing and in 1965 he won the European Saloon Car Championship. He retired from motor racing the following year in order to run a large agribusiness, a product design company and a Ford Main Dealership. [58-61]

In 1968, Whitmore sold all his business interests to study physics, psychotherapy and sports psychology. [58, 59] He felt there was more to life: "I had material success from both business and racing, even including my own plane and airstrip, but this did not seem to satisfy me." [62] He went to the Esalen Institute in 1970 at a time when it was visited by Carl Rogers and Abraham Maslow. He studied humanistic psychology and met Timothy Gallwey. [62]

In 1971, Whitmore shot a full-length feature film at the Esalen Institute which was shown at the Cannes and Edinburgh film festivals. It featured a week-long 'encounter group' led by Will Schutz, who had developed a system called Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation (FIRO) [63]. He brought Werner Erhard to the UK in 1974 to present the first est training in Europe. [65, p. 423] Vikki Brock has indicated that the "Gallwey / Whitmore" group was connected to Erhard through Esalen and personal relationships. [65] Erhard has been quoted as follows: "Tim [Gallwey] was one of the coaches that I studied . . . and I really learned a lot working with him . . . [as a tennis coach and] . . . John [Whitmore] came to visit and gave me some support coaching [in race car driving]" [65, p. 423].

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[8] Sir John Whitmore was presented with an award by the Association of Coaching (AC) in 2005 for having had the most impact on the coaching profession: "This award recognises an individual who has pioneered the development and use of coaching based philosophies that significantly benefit society, along with ethically demonstrating the benefits coaching based relationships can deliver to the wider community." [57] In 2007 he received the President's Award from the International Coach Federation (ICF) and in 2008 he was awarded an honorary Ph.D. in Business Administration by the University of East London (UEL) for his contribution to the development of the coaching profession.

   Brock discusses the role of the Human Potential Movement in the 1960s, out of which the Esalen Institute emerged:

> The spread of coaching was fueled through interdisciplinary mingling in venues available at ...[locations such as Esalen]. The key figures in these movements connected through face-to-face conferences, workshops, and forums. [65, p. 487]

The emphasis was therefore on non-formal and informal learning rather than formal learning. In sports coaching, Lee Nelson and his colleagues concluded that coaches learn from a wide range of sources, but formal and non-formal learning episodes are low-impact endeavours when compared to the lifelong process of informal learning. Formal learning is institutionalised and may involve studying for a coaching certificate or university degree; non-formal learning may include coaching workshops and conferences; while informal learning can range from previous experience as an athlete to interaction with peer coaches, as well as independent learning using resources such as journal articles. With regard to informal learning:

> Learning is viewed as distributed among many participants within the community in which people with diverse expertise are transformed through their own actions and those of other participants. … [It] is largely through such experiences that collective understandings begin to develop and the shared meanings about the occupational culture of coaching start to take shape. Therefore, much of what a new coach learns is through ongoing interactions in the practical coaching context. Such formative experiences carry far into a coach's career and provide a continuing influence over perspectives, beliefs, and behaviours. [66, p. 254]

In 1974, for a series of "May Lectures" in London, Whitmore "brought together the California hippies of Esalen with the British aristocracy of Findhorn [a spiritual community in Scotland]" [67]. Whitmore trained with Gallwey in California and returned to the UK with an agreement to represent the Inner Game in Europe. [65, 68] In 1979, Whitmore and a group of British coaches including Graham Alexander and Caroline Harris took part in the first Inner Game coaching training to be in held in the UK, led by one of Gallwey's trainers. The group set up The Inner Game Ltd. and ran courses in tennis and skiing:

> Enquiries from other sports followed. In the early 80's there began to be noticeably more interest from the business world keen to learn about the principles of Inner Game coaching and sensing the value and potential of their application in the work environment. The original trainees were welcomed into the new field of business coaching. [68]

   In 1986, The Inner Game Ltd. and Results Unlimited, which had been founded by Jenny Ditzler in 1981, merged into the Alexander Corporation. Ditzler formerly

worked for Erhard. [31] In 1986, Whitmore teamed up with David Hemery and later with David Whitaker to found Performance Consultants:

> We dropped the Inner Game name and called what we did 'Coaching'. Coaching became a business buzz-word quite quickly. Then I felt that some people were leaping on the bandwagon and re-labelling their products as 'coaching' when they did not really understand what the underlying principals of 'coaching' were.
>
> They knew that *questioning* was involved, but not the basis of the whole approach. I wrote 'Coaching for Performance' in order to throw down the gauntlet and say, 'here is the definition of coaching'. It worked because the book became the best seller in the field. Some of the impostors fell by the wayside and we were joined in the market by a number of ex-colleagues from earlier sports 'Inner Game' days. All the successful people in business coaching that I know are now using similar principals to those outlined in my book. [62]

WHITMORE AND EMPOWERMENT

Empowerment has been a buzzword since the 1980s and 1990s [69, p. 404] when it was associated with radical organisational changes. In their research on how organisations are managed when they face decline, turbulence, downsizing and change, Kim Cameron and his colleagues identified twelve negative attributes or attitudes: centralization, threat-rigidity response, loss of innovativeness, decreasing morale, politicized environment, loss of trust, increased conflict, restricted communication, lack of teamwork, loss of loyalty, scapegoating leaders, and short-term perspective [70, p. 403]. Empowerment has been viewed as "a key to unlocking the potential of a successful workforce in an era of chaotic change and escalating competitive conditions" [69, p. 401]. It involves managers removing controls, constraints and boundaries so as to give people the freedom to be more autonomous and self-directed [69, p. 401; 20, p. 53]. From a review of empirical research on empowerment, David Whetten and Kim Cameron identify five core dimensions of empowerment self-efficacy (a sense of personal competence), self-determination (a sense of personal choice), personal control (a sense of having impact), meaning (a sense of value in activity), and trust (a sense of security) [69, p. 406].

Empowerment has not been accepted uncritically by management and personal development scholars, however, as Paul Tosey and Jose Gregory remark:

> There is much talk of 'empowering' people, yet this entails the quite odd idea that some external authority is capable of enabling others to become 'empowered'. Rather like learning, empowerment: may be spoken of as if it were a universal good. This contemporary rhetoric begs analysis also of the restrictions likely to be placed on empowerment in organizations – many employees have found that acting in an empowered way attracts sanctions. [20, p. 53]

Jim Durcan and David Oates report the work of Sir John Whitmore with the Kent County Constabulary in which it was sought to empower lower-rank police officers by encouraging them to generate innovative ways of increasing the crime detection rate, for example. According to Stuart McBride, who was in charge of management and personal development for the Kent County Constabulary, this took place at a time when there was "structural delayering" in police forces and a need to respond to pressures from society for an empowerment approach to be taken; however:

> "It's not true empowerment in the sense that you say 'Here's the mission statement, go away and do whatever it is you want to do'. The coach, in the coaching process, in my view, retains control and responsibility. What he does is recognise that by moving towards the empowering end of the scale people get far more ownership of issues and problems, more enjoyment, more reward. I don't mean that it is a conning approach, that people only think they have control, but they don't really. They do have control, but that doesn't mean the boss loses control. The boss has to be more aware." [71, p. 107]

Whitmore regards The Inner Game as "the purest basis of workplace coaching" and believes that it "is predicated upon us recognising and eliminating the internal obstacles to our becoming what we may be, and fear is the greatest of those obstacles" [72, p. 8]. He defines coaching as "unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance" [3, p. 8], and advocates it as "a management style rather than merely a tool for a manager to use occasionally" [3, p. 6].

Awareness and responsibility are the key principles of coaching [3, p. 16]. Awareness is "knowing what is happening around you", while self awareness is "knowing what you are experiencing" [3, p. 35]. Responsibility is concerned with personal choice and control:

> Coaching helps build responsibility into the other person by enriching their capability to make choices and decisions of their own. [14, p. 13]

> Personal responsibility can seem threatening because it means there's someone to blame. But without responsibility you can't make decisions. [73]

Whitmore notes that "many managers withhold responsibility and kill awareness" [3, p. 40]. He believes that "coaching represents and symbolises the collective societal shift from hierarchy towards self-responsibility" and a "paradigm shift from the common culture of fear to one of trust"; and "an emerging shift from the subservient, convenient and automatic following of orders, to the expectation of and demand for more choice by ordinary people at work and elsewhere in their lives" [74, p. 24-25].

He describes empowerment in terms of "encouraging the inner authority of employees" [75], which echoes the words of Tim Gallwey in the foreword to Myles Downey's book:

> The goal of coaching is to establish a firmer connection with an *inner* authority that can guide vision and urge excellence and discriminate wisdom without being subject to an 'inner bully', that has established its certification from external dictates and imposes them on you without your authority to do so. [4, p. ix; italics original]

WHITMORE, HIS PARENTS AND EMPOWERMENT

Whitmore has described himself as "the timid son of a benevolent and successful but autocratic father in whose shadow I hid my mediocrity during my school years" [60, 61-62]. He has explained his motivation for motor racing:

> I was the 'little guy' and I wanted to break out from behind his imposing shadow. At around 17-18 my rebellious nature came out. I wanted to find myself, and that resulted in a competitive need to prove myself. I was just starting to drive, so the car became the tool of my competitive expression. [62]

In further describing his father, and his mother, Whitmore states:

> My father was 65 years old when I was born. He was a Victorian landowning aristocrat and he ruled his estate and his family as a benevolent dictator. Though Norwegian and half his age, my mother's caring and authority were comparable. In my child's eyes they successfully and single-handedly defended England against the Huns during World War II. In their roles as leaders of the district Home Guard and Red Cross respectively, they were indeed renowned and honoured for the contributions they made in material and morale to the war effort.
> …
> My father was indeed a caricature of a benevolent dictator. He was at times disappointed by the lack of benevolence shown by some of his aristocratic colleagues and by many of the ambitious 'nouveau riche' who rose to commercial or political power when the war was over. Nevertheless he was unable to comprehend the rise of socialism because he cared for his hundred or so employees as if they were his family. They had everything they needed except for the one thing they might have wanted, choice and self-determination. He was incapable of understanding why they would want that. Most of them probably didn't, but other less well-treated workers certainly did. [75]

WHITMORE AND MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

In 2006 Whitmore formed Performance Consultants International, which is an "international specialist advisory, coaching, leadership and transformation firm" with the purpose being "to share the best leadership, social responsibility and other people skills among different countries and cultures for a sustainable future for all" [76]. Whitmore is also the co-creator with Nick Hart-Williams of the "Be The Change" movement [77], which staged its first event in 2004. He strives in particular "to get

businesses to recognise their wider responsibilities and contribute directly to global conditions" [62]. Whitmore promotes the idea of transpersonal coaching, on the basis that we have a "core within ourselves" that is "the fountain from which true values and qualities emerge and, if there is ever a time at which humanity needs to find its values and qualities, it is now" [59]. The following statement would appear to suggest that Whitmore has indeed followed Maslow's original agenda; i.e., of "societal change and emancipation of humankind" [48, p. 149]:

> As we climb the Maslow hierarchy of needs, we meet different needs along the way but its not a linear journey. All people need to have meaning and purpose but often can't define it and so project their need onto the games of life along the way. At first, meaning and purpose for me was to be successful in my sport. Eventually, I left that little game to play a bigger game, first business then the game of life itself. I quickly realised that business was just another game and should not be taken too seriously. Pushing bits of paper around or figures on a screen is fairly pointless and not half as much fun as tennis or racing. We use these games to satisfy an inner need. As we evolve and become more psychologically mature, we get more sophisticated about what gives us meaning. In the early stage we look for recognition from others but that develops into a more profound and discriminating search for self-esteem, self belief and for personal fulfilment. The final stage, at least on the Maslow scale, almost always includes <u>a desire to make a contribution in the wider world</u>, and that is what happened to me. What really gave me satisfaction was to make a contribution.
> [62; underlining added]

CONCLUSION

Stephen Palmer and Michael Cavanagh stated that coaching psychologists "bring more than just a framework with a client, such as the famous GROW model", bringing "a host of psychological theories and models that underpin, and bring depth to, the coaching relationship" [12, p. 1]. Coaching psychologists have had rigorous university-level training in psychology and use the scientist-practitioner approach [10, p. 118]. Notions of 'evidence-based coaching' that are embedded in concepts of scientist-practitioner are not unproblematic, however, not least because (as coaching psychologists acknowledge) more research is needed to inform practice in coaching [15, p. x] and because theory may be conflated with empirical evidence. While coaching psychologists emphasize the need for "a shared body of knowledge rather than proprietary systems" [13, p. 3], coaches argue that their techniques need to be marketed and made accessible to the layperson [19, p. 19-20]. As in psychology, the terms 'model' and 'theory' in coaching are used in a variety of ways. Coaching practice integrates a range of different models, theories, approaches and processes [40, p. 79] - as a consideration of NLP shows [22], coaching is eclectic in its orientation. The GROW model [3] can be regarded as a simplified representation of a complex real world process; i.e., 'coaching conversation'. A model in this sense is simple in order to have practical utility.

The influence of Timothy Gallwey's Inner Game [51] and his disciples such as John Whitmore is captured in Peter Bluckert's list of seven "sound coaching principles" of which the first four are: "From tell to ask" [facilitated learning], "Performance and Potential" [unlocking potential], "Awareness and Responsibility", and "Building Self-Belief" [56, p. 4-5].

Whitmore's success in coaching can be attributed to a number of factors, including his: parents; careers in motor racing and business; involvement in the Human Potential Movement and the Esalen Institute; meeting Timothy Gallwey and learning about the Inner Game; marketing the Inner Game in the UK; finding a synergy between the Inner Game and the empowerment movement in the business world; change in describing what he does from "sport psychology" to "coaching"; distinguishing between "on-line" and "off-line" use of the Inner Game (to use Myles Downey's [4] terminology), commitment to lifelong and shared learning through non-formal and informal means; making a link between spirituality and the workplace; continual search for meaning and purpose in life; and a passionate desire to make a difference in the world, which goes hand-in-hand with his advocacy of transpersonal psychology and coaching:

> In recent years people especially in Western culture are waking up to the transpersonal within themselves through the emerging need to find meaning and purpose in all aspects of their lives and to work in the service of something beyond just making a profit.
>
> This was less urgent when we were more focussed lower down the Maslow hierarchy (on survival, on belonging and material success), and when religion was the preserve of the spiritual. Affluence, global communication and the secularisation of society have now brought the transpersonal onto many people's agenda, both personally and at work. Coaching tends to be viewed in the business world as an action-orientated way of addressing problems.
>
> Transpersonal coaching is an empowering process which helps clients discover the power and effectiveness of who they really are. This core, source of our deepest values and qualities, is a well-spring of real strength, creativity and actualisation. [78]

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