

# **Low Stern Interview: Research on Professional Coaching**

## **Interview Conducted by Bill Carrier**

Bill Carrier: Lew, thank you again for investing some of your time and talking about the research that you've done, and your experience and insight on research in general. I'm looking forward to this conversation.

Lew Stern: Thank you.

Bill Carrier: I thought we would start out by taking a quick look at your background. Can you help us understand a little bit about what you're doing and your portfolio of research?

Lew Stern: Sure. I'm not a researcher. What I am is an organizational consulting psychologist and business consultant, and also very heavily involved in the development of the professional discipline of coaching. Since I am a scientist, I believe that any professional discipline needs to be based on what you know from data that is scientifically derived as opposed to just hearsay. As such, coaching needs to be evidence-based and data-based and research-based.

As a result, I've become significantly involved in driving what kind of research gets done and how it gets done within the coaching field, especially the executive coaching field, the leadership and organizational coaching field. I've also been deeply involved in the standards for coaching and the standards for the education and training and certification of executive coaches, as well as in the dissemination of information as the field of coaching quickly and continually morphs.

Yes, I do research, and I'm always doing some kind of research in coaching, but my primary focus is the practice of coaching with senior-level executives and their teams, both in the for-profit and especially—and now primarily—in the not-for-profit sectors, especially in the areas of environmental preservation and in promoting the peaceful resolution and suspension of conflict on an international basis, and in the quality of life especially for those in greatest need.

I do education and training; I speak, I write articles, I write books, I do research, and that's all in my spare time. In my regular time in my semi-retirement, I am also selecting clients, a few of them in best-in-practice, mostly for-profit organizations who really are committed to doing the right thing and doing it the right way; and on leaders and best practices, for example in financial services, in biotechnology and pharmaceuticals, in medical delivery, in scientific research, those kinds of situations. Some are also in the delivery of consulting and coaching services within the nonprofit sector, especially institutes, research

institutes, NGOs and nonprofits that promote change making and change leadership for the benefit of worldkind, for the future generations. That's pretty much what I do.

I started out thinking that I was going to be a clinical psychologist, a clinician. I got a PhD in educational and counseling psychology, and, in fact, did clinical work in the 1970's. At the same time I was doing organizational work and doing coaching and consulting with leaders and potential leaders, and found that work in organizational systems was much more stimulating and much more fitting to my style and interests and energy.

After several years, I stopped doing any work in the clinical arena and primarily focused--with the mindset of understanding individual differences, human development, developmental psychology, interpersonal relationships, team dynamics, organizational dynamics, all areas I learned as a psychologist--as a consultant and coach in organizations on an international basis. That's primarily what I've done in the last 37 years.

As I was doing that, the field was really emerging. There was very little in the field when I started in '76, and came back to Massachusetts, Boston, after going to grad school and working in Minnesota. I found that most people didn't even know how you could apply, for example, psychological principles in organizational settings, so I ran the first workshop for the Mass Psych Center on applying psychology in organizational settings.

There were very few people involved in this space. My mentor was Harry Levinson, one of the grandfathers of organizational psychology and emotional health within the workplace. My father-in-law at the time was a business executive and owner and he mentored me from the business side. Meanwhile, I taught courses in graduate programs in business and organizational psychology and behavior.

Then I found that, every step I went, there were missing frameworks for professionals to learn. I was a cofounder of the New England Society of Applied Psychology, because there was no group to come together and share best practices in this region. I was a cofounder of the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching because there were no standards for the education, training and certification of executive coaches on an international basis. I cofounded The Executive Coaching Forum to develop our competency model and a handbook of standards for all players in the coaching partnership--the executive, the boss, the HR professional and the coach. The Handbook is available online in its fifth edition.

Then there's the Institute of Coaching at Harvard. I've been a senior advisor since the founding of that, to help drive their mission to build the discipline of coaching from research to practice, supporting research that can be applied

within the practice of all coaching, including personal life coaching, wellness coaching and leadership and organizational coaching.

There have been many other things. I founded the only graduate program in New England in executive coaching and ran that program after developing the curriculum and bringing together and managing the faculty (at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology). After five years, I decided to move into the Institute of Coaching at Harvard to help drive the development of its strategy of building the professional discipline through research and bringing together an association of coaches from around the world who are committed to those ideals.

I think that probably explains where I've been. It's definitely my professional life--and I have a much bigger life that is even more important to me in my own family and around volunteerism within the international community and my local community, as well as playing with my grandchildren, dog, and friends. I live on the ocean, so there's kayaking and exploring the environment, preserving the environment and many other activities that I get involved with, because life is short and life is fun.

#### OPPORTUNITY TO PARTNER

Bill Carrier: It's so characteristic of you, Lew, being so involved in stewardship--and not just of the profession, but of your own life.

Lew Stern: If we only try, right?

Bill Carrier: Trying and trying again is more than half the battle. You've done something interesting. You've bridged this divide from practice into doing research. It's been said occasionally about research that there are practitioners and professors, and never the twain shall meet. You've mentioned this a little bit, but please just speak more directly to how that happens for you and what has animated it.

Lew Stern: I think is a real opportunity on an international basis to do this, to build a partnership between research academicians who understand how to do research and the practitioners who have the daily data-gathering that needs to be organized. Many of them have already gathered data; they just don't know what to do with it or have the time to do it.

It turns out that just because of personality and style and natural strengths and inclinations and all the rest of it, the people who tend to like to practice don't have a lot of interest or patience or whatever it takes to do really good research--and yet they're very interested, most of them, in really using their practice to understand what works. They're looking for patterns. They want to know how they can contribute best practices with others and share the same thing and get

the same thing from other practitioners.

For me, I've always collected data. Every time I work with a client, I gather. I always anonymize all of my data. Whenever I do assessments and the 360s and I meet with the client, every time I meet, I have very structured notes of what I did to intervene and assist the client to discover things and decide what they're going to do, and to implement those and experiment and try those things. Then I log what worked and what didn't work, and I keep notes of all that.

For the 1,000 to 2,000 coaching clients that I have had—and I have much of that data, and I'll speak for myself: I have done very little with that data. I did one research study for my own practice, and took 25 clients that I had worked with over a period of a year who were senior executives. I tried to identify what the patterns of their presenting situations and their strengths and what their goals for coaching were, and then what the results of the assessments were and what the results of the 360s were, and then what coaching approaches we used and which worked and which didn't work. Then, what kind of results did we get at the individual, the team and the organizational level, as well as business measures? Then I followed up six months later to see what kind of sustained results were derived.

I found that 75 percent of the people that I coached were promoted or given expanded responsibilities within six months of the coaching, but I didn't do enough with the data, or I didn't have enough time ... And that's one of the things. If you're a coach, you don't have a lot of time. It's a very time-consuming profession, as an executive coach. You're spending a minimum of typically ten days, eighty hours of work, to coach an executive over a period of six to twelve months.

To then take all of what you learned and structure the research to be able to take that data and look for patterns and control it in such a way that you can compare that with the people who haven't received coaching, so that you can actually generalize it and do some random sampling, so that you know that it's not just because of your being the coach but because of what happened in the coaching in certain situations, I just don't have the time to do that.

That's probably the case for most practitioners, but there's an opportunity for a partnership between the researchers and the practitioners: to be able to use the time and the expertise of the researchers on how to design the “experiments.” They can design the research around what is coaching, how it's done, by whom, with whom, in which situations, with what kinds of results, measured in what ways. They can include what periods of time with what sustained results, and what the options are, and where there's a good match, and does it make a difference if the coach is certified or has a certain kind of background.

All those things, we don't know any of that. Even with all the research that's been done, we don't know any of that, so as a potential discipline, we're really in our infancy.

Now, we've learned some things, over the last five years especially, having to do with the diversity of what's going on, especially in executive and leadership and organizational coaching, around the world. One thing that we know in general is that people are doing coaching in very different ways. They're calling it coaching, but meaning very different things in different parts of the world. Some of it includes mentoring, some advising, some consulting. Some of it's focused on mindfulness, some of it's focused on self-awareness, some of it is on skill building, some of it is on habit change, some is on organizational development, some on intervention, some on relationships. And everybody's calling that all one thing: coaching.

Coaching means many things to many people, not only in different parts of the world and of the United States, but also in different disciplines within the United States and then in different parts of the world in the same way. There's a multitude of things that people are calling executive and leadership and organizational coaching, or executive coaching. Here's a critical consequence of that imprecision: When it's hard to agree on what it is that we're going to include in the research, because we all have different definitions, it's very hard to know even what kind of research to do with whom.

Then comes the design of how do we do that, how do we get the real experts in research? Because I'm a PhD and I was trained as a researcher, I happen to understand, to some degree anyway, what is good research design. I'm familiar with what are good qualitative and quantitative studies, and things like when do you use control groups, how you can do that, what kind of statistical analyses you should be able to do to make it generalizable, so that we can interpret what is applicable in one situation versus all situations, or at least to what degree can we generalize findings.

I understand that, so there's where I bridge, as a lot of other people who have backgrounds in social sciences or medical science, or anthropology. A lot of people in coaching have backgrounds that include research expertise, and they can be bridges between the experts in research and the experts in practice. They're doing practice, they're doing a little bit of research, and they understand research enough to connect the two. Does that answer your question?

## RESEARCH IN COACHING HISTORY

Bill Carrier: Very much so. You've been talking about this particular bridge between practice and research, and I know that you've written about the difficulties in research on coaching. Can you help us understand a little bit about, first, how you got involved in the idea of research broadly serving the field of

coaching? I know, for example, you were involved in the ICRF, the Institute of Coaching Leadership Forum at Harvard, which was convened to set up an agenda and guidelines for research that would help advance the field. Then I'd like you to talk a little bit about your own research into the research.

Lew Stern: Absolutely. Where would you like me to start?

Bill Carrier: Probably at the ICRF, and please mention the Dublin Declaration as part of that.

Lew Stern: Sure. It was about six or seven years ago. There was sort of a rumbling, sort of an undercurrent across and especially within English-speaking countries, but in other countries as well, that somehow we needed to come together. There were pockets of people doing research and defining coaching and training coaches and setting standards, and starting to do the kinds of things that it takes to build a professional discipline. Coaching was, as the article in the Harvard Business Review said "the wild west of coaching." And it was the Wild West because there were few rules and standards. Everyone was just going into coaching.

It was a fascinating field. It gave focus and opportunity to people who were good as helping professionals, at working with individuals and groups to help them understand themselves. People entering the field could support clients in understanding what they wanted to accomplish, to make decisions and to set plans in motion, to develop their capacity and to improve their performance-- to have an impact and influence on the results of their organization or their community or their family or whatever it might be.

There was that rumbling. So a large group of people came together in Dublin for a forum of people who represented ten different categories of what was going on in coaching. They were leaders of about 250 people who had been meeting virtually as multidisciplinary and international teams for a year, having teleconferences, to talk about each of those ten categories. For example, the ten categories were things like the definition of coaching and the training and education of coaches, research in coaching standards of coaching practice and the measurement of results--all those kinds of things that would go into moving coaching into a more professional space and into a more evidence-based space. Evidence-based simply meaning that we wouldn't just do things by guessing what might work, but that we would actually have data to support that it would be more likely to work, and that you were accountable to your client for best practices.

That was the field of coaching emerging. I think it was five days long in Dublin, in Ireland, and basically what we did was to share the work of the ten teams and what we learned. We gathered statements for each of those ten areas about what the status was, where we were, and what needed to be done to move it to

the next step.

We then put together a declaration based on our experiences and our interactions as a group of professionals from around the world, which included academicians and practitioners and trainers and certifiers and you name it. Given the involvement of that relatively representative group of people, we asked ourselves: What do we declare about where coaching is? Where does it need to go? What are the priorities and stages of how we need to make that happen? That was done, and that document and supporting white papers are available online.

## RESEARCH FORUM and INSTITUTE OF COACHING

Then as a result of that--and also there was a second process going on simultaneously--the people who were more into research were also asking what kinds of research and what research topics were of highest priority.

That group, with the leadership of Carol Kauffman, who had been at Harvard for many years, identified that there was a need to form an academically-based, research-driven institute at a well-established, well-respected academic institution.

The Institute of Coaching was being formed. There was a need to pull together leading researchers in coaching from around the world five years ago at what became the first meeting of the International Coaching Research Forum (ICRF). I was fortunate to be part of that Forum. Each of us shared a view of where the field was, where research was and what we saw as the priorities of where it needed to go. Then we spent several days literally brainstorming planning, given all the data that we brought with us, what we knew and what we didn't know, and what we needed to find out through research and what kinds of research needed to be done.

We came up with a hundred different topics that needed to be researched. That list is available online. In fact, many of these resources, including the Handbook of Coaching and this list of the needs for research in coaching and the different journals—they are all available at the [instituteofcoaching.org](http://instituteofcoaching.org).

As a senior advisor to the Institute, I'm a bit biased, but the Institute of Coaching really is the only academically based organization that is driving coaching research to practice. It is an enormous resource for anyone who cares about doing evidence-based coaching and getting involved with research and coaching, best practices in coaching, and what have we learned. There are tele-classes and master classes and tutorials, as well—many ways of accessing information and research. I encourage people to join the Institute's Professional Association to get access to all of these resources.

There is a lot of research going on in the field of coaching, and one thing the Institute has been trying to do is to provide financial resources, with the support of the Harnish Foundation, to allow people to get small grants to support the research that they want to do. What the Institute is now moving into even more is a proactive role in driving the agenda for what research needs to be done.

## THE ARTICLE

Bill Carrier: You and Sunny Rostron collaborated on an article about that topic recently, surveying the written research in coaching and coming up with some important conclusions. Can you tell us more about that?

Lew Stern: Sure. Anthony Grant published his bibliography in 2011 of what research had recently been done in coaching. The extensive bibliography did not restrict itself to just peer-reviewed journals or original research. It was on anything having to do with coaching.

Sunny and I decided that we would take a deeper look at peer-reviewed research published in journals from many disciplines. For our research, we took the 100 original topics that the ICRF suggested for research and, through a systematic analysis; we organized the 100 topics into 16 categories of research that needed to be done.

In our review of the research, we included all the peer-reviewed articles we could find on the web in a wide variety of publications. Anthony Grant came up with hundreds and hundreds of references on all the articles that had been written. We came up with more than 200 research articles that had been written which were either not included in Tony Grant's work or had been done since he published his bibliography and weren't included in his research. There were almost 90 peer-reviewed journals that had published original research in coaching in the last five years. They're in every discipline you can imagine, from psychology to coaching specifically, to medicine, business management, organizational development, human resource development, education and training, finance and economics and other disciplines, even construction management, the Journal of Engineering, the Journal of Safety Research, the Journal of Social Work Practice, the American Geriatric Society, and Leadership in Management and Engineering.

## ICRF CATEGORIES OF RESEARCH

We did an analysis of the 100 questions originally asked at the ICRF and came up with 16 topical categories. We did our research to find out the degree to which each of those categories of the 100 questions had been studied since they were raised at the original ICRF meeting.



Had they been answered? Had there been any research in those topics? If you like, I can get into what those topics were, just to give you a flavor of them. Would that be helpful?

Bill Carrier: Yes, it would be very interesting.

Lew Stern: Okay. I'm going to run through them very quickly, but you'll get a sense of it. One topic is coach education and training. Is it being done, where is it being done, how is it being done? What's the curriculum, who are the students, what kind of results, how long does it take? Those who are certified, do they get better results than not?

The coaching relationship, how do you define it, and what goes on for chemistry building and matching between a coach and a coachee? And does it matter if there's a gender similarity or difference, and how about style and the background of the coach in the relationship?

Then, regarding coaching outcomes, how are those measured and what outcomes are being followed, and what do clients care about when it comes to outcomes? Are their outcomes sustainable, and are they outcomes of well-being and outcomes of lifestyle and outcomes of organizational effectiveness and business results, depending upon the kind of coaching?

Coaching in organizations specifically: who's doing it, which organizations are doing it, why are they doing it? Who's getting it within the organizations, how are they structuring it, how are they managing it?

Then specifically about the coach, what competencies are needed, are developed, and what are the characteristics and practices of coaches? Regarding certain characteristics and competencies and practices and compassion--what makes a great coach versus a good coach versus an incompetent coach, when it comes to actually having the kinds of results that clients are looking for?

How about the coaching process? Is there any pattern around how people actually do a flow of what goes on from the initial contact between a potential coach and coachee to the ending of the coaching? We need to find out. Is there best practice around coaching processes, or are there best practices in different situations?

How about research methods in coaching? Do any research methods work better than others? What is being done and what isn't being done, and where is it being done and how is it being done? By whom?

How about supervision? It's a critical area, because you can't expect to go to a certificate program and be ready to handle any complex coaching situation

without supervision, just like you couldn't if you were a teacher or a physician or an occupational therapist or anything else. You need supervision, so is there supervision going on, and if so, what goes on in that supervision? What does a supervisor need to have to be competent, and what is the process of supervision?

The business of coaching: how has coaching been professionalized with policy, ethics, governance, identification of business trends, pricing, et cetera.

How about the difference between coaching and what's done in therapy, versus counseling and versus mentoring? That's another category.

How about how coaching differs by geographic area, internationally? The models, the theories, the activities, the assumptions, the processes?

And then there's a lot of work being done in peer coaching. Is peer coaching going on, where has it been going on, where is it going on? It's happening a great deal in academia, we know that. It is happening a lot in organizations; it's happening a lot in religious organizations, so is peer coaching happening in coaching? Where is it happening, how is it happening?

The contracting process is very important. The agreement between an individual and their coach or an organization and an individual and their coach: what is included in that contracting, and what makes for better coaching where there are less conflicts that could get in the way of the result?

How do we know that someone is ready for coaching, and that they're not ready for coaching: what criteria are used to evaluate readiness? How is the decision being made on who is coached and not?

How is assessment being used? Is it worthwhile doing, and if so, what kinds of assessment and data gathering, such as standardized instruments, observation, 360's, et cetera?

Finally, the last area is the impact of coaching on society, and that's the area that matters most to me, because we can do all of this and it's nice to have an impact on one individual, but wouldn't it be nice for coaching to have an impact on the crazy world that we're living in? Saving the planet from this self-destruction and from killing each other, and supporting a quality of life for all the poor people in the world and the people going through war in every part of the world? Wouldn't it be nice if coaching could have an impact on the people who influence the state of the world and the survival of our planet for generations to come?

#### STATE OF RESEARCH NOW

Bill Carrier: When you're starting to look at all of this research across four and a

half years, at all of the peer-reviewed articles about coaching research, what did you find?

Lew Stern: The good news is that there's a little research going on. The bad news is there's very little, and it's not systematically being managed, so most of the questions aren't being addressed. Basic research is not being done, so we don't know what the shared definitions are. We don't know how coaching is defined in different parts of the world. We don't know what is going on in the coaching room or on the teleconference when people are doing coaching. We don't know the actual dynamics.

We don't know whether or not it's getting the results. We don't know what results are being measured. We don't know whether or not a coach with one kind of background and certain kinds of training and certain competencies does any better on certain results than any other kind of coach. We don't know what kind of impact the organizational system or a person's life system has on outcomes and the degree to which a coach needs to understand that in order to help the individual. We don't know what processes work better than any others. We don't know whether or not there are certain things about contracting that can increase the efficacy of coaching.

We don't know what research designs would give us the most efficient and yet most useful results, and internationally we don't know the impact that coaching is having on societies.

We do know that a lot is going on, but the research that has been conducted has not systematically gathered that data to know what is going on in what parts of the world with what kinds of results.

The good news is we know that a lot of people are doing a lot of good work. Most of that work is focused on measuring psychological results. We know, for example, that if you look at most of the controlled research studies in the peer-reviewed journals, most of the work is on the coaching process. The two topics that are being researched most are the coaching process and coaching outcomes.

If you look at how many studies have been done in this time period, the coaching process represents, from 2008 to 2012, more than 100 studies total in more than 80 journals where they were published.

Again, this is peer-reviewed original research; not just what people are writing about what they think. If someone submits a research article of original research, then the people who are reviewing to see whether or not it meets the standards for professional research, the people who are reviewing the submission, don't know who submitted the article, so it's a blind review.

In those peer-reviewed journals, there were only basically 100 studies in five years having to do with what goes on in coaching, and a little over 40 about outcomes and not quite 30 about coaching in organizations. There were about 20 articles about coaching versus other helping practices and how they differ. Then you go down the line regarding other categories of research and the numbers get smaller and smaller and smaller. So there were several hundred articles total over five years, but basically only two or three of the original 16 categories that were identified by the International Coaching Research Forum out of that list of 100 topics have had any significant coaching done.

One of the interesting thing we found was that the largest number of articles that have been published were primarily in coaching psychology, psychology and coaching journals, but there were a bunch of other publication venues. If you look at the articles that have been published around the coaching process, roughly 80 of them were in psychology or coaching journals, about 25 in coaching journals and a little more than 50 in psychology journals. But there were also almost 10 in medicine, more than 10 in business, and several in human resources and in education and training. So one thing that we learned from this diversity is that coaching really is a multidisciplinary field, that the people who are doing coaching and that are studying and researching coaching come from many different fields.

I did another research study through interviews with a colleague of mine, Doug Riddle. We interviewed coaches from 25 different disciplines, from art to music to psychology to anthropology to sociology to medicine to education. The coaches we interviewed had originally been trained in those disciplines and then got into coaching. We wanted to see whether or not their models and their practices were different--and they were absolutely different.

It was fascinating. There were some commonalities, but the way someone with an art background—and an artist's mind and an artist's standards and processes and models—approaches coaching is very, very different from the approaches of someone who's from psychology or education or sports medicine, or a physician or a therapist. It's fascinating—we don't have any research to substantiate exactly what are the differences...and do those differences impact the process or impact of coaching.

#### WHERE TO GO FROM HERE

Bill Carrier: I could probably write an entire article just about this part of the conversation, but I want to be respectful of your time, too. I know we've got about five more minutes. It's such wonderful content. How would you like to spend these last five minutes? What have we not addressed that you'd like to address?

Lew Stern: I guess the most important thing to me is: where do we go from here?

If research is going to do what it needs to do to help coaching move in the direction of being a more professional, evidence-based discipline, where coaches have data to substantiate that what they're doing is the best that they can be doing with their clients, what do we need to do? Here are my recommendations, and the recommendations that Sunny and I came up with.

First of all, we need to do much more research. The amount of research that's being done is actually going down. It picked up in the mid-2000s but since 2008 less peer-reviewed original research was conducted through the first half of 2012. One, we need to beef it up, and we need to get more practitioners and researchers working together to do real research, both controlled studies and non-controlled studies. What we need to do is systematically find out who's being coached, by whom, in what ways, with what results, and what factors are affecting the results and the satisfaction and the impact of the that coaching.

Number two is we really do need to expand the variables that we're studying when it comes to results. Since psychologists have become, or primarily have been, up until this point, the primary drivers of the research, the outcomes that they're primarily looking at—not only, but primarily—are outcomes like depression and anxiety and happiness. Also, they're primarily focused on individuals, they're primarily psychologically oriented, and the results that are primarily being measured are through standardized psychological testing.

What we're not measuring is the impact of a leader on business/mission results. We're not measuring whether or not, over a period of a year, whether, literally, a person's physical well-being is better. Does their vagal tone get better? Does their blood pressure go down? There's a happiness scale that's often used, and that's very positive, but does that happiness lead to a life that is more productive?

We need to look at the different specialty areas of coaching, like life coaching, personal coaching, executive coaching, motivational coaching, wellness coaching, coaching with people with special needs, coaching in the sports arena. These sub-disciplines of coaching all need to do research in order to be evidence-based and be responsible to their clients.

Next, we've produced a bunch of research, but we're not doing it in a systematic way. Somehow we need to come together again, and perhaps approach the path through other sources. We need to set some priorities by the people who are actually going to do the research. Right now what is happening is that people tend to be doing research where they have the clients available to study. There's very little random sampling going on, and there's very little in the way of control groups, so we can't generalize either within coaching groups or across situations and geographic regions.

We can't just be looking at the general coaching process. We need to be studying what the coach is actually doing at the micro level. We're not doing that

yet. We need to do things more systematically, more internationally, sharing results.

The certification programs need to be doing more research. They have a large array of people coming in, and what they're not doing is systematic research on what backgrounds those people come in with, what competencies, what styles, what strengths, and where are they at the end of the certification training and then where are they six months later. What kinds of coaching have they done and what impact has that had.

We also need to be focusing on the larger impact on the system within which people live and work; so not only the impact of coaching on the individual, but also on their relationships and their families, organizations, and their communities and society as a whole. That's where we need to get involved with looking at where is society, and who are the influencers and potential influencers on the future of our society. We need to proactively focus our coaching where it can have the greatest influence to have the biggest impact on the future for generations to come. Socially responsible coaching is a critical aspect of this, and there's practically no research being done on the impact of coaching at this societal level.

In short, we need more diverse research, better coaching research, more involvement of the practitioner and partnership with the researcher, better studies that are more controlled with random samples and control variables, and then more people publishing. More research—and then the actual practitioners actually looking at that research and using it to build their practice, not just doing what their gut tells them is the right thing to do.

## COACHING IMPACTING PEOPLE

Bill Carrier: We just started talking about how research into social impacts is a critical question and one that has been pretty much untouched, and it brings me back to where we started, which is how much you personally are working in this area, both as a coach and as a steward of the profession. Your sharing this information right now is a great example of what you're doing, in order to help others have that social impact.

Lew Stern: I appreciate that, and thank you. What I need to let you know is that there are many talented people who are doing as much or more than I am to steward the coaching professional discipline. There are unbelievably wonderful, dedicated people who are giving of their lives, literally. I know coaches and coaching researchers who have moved to Africa, India, South America, so many parts of the world, into impoverished areas for months every year of their lives, to help build coaching within communities for people to coach each other. Many of these coaches are going into countries that are war-torn, putting themselves in danger so that the leaders of those countries can stop wars. I know people who

are spending most of their lives not getting paid to identify opportunities for making a difference by using coaching to save our planet for future generations.

The one thing that I'd like to say, in my closing anyway, is that coaching doesn't just have to be a professional discipline. Coaching is an unbelievable resource for every one of us to use every day in our lives, with the people with whom we interact in our personal and in our work lives.

We know from research that compassion makes a difference; that looking someone in the eye makes a difference; that unconditional regard makes a difference; that helping a person discover things on their own instead of telling them makes a difference; that coaching someone so that they operate primarily in their parasympathetic nervous system helps them so they are not on guard and they stay more open-minded to possibilities.

We know some of those things already, but it doesn't have to be done just by professional coaches. The opportunity, the biggest opportunity, is for every one of us to coach each other. Every day, when we have those end-of-the-day conversations with our partners or with our kids or with teachers, other people that we know or someone on the street that you meet, or someone at your religious organization or in your neighborhood. We can stop and do more than listen. Coaching is more than listening. There is a great potential to apply coaching with each other to change the world one person at a time.

Bill Carrier: You managed again to bring it back to how other people are doing coaching—a gracious and big-picture perspective which seems characteristic of your approach. Thank you!

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## **Lew Stern**

Dr. LEW STERN has over 35 years experience as a leader, management consultant, executive coach, organization and leadership development specialist, and consulting psychologist. He focuses on helping boards, leaders and their teams develop skills and strategies and change their organizations and how they run them. He has worked with hundreds of leaders and would-be leaders to improve their leadership and accomplish their business and mission objectives on a very practical level.

### **Services**

Lew provides a wide array of consulting and coaching including: Customized 360-degree feedback for leaders, executive coaching, leadership assessment and development planning, on-boarding consulting, succession planning, and development for high-potential leaders.

### **Demonstrated Results**

His past research has demonstrated 75% of his coaching clients to have been promoted or given expanded responsibilities within a year and doubling of the typical retention rate of leaders assigned to new positions.

### **Publications and Presentations**

Lew has written many publications and presented at major conferences not only in leadership development but also in quality assurance, process reengineering, customer focus, interpersonal communication, team development, and the potential social and environmental impact of coaching. His most recent books are Executive Coaching: Building and Managing Your Professional Practice (Wiley, 2008) and the 5<sup>th</sup> Edition of The Executive Coaching Handbook.

### **Leadership Experience**

He has served as President of Focus Consulting and Stern Consulting, Vice President at ODI, Senior Vice President of Manchester Partners International, and Executive Director of the Foundation for International Leadership Coaching.

**Thought Leader in Leadership Coaching**

Dr. Stern serves as Senior Advisor to the Institute of Coaching at McLean Hospital, Harvard Medical School and has a faculty appointment as Clinical Instructor at Harvard Medical School. He is a Co-Founder and Past President of the New England Society for Applied Psychology, and Co-Founder and Co-Leader of The Executive Coaching Forum. He was a Founding Board member of the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching and founded and served as the Director of New England's only Graduate Certificate Program in Executive Coaching (at the Massachusetts School of Professional Psychology). Lew served as Director of the Annual Boston Conference on Executive Coaching for five years. He is a member of the International Advisory Board of the International Coaching Psychology Review and on the Editorial Board of Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice.

**Selected Client List**

Fidelity Investments, Federal Express, American Express, AT&T, Omgeo, Johnson & Johnson, Rohm & Haas, Tufts Health Plan, State Street Global Advisors, Millennium Pharmaceuticals, Brown Brothers Harriman, Northeastern University, Rogers Corporation, Boston Scientific, Pulmatrix, Wellington Management, as well as many other leading organizations in the retail, telecommunications, technology, hospitality, healthcare, educational, and non-profit sectors.

**Education**

Lew received his B.A. with Honors from the University of Massachusetts in Amherst and his M.A. and Ph.D. in Psychology from the University of Minnesota. Dr. Stern is a licensed psychologist in Massachusetts and a Certified Health Care Provider. He has served as an adjunct faculty or guest lecturer in business, management, and organization behavior and development at many colleges and universities. Lew is networked with many other consultants, coaches, and coaching and consulting firms and organizations. These collaborative relationships allow him to refer to or bring in leading coaches and consultants with special backgrounds and from different locations across the U.S. and around the world. His consulting network provides a depth and span of consulting resources while ensuring special attention and high quality for each of his client projects.

**A Commitment to Global Sustainability**

A significant portion of Lew's time is dedicated to pro bono consulting and coaching of leaders of non-profit, government, and international non-government organizations who are committed to environmental sustainability, peace, and quality of life.