

Book review

DeHart, L. (2024). *Light Up: The Science of Coaching with Metaphors*. Barn Swallow Publishing.

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"Light Up: The Science of Coaching with Metaphors" by Lyssa deHart explores the transformative power of metaphors in coaching. The book offers a unique lens through which coaches and helping professionals can enhance their practice, providing a theoretical framework and practical applications.

Lyssa deHart is an experienced coach with a background in art, art history, anthropology, and social work. She brings her knowledge and professional and lived experience to "Light Up," addressing an essential topic in the coaching literature. The book explores the theories and science behind metaphors, considering the value of client-led conversations and embodied cognitions, and bridges the gap between science and practice by offering a fresh perspective on how language shapes our experience and how we can harness this power in a coaching context. It includes many examples from real coaching conversations, which is essential to help coaches tune their ears to hear and use the client's metaphors in their sessions. The author shows how clients often use metaphors to explain complex concepts non-threateningly and how metaphors can act as containers for ideas, allowing individuals to create meaning and foster agency and awareness.

The book is structured into cohesive chapters that build upon each other, guiding the reader from foundational concepts to advanced applications. It starts by exploring the role of visual language in the brain and how it connects to metaphors. Then, it explores the subject from the lens of linguistics and the different kinds of metaphors clients use, including conceptual metaphors – the ones that shape their understanding by linking abstract concepts with concrete experiences and owned metaphors – the ones that often begin with "I" or "my," bring the individual's inner world into focus, unveiling the internal experiences that influence their actions. Other chapters delve into the theory inherent in coaching with metaphors, including the contributions of the Rogerian humanist client-centred theory and Gestalt. As we could expect in a book dealing with metaphors in coaching, the text analyses the perspective of clean language and symbolic modelling and its importance in creating client-led conversations and helping clients explore their thoughts, feelings and experiences through their metaphors, facilitating more profound understanding and personal change. Chapters eight and nine offer an interesting approach to considering concepts of embodied cognition and somatic awareness, reminding us that our mind is not separate from our body. According to deHart, "somatic awareness and the art of listening for metaphors are two of the most powerful tools in a coach's toolbox". Other chapters consider the relationship between the

author's proposal and ICF coaching competencies and the skills coaches should develop to use the client's language, listen to their emotions or be attentive to cultural differences.

Content-wise, "Light Up" is worth reading because of its insights and practical tools. DeHart's writing is clear and engaging, making complex concepts accessible to a broad audience. Integrating scientific research with practical application is seamless, providing a solid foundation for using metaphors in coaching. Coaches will find the theory, examples and thought-provoking questions at the end of each chapter particularly useful, as they offer a roadmap for integrating metaphors into their practice.

I recommend "Light Up: The Science of Coaching with Metaphors" to professional coaches, therapists, and anyone interested in the power of metaphors. Lyssa deHart's expertise and passion for the subject shine through, making this book informative and inspiring. Its practical approach ensures that readers can immediately apply the concepts and techniques in their work, enhancing their effectiveness and enriching their coaching practice.