

APPLYING THE OXYGEN MASK PRINCIPLE TO COACH SUPERVISION

**Authors: Michelle Lucas
(Greenfields Consultancy)**

**Contributors: Angela Dunbar, Diane Marks,
Liz McGivern, Sarah Perrott**

Value/Originality

An innovative approach to coaching supervision with mature practitioners is described in a phenomenological style. Building on the notion of the coach using their self as the instrument of their client work, the proposition is that the supervision of that work benefits from being highly coach centric. Potential criticisms to the approach are explored and initial responses from the wider supervision community are reported upon.

Keywords

Coaching supervision, coach as instrument, development of mature practitioners

Abstract

A new supervision group comprised of mature practitioners was set up with the primary purpose of exploring how the supervision experience might differ if a more deliberately self-centred perspective was taken. For this particular approach to supervision we use the analogy of the oxygen mask when travelling in a plane. The agreed protocol is to put on your own oxygen mask before attempting to help others. In this group, the working assumption is that focusing on growing the self-awareness of the coach will facilitate how they then work with their clients. This article describes how the group came about, how the group operates and reports back in a phenomenological style the member's experience. As part of all of our development an opportunity arose to present our work at the 7th International Supervision Conference at Oxford Brookes in May 2017. Recognising that the group is early in its evolution, contributions were invited regarding how this particular approach might have implications for the supervision community. In addition questions were invited that the group might consider for its own development. In preparing for the conference, 4 questions were raised for the supervisees to respond to. The supervisees responses to the 4 questions posed, along with key feedback from the audience at the conference, form the basis of this article.

In 2016, a new supervision group comprised of mature practitioners was set up with the primary purpose of exploring how the supervision experience might differ if a more deliberately self-centred perspective was taken. For this particular approach to supervision we use the analogy of the oxygen mask when travelling in a plane. The agreed protocol is to put on your own oxygen mask before attempting to help others. In this group, the working assumption is that focusing on growing the self-awareness of the coach will facilitate how they then work with their clients. This article describes how the group came about, how the group operates and reports back in a phenomenological style the member's experience. As part of all of our development an opportunity arose to present our work at the 7th International Supervision Conference at Oxford Brookes in May 2017. Recognising that the group is early in its evolution, contributions were invited regarding how this particular approach might have implications for the supervision community. In addition questions were invited that the group might consider for its own development. In preparing for the conference, 4 questions were raised for the supervisees to respond to. The supervisees responses to the 4 questions posed, along with key feedback from the audience at the conference, form the basis of this article.

Background

The origin of the idea

The idea for this group came through my own supervision. Contextually it is important to understand that I had selected my supervisor on the basis of their personal development stance to supervision. Stemming from the philosophy of Heidegger (1962) that "who we are, is how we are" I wanted to explore my own authenticity and how that impacted on my coaching and supervision work. Additionally, both myself and my supervisor believe that it is the relationship between coach and client and how we leverage that which brings value, rather than the collection of tools and techniques that we might use with our clients. This is what has become referred to as "coach as instrument" a concept explored by Bachkirova in 2016.

In exploring how I was showing up in my own supervision practice, I noticed a growing frustration, a yearning for more "stretch" in my work. The vast majority of the groups I run are telephone groups aimed at Independent Coaches. Sessions run monthly and offer a flexible membership. Participants enjoy the opportunity to work with a variety of coaches with different perspectives. Having run these groups for a number of years I noticed that whilst each session had its own flavour, I was becoming habituated in how I worked. By contrast I also worked with a number of supervision groups for Internal Coaches. These groups had a fixed membership and I noticed we were able to experiment more because the level of trust and safety had been developed to a deeper level.

Additionally, I had noticed a pattern in many supervision discussions. Whilst the topic most often brought to supervision was related to a moment in a client session, the dialogue typically ended in a recognition that there was some personal "interference" (Gallwey, 2015; Downey, 2003) from the coach playing out in the dynamic with the client. So to quote Stephen Covey why not "start with the end in mind"? If we anticipate that the supervision will end up highlighting a personal development issue, why not start by directly considering what personal development issues clients are prompting in the coach.

How the group was formed

As a result of my supervision discussions I developed the concept of working with a fixed group of supervisees, all of

who were mature in their practice and who also subscribed to the notion of "coach as instrument". I labelled this type of supervision "deliberately "self-centred" (ie. coach centred) supervision". I approached seven people to see if they would be interested in joining the group. All of these coaches had already worked with me in a supervisory capacity. I organised a couple of initial webinars to co-create some of the procedural elements of the new group – for example how long the session might be and how often they would meet. As a result of those conversations 4 people elected to join the group. Prior to the group convening for their first supervision session, a skype call was organised to help people to bond as professionals.

How the group works

There are four supervisees in the group plus the supervisor. The groups are held using webinar technology and therefore the group can see each other through webcams, the sessions are of two hours duration with a short "comfort break" half way through.

The structure of the session time is similar to how my other groups work, a round of arrivals, a mindfulness exercise (the responsibility for which is shared amongst the group) followed by a contracting discussion. We then move to the heart of the session which has been structured deliberately to be "self-centred". The session is wrapped up by a round of what their individual learning has been and what their take-aways are for their coaching practice. To date we have begun the heart of the session with sharing some pre-prepared work. The focus of this prepared activity is always "Who are you, as a coach?". Preparing for this activity encourages reflection and facilitates a heightened self-awareness ahead of time. It is also intended to deepen the group members understanding of how they each like to work. The core of the session is an opportunity for each coach to bring something to explore with the group. Typically in group supervision members are invited to bring a client case to review. Within this group they are asked a specific question "When you think about your client work, what is it telling you about you?". The group discussion is emergent and rich with each supervisee reflecting back what is resonating and what more they see within each other's narrative.

Gathering data for the conference presentation

In order to share with the audience our experiences to date, I posed four questions for my group supervisees to respond to. The questions are listed below with some commentary around their direct quotes.

Question 1:

What attracted participants to join the group?

Given the group was formed through invitation, it feels congruent that the practitioners felt a resonance between their own coaching approach and what I was proposing for the group supervision.

"My MA had led me to explore who I am as a Coach and being my true self. The context for this supervision work that was outlined, 'a deeper dive' and the link with authenticity, felt a great match and opportunity to grow."

"I passionately believe that who you are is how you coach and want to further that knowledge. I had been thinking about extending my supervision work."

"Parallels between the supervisor's curiosity and enthusiasm and a link with my own earlier research (McGivern, 2009) exploring the relationship between coachees lived experiences of supervision and the ongoing learning and development of the coach."

"Reflecting on a journey through a "socialised mind" via a "self-authoring mind" towards a "self-transforming mind" (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) and noticing if this helps me to be more effective with clients."

Additionally, it seems that the innovative nature of the group itself was attractive:

"Love of learning, real learning, when one's mental, emotional, and relational capacities (Torbert, 2004; Loevinger, 1976) are stretched, a promise of vertical learning (Brown, 2013)."

"Continuing on my developmental journey as a Coach – it felt like this would provide the same supportive but challenging (slightly scary!) environment (of reflective practice) I had experienced in my training years."

"Curiosity about what real development looks and feels like and reflecting on adult levels of development and barriers (Kegan, 1982, 1994)"

"Also interested in being involved in something new and different."

Finally, there was a general acknowledgement that having worked with the supervisor before was helpful, for example:

"In a word, Michelle! To delve a bit deeper, what drew me to Michelle is that I know she can work deeply as a supervisor and ask a question that 'turns things around' to help me look

at my coaching relationships in a different way. Equally important was knowing that as well as the depth, there would be lightness and playfulness."

Question 2:

How does their experience differ to participating in other supervision groups?

The most obvious difference which the members of this group noticed was the sense of shared purpose. This was possible because of the fixed membership of the group and the specific intention to work at a deep level of reflection.

"Shared purpose of our work to go to a deeper level together in a safe environment, rather than potentially finding ourselves going there unexpectedly!"

"previous group supervision had mixed membership. With this group, both the consistency of members combined with deeper level exploration has enabled the trust to be built and what I feel is the rapid development of the group relationship. Rather than permanently in 'forming' stage."

In my experience, supervision discussions often start by exploring "what happened" between the coach and client. We then quickly get pulled into a conversation about the choice of tools and techniques. However, this can serve to keep the discussion at a relatively transactional level. One of the members noticed a repetitive quality with her prior supervision in that often in working through a supervision issue she came to the conclusion that familiar patterns were playing out for her. As the client issue was the main focus, the supervision did not help her explore what those patterns really meant for her. By contrast, in this group participants seem to appreciate that it is the coach themselves which is the main focus – not the conclusion of transactional reflections.

“More focus on being resourced to navigate an emergent *self-discovery process than being side-tracked about tools and techniques (Perls, et al, 1994,; Perls, 1969; Perls, 1976; Rogers, 2004)*”

“The focus here is *on me as the coach and what is going on. My experience of other supervision is that me as the coach is often the after-thought, if at all, rather than the main focus.*”

At a very practical level, this group worked via webinar, so video was available as well as voice. For those who had previously been supervised on the phone, the ability to see their peers was a welcome addition. Further joining the session from the comfort of their own home, seemed to increase the sense of safety. Another visual benefit came through the use of a playful visual prompt (the Misfits game) which creatively aided self-expression and the resulting visual was memorable.

“I like visuals and previously I had *group supervision by phone, now I can see my colleagues! Feels very much more as though we are coming together for the session*”

“Previously [my supervision] had a feeling of groundhog day – *working on an issue and often noticing familiar themes at the end, which helped to relieve and manage the immediately presenting issue with that particular client, but not really go further.*”

“Growing rather than maintenance – *less about keeping on track, dealing with a specific client issue and any problems arising; coming from a completely different angle of self-learning, and then the implications; starting with the bigger picture rather than one issue.*”

“What’s different to before is that this group is online. In many ways we may feel safer to explore when we are in our *personal physical environment, and Michelle helps us to connect both visually and kinaesthetically through shared ‘props’ eg misfits game*”

“Also the visuals of the misfits exercise have stayed *with me ☺*”

Importantly – not all members of the group experienced the group as discernibly different from their prior experiences of supervision. Indeed that was in itself one of their drivers for joining this particular group.

“I was lucky to have been part of a *supervisory group run by a humanistic counsellor / coach supervisor, so I have been used to working in depth on myself as part of the process.*”

Since moving house ... I wanted to retain this kind of deep connection to the work I do.”

Question 3: What impact has this supervision had on their practice?

This proved an interesting question for the group to answer. Prior to the conference we had only completed two supervision sessions and so it felt “too soon” to assess this. However, with reflection, participants could notice some significant shifts occurring.

There was a sense of heightened self-awareness:

“Greater awareness of how I turn up. Greater awareness and *commitment to preparing well and thoroughly, personally to be the best coaching tool that I can be*”

“Being reflexive, where I am on the helping continuum *moment to moment*”

“Being a Coach rather than doing coaching”

There has also been some very specific learning:

“During one of our sessions I became more consciously aware of my ‘talent’ to see the best in people. But also to *recognise that that there is a shadow to this strength as at times I may expect more from coachees than they are prepared to give*”

“It has prompted me to begin another session of psychotherapy, having had one ‘session’ five or so years ago.”

”

“[a reminder that]Coaching can be complex, ambiguous and uncertain, not knowing is OK”

“Reconnecting with my learning path as a Coach, a sense of *moving forward rather than stationary, growth rather than maintenance, proactive rather than reactive.*”

“Noticing more keenly the helper, *rescuer, pleaser and perfectionist* in me and how I may contribute to interference”

“Stepping back from the coal face and the ‘distraction’ of a 4 session assignment, to reconnect with what’s important, at the heart of it.”

“Asking myself: ‘am I missing something or am I looking for something that isn’t there?’”

Question 4:

How do we ensure that client's needs are not overlooked?

We posed this question, as it felt like an obvious criticism to our self-centred approach. However, every member of the group held a deep belief that their development as a person was unavoidably linked to their development as a coach.

"Rather than just one client's need being considered, by *focusing on me, this then impacts my practice across all of my clients. I am the common theme, so by addressing self, all clients benefit.*"

"I see that I am part of the coachee's system so any shift in *me will bring about a change for the coachee too, ultimately.*"

"[it makes me think about an] Oxygen mask – *knock on effect of being able to attend to others if I have taken care of myself.*"

"The better place that I am in, the less conscious awareness of me there is. *Therefore the coachee client is the agenda and focus in the moment, not me. That has to be better for them.*"

"Working on [my]congruence, the extent to which I am *working with the clients purpose/agenda and not my own or someone else's and still meet expectations*"

"On a wider level, it's *recognising how strengths can be blind spots, and conversely our so called 'weaknesses' present wonderful opportunities to be human, authentic and model vulnerability.*"

For some they noticed that it was helpful to quite deliberately look for the relevance to clients, or to seek separate support to do so.

"I can turn things around again at the end of any exploration by asking myself of any personal insight: "And what is that now telling you about your CLIENT(S)?"

"If there is anything in particular I take it to other supervision that I have in place."

"Continuing to share what I am learning about self and relating to other."

Implications for practice in the wider coaching community:

When presented to the conference audience the mood of the session was supportive and engaged. Our approach clearly resonated for some of the audience:

"[a reminder] To be more explicit about "Who you are is how you coach" and that we'll look at this rather than have it evolve"

"Like the idea of asking "Who are you, as you coach?" and "misfit" exercise (how did you do that virtually?)"

"[I'm curious about] How to incorporate *the centring on who I am as a coach in my group supervision sessions*"

"Power of choosing to focus on a particular aspect of *supervision offering*"

There was also some challenge as to whether or not what we were engaging in was truly supervision. Indeed, we are conscious that given the group has started from a shared position, this could mean that we are trapped in "group think" (Janis, 1972). We could be colluding that we are doing supervision and keeping our clients in mind, but we may be misguided!

"Is this supervision or is it reflective practice? (note from a *clinical background looks like reflective practice*)"

"What is allowable in the group eg. Not "practical" matters which might be indicators of more patterns?"

"Is this Supervision or just an Action Learning Set?"

"Where the client was in the conversation?"

Although some of the audience affirmed our position:

"It sure is supervision! And should be at the heart of supervision practice!"

"There is no client! There is just *your version of the client*, therefore what is this saying about you"

How do we continue to move ourselves onwards into a deeper space?

We invited the conference participants to pose us some questions that would help us develop as a group. There were some thought provoking questions raised listed in Table 1 below, along with our current thinking on how we might work with these ideas:

Table 1: What could we be curious about?

Comment from Conference Workshop	How we might respond
What are you getting comfortable about?	Great question for our annual review
What are your group patterns?	Something for the group to monitor as part of the session wrap up. Perhaps also something that I can take to my supervision and bring back to the group.
Life stages of mature practitioners groups – what characteristics?	Interesting point. There are some models which track coach development, it might be useful for the supervisees to track how they see themselves over time. This might link to question above – and we can consciously track how the group evolves
What about other needs for the coaches? Not just developmental	Yes an omission in our account to date. Another great question for our annual review.

Discussion

My intention when setting up this particular supervision group was simply to see what was possible if we brought together mature practitioners and started the supervision dialogue from a different place. The group is still in its first year of formation and therefore the reported impact must be seen in that context. Nonetheless it seems significant that all those involved speak positively about the richness of this self-centred supervision experience. Particularly, the sense of trust and cohesion in the group has been swift.

When bringing our work to the attention of the wider community – we were interested to hear their reaction. One of the concerns we anticipated hearing from those outside the group related to how the needs of the client would get met. We had covered this in the presentation – arguing that by focusing on the coach there is an impact for all the clients the coach works with. However, the comment “Where is the client in the conversation?” was interesting, as, it was clearly an indication of underlying doubt for some. In order to understand the value in this self-centred supervision, perhaps one first has to engage with the notion of coach as instrument.

There is no shortage of models, theories and techniques to learn in the field of coaching. Indeed the constant reminder of how much more is available to learn can be a source of anxiety for coaches early on in their journey. It is common to see this play out in supervision – with supervisee’s asking “What else could I do?”. However, the longer our experience the more we come to experience for ourselves that whilst the models, tools and techniques are helpful, it is the quality of the relationship (de Haan, 2008) we have with our clients that is the difference, that makes the difference. If we are to enter that relationship effectively, we need to have a deep understanding of how we are impacting on the relationship

dynamics. As Bluckert (2006) identified “Being able to connect with more aspects of yourself and to bring them authentically into the coaching relationship can make a profound difference to the quality and depth of your work.” The stage of maturity of the coaches in this group is significant, each of them have been working as a coach for between 8 and 23 years. All of these supervisee’s philosophies are congruent with the relational nature of coaching, and they most likely would not have joined the group otherwise. Once we consciously rely on ourselves as the instrument for our work, it is easier to understand why it is important to keep this instrument in tune.

In addition, the practitioners involved were not only experienced practitioners they were also experienced supervisees. For our deliberately self-centred supervision work, a different kind of preparation is required. Some self-supervision must already have occurred for the supervisees to move the enquiry from “what happened” to “what does what happened say about me”. As the supervisor, I have noticed that while the conversation has been thought provoking it has not had a therapeutic tone. Rather it seems to generate a genuine curiosity which leads to deep exploration of areas not yet discovered. Importantly the lack of prior exploration seems not to be due to defence mechanisms being in place, rather the process encourages new connections to be made in their conscious understanding. I suspect that taking this more introspective approach with novice practitioners could lead to confusion – perhaps giving the impression that they were engaging in therapy more than coaching supervision. However, that would be an interesting assumption to test.

The potential for blurring of the line between coaching supervision and therapy is an interesting one. Perhaps this speaks to the differences between coaching and other helping professions. As a psychotherapist or counsellor in training, you are expected to engage in dedicated therapy yourself. Conversely as a coach in training, whilst you will practice coaching with your peers and no doubt do some self-work in the process – there is no requirement to put particular effort into introspection and heightened self-knowledge. It seems to be assumed that it is either already there, will be developed along the way ... or perhaps because coaches are supposed to be non-directive it simply doesn't matter? None of these are perspectives I would subscribe to.

Guy Claxton spoke at the same conference, talking about at least three levels of learning and used the analogy of a river. Firstly, noticing what is skimming across the surface. In the context of coaching supervision, this could symbolise the coaching moment chosen for supervision work. Secondly, being curious about what is happening just beneath the surface. This could relate to the coach's habitual responses of which they are sometimes unaware. The coaching supervision discussion brings attention to which of those habits may have influenced what happened in the moment. Thirdly exploring what lies in the river bed beneath. It is this deeper, darker level on the river bed which both contributes to the currents above and yet is also shaped by the movement of the river. In the context of coaching supervision, what is deep down on the river bed relates to an individual's underpinning beliefs, values and attitudes and how this manifests in their coaching work. It would be my position that only by working to understand these will we be able to build an individual's "learning power" Claxton (2002) and thereby transform their coaching work through supervision.

This leads to the question of what impact this configuration of supervision has had on their coaching work. The participant's answers to Question 3 illustrate that already they have a sense of deepening self-awareness and they are making links back to their client work. Since the conference, one of the participants has noticed that by focusing on self in our supervision she has become braver. When faced with a question around how fixed the boundary is between coaching and therapy (Rogers 2004; Maxwell, 2009) we did not get distracted by theoretical debates. Our supervision made it more possible to explore how she experienced the keeping of this boundary when working with a client who shared their early life trauma. In focusing on the question "What is your client work telling you about you?" it deepened her confidence and her level of self-trust. She saw more clearly the potential for fluidity and for bringing her own 'not knowing' proactively into the dialogue. With the permission of her client she was able to work on and beyond the 'argued' for boundary, producing real shared learning and a big shift for her client.

This speaks to the core of how this particular group of coaches are working together in supervision, the experience allows them to be on the receiving end of what they hope to provide for their clients:

"Connecting more meaningfully with what unconditional positive regard and being non-judgmental actually feels like; humility (Rogers, 1961)"

It will be interesting to track over time what happens to how they articulate their work and whether this leads to a greater complexity in their coaching assignments.

Conclusion

Our intention with this article was to articulate our experience of "self-centred supervision" and share our journey with the wider community. We wanted to prompt consideration of how coaching supervision might be experienced differently if we started in a different place. A place that genuinely helps us practice what we preach, making sure that if we aim to "encourage critical thought in others we must engage in it ourselves" (Berlak & Berlak, 1987). We approached this work with a curiosity about how we might make the experience of supervision for coaches mature in their practice, more challenging in this respect. That curiosity has been rewarded by a strong bond between the group, an acceleration of self-awareness and noticeably positive impacts on client work.

The value in this deliberately self-centred approach endorses work from the Gestalt tradition. Namely that it is the quality of the coach's presence and relationship, rather than the technique or tool used, which really counts. (Jacobs, 1989; Yontef, 1993, 1995; Yontef & Jacobs, 2000). Moreover, it is possible to explore more keenly what this actually means for practitioners when we put attention to the self in the supervision experience simply by shifting the supervision question brought for exploration. This self-centred approach to supervision is not an indulgence, neither is it a substitute for therapy. Just like the oxygen mask it is a proactive and deliberate strategy for our survival. It helps us get oxygen into the heart of understanding who we are. When we understand that, I believe we see more clearly and more consciously who we are when we coach. In turn this allows us to truly be of service to our clients.

We would invite other coaching supervision groups who share this personal developmental approach to connect with us so that we might learn together. We would be interested to share approaches to the work and perhaps collaborate to explore some of the questions posed by the conference audience regarding how these types of groups will mature.

References

- Bachkirova, T. (2016) The Self of the Coach: Conceptualization, Issues and Opportunities for Practitioner Development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68 (2) pp. 143-156.
- Berlak, A. and Berlak, H. (1987) Teachers working with teachers to transform schools. In J. Smyth (ed), *Educating Teachers: Changing the Nature of Pedagogical Knowledge*, Bristol: Farmer Press
- Bluckert, P. (2006) *Psychological Dimensions of Executive Coaching*, Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill Education. p.125
- Brown, B.C. (2013) The Future of Leadership for Conscious Capitalism. file:///C:/Users/liz/AppData/Local/Microsoft/Windows/INetCache/IE/MJNR5H07/MetaIntegral_Brown_The%20future%20of%20leadership%20for%20conscious%20capitalism_20131018.pdf (Accessed 6.6.17).
- Claxton, G. (2002) *Building Learning Power: Helping young people become better learners*. Bristol: TLO Limited.
- Covey, S. R. (1988). *The 7 habits of highly effective people. Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York. Free Press.
- DeHaan, E. (2008). *Relational Coaching: Journeys towards mastering one to one leaning*, Chichester: John Wiley & Sons Limited.
- Downey, M. (2003) *Effective Coaching: Lessons from the Coaches Coach*. USA: Thompson.
- Galloway T. (2015) *The Inner Game of Tennis: The ultimate guide to the Mental Side of Peak Performance*. London: Pan Books.
- Heidegger, M. (1962) *Being and Time*. (J. Macquarrie & E. Robinson, Trans) New York: Harper & Row.
- Jacobs, L. (1989) Dialogue in Gestalt Theory and Therapy. *The Gestalt Journal*, 12 (1) 25-67.
- Janis, I. L. (1972) *Victims of Groupthink*. New York: Houghton Mifflin.
- Kegan, R. (1982) *The Evolving Self: Problem and process in human development*. USA: Harvard University Press
- Kegan, R. (1994) *In Over our Heads: The mental demands of modern life*. USA: Harvard University Press
- Kegan, R. & Leahy L.L. (2009) *Immunity to Change: How to Overcome it and Unlock the Potential in Yourself and Your Organisation*. Boston, Massachusetts: Harvard Business Press.
- Loevinger, J. (1976) *Ego development*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Maxwell, A. (2009) The Co-created Boundary: Negotiating the limits of coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Special Issue, No.3, November 2009, pp.83-94.
- McGivern, E. (2009) Continuous Professional Development and Avoiding the Vanity Trap: An exploration of coaches' lived experience of supervision. *International Journal of Evidenced-based Coaching and Mentoring*, Special Issue, No 3, October 2009, pp. 22-37.
- Perls, F. (1969) *Gestalt Therapy Verbatim*. Moab, UT: Real People Press.
- Perls, F. Hefferline, R. Goodman, P. (1994) *Gestalt therapy: Excitement and growth in human personality*, New York: Gestalt Journal Press.
- Perls, L. (1976) Comments on new direction. In E.W.L. Smith (Ed.), *The growing edge of Gestalt therapy* (pp. 221-226), New York: Brunner/Mazel.
- Rogers, C. (1961) *On Becoming a Person*. London: Constable and Robinson.
- Rogers, J. (2004) *Coaching Skills: A handbook*. Maidenhead: McGraw-Hill.
- Torbert, B. (2004) *Action Inquiry: The Secret of Timely and Transforming Leadership*. San Francisco: Berrett Koehler.
- Yontef, G.M. (1993) *Awareness, dialogue and process: Essays on Gestalt Therapy*. Highland, NY: Gestalt Journal Press.
- Yontef, G. (1995) Gestalt Therapy. In A.S. Gurman & S.B. Messer (Eds.), *Essential Psychotherapies: Theory and practice* (pp.261-303), New York: Guilford Press.
- Yontef, G. and Jacobs, L. (2000) Gestalt Therapy. In R. Corsini & D. Wedding (Eds.), *Current Psychotherapies* (6th ed., pp.303-339), Itasca, IL: F.E. Peacock.

About the Author



Michelle Lucas is the founder and lead consultant for greenfields. Her applied psychology and blue chip corporate background contributes to her deep understanding of individuals and organisations, which informs her coaching work. She is passionate about coaching and coach supervision, is an Accredited Master Coach and an Accredited Supervisor. Michelle is recognised as one of the leaders in the field, a regular speaker at coaching conferences, she has authored numerous academic articles, two books and is now working on a third.

Acknowledgments

With thanks to my group supervisees Angela Dunbar, Diane Marks, Liz McGivern and Sarah Perrott for their whole hearted engagement in this endeavour and their contribution to this article.



[Click here to link to the original Journal Article in Appendix](#)