A woman with shoulder-length brown hair, wearing white-rimmed glasses and a brown blazer over a light-colored top, is smiling warmly. She is looking down at a document she is holding. The background is a bright, out-of-focus office or meeting room.

Becoming a Professional Life Coach:
The Art and Science of a Whole-Person Approach

Patrick Williams & Diane S. Menendez

FEATURE

No matter what kind of subspecialty a coach might have, life coaching is the basic operating system: a whole-person, client-centered approach.

INTRODUCTION

Coaching continues to evolve as a profession that is changing the way people get help by improving their lives and their business. It is a profession that is more needed than ever, as remote learning and working becomes more prevalent, and in light of the constant change that accompanies world events. This third edition will include many changes and updated information on coaching as it is today. Our stance is still that all coaching is life coaching if you coach the person, not the problem (Reynolds, 2020). There are many specialties now in coaching that often require some special knowledge of the coach, but we don't want coaching to be purely problem solving or advice giving. New ideas, insights and revelations come to the client if we focus on who they are with the current situation, and who they want and need to become for the desired change to manifest. Coaching is a partnering conversation where clients have the opportunity to explore new thoughts and say what they might not normally express out loud, all with a committed listener (the coach). Coaching as a process is exploratory and insightful. It is a co-creative method in which the coach partners with a client who wishes to better navigate change (chosen or unchosen). All change must eventually be-

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come chosen, and coaching conversations with a trained professional coach allow for deeper exploration of any transition the client may be experiencing. These conversations help to solidify who the client is becoming and uncover what is emerging next for them.

LIFE COACHING AS AN OPERATING SYSTEM

Personal and professional coaching, which has emerged as a powerful and personalized career in the last few decades, has shifted the paradigm of how people who seek help with life transitions find a professional to partner with them in designing their desired future. No matter what kind of subspecialty a coach might have, life coaching is the basic operating system: a whole-person, client-centered approach. Coaching the client's whole life is the operating system working in the background. A client may seek creative or business coaching, leadership development, or a more balanced life, but all coaching is life coaching. Before 1990, there was little mention of coaching except in corporate culture. Mentoring and executive coaching were resources that many top managers and CEOs utilized, either informally from a colleague or formally by hiring a consultant or psychologist who became their executive coach. We later elaborate on the history of coaching but, for now, let us examine why life coaching is becoming more popular and prevalent. The International Coach Federation (ICF) was founded in 1992 but did not have a real presence until its first convention in 1996. The ICF has kept detailed archives of media coverage on coaching since the early 1990s. Two newspaper articles appeared in 1993, four in 1994 (in-

cluding one from Australia), and seven in 1995. Most articles appeared in publications in the United States. Then, in 1996, a huge increase in publicity occurred, with more than 60 articles, television interviews, and radio shows on the topic of coaching. Every year since then, media coverage has increased to hundreds of articles as well as live media coverage in countries such as the United States, Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan, and Singapore. This coverage has comprised both national and local radio and television, including *Good Morning America*, *Today*, *CNBC*, the *BBC*, and other outlets around the globe. In print, the only books written about coaching before the 1990s were geared toward corporate and performance coaching. Good,



solid books about life coaching and all its specialties are now becoming numerous, including some recent national bestsellers. As of this writing, there are over 50,000 certified coaches in over 150 countries who are members of the International Coach Federation. Understanding the history of coaching provides current and prospective life coaches with a framework for understanding their profession, as well as insight into future opportunities. This framework also helps life coaches place themselves squarely within the larger context of a profession that is still evolving. Casting our eyes across the diverse landscape of coaching today reveals that the profession is global, widely known, and full of specializations and diverse ways for people to access coaching.

Anyone who reads a book with this much content must be aware that to put these lessons into practical use often requires a more formal learning structure. When I created the Institute for Life Coach Training (ILCT), it was the twelfth recognized coach training program globally, and now, there are thousands. Much of the earlier versions of this text were based on many years of our coach training and now it has evolved even further.

For a very comprehensive and scholarly history of coaching's evolution as a unique profession and the influential tributaries that flowed to it, please note Dr. Vikki Brock's *Sourcebook of Coaching History*.



THE ROOTS OF LIFE COACHING

Coaching has a unique paradigm, but it's not new in its sources, theory, and strategies. Much of the foundation of coaching goes back many decades and even centuries. The draw of pursuing life improvement, personal development, and the exploration of meaning began with early Greek society. This is reflected in Socrates's famous quote, "The unexamined life is not worth living." Since that time, we have developed many ways of examining our lives, some useful and some not; some are grounded in theory and are evidence based, while others are made up and useless. What persists, however, is that people who are not in pursuit of basic human needs such as food and shelter do begin to pay attention to higher needs such as self-actualization, fulfillment, and spiritual connection. In ancient Greece, as now, people have always had an intense desire to explore

and find personal meaning. Coaching today is seen as a new phenomenon, yet its foundations can be found in modern psychology and philosophy. Coaching is a new field that borrows from and builds on theories and research from related fields that have come before it. As such, coaching is a multidisciplinary, multi-theory synthesis and application of applied behavioral change. Coach training schools today, both private and academic, must be clear about their theoretical underpinnings and the philosophy that supports what they teach. From its inception, ILCT declared that its intention was to have a content-rich, theoretically based curriculum equivalent to a graduate-level education. Because the original participant base consisted of helping professionals — therapists, counselors, psychologists, industrial-organizational practitioners, and psychiatrists — they knew that they needed to discuss participants' common and varied education, the impact of psychology and philosophy on coaching practice, and



coaching's use of adult learning models. The curriculum that emerged was written by and for therapists transitioning into coaching. It has since expanded in its reach to other aligned helping professionals who have a similar educational background and a psychological orientation for achieving greater human potential.

CONTRIBUTIONS FROM PSYCHOLOGY

So, what has the field of psychology brought to coaching, and what are the major influences? There have been four major forces in psychological theory since the emergence of psychology as a social science in 1879. These four forces are Freudian, behavioral, humanistic, and transpersonal. In recent years there have been three other forces at work, which we believe are adaptations or evolutions of the original four. Cognitive-behavioral psychology grew from a mix of the behavioral and humanistic schools. Positive psychology utilizes cognitive-behavioral approaches and repositions many of the theories that humanistic psychology emphasizes: a non-mechanistic view and a view of possibility as opposed to pathology as an essential approach to the client. Along with each revolution in psychology, a changing image of human nature has also evolved. Psychology began as the investigation of consciousness and mental functions such as sensation and perception. *Webster's New World Dictionary* defines psychology as "(a) the science dealing with the mind and with mental and emotional processes, and (b) the science of human and animal behavior." Much of the early influence on psychology came from the philosophical tradition, and early psychologists adopted the practice of introspection

used by philosophers. The practice of introspection into one's desires, as well as noticing and observing behaviors, thoughts, and emotions, are core practices for increasing client awareness and are cornerstones of a whole person approach to coaching.

Introspectionists were an early force in psychology. Wilhelm Wundt in Germany and Edward Titchener in the United States were two of the early defenders of introspection as a method of understanding the workings of the human mind. But they soon realized the inadequacies of introspection in validating the young science of psychology. Consciousness and mental functioning were difficult to study objectively. Psychology was experiencing growing pains then, much as coaching is today.

PSYCHOLOGY'S MAJOR THEORISTS

What follows is a quick tour of the growth of psychology and how its major thinkers set the stage for the coaching revolution. William James was the father of American psychology. James preferred ideas to laboratory results and is best known for his writing on consciousness and his view that humans can experience higher states of consciousness. He wrote on such diverse topics as functions of the brain, perception of space, psychic and paranormal faculties, religious ecstasy, will, attention, and habit. He gradually drifted away from psychology and in his later life emphasized philosophy, changing his title at Harvard University to "professor of philosophy." Nevertheless, James had a tremendous influence on the growth of the psychology profession, and he is still widely read today. One of his most historic books, *The Varieties of Reli-*

gious Experience (James, 1902/1994), is a treatise that offers much on the topics of spirituality and transpersonal consciousness. Sigmund Freud influenced the first force in psychology, the Freudian approach. While psychology in the United States was struggling for an identity and striving for recognition by the scientific community, European psychology was being reshaped by Freud's theories. He created a stir in the medical community with his ideas and theories, and finally gained acceptance in psychiatry with the "talking cure" breakthrough — psychoanalysis. Freud brought us such terms as unconscious, id, ego, and superego, and ideas such as the unconscious, transference, countertransference, defense mechanisms, and resistance. His theories, although strongly based in pathology, allowed the pursuit of our unconscious desires and subconscious mechanisms that influenced behavior, and they soon began to gain acceptance in the United States as well.

As Freudian thought was taking shape in Europe and the United States, William James and others began to focus on measurable behavior. Many American psychologists began to combat Freudian theories as another nonverifiable, subjective pseudoscience of the mind. The time was ripe for the emergence of behaviorism as the second major force in psychology, led by B. F. Skinner and John Watson. Hundreds of years previously, Shakespeare had commented, "What a piece of work is a man!" The behaviorists took this literally and looked upon humans in the early 20th century as *Homo Mechanicus*, an object to be studied as any machine. *Homo Mechanicus* was a machine whose mind was ignored. In the 1950s, Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers initiated the third force in psychology, humanistic psychology, which focused on the

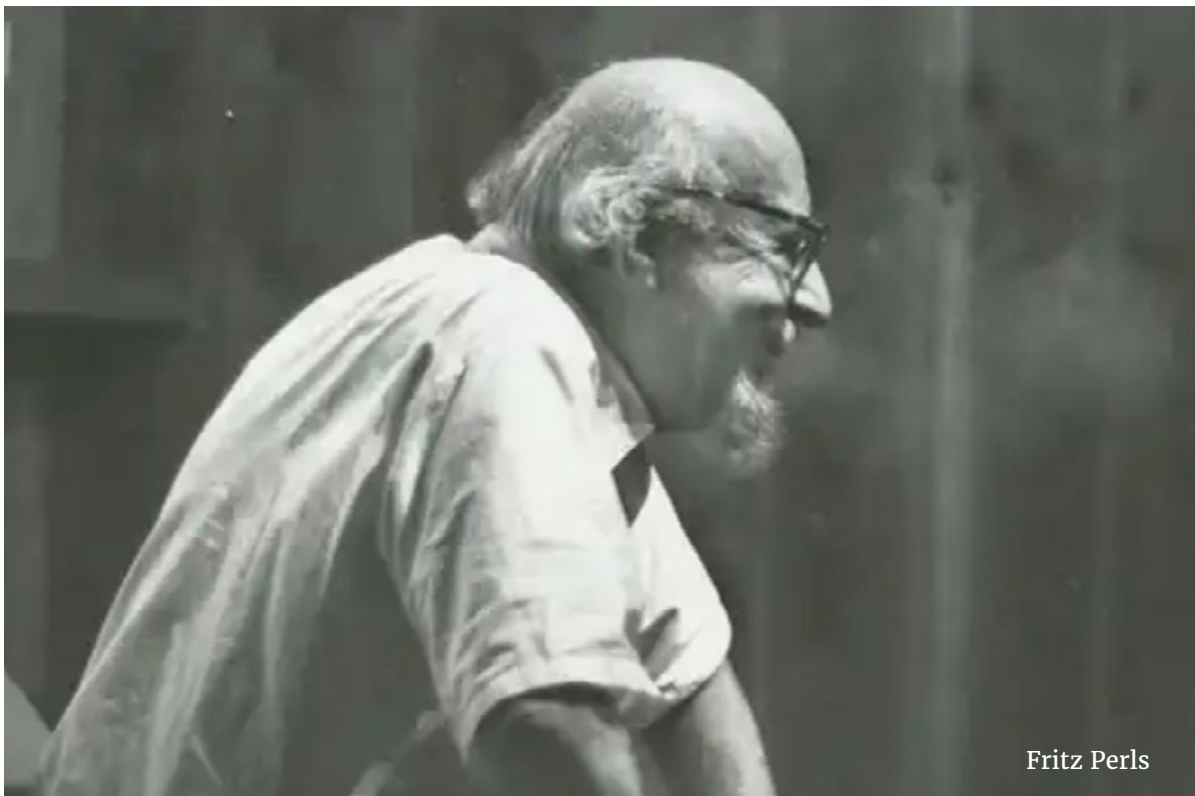
personal, ontological, and phenomenological aspects of human experience, as opposed to the mechanistic and reductionist theories of Freudianism and behaviorism. Maslow eventually posited the fourth force, transpersonal psychology, which included mind, body, and spirit. It delved into altered states of consciousness that were naturally induced by esoteric practices and drug induced by LSD (see the works of Stan Grof, Timothy Leary, and Richard Alpert, a.k.a. Baba Ram Dass) and other hallucinogens as a way to explore the transpersonal realm. This research began to open our knowledge of the human mind and expand our windows of perception and possibility. Carl Jung introduced symbolism, ancient wisdom, the spiritual archetypes, life reviews, synchronicity, transpersonal consciousness, stages of life, individuation, the shadow (both good and bad), and spiritual quests. Jung broke away from Freud in pursuing a more holistic, spiritual understanding of human motivation. He is quoted as saying, "Who looks outside dreams . . . who looks inside awakens." That is a powerful quote for coaching today. ILCT emphasizes an approach to clients that must include examining their developmental stage or orientation as part of the coach's working alliance with the client. Alfred Adler (1927/1998) worked on social connections, humans as social beings, the importance of relationships, family-of-origin themes, significance and belonging, lifestyle assessment, the big question ("What if?"), and "acting as if."

Roberto Assagioli, the father of psychosynthesis, wrote about our ability to synthesize our various aspects to function at higher levels of consciousness. He introduced such concepts as subpersonalities, wisdom of the inner self, higher self, and the observing self. Karen

Horney was an early, influential feminist psychiatrist. Her key theories involved irrational beliefs, the need for security, early influences on rational-emotive theory, and modeling the goal of “self-help.” She was a contemporary of Adler’s and an early influence on Carl Rogers. Fritz Perls, founder of Gestalt therapy, worked with personality problems involving the inner conflict between values and behavior (desires), introducing terms such as top dog, underdog, polarity (black-and-white thinking), the empty chair technique, and awareness in the moment. Gestalt theory also valued the whole-person experience of the client, including mind, emotions, physicality, and spirituality. Perls was influenced by Kurt Lewin’s change theory and his work in figure-ground perspectives. Carl Rogers developed a client-centered approach that suggested clients have the answers within

them. He brought us the terms “unconditional positive regard” and “humanistic psychology.” He introduced the practice of listening, reflecting, and paraphrasing and the value of silence and sacred space. Empathic listening was key to Rogers; it is also key for the profession of coaching.

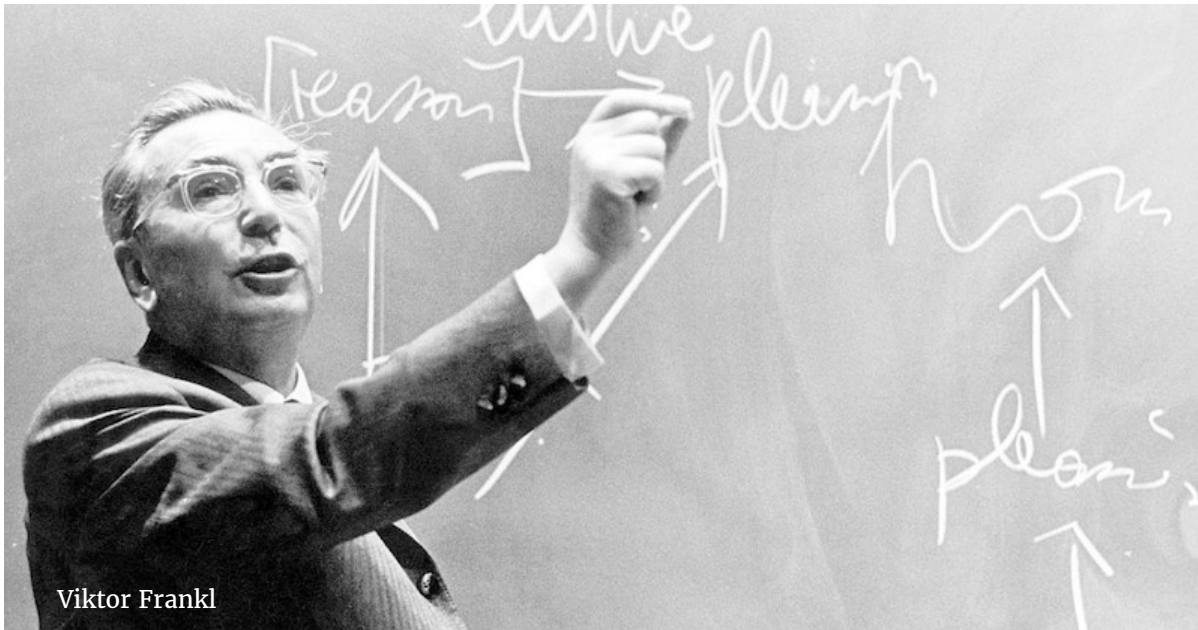
Abraham Maslow introduced his hierarchy of needs and values. He reflected on being needs versus deficiency needs, the higher self, and transpersonal potential. He is considered the father of humanistic psychology and transpersonal psychology. Maslow, although often credited with the Hierarchy of Needs Pyramid, did not really create such a pyramid. That was done by management consultants in the 1960s. But Maslow’s research on self-actualization and *being needs* versus *deficit needs* continues to influence coaching theory today (Kaufman, 2020).



Fritz Perls

Virginia Satir was the mother of family therapy, sometimes called the “Columbus of family therapy.” She believed that a healthy family life involved an open and reciprocal sharing of affection, feelings, and love. She was well known for describing family roles — such as the rescuer, the victim, and the placater — that function to constrain relationships and interactions in families. Her work was an early systemic look at relationships and one that has had a strong influence on coaching in the business context. Viktor Frankl developed logotherapy out of his personal experience during World War II. Influenced by existential philosophy and his own existential crisis, Frankl wrote *Man’s Search for Meaning* while in a Nazi prison camp and later published it from notes he had made on toilet paper. He is quoted as saying that the one freedom that could not be taken from him while in prison was his mind and his freedom to think, dream, and create. Frankl introduced paradoxical intent into psychology — “what you resist persists” or “what you give energy to is what

you manifest.” Coaches today help their clients focus on what they want and on creating desired outcomes. Frankl is cited by coaches as an exemplar of the importance of intention as well as the necessity of finding meaning in work and life. Milton Erickson investigated hypnotherapy, as well as linguistics and the double-binding of the client. From his work we learn to focus on possibility and looking for the uncommon approach to change, including paradoxical behaviors. Erickson is the father of American hypnotherapy and, along with Gregory Bateson, an early influencer of neurolinguistic programming (NLP) created by Richard Bandler and John Grinder and popularized by Tony Robbins. Jeffrey Zeig and Bill O’Hanlon, students of Erickson, introduced pattern interruption, the confusion technique, forced choice, assumption of the positive path, nontrance hypnosis, and unconscious competence. Reframing is another important coaching tool based in their work. We’re certain that most coaches use reframing to shift a client’s view of a situation. In the



Viktor Frankl

1970s, solution-focused approaches emerged that emphasized less focus on the problem and instead of putting energy into discovering what works. Three well-known practitioners in this arena are the late Insoo Kim Berg and her husband, the late Steve de Shazer, and Bill O'Hanlon. O'Hanlon developed solution-oriented therapy, which has now been reframed as solution-focused coaching. Berg, along with Peter Szabó, wrote *Brief Coaching for Lasting Solutions* (2005), which blends solution-focused theory and brief, short-term coaching sessions. Fernando Flores is a philosopher who took the work of J. L. Austin and John Searle on speech act theory and applied it to human interaction through conversations. By exploring how language really brings action into being, Flores inadvertently devised one of the most useful coaching tools:

making requests. Flores was the early influencer of Werner Erhard and his Erhard Seminars Training (est), which later became Landmark Education and influenced Thomas Leonard's early curriculum at Coach U.

Martin Seligman promoted positive psychology as a strength-based approach to human fulfillment. Positive psychology is applied to therapy as well as coaching and education. Its consistent focus is on building and using strengths rather than weaknesses. Seligman's work is highly useful to coaches, as he focused on intense use of current academic research to back up theories. Positive psychology has evolved as an entire movement. Life coaching can be viewed as applied positive psychology. In addition to the theorists discussed here, a vast



Martin Seligman

array of research into life span developmental psychology has created an understanding of developmental trajectories that can be helpful to coaches. Daniel Levinson's early work on the life development of Harvard graduates over their 50-year life span yielded great insight into men's development within that age cohort. Carol Gilligan's work on girls and women created insights into the ways women's thinking and behavior differs from men's over the life span. Robert Kegan developed theories and methods for assessing the development of levels of consciousness in human life span development. Ken Wilber's integral approaches to psychology and life built on and went beyond the transpersonal approaches. In essence, his integral psycholo-

gy examines all the various therapies that exist and then plugs them into the developmental levels for which they are most appropriate. For example, Freudian psychology is most relevant to disorders that occur in early childhood (ages two to seven). Jungian psychology is best suited to existential issues of early adulthood, most of which are seldom addressed until mid-life. Transpersonal therapies are best for people who have healthy ego structures but sense the absence of higher meaning in their lives. Wilber synthesized the developmental models of several leading psychologists, including Freud, Piaget, Erikson, Kohlberg, and Bandura for early development, and then added Jung, Gilligan, Aurobindo, Washburn, Kegan, Fowler, Under-



Robert Kegan



Ken Wilber

hill, and dozens of others to produce a developmental model that incorporates every stage from birth up to total, nondual enlightenment. These and other amazing tools that have grown out of modern psychology support coaches in helping clients change directions as desired. As research in positive psychology shows, new developments become available every day.

A hallmark of coaching is its synthesis of tools from other fields, as well as its proclivity for innovation. With current research, coaching is developing its own evidence-based theories. It has borrowed from what has gone before, just as psychologists borrowed from philosophers. As coaching grows as a profession, it is developing its own focused research base of effective strategies and tools within the unique relationship that is the coaching alliance. Our profession is strongly grounded in sound academic and scholarly theories that preceded coaching, and it will be strengthened by the validation of theories and evidence-based research as we move forward.

THE INFLUENCE OF POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY

In general, people have referred to psychology as a single term with the unspoken and assumed understanding that it was about pathology. Then in 1998, the term positive psychology emerged. This became newsworthy when Martin E. P. Seligman, president of the American Psychological Association (APA), formally introduced academia and the world to the term. His address to the Annual APA Conference was titled, “Building Human Strength: Psychology’s Forgotten Mission.” In this address he announced he had created a task force to set the groundwork for positive psychology: That is, a reoriented science that emphasizes the understanding and building of the most positive qualities of an individual: optimism, courage, work ethic, future-mindedness, interpersonal skill, the capacity for pleasure and insight, and social responsibility. It’s my belief that since the end of World War II, psychology has moved



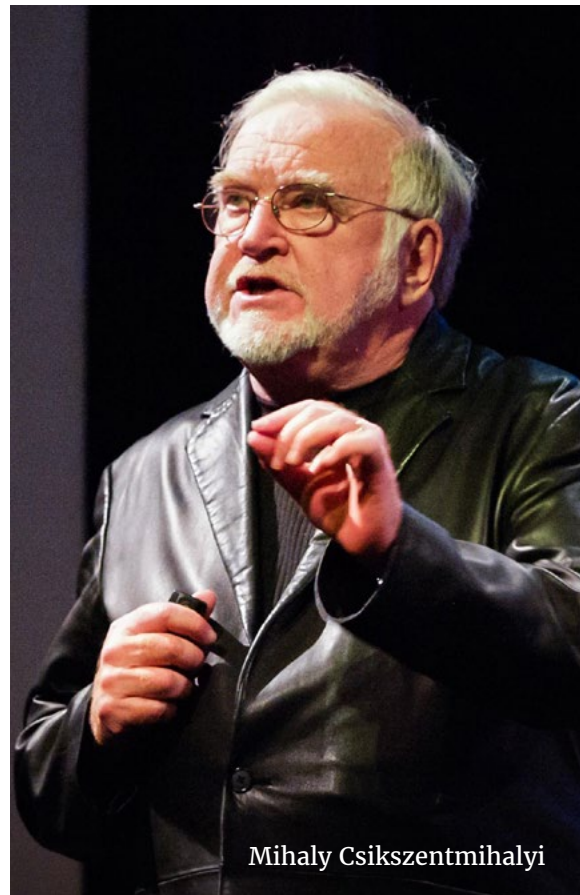
too far away from its original roots, which were to make the lives of all people more fulfilling and productive, and too much toward the important, but not all-important, area of curing mental illness. With Seligman's address there was a major acknowledgment and repositioning within psychology. This shift focused on illuminating and defining the "good life." In fact, the addition of the word positive to this new initiative effectively acknowledged that in their quest to treat pathology, most practitioners in the field had overlooked a large portion of the population functioning at a healthy level but nevertheless with a strong desire to improve their life experiences.

Two years later, in their introduction to the 2000 millennial edition of the *American Psychologist*, Seligman and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi wrote:

We have scant knowledge of what makes life worth living. Psychology has come to understand quite a bit about how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity. But we know very little about how normal people flourish under more benign conditions. Psychology has, since World War II, become a science largely about healing. It concentrates on repairing damage within a disease model of human functioning. This almost exclusive attention to pathology neglects the fulfilled individual and the thriving community. The aim of positive psychology is to begin to catalyze a change in the focus of psychology from preoccupation only with repairing the worst things in life to also building positive qualities. The field of positive psychology at the subjective level is about valued subjective experience: well-being, contentment,

and satisfaction (past), hope and optimism (future), and flow and happiness (present). At the individual level it is about positive individual traits — the capacity for love and vocation, courage, interpersonal skill, aesthetic sensibility, perseverance, forgiveness, originality, future-mindedness, spirituality, high talent, and wisdom. At the group level it is about the civic virtues and the institutions that move individuals toward better citizenship: responsibility, nurturance, altruism, civility, moderation, tolerance, and work ethic.

With Seligman's commitment to the research of positive psychology and his support to build a body of knowledge about what makes life



Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

fulfilling, psychology was beginning to return to its original meaning: the study of the spirit or soul. This dedication to scientific research strengthened what so many psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors, coaches, and people in the general public believed but had not proven, namely that individuals wanted to continuously grow, be happy, and have a fulfilling life. Seligman has a long history of doing research in psychology beginning in the 1960s. His study of what constitutes the “good life” and happiness was presented in *Authentic Happiness* (2002). He asserted that positive psychology is based on three pillars: the study of positive emotions, the study of positive traits and virtues, and the study of positive institutions. For his book, Seligman reviewed and summarized volumes of seminal research in positive psychology by Ed Diener, Chris Peterson, Lisa Aspinwall, Sandy Murray, Sonja Lyubomirsky, Thomas Joiner, George Vaillant, Barbara Fredrickson, and Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi, to name a few. Besides being abundant, many of these research studies were also cross-cultural, which added credibility and applicability to the findings. What emerged from these studies were three basic findings that predicted an increased sense of satisfaction and gratification in the lives of adults. The findings that supported increased fulfillment in life were being in a stable romantic relationship, making a living from a vocation or calling versus just having a job, and believing in something larger or greater than oneself. Interestingly, the research also showed that there was no significant correlation between wealth, health, or education and authentic happiness. As a way of researching individuals’ traits, beliefs, and sense about many aspects of life, Seligman and his colleagues have created numer-

ous surveys and questionnaires to gather data on a variety of topics related to happiness, signature strengths and well-being and have made them readily available. A sampling of these assessments, which can be found online (<https://www.authentic happiness.sas.upenn.edu/>), include:

- Authentic Happiness Inventory; measures overall happiness
- General Happiness scale; assesses enduring happiness
- Grit Survey; measures perseverance
- Optimism Test; measures optimism about the future
- Values in Action (VIA) Survey of Character Strengths; measures 24-character strengths
- Work-Life Questionnaire; measures work-life satisfaction
- Compassionate Love Scale; measures a person’s tendency to support and understand others
- Meaning in Life Questionnaire; measures meaningfulness

These assessments provide ongoing data that add to our understanding of the factors, practices and attitudes that make life meaningful, happy, and fulfilling and therefore allow individuals to flourish. These assessments are available for anyone and provide personalized information about individual results. At the same time, each person taking an assessment becomes part of the research data pool that is

informing positive psychology. Prior to Seligman's announcement of positive psychology, there was research being done on positive emotions. In the 1980s Barbara Fredrickson, then a doctoral student and now known as "the genius of the positive psychology movement," chose to study positive emotions, such as joy, happiness, gratitude, hope and love. This research demonstrated that positive emotions transform the future by bringing out the best in people and enabling individuals to build their resources. It also suggested "the capacity to experience positive emotions may be a fundamental human strength central to the study of human flourishing."

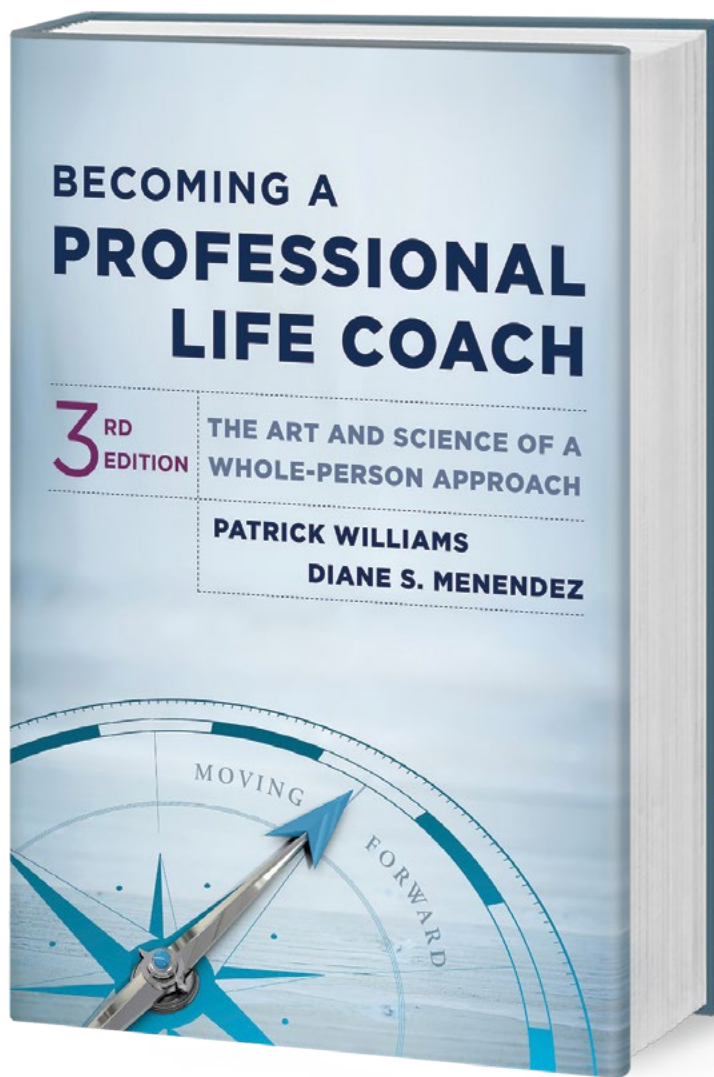
SOME DIFFERENCES BETWEEN POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY AND COACHING

The research in positive psychology has confirmed many of the beliefs and operating principles of coaching: people want to live a fulfilling, good life; people want to utilize their strengths, skills and talents; people want to be more positive and eschew negativity; people want meaningful relationships; people want careers or work that allows them to develop; and people want to make a positive difference in the world. Still the question sometimes remains: what is different? Is the emphasis of each field the same? In his chapter in the *Handbook of Positive Psychology* (Snyder & Lopez, 2002), Seligman states, "the aim of positive psychology is to catalyze a change in psychology . . . (and) we must bring the building of strength to the forefront in the treatment and prevention

of mental illness" (p. 3). Throughout this chapter he makes the case that positive psychology may prevent "many of the major emotional disorders" (p. 5) and he believes that positive psychology "will become an even more effective approach to psychotherapy" (p. 6). From this perspective the emphasis of the practice of positive psychology is on prevention and treatment, which puts it in the medical model of diagnosing and fixing something that isn't working properly. This emphasis leads to the professional or service provider being an authority and the consumer being someone that looks to the authority for answers. In coaching the emphasis is on the client as the designer and creator of his or her life.

From this perspective, the client is viewed as the expert on his or her life and is believed to be competent, capable, creative, and resourceful. At the same time, the coach is the expert on the coaching process only. This means that the coach's responsibility is to discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve, encourage client self-discovery, elicit client-generated strategies and ideas, and hold the client responsible and accountable. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life. Thus, coaching is a learning and developmental model with an emphasis on creating awareness so that clients can choose outcomes that promote their growth and development while attaining what they believe are the qualities of a fulfilling life. In the positive psychology literature, authors frequently refer to what they do as "interventions." Several dictionaries define intervention as "(1) the

3rd EDITION of the coach training BESTSELLER



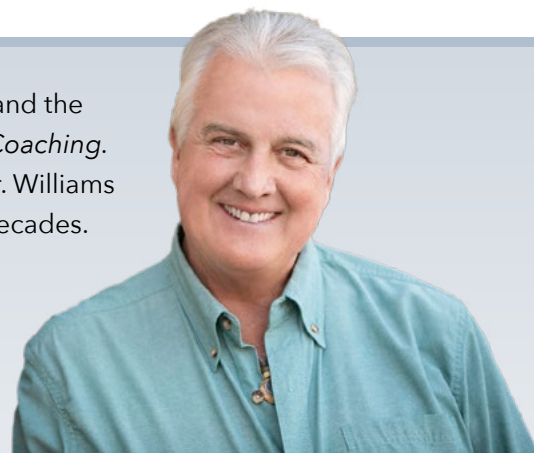
“This is simply a fabulous book, wise and beautifully written.... It will help you think through how to coach and empower you to a great one..”

–**Carol Kauffman PhD**, Founder, Institute of Coaching, Assistant Professor, Harvard Medical School

Full of new information on the neuropsychology of coaching, the third edition of *Becoming a Professional Life Coach* explores the neuropsychology behind coaching; specialties in the field, such as trauma and addiction coaching; coaching amid post-pandemic global stress; coaching virtually; navigating emotions in coaching; and achieving transformational coaching by addressing the whole person. It takes readers step-by-step through the coaching process, covering all the crucial ideas and strategies for being an effective, successful life coach. This book is one-stop shopping for beginner and advanced coaches alike.

Patrick Williams, EdD, is founder of the Institute for Life Coach Training and the coauthor of the highly acclaimed *Therapist as Life Coach* and *Total Life Coaching*. Since 1998, ILCT has trained thousands of individuals worldwide, and Dr. Williams has helped shape coaching into a respected profession for over three decades.

Diane S. Menendez, PhD, is a master certified coach and has coached leaders, teams, and organizations for more than twenty-five years. She specializes in executive coaching, leadership development, and culture change in large organizations.



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act of intervening, interfering, or interceding with the intent of modifying the outcome; (2) when someone becomes involved in a particular situation, issue, problem, etc. to influence what happens.” This means that the professionals believe they know what is right or appropriate for an individual and will step in and tell him or her what to do to change their situation. Additionally, this means that the patient (the term frequently used in the medical model) is viewed as needing directives and advice. The practitioner thus has a vested interest in the outcome. Adhering to the precepts of excellence in coaching, coaches do not make interventions because they do not offer advice. Coaches believe that clients contain all their answers within themselves, and that the coach’s job is to assist the client to discover those answers, gifts, talents, and strengths. The form of discovery used in coaching is based on the Socratic method. This means that coaches support and challenge their clients’ thinking and actions by using deep listening, powerful questioning, and direct communication of what is being noticed and perceived so that awareness is increased. Therefore, clients are better able to make informed choices as they design the steps they will take to achieve what they want. Although some people want to minimize the differences between positive psychology’s approach and coaching’s approach when working with clients, these differences are important. Coaching is not psychotherapy and coaches do not perform as psychotherapists, nor do they want to. Coaching education stresses the important differences between these two fields and continuously mentors and supervises its students to stay consistently within the coaching frame. Furthermore, coaches encourage clients to get

assistance from other professions when needed. In fact, the ICF’s Core Competencies clearly state: “Core Competency #1: Demonstrates Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards — (6) (The coach) maintains the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy, and other support professions (7) (The coach) refers clients to other support professionals, as appropriate.” Therefore, it is paramount to the integrity of the coaching profession and its coaches to continuously uphold the differences between the various professions so that clients can clearly choose the service that they desire and is best for them. (We thank and acknowledge our colleague, Lynn Meinke, for the context on positive psychology,) Alex Linley, a prominent researcher of positive psychology, calls it a win-win for management and employees. Who would not be attracted to a protocol and strategy, he reasons, that motivates employees to work more diligently and productively while also remaining loyal to the company because the company has improved the quality of its working conditions? In an interview he stated, “Positive psychology speaks to the important bottom lines of profit and productivity. And yet, concurrently, it also speaks to employee welfare.” That is a product of a coaching approach incorporating principles of positive psychology.

THE FUTURE OF COACHING

One additional thought: We have noticed that as we gain more training and experience in working with clients, it is not so much that our skills and competencies change as that our “beingness” and our spirits as coaches reach a different level. Mastery is more about who you are than what you do or say. Research in the field

of psychotherapy has repeatedly found that the relationship between the therapist and client is the most important ingredient in client success. The therapeutic approach or technique is less important than the ability of the therapist to create and maintain a strong relationship and an environment of trust and confidence. That is mastery! Where could you use some training? What new skill, technique, or personal strength would you like to master? Go for it. We all will benefit.

We are on the verge of a fundamental shift in how and why people seek helpers. We believe psychotherapy has played an important role in the lives of many clients and will still be needed in our society, especially for the seriously mentally ill. We also believe coaching will become a prevailing strategy for personal development — the most common way to learn to identify strengths and use them to overcome

obstacles and challenges while pursuing possibilities. People today need connection with a mentor, coach, or guide more than ever before due to the rapid pace of change, the difficulty of sustaining relationships, and the desire to fulfill one's life purpose. We believe this is what the human potential movement of the 1970s intended. Psychological research and theory over the past few decades have contributed much to our understanding of how people change, how they adjust to life's struggles, and how they develop into self-actualized human beings. That knowledge now lends itself to this new field of life coaching, without the medical model stigma and diagnostic labeling that often comes with psychological counseling or therapy. Being able to receive coaching and have a personal coach, whether privately hired or provided by your company or community agency, is a service that we hope becomes ubiquitous and transforma-



tional to individuals and our culture. We believe that the profession of coaching will soon be bigger than psychotherapy. The public will know the distinction between therapy and coaching and will be clear on when to seek a therapist and when to seek a coach. Coaches will refer to therapists and therapists will refer to coaches. Coaching will permeate society and be available to everyone, not just executives and high-powered professionals. We expect to see a variety of specialized coaches, such as relationship coaches, parenting and family coaches, wellness and health coaches, spiritual development coaches, and career coaches. The entire profession will foster the idea of life coaching as the umbrella under which all coaching rests. Whether a client seeks specific coaching for business or job challenges, coaching for a life transition (such as a relationship change or health issues), or for

pure life-design coaching, it is all life coaching. A coach may also serve as a referral source for specialty coaching as needed or requested by a client. The coaching profession is experiencing dynamic growth and change. It will no doubt continue to interact developmentally with social, economic, and political processes; draw on the knowledge base of diverse disciplines; enhance its intellectual and professional maturity; and proceed to establish itself internationally as well as in mainstream North America. If these actions represent the future of coaching, then the profession will change in ways that support viability and growth. Life coaching exists because it is helpful, and it will prosper because it can be transformational.

In the chapters that follow, we share the specific ways that coaching can bring about transformation in the lives of clients, as we have



been teaching them at ILCT since 1998. As you read, you will be joining the thousands of highly trained coaches — as well as thousands of others with quality coaching education — who are now coaching all around the world.

TRANSFORMATIONAL VERSUS TRANSACTIONAL COACHING

As you read and digest the Coaching from the Inside Out chapters, keep in mind that the intent is to add to the concept of whole life coaching and to encourage coaching conversations that are more transformational than transactional. In other words, we don't want to only emphasize measurable goals and outcomes with the client. Rather, we want to focus on who they need to be and how they need to change for what they want to emerge. Transformational coaching encompasses the concept of going deeper in the work with the client: coaching the person, not the problem (Reynolds, 2020). It is like snorkeling in beautiful, calm waters: when you put on your snorkel gear and look just below the surface, there is the untold beauty of a coral reef and fish of many colors and characteristics. For some, the first time they snorkel is scary. Breathing is a bit different and looking under the water's surface can be thrilling or unnerving. Going deeper in coaching is not scuba diving to eighty feet; it is only looking under the surface for what can be revealed, shared, and contextualized with the challenges or intentions that are present. In Dr. Pat's mentor coaching, he teaches skills in listening and posing evocative questions that encourage the client to go inside — to notice how they are reacting, learning, or feeling curious about what is emerging in the coaching conversation. Coaches may ask,

“What are you learning as you share this challenge?” “How are you changing or how do you need to change?” “How will you be when this future state is achieved?” Transactional coaching is more formulaic and outcome focused. An example would be committing to diet and exercise changes: what did the client do and did they make progress? Or, if they are transitioning to a new job, what have they done and what else is needed to accomplish the change? Not all coaching can be transformational; however, if you go deeper with the client, you may get to the true why for the goals they wish to meet. Transactional coaching is more about the doing, while transformational coaching includes the being of the client.

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