

Coaches use of Reflective Journals for Learning

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Published by Kogan Page, 2011)



Introduction

Success in the marketplace increasingly depends on learning, yet most people don't know how to learn (Argyris, 1991). This is worrying because knowledge and skills can quickly become outdated and competence is not a constant and to adapt to what tomorrow may bring people will need to continue to learn (Lewis, 2003). If this was true before, nowhere is this truer now than in the fast evolving world of the coach and their work with coachees. There are, however, opportunities every day for the coach to learn through their coaching. The trick is for the coach to find ways of maximising these learning opportunities. Keeping a journal on their coaching and reflecting on it may help.

A literature review reveals confusion over both the definition and practice of reflection. This is consistent with the findings of a small-scale study with several executive coaches carried out in writing this chapter. Their comments and experiences are included herein. Despite wide variations in approaches to reflective activity, the research participants all recognised the potential value in reflecting on their practice and sought guidance on how to do this better. This should be of interest to coaches because, as Johns explained (2004), reflection should be a core activity and quality of a professional coach. Yet despite these, Boud and Walker (1998) advise that many learners either resist reflecting, have difficulty understanding how they should go about it, or simply cannot reflect. This chapter therefore aims to demystify reflection and provide guidance to coaches about how to go about it using case examples. After defining key terms, the chapter is structured around a coach's work with clients and the review, reflection and learning derived from it.

What is reflection?

To many, reflection is an intangible, woolly concept. Some clarification might help demystify it. Most theorists (e.g. Raelin, 2001). agree that reflection means "to bend back, stand apart from, stand outside of". Carroll and Gilbert (2005) also referred to reflection as gaining a new and perhaps different perspective after having stepped back from one's coaching. Dewey (1933), an early proponent of reflection, believed reflection fell into two parts: questioning (often based on some doubt) and searching (for new material to overcome the doubt). But what makes a coach step back, question and search?

For many, the first step in reflection is a feeling of discomfort arising from an (coaching) experience and the start of recognising that their normal response to a situation was insufficient (Atkins and Murphy, 1993). One of the coaches surveyed said they note:

- *Notes to self. e.g. "cleaner contracting", "next time I need to..."; my reactions or what's working well and [my practice would be] even better if...; observations on the client*

and commented they typically log gaps in their practice or ideas about practice improvements.

Hinett (2003) and Mackintosh (1998) recognised a trigger for learning was sometimes from recognized error or ineffectiveness in practice. Hackman and Wageman (2007) extended this view believing errors and failure provide more opportunities for learning than do success and achievement, because failure provides data that can be explored for insights into the selected approaches and how these might be improved.

If true, a key challenge for coaches seems to be overcoming a natural defensive reaction and not overly-rationalising their approach to coaching. Hay (2007) recognised this response in herself when she described her development through tape-recording her work and reviewing this with a supervisor: "I persevered and gradually learned to accept these insights and improve my competence for the future instead of beating myself up over my perceived inadequacies." (p.7) and "... once you get beyond the natural tendency to punish yourself for being so unaware at the time, you begin to learn a great deal more about how you function." (p. 25).

Recognition, time and timing are also important too. Adult learning theories (e.g. Knowles, 1985) suggest that managers learn most when they are ready to learn - that is when they recognize in themselves that their past experience is no longer proving useful in the current situation. It may take a particular event to trigger this awareness and being conscious of areas for development in their practice. However, while a coach may realise they are ready to learn, they may be less aware that their prior experiences might affect their openness to reflecting and learning. While a shocking or

ineffective coaching intervention or outcome might cause a coach to stop and 'reflect', they still need to be open minded enough to evaluate the situation and take in different viewpoints and consider fresh possibilities. This may prove uncomfortable for many coaches and require courage to do so and a willingness to accept the unknown for a time. Given the above, establishing a safe environment seems an important element to encouraging effective reflective learning.

For those coaches that accept this discomfort, there are strong arguments to the benefits of reflective practice, including:

- increasing ownership of the material and encouraging the learner to have a more active role in the learning process (Jensen, 1987);
- personal development – through the exploration of self and personal meanings to events (e.g. Christensen, 1981);
- improving thinking skills (Moon, 2005d), and
- supporting behaviour change – “offloading of the burden of unpleasant events or experiences, an 'emotional dumping ground' (1996 in Moon 2006, p. 49).

Gathering material from coaching sessions

This section looks at coaches initial gathering of material from their coaching on which they can reflect later.

Capturing material from coaching sessions

In the author's experience, judicious note-taking can help a coach reflect and learn. The use of note-taking in coaching is widely debated, however. While some coaches like to take notes during a coaching session, others prefer not to, believing it can get in the way of being present with a client. Provided the client agrees to the coach taking notes (this needs to be contracted for), it can have advantages including providing a more detailed session record than if a coach relies on memory alone. However, note-taking can lead to a coach failing to spot or hear vital clues provided by the coachee at the time. If no notes are taken, the coach is able to focus on developing an effective working relationship with the coachee. An alternative for the coach is to take notes after a session ends, which can act as a form of 'clearing' of the client and their issues and allow a fuller concentration on the work ahead.

Alternatively, a session can be recorded. While it could be video recorded, often an audio recording will often provide most of the important information a coach will need. It is common for

therapists- (and coaches) in-training to audio record their work and transcribe it for further analysis, including with the support of a supervisor with a view to finding ways of doing it even better. After all, as Hay said (2007), reflection is setting aside time to think about what you've done in the past and what you might do in the future..." (p.23).

A key advantage of recording over notes is that note taking is subject to a coach's own biases, preferences and selective attention. This starts during the coaching itself where a coach, if unaware of a particular occurrence, is unlikely to note it and pay attention to it subsequently in their review and analysis. Recording can help offset these limitations.

Knapman and Morrison (1998 in Carroll and Gilbert, 2005) refer to the practice of writing up notes as producing a process report: "Recording in detail either during the interview or immediately afterwards what was said by both parties, recording the non-verbal cues given by both parties and any analysis of what you...thought might be happening." (p. 33). These notes might be based upon what a coachee says or coach observes in a particular session thus providing a short-term reaction to this, or when kept chronologically over a number of sessions, may form a coaching diary.

The next section goes beyond the notes a coach takes during a session to how they might collate these in different formats, including in logs or diaries.

Logging material from coaching in journals

What are reflective journals?

The focus of this chapter is on coaches use of journals and diaries for learning. Moon (2006) calls learning journals a vehicle for reflection, saying there are many different words used to describe them including terms such as diaries, logs or learning logs. She differentiates them by saying a learning journal is likely to include some factual recording (e.g. the time and place of the coaching) but not necessarily limited to these details.

The literature tells us journals help people think about their attitudes, beliefs and assumptions in order to promote self-evaluation. This study seems to support this view as the following quotations from the study participants indicate:

- *It's about deep self-awareness and knowing myself.*
- *As I'm an extrovert, I need to write to "hear myself speak".*
- *Journaling is therefore a way of externalising an otherwise internal process.*
- *I ask my self-questions: where is my life going? Where am I in relation to my purpose and passion? It tends to be philosophical.*
- *I've been journal writing for 20 years. Every 6 months, I look back and identify patterns and themes.*
- *It's what's going on for me in my world at that time.*

Chi *et al* (1994) describe making sense of something through journaling as a place for self-explanations, which aligns with the coaches surveyed:

- *It's for me. It's my self-coaching journey.*
- *... it's my learning journal. This is personal to me and my way of learning.*

as well as a philosophical benefit, journals also appear to have a practical one too with coaches reporting:

- *It's a professional tool*
- *Part of [my] toolkit*
- *Keep on track and key things.*

What format do reflective journals take?

This study reveals that the structure of coaches' journals varies. They appear in a wide variety of formats and dimensions from bound diaries to blank loose-leaf pads to scrap books to audio and visually recorded media. The literature also charts the increase in electronic media in the form of blogs and *Wikis*.

With one exception of a coach who captured their journal on a laptop, all of the coaches surveyed used paper-based journals. For example:

- *I keep a personal journal (for my learning), and a small moleskin book (a reminder of key coaching models and to capture themes and reflections to take to supervision)*
- *[I have a moleskin book] The feel is very important to me and how it looks, such as the texture/colour especially as it lasts a long time. I want to keep it; it's not disposable.*

Journals are typically thought of as written – often handwritten – accounts and pen and paper are easily transportable and provide low-technology solutions for quick recording and reflective writing.

This was the most common means by which the coaches surveyed collected material. What is important is that the coach finds a format that works quickly and easily for them and allows them to organise material in a way that they can reflect on it.

What do coaches write in reflective journals?

The content of what coaches write in learning journals also varies. Irrespective of the format, the content need not be limited to handwritten or typed notes and could be in the form of, or supplemented by, diagrams, sketches, relationship maps and materials added from other sources e.g. coachee organisational information such as an organogram. Moon (2006) says “learning journals are close or coincide with the idea of an artist’s notebook” and “words can be mixed with drawing or drawings may predominate.” (p.3). When asked about the format they used, the coaches surveyed said:

- *It is my personal reflections and also includes sketches, diagrams, mind-maps.*
- *Words (at a deeper level), pictures (e.g. “I use light bulbs a lot”), photos, scrapbook. My words take me straight back into it [the coaching session].*

A key question in determining the content is the purpose and intended audience of the journal and principally for whom it is being written and who, therefore, will see it. For example, it is common for a journal to be used as part of the assessed work of a formal coach training or by a professional coaching body (e.g. AC) as part of its individual coach accreditation. Whether for personal or professional development, if the journal is to be viewed by others (such as fellow trainee coaches or the coach’s supervisor) it will need to be recorded in a format that is understandable by others.

Gray tells us that a “reflective journal is a document that contains personal anecdotes, stories, or descriptions of work-related problems” (2004, p.65) and this is consistent with these findings:

- *I write about everything – ideas; creative thoughts; feelings; things to do; stories.*
- *A diary’s what I keep dates in and log sessions (timing and process) – this is different from my reflective journal.*

- *What I write varies. Sometimes short e.g. Key things remembered/prompts for next time; sometimes longer e.g. positive work goals; key life events.*

The literature tells us that a reflective journal can contain a description of critical learning incidents, reflections on personal and professional values and an analysis of the contradictions between what the person wants to do (espoused theories) and what they do in practice (theories-in-use) (Ghaye and Lillyman, 1997). It is not uncommon for coaches to record critical incidents in journals. While Gray (2004) says that descriptions of these incidents tend to be more detailed than "... mere diary entries" (p. 66), they need not be particularly sensational events. They can often be highly personal and the cause of deep (and uncomfortable) introspection, which can become "developmental turning points" (Skovholt and McCarthy, 1988, p.69). The following quotes show the degree of emotional content in some coaches' journals:

- *It charts my ups and downs – I use it to control them and me. I use it to help me step back particularly during the downs.*
- *I keep a diary of my thoughts/emotions to "get it out there" – I look back on these later and find this "very therapeutic".*
- *If I'm emotional (angry). I'm impulsive. Journaling is a "safe environment to get some feelings out."*
- *It helps me distil [how I feel about my coaching] and make it real rather than talking to someone about it.*

Cormier (1988) goes so far as to say these critical incidents could be categorised as 'mistakes' and, while challenging at the time, they can act as useful developmental fulcrums. He reminds us there is a long history in psychological practice of therapists analysing critical incidents to develop self-awareness and professional practice. Coaches could learn much through adopting this practice.

Organising reflective journal material

Journals often consist of an "accumulation of material" (Moon, 2006, p. 2), implying a lot of material has been generated over time. Here, gathering and organising this material to make it manageable for the coach to reflect will be important, especially for those verbose in their writing!

The following extract from the children's favourite wizard, Harry Potter (in Moon, 2006) illustrates this:

"... I sometimes find, and I am sure that you know the feeling, that I simply have too many thoughts and memories crammed into my mind... At these times... I use the Pensieve [a stone basin]. One simply siphons the excess thoughts from one's mind, pours them into the basin and examines them at one's leisure. It becomes easier to spot patterns and links, you understand, when they are in this form." Rowling, 2000, pgs. 518-9.

Some writers (e.g. November 1993) believe that the best results are achieved when significant guidance on journal-writing is provided. Moon suggests those unfamiliar to journaling "start with a journal that is relatively structured and move on to a freer format." (p. 52) believing this approach can help a learner obtain greater benefit from the journal-writing process by helping them not 'going around in circles. Having a pre-determined approach will help a coach manage large amounts of data. A structure for this could include themes for writing and Knapman and Morrison (1998) suggest items that could be used to organise coaching material: 1. what I said; 2. what the coachee said; 3. what I felt; 4. what I told myself; 5. what I did; 6. what the coachee did; 7. what seemed to be happening at this point.

An example of an extract from a transcript of a tape-recorded session (with a coach's immediate reflections) is presented below at Appendix 1. This shows how, through a simple, structured approach using several of Knapman and Morrison's (1998) themes, the coach organizes her material and used it to help her reflect later.

Reviewing and analysing reflective journal material

How can coaches review and analyse reflective journal material?

The next step after having gathered material is to review it and start the process of making sense of it. There are various options open to the coach. As well as reviewing a specific coaching session, much can be learned by reviewing material from across a range of sessions whether with the same client or across several different clients. For example, a coach could reflect on the same stage across different coachees and identify patterns and themes or on the transition between stages with either the same, or different, coachees. In the author's experience, reviewing material from across sessions has proven particularly enlightening and developmental in identifying patterns of habitual practices over different coachees.

As noted, taking a focussed approach to managing large volumes of notes and journal material seems sensible and Hay (2007) suggests prioritising areas to target for development to help this. Hay (1999) suggests one approach is to review data from across different stages of the coaching process alliance. Alternatively, a coach could review their work against a set of coaching competencies as the example below shows:

Case example # 2

Contextual background

The material below is partly recorded from notes taken during a coaching session - the last of four sessions. In reviewing her notes, the coach noticed she frequently demonstrated the following competencies:

- Establishing the coaching agreement
- Active listening
- Managing accountability and progress
- Powerful questioning

She also noticed the following competencies were less evident in this latest coaching session:

- building the relationship; and
- Developing trust and intimacy.

Post-coaching Reflections & Learning

On reflection, I recognize my coaching had become stale over recent weeks and I was bored by the typical pattern of my coaching i.e. listen; reflect back; work the issue towards achieving goals. I notice these elements are areas where I have received very positive feedback from coachees and peers (acute ability to listen; ability to connect issues/threads and offer insights and use of my cognitive skills to manage accountability towards achieving a practical task). My coaching seemed to lack depth and connection, however, and I felt jaded by the sameness of it.

I realize my coaching had hit a plateau and I was searching for ways of moving through this and developing my coaching skills. Through supervision, I found that focussing on emotions (my own and the coachees) helpful, which led to bolder interventions on my part and a greater use of self as an instrument of change for the client as part of my expanded everyday practice.

While this example is based on a single session with one coachee, it could equally be reviewed across several clients. In fact, it was the reflection from this session that encouraged the coach to think about her coaching and recognize broader patterns and implications for her coaching practice.

Learning from reflection and learning how to reflect

How does a coach learn through a reflective journal?

While reflective practice is still loosely defined, many definitions in the literature imply that a person is reflecting on activities and deriving learning from them. Yet despite Gilbert and Carroll (2005) telling us that "...reflection is a crucial element in learning." (p. 61), learning from journals is often assumed to be an outcome in a largely uncritical way. This is particularly telling because although some might argue that reflection is no more than a form of thinking, it is generally agreed that learners have difficulty starting reflective writing and, when they do, it is typically descriptive, superficial, and does not lead to significant learning (Lyons, 1999; Samuals and Betts, 2005).

Moon (2006) strongly asserts that learning should be an outcome of journal-writing and reports that there is no one type of learning arising from them. She discusses several elements to how people learn from journals saying that learning is deliberate, probably organised and formal in nature. While some of the coaches consulted reported they need to allocate time for reflection, others preferred to do this on a more *ad hoc* basis:

- *[I reflect...] Spontaneously. Often in the early hours of the morning or late at night.*
- *I recognise the need [for me] to be disciplined. Journaling provides that discipline and structure.
... suggesting that a degree of organisation and formality might be useful for some coaches.*

This is interesting because it sits at odds with the way learning at work has evolved in recent years. While people learn everyday both formally and informally, Eraut et al (1998) tell us that most of the learning that takes place in organisations is informal, with responsibility for it having moved from the organisation to the individual in recent years (Megginson, 2004) and the shift from formal to more informal development with increasing use of self-managed learning (Woodall and Winstanley, 1998). Learning journals seem to fit within this vogue.

Although reflection can take place unconsciously, we focus here on a more conscious approach to evaluating a situation from which learning emerges. Kolb (1984) recognized this having identified reflection as one stage of learning in his popular learning cycle.

Rather than a traditional teacher-led accumulation approach to learning with knowledge poured in, in reflection on journal-writing, the learner guides the learning journey. Learning is therefore not about accumulating knowledge per se but changing one's views. A journal can play a central role in this by helping a coach decide what they already know and expanding their schema of it. Equally, a coach recognising what s/he doesn't know, or the limits of their practice could be the trigger for starting to reflect, as the following examples imply:

- *I compare my ideal self with my practice and where I'm "off kilter"*
- [When reflecting, I look for] *'Even better if...' – what's the client style and what worked well for them from my practice*
- *So that I can be better prepared next time.*

The act of journal-writing allows a coach to re-visit their practice and expand this by building on existing learning, examine existing internal experiences, the fit between these internal experiences and new external ones, and the meaning made of these. Cognitive structures can change without any new knowledge being added – we may just change our point of view on an issue. Moon (2004a) coined the phrase 'cognitive housekeeping' to describe this re-ordering of internal experience, particularly if there is no new material added.

However, in the same way as earlier experiences of reflection can shape our attitude and approach to it, the knowledge we already possess may affect what we learn. This is partly because prior experiences are likely to have influenced the way in which we receive and process new information and because it is possible that the process of acquiring new knowledge may well cause a conflict with a coach's established and dominant beliefs. Festinger (1957) coined this cognitive dissonance and there are strong reasons for the use of journals to support professional development where this might occur (Trelfa, 2005; Moon, 2004a). Several of the coaches surveyed commented on their use of journaling for professional development:

- *I see it [journal] as an aid for learning. I intend to use it to support my accreditation as a coach. It's not formal learning. I can share my coaching journey and open up myself to others e.g. in co-coaching or supervision.*
- *I found journaling on [coach training] courses and supervision courses to be excellent learning.*

The act of writing itself seems to provide conditions for learning. For example, Moon (2006 - unless otherwise stated) says we can learn through writing because it:

- *forces time... for reflection (Holly and McLoughlin, 1989);*
- *forces learners to organise and to clarify their thoughts... In this way they reflect on and improve their understanding (Moon, 1999b);*
- *helps learners to know whether or not they understand something. If they cannot explain it, they probably cannot understand it.*

Given the above seem to be important to encourage coaches to reflect, it begs the question about what might get in the way of coaches reflecting?

What are the barriers to reflective learning?

A range of things can block reflection: tiredness, stress and other preoccupations can all 'get in the way'. In today's fast-paced world, finding 'quality' time is a challenge for many of us. Walker (1985) and Wildman and Niles (1987) recognised that writing takes 'time and intellectual space', which can sometimes be difficult to achieve. Selfe and Arabi (1986) cited a lack of time as a reason for journal-writing actually failing.

Many coaches will be familiar with Nancy Kline's 'Time to Think' (1999) in which she emphasises the components necessary to maximise a quality thinking environment including "Ease" - slowing down before asking questions that facilitate reflection. The act of journal-writing may help because it encourages the writer to stop and think as we saw earlier and below:

- *My ideal is to finish coaching, sit for 10 minutes to dump down my thoughts when they're fresh. I find it frustrating if I have to go straight onto another activity, I lose the richness and have difficulty recalling the granularity.*
- *It's easy to go from one thing to the next and disregard and for it [coaching] to feel superficial. In other words, I NEED to do it.*
- *I do feel I work better if I stop and reflect. It frees me up and calms me down and makes me more resourceful*
- *Embedding my learning - otherwise it will float away.*

Time does appear to be an important ingredient in effective reflection. Although important, preserving regular time for it may not be realistic or possible for some. With this in mind, Carroll and Gilbert (2005) argue that reflection-in-action (as something happens or occurs) could suit the speed of contemporary life better with the onus being on us needing to learn this way to derive maximum learning from everyday activities.

Another contentious area seems to be the quality of reflection itself. It is argued that if reflective quality is poor then resultant learning will be poor. Ferry and Ross-Gordon (1998) and McAlpine and Weston (2002) provide verification that people do vary in the effectiveness with which they reflect, saying this is not limited to experience. Smith (2001) and Gray (2004) advise that, while informal learning experiences are an important means through which people can develop critical reflection, it does not come naturally to most. This could be because coaches do not understand the differences between description and critical reflection. Clear definitions and an example (below) might help.

So, what is the difference between describing coaching and critically reflecting upon it? Reflection is often thought of as existing at different levels, suggesting an order or hierarchy from a shallower descriptive level through to a deeper level of critical reflection. While some theorists give different levels of reflection names (e.g. Van Manen, 1977), this does not imply that they are qualitatively different. There seem to be consistent views that superficial reflection is descriptive (Moon, 2006) and Kim (1999) uses the phrase non-reflexive to refer to material that is non-critical or non-reflective. Hatton and Smith's (1995) work has become a well-known framework to depict the different levels of reflective activity and coaches might usefully use this to develop their writing to become more reflective. This framework is shown below along with an example of the differences in a coach's reflections by three levels:

Hatton and Smith's (1995) framework of the different levels of reflective activity.

Adapted by Moon (2006)

1. Descriptive writing – writing that is not considered to show evidence of reflection: it is a description with no discussion beyond description.

Example Coach reflection:

- The coachee achieved her outcome.
- The coach was content with the session.

2. Descriptive reflection: There is description of events. The possibility of alternative view-points is accepted but most reflection is from one perspective.

Example Coach reflection:

- The coachee achieved her outcome. The coachee appeared happy. I wonder how satisfied the coachee really was? How might I find out?
- I [coach] was content with the session. I wonder if this matches the client's view?

2. Dialogic reflection: The work demonstrates a "stepping back" from events and actions leading to a different level of contemplation about discourse with self and exploring the discourse of events and actions. There is a recognition that different qualities of judgement and alternative explanations may exist for the same material. The reflection is analytical/integrative though may be inconsistent.

Example Coach reflection (on what would make the session better...):

- Could cut out detailed reflecting back to coachee (What I'm hearing is...) and explain the essence of what I've heard – this would help make the session pacier. At what pace is the coachee experiencing the session and is this helpful (from the coachee's perspective)?
- Noticed over-use of question "Is that it or...?" to check understanding.
- Wondered why I need to understand? Who am I understanding for?
- What if I don't? Wonder if that's polarising choices for client into only two possible options (one or another) and how I can create consideration of greater possibilities
- Repeated use of the word "Okay" – is this an acknowledgement or a verbal tick? Need to self-check to make sure I don't over-use

None of the coaches that formed part of this study commented upon the different levels of reflection indicating a possible lack of awareness of the deeper levels of reflection, at least in theory. From the sample coach reflective materials disclosed and reviewed in writing this chapter, most fell into the Descriptive category pointing to critical reflection being an area for development, even for experienced coaches.

The sharing of journal material raises ethical and practical issues of confidentiality and readability. Interestingly, 50% of the coaches surveyed said they typically share or would be prepared to share the content of their journal with their coachee. Another coach commented, "*I'm conscious of the ethical position and the DPA [Data Protection Act] – and aware of what could be read by anyone if a case goes to court.*" Suggesting a degree of caution as to what might be written in a journal.

There is always the danger that the knowledge that a journal will be seen by others may have both a conscious and unconscious influence on what is written by the coach. As one coach surveyed pointedly put:

- *I retain much of my journaling in my head for safety. Don't want top secret documents falling into enemy hands..."*
- Another commented that a barrier to learning would be:
- *If others invaded or intruded on my log.*

This research seems to support the view that other people viewing a journal may constrain the flow of reflection and freedom of expression on the part of a coach, highlighting another barrier to learning from journals.

Conclusions

Learning is vital to develop our practice as professional coaches and journal writing and reflection can play an important role in this. Yet for many, reflecting on experience does not come easily and few of us do it effectively. For those that already reflect, the benefits are numerous and high despite the trigger for reflecting often inducing real (emotional) discomfort in the coach.

The most common approaches to gathering material for reflecting are in writing or by audio recording and to capture this in semi-structured, paper-based journals in word and pictures.

Having developmental experiences in the first place is vital and recognising the need to learn, being ready for it, and setting aside time are all-important ingredients in helping promote successful reflective practice. Breaches in confidentiality, distractions and not knowing 'how to' all inhibit reflection.

The chapter has provided examples of how to gather, organise and review raw journal material and presented different possibilities about how to go about reflecting, particularly at a deeper, more critical level from which even more learning can be gained.

Hay tells us "The point of reflection is to enhance capability, so time spent reflecting on how to behave in future situations allows you to identify more options and to plan for increased flexibility, with specific clients and more generally." (2007, p. 8). It is hoped that this chapter will, in some small way, encourage wider and improved reflective learning that, in turn, enhances coaches' work with coachees.

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Appendix 1:

Case example #1

Contextual background		
<p>The session tape-recorded and transcribed below is the fourth session out of 6 contracted for with the client and took place several months after the third session had been held. What emerged from the first session was a range of inter-connected presenting issues covering:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal issues such as confidence levels, raising his profile, networking • Resourcing issues around staff shortages, lack of personal and staff capacity • Working method and work-life balance issues manifesting itself in limited work role effectiveness and a negative impact on his personal life and relationship with his wife. <p>At sessions 2-3, the client reported good progress on the above and in the 4th session wanted to focus on an internal promotion opportunity that had arisen between sessions.</p>		
Transcript extract from a recorded coaching session		Coach's post-coaching reflections
What the coachee said	Coach's in-the-moment thoughts (shown in) and actual responses	
I should have done it by now but I'm finding I can't clear space in my diary to address these higher level things, which unfortunately will affect my future because if I don't do it I'll have to accept what happens.	(Uses silence to encourage the coachee to tell his story)	His issue could be organisation but could equally be a lack of people resource in his team and him being overloaded. He seems to recognise the realities of his situation.
There could be talk of a re-organisation but that might mean someone of a higher level replacing my boss. I'm not sure if that's what I want, it might be too much.		I sensed we had hit upon the core issue but the coachee, perhaps projecting his anxiety, feels the need to tell me all the details. I continue listening for further info.
What I need to think about is getting my boss to let me do it [temporary promotion to Dept Head]	Yes. And what else?	Trying to encourage the recognition
To backtrack a bit, I think I'm not perceived as being a Dept Head and so people probably formed their own opinions no matter what I say, won't actually change anything.	(Decide the relationship isn't strong enough to challenge his self-limiting belief yet and so adopt a more supportive stance): "That sounds difficult for you."	Backtracking happens often making it difficult to keep track let alone on track! Trying to suspend my judgement on his promotability and stay neutral!

Conversation continues		
I'm starting to babble now.		Relieved client recognises this part of the conversation isn't helping him.
	[Enquiring tone] My question was "What's your feeling at this stage?" [about whether you want the Dept Head role.] "Do you want it and why?"	I try to keep the conversation focussed. He seems to prefer a cognitive style & so I try a different approach here - accessing how he feels rather than thinks about it. Try to uncover his motivation for the job.

Coach's subsequent reflections on coaching this client, including this session

Having had the opportunity to reflect upon the session, I conclude that there were patterns of behaviour here that had surfaced in previous sessions. With this awareness I actively tried to break these patterns in this session by remaining neutral and thus encouraging the client to make his own decisions. Although I am aware of the power dynamics between coach and client and had tried not to collude with the client in earlier sessions, I think I may have done this unconsciously by directing the coaching process more than may have been necessary. In so doing, I may have fallen into the role of Rescuer (one of my own patterns of behaviour) – something I was keen not to repeat in this session and largely achieved. This change in intervention style from me led to a degree of circling in the session, with the client stating his views several times and an apparent lack of progress in terms of moving the work forward. I experienced this as frustrating at the time and with hindsight could have used my felt-experience by sharing this with the client during the session.

On reflection, I recognise that there were some possible parallels between how the client behaved towards me in the session (defers decisions and acts passively) and how he probably behaves towards others (especially superiors) at work. Although I didn't feel it necessary to share this with the client in the session, I feel this is material that could be used to support the client in challenging others' perceptions of him in the Dept Head role. I didn't possess sufficient awareness to see this issue as clearly in the session as afterwards.