

# List of Tables

Table 1: Characteristics of Being and Doing Mind Modes	36
Table 2: Core Conscious Coaching Competencies	55
Table 3: The ‘Halos and Horns’ Model	96

# Introduction

In 2014, *Harvard Business Review* ran an article on VUCA, the now ubiquitous acronym coined by the US military to describe volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous post-Cold War global conditions. The article highlighted how the acronym was fast becoming management shorthand for ‘It’s crazy out there!’ The world was indeed a little crazy then. Around this time, I co-wrote and edited a book about coaching in times of crisis and transformation, prompted in part by the fallout from the 2008 Global Economic Crisis. I remember wondering if the theme would continue to have a shelf life. It would be funny, if it wasn’t so serious. The world seems to have become a whole lot crazier.

We’re in the midst of a perfect storm of global challenges, including a worldwide crisis in mental well-being. Mental health issues, such as anxiety and depression, are taking an enormous toll on the economy, on individuals and those around them and on people’s abilities to contribute meaningfully to the organizations within which they work. In the UK alone, poor mental health is costing employers up to £42 billion a year in lost productivity,<sup>1</sup> absenteeism and ‘presenteeism’ (where employees feel under pressure to go to work, or work long hours, when they’re unwell). In the US, up to \$500 billion a year is lost in productivity.<sup>2</sup>

There are many other urgent issues we face in the workplace and society, as leaders/managers and in our organizations. The list is vast. Climate change and related issues – such as increasing numbers of refugees, food insecurity, and the threat of the Sixth Mass Extinction. Growing wealth disparity and the erosion of the middle class. Rising nationalism. Declining trust in institutions and leaders – attendees at the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Davos in January 2019 underlined a widespread lack of faith (including in government). Bombardment with data, manipulation via social media platforms and a rise in human disconnection as technology becomes a common substitute for direct contact. Ethical concerns, disruption of business models, and an urgent need for reskilling coupled with widespread redundancy, as new technologies including Artificial Intelligence become widely adopted in the Fourth Industrial Revolution. And unless managed wisely, the significant transformations in global labour markets will increase already widening skills gaps, inequality and polarization, the WEF has warned.<sup>3</sup>

Individually and collectively, faced with all these challenges, we need to wake up.<sup>4</sup> We need new types of conversations. We need new collective narratives and practices – about how we show up with one another, how we work together, how we lead, follow and manage others, about what it means to be human in these times.

Leaders and managers have a pivotal role to play in seeing off the old practices which no longer work for us, creating and putting in place alternatives that are more readily fit for purpose. We must create new processes that align around meaning, purpose and values and which draw on and foster courage, creativity, community, compassion and cooperation. Ones that honour the authenticity and diversity that movements such as #MeToo and #BlackLivesMatter have brought to our attention.

Many of us – in our roles as leaders, managers and coaches, in our organizations and our lives in general – are seeking change. We're searching for alternative ways of doing things and of being. Because, on some level, we know things can't carry on as they are. It's just not sustainable. The huge growth globally in coaching and the adoption of mindfulness in all sorts of areas – including the workplace, education, and even politics – are, in part, a response to the challenges we face.

It was a recognition that I couldn't continue as I was that led me to mindfulness, years before I'd started working as a coach. It was a time when I was extremely stressed and worn down, a single mother, working very hard as a journalist – ironically writing lots about well-being at work. (An irony not lost on me at the time, although I don't recall having the energy or desire to laugh at my situation!) I had a very young baby (now all grown up) who I was reluctantly taking to childcare, and I felt very torn. I never seemed to have enough time, energy or patience.

One day, driving home from the childminder, my daughter screaming, I snapped. I pulled over and I screamed too.

A woman tapped on the car window. 'Are you okay? Would you like to come in for a cup of tea?'

Gulping back tears, and feeling ashamed, I nodded.

What a lovely woman! I've often remembered her with deep gratitude. She reassured me – she was a working mother of four – that she'd had her struggles too, on many an occasion.

After tea, biscuits and the love of a stranger, I drove home. And in floods of tears, I talked to a friend, who happened to be a nurse involved in counselling in general practice. She told me about an approach that was helping her. Although I didn't know it then, it was mindfulness. Not necessarily easy, but so simple. Using that approach, I began to get a glimpse of

calmness every now and then, a sense of spaciousness on the odd occasion, a snatch of what it feels like to be in the present, rather than panicking about future deadlines, delivering on projects, how on earth I was going to get everything done, what an awful mother I was. I remember looking at a picture book with my daughter and noticing that, wow, I was actually *with* her. How amazing was that!

Mindfulness and coaching and the many beautiful and meaningful encounters I've had as a result are helping me to wake up, to live and work more consciously, with more purpose. We *need* to wake up and, in many quarters, we *are* waking up.

We are seeing more organizations become purpose-led and driven by conscious leaders as well as in response to shifts in demands, desires, needs and expectations from employees. Increasingly, in addition to the desire and need for support around well-being and mental health, people want work to be about more than just receiving a pay cheque. They want more empowering and facilitative workplace cultures, leadership and management styles. They want meaning and purpose, and development opportunities. Millennials examine organizational values and development opportunities before they choose an employer<sup>5</sup> and particularly want professional development support in the form of coaching and mentoring.<sup>6</sup>

Executive coaching has become a worldwide phenomenon, used to:

- increase resilience and the ability to manage stress
- develop higher emotional intelligence
- increase flexibility and openness
- shift culture, and
- create new narratives.

Increasing numbers of organizations now offer coaching internally, and growing numbers are developing a coaching culture, training up their own internal coaches, and weaving coaching into leadership development. Coaching is considered a key leadership responsibility<sup>7</sup> and a core leadership competency, distinguishing outstanding leaders from those with average abilities in their field.

Mindfulness too is everywhere. Google, EY, the armed forces and many other employers have rolled out mindfulness programmes. It's being introduced in schools all over the world. In the healthcare arena, it's become one of the go-to therapies for recurrent depression and a host of other mental and physical conditions.

Mindfulness is helping those I work with in my coaching practice be more resilient, better able to work with complexity and ambiguity. They are more creative, emotionally intelligent, and have more mental clarity, resulting in vastly enhanced relationships with themselves and others. Ultimately, mindfulness helps those I work with to be much happier, which arguably is the most important benefit of all.

Mindfulness is perfect for these challenging times. A recent study of leaders who had trained in mindfulness found that they were more resilient, more collaborative and better able to lead in complex conditions.<sup>8</sup> It also recognized that the benefits enjoyed by mindful leaders and managers had rippled out through the rest of the organization.

Many organizations are recognizing the benefits of mindful coaching and adopting the practice within their structures and processes. Whilst mindfulness and coaching are separate interventions, they can be combined or offered alongside one another in various ways to great effect, especially if supported

by initiatives to build compassion. It's what I call Conscious Coaching.

The Conscious Coaching approach draws on years of my own and others' research, and a wealth of experiences and learning from working with coaching clients, teaching mindfulness and compassion, and editing the magazine *Coaching at Work*. It combines both ancient disciplines, such as mindfulness, and new fields, such as neuroscience, as we increasingly have access to an ever-growing collection of tried-and-tested, evidence-based and cutting-edge discoveries, practices and techniques. In this book I will introduce and explain some of these for you to build into your own organization.

First, *Coach Your Team* examines the *why* of mindful coaching by examining the research, which highlights the many benefits of the practice. Second, the *what* – what do we mean by a leader, manager or organization adopting Conscious Coaching? Finally, the *how*, providing practical guidance on how to put Conscious Coaching in place for you and others in your team.

Of course, whilst there's an order to the book, you're free to dip in and out as best serves you on your own journey. The content is presented to enable you to easily do so. My intention as your guide in this book is to sow some positive seeds to support awakening, growth, more conscious working, and the fostering of workplaces in which all can flourish.

It's down to you which seeds you decide to water!

I bow to you.

Liz Hall

# **PART ONE**

## Setting Out





# 1 Starting the Journey

Increasingly, we're seeing the term 'conscious' used in relation to leadership, coaching, companies, capitalism, to pretty much everything these days. The concept of waking up, becoming aware, and realizing we need to change our ways of thinking and being is very much part of the zeitgeist. Building greater awareness, and thus increased choice, followed by informed change, is fundamental to the Conscious Coaching approach.

As mindfulness and compassion become more mainstream and their benefits better understood, we're seeing a rise in the numbers of coaches, leaders and managers adopting a coaching style which draws on these approaches. Conscious Coaching explicitly embraces both. But, what do we mean by coaching in general, mindfulness, compassion and Conscious Coaching?

## What is coaching?

*'Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.'*

– International Coach Federation<sup>1</sup>

In the workplace, coaching is about enabling employees to take self-responsibility. It's about empowering them to find their own solutions and make their own decisions, and assumes that they are capable of this. Thus, I define coaching as:

A co-created process to help people tap into their own wisdom so they can learn, grow and fulfil their potential.

Coaching can be delivered one-to-one, in groups and in teams. We can also coach ourselves. Team and group coaching are no longer the new kids on the block. Companies such as PwC have been delivering team coaching for many years, others have taken longer to catch up, but they're catching up fast. A 2016 report found that over the following three years, 76 per cent of organizations were planning to increase team coaching and 47 per cent of organizations were considering introducing group coaching.<sup>2</sup>

However, many confuse team coaching with other team activities such as action learning sets, facilitation, team building, process consulting, or team away-days. It's important to understand the difference.

- **Team coaching** is a collective intervention for groups of people who work together in a team, using core coaching skills and paying attention to group dynamics.
- **Group coaching** is individual coaching in a group setting.

Coaching can take place informally, such as a 'corridor coaching'-style brief conversation between a manager and a direct report, or it can be more formal. The essential skills – such as active listening and asking, not telling – are the same.

## **How is coaching different from other interventions?**

### ***Coaching versus therapy or counselling***

Coaching in general is often informed by therapeutic approaches including Cognitive Behavioural Therapy, Solution Focused Therapy and Transactional Analysis. However, coaching differs from therapy and counselling as we assume those being coached are well enough to solve their own problems, albeit with coaching support at first. This doesn't necessarily rule out working with people who are struggling with their mental health, feeling overwhelmed or anxious, for example.

### ***Coaching versus mentoring***

Coaching and mentoring are sometimes confused as there is a crossover in the skills used by the coach and the mentor (such as active listening). However, with mentoring, we assume the mentor has valuable expertise and experience to share. In coaching, we assume the other person knows what's best for them.

### ***Coaching versus training***

With training, as with mentoring, we assume there's knowledge to impart, and the trainer 'owns' the process and drives the curriculum. In coaching, the person being coached 'owns' the process.

## **What is Conscious Coaching?**

Conscious Coaching is built on the core concepts and competencies underpinning professional coaching, which we will