

Chapter 2

Roots of Coaching Psychology

I recently attended a talk by Anthony Grant, one of the leading researchers of coaching psychology. His slides began with images of the pioneers in the field of psychology—Freud, Rogers, Maslow, Skinner, Beck, Ellis, and Bandura. He also talked about the big names in the coaching industry—Thomas Leonard, Oprah, and Tony Robinson. While we all had a chuckle, his point was well taken. Combining the theories and rich scientific background of psychology and bringing that together with the industry of coaching is a great way to grow the fields of coaching and coaching psychology. Today the fields of psychology and the practice of coaching are converging, even though there has been resistance from both fields in the past (Grant, 2012, 2015).

To put it bluntly, Grant suggested, coaching is about helping clients reach their goals, and find solutions. Coaching is about collaborating with clients in a solution-focused, results-oriented process. Coaches facilitate the enhancement of performance, but it is the client that guides the process (Grant, 2015). Bringing together the fields of coaching and coaching psychology has provided a unique opportunity to increase the science and rigor of coaching, and grow the applied science of psychology. It is quite exciting to be in the field of coaching psychology right now, a young field on the cusp of greatness.

This chapter covers the theoretical roots of coaching psychology including adult learning theory, humanistic psychology, person-centered approach, positive psychology, and solution-focused theory. Because coaching psychology is considered a new and growing field, this chapter covers the history of coaching and reviews the current literature on the efficacy of coaching in personal change.

History of Coaching

“Put me in coach, I’m ready to play!” Many think of sports coaching when they think of coaching, and for good reason. Coaching has its roots in the area of sports, dating back to ancient Greece when the top athletes were coached by well-paid coaching professionals (Carpenter, 2004). Some might argue that workplace coaching goes back centuries to the times of apprenticeships. However, the earliest forms of coaching as evidenced in the scientific literature come from the field of business. From the 1940–1970s, businesses hired psychologists and organizational development professionals trained to come into an organization to help increase overall productivity. This often occurred through the use of informal conversations (Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). In the early years, coaching was used as a managerial technique, where the focus was on the employee and his/her abilities, rather than their faults (Burdett, 1998).

While coaching psychology is a relatively new approach to the psychological service field, coaching literature dates back to Coleman Griffith, a sports psychologist that made observations about the psychology of the athletes back in 1918 (Palmer & Whybrow, 2008). Griffith (1926) suggested that coaching is more than instructing; coaches are teachers. While the field of sports coaching has long been the field most associated with coaching, the field of business coaching was not far behind. Gorby (1937) wrote one of the first articles in the field; an article that detailed how coaching techniques could be used to increase productivity and profit in business. The literature on coaching in the business industry was the prominent focus of the coaching literature for most of the Twentieth century. Recently, that has begun to change as the literature on coaching and coaching psychology is rapidly increasing (Palmer & Whybrow, 2008).

While the literature on coaching continues to grow, so has the industry of coaching. From 1980 to 1994, the field of coaching expanded to a variety of fields far beyond athletics and business, and began finding success in life, health, and family arenas (Hudson, 1999). The number of publications on coaching in each of these fields also continues to grow every year. Today, The International Coach Federation estimates over 30,000 professional coaches are currently practicing (ICF, 2007). Today’s coaches come from a wide variety of backgrounds and since there is not one unifying credential, it is hard to say exactly how many coaches there are in total or from what profession they come (Harris, 1999). The nature of coaching, both executive and life coaching, is enact and sustains change at the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral levels, leading to goal attainment and increased performance in personal or professional life (Stober & Grant, 2006a). In that respect, the fields of coaching and coaching psychology will likely continue on the path of growth.

Coaching and Coaching Psychology. Is There a Difference?

The origins of the coaching industry can be traced back to the 1950s in the humanistic approach to change. Humanists are optimistic in their perception of human behavior and work on interpersonal relationship improvement (McLean, 2012). This optimistic process takes place in a client/coach relationship. Cognitive Behavioral approach was also being used at this time, often through the work of industrial psychologists that worked for major industrial companies (Stober & Grant, 2006a, b). These psychologists used psychological methodology as the preferred approach to human growth.

The humanistic approach is open; it does not have barriers on who can or cannot practice, nor does it have limitations such as education or credentials. However, the development of credentialed training institutions created requirements to become certified in coaching. The CBT training institutions required that students be trained in health professions (Palmer & Whybrow, 2008). Therein lies the root of the difference between the coaching industry and coaching psychology. With few exceptions, the coaching industry accepts varying educational backgrounds and often uses the Humanistic approach to change, as in the GROW model or similar coach-specific models. The coaching psychology profession requires training in psychology and uses a variety of psychological theoretical approaches, all having gone through evidence-based evaluation. The academic and training requirements for coaches and coaching psychologists vary greatly.

There is a growing body of research that suggests significant research and training credibility is needed to grow the coaching profession (Grant, 2011). The need for rigor, training standards, and standardized competencies will help legitimize the field amongst other professionals. Additionally, there is still a question about the definitions of coaching and coaching psychology, and there is still a need for clarity of what coaching actually is (Stober & Grant, 2006a). There is lacking an established, clear delineation between the fields of coaching and coaching psychology. Palmer and Whybrow (2008) highlight the differences between the two in their book, *The Handbook of Coach Psychology*. First, they identify three definitions in the fields of coaching as told by Whitmore (1992), Downey (1999), and Parsloe (1995).

Coaching is unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them—a facilitation approach. Whitmore (1992).

Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another Downey (1999).

Coaching is directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction. Parsloe (1995).

Yet another definition of coaching includes more specific information on the process of coaching.

A coach is a person who facilitates experiential learning that results in future-oriented abilities.” He goes on to say a “coach is someone trained and devoted to guiding others into increase competence, commitment, and confidence (Hudson, 1999, p. 6).

The International Coach Federation (n.d.) defines coaching this way:

Professional Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life.

These definitions have much in common in that they all refer to coaching as a process with an ultimate goal of increasing a person’s performance. Brennan and Prior (2005) identified common themes of coaching definitions. The themes included an egalitarian relationship, solution and goal attainment focus, and a need for abilities to facilitate learning and growth. Effective coaching is about asking the right questions and facilitating growth rather than telling a client what to do (Stober & Grant, 2006a).

What is absent in the themes of the previous coaching definitions is a specific need for developing a mastery in learning a theoretical underpinning. Coaching psychology, a newer distinction in the coaching industry, is considered an applied positive psychology. As with coaching, many definitions of coaching psychology include an increased performance element, but also include an expectation of professional training and a psychological theoretical underpinning (Stober & Grant, 2006a).

Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established learning theories and psychological approaches (Adapted from Grant and Palmer, 2002 as cited in Palmer & Whybrow, 2008).

This definition captures the importance of theory and evidence as an essential element of coaching psychology. While the coaching industry is working on improving rigor and more research is providing evidence of the efficacy of coaching, there is still a considerable difference of the two fields. Namely, it comes down to theoretical differences and qualifications of the practitioner.

Another working definition of coaching psychology was presented at the 2015 International Congress on Coaching by Vandaveer, Pearlman, Lowman, and Brannick (2015). The team reported on research and development currently underway to develop a coaching competency model. Their research looked at the working definitions and practices of coaches in the US in order to create a working definition of coaching psychology, among other objectives. While the formal definition is still under development, the working definition includes the following components:

- Area of professional practice and research within broader discipline of psychology
- Individualized process of professional development in which a coaching psychologist works with individuals one-on-one and/or sometimes in a broader

context, to enhance their effectiveness in their organizational roles and environments.

- Designed to benefit both the individual and the organization
- Grounded in scientifically established psychological theories, principles, and methods.
- Practiced by qualified psychologists who, among other requirements, have a graduate degree in a psychology discipline accredited university + relevant post-graduate qualifications

So while the field of coaching psychology is growing, and the industry of coaching is beginning to merge with the field of coaching psychology, it is clear that we are on the cusp of an emerging field that will likely have staying power. In fact, in 2011, Division 13 of the American Psychological Association, Society for Consulting Psychology, which represents practitioners in the coaching industry, developed a memorandum of understanding with the International Society of Coaching Psychology (ISCP), a professional association of coaching psychologist. This created the first steps towards a merger of the coaching industry and field of coaching psychology. The questions the field still must answer are does it work, how does it work, and how do we ensure professionalism.

Coaching or Coaching Psychology: Does It Work?

Does coaching work, that is the million-dollar question.

Evidence of the effectiveness of coaching psychology is growing rapidly (Grant, 2012). If coaching practitioners want to truly be able to say that coaching is an effective method of personal change, then we must speak in a common language and evaluate a common method. To date, most research shows that clients improve having received coaching. Of course there could be flaws with some of the evidence, but overall the research shows that coaching psychology is effective (Theeboom, Beersma, and Van Vianen (2013). In other words, coaching has a positive impact on the overall quality of life for participants. People that receive coaching are more resilient, have increased well-being, have increased insight, and are more likely to reach their goals (Grant, 2015)

Evidence-based coaching is yet another distinction of coaching industry and coaching psychology. Evidence-base is a term long found in science and academia to describe practices that have scientifically supported results. While the field of science includes a hierarchy of methodological significance, with ideas, editorials, and case studies at the bottom and randomly controlled trials and systematic reviews at the top, it is easy to say that coaching psychology research has far to go. However, Theeboom et al. (2013), recently completed a meta-analysis of coaching outcomes. Specifically, the authors investigated the effectiveness of five individual-level outcome categories: performance, well-being, coping, work

attitudes, and self-regulation. Results of this study indicated that coaching does, in fact, have significant positive effects on all five outcomes.

Lai and McDowall (2014) completed a systematic review of coaching psychology to better understand the knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors associated with the quality of coaching relationships and the outcome of coaching. Their research found that the quality of the coaching relationship is critical to the success of the coaching goal, and significant professional training is necessary to regulate and manage the client's emotional reactions. From this, we can begin to understand not only that coaching works, but that the relationship and qualifications of the coach are both paramount to the success.

Theeboom et al.'s and Lai & McDowall's work is a great start, but more work is needed to show evidence of efficacy. Stober and Grant (2006a, b) argue that coaching psychology is moving toward a model of professional coaching that includes informed-practitioners that have an understanding of methodologies for research and evaluation of their practice. While informed practitioners may not be expected to be producers of research, they are expected to be critical consumers of research, thus selecting practices that have evidence of efficacy and might improve their practice. The informed practitioner model has been evident and extensively used in behavioral sciences (Shapiro, 2002). Coaching psychology training programs that include this model will help students address the theory, methods, and critical thinking needed to provide effective, evidence-based coaching (Stober & Grant, 2006a, b).

The research on coaching psychology is young, and we have evidence that it works. However we still have far to go to truly understand how and why it works, and how effectively coaching interventions work. Future research that will help us understand the how and why will include closely investigating the coaching relationship, and the micro and macro factors of the coaching process.

All evidence indicates that coaching psychology is here to stay. Stephen Palmer (2015) outlined a few trends of coaching in his ISCP talk. He explained that there are currently an estimated 4000 coaches registered in national professional development groups right now, and more than 20,000 are showing an interest in the field. To date, nine countries, including the US, have formed a memorandum of understanding to bring together coaching psychology groups and the coaching industry. There has been a dramatic increase in the number of publications on coaching, and perhaps most importantly, professional qualifications, professional registers, and supervision of coaching psychologists are on the rise.

Theoretical Roots of Coaching Psychology

Humanistic, Person-Centered Approach

Open most any coaching book, and the theoretical foundation first identified as the underpinning for coaching psychology will almost always be the Humanistic

approach. Perhaps that is because coaching is all about personal growth; it is about helping a person move forward. Carl Roger's, person-centered approach is only one of several Humanistic approaches. Other approaches that fit under this label include Gestalt, experiential and existential therapies. However, Person-Centered Humanistic approach is the one most often identified as a foundation for coaching psychology. A connection was found between the two in a review between Roger's approach and the literature on executive coaching (Hedman, 2001).

Roger's person-centered approach places great emphasis on the quality of the relationship between the client and the practitioner (Rogers 1961). First identified as an approach to psychotherapy, Roger's Humanistic approach fits ideally with the role of the coach and coachee. In fact, nearly all of the definitions reviewed for coaching and coaching psychology refer to performance increase, which can directly relate to Roger's idea of self-actualization. Roger's stated that the goal is for a client to move towards self-actualization as we all have "a tendency to actualize [our]selves" (Rogers 1961, p. 351).

While self-actualization might be a rather lofty goal for most, the movement towards a goal through a supportive process is the essence of coaching psychology. Like Humanistic psychology, coaching psychology focuses intently on positive movement toward growth. A coach's job is to work collaboratively with the client to help them move towards their goal, and as such, belief in the potential of the client to make that movement is critical for the success of the process.

Roger's theory suggests that the process by which change is most notably accomplished is through the quality of the relationship which is fostered through an optimal climate. Rogers (1980) stated the climate for change is best accomplished with unconditional positive regard, empathy, and genuineness. Unconditional positive regard, or the acceptance of the client through the building of a supportive relationship, helps the client move forward by valuing the client for who they are. Empathy allows the coach to best understand a person's experience from an emotional standpoint. While the coach works to best understand and support the client, the coach must also be authentic. Genuineness is best achieved when the coach takes stock of his or her own experiences, reactions, and feelings, or being completely present in the moment.

In the Humanistic approach, as is true in coaching psychology, the client is seen as the expert in their own life (Rogers 1961). Identifying the client as the expert in their lives provides a framework for acknowledgement of an individual's strength, and allows for the facilitation of growth by the coach. It also builds upon the key concept of a trusting relationship that is based on empathy. Stober (2006) has identified other key concepts of Humanistic approaches considered foundational to coaching.

Growth-Oriented View of the Person This optimistic view of people does not deny that dysfunction exists, but rather it places the focus of the change process on an individual's capacity to move forward. Coaches must approach the relationship

with optimism, and work with the clients in a supportive, mutually beneficial relationship.

Self-Actualization Rogers (1959) suggested that people have a natural tendency or possibility for forward development and that people strive to reach their full capacity. The coach that develops a supportive environment for the coaching process helps client's move towards self-actualization.

Holistic View of the Person In the Gestalt tradition, the sum of its parts is not as great as the whole. In coaching, we must see the connection of all facets of a client's experience. This means understanding their human experience, their uniqueness's, and how their systems influence their perceptions and reality.

Human Potential Movement Following in the work of Kurt Lewin, Human Potential movement emphasized the ability of the individual to fix themselves without having to be sick or have a diagnosis. It is the notion that self-improvement does not need to focus on the weakness of the individual.

Positive Psychology

In 1998, then APA president Martin Seligman stood at the podium to deliver his presidential address. That address, many argue, changed the face of psychology. Seligman presented a science of human strengths, and encouraged the field of psychology to move past the deficit-based approach so commonly presented in studies. In his speech, Seligman (1998) stated,

Ideally, psychology should be able to help document what kind of families result in the healthiest children, what work environments support the greatest satisfaction among workers, and what policies result in the strongest civic commitment.

Yet we have scant knowledge of what makes life worth living. For although psychology has come to understand quite a bit about how people survive and endure under conditions of adversity, we know very little about how normal people flourish under more benign conditions.

Positive psychology is the study of how people prosper in the face of adversity (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000). While this seems an appropriate or even common area of study for psychology, the norm of psychology has historically been a medical model, meaning that people come to see a psychologist, become diagnosed with a mental health issue, then receive treatment for that issue to be fixed. The medical model has been the norm for decades, and is the primary way practitioners receive payment from insurance.

While Seligman has become the spokesperson for positive psychology, the roots of positive psychology can be traced back to the Humanist movement and work of Rogers, Maslow, and even to the earliest works of William James (Froh, 2004). While the theory of positive psychology is gaining much traction, the practice of positive psychology can be found in coaching psychology (Palmer, 2008, 2015). Coaching

psychology puts the focus on where people want to go; how to move from here to there. Put another way, the heart of positive psychology is a movement away from pathology and dysfunction and towards a focus on strength and positive development.

Coaching psychology has been identified as the applied practice of positive psychology (Kauffman, 2006). The numbers of positive psychology interventions (PPIs) are increasing, and are showing promising results (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). In a meta-analysis of 51 positive psychology interventions aimed at increasing positive feelings, behaviors, or thoughts, Sin and Lyubomirsky found that such interventions enhance wellbeing and decrease depressive symptoms. There is also growing literature on the efficacy of specific positive psychology coaching interventions that increase wellbeing (Madden, Green, & Grant, 2011).

Based on the concepts of positive psychology, the Authentic Happiness Coaching model was created to provide coaching approaches that were grounded in theory and supported empirically (Kauffman, 2006). The model includes a set of techniques to foster happiness and was designed to help a broad range of clients, from CEOs to parents (Seligman, Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005). It is for people who are mentally healthy but want to find more joy in their lives. The process includes an educational component where the coach explains Seligman's pathways to happiness through emotions, connections, activity, and through personal meaning. Seligman calls these three areas the pleasant life, engaged life, and the meaningful life. The coach then works with the client(s) to help them identify steps to improve one of the three areas. For more information on this process, see Chap. 7.

Adult Learning Theory

While there is a growing literature on coaching youth, the bulk of all coaching research deals with coaching adults. Unlike traditional, younger learners, adults come to the coaching process with varied life experiences and often with formal and informal education. Adult Learning Theory tends to focus on andragogy, or the study of helping adults learn (Knowles, 1978). According to Knowles, Holton, and Swanson (1998), adults are self-directed, goal-oriented, and come with life experiences that provides important insights and direction. Coaches will benefit from focusing on real-life issues and keeping the session relevant to the individual's specific needs and goals. Knowles et al. suggest adults have intrinsic motivation, and as such coaching should focus on the internal process or internal goals of the client being served.

Experiential learning principles (Kolb, 1984) focus on the idea of learning through action. Kolb directly connects his perspective on the works of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget. He emphasized the importance that experiences play in the learning process. Rather than distinguish experiential learning as a separate or alternative to behavior and cognitive theories, Kolb considers experiential learning

theory as a holistic approach that integrates experience, perception, cognition, and behavior.

While the experiential learning model has been an important component of adult learning theory, the model is also a staple in youth development, and in particular, for use with 4-H learning activities. The experiential learning model has five components in three sections (Pfeiffer & Jones, 1983).

DO:

1. Experience the activity.

REFLECT:

2. Share reactions and observations
3. Process the experience; analyze what happened.

APPLY:

4. Generalize to connect the experience to real-world examples
5. Apply what was learned to other situations

This is relevant to coaching because most clients come to sessions with a goal of immediately implementing change strategies in their life. Adult learning theory tends to focus on the present and future (Berg & Karlsen, 2007). Experiential learning has been used successfully in coaching, perhaps most notably with the GROW model, which was created by Alexander and made common by Whitmore 1992 (Cox, 2006). In GROW, G = goal setting, which equates to concrete experience. R = reality, or the observation. O = options, or generalization. W = will, or what will you do, is the application.

Cox (2006) identifies additional theories that are considered staples of adult learning theory, and necessary to consider when coaching adults. In addition to andragogy and experiential learning, reflective practice, learning styles, life course development, values/motivation, and self-efficacy are all aspects of adult learning theory that are relevant to coaching.

Cognitive Behavioral

Aaron Beck is considered to be the pioneer of cognitive behavioral therapy, a therapeutic process that seeks to identify the faulty thinking that can lead to emotional turmoil and dysfunction. The CB model describes how a person's thinking or perceptions of an issue influences emotional and behavioral reactions (Beck, 1976). Beck describes how psychological problems often come from faulty learning, incorrect inferences, or simply failing to distinguish between imagination and reality.

A contemporary of Aaron Beck, Albert Ellis, developed the ABC rational-emotive therapy (RET), an approach that also identified faulty thinking as a

contribution of mental well-being. Ellis (1979) explained that faulty beliefs, also called cognitive distortions, are what influences how we feel.

A: Activating experience
B: irrational Belief about the experience
C: emotional Consequences

For example, it is common for people in a relationship to have faulty perceptions of their relational experience. I have worked with several clients that have a suspicion or feeling that something is wrong when their partner identifies no such issue. This typically happens early in the relationship, when moving from the beginning stage, romantic love, onto the stage of accommodation or reality.

Many times I have heard couples say that things in their relationship are not what they used to be. One particular couple came to work with me after they had been in a relationship for about 6 months. She was concerned that he was no longer interested in the relationship because he stopped many of the behaviors of courtship; sending flowers, multiple daily calls, and going out on romantic dates. While these concerns had merit, her message to herself was that he was just like her last boyfriend. In her former relationship, the boyfriend had lost interest and stopped showing affection right before he left her. Although her current partner repeatedly told her he was invested in the relationship, she had a faulty belief that he was leaving. Through a coaching process, she was able to identify other reasons that his behavior had changed, such as that sending flowers and going on fancy dates can become expensive. Her irrational beliefs about the experience were actually causing her great frustration and were creating difficulty in the relationship. Through the coaching process, we were able to identify faulty thinking, and perhaps even more important, we were able to identify new behaviors that provided cognitive evidence that the boyfriend was invested in the relationship. This new way of thinking helped her change her thoughts, which changed her actions.

As a coach using cognitive behavioral techniques, we can help challenge the thinking of the client to help them identify their irrational belief system. David Burns (1980) identified “cognitive distortions” and Auerbach (2006) has translated those distortions for coaching.

1. *All or nothing thinking*. Black and white; no room for possibly alternative explanations.
2. *Overgeneralization*. Seeing a pattern from isolated incidents.
3. *Mental filter*. When someone sees only a negative detail when there are many positives that could be viewed.
4. *Disqualifying the positive*. Actively rejecting positive experiences by thinking they are not important.
5. *Mind reading*. Concluding that people have negative thoughts about you despite lack of evidence supporting this thought.

6. *The fortune teller error*. The belief that things will turn out badly before there is any evidence to support that belief.
7. *Catastrophizing*. Exaggerating the importance of a minor event.
8. *Emotional reasoning*. Belief that negative emotions are facts.
9. *Should statements*. The idea that things should be done in a certain way, the following negative self-talk.
10. *Labeling*. A form of overgeneralization of lumping all negative into one label rather than looking at specific events.

Burns (1980) describes the triple-column technique as a way of identifying cognitive distortions. These often begin with automatic thoughts, which can be categorized as one of the ten cognitive distortions above. The coaching goal, then, would be to help the coaching client identify the irrational thought and replace it with a rational response. If we think about the case above where the woman is concerned that her partner is losing interest in the relationship, we could coach her into identified rational responses.

Example of multi-column technique in family life coaching

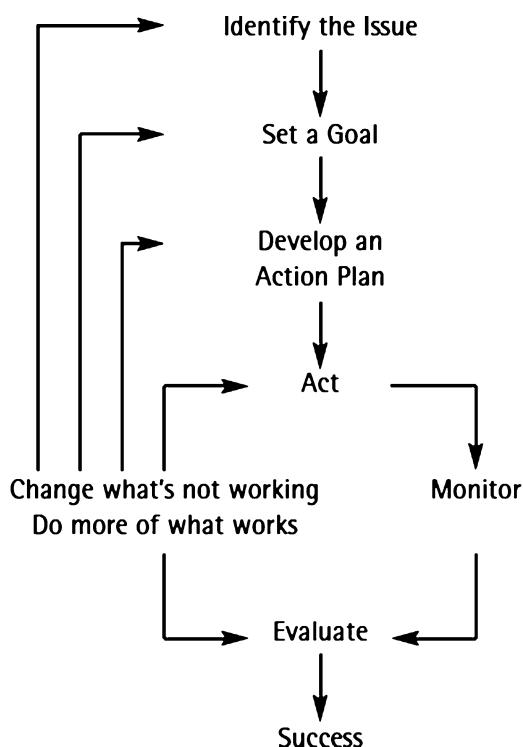
Automatic thoughts (self-criticism)	Cognitive distortions (faulty belief)	Rational responses	Possible power questions
1. He never brings me flowers anymore.	<i>Overgeneralization. Mental Filler</i>	Flowers are not the only way of expressing interest in a relationship.	What other ways has he shown interest in you or the relationship?
2. He has no reason to stay with me. Men always leave me anyway.	<i>The fortuneteller error.</i>	Of course there are many reasons for him to stay in this relationship!	What positives do you bring to the relationship?
3. I'm just a fool to think this relationship will work	<i>Labeling</i>	I'm not always a fool; in fact, I'm smart in many areas of my life.	How have other relations in your life been successful?

Goal-Focused Approach

With so much emphasis in the field of coaching placed on goal setting, it is important to draw on the literature from goal-setting, self-determination, and personality. Anthony Grant (2012) lays out an approach to integrating goal-focused coaching work, with much emphasis on self-regulation. According to Grant (2006, p. 153)

the core constructs of goal-directed self-regulation are a series of processes in which the individual sets a goal, develops a plan of action, begins action, monitors their performance, evaluates their performance by comparison to a standard, and based on this evaluation, changes their actions to further enhance their performance and better reach their goals. In relation to coaching, the coach's role is to facilitate the coachee's movement through the self-regulatory cycle

Fig. 2.1 Generic model of goal-directed self-regulation (Grant 2012, Reprinted with permission)



This process can be seen in Grant’s model (2012) of goal-directed self-regulation figure (Fig. 2.1).

Solution-focused approaches have been used in coaching both for organizational change (Bloor & Pearson, 2004) and in life coaching (Grant, 2003). Solution focused interventions were described by Berg and Dolan as “the pragmatics of hope and respect” (p. 1). Like positive psychology, solution focused approaches focus on what can be, and the client’s view is considered a valuable resource and necessary to create change (Berg & Dolan, 2001). In solution focused coaching, it is the role of the coach to help the client turn toward solutions.

Grant (2006) identifies two key factors in the process:

1. Changing the viewing.
2. Changing the doing.

In essence, solution focused coaching is about helping the client create and negotiate the future (Berg & Dolan, 2001). One of the most popular approaches to changing the viewing comes in the form of a “magic question”, which is this:

... in the middle of the night, a miracle happens and the problem that prompted you to talk to me today is solved! But because this happened while you are sleeping, you have no way of knowing that there was an overnight miracle that solved the problems. So, when you wake up tomorrow morning, what might be the small change that will make you say to yourself, ‘wow, something must have happened. The problem is gone! (p. 7).

This miracle question, which is one of many powerful questions often used by coaches (see Chap. 8) helps the client become familiar with a solution. It helps them change the viewing, and see what they are looking for. The second step, or changing the doing, occurs with goal setting and action steps.

Smart Goals

S: Specific

M: Measurable

A: Attainable

R: Realistic

T: Timely

Goal setting is the groundwork of good coaching. Goal-focused coaching is proving to be an evidence-based framework for practice and teaching (Grant, 2007). Goals are what lay the foundation for action steps, or the changing of the doing. Many coaches focus on setting outcome goals, a statement of a desired outcome (Hudson, 1999). Most coaching professionals have a list of goal types. SMART goals, (originally delineated by Raia, 1965) are **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**ttainable, **R**ealistic and **T**imely and are often found in the coaching literature as are performance and avoidance goals. Helping a client set goals, and plan the action for accomplishing those goals are critical steps in the coaching process. Solution-focused approaches have been identified and implemented into models of coaching (Palmer, 2008).

Understanding that goals are an essential process of coaching psychology is critical to coaching success. While building a relationship and focusing on solutions are critical components of successful coaching, facilitating goal alignment can help clients gain insight and behavioral changes (Grant, 2012). As Grant states, goal identification and attainment “is surely the overarching goal of the coaching enterprise itself” (p. 161).

A Meta-Model of Coaching

To summarize this chapter, coaching psychology is a new field that brings together a rich and varied theoretical background to offer a vibrant and evidence-based approach to help people lead meaningful and fulfilling lives. While this chapter is a summary and only touches on the intricacies of the field of coaching psychology, my hope is that you have enough information to want more information. I have included a list of recommended readings for more information.

While there are many models of coaching, most with varied theoretical underpinnings and practice suggestions, there are themes that ring true for most coaching models (see Chap. 7 for more coaching models and assessments). I want to leave you with Stober and Grant’s (2006a, b) concept of a meta-model of coaching.

They suggest seven thematic factors of coaching that together identify most themes and principles of coaching psychology.

1. *Goals*. The coaching process has an explicit outcome. Goals are an essential element of the coaching process, and as such, coach and client can work together to identify the needs to be addressed.
2. *Rationale*. Clients need understanding and coaches will do better with an explanation of how the process of coaching will help meet the needs of the client.
3. *Procedure*. The coach will follow set up steps that will include participation from both the coach and the client.
4. *Relationship*. As was discussed in most all theoretical underpinnings of coaching psychology, building a meaning relationship whereby the client feels supported is essential.
5. *Alliance*. Coaches will play the role of helping to expand the client's skills and performance. This is more than building a relationship; it is challenging while supporting the client.
6. *Client's Change*. Coaching is about change, and specifically about the client's ability and readiness to change.
7. *Coach's Role in Client Change*. The coach must have the abilities and skills to assist in the client's change process.

These steps, or the meta-model of coaching, can be boiled down to the “how” of coaching psychology. Stober and Grant (2006a, b) identify these steps as the common themes of coaching. While there are plenty of specific models that must continue to be evaluated and new models that will be developed, it is important to understand the common themes of the coaching psychology process and recognize the contextual model.

Chapter Summary

The fields of coaching psychology and the coaching industry are in the process of merging. The field of coaching is growing, and many efforts are underway to help ensure professionalism and efficacy. Professional associations are an important element of professionalism. The International Society of Coaching Psychology (ISCP) is an international professional membership organization working to grow the professionalism of coaching. Facilitated primarily by the work of coaching psychologists Stephen Palmer in the UK and Anthony Grant in Australia, the process of creating global professionalism is underway (Palmer & Whybrow, 2006). To date, over 18 countries have joined efforts of inclusion in the International Society of Coaching Psychology in an effort to bridge the work being done in individual countries with international collaborations.

Since the field is new, there are questions being researched such as how effective is the coaching process, why is the coaching process effective, and how should

coaching psychologists be trained and managed (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). I would add the question, how do we move past the terminology of “coaching psychologist,” which implies the exclusion of other helping scientists, such as family life coaches, social workers, and marriage and family therapists. Family life coaching is a sub section of the broader field of coaching psychology, and an understanding of how family science and coaching psychology can co-exist is the essence of family life coaching. Clearly the field is coming of age, and psychology is at the foreground of the movement (Palmer & Cavanagh, 2006), but I suggest there is room for family science in the field. The remaining chapters will focus highly on the theory, research, and practice of family science, helping to close the gap between coaching psychology and family science.

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