

Preface

Since the Danish Psychological Publishers published my first coaching book *Coaching – læring og udvikling* (Coaching – learning and development) in March 2002,¹ the field of coaching has undergone tremendous development, both in Denmark and around the world. With some 25,000 copies sold in Denmark and Sweden, this book has influenced and promoted the field in Scandinavia. For me as an author, it has been very gratifying to see the book in use in a large number of educational programmes and courses with a focus on learning, leadership, team development and communication with coaching as pivotal point.

In 2009, Birgitte Lie Suhr-Jessen and Mette Popp-Madsen, then both editors with the Danish Psychological Publishers, approached me with a request and a proposal of revising the aging bestseller and preparing a new edition of the book. I declined, as I felt it would be too daunting a task to incorporate all the new developments into the existing framework and to decide what was ‘worth’ preserving, and what needed to be rewritten from scratch. The book would not become the coherent whole that it has become in its present form. Therefore, I suggested to the editors that I write an entirely new book on coaching, a book that would reflect my own learning and developmental process during my past 10 years’ journey in coaching and coaching psychology.

In the 10 years following the publication of the first book, I have developed numerous international contacts, including my involvement with the Global Convention on Coaching in Dublin in 2007, where I served as a working group chairman and was involved in shedding light on many key issues in coaching. Over the years, I have developed close relations with many key figures within the field, including strong professional ties with coaching psychology units at the University of Sydney, London City University, the University of East London, Oxford Brooks, the University of Middlesex, the University of Johannesburg and, in Denmark,

¹I still remember the amazing collegial cooperation with my fellow authors who contributed to the success of the book: Stig Eiberg Hansen, Peter Hansen-Skovmoes, Allan Holmgren, Lotte Møller Elleberg and Gert Rosenkvist.

with my colleagues at Aalborg University, Copenhagen Business School and the University of Copenhagen. As a member of the International Coaching Research Forum; as a Founding Fellow of The Institute of Coaching at Harvard Medical School, where I continue to be a member of the institute's Scientific Advisory Council; and through my membership of the Scientific Committees of five major international coaching psychology conferences, I have had rich opportunity to expand my international collegial relations and gain insight into the most recent research and practice development within the field – an amazing opportunity for professional development. Since early 2008, I have organized the lecture series *Coaching – research and practice* in my department at the University of Copenhagen, which I hope has been a significant driver of professional development in the Danish coaching environment. For more than 5 years, the lecture series has attracted many with an interest in coaching and thus developed into a professional development forum for coaching in Copenhagen and environs; it has also resulted in many personal and professional contacts.

Without the many travel companions and new professional contacts after the publication of my first book, the present book would not have become what I now present, with a certain amount of pride. My own activities as a researcher, teacher and practitioner in the fields of coaching and coaching psychology have had a significant impact on my development and professional learning. I have learned so much from my many teaching sessions in various places of education – especially in my own workplace, the Section of Psychology and Educational Studies, Department of Nutrition, Exercise and Sports at the University of Copenhagen; at the Copenhagen Coaching Center (CCC); and at the Master of Public Governance programme that is run jointly by the Copenhagen Business School (CBS) and the University of Copenhagen, where I am responsible for teaching the compulsory module *Personal leadership and dialogical coaching*. I have also highly appreciated my new professional challenge at the Copenhagen Summer University, where I have been course director for the week-long course *Coaching, Kierkegaard and leadership* since 2011. My interactions with students and course participants, their willingness to reflect and their many questions have provided food for thought, forced me to seek new paths and facilitated my own development as a coaching practitioner and theorist. Through theory development and through developmental and research projects, I have sought to offer my contribution to documenting the role of coaching as a practice field.

Coaching should be understood as a dialogue form that focuses especially on the coachee as a fellow human being. In the present book, I shall be using the term *coachee* rather than *focus person*, the term I used in my first coaching book. I view my conversation partner less as a focus person and more as a partner in a shared process of learning and development. With the term *coachee*, I aim to highlight this equality of roles and my effort to reduce the asymmetry. This forum of shared learning and development becomes even clearer when I work with group coaching. I would describe coaching as interaction and dialogue – not as intervention. My conversations with a coachee constitute a search and a quest for third-generation coaching, where shared meaning-making and reflections

on essential life values carry special importance in the conversation. I seek to underpin this new understanding of coaching with relevant theory and research, and in addition I will point to links with current societal (post-modern) challenges that we all have to be ready to deal with. It is precisely the analysis of these social conditions and challenges that inspired me to continue developing third-generation coaching as a new dialogical practice.

The book is not merely a handbook aiming to cover anything and everything within the field. As the author of the book, I have a special ambition: I hope to provide a direction for coaching where I view the development of new forms of dialogue, in a broad sense, as a key and possibly novel basis for developing our society on many different levels – in conversations with each other, in small learning situations, in specific work contexts, in developmental and team contexts, in organizations and many other settings. Coaching and coaching-inspired dialogues should help build new social realities that revolve around the development of our abilities, a desire to engage in reflection and a striving for a better understanding of each other. My hope is that the differences between people will not be an obstacle to genuine meetings but instead can facilitate development for both parties. Obviously, I sometimes fail to live up to this vision myself. Sometimes it is necessary to give yourself a push to speak to the other person in a new way, but it also requires willingness and readiness from the other person. Hopefully, the book can give readers the courage and the urge to spark new conversation processes.

A Guide to Third Generation Coaching
Narrative-Collaborative Theory and Practice

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