



**The Mature Coach: Managing key transitions in
coach development**
Professor David Clutterbuck

Some starter questions

- To what extent does growing up as a profession require “grown up” coaches?
- What happens to our “inner child” as we mature as coaches (or generally)?

Stage models

- Growth happens in logical stages
- You have to go thru stages in sequence
- Earlier stages remain part of your repertoire, although you have transcended them
- Each stage increases ability to interact with complexity

Some assumptions

- Only when we reach a stage can we articulate what it means to us and use it to achieve change in ourselves and others
- We reach new stages by reflecting on challenges, which the previous stage was less effective in managing – an iterative process of dissatisfaction and reflection
- Maturing happens through interplay between the person and their environment

Models of maturity: Kegan/ Laske

- Level 3: dependent on others in one's definition of oneself
- Level 4: self-authoring (dependent on one's own values, or espoused values one has internalised)
- Level 5: self-aware (able to take an objective perspective on one's own values and other people's)

Models of maturity: Torbert*

- The **Opportunist** asks "How can I survive?" They will tend to focus on personal wins and see the world and others as opportunities to be exploited.
- The **Diplomat** asks "Do I belong?" They can therefore be tactful, loyal, respectful, but may also find it difficult to deal with conflict, give or receive criticism or take unpopular decisions.
- The **Expert** asks "Who am I?" They lead through controlling the world around them through the quality of their knowledge, intellect and expert ability.
- The **Achiever** asks "Am I successful?" They seek to manage people efficiently and effectively to achieve work goals.
- The **Individualist** asks "Who am I really?" They have a democratic, facilitative, team-oriented, empathetic and people-focused style of leadership.
- The **Strategist** asks: "What can we contribute together to make a difference?" They are clear about their gifts and are seeking to discover how to integrate them with the needs of their organization and of society
- The **Alchemist** asks: "What does the planet need?" They and their organization lead the way in creating a sustainable future for humanity and the planet.

* *After Mike Munroe Turner*

An unanswered question

- To what extent does personal maturity influence maturity as a coach?
- (What can we reasonably expect of a teenager or an eight-year old in terms of their ability to coach?)

Evolution of coach maturity

Coaching approach	Style	Critical questions
Models-based	Control	How do I take them where I think they need to go? How do I adapt my technique or model to this circumstance?
Process-based	Contain	How do I give enough control to the client and still retain a purposeful conversation? What's the best way to apply my process in this instance?
Philosophy-based	Facilitate	What can I do to help the client do this for themselves? How do I contextualise the client's issue within the perspective of my philosophy or discipline?
Systemic eclectic	Enable	Are we both relaxed enough to allow the issue and the solution to emerge in whatever way they will? Do I need to apply any techniques or processes at all? If I do, what does the client context tell me about how to select from the wide choice available to me?

Systemic eclectics

- Have immense calm
- Use tools subtly and seamlessly within the conversation.
- Steer with only the lightest of touches
- Understanding a technique, model or process in terms of its origins within an original philosophy
- Use experimentation and reflexive learning
- Use peers and supervisors to challenge their coaching philosophy
- Take a systemic and holistic view of the client and the client's environment; and of the coaching relationship

Mature coaches reflect deeply on:

- Personal philosophy of coaching
- Understanding of the business context
- Freedom from the tyranny of the question
- How they use supervision
- How they maintain professional development – and can demonstrate how you have applied learning
- How they identify and manage boundaries
- Their personal journey as a coach
- What kind of clients and situations they work best with
- What makes a fully functioning individual
- What makes an effective organization

How would you assess where you or another coach is in terms of their level of coach maturity?

(They might be in transition between mind-frames.)

Core qualities of a mature coach

- Compassion
- Curiosity
- Courage
- Connectedness

Building compassion

- Thinking about how we think (metacognition)
- Thinking about how we feel
- Feeling about how we think
- Feeling about how we feel (meta-emotion)

- When we find ourselves irritated by a client's attitudes or behaviours (or those of anyone we encounter), we can ask ourselves: *Would I be feeling like this, if I were more compassionate towards them? How might greater compassion on my part help them think and behave differently?*

More generally, we can develop wider compassion by reflecting on:

- What kindness could I offer to someone, towards whom I feel disapproval?
- How compassionate is my ideal self?
- What's the most generous thing I could think or do right now?

How can you have more compassion for yourself?

- Engage your inner critic
- What can I forgive myself for?
- What simple kindness can I do for myself today (or in this situation)?
- What would someone, who deeply loves me, say to me right now?

Linear v systemic thinking

Linear

- Fixing the problem
- Maintaining control
- Discreet solutions
- Predicted / predictable outcomes
- Static processes and procedures
- Hierarchical communication
- Seeking certainty

Systemic

- Understanding the context
- Enable, liberate, empower
- Interconnected solutions
- Emergent, evolving outcomes
- Evolving processes
- Unbounded communications
- Living with uncertainty

Linear to systemic progression

- Client – problem – solution
- Client – situation – values – solution
- Client – values – context – coaching relationship -- emergent ways forward
- Client within their system(s) – coaching relationship – emergent ways forward – emergent questions

Maturity and emotional connectedness

- Sympathy
- Empathy with the person
- Empathy with the person and their situation
- Empathy with the whole system

Use of self

- To understand/ interpret issue from coach perspective
- To understand from client perspective
- To understand from multiple perspectives
- To understand holistically
- Using own knowledge and *wisdom*

What is your philosophy of coaching?

- What have been the formative points in your journey of discovery as a coach?
- What personal values are reflected in your approach to coaching?
- What are you currently curious about?

Transition 1: Models to process

- What did you have to *unlearn* at this stage?
- If you were supporting a coach at this stage, what would you notice about how they coach?
- How could you help them begin the process of transition to the next level of maturity?
- Where would you guide them to focus in their reflections?

Goals & coach maturity

- Models-based coaches need SMART goals
- Process-based coaches seek solutions (so goals become part of the process)
- Philosophy-based coaches may choose to free themselves and client from immediate or specific goals
- System eclectic coaches enable the transmutation/transcendence of goals

Transition 2: Process to *being* a coach

- What did you have to *unlearn* at this stage?
- If you were supporting a coach at this stage, what would you notice about how they coach?
- How could you help them begin the process of transition to the next level of maturity?
- Where would you guide them to focus in their reflections?

**There is no such thing as a
non-directive question**

Transition 3: Becoming a systemic eclectic

- What might a coach need to *unlearn* at this stage?
- What would be different in how they reflect on their practice and experience?

Supervision and coach maturity

- What are the implications for coach supervisors, in working with coaches at different levels of maturity?
- What are the implications for peer supervision?

What don't you like to think about in your coaching?

Your thoughts.....?

A coach development plan

- Makes the coach or mentor more mindful of how they are growing in comparison with the world of coaching and the needs of their clients (what might have passed for “good” a few years ago, now looks increasingly average)
- Helps maintain the humility essential to effective coaching (“I may have a lot of experience, but I’m still learning, too.”)
- Provides a rich source of topics for reflection and to take to supervision
- Gives focus and direction to the development of coaching skills, practice and philosophy.

Some BDQs for your CDP

- What skills do I most want to improve in? Or, what skills improvements in me would be of greatest benefit to my clients? Skills might, for example, include listening/ mindfulness; self-awareness; systems awareness; or use of silence.)
- What tools, techniques or coaching constructs do I want to add to my toolbox? How will I ensure I understand them in sufficient depth to apply them safely and wisely? How will I integrate these with my existing toolbox?
- How can I *reduce* my reliance on models, processes, tools and techniques?
- What can I do to increase the quantity and quality of the feedback I receive on my coaching or mentoring?
- How can I extend my learning network? Who can I use as role models of good practice?

And more....

- What do I need from my professional supervisor? Is it time to trade them in?
- How can I develop and more clearly enunciate my personal philosophy as a coach?
- How can I build my reputation?
- How can I build my self-confidence as a coach or mentor?
- How can I become even more authentic?
- Where can I find appropriate challenges to my assumptions about coaching and my role as a coach or mentor?
- How will I improve the quality of my reflections on my practice?

And yet more...

- When am I at my most/ least effective as a coach or mentor? How do I know? Who holds up the mirror to me as a coach or mentor?
- In what ways, do I want to stretch my boundaries of my coaching?
- What resources are available to support my development as a coach? (e.g. reading, social networks, role models, courses, supervision...). Who can I rely on to help me?
- What is my vision for the coach or mentor I want to be in 1, 2 and 5 years' time?
- How much energy, time and other resources can I invest in making this vision happen?
- How will I know I'm making progress?

Thank you for listening

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