

Coaching at Work Annual Conference

Maintaining Momentum:

Coaching and Mentoring in a VUCA world

6th July 2016, London

Coaching
at Work

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Complexity, Contradiction, Connection and Collaboration: 4 Stories and a Proposition - The Role of Coach in the 21st Century?

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Complexity



Faced with complexity and ambiguity – we naturally seek control. We want to make sure that what happens next is more expected and its effects on us less unpredictable.

Connection

In many ways, as a species, we have responded well to the numerous challenges that have faced us as we have expanded in numbers and populated most of our planet.



Contradiction

But these achievements have not been without challenge.

We need change (and to change) to survive. We are also desperate for, and struggle to maintain, stability.

We thrive on challenge, yet challenge threatens us even as it creates us.



Complexity – New Challenge or Nothing New?

The contradictions that complexity creates can be the “desirable stimulants” that are the essence of creativity.

Each episode of confusion can beckon us towards ever more fruitful innovation and growing resilience.



Time for more reflection (...and change?)



- *Re-assess our beliefs about what coaching in this kind of world is about and can be for?*
- *Re-imagine what where we start and what we do as coaches?*
- *Consider how our 21st century may be redefining coaching?*

Continuing to make sense and discover new meaning



*We make our own sense and meaning
out of experience...*

What is your story?

“In a fractured age, when cynicism is God, here is a possible heresy: We live by stories, we also live in them. One way or another we are living the stories planted in us early or along the way, or we are also living the stories we planted – knowingly or unknowingly – in ourselves. We live stories that either give our lives meaning or negate it with meaninglessness. If we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives”

from "A Way of Being Free" by Ben Okri



Complexity, Contradiction, Connection and Collaboration

4 Stories ...

and a Proposition

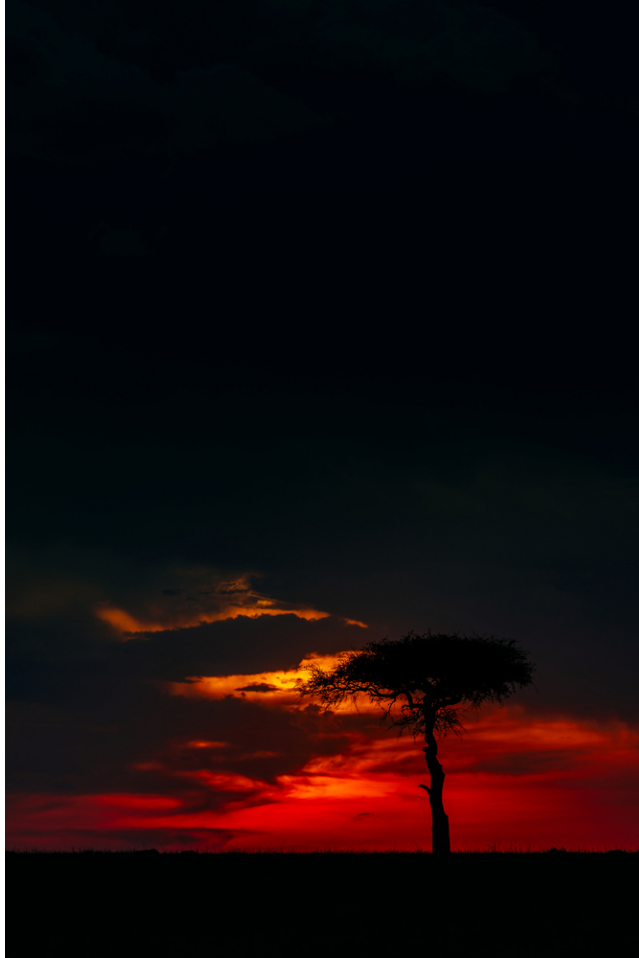
Connecting with our identity(ies) in the midst of complexity and diversity



In complexity – identity matters.

In the midst of circumstances we cannot understand and challenges we had not contemplated, these identities help us remember who we are in it all. They free us to walk on, to connect - to become who we can be - regardless of the surroundings (and the challenges).

Seeing contradiction as complementary



As challenges and contradictions threaten to overwhelm, the simple commitment to see and work with the simplicity embedded in the complexity (and shrouded by mystery) can be the inspiring source of motivation.

Seeing difficult questions and difficult episodes as opportunities for more wholesome intimacy



Individuals who manage to find sufficient stability and support can lean into and create the spaces of trust and intimacy required to work effectively and together with creativity and courage.

Seeing collaborating as a natural expression of compassion and humanity



Compassion and humanity are not aspects to be saved for times when we have “time” for them. They are the fundamentals that define us as creative and social human beings.

New Meanings and Beginnings?



Our complex and changing times demand that we continually make new meaning for ourselves and create and engage with new beginnings repeatedly.

As coaches helping others to live well in a complex world we have to attend to where we belong and where we find and recreate our identities in the midst of change. We have to become ever more comfortable working with and living in contradiction.

This involves diversity, humility, listening, reimagining relationships, increasing respectfulness, working with being lost and not knowing, facing difficult questions and remaining faithful, fruitful and hopeful.

Walk

*Walk!
Barefoot.
Discover for yourself
the path
To life;
to consolation*

*Be!
Secure.
In Redeeming love
knowing
that through Grace alone
who you are
Is;
more than enough.*

*Walk!
Keep walking.
Barefoot
with courage
and integrity
Each step an inquiring scrutiny;
A firm testimony.*





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