

Book Review

***Coaching Skills* by Jenny Rogers**
Maidenhead, Open University Press, 2004
240 pages, £16.99

In her final chapter of *Coaching Skills*, Rogers explains the paradox inherent in coaching: that to be a good coach “you have to learn technique in order to bypass it” (p185). Throughout the book Rogers presents a comprehensive and measured narrative account of the techniques of coaching, her aim being to introduce the reader to material she wishes had been available to her at the beginning of her coaching career.

Rogers begins with a discussion of what coaching is, comparing and contrasting it with other disciplines: psychiatry, psychotherapy, counselling, mentoring, training and line management. Moving on to the fundamental aspects of the coaching relationship: creating trust, asking the right questions and assessment, Rogers then draws on a range of coaching and related psychotherapeutic models, such as Transactional Analysis, Co-active Coaching and the Johari Window in order to show how to develop and enhance the relationship. Short case stories or vignettes from real coaching examples, are provided frequently and add a legitimacy that is often missing from coaching books of this type. There is also a chapter on ‘Practising Professionally’ that covers important topics such as ethics, supervision, record keeping and training.

Rogers’ style is confidently autobiographical, and draws on her 14 years’ experience of working as a coach in industry. The significance of this work, for me, is the authority that this writing style conveys. This is combined with a clarity about what coaching is that only comes from being open to developments in the field. Rogers has refreshingly re-packaged the primary techniques and skills that the coach needs to master. In her final chapter she emphasises that the skills and techniques of coaching have to be honed, in order, paradoxically, to by-pass them all and so become a great coach.

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