

Book review

Fusco, A., (2022) Coaching Life. Three-Dimensional Press

**By Ian Day
United Kingdom**

Dr Tony Fusco has written a book that is original, engaging, and educational. Sometimes I read a coaching book and conclude that there was nothing new, the same old material is rehased by a different author, but this was certainly not the case with *Coaching Life*. The book combines narrative prose with a coaching book, in what is described in the introduction as “educational fiction.” This may sound an odd integration of two separate worlds, but it works very well, engaging the reader in a fascinating tale for two central characters.

This fictional story follows our protagonists, Jasper and Simone through the different stages of their coaching journey. We follow these two work colleagues as they progress from being coaching clients, who then become trainee coaches and coach practitioners themselves. Jasper and Simone’s divisional director has been approached by a local university undertaking research into coaching, and offers them coaching with three different coaches, a cognitive coach, a Gestalt coach, and an existential coach. Instead of scripting the coaching meetings, the narrative evolves as the two colleagues meet in a coffee shop after each coaching session to share their experience.

Jasper and Simone’s conversations are both amusing and informative. These post-coaching coffee shop meetings provide the reader with an understanding of the different coaching approaches. Simone and Jasper are brought to life with vim, vigour, and humour. The reader is drawn into their narrative and back story very realistically, which will be familiar to anyone who has experienced coaching. Also, this will be informative to anyone who is new to coaching and curious to understand more, as this provides an insight into how it feels to be coached.

Jasper and Simone’s characters are not described in any detail. For example, Jasper and Simone’s ages are not divulged, their height, hair colour, their mannerisms are not mentioned, typically invaluable descriptions in a traditional novel to bring the characters to life. However, the absence of detail makes them relatable, in a way, as they could be me or you, as their reflections on the coaching sessions stir memories of my first coaching meetings.

Their coach development journey metaphorically and physically develops, as they travel to the Lake District to train to become coaches. Through their coaching training, Jasper and Simone make sense of their previous coaching sessions as well as exploring issues such as listening, coaching presence, and transtheoretical change, with example narrative coaching

sessions to explain these concepts and bring these to life, describing the importance of co-coaching as an integral part to coach development.

This is a refreshingly different coaching book, the journey and interaction of Jasper and Simone is enjoyable, entertaining, and informative. This is written by someone who clearly has experienced coaching from both a client's and a coach's perspective. Tony Fusco's deep coaching and psychological knowledge is subtly and skillfully woven into this narrative, so *Coaching Life* is a joy to read. It takes great literary skill to integrate narrative prose with an educational book. Socrates is credited with saying that a compelling message must comprise three elements, pathos, logos, and ethos, and all three are provided in this book whose aim to provide educational fiction has been achieved with great success.