

Conversations *in* Partnership

at www.coachingforstars.com

Halina Jaroszewska, PCC ~ +44 (0)845 166 2321 ~ halina@halinajaroszewska.com

Hot Coaching Topics Conference 2011 Bristol UK

Wednesday 8 June

*'An opportunity to ask, engage with and explore
the current big questions in coaching'*

Sponsored by

*
clarke
willmott

DELEGATES' FEEDBACK

And again the day was weather perfect, delegates were a mix of those who had been before and those who were in the conversation space for the first time, of the 3 facilitators ... one had facilitated at all of the Hot Coaching Topics conferences and one was with us for the first time, the location was superb and huge appreciation to Clarke Willmott the sponsors for the conference. Our sponsor set the scene for the day with these words "We are living through changing and challenging times. What worked yesterday is no longer a guide to future success. This can create an uncertain and confidence sapping environment in any organisation. Never has there been a more important time for leaders at every level to understand and manage the dynamics of change. Good coaching is an essential part of that process."

What a great combination for a great conversation!

At the start of the day we discovered who was in the room by asking a question of as many delegates as we could in 5 minutes which was designed to discover what previously hadn't been made public, what was the unknown. This led to quite unexpected exchanges, much thoughtful reflection, curiosity and hilarity! At the end of the day we reflected on what we were taking away from this rich experience.

Indicator of a good conference? Really hard to bring conversations to a close and the recognition that the work continues long after the conference ends and that was certainly so on June 8 in Bristol. The dedicated Hot Coaching Topics LinkedIn group has enabled conversations to continue.

The HOT TOPICS for 2011 that framed the morning chosen from a selection of those suggested

- Our presence, brand and profession: how are these impacted by the way we use time, manage ourselves and communicate to other the challenging times as well as when the going is good?
- Credit crunch as a creative force, energising dynamic or total block?
- Supervision, why bother? A one off or built in?
- Powerful questions – what is the catalyst for shift to happen?

The words delegates said that encapsulated the whole experience were – thought-provoking, reflective, connection, peace, stimulating, amazing, eclectic, clean-controversy, re-energised, invigorating, encouragement, provocative, useful, growth, diversity.

We explored different ways of diving into the conversation space with a Living Graph to start the afternoon and get our energies sparkling after sampling delicious cuisine in the locality. The three controversial statements that were used to explore our beliefs, taken for granted, not negotiables and unpick polarisations were –

- We shouldn't use activities, exercises and models if we want to coach cleanly.
- I'm always true to my philosophy of coaching in my practice.
- I model my coaching values in the actions of my daily life as well as in my practice.

In addition for 2011, there was the option to choose a Hot Topic for the afternoon session

- Core competencies – the foundation from which we build new layers of understanding.

From these eclectic and passionate exchanges delegates segued into conversation spaces of their own devising emanating from the Living Graph statements and the fourth option. This part worked well for some delegates and we need think more out of the box to match the requests from other delegates. This conference is a certainly a learning and growing space at all levels and in all dimensions both for delegates and organiser!

Post-conference, amongst the questions on the feedback form were:

- Your key learnings / discoveries / surprises / reflections?;
- Great conference - so what! What is different now for you?;
- What worked well? What could be even better for HCT 2012?

95% of delegates responded. Their replies are below and on the pages that follow ...

Your key learnings / discoveries / surprises / reflections?

As usual mostly enjoyed talking with other coaches, getting different perspectives, learning about different approaches to coaching.

How different we all are and different is good.

Different perspectives on marketing. Excellent conversations on leadership and some new learning/areas to investigate.

The importance of hope, trust and risk in the current economic climate.

How I and others am seeing coaching and related opportunities going forward.

I now know that I can be more intuitive in my questions, by paying more attention to the detail of my client's communication. I learned some great techniques for clearing and centring to prepare for my next client.

My self-belief, trust and hope for myself and my coaching.

Genuine presence. How to disconnect from one to reconnect to new. Shifting sands of truth in self and difference in others.

What makes powerful questions powerful; the role of exercise, tools, techniques and models in coaching – the range of views; coaching values may show up in very different ways in one's coaching practice and daily life; the 'do', 'be', 'believe' model and which my biggest bubble is!

Powerful questions – they are powerful when they link in with the 'who' of who we are. A powerful question puts us in a new space and helps us make new meaning of a situation. The formula behind creating a powerful question is almost more important than the words itself – the situation, true listening, coming from the gut, echoing the client's words etc. The shorter the question, the less chance there is for it to be directive. To be fully present – we have to disconnect first before we can connect fully.

That there is confusion between nouns and verbs for some – ref. presence / being present – and the ambiguity in interpretation that exists. Very Interesting discussion on Powerful questions.

Liked the living graph process. Enjoyed the diversity of coaches.

Good to spend time with other coaching professionals. They are easy to be with. They listen well and deeper so you feel that you are being heard (this different from everyday life). The day was tougher intellectually. Such interesting thinking from colleagues. Sometimes over intellectual – but mainly good.

Writing the morning papers - great tool! Defining my coaching philosophy and really living it - essential!

Embrace change, evaluate the risk, innovate and be creative. On reflection it was great to share a day where one or two individuals were truly inspirational.

I have moved on a lot since I trained as a coach. It was wonderful to be with such a varied group of committed people using coaching in so many ways. I was particularly inspired by the young man using coaching in prisons. Way to go! Stunning venue!

Explore "breaking the rules" (writing outside the boxes and lines is OK to try, at least, and is strangely fun, amazing and yet puzzling all at the same time!

Enjoyed the living graph, gives as coaches the opportunity in a practical/physical way to reflect on a perspective and then having reflected change our position. Really great practical exercise in challenging views and position. Even more conscious of the different types and styles of coaches/coaching. The number of opportunities even in tough economic times that are there if we think about it!

The key learnings were the energisers / ice breakers – I have used both of them several times in the last week.

Lovely to have space to learn a bit more about myself – it doesn't seem to matter how much self development I do there's always something new to learn. I was surprised to discover that I still have a strong rebellious streak! Great reflections around what makes a powerful question powerful i.e. not necessarily the words themselves but the circumstances in which the question is asked. A question might be powerful but only in that moment and with that coachee.

The discussion around powerful questions. Drafting a simple formulae definition for coaching supervision. The LinkedIn Hot Topic forum.

Others share similar concerns/questions about coaching issues, and that a powerful question is not really powerful, it's really how it impacts on the other person.

I enjoyed the 'powerful questions' discussion and appreciated the facilitation of this session.

Reconfirmation of the essentialness of human contact at every level for wholeness of head and heart; speaking our thoughts, ideas and feelings and receiving attention and appreciation.

Honouring values looks different in different areas of life.

Some provocative thinking around powerful questions and enjoyable conversations evoked from the living graph.

Great conference - so what! What is different now for you?

Actually felt more confident by the end of the day – discussions with colleagues showed me how much I'd learnt and grown as a coach since the conference last year.

Greater commitment to self care.

I will have a different marketing strategy moving forwards. New contacts with local coaches.

The friendships and relationships developed with other attendees.

Some interesting, continuing conversations and ideas to put into action.

I am relaxed, ready to be a more authentic coach, and to stop worrying about my niche.

Connections made and followed up. Followed through an opportunity I was contemplating. Remember all my Torbet leadership model knowledge.

I have a sense of release from an old way of working and feel the view will be different for my next coaching session.

I have come away stimulated with ideas, things I will notice more in my own coaching and areas I want to explore further.

Really good food for thought about Powerful Questions in particular. Can feed that back into my practice.

A few new contacts and some reinforced learning on powerful questions.

A sense of greater connectedness with other coaches in the area.

Now I know that there is a good coaching community near my home, I want to stay connected.

Not obvious yet except that I want more- more challenge, controversy, passion and edgy-ness!!

Listening to the shared experiences of others has helped me to re-engage with my own journey.

I am looking to build my coaching practice and considering doing some work in the Bristol area. I am reflecting very much on how I live my coaching values.

My mind's eye is open to think about coaching differently and I've been really encouraged to strive for more coaching business ... re-invigorated.

Really considering personal brand and differentiators!

Not much.

My thinking has deepened around questioning.

I know there is a useful resource of knowledge on the Linked In Group that I can tap into.

Nothing major, enjoyed meeting some of the participants and will follow up with some.

I feel a renewal of confidence with a realisation of how I have built on my positive experience of Hot Topics 2 years ago. I met old friends and made new ones and feel excited and optimistic about developing these friendships for mutual benefit.

More commitment to be congruent – Walk the Talk.

Nothing that I can put my finger on at the moment.

What worked well? What could be even better for HCT 2012?

Small discussion groups worked well – perhaps giving more time for these to really flourish and explore and develop their content. I know time is always so difficult in conferences - there's never enough of it. Perhaps allowing 90 minutes instead of 60 for topical discussion and less time on the living graph. Last year, I thought, the graph worked really well, very useful discussion that engaged the whole group. This year, I didn't feel that it worked quite so well. I would have liked more time in the smaller groups for discussion than the graph.

Jenny was an excellent facilitator and a brilliant role model for being present. I found the afternoon session less useful and thought that throughout the day either smaller groups or longer sessions would help.

Small group size is important so that people have plenty of opportunity to contribute.

I thought it all went very well.

Liked the idea of self selecting groups around key topics but found the group sizes quite large. Appreciate a mix of groups and facilitators for variety of style and input. Something new as part of the 2012 day format would be attractive.

The format is excellent. Perhaps have a shorter lunch break if the canteen is available.

Hot topics groups. Living Graph. Having a new group in the afternoon that weren't energised by any of the 4 options.

Great organisation and facilitating. Great lift to energies, enthusiasm and commitment. What could be better – something every couple of months rather than wait a year.

The Living graph worked well. It got us up and on our feet and provoked hot discussion!

Powerful Questions session worked well. The Presence session wasn't quite so good – I think largely as the focus of the session was a little too broad and we a large part of the session to find any sense of direction with it. Would be better to keep the HC topic more tightly focused. I enjoyed the sculpt in the afternoon. In the second part of the afternoon we had a very large group and I think we could have had more focused and more in depth discussions in smaller groups with more of a structured approach.

The morning worked well with focus groups and some lively discussion. Fortunately both my groups were small enough to enable all who chose, to contribute. Facilitation was excellent in one group with steered focus into group language and development of contribution by attendees; not so good in another as the facilitator talked too often about their own experiences, at times dominating the discussion. The afternoon was very flat compared with the dynamic morning. Suggest dynamic short bursts of exchange discussion perhaps could have worked. Could more have been made of the purpose of the exercises?

Perhaps if the morning sessions could be framed as a question/provocation the discussions would get deeper quicker?

The smaller group discussion was the best. There were about 8 in the group – all got their chance to speak and be involved and it was great. The other sessions had too many people in and worked less well.

The topics and material was all great but could we delegates have stepped up to the plate a little more - a few more conversations on the edge?!!

Choosing a track / themes to follow for the round table group discussions worked well. I'm not so sure about the 'living graph' in the afternoon - all a bit 'fragmented and woolly'. It felt a little like 'filling time'. On reflection, perhaps just a morning session concluding over a networking lunch would have been adequate rather than 'pad out' for the whole day.

The discussion on living coaching values was very meaningful for me. More participatory activities.

Venue great, refreshments great, price point is perfect ... perhaps a useful resources list, eg I was surprised how few people had heard/read about David Rock's work. I'll post a link with LinkedIn.

Some more practical work such as the living graph. If we could find someone who would be willing to give a talk on some aspect of coaching skill or technique would also be good if possible (appreciate this may be a challenge).

re as my learning style /preference is for more workshop-type activities rather than open discussion. This may not be appropriate as it would change the nature of the event.

The arrangements were beautifully smooth – thank you! The venue is perfect and the activities were very well paced. The facilitator could have been more prepared – she allowed the session to be very emergent which could have been a good thing but in fact led to us not covering much ground e.g. still working out what we wanted to talk about 5 minutes before the session ended. If possible it would be great to have tea/coffee available at the end of the lunch break?

What worked well: 1 word questions / introduction / pace of event / venue. What could be better: Facilitation

Liked the venue, pacing and ambience.

I felt the day could have been better structured, in particular the afternoon which lacked **pace**. I felt that there was a lot of talent amongst the participants and there was not enough opportunity to explore it. A lot of expectations had been raised by the gathering of our 'hot topics' etc., and then the afternoon effectively **prescribed** a selection of topics, none of which appealed to a group of about 7 or 8 folk, leaving them with a lack of focus. The after lunch line up session was allowed to run on too long, again losing the pace of the event.

The safe boundaries and clear expectations re time and behaviour. The openendedness of sessions with sparks to light blue touch papers. The goal of mind-widening conversations to invite the joy of sharing thoughts and ideas. "First define your terms!" Next time maybe some more care with topic definitions to avoid going round in circles trying to find out what the focus is about.

d well: fabulous venue! Even better: slightly longer breaks to allow for more informal conversations.

aph was a useful exercise, lovely people to talk to and share thoughts with. Facilitation of some groups could be less formative – I didn't appreciate witnessing the 'semantics conversation' about the correct use of coaching terminology.

And finally, the quotes to encourage you to join us in HCT 2012

A thought-provoking, challenging yet supportive space.

Time out to think about you, your life, your business.

When 30 plus coaches get together something magical has to happen.

Thanks for another great day of inspiration, connections and friendship.

Nothing new to add to previous comments, but 'thank you'!

I arrived feeling anxious about an aspect of my practice. I left feeling relaxed and at peace, more ready to be an authentic coach, authentically me.

Great to take time out and have space to contemplate.

In realising a shift in myself, I will be better able to support a shift in others.

A great space to stop and just be ... and explore, question, discover and share.

I enjoyed getting together with my peers to broaden our understanding of the skills we use in our coaching and to deepen our connections with one another.

A good orchestrated opportunity to mingle and expand.

"Grass is greener when it's watered!"

Time to think about, reflect on, share, and challenge my coaching and indeed my life - how often do I have the opportunity to do that??

Refreshing and energising – a great way to re-engage with my personal coaching priorities! Definitely one for next year's diary!

Meaningful, lively connections with like-minded souls using coaching skills in diverse and fruitful ways.

Please don't come if you've not been before or there would not be room for all of us who love Halina and her magnificent event.

Thought provoking and questioning, what next?

Thank you Halina – another excellent day. A great learning experience to share a day with like minded people who are all on their personal coaching journeys.

Not so much a refresher workshop as a refreshing workshop for coaches who are serious about their profession.

Good day and useful return on investment of time and money.

A day for the personal side of professional experience, creating a 'togetherness' that can soothe, stimulate and challenge.

What a treat to spend a day in the company of so many amazing and interesting human beings, talking about issues that matter.

A warm and friendly atmosphere to grow and gain support from a network of fellow professionals.