Global coaching and evidence based coaching:
Multiple perspectives operating in a process of pragmatic humanism

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Abstract

This article highlights relationships between the emerging practice of *global coaching*, described in Rosinski (2003a, 2006) and six leading 'evidence based' approaches to coaching (Stober & Grant, 2006). Attention is given to global coaching in the international business environment, positioning the treatment within an executive coaching framework. These connections clarify the concept of global coaching; and generate new insights, fresh angles, and empirical evidence to clarify and enhance the concept and practice of global coaching. The article emphasises themes and patterns essential for effective global coaching such as: openness, curiosity about other systems, comfort with complexity and interdependence, thriving on paradoxes, search for meaning, multiple perspectives, engagement with culture at multiple levels, and innovation at the edge of chaos. The article covers how global coaching and the cultural perspective interconnect with the following coaching perspectives; (1) Cognitive-behavioural, (2) Psychoanalytic, (3) Adult development, (4) Action learning, (5) Systemic, and (6) Positive psychology.   A case study of an Australian-Guatemalan expatriate manager in Central America, drawn from a recent doctoral action research study (Abbott, 2006) is used to illustrate how the different perspectives intersect in practice and concludes that global coaching, which is both pragmatic and humanistic, may be an effective catalyst for bringing individual and organizational success as well as for promoting corporate citizenship.

Key words: Global coaching, culture, executive coaching, evidence based coaching

Introduction

In this article we give attention to an emerging form of executive coaching – global coaching – which appears to be well-suited for executives struggling to cope with current personal and professional demands. The complexity and uncertainty of international business practice are increasing with globalization, as are the associated stresses and pressures on individual executives. International merger and acquisition deals in 2006 approached a record three trillion dollars (Berman, 2006). Further, new players are emerging which is adding complexity to the kinds of management challenges that are being presented to executives. For example, in 2006, the Indian family steel giant Mittal successfully acquired French multinational Arcelor to form the world's biggest steel company. Australian-owned international construction materials company Rinker was recently the target of a hostile takeover by Mexican rival Cemex. China is a huge player in most industries. Global leadership researchers Black, Morrison, and Gregerson (1999) observe, "The tsunami of globalization is inescapable" (p. 10). In many cases it is not a choice to go global; it happens regardless.

The financial and structural aspects of globalization are well-publicized. The human side is not so public and generally not well-handled. Executive coaching is emerging as an

attractive intervention in international business because it seems to assist executives to make sense of what is going on and to plan effective strategies firstly for survival and then for success. Kets de Vries (2005, p.62) suggests that, "Perhaps the biggest reason for the coaching trend is the pace of change in our present-day global world." However, there are few established guidelines for coaching in this new global environment. Executive coaches are being challenged to provide multidimensional, multilayered, and rigorous approaches that can assist clients to find clarity and direction. Global coaching, grounded in a sound theoretical framework and supported by research evidence, may offer practitioners guidance on how to assist their individual and corporate clients. Currently, the only detailed global coaching approach is outlined in Rosinski 2003a.

Global coaching is a holistic and rigorous coaching approach both for choosing meaningful, important objectives and for reaching them effectively (Rosinski, 2003a). It can be delineated from more traditional executive coaching approaches because it entrenches a broad scope that challenges the individualistic model that most coaching engagements favour. Kilburg (2000, p. 67) defines executive coaching as, "a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and consequently to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement." The scope is relatively narrow and focuses on the individual, though coaches will often extend the conversations and impact much further. Similarly, the *practice* of global coaching begins at the level of the individual. However; its *design*, *impact* and *success* are systematically and rigorously considered against broader considerations of the client's family, friends, colleagues, team, organization, community, nation, and the society in general. The influence of culture is often given considerable attention. A 'global' dimension is therefore built-in rather than added-on.

In this paper, we clarify and extend the concept and practice of global coaching by examining connections and contrasts with various perspectives that have emerged in the relatively short history of executive coaching. We give attention to the cultural perspective on coaching – often a prominent element of global coaching interventions. We then examine other evidence-based coaching approaches that have proven effective and powerful in enhancing individual and collective potential. Evidence based coaching refers to, "the intelligent and conscientious use of *best current knowledge* integrated with *practitioner expertise* in making decisions about how to deliver coaching to *individual coaching clients* and in designing and teaching coach training programs" (Grant & Stober, 2006, p. 6). We place global coaching within the evidence based framework, noting that it requires the coaching to take a perspective wider than the individual client.

Global coaching can be conceptualized as a form of *pragmatic humanism*, meaning that there is a need to select rigorous approaches that:

- assist the client to create solutions that work in his or her unique context; and
- are consistent with broader responsibilities of citizenship.

The first consideration is that the reality of each client is different and the coach's choices of approach must be creative and based on interactions with the client through the process.

The second consideration - responsibilities of citizenship - is an aspect of pragmatism that was central to the thinking of the early American pragmatists, John Dewey and William James. The social responsibility dimensions of pragmatism have to a large extent been lost in modern usage. The term now has connotations of immediate utility at the expense of broader responsibilities. However, Dewey's original concerns, for example, were for the health of American democracy and humanity in general. Applied to global coaching, the *pragmatic humanism* approach encompasses a vision beyond the immediate. Dewey (1917) could have been writing the preface for a 2006 coaching text when he wrote, "in a complicated and perverse world, action which is not informed with vision, imagination, and reflection, is more likely to increase confusion and conflict rather than straighten things out" (pp. 229-230).

William James (1907) suggested that pragmatism might be best viewed as a corridor with multiple doorways. The challenge is to choose the doorway that leads to a future that is best suited to our context and our desires. The analogy has relevance to the relatively recent phenomenon of professional executive coaching whose pace of growth has only been matched by the speed at which new varieties and perspectives have been introduced. What we suggest is that in what we term global coaching there are no walls behind each coaching doorway. Instead there is a complex and interrelated network of approaches that coaches can combine creatively to work at ever increasing depths in the contexts of their clients. Each coaching perspective – including the cultural perspective - is informed by and can inform other perspectives, resulting in the development and strengthening of the professional practice of coaching.

A case study of an Australian-Guatemalan expatriate manager in Central America is used to illustrate global coaching in practice and to highlight how different perspectives intersect. The global coaching approach seems particularly powerful in the expatriate environment where overseas managers face complex challenges of cultural adaptation related not just to a new country but also to a different organizational environment. This case study was done as part of an action research doctoral study into the impact of executive coaching on expatriates (Abbott, 2006). The study illustrated that within one context and with a limited sample size (fifteen), executive coaching was an effective intervention to assist expatriates with a range of issues associated with their roles as executives working overseas. (An overview of the methodology is provided later in this article.) The study concludes that coaching appears to have contributed to enhancing the performance and increasing the personal satisfaction of the participants because it:

- was tailored to the individual needs of diverse individuals in diverse cultural contexts;
- applied sound models from coaching (Grant & Greene, 2001; Rosinski, 2003a) and acculturation (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001; Earley & Ang, 2003) to operate interactively across the affective, cognitive and behavioural domains;
- encouraged expatriate managers to operate from a basis of trust in professional cross-cultural relationships;
- clarified and worked from the personal values of the individual expatriate managers;
- facilitated reflective thinking, allowing the expatriate managers to step back from their complex and pressured situations to better-understand themselves and their contexts and to plan effective actions;
- provided a medium to transfer and apply knowledge (theory, research and experience) from other contexts into the local situations of the individual expatriate managers; and
- from a cultural perspective, promoted leveraging individual and group differences.

The study further proposes that these finding could potentially be extended to other contexts if considered by skilled researchers and practitioners using the technique of analytic generalization (Yin, 2003), and considered in the light of other research.

The current paper is divided into three parts. In part one a summary of the cultural perspective is given. This perspective is, in our experience, given far little attention in coaching. As globalization continues to impact on all executives, cultural issues are almost certainly going to be of greater significance. Virtual teams, multicultural teams, cross-border management arrangements, cross-border mergers and acquisitions, overseas competition, and so on are going to be increasingly common. Culture is likely to be a relevant influence in some obvious, and some not so obvious ways. Coaches will need at least to be able to investigate its relevance with clients.

In part two a complex cross-cultural global coaching case study is introduced and a range of issues identified. In part three we map our case study, with its integral cultural perspective, to a number of relevant theoretical perspectives highlighted by Stober and Grant (2006): (1) Cognitive-behavioural, (2) Psychoanalytic, (3) Adult development, (4) Action learning, (5) Systemic, and (6) Positive psychology. By way of illustration, we refer briefly in each numbered section to the case study. Our conclusion highlights how the practice of global coaching, which is both pragmatic and humanistic, can be a catalyst for bringing individual and organizational success as well as for promoting corporate citizenship.

I   The Cultural Perspective

Taking a cultural perspective on coaching involves the decision to recognize the possibilities of utilizing culture as a force of change to unleash client potential. It is integral to high impact global coaching approaches. By exploring the way culture might be influencing thoughts, feelings, and behaviours in the different contexts of their clients, coaches can utilize culture as a powerful force of change and development. We see the benefits of leveraging differences that may be culturally based, rather than treating them as barriers, threats, or irrelevancies. The working definition we use in this paper is: "A group's culture is the set of unique characteristics that distinguishes its members from another group" (Rosinski, 2003a, p. 20). Looking at culture in this way enables the coach and client to look at various affective, behavioral, and cognitive characteristics of groups that may provide relevant information about the impact of culture.

Culture has been measured in various ways by many different interculturalists and value researchers (e.g. Hofstede, 1997, 2001; Kluckhohn, 1967; Schwartz, 1999; Trompenaars & Hampden-Turner, 1998). Hofstede's work is well known and has had a profound impact in raising awareness about the significance of cultural differences. He found four (then later five) dimensions across which differences between societies and groups could be measured. Some argue that the quantitative measurement of culture is itself fraught with danger (Osland, Bird, Delano, & Jacob, 2000). Values and culture are muddy at best and there will never be a perfect system. However, cultural orientations and dimensions can be useful road maps for coaches and clients who are working across cultures, always remembering that the map is not the territory.

Rosinski (2003a) has synthesized the systems of cultural difference into the Cultural Orientations Framework (COF), which can be used in various ways and at various levels of culture, including at the level of the individual. The main danger with use of the cultural

measurement is entering the territory of 'sophisticated stereotyping' and inaccurately or inappropriately labeling people, groups or societies. This is one of the many paradoxes of coaching across cultures. The dimensions and orientations are invaluable in conceptualizing the world of the client – for the coach and for the client – but they can lead to negative outcomes if not dealt with very carefully. The challenge in coaching is to encourage clients not to see the orientations as 'either/or', but to look for ways of adopting 'and' strategies. For example, within the 'Time Management Approaches' category of the COF is an apparent dichotomy between time as 'Scarce' and time as 'Plentiful'. Time can sometimes be viewed as scarce and sometimes as plentiful depending on context. The leveraging of differences through coaching can reframe cultural dimensions from dichotomies into orientations that can be held together and synthesized to develop approaches that are of most benefit to the client in specific contexts.

II   Case Study: Raul Hernández

Methodology

The coaching program with Raul Hernández was one of fifteen conducted as an action research doctoral study in El Salvador examining how executive coaching could facilitate expatriate acculturation (Abbott, 2006). The research involved the researcher-coach (Geoffrey Abbott) delivering individual executive coaching programs with participant-clients and then analysing the impact of the coaching, giving particular attention to the criteria of performance and personal satisfaction. The action research methodology adopted drew on grounded theory; i.e. the study was exploratory rather than testing any fixed hypothesis beyond the theoretical position that coaching should be of assistance to the executives in meeting various challenges of their sojourns.

The Central American case study research study was established with an action research framework with the implicit intention of facilitating action learning. Abbott and Grant (2005) provided a conceptualisation of executive coaching as a form of action research where coach and client go on a shared journey of exploration and research. Ellis and Kielly (2000, p.83) position both action research and action learning as related strategies of action inquiry in organizational contexts. A distinctive feature of action inquiry is that it may change shape and direction over time as participants focus and refocus their understanding about what is really happening and what is really important to them. While reflection, meaning-making, and awareness-raising are always crucial elements of coaching practice, in cross-cultural environments these features of action inquiry are essential if clients are to make sense of their often complex and changing environments.

All coaching sessions were taped and transcribed. Computer data analysis software NVivo was used to navigate through over one thousand pages of text to examine individual and cross-case themes. Participants were given access to their case studies to provide added insights on what they believed was happening during the process. An extensive post-coaching questionnaire was administered and a post-coaching interview conducted. A feature of the methodology of the study was the capturing of the unique stories of the individuals. Each was presented as a separate study, with an additional chapter covering cross-case themes and findings. This approach contrasts with many of the quantitative studies of expatriates which by design lose much of the richness and uniqueness of the individual executive sojourner. By using coaching as a vehicle for action research, Abbott was able to retain the qualitative essence of the story while still adding to the empirical knowledge of coaching by rigorous processes of data-gathering and analysis. The strengths of the design included the depth of engagement with participants, the longitudinal

element (up to two years of coaching/research plus post-coaching examination), and the rigor of data collection and analysis. Limitations included the use of a single research-coach, the fact that there was only one location, and the normal action research bias where the researcher is also a participant (though of course this is also a major strength). Some biographical details of participants were changed to protect confidentiality. The first person is used by the coach-researcher (Geoffrey Abbott). Further details about the methodology are available on request from the author.

Raul Hernández

I began the coaching assignment in early 2004 in Guatemala. Raul was a 28 year-old Australian who was born in Guatemala. We had fifteen coaching sessions together over two years. He moved to Australia with his parents when he was five and had very recently returned to Guatemala. Technically therefore, Raul was repatriating. In many respects, however, he fitted the profile of an expatriate given that he identified as an Australian. Raul's situation, described below, was complex. Although studies often paint a picture of 'typical' expatriates with common issues, one of the findings of the study in which Raul participated was that each case is different and coaches should assume nothing when taking on clients in international business environments (Abbott, 2006).

Raul was a qualified chartered accountant and had worked in one of the top accounting firms in Sydney. Raul was originally referred to me by one of my other clients in the organisation, Roger Plummer (with a Kenyan background). Roger befriended and informally mentored Raul. Raul told me that he had moved to Guatemala to reconnect with his cultural roots and to begin a career in a multinational company. He had come to Guatemala without a job but quickly found a middle managerial position with a European multinational. Raul married a Guatemalan (Julia) several months after his arrival. (I subsequently discovered that Julia was a, if not the major influence in his decision to return to the country). Julia did not speak English but was keen to learn the language and move to Australia. After twelve months, Raul joined the company's fast-track Executive Development Program for talented managers commencing their careers in the company.

The cultural issues were complex:

- Raul saw himself as Australian. He had a strong professional working background in Sydney. He was viewed by others as Guatemalan but was not well-grounded in the culture due to an extended absence (23 years);
- Raul was fluent in Spanish had some difficulties with the technical terms in Spanish;
- the company (EBM) was a European-based multinational, recently merged with an American multinational;
- EBM had taken over a family company (AFC), which itself was a recent amalgam of three other companies (the local company and two related multinational franchises);
- the EBM takeover was not very successful and the AFC principal sold out in acrimonious circumstances amidst weaker-than-anticipated financial results and various law suits;
- Raul's supervisor for the first year was Chilean (with a rather jaundiced view of Guatemalans; commenting to Raul at one stage that he needed to be careful because they 'talked bullshit');
- Raul's mentor (Roger) was Kenyan and had his own view of the EBM culture which was not always positive;

- the new country manager of EBM was Belgian, married to a Guatemalan, with an MBA from France, and was having considerable difficulty making an impact in his new role;
- the EBM Executive Development group was viewed with suspicion by line managers in the company, many of whom had worked with AFC for over 15 years at low rates of pay and were resistant to major changes to their ways of operating; and
- Raul faced a personal dilemma in that he saw a clear and comfortable future as a successful international executive but he had great empathy for the difficult situation of local employees working at low wages, or those not working at all and in desperate situations.

In practice, the global coaching intervention was a mix of approaches that was aimed to assist Raul to unleash his potential within a very complex cultural and organisational environment. Some events that had an immediate impact on the coaching and that derived from culturally related causes included:

- Raul suffered 'culture shock' early in his sojourn. The 'symptoms' were sadness and lack of enthusiasm for things he normally enjoyed. He missed his friends and Australian lifestyle and found Guatemalan life difficult to adjust to.
- Raul was robbed twice in the street – at gunpoint.
- One of Raul's direct reports indirectly threatened him, saying after a heated argument, 'I know where you live.'
- Raul was taken on as a 'local hire' at a local salary (much lower than those paid to expatriates who also had housing and other support). Raul had initial difficulty being recognised (financially and for promotion) in the company, even though he was equal in experience and talent to the expatriate managers.
- Julia lost two jobs – in circumstances that reflected the authoritarian and hierarchical nature of the Guatemalan workplace.
- Raul was disciplined by his line manager (a Guatemalan without formal education and a long work history with AFC) for being "too soft" with his staff even though Raul's sales results were outstanding.
- Raul was interested in pursuing an overseas career but Julia's close connection to her family made this move difficult.

In the post-coaching questionnaire and interview, Raul rated the coaching program highly on all indicators. He gave 4s and 5s (on a scale of 1 to 5, with 5 high) for all responses in the Post-Coaching Questionnaire. He said he would continue to have a coach through his career and intended to engage me professionally when I finished the research work (this subsequently occurred). He found the coaching particularly useful early on in coping with initial adjustment. Raul commented in the Post-Coaching Questionnaire, "Initially, the coaching was more for personal satisfaction rather than financial rewards. I was very emotionally unstable at the start. Without the coaching I think I would have gone back to Australia".

Raul said that he found coaching helped him learn how to survive in a corporate environment through goal-setting and knowledge of his peers. He found that coaching gave him more self confidence. It helped him to realize his potential, find out who he was and where he wanted to be in the future. Raul saw the cultural side of the coaching as a great strength in helping him sort out how to fit into a multinational and make a stable life in a new environment.

My observation was that the coaching was of assistance across various areas of Raul's life. From a professional perspective, I believe that the main contributions were in giving Raul:

- self confidence in his management approach;
- in-context training on management issues; and
- perspectives on managing organizational politics.

On a personal level, coaching assisted him with coping with culture shock and stress.

III   Global Coaching and Multiple Theoretical Perspectives

In what follows, we introduce a number of coaching approaches that are underpinned by theory and then relate these to the case study of Raul.

1. Cognitive-Behavioural

Most current coaching approaches come from a psychological perspective. Implicitly or explicitly, they usually draw on theories and research from cognitive-behavioural psychology. Change programs implemented by coaches with clients often mirror cognitive behavioural models, drawing on the work of cognitive psychologists such as Albert Bandura (1997). Bandura's approach to change is based on the interrelationship between internal cognitive, emotional and biological events and the external environment and gives attention to the importance of self-efficacy, essentially the degree of confidence one has in the capacity to achieve a certain objective (Bandura, 1997). Grant and Greene's (2001) House of Change model draws on this idea of identifying and pursuing goals through the interaction between our thoughts, emotions and behaviour, and our situation. They suggest that emotion, thought, behaviour and situation are each potential entry points for change. They stress that each is heavily dependent upon the other. Coaches encourage clients to use their cognitive skills to look around the rooms of the House of Change to conceptualize, reframe, plan and generate action. There are many variations of the model. Common to cognitive behavioural approaches is a search for underlying assumptions and the use of coaching to generate new ways of approaches problems to design solutions that work. Coaches invite clients to enter cycles of action and reflection to generate sustainable change.

The cognitive behavioural influence on coaching from a cultural perspective is very strong. For example, expatriate managers face challenges of acculturation. Acculturation refers to the ongoing changes and outcomes that occur as an individual experiences the process of interacting in and adapting to a different cultural environment (Berry, 1997, p.12). Acculturation is a multidimensional cognitive and behavioural process that continues throughout the expatriate sojourn. Recent theories of cultural intelligence (Earley & Ang, 2003) are largely based on cognitive behavioural psychology, and view successful cultural adaptation to a new environment as coming from the:

1. cognitive appreciation of what is required for adaptation;
2. capacity to take the required action; and
3. desire to adapt (this third element – motivational and affective – is the one that receives least attention from individuals and companies in cross-cultural interactions).

Similarly, Ward *et al* (2001) conceptualize cultural adaptation through interactivity across the emotional, behavioural and cognitive domains. As coaches, we work with our clients on how they are thinking and feeling about cultural influences in order to raise situational awareness. With awareness, it is possible to generate new thinking and to take responsibility for change and to plan new actions. The actions our clients take in relation to taking advantage of cultural differences and possibilities provide new opportunities for reflection and further action. Beyond cultural intelligence, a global coaching encourages clients to reach in their learning journeys a point of intercultural excellence (Rosinski, 2003b) where not only can they work effectively across cultures through an appreciation of cultural difference, but also synthesize and leverage these differences to construct new ways of perceiving and operating.

Case Study

With Raul, I was quite explicit about the use of cognitive behavioural models drawn from the literature on cultural adaptation and 'culture shock' (the intense negative feelings and depression-like symptoms that often surface in expatriate sojourns). In the early stages of the coaching, when Raul was very upset and contemplating his future, I encouraged him to work behaviourally – i.e. to take action – to assist him through culture shock. Research indicates that those expatriates who make an effort to interact with others in both work and non-work settings tend to acculturate more quickly and smoothly than those who ruminate on the difficulties of adjustment (Hechanova, Beehr, & Christiansen, 2003). In practice this meant Raul deciding the he would make a greater effort to interact with both the local managers (to acculturate with local culture) and also with the expatriate managers (to acculturate with company management culture). This seemed to be successful, including Raul joining the company darts team and enjoying regular social interaction with Guatemalans and expatriates. Within three months of our meeting, Raul had formed some strong collegial relationships which he believed assisted him in getting over the initial crisis. A discussion of theory provided a cognitive entry point to behavior change which appears related to a positive change in affect – consistent with cognitive behavioral coaching models and the cultural adaptation theory of cultural intelligence.

2. Psychoanalytic

The psychoanalytic perspective in coaching has received considerable attention (e.g. Allcorn, 2006; Kets de Vries, 2005; Kilburg, 2004; Peltier, 2001; Rotenberg, 2000). As in psychoanalytic theory and practice generally, there is considerable variation between approaches. However, all draw in different ways on the ideas of Sigmund Freud, Carl Jung, Melanie Klein and others and give weight to the role of the unconscious in driving human behaviour. Compared with traditional psychotherapy, coaching models working from a psychoanalytic perspective are less likely to work with the client's past and are more likely to focus on how the unconscious is impacting in the present. Psychoanalytically informed executive coaching attends to the executive's unconscious attachments and emotional investments relative to the organization, its workers, and the coach who assists the client in seeing more clearly how his or her internal world affects the organization and its members (Allcorn, 2006, pp.129-130).

Working from a psychoanalytical perspective, Kets de Vries, Vrignaud and Florent-Treacy (2004, p.480) discussed the need for leaders to work with the cultural context by instilling values to act as a glue between the regional and/or national cultures represented in the organisation. Coaching aims to assist in surfacing issues and influences from the unconscious so that clients can understand them better and design more effective strategies for achieving objectives.

Being aware of phenomena such as denial can be invaluable for giving clues and hypotheses to understand dynamic at play in apparently irrational behaviours. Understanding what is going on underneath the surface, helps the coach to deal appropriately with the situation: notably not taking psychological defenses personally but as real developmental opportunities (Allcorn, 2006, p.137). Sometimes, the kinds of defensive behaviours by executives that can be viewed as negative can also, paradoxically, be valuable coping mechanisms. For example, studies of expatriate manager acculturation (Mendenhall, Kuhlmann, Stahl, & Osland, 2002) report that withdrawal into a more culturally familiar 'stability zones' can sometimes be a healthy strategy when the stress and complexity of a new cultural environment threatens to overwhelm a new sojourner (the proviso being of course that the executive re-engages with the assignment and the new culture!).

Transference and counter-transference are also potentially powerful processes that can be in play in the cross-cultural coaching relationship. Transference refers to the displacement of patterns of feelings, thoughts, and behaviour, originally experienced in relation to significant figures during childhood, onto a person involved in a current interpersonal relationship (in this case the coach). Counter-transference is a specific reaction to the client's transference and reflects the coach's own unconscious response to the client, though some aspects might become conscious (Allcorn, 2006, p.141). For example, where the coach and client are of different cultural backgrounds, there can be an unconscious triggering of past culturally related events and associations that can interfere with the process of client development. Also, the resultant behaviours by the client can trigger counter-transference in the coach, possibly triggering otherwise latent stereotypes. (For example, a white coach from a Western background may trigger transference in a client from an African American background who was the subject of racially based torment as a child.) In this sense, this knowledge is particularly useful for global coaches. The psychoanalytical perspective was relevant in the case study of Raul, which continues below.

Case Study

In the latter stages of my work with Raul, the psychoanalytic perspective was invaluable. As part of the Executive Management Development Program, Raul was sent into the field to manage sales staff. His results were excellent but Raul was increasingly being criticised by his Guatemalan line manager. It reached the point where the manager wanted Raul removed from his position, and even sacked from the company. Raul was moved to another area. The Management Program Co-ordinator, an expatriate, believed that the manager's approach to Raul was quite vindictive and was unlikely to change. Raul was angry, felt aggrieved, and was very negative about the company and what was happening to him. I encouraged Raul to look beneath the surface as to what might be happening for the manager that in the end resulted in such apparently irrational and negative behaviour towards Raul. Between us, we explored the cultural and systemic issues and how these might be playing out unconsciously for the manager. We examined how Raul's reaction to his manager and behaviour in his role might have unconscious dimensions. We looked at strategies Raul might use to avoid such a situation occurring again.

By this stage in our engagement, Raul was quite adept at exploring different perspectives in the coaching conversations, though he didn't always take this skill into the workplace. He was able to speculate (which is all that was possible without direct conversations with the manager) that:

- the manager (a long term AFC employee) was likely to be feeling under pressure as changes were being imposed by EBM initiatives and the former AFC owners were no longer involved;
- the manager may be resentful of Raul's position in a fast-track management program while he had to earn his promotions through many years of operational work;
- the manager may not value educational qualifications and see Raul's success as more good luck than good management;
- there may be underlying cultural resistance coming from Raul's egalitarian approach to management (including the almost unheard of management practice of taking lunch with his workers); and/or
- the manager may be jealous of Raul's success and carry uncertainties about his own capabilities in the new environment of EBM.

Some of these factors may be operating unconsciously with the manager and therefore never be articulated even if an open conversation was possible. An open conversation was unlikely given the indirect communication style that was prevalent in Guatemalan culture. The manager may deny that the kinds of thoughts and feelings that Raul had identified were at all relevant in the situation. The coaching sessions gave Raul the opportunity to explore the possibilities and to understand that underneath the resistance he was experiencing was potentially a whole range of explanations that may have had nothing or little to do with Raul as an individual. This helped him to contextualise what had happened and also to see how his actions and reactions may have accentuated the problems that he experienced. This awareness prepared him for future situations with similar contextual cues.

3. Adult Development

Recently, there has been a strong movement within the coaching community to inform coaching interventions with models from adult development. Many coaches who work from this perspective draw on the theories and research of Robert Kegan (1982, 1994). Berger (2006), Berger and Fitzgerald (2002), and Laske (1999, 2000, 2004) have been prominent in applying these developmental theories to coaching. Berger and Fitzgerald (2002, p. 44) discussed the role of a coach in supporting growth, and noted that without sound support people tend to slip back into more comfortable roles and ways of thinking. The developmental perspective in executive coaching proposes coaching as a way of facilitating client growth through stages of development towards more advanced stages of thinking that can accommodate the increasing complexity of the modern business environment. As people get to the higher stages they become better able to step back from their situations and gain new insights.

The need to deal with complexity is a major issue in cross-cultural environments. One of Kegan's most influential ideas is that most people are out of their depth in handling the mental demands of modern life. The demands on managers who are working across cultures are notoriously heavy and complex. For global executives to be able to see themselves in their situations with objectivity is a powerful strategy for understanding and managing individual and environmental complexity.

Berger (2006) adapted Kegan's developmental stages models into metaphors of the Prince or Princess, the Journeyman, the CEO and the Elder. The Elder is able to understand, work from and synthesize multiple perspectives. The Elder can be equated to people who are

at the highest stages of development in the capacity to work across cultures discussed by Rosinski (2003a).

Kegan's model sheds light on the developmental characteristics one needs to acquire to effectively engage in global coaching. Interestingly, the model is about taking perspective and increasing ability to deal with a complex and multidimensional reality, including being able to accommodate and work with paradox. Berger (2006, p.80) suggests that an understanding of the adult developmental processes and the different characteristics that are manifested in the different stages allows coaches to be more careful listeners, to make connections they would not otherwise have made, and to suggest interventions that can lead to clients' heightened success and development. Interestingly, Berger argues that the Elder stage is rarely attained. So, as enthusiastic global coaches, we should not assume that people naturally operate from that stage.

The Elder role is aspirational for those working in senior levels of business where there is complexity – which typifies the international business environment. McCall and Hollenbeck (2002) describe a key characteristic of a successful global executive as the "ability to acquire and hold multiple, perhaps competing, perspectives" (p. 105). Transforming as a result of their global experiences, these executives are able to navigate and survive in different business settings with often contradictory practices. This is the position of the Elder who sees and understands the perspectives of others and uses those perspectives to continuously transform his own system, becoming more expansive and more inclusive. He does not use the perspectives of others to fine-tune his own argument or principles like the CEO.

Curiosity about other systems and realities is another key characteristic of the Elder. Elders are tuned in to all the various constituencies around them. (In global coaching, this openness of perspective is encouraged by the Global Scorecard tool, Rosinski, 2003a, which provides a method for giving systematic attention to multiple stakeholders.) With a curious, exploratory mindset, the Elder sees connections everywhere and can see the ways the different perspectives overlap. The Elder can handle paradox and is comfortable with uncertainty – a paradox in itself (Berger, 2006). These same qualities are the hallmarks of intercultural excellence (Rosinski, 2003b) and are associated with thoughts, feelings and behaviours of those who are skilled at working across cultures (Hampden-Turner & Trompenaars, 2000). Elders are needed in our increasingly complex world. Global coaching challenges clients to take actions that will generate learning experiences and to reflect on those experiences in ways that facilitate their development.

<u>Case Study</u>

With Raul, the adult development perspective was useful in contextualising the coaching work within his life development and to encourage him to expand his thinking around how he was situated in Guatemala. As he took steps towards establishing a broader understanding of where he was going in his life in relation to the company, Australia, his wife and family and the world in general, the coaching conversations gave him opportunities to consolidate and build on his developmental path. Within the company there were few opportunities for him to de-contextualise from the immediacy of the pressured workplace, for example in imagining himself working in the future outside of EBC in a different company and even country.

The conversations through the two years surfaced underlying tensions within Raul over his identity as an Australian with Guatemalan cultural roots. He became more comfortable with is identity and better able to navigate across cultures without feeling as though he had to abandon aspects of who he was or compromise on who he wanted to become. The coaching facilitated a time of growth and development in confidence and identity. My coaching impact was enhanced by a confidence that Raul would develop through his career and most likely achieve the CEO or even Elder stage, though I did not express it in these terms at the time. This is an example of the adult development, positive psychology and psychoanalytical perspectives working together in the global coaching process.

4. Action Learning

An action learning perspective in executive coaching emphasises learning that is cyclic and iterative in nature, moving between action and learning and back to action. Action and experiential learning receive attention in many coaching approaches. Chapman, Best and Casteren (2003) for example, highlighted the role of experiential learning in encouraging risk taking. Vaartjes (2005) proposed an action learning coaching approach in organisational contexts as a way of enhancing business results, linking this approach to a developmental perspective. Action learning requires reflection, which links this perspective with the cognitive-behavioural perspective on coaching.

From a cultural perspective, the action learning approach is particularly valuable in the expatriate context. The expatriate is new in the environment and carries cognitive schemas and ways of doing things that worked in the home situation but may not be so effective in the new cultural context. The coach can encourage the expatriate client to work through action cycles that include goal setting, planning, action, reflection and new planning and action and so on. Reflection on the possible consequences of actions, given what is known about the cultural context, is vital. Too often, expatriates make the erroneous assumption that what works at home works abroad. The action learning process encourages a systematic 'trial-by-error' approach that includes preventing as many errors as possible through examining consequences prior to action.

Case Study

In Raul's case, the action learning approach was very valuable in working with him as he dealt with a difficult management issue with the direct report who had threatened him. The person had worked in the area for a long time and was considered an 'expert' and indispensable. He was, however, causing ongoing disciplinary issues by being disrespectful to his supervisors and undermining area morale. In the coaching conversations, Raul and I discussed what approaches he could use and what the possible consequences might be. Early on, Raul decided to work on the issue himself without his manager's intervention. Later, when he realised he was having only marginal impact, he elevated the issue after considering the consequences in the context of the company, the office and the relationship with his supervisor. The end result was that the person was fired. As Raul had anticipated, his own position was considerably strengthened in the eyes of his subordinates, colleagues and supervisor since he had worked through the issue over time and had elevated it appropriately given the hierarchical nature of the workplace. More generally, the coaching conversations were opportunities for Raul to step back and reflect on and make sense of his changing situation as he adjusted to his new cultural and organizational setting and planned his future career direction. Raul was experiencing massive changes in his life over a relatively short time frame. Within the fifteen case studies of different expatriate experiences, this pattern was common. The action learning process facilitated by the

coaching seemed to assist participants to get some perspective, clarity and also control as the change processes played out.

5. Systemic Perspective

The systems perspective in coaching seeks to place the client in the context of interrelated systems and draws on various strands of systems theory, particularly soft systems thinking (e.g. Checkland, 1985) and family systems theory (Bowen, 1978). Soft systems thinking argues that the social world is not suited to conceptual models from mechanical systems but can be explored by using soft system models that keep in touch with the human content of problem situations. A soft systems approach does not produce final answers but accepts that inquiry is never-ending. The application in executive coaching is to introduce to clients the idea that social systems (e.g. organisations) are not perfect, nor necessarily predictable. Bowen's family systems theory views the family as an emotional unit and uses systems thinking to describe the complex interactions in the unit. It is sometimes used to explore possible connections between the client's family system and the way they interact in an organisational or social context.

Kilburg (2000) based his systems focus in coaching on the conceptual foundation of general systems theory as applied to organisations. O'Neill (2000, p.91) described her executive coaching as a systems approach. She combined a systems perspective with the action research model, 'because each leverages the other for greater results'. Recently, Cavanagh (2006) extended the systems perspective further in proposing that "complex adaptive systems" provided a useful conceptual framework for coaching. The coaching relationship, the coach, and the client each make up interrelated systems, with multiple influences. Cavanagh (2006, 239) observed that executives and coaches are connected parts of the organisational system and cannot stand outside them and manipulate them. However, it is possible through coaching for clients to gain a temporary distance from the system(s) within which they operate by mentally disengaging for the purposes of reflection.

The systems perspective is remarkably in line with global coaching. Various connections help to understand and articulate the essence of global coaching. Cavanagh (2006, pp. 313-314) describes coaching as a journey in search of patterns. He notes that the value coaches add to clients resides in the ability to help them see their experiences in a new way). This is at the core of global coaching. Key characteristics of complex adaptive systems - such as holism, interdependence, openness, diversity, and the embracing of paradox - are integral to global coaching. Both conceptualize growth and learning happening at the edge of chaos. Cavanagh suggests that the edge of chaos is created where there is sufficient energy and information flow, diversity, and connectivity between different elements of a system. Global coaching promotes each of these elements by challenging clients to work at the limits of their potential and to engage in reflection on dialogue about the meaning and purpose of what they do in relation to those around them.

It is clear from a systems perspective that if there is no challenge and tension in the coaching approach, there will be limited opportunities to move to the edge of chaos and learning and growth will also be limited. However, if the client is in chaos (or is moved there by the coach!) then learning cannot take place. The place of chaos is where the client becomes overwhelmed and paralyzed by his or her circumstances, events, meanings and emotions. This moves the engagement into the realm of therapy.

An added layer of complexity is provided when this conceptual framework is situated in a cross-cultural environment. The non-linearity and unpredictability of complex adaptive systems will be exacerbated, thus increasing the coaching challenge, but at the same time heightening the need for an intervention such as global coaching that is suited to complexity and change. Mendenhall (1999) proposed viewing the expatriate experience from a systems perspective. He proposed applying the lens of "non-linear dynamical systems" to the research of expatriate experiences.

Case Study

My conversations with Raul often examined how the system within which he worked was highly resistant to change from someone in his position and that he was, by necessity, forced in a position of waiting for opportunities. Change happened slowly as possibilities for mergers and acquisitions in the region ebbed and flowed. As a coach in the organisation I observed how much anger and stress this uncertainty was causing many of the expatriate managers who were seeking a degree of certainty in career progression. Corridor gossip was rife as rumours of new ventures circulated and people looked for opportunities. There was, therefore, a large amount that Raul could not control even though he was talented, highly ambitious and culturally not attuned to letting events happen. A systems perspective assisted him to become comfortable with the frustrations of not knowing when he would be able to use and be rewarded for his considerable talents and drive. At the same time, we worked on strategies for being noticed and forming strong networks that would position him for promotion if the opportunities did present themselves. We were therefore leveraging the need for control (to do something) with need for humility (with the understanding that the nature of such systems is that they are firstly uncontrollable and secondly unpredictable). He was able to see that waiting was part of being in the environment he had chosen, but also see that action was possible within times of company doldrums.

6. Positive Psychology

The essence of the positive psychology movement is captured by Seligman's (2002, p.263) description of a full life as, "experiencing positive emotions about the past and future, savoring positive feelings from the pleasures, deriving abundant gratification from your signature strengths, and using these strengths in the service of something larger to obtain meaning". This relatively recent trend takes psychology away from a focus on problems and mental illness and back to the humanistic movement of Carl Rogers, and Abraham Maslow who based their approaches on a fundamental belief that people have the innate capacity for growth and development. The role of the counselor is to encourage the unleashing or revealing of potential rather than to 'fix' or 'change' the client.

Carol Kauffman (2006) shows how research in the area of positive psychology can help to scientifically ground the field of coaching, claiming that that "positive psychology theory and research will provide the scientific legs upon which the field of coaching can firmly stand" (p.221). Kauffman offers useful evidence from positive psychology research that shows the merits of building on the positive and notes how positive emotions, for example, serve to "broaden and build" access to personal competencies (2006, p.222). In the physical realm, positive emotions have been shown to: increase immune function, improve resilience to adversity, reduce inflammatory response to stress, increase resistance to rhinoviruses, lower cortisol, and impact brain symmetry, and a number of studies show they predict longevity. Positive emotions are central to psychological flourishing and have been found to have a

significant impact on increasing intuition and creativity, and widening scope of attention. They increase our capacity to use multiple social, cognitive, and affective resources and to take in an integrated long-term perspective (Kauffman, 2006, pp.223-4). Also, positive emotions have been found to have a powerful effect on work teams, which translates into profitability. Research data suggest that while negative emotions serve to quickly negotiate life/death challenges, positive emotions are interconnected with the kind of competence needed a majority of the time. Research confirms that being "vitally engaged" in one's life and grounded in a sense of meaning and purpose is a powerful route to happiness (Kauffman, p. 227). Csikszentmihalyi discusses the notion of flow, or *état de grace*, or "being in the zone" and most interestingly describes the "conditions of flow".

Seligman's and Csikszentmihalyi's (2000) research shows how, beyond meeting one's survival and safety needs, it might not be what you have that matters, but how mindfully you experience it. Some studies reveal a 'hedonic treadmill' phenomenon and pitfall (i.e. individuals quickly acclimate to their new possessions or positions without finding happiness in these *per se*), and a negative relationship between materialism and happiness is set up (Kauffman, 2006, pp. 225-226).

Coaches are encouraged to be familiar with the theory, particularly the link between the state of happiness and being grounded in a sense of meaning and purpose. They can then apply the theory in sessions to help clients find their own ways to access the high-performance state of flow. All these findings from positive psychology provide additional validation of the Global Scorecard model, which includes internal objectives (e.g., experiencing flow, serenity and joy, building on one's strengths) as well as external categories of objectives with "improving the world" as a potentially rich source of meaning and purpose. The Global Scorecard emphasises the interplays between the various categories for fostering sustainable success for self and others (see Rosinski, 2003a, Chapter 12).

Intercultural research can add to the evidence base of positive psychology research with insights on cultural variations on how people conceive happiness. Further, such research can have relevance when coaching across cultures. For example, American-Taiwanese Jeannie Tsai has conducted numerous studies that show striking variations in what sort of happiness people they want. She found that European-Americans aspire more often to a high-energy elation— perhaps because American culture is so individualistic and prizes the ability to influence others. However, people raised in more collectivist Asian cultures, which prioritize adjusting to others, aspire more often to a tranquil joy. Asian Americans, influenced by both cultures, tend to fall somewhere in the middle (Platoni, 2006). Coaches need to consider the cultural background of the clients as they seek to facilitate reflection and engage in dialogue about aspirations and joys.

Case Study
One of the major features of the coaching work with Raul was that I continually supported him in his positive view of his work future, through times when frankly things looked a little bleak! We acknowledged and reflected on the bleakness together – sometimes with a lot of humour. He used the sessions to remind himself that he had an excellent education, strong work experience, considerable leadership flair, determination and a capacity to form meaningful, productive and sustainable relationships. Raul often reflected on the difficult and limited situations experienced by lower level workers in the company, contrasted with the privileged position of the expatriate managers and his own situation. He reflected on

the ethics of multinational companies generally. He was grateful that he worked for a company with a high degree of social responsibility and affirmed his determination to pursue a career that did not exploit people in developing countries. Raul aimed to use his own experiences in this phase of his career in Guatemala to motivate him towards making ongoing contribution to society as a manager in a multinational company. He grappled pragmatically (i.e., considering 'what works' along with broader responsibilities of citizenship) with the tension of following a career where there would be a major gap between the kind of life the he would lead and those of the lower levels of the company. The coaching conversations gave him space to think and talk in the mode of pragmatic humanism.

Conclusion

Globalization is creating a kind of international business environment in which managers are – to use the expression of Kegan (1994) – in over their heads. Models developed by Rosinski and others provide some guidance to coaches when working with executive clients who are experiencing the daily reality of change, complexity and uncertainty. However, global coaching as a concept and practice is work-in-progress. The nature of change suggests that it always will be. Research studies of global coaching (such as the one from which the case study here was drawn) provide some supporting evidence of what works and what doesn't – beyond anecdotal reports from the field. More research is required, including large scale studies with multiple coaches working in multiple locations. However, it is important that such research retains the contextual essence of coaching – that is, it allows the uniqueness of individual executive situations to be accommodated. There is no 'one-size-fits-all' model. Individual coaches working with individual clients in diverse situations will need multiple resources drawn from multiple perspectives and disciplines in line with the principles of evidence based coaching. In large scale quantitative studies, however well-conducted, there is always the risk that individuality will be statistically 'washed-out' in the search for practices that are likely to work with 'normal' populations of international executives. This is not consistent with a coaching philosophy that seeks to unleash individual potential in unique ways and to give value to the individual narratives of clients.

The global coaching approach sees coaches working pragmatically with clients to choose approaches that work in context, with an eye to the broader responsibilities of global citizenship. The choices available to the coach however, are limited by training and experience. Coaches can only use techniques and experiences that they feel competent in drawing upon. It is impossible to be an expert on every aspect of human behaviour (or on any!) and on international business, politics, society etc. Not surprisingly then, it seems that coaches select clients whose challenges and contexts are relevant to the kinds of interventions that they can offer. Similarly, clients look for coaches who seem equipped to work with them to explore specific challenges and problems.

To return to James' corridor analogy; for coaching to be effective each of the doors must open to a space that has dynamic and multidimensional connections to different perspectives and approaches. The global coaching approach positions the coach as a guide who is adept in navigating through the complexity in assisting executives to find meaning and to fulfill individual and organizational potential. The implications of this metaphor are that coaches are obliged to be familiar with many perspectives and be open to learn new approaches that can be of value to their present and future clients. We suggest that the cultural perspective is one that is essential if coaches are to add significant value in the international environment.

Global coaching that is both pragmatic and humanistic can be a catalyst for ethical practices within international business. We have demonstrated how global coaches encourage clients to reflect on what they do and make decisions in the light of their desires for themselves, their families, their organizations and for society. This is consistent with the 'new ethics', described in the context of coaching by de Jong (2006), in which ethics are internally-derived rather than externally imposed. Our observation is that international businesses are starting to take serious account of social and environmental responsibilities as they seek a sustainable future. Coaching can assist individuals involved in the executive-level decision making to establish ethical frameworks that are based on their true beliefs and values. As it evolves as a concept and practice, global coaching may offer an effective vehicle to help bring about high performance together with high fulfillment, in the service of multiple stakeholders and of the world at large.

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