

# Coaching Evolution

(and Revolution)

The history, development, and distinctions  
that will define coaching as the most important  
organizational development of the future.

By Dr. Patrick Williams

**“Coaching is the latest and most pervasive evolution in the self-improvement industry.”**

**—Career Confidential**

Coaching, while the latest and hottest trend to invade the workplace, is not really new. It is a new derivative of the best thinking in self-improvement since the turn of the 20th century. Coaching found its place in history—and most recently in the business world—when it exploded into the corporate environment in the 1990s. Today, workplace coaching has dozens of specialty fields (just like medicine) for every kind of business concern including personal career coaching, transitions and mergers coaching, start-up venture and entrepreneurial coaching, executive leader coaching, team coaching, and what many call life coaching. After all, behind every job is a real person. There is coaching for every type and size of business from the self-employed sole proprietor to huge coaching programs within the top Fortune 500 companies. Boeing International even has a coaching department. Coaching has proven a worthy investment during its short but remarkable history.

### **The Roots Of Coaching**

Coaching evolved from three main streams that have flowed together:

- 1. The helping professions such as psychotherapy and counseling**
- 2. Business consulting and organizational development**
- 3. Personal development training, such as EST, Landmark Forum, Tony Robbins, Covey seminars, and others**

Many psychological theorists and practitioners from the early 1900s onward have influenced the development and evolution of the field of business coaching. The theories of William James, America’s father of psychology, influenced coaches as they help clients discover their brilliance, which is often masked or buried and can be experienced when they begin to design life and work consciously and purposely. Many of the theories of Carl Jung and Alfred Adler are antecedents to modern day coaching. Adler saw individuals as the creators and artists of their lives and frequently involved his clients in goal setting, life planning, and inventing their future—all tenets and approaches in today’s coaching. In a similar fashion, Jung believed in a “future orientation” or teleological belief that we can create our futures through visioning and purposeful living.

In 1951, during the human potential movement, Carl Rogers wrote his monumental book, *Client Centered Therapy*, which shifted counseling and therapy to a relationship in which the client was assumed to have the ability to change and grow. This shift in perspective was a significant precursor to what today is called coaching. Abraham Maslow researched, questioned, and observed people who were living with a sense of vitality and purpose and who were constantly seeking to grow psychologically and achieve more of their human potential. He spoke of needs and motivations, as did earlier psychologists, but with the view that man is

naturally a health-seeking creature who, if obstacles to personal growth are removed, will naturally pursue self-actualization, playfulness, curiosity, and creativity. This is the foundational belief of coaching today. Maslow’s treatise, *Toward a Psychology of Being* (1968), set the framework that allowed coaching to fully emerge in the 1990s as an application of the human potential movement of the 1960s and 1970s.

### **Important Distinctions**

Coaching is a derivative of many fields and the innovative thinking of great pioneers. As such, however, it is important to recognize the major distinctions between coaching and other disciplines such as therapy, mentoring, and consulting (see table on page 8).

With coaching, little time is spent in the past, except for brief “visits,” and the focus is on developing the person’s future. This philosophical shift has taken root in a generation that rejects the idea of sickness and seeks instead wellness, wholeness, and purposeful living—both personally and professionally. The coaching relationship allows the client to explore their blocks to great success and to unlock his or her biggest dreams and desires. The shift from seeing clients as “ill” or having pathology toward viewing them as “well and whole” and seeking a richer life is paramount to understanding the evolution of coaching.

I often say therapy is about *recovering* and *uncovering*, while coaching is about *discovering*.

### **Coaching Tools**

In the modern day workplace, coaching is utilizing theories and practices that have been around quite awhile. Theories such as Group Dynamics, Emotional Intelligence, and the Johari Window, and tools such as 360 Feedback assessments, allow clients to learn both about blind spots—their Achilles heels of behavioral tendencies that block effectiveness—and hidden strengths which can be used more effectively. Style assessments or inventories (such as FIRO-B, Myers-Briggs, and DISC) help people learn how they relate to one another most effectively.

Team coaching draws on theories from Group Dynamics including:

- **The stages of group development;**
- **Group norms;**
- **Group cohesiveness; and**
- **Team building.**

The difference between a consultant using these theories and a coach applying them is that the consultant works independently to identify or state the problem and possible solutions, while the coach works with the team to recognize the challenges and co-create solutions. The consultant makes the diagnosis. The coach promotes self-healing.

Emotional Intelligence (EI, Daniel Goleman) is very popular, especially since it has reinforced what everyone always knew but didn't want to admit—relationships within the workplace are important to the overall success of the company or organization. Businesses improve (and show healthier bottom lines) if the employees are happier and communicate and function as a team that works well together and resolves conflict early. EI includes Personal Competence in self-awareness, self-regulation, and motivation as well as Social Competence in Empathy and Social Skills. Coaching acts as a catalyst in executives and teams to elicit their natural EI strengths and promote healthy, functional—and yes, even enjoyable—workplace relationships.

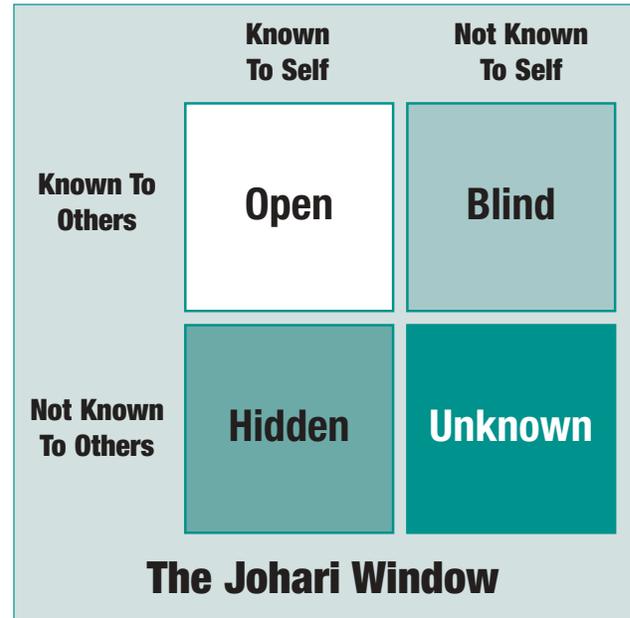
The Johari Window is a disclosure/feedback model of self-awareness, named after its inventors Joseph Luft and Harry Ingham. It was first used in 1955 at the Western Training Laboratory in Group Development.

This “window” is a graphical representation of those aspects of our self that are known or unknown to us, and known or unknown to others. It is a model for communication, and can also reveal difficulties in this area. The Johari Window only functions properly with a give-and-take of disclosure and feedback—the natural interaction of the coach and coachee. This simple yet effective theory demonstrates the power of the coach offering feedback to the coachee that he or she isn't aware of, and working with that person to realize positive change.

The “Peoplemap” (E. Michael Lillibridge, PhD) is a user friendly and powerful personality assessment that is quickly completed and easy to understand and apply. (See Peoplemap sidebar on page 9). The client recognizes and comprehends his or her general personality type and how it manifests itself in work, family, and social environments. When we are aware of our strengths and our areas

of potential challenge or conflict, we can be more sensitive to the ways that other people view and respond to us.

As individual coaching clients obtain results from these assessment tools, and make discoveries about themselves, they work with coaches who help them understand the information, determine what changes they want to make, and plan the strategy to reach desired goals. The coach elicits ways that the person can change behaviors. A coach does not TELL the person, but helps



### Important Distinctions Between Coaching And Other Disciplines

<i>Therapy</i>	<i>Mentoring</i>	<i>Consulting</i>	<i>Coaching</i>
Deals mostly with a person's past and trauma, and seeks healing	Deals mostly with succession training and seeks to help someone do what you do	Deals mostly with problems and seeks to provide information ( <i>expertise, strategy, structures, methodologies</i> ) to solve them	Deals mostly with a person's present and seeks to guide them into a more desirable future
Doctor-patient relationship ( <i>Therapist has the answers</i> )	“Older/Wiser” - Younger/ Less Experienced relationship ( <i>Mentor has the answers</i> )	Expert-Person With Problem Relationship ( <i>Consultant has the answers</i> )	Co-creative equal partnership ( <i>Coach helps client discover their own answers</i> )
Assumes emotions are a symptom of something wrong	Is limited to emotional response of the mentoring parameters ( <i>succession, etc.</i> )	Does not normally address or deal with emotions ( <i>informational only</i> )	Assumes emotions are natural and normalizes them
The Therapist diagnoses, then provides professional expertise and guidelines to give you a path to healing.	The Mentor allows you to observe his/her behavior, offers expertise, answers questions, provides guidance and wisdom for the stated purpose of the mentoring.	The Consultant stands back, evaluates a situation, then tells you the problem and how to fix it.	The Coach stands with you, and helps YOU identify the challenges, then works with you to turn challenges into victories and holds you accountable to reach your desired goals.

***“Part therapist, part consultant, part motivational expert, part professional organizer, part friend, part nag—the personal coach seeks to do for your life what a personal trainer does for your body.”***

**—Kim Palmer, Minneapolis-St. Paul Star-Tribune 1998**

them arrive at a strategy for change. Coaching involves motivational interviewing, powerful questions (discovery), intentional listening, empowerment, consistency, and accountability.

### ***The Future Of Workplace Coaching***

There’s no turning back. We are on the verge of a fundamental shift in how the workplace ensures employee retention, team cohesiveness, sales and production increases, and overall employee effectiveness and satisfaction. Coaching is on its way to becoming bigger and more successful than any other form of organizational investment in the future. People today need vital, results-oriented connections due to the rapidly increasing pace of change, lack of sustainable relationships, and the desire to live life on purpose. A coach can become your best friend—in the workplace and in your personal life.

Coaching will permeate society in the coming years, and will be available to everyone. Coaches will be seen in every organization and group, from the family unit to the largest conglomerates on the planet. Coaching outside the workplace is available for relationships, parenting, wellness and health issues, spiritual development, and retirement, just to name a very few. The coaching profession is experiencing dynamic growth and change. It will continue to interact developmentally with social, economic, corporate, and political processes, draw on the knowledge base of diverse disciplines, enhance its intellectual and professional maturity, and proceed to establish itself as the most powerful and effective tool for success in any area.★

#### **ABOUT THE EXPERT: Patrick Williams, EdD, MCC**

Dr. Patrick Williams, President and founder of the Institute for Life Coach Training, and a Master Certified Coach, brings with him a wide variety of training in psychology and professional experiences, as well as training as a Coach. His personal approach is eclectic, drawn from his graduate education, life experiences, and other professional training. He is also the co-author of the highly acclaimed *Therapist As Life Coach: Transforming Your Practice*, a Behavioral Sciences book club selection.



### **The Peoplemap: 14 Questions For Working More Effectively As A Team**

Carol came to me for executive coaching to improve her role as Vice President of a department with a major international bank. She was generally very happy with her work, but was having difficulty with her team. Specifically, they often saw her as a tyrant, and aloof. This was not her intention. Carol wanted her coaching to show her how to be a better manager. What she learned, however, was that a better manager is really a coach, rather than a supervisor. A good manager brings out the best in team members, ensuring that the team works efficiently and smoothly.

Carol had already completed the Myers-Briggs assessment as well as 360 feedback with her staff. I introduced her to the Peoplemap (which contains only 14 questions!), and she was amazed at the report generated from her answers. Carol’s profile showed her general tendencies to be Leader-Task, the most common combination for managers. I coached her around the strengths and blind spots of her personality type, which correlated perfectly with what was revealed on both the Myers-Briggs and 360 feedback assessments. Carol learned how to more effectively communicate with the other “types” on her team and to appreciate each of their unique contributions, as well as anticipate their potential conflicts.

During our coaching, Carol also discovered that she needed to delegate more responsibility to her staff, coach her team rather than manage them, and find opportunities to have more fun while maintaining her vision for herself and the team.

Carol has realized that an effective team is like a family, and relationships can sometimes manifest personality conflicts. Her learning around the concepts of Emotional Intelligence helped her understand that each team member also has emotional needs in the workplace.

Carol actually gave the Peoplemap to her entire team and had two conference calls to review the results. Everyone felt acknowledged and empowered to work more effectively as a team, and all appreciated Carol’s openness and willingness to change. She became a model for her team members. Carol became a coach herself.