COACHING

Coaching as a discipline really took off in the 1990s. The coaching industry stems from several different and sometimes conflicting disciplines, theories and methodologies (Renton, 2009). This section outlines the main strands.

Much of coaching in the UK has its origins in sports coaching. Timothy Gallwey caused a huge stir when his book, The Inner Game of Tennis, was published in 1974. Gallwey was a Harvard educationalist and a tennis expert. His focus was on the individual’s potential and performance. He realised that fears and doubts, such as lack of self-confidence, can impair good performance, and he called these fears and doubts interference. His model of coaching therefore became

\[ \text{Potential - Interference} = \text{Performance} \]

One of the ways to reduce interference is by focusing your attention (Downey, 2003). Gallwey called this ‘relaxed concentration.’ It is also called being “in flow,” when what you are doing seems easy and effortless. In this model of coaching, the coach’s role is to reduce the interference and help the coachee learn.

Kline’s model has influenced coaching practice in Britain, with some coaches specifically training as “Time to Think” coaches.

A corollary of this approach is that coaches do not need to be knowledgeable about their coachee’s work or organisation, nor an expert in the issue being addressed. The assumption is that people have more capability than they are expressing, and that attentive listening and appropriate questions will enable them to work things out for themselves. Through their own practice and their training of coaches, Myles Downey and The School of Coaching were a major influence on developing this non-directive model of coaching in the UK, based on the inner game approach and Carl Roger’s (1961) person-centred therapy.

A second dominant influence on coaching comes from psychology. Renton (2009) gives a brief outline of the key American figures in psychology who have had a bearing on coaching. One of them is Carl Rogers, mentioned above, who is associated with the person-centred approach in counselling. This approach emphasises the importance of the client-counsellor relationship over technique or models. Active in the mid twentieth century, Rogers championed the idea that a good relationship would help clients find within themselves the capacity for growth and development. He emphasised the clients’ goals, with the clients leading much of the process, rather than the more traditional emphasis on “fixing them,” believing that only clients could heal themselves. His belief in the importance of accepting the client, being non-judgemental, and listening, have all influenced coaching (Renton 2009). He was thus a forerunner of the non-directive school of coaching and approaches like Kline’s Time to Think.

The main psychological theories which inform coaching
in Britain, their uses and limitations, are well described by Peltier (2010). They include adult development, the psychodynamic view, behavioural concepts, cognitive psychology and cognitive therapy, which is popularly used in the NHS, and systems thinking. Some of these models are described in more detail in a subsequent section.

Social work practice has also influenced coaching, particularly coaching supervision. A leading figure here is Peter Hawkins, a former social worker and therapist. He has influenced coaching through his practice, his writing and research, and his training programmes at his Bath Consultancy Group. Hawkins (2006) sees coaching in terms of helping coachees achieve personal change. This is mainly behavioural change, which will inevitably include changes in mind-set, emotions and sometimes core purpose. The thinking underlying his approach to coaching has influenced many practising coaches, and will therefore be outlined in a later section.

The other main influence on coaching has been business. As coaching developed, senior figures from business entered the new profession, bringing with them their experience as senior leaders and their business perspective.

**MENTORING**

Mentoring has a long history. The word ‘mentor’ comes from Greek mythology, when Ulysses entrusted his son’s education to his old friend, Mentor. This is described in The Odyssey, an epic Greek poem dating back at least 3,000 years. The term ‘mentor’ thus became associated with the idea of a more experienced person acting as a guide to a younger and/or less experienced person.

Mentoring disappeared for a significant period before becoming increasingly popular over the last two decades of the twentieth century, particularly in English speaking countries. Levinson’s longitudinal research in the 1970s into male development stimulated an interest in mentoring in the United States. He used the term ‘mentor’ for someone who was half a generation older who could accelerate the development of another through age-related transitions. This quickly became the catalyst for rapid growth in mentoring in the United States that focused on rapid career progression.

It is from this point that we start to see the emergence of a body of literature about mentoring in American business management (Colley, 2002). Influential articles (particularly Roche’s report, Much Ado about Mentoring (1979)), claimed to have discovered mentoring as an informal but important part of a business man’s career. Mentoring in Britain then began to be seen as an American import, which had to be adapted to British culture. Clutterbuck was instrumental in the 1980s in bringing the idea of mentoring to Britain from the United States. He is regarded as the ‘grandfather’ of mentoring. Mentoring has now become a key feature of initial training in public service professions, including nursing, teaching and business management. It has also been used to foster social inclusion, with mentors working with disadvantaged young people. Colley argues that, given mentoring’s rise in popularity, it might be expected that the recent past would have produced clear theoretical and practical frameworks for its implementation. However, this has not been the case. Despite first appearing in academic literature in the 1970s, the concept remains elusive, with relatively slight coverage in formal journals (Piper and Piper, 2000).