

# Philosophy of Coaching

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## Editor's Introduction

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Thank you for reading *Philosophy of Coaching*, and especially this new issue. You might be a regular reader (Thank you for your loyalty!), or this might be the first time you read us (Thanks for your curiosity!).

*Philosophy of Coaching* is dedicated to advancing the coaching profession by encouraging reflexivity through academic publications. You will read voices of practitioners, researchers, educators who are eager to share with you their expertise, experience and knowledge to foster meaningful conversations. Hopefully their work will allow you to take a step back, open new avenues, reconsider traditional paths, and question what we take for granted. Therefore, as you read this, wherever you are on the planet, you are part of a vibrant intellectual community eager to critically reflect on the complexities of the multifaceted practice of coaching.

Especially in this March 2025 issue, we engage you in a journey exploring the conceptual foundations of coaching, a much-needed exploration at a time when the practice sits on shaky conceptual grounds (Bachkirova, 2024). Our intention here is to foster epistemic reflexivity, that is, the ability of practitioners to be aware of the theoretical underpinnings of their practice, as well as the models and tools they use. A lack of epistemic reflexivity is a problem in coaching as it can unintentionally perpetuate implicit worldviews and lead to “slow violence” (Pérez, 2019) i.e. the implicit imposition of ways of thinking and behaving that are considered “normal” without surfacing their underlying assumptions. In this regard, it is important to understand coaching as a social process (Shoukry and Cox, 2018) and promote its potential contribution to social change (Gannon, 2021) and social justice (Roche, 2022).

The six articles in this issue contribute to enriching epistemic reflexivity towards epistemic justice in coaching by advocating for more awareness on the approaches we use in coaching and offering pathways to do so.

The first two articles by Sebastian Fox and Luca Stanchieri help us understand the need for epistemic reflexivity in different contexts.

The article by Sebastian Fox, “**Bringing critical reflexivity into team coaching: A proposed framework,**” calls for more critical reflexivity in team coach development and practice. He does so by suggesting going beyond the dominant focus on horizontal development to an approach which integrates vertical development, fostering deeper self-awareness and new ways of thinking. The proposed framework helps team coaches enhance their critical reflexivity, enabling them to reframe existing knowledge, expand their capacity, and develop new, more effective approaches to their practice.

In his paper “**The Paradigmatic Failure Affecting Coaching Demand,**” Luca Stanchieri examines coaching’s response to shifting cultural norms and values in postmodernity, building

on paradigms from theorists like Kuhn and concepts such as Bourdieu's *habitus* and Husserl's cultural crisis. It defines paradigmatic failure as the breakdown of established norms, showing how coaching addresses demands for deeper values and meanings amid societal transformation. By analyzing dynamics of collusion and emotional states, the research underscores coaching's role in fostering ethical transformation and helping individuals pursue self-realization through innovative meaning-making.

The articles by Dr Ursula Clidière and Dr Henry Campion raise reflexivity by building on learning and development theories in coaching.

Dr Ursula Clidière, in **“Reframing the Intersection of Coaching and Therapy with an Adult Developmental Lens,”** explores the intersection of coaching and therapy through the lens of adult development theory and proposes considering both psychological dimensions and developmental criteria to enhance mental health-related practices and decision-making in the coaching-therapy interface.

With **“Predictive Processing: A Common Mechanism for Learning in Coaching Practice,”** Dr Henry Campion contributes to strengthening the theoretical foundation of coaching by suggesting a unifying concept of learning for different approaches to coaching. To do so, he draws on Predictive Processing (PP) – a theory of brain function which explains how we learn, adapt and survive – and explains this model of learning and how they are reflected in models of learning and coaching practice. Equipped with this knowledge, coaches can question their assumptions and open new avenues of practice by considering alternative ways of thinking and doing, thereby deepening expertise and enhancing decision-making and problem-solving skills.

Finally, the two papers by Nelia Koroleva and Abongile Sipondo help us think how we can design spaces that foster epistemic reflexivity and justice in coaching, especially in the context of leadership development.

Dr Nelia Koroleva, with **“Advancing the Science of Executive Coaching through Leader/ship Identity Work,”** contributes to the discipline of executive coaching by providing a comprehensive understanding of Leader/ship identity work, focusing not only on what leaders do but also on who they are, and how their self-perception shapes their decisions and actions. This is an invitation to consider coaching as an identity-driven intervention beyond a performance-enhancement tool in leadership development.

In **“Introducing an Intersectional Lens in Executive Coaching for Black Women Leaders,”** PhD scholar Abongile Sipondo suggests the integration of intersectionality theory into executive coaching for Black women leaders, emphasizing the importance of recognizing intersecting systems of race, gender, and class in leadership development. Adopting an intersectional framework in coaching goes beyond traditional leadership models that often marginalize Black women's experiences, and is more likely to promote inclusive leadership practices, empower Black women to navigate organizational barriers, and foster authentic leadership identities, ensuring diverse voices are heard and valued in leadership roles.

These six articles, by leading us to consider the worldviews embedded in our practices, help us to remember that any practice is political (Shoukry and Fatien, 2024), since any space, coaching included, is a social product (Louis and Fatien Diochon, 2018). Let's make space for epistemic reflexivity and justice in coaching.

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