

Conference Review:

October 2002, the UK College of Life Coaching established the first International Coaching Summit

Pam Richardson and Mike Hurley, UK College of Life Coaching

The UK College of Life Coaching (UKCLC), working jointly with Wolverhampton University, brought together over 100 coaches, coach training providers, universities and business people for the first UK Coaching Summit. This truly international event was held on 29th October 2002 and was opened with civic recognition from the Mayor of the City of Wolverhampton.

The core objective was to secure cross-profession consensus and common understanding of the key issues facing coaching. The Summit identified these issues as Standards for the Profession, Codes of Practice, Academic Study, Support, and Continuous Professional Development.

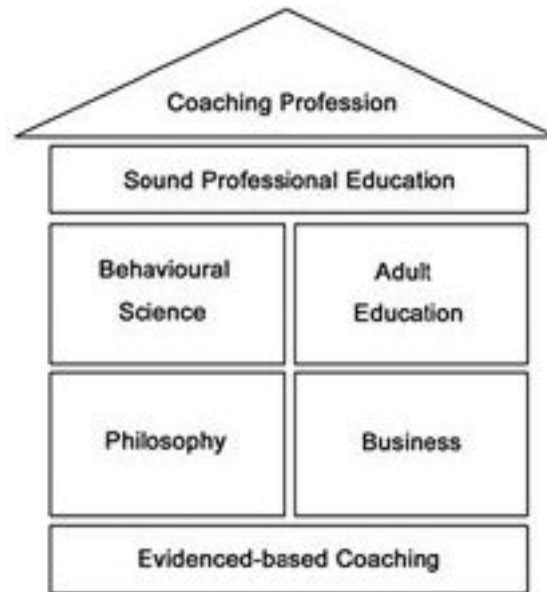
The keynote speakers delivered thought provoking and challenging addresses. Dr. Anthony Grant, Director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney, spoke in his inimitable vibrant style of the need for ‘theory, professionalism and evidence based practice.’¹ He defined coaching as

A solution-focused, results-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of the work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and the personal growth of the coachee

and argued very convincingly that coaching was not a fad. However, Dr. Grant tabled concerns that not all coaches are well trained or accredited through an authorized agency. He stressed the need for coaches not to apply “cook-book recipes” but to work from a firm understanding of underlying principles. He urged the profession to set significant barriers to entry, formal entry qualifications, a shared body of knowledge and an enforceable code of ethics. He suggested that regulatory bodies with some degree of licensing would ensure these issues were enforced.

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Following a number of requests from delegates the UK College of Life Coaching has made a CD Rom of Dr Anthony Grant’s video and PowerPoint presentation available at a cost of £15.99. A VHS video of Sir John Whitmore’s presentation is also available. Visit their website: <http://www.ukclc.net/collegeinformation/contact.asp>



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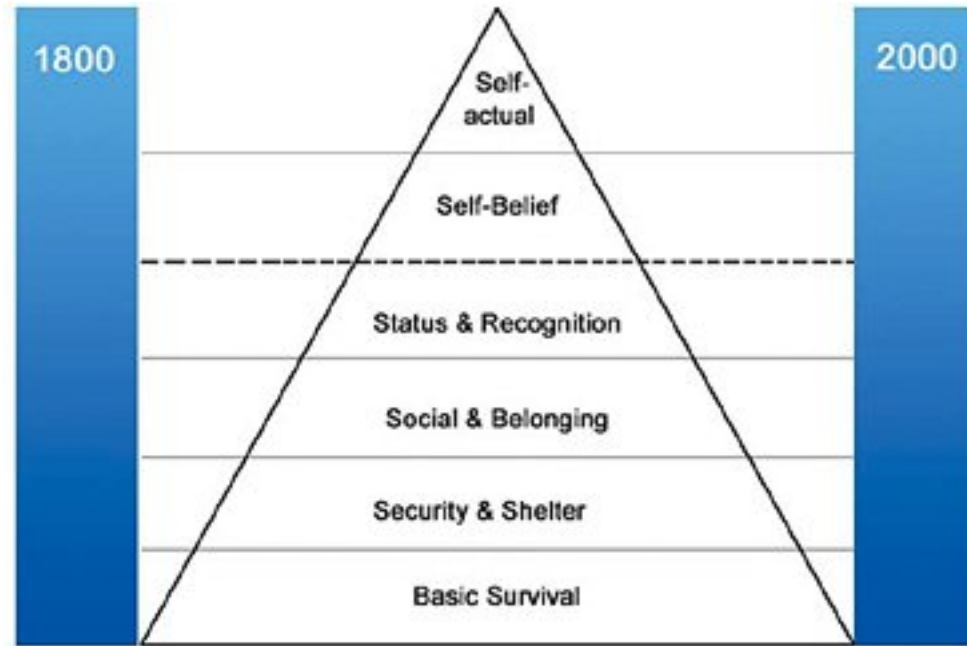
Dr Grant made the case for education and professionalism leading to evidence based quality assessment. He remarked that Coaches needed to focus on the real issues through basic mental health diagnostics allied with Basic training in psychometrics. For the future he urged all coaches and teachers of coaches to ‘never stop learning’.

Sir John Whitmore, author and founder of Performance Consultants, explored how lack of self-belief is the greatest detractor from individual performance, explaining the four phases of harmonisation as Recognition, Acceptance, Integration and Synthesis.

Sir John assessed the impact of coaching on developing inner authority versus imposed external authority. He went on to detail how the characteristics of the ‘I’ present the ‘Self’ through consciousness, will, choice, impacting and working with sub-personalities. Sir John gave his ABC of coaching as Awareness of Self, Belief in the Self and Choice.

He explored the borders between ourselves, our surroundings and our work before moving on to apply borders to our relationships within our communities and the world.

Sir John also traced the relative movement of the general level of achievement over the past two hundred years, along Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, claiming that we have covered a number of steps along the path towards the ‘Higher Self’.



Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Sir John Whitmore (2002)

Highlighting the importance of Emotional Intelligence (EQ), particularly in leadership roles, Sir John explained the quadrants of EQ as being Self awareness, Awareness of others, Self management and Social skills. He emphasised that all change starts with self-awareness and that a positive impact on others comes through social skills. Focusing on Life Coaching against the backcloth of world turbulence over the past sixty years, Dr Grant Ledgerwood, from the University of Greenwich, considered how the role of coaching could support global development. Dr. Ledgerwood reviewed what would be required of a coaching profession including peer control of members with clear methods of acquiring qualifications. He identified the need for a monopoly of practice and membership, before detailing training and education systems ensuring continuing professional development. Echoing Dr. Anthony Grants message, Dr Ledgerwood reiterated the need for Codes of practice with penalties for malpractice. He also stressed the need for ethics in coaching with primacy given to the client, while noting that the professional coach and the client have equal responsibility in the relationship.

Looking towards the future, Dr. Ledgerwood laid out the challenges inherent in a global, ethical coaching profession and identified the starting points as building upon existing coaching networks, starting active dialogue and using a pro bono approach. He called for involvement of a huge range of bodies from the corporate world to government, schools and health care.

Open Discussions

The key to the Summit's success, was the opportunity for the delegates to give their input through a series of open forum breakout sessions. The sessions covered a diverse range of subjects from perceptions of coaching and the field of practice, to client screening. Other topics discussed included measuring the effectiveness of coaching, regulation and continuing professional development (CPD).

Facilitated by volunteer coaches from across the UK, the findings from these breakouts were presented to the Summit in a plenary session. The findings drew out some of the confusion and lack of agreed definition within coaching. There was a clear case for a common, generic core of study that would be informed by a range of disciplines. A variety of routes into coaching are developing with a suite of qualifications that would, over time, lead to professional recognition and chartered status.

The groups identified that not everyone would be a suitable client for coaching and that corporate expectations of results needed to be managed. Many delegates suggested that clients need to fully commit to the coaching and take ownership, which may lead to a change in their frame of reference.

In terms of regulation and CPD, participants felt strongly that there is a need for change. Learning from other professions would provide a starting point to move towards formal coach accreditation.

The breakout sessions were limited in time and the delegates were very keen to progress the discussions further. The participants started to prepare detailed recommendations and positive future actions.

There was a determination from the delegates to maintain the momentum generated by the Summit. The delegates recognized that a lot of work had been done on standards and codes of practice in the Coaching community, notably by the European Mentoring and Coaching Council, the Association for Coaches and the Coaching and Mentoring Network and were keen to contribute to the wider development. Many delegates have therefore, volunteered to carry on the work of defining and