



## Coaching Report

June 2015

### Directors' Corner

Hello Fellow Colleagues,

This month's Coaching Report centers on potential applications of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT) to coaching. ACT is grounded in deep theory and science and is complemented by pragmatic tools. Key foci of ACT are the willingness to help clients embrace their full selves (including their more difficult emotions and experiences) and to take valued actions toward cherished goals.

This nexus of science and practice in ACT echoes the mission of Institute. We were founded in 2009 through a two million dollar gift from the Harnisch Foundation with the mandate to cultivate the scientific foundation and use of best practices within the coaching profession. The IOC now has a vibrant membership of thousands of coaches from all over the globe who join us for webinars, classes, research and leadership forums and [our signature coaching conference](#). Many have also received funding for their coaching research.

We are excited at our continued evolution and growth, including our new website which is due to launch later this year.

We look forward to finding ways to continue to support you in making a positive impact.

Warmly,

Susan David, Ph.D.  
Co-founder and Co-director

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#### UPCOMING LIVE WEBINARS FOR IOC MEMBERS:

July TBD

**REGISTER NOW:**  
**Coaching in Leadership and Healthcare Conference:**  
September 25 – 26, 2015

#### HARNISCH GRANTS:

Next Grant Deadline: 1 August 2015

**Special thanks to our  
Sponsors, Fellows,  
Members and  
The Harnisch Foundation  
for supporting the Institute  
of Coaching**



## Research You Need to Know



**Relational Frame Theory, Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, and a Functional Analytic Definition of Mindfulness**  
by Lindsay Fletcher and Steven C. Hayes *Journal of Rational Emotive and Cognitive Behavioral Therapy*

*Special thanks to Deb Elbaum, MD, CPCC, ACC for this contribution.*

Mindfulness is the latest buzzword in stress reduction and mental health. Scientists are increasingly studying this practice, what it involves, and its benefits. Increasingly coaches, physicians, psychologists, and other health professionals are encouraging their clients to practice mindfulness as a way to improve mental health, reduce stress, and increase happiness and productivity.

In this article, Hayes and Fletcher discuss the connections between mindfulness and Relational Frame Theory (RFT) and Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT). Their main point is that ACT, a modern behavioral psychological therapy developed by Hayes and colleagues, incorporates mindfulness.

RFT is a way to understand healthy and unhealthy thinking. Defined by the authors as "a modern behavioral account of human language and cognition," they state, "The core claim of RFT is that humans learn to relate [to] events mutually and in combination." Psychopathology happens, they explain, when language and cognitive networks become entangled.

ACT was developed in the 1980s by Hayes. Considered a "third wave" behavioral and cognitive therapy, ACT employs proscribed techniques and strategies. These help change a person's relationship with his or her thoughts and feelings. As people use the array of exercises and techniques, they become better able to recognize that they are not "fused" with their thoughts and sensations. This results in the goal of ACT: increased psychological flexibility.

Successful ACT allows individuals to fully recognize what's happening in the present and distinguish that from their thoughts as well as the sensations their thoughts produce. The main components of ACT that contribute to this outcome are acceptance, defusion, contact with the present moment, self-as-context, values, and committed action. The authors argue that mindfulness underlies most of these components.

As this article doesn't refer specifically to coaching, readers might wonder about the connection between ACT, mindfulness, and coaching. Certainly, many coaches currently recommend that their clients incorporate mindfulness as part of their practice. After reading this article, coaches might be persuaded to read about and learn ACT so that they can use these techniques with their clients, as well.

## **Books of the Month**

### ***Get Out of Your Mind and Into Your Life: The New Acceptance and Commitment Therapy*** by Steven C. Hayes, PhD

Acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) is a new, scientifically based psychotherapy that takes a fresh look at why we suffer and even what it means to be mentally healthy. What if pain were a normal, unavoidable part of the human condition, but avoiding or trying to control painful experience were the cause of suffering and long-term problems that can devastate your quality of life? The ACT process hinges on this distinction between pain and suffering. As you work through this book, you'll learn to let go of your struggle against pain, assess your values, and then commit to acting in ways that further those values.

ACT is not about fighting your pain; it's about developing a willingness to embrace every experience life has to offer. It's not about resisting your emotions; it's about feeling them completely and yet not turning your choices over to them. ACT offers you a path out of suffering by helping you choose to live your life based on what matters to you most. If you're struggling with anxiety, depression, or problem anger, this book can help—clinical trials suggest that ACT is very effective for a whole range of psychological problems. But this is more than a self-help book for a specific complaint—it is a revolutionary approach to living a richer and more rewarding life.

- Learn why the very nature of human language can cause suffering

- Escape the trap of avoidance
- Foster willingness to accept painful experience
- Practice mindfulness skills to achieve presence in the moment
- Discover the things you really value most
- Commit to living a vital, meaningful life

*This book has been awarded The Association for Behavioral and Cognitive Therapies Self-Help Seal of Merit — an award bestowed on outstanding self-help books that are consistent with cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) principles and that incorporate scientifically tested strategies for overcoming mental health difficulties. Used alone or in conjunction with therapy, our books offer powerful tools readers can use to jump-start changes in their lives.*

***Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, Second Edition: The Process and Practice of Mindful Change*** by Steven C. Hayes, PhD, Kirk D. Strosahl and Kelly G. Wilson

Since the original publication of this seminal work, acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) has come into its own as a widely practiced approach to helping people change. This book provides the definitive statement of ACT—from conceptual and empirical foundations to clinical techniques—written by its originators. ACT is based on the idea that psychological rigidity is a root cause of a wide range of clinical problems. The authors describe effective, innovative ways to cultivate psychological flexibility by detecting and targeting six key processes: defusion, acceptance, attention to the present moment, self-awareness, values, and committed action. Sample therapeutic exercises and patient–therapist dialogues are integrated throughout.

#### New to This Edition

\*Reflects tremendous advances in ACT clinical applications, theory building, and research.

\*Psychological flexibility is now the central organizing focus.

\*Expanded coverage of mindfulness, the therapeutic relationship, relational learning, and case formulation.

\*Restructured to be more clinician friendly and accessible; focuses on the moment-by-moment process of therapy.

## Offerings for Members of the Institute of Coaching

The Institute offers a member-donor association designed to bridge scientific research and theory to best practices in leadership, health / wellness, and personal coaching. Learn more [here](#).

### Live Webinar for IOC Members:

Date: July TBD

Time:

Members can sign up for live webinar by logging in and selecting the Live Teleclass blue tab.

- IOC members [login here](#)
- [Or join the IOC](#) to access the full MasterClass

### Coaching in Leadership & Healthcare Conference

September 25 – 26, 2015 at the Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel.

Register [here](#) and click [here](#) for room reservations.

### Deadline Extended for Paper and Poster Submissions

We invite you to share your research on all aspects of coaching during the 2015 “**Coaching in Leadership and Healthcare: Theory, Practice and Results**” Conference! The Conference is organized by the Institute of Coaching, McLean Hospital, and Harvard Medical School **on September 25<sup>th</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> 2015** at The Renaissance Boston Waterfront Hotel, Boston, MA.

We invite submissions of proposals for:

- **Oral Paper presentations:** Accepted papers will be presented in oral sessions according to topics.
- **Posters:** Accepted posters will be arranged in an exhibit during the poster session, with opportunities to interact with authors and audience.

The deadline for the receipt of paper and poster applications **is extended to June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015 11:59 PM EDT**

**For more details visit the [2015 Conference website](#).  
To submit your application visit the [Registration page](#).**

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