

# **Development of Coaches: II. Challenge, Autonomy and Support**

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This report is the second in a series that convey and interpret results from two versions of a questionnaire that was initially prepared by the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative in cooperation with the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research. Completed in 2009 by 153 coaches from throughout the world, the first survey was followed by a second version that was distributed in 2015 (with only minor editing changes) by the Library of Professional Coaching in cooperation with ITLCInsights. Fifty eight coaches provided responses to the second questionnaire -- yielding a total of 211 responses to the two surveys. The time interval between the two surveys was six years, enabling us to get a preliminary sense of possible changes in coaching attitudes over this period of time, as well as a sense of stability (low levels of difference in mean scores and variance) in the attitudes of professional coaches regarding their own development.

Unlike most coaching surveys, the two surveys conducted in 2009 and 2015 were directed toward those actually doing the coaching, rather than the users of coaching services. These surveys were completed by a widely ranging group of coaches - in terms of geography, schools of coaching, age and years of experience in providing coaching services. These two surveys are also distinctive in that they have been being conducted by organizations (the Library of Professional Coaching and ITLCInsights) that have no specific stake in the outcomes, and are being distributed to practitioners at many levels of practice and status. These surveys are truly "neutral" and "democratizing."

## **Methods**

Both versions of the Development of Coaches questionnaire are based on one devised by the Collaborative Research Network of the Society for Psychotherapy Research in their

international study of development among professional psychotherapists described by Orlinsky and Rønnestad in *How Psychotherapists Develop* (Orlinsky & Rønnestad, 005). Both of the coaching studies include questions that parallel those used in the Society's Development of Psychotherapists Common Core Questionnaire. This enables us not only to study varied aspects of coaches' development, but also compare responses of coaches to these made by psychotherapists. Many questions have been posed over the past twenty years concerning the similarities and differences between professional coaching and psychotherapy. The data being gathered in these two surveys will provide some of the first answers regarding this comparison.

### **Modification of Development of Psychotherapists Survey**

In adapting the questionnaire, members of the Development of Coaches Research Collaborative drew on their own experiences as coaches to ask questions that they hoped would seem meaningful and relevant to those responding to the questionnaire. Most of the questions could be answered quickly by checking alternatives that most closely reflected the respondent's own experience.

### **Instructions to the Respondents**

In the case of both surveys, respondents were asked to answer all of the questions and were provided with the following framework:

The complete set of responses provides us with a fuller understanding of your own work and the context in which you work. You may find these questions offer a useful opportunity to reflect on your own coaching career. If any seem difficult to answer exactly, give your best estimate and continue. To ensure confidentiality, the questionnaire is completed anonymously. Information you provide will be used only for research purposes.

Designers of the original survey proposed that the respondents would benefit in two ways. These two benefits made this truly a collaborative effort between those who designed the

questionnaire and those who completing it. Following is a statement offered to those considering completion of the second survey:

You can sign up to receive the report findings from this study when they become available. . . These reports will also be made available at no charge to the general coaching public through the Library of Professional coaching. The reports will identify which modes of development have been found to be the most effective. . . .

[Furthermore, results from this survey may] increase the credibility of the coaching profession. As Francine Campone, one of the creators and initiators of the original survey has indicated, a culture of research and evidence needs to be created in the field of professional coaching. The more we learn from one another about professional coaching practices, the more collectively knowledgeable we will become. The more knowledgeable we become, the greater the opportunity for building evidence-based coaching strategies and tools. The better the strategies and tools the more effective we will be as coaching professionals. The more effective we become as a profession, the greater the demand will be for our services.

### **Focus of the Study**

While there were 76 questions in each of the coaching surveys, we will concentrate in this second study on responses to only three of the questions (questions #32, #33 and #34 in the first survey and questions #31, #32 and #33 in second survey):

*Question One: Currently, how often do you feel ...*

- a. Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.*
- b. Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.*
- c. In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.*
- d. Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.*
- e. Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.*
- f. Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation*
- g. Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.*
- h. Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.*

- i. Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.*
- j. Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.*
- k. Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.*
- l. Boggled down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.*
- m. Frustrated with a client for wasting your time.*

*Question Two. When in difficulty, how often do you ...*

- a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective*
- b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client*
- c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague*
- d. Consult relevant articles or books*
- e. Involve another professional or organization in the case*
- f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client*
- g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually*
- h. Seriously consider terminating coaching*
- i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen*
- j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings*
- k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty*
- l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem*
- m. Modify your stance or approach with a client*
- n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present*
- o. Show your frustration to the client*
- p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach*
- q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional*

*Question Three. In your RECENT coaching work, how much ...*

- a. Do you feel you are changing as a coach?*

- b. Does this change feel like progress or improvement?*
- c. Does this change feel like decline or impairment?*
- d. Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?*
- e. Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?*
- f. Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?*
- g. Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?*
- h. Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?*
- i. Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?*
- j. Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?*
- k. How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?*
- l. How important to you is your further development as a coach?*

Respondents were asked to answer each of the items under each of these three questions using a five point rating scale:

*0 = Not at all*

*1 = Slightly*

*2 = Somewhat*

*3 = Moderately*

*4 = Much*

*5 = Very Much*

In future reports we will provide results from the other questions, as well as offer more detailed analyses about relationships between responses to the three questions on which we focus in this article and the other questions -- including the potential differences in responses between various demographic groups and correlations between responses to various questions. In addition, we will engage advanced statistical tools (multiple regression and factor analysis) as we seek to provide a more comprehensive and systemic portrait of the respondents' sense of their own development as coaches.

## Results

As we did in the first report we will offer only basic descriptive statistics (mean and variance) for all of the statements associated with each of these three questions. The mean scores will give us an initial impression regarding the extent to which respondents rated themselves low or high on each item, while the variance scores will give us an initial impression of the extent to which respondents tend to agree with one another in their rating of each item.

### Question One: Currently, how often do you feel . . .

We begin by providing a summary of the responses to this initial question concerning how coaches feel about various aspects of their work as a coach.

First, a table for the first study with mean scores and variance for each item:

**Table One: Study One: Currently, how often do you feel . . .**

	Mean	Variance
<i>Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.</i>	1.46	0.37
<i>Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.</i>	1.52	0.40
<i>In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.</i>	0.93	0.60
<i>Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.</i>	0.68	0.34
<i>Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.</i>	0.75	0.34
<i>Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation.</i>	1.03	0.63
<i>Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.</i>	0.66	0.43
<i>Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.</i>	1.03	0.56

<i>Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.</i>	0.93	0.46
<i>Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.</i>	0.41	0.28
<i>Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.</i>	0.90	0.57
<i>Bogged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.</i>	1.03	0.59
<i>Frustrated with a client for wasting your time</i>	0.74	0.48

Second, we present the means and variance scores for the same question as it was posed in the second survey -- six years later.

**Table Two: Study Two: Currently, how often do you feel . . .**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<i>Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.</i>	1.47	0.74
<i>Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.</i>	1.38	0.49
<i>In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.</i>	0.91	0.54
<i>Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.</i>	0.62	0.38
<i>Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.</i>	0.57	0.39
<i>Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation.</i>	1.07	0.59
<i>Troubled by ethical issues that have</i>	0.57	0.39

<i>arisen in your work with a client.</i>		
<i>Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.</i>	0.86	0.61
<i>Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.</i>	0.71	0.39
<i>Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.</i>	0.34	0.34
<i>Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.</i>	0.64	0.69
<i>Bogged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.</i>	0.86	0.44
<i>Frustrated with a client for wasting your time</i>	0.72	0.62

As we noted in our analysis of results from the two questions that were the focus of our first article, several approaches can be taken as we attempt to make sense of these means and variances. One approach, with regard to the means, is to take these mean (average) scores at "face-value." If a respondent indicates that her level of agreement with a specific statement is "Much" or "Very Much", then we should accept this level of agreement for this respondent and not attempt to manipulate this assessment in some manner. Therefore, as we discuss the results from these three questions, we will first consider the mean scores as accurate representations of the respondents' self-perceptions regarding the challenges they face and the support they seek.

We also can make a legitimate claim that the mean scores should be interpreted in a comparative manner. It is not simply a matter of reporting on the mean scores recorded for these questions. There are several ways in which we must be cautious in accepting the mean scores for these three questions. Specifically, as we noted in the first article, there are so-called "response set" factors that can legitimately be considered when seeking to make sense of the scores recorded for these questions.

Clearly, there is a strong judgmental factor ("social desirability") to be assigned to these three questions--especially the first question ("currently, how often do you feel"). It is better to feel

good about your work as a coach. In a long questionnaire, such as this one, response fatigue is also likely to settle in by the time the respondent faces these questions. Respondents are often likely to simply click on one end of the response spectrum (usually the positive end). This acquiescence response set can be particularly prevalent when the survey requires no more than clicking of the mouse on a specific response bullet.

Given these concerns, it is legitimate to provide a comparative analysis--looking at means in terms of not just their absolute value, but also their value in comparison with the mean scores on other items listed within a specific question. We will approach the mean scores for each of the three questions from both the absolute and comparative perspectives.

There is not as much of a problem in making sense of the variance scores. In many ways, this is the most interesting descriptive statistic when considering the meaning of scores in a questionnaire such as this one--which was completed by a diverse set of respondents. The variance scores tell you about the extent to which respondents tend to agree with one another. A low variance scores indicates that there is a high level of agreement, whereas a high variance score indicates low levels of agreement (and potential controversy). Some caution does have to be engaged when interpreting variance scores, for an item that pulls for social desirability or acquiescence tends to "squish" everyone at one end of the scale: there is not a higher (or lower) point on the scale when respondents are making their choice.

Given these preliminary considerations, alternative approaches, and cautionary notes, we present the mean scores and variances for each of the three questions in a hierarchical manner--from high to low. We turn first to the question about how coaches currently feel, beginning with the mean scores for the first survey, listing the means from highest to lowest:

*Question One: Currently, how often do you feel ...*

- b. Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client. (mean = 1.52)*
- a. Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client. (mean = 1.46)*
- h. Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts. (mean = 1.03)*
- l. Bugged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere. (mean = 1.03)*
- f. Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation (mean = 1.03)*
- c. In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client. (mean = 0.93)*
- i. Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem. (mean = 0.93)*
- k. Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others. (mean = 0.90)*
- e. Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client. (mean = 0.75)*
- m. Frustrated with a client for wasting your time. (mean = 0.74)*

- d. Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences. (mean = 0.68)
- g. Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.(mean = 0.66)
- j. Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.(mean = 0.41)

We now list the means in order of magnitude for the first question from the second survey:

*Question One: Currently, how often do you feel ...*

- a.Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.(mean = 1.47)
- b. Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.(mean = 1.38)
- f. Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation. (mean = 1.07)
- c. In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.(mean = 0.91)
- h. Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.(mean = 0.86)
- l Boggled down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.(mean = 0.86)
- m. Frustrated with a client for wasting your time.(mean = 0.72)
- i. Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.(mean = 0.71)
- k. Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.(mean = 0.64)
- d. Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.(mean = 0.62)
- e. Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.(mean = 0.57)
- g. Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.(mean = 0.57)
- j. Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.(mean = 0.34)

The variance scores for the items on question one will provide us with some idea about the level of agreement among the respondents to both surveys. We begin with the variance scores for the first survey from highest (least agreement) to lowest (most agreement):

*Question One: Currently, how often do you feel ...*

- f. Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation (variance = 0.63)
- c. In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.(variance = 0.60)
- l Boggled down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.(variance = 0.59)
- h. Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.(variance = 0.58)
- k. Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.(variance = 0.57)
- m. Frustrated with a client for wasting your time.(variance = 0.48)
- i. Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.(variance = 0.46)
- g. Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client.(variance = 0.43)
- b. Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.(variance = 0.40)
- a.Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client. (variance = 0.37)
- d. Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.(variance = 0.34)
- e. Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.(variance = 0.34)
- j. Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.(variance = 0.28)

The second set of variance scores comes from Study Two responses to our first question. They are once again listed from highest variance to lowest:

Question One: Currently, how often do you feel ...

- a. Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client. (variance = 0.74)
- k. Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others. (variance = 0.69)
- m. Frustrated with a client for wasting your time. (variance = 0.62)
- h. Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts. (variance = 0.61)
- f. Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation (variance = 0.59)
- c. In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client. (variance = 0.54)
- b. Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client. (variance = 0.49)
- l. Bugged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere. (variance = 0.44)
- g. Troubled by ethical issues that have arisen in your work with a client. (variance = 0.39)
- e. Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client. (variance = 0.39)
- i. Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem. (variance = 0.39)
- d. Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences. (variance = 0.38)
- j. Unable to find something to like or respect in a client. (variance = 0.34)

### Question Two: When in difficulty, how often do you . . .

We turn now to reporting on the means and variance scores for responses to the second question. The means and variance scores for the Survey One respondents are provided in Table Three.

**Table Three: Study One: When in difficulty, how often do you . . .**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<i>Try to see the problem from a different perspective</i>	3.92	0.76
<i>Share your experience of the difficulty with a client</i>	2.88	1.57
<i>Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague</i>	3.30	1.32
<i>Consult relevant articles or books</i>	2.70	1.70
<i>Involve another professional or organization in the case</i>	1.77	1.85
<i>Make changes in your coaching contract with a client</i>	1.55	1.42
<i>Simply hope that things will improve eventually</i>	0.90	0.84

<i>Seriously consider terminating coaching</i>	1.12	0.61
<i>Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen</i>	3.70	1.42
<i>Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings</i>	3.28	1.35
<i>See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty</i>	3.31	1.45
<i>Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem</i>	1.43	1.41
<i>Modify your stance or approach with a client</i>	3.28	1.17
<i>Avoid dealing with the problem for the present</i>	0.97	0.63
<i>Show your frustration to the client</i>	0.82	0.81
<i>Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach</i>	1.56	0.98
<i>Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional</i>	1.62	1.20

Our fourth table contains the means and variance scores for Question Two respondents to our second survey.

**Table Four: Study Two: When in difficulty, how often do you . . .**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<i>Try to see the problem from a different perspective</i>	4.07	0.77
<i>Share your experience of the difficulty with a client</i>	2.76	1.80

<i>Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague</i>	2.83	2.08
<i>Consult relevant articles or books</i>	2.83	2.00
<i>Involve another professional or organization in the case</i>	1.67	1.87
<i>Make changes in your coaching contract with a client</i>	1.83	2.00
<i>Simply hope that things will improve eventually</i>	0.55	0.50
<i>Seriously consider terminating coaching</i>	1.41	1.09
<i>Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen</i>	3.60	1.37
<i>Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings</i>	3.22	1.44
<i>See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty</i>	3.47	1.55
<i>Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem</i>	1.40	1.79
<i>Modify your stance or approach with a client</i>	3.21	1.32
<i>Avoid dealing with the problem for the present</i>	0.88	0.88
<i>Show your frustration to the client</i>	0.69	0.81
<i>Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach</i>	1.74	1.39
<i>Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional</i>	1.81	1.45

The same set of considerations will be taken into account when attempting to make sense of mean scores and variance scores for this second question. The absolute value associated with each of the mean scores must be considered and we will do so when discussing the results from this second question. It is also important for us to compare the mean and variance scores, given

the same potential response set distortions in data derived from responses to this second question. Given these response set concerns, we offer the following ranking of mean scores (from high to low) for this second question from our Survey One respondents:

*Question Two. When in difficulty, how often do you ...*

- a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective(mean = 3.92)*
- i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen(mean = 3.70)*
- k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty(mean = 3.31)*
- c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague(mean = 3.30)*
- m. Modify your stance or approach with a client(mean = 3.28)*
- j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings(mean = 3.28)*
- b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client(mean = 2.88)*
- d. Consult relevant articles or books(mean = 2.70)*
- e. Involve another professional or organization in the case(mean = 1.77)*
- q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional(mean = 1.62)*
- p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach(mean = 1.56)*
- f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client(mean = 1.55)l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem(mean = 1.43)*
- h. Seriously consider terminating coaching(mean = 1.12)*
- n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present(mean = 0.97)*
- g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually(mean = 0.90)*
- o. Show your frustration to the client(mean = 0.82)*

We turn now to the mean scores (listed from high to low) for the Second Survey:

*Question Two. When in difficulty, how often do you ...*

- a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective(mean = 4.07)*
- i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen(mean = 3.60)*
- k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty(mean = 3.47)*
- j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings(mean = 3.22)*
- m. Modify your stance or approach with a client(mean = 3.21)*
- c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague(mean = 2.83)*
- d. Consult relevant articles or books(mean = 2.83)*
- b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client(mean = 2.76)*
- f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client(mean = 1.83)*
- q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional(mean = 1.81)*
- p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach(mean = 1.74)*
- e. Involve another professional or organization in the case(mean = 1.67)*
- h. Seriously consider terminating coaching(mean = 1.41)*
- l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem(mean = 1.40)*
- n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present(mean = 0.88)*
- o. Show your frustration to the client(mean = 0.69)*
- g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually(mean = 0.55)*

The next set of scores we provide are variance scores for this second question. We begin with the variance scores for the first survey listed from high (least agreement) to low (most agreement):

*Question Two. When in difficulty, how often do you ...*

- e. Involve another professional or organization in the case (variance = 1.85)*
- d. Consult relevant articles or books (variance = 1.70)*
- b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client (variance = 1.57)*
- k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty (variance = 1.45)*
- f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client (variance = 1.42)*
- i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen (variance = 1.42)*
- l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem (variance = 1.41)*
- j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings (variance = 1.35)*
- c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague (variance = 1.32)*
- q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional (variance = 1.20)*
- m. Modify your stance or approach with a client (variance = 1.17)*
- p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach (variance = 0.98)*
- g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually (variance = 0.84)*
- o. Show your frustration to the client (variance = 0.81)*
- a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective (variance = 0.76)*
- n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present (variance = 0.63)*
- h. Seriously consider terminating coaching (variance = 0.61)*

We have similarly listed the variance scores for Question Two items in the Second Survey from high scores (least agreement) to low scores (most agreement):

*Question Two. When in difficulty, how often do you ...*

- c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague (variance = 2.08)*
- d. Consult relevant articles or books (variance = 2.00)*
- f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client (variance = 2.00)*
- e. Involve another professional or organization in the case (variance = 1.87)*
- b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client (variance = 1.80)*
- l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem (variance = 1.79)*
- k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty (variance = 1.55)*
- q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional (variance = 1.45)*
- j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings (variance = 1.44)*
- p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach (variance = 1.39)*
- i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen (variance = 1.37)*
- m. Modify your stance or approach with a client (variance = 1.32)*
- h. Seriously consider terminating coaching (variance = 1.09)*
- n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present (variance = 0.88)*
- o. Show your frustration to the client (variance = 0.81)*
- a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective (variance = 0.77)*
- g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually (variance = 0.50)*

### Question Three: In your RECENT coaching how often . . .

We turn now to reporting on the means and variance scores for responses to the third question. The means and variance scores for respondents to the first survey are provided in Table Five.

**Table Five: Study One: In your RECENT coaching how often. . .**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<i>Do you feel you are changing as a coach?</i>	3.73	1.00
<i>Does this change feel like progress or improvement?</i>	4.20	0.97
<i>Does this change feel like decline or impairment?</i>	0.20	0.38
<i>Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?</i>	3.56	1.43
<i>Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?</i>	4.13	0.92
<i>Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?</i>	4.16	0.98
<i>Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?</i>	3.95	1.53
<i>Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?</i>	0.52	0.96
<i>Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?</i>	0.19	0.56
<i>Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?</i>	0.48	0.74
<i>How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?</i>	3.81	1.42
<i>How important to you is your further development as a coach?</i>	4.57	0.74

Our sixth table contains the means and variance scores for Question Three respondents to our second survey.

**Table Six: Study Two: In your RECENT coaching how often . . .**

	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<i>Do you feel you are changing as a coach?</i>	3.38	1.40
<i>Does this change feel like progress or improvement?</i>	3.90	1.32
<i>Does this change feel like decline or impairment?</i>	0.14	0.16
<i>Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?</i>	3.40	2.00
<i>Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?</i>	3.91	1.17
<i>Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?</i>	4.02	1.21
<i>Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?</i>	3.91	1.31
<i>Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?</i>	0.28	0.59
<i>Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?</i>	0.10	0.09
<i>Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?</i>	0.38	0.34
<i>How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?</i>	3.52	2.32
<i>How important to you is your further development as a coach?</i>	4.62	0.73

The same set of considerations will be taken into account when attempting to make sense of mean scores and variance scores for this third question. The absolute value associated with each of the mean scores must be considered and we will do so when discussing results from this third question. It is also important for us to rank the mean and variance scores, given the same potential response set distortions in the data derived from responses to this question. Given these response set concerns, we offer the following listing of mean scores (from high to low) for this third question from our Study One respondents:

Question Three. In your RECENT coaching work, how much ...

- l. How important to you is your further development as a coach?(mean = 4.57)
- b. Does this change feel like progress or improvement?(mean = 4.20)
- f. Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?(mean = 4.16)
- e. Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?(mean = 4.13)
- g. Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?(mean = 3.95)
- k. How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?(mean = 3.81)
- a. Do you feel you are changing as a coach?(mean = 3.73)
- d. Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?(mean = 3.56)
- h. Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?(mean = 0.52)
- j. Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?(mean = 0.48)
- c. Does this change feel like decline or impairment?(mean = 0.20)
- i. Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?(mean = 0.19)

We turn now to mean scores (listed from high to low) from Question Three for the Second Study:

Question Three. In your RECENT coaching work, how much ...

- l. How important to you is your further development as a coach?(mean = 4.62)
- f. Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?(mean = 4.02)
- e. Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?(mean = 3.91)
- g. Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?(mean = 3.91)
- b. Does this change feel like progress or improvement?(mean = 3.90)
- k. How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?(mean = 3.52)
- d. Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?(mean = 3.40)
- a. Do you feel you are changing as a coach?(mean = 3.38)
- j. Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?(mean = 0.38)
- h. Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?(mean = 0.28)
- c. Does this change feel like decline or impairment?(mean = 0.14)
- i. Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?(mean = 0.10)

The final two set of scores we provide are variance scores for this third question. We begin with the variance scores for the first survey listed from high (least agreement) to low (most agreement):

Question Three. In your RECENT coaching work, how much ...

- g. Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?(variance = 1.53)
- d. Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?(variance = 1.43)
- k. How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?(variance = 1.42)
- a. Do you feel you are changing as a coach?(variance = 1.00)
- f. Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?(variance = 0.98)
- b. Does this change feel like progress or improvement?(variance = 0.97)
- h. Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?(variance = 0.96)
- e. Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?(variance = 0.92)

- j. Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?(variance = 0.74)*
- l. How important to you is your further development as a coach?(variance = 0.74)*
- i. Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?(variance = 0.56)*
- c. Does this change feel like decline or impairment?(variance = 0.38)*

We have similarly listed the variance scores for Question Three items in the Second Survey from high scores (least agreement) to low scores (most agreement):

*Question Three. In your RECENT coaching work, how much ...*

- k. How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?(variance = 2.32)*
- d. Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?(variance = 2.00)*
- a. Do you feel you are changing as a coach?(variance = 1.40)*
- b. Does this change feel like progress or improvement?(variance = 1.32)*
- g. Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm about doing coaching?(variance = 1.31)*
- f. Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?(variance = 1.21)*
- e. Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?(variance = 1.17)*
- l. How important to you is your further development as a coach?(variance = 0.73)*
- h. Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?(variance = 0.59)*
- j. Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?(variance = 0.34)*
- c. Does this change feel like decline or impairment?(variance = 0.16)*
- i. Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?(variance = 0.09)*

### **Comparisons Between Two Studies**

One of the strengths (or at least potential strengths) of this two phase study is that we can compare results from these two different samples, taken several years apart. Are the findings "robust" with regard to consistency over time, as well as the sampling of different populations (at least minimal overlap in populations sampled). Following are comparisons between the two studies regarding all three questions. We begin with the First Question and offer means and variances (as well as rankings) for both studies.

**Table Seven: Study One and Two**

**Question One: Currently, how often do you feel . . .**

	<b>Study One Mean</b>	<b>Study One Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study One Variance</b>	<b>Study One Variance (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Mean</b>	<b>Study Two Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Variance</b>	<b>Study Two Variance (Ranking)</b>
<i>Lacking confidence that you can provide a beneficial effect for a client.</i>	1.46	2	0.37	10	1.47	1	0.74	1
<i>Unsure how best to deal effectively with a client.</i>	1.52	1	0.40	9	1.38	2	0.49	7
<i>In danger of losing control of a coaching conversation to a client.</i>	0.93	6	0.60	2	0.91	4	0.54	6
<i>Unable to have much real empathy for a client's experiences.</i>	0.68	11	0.34	11	0.62	10	0.38	12
<i>Uneasy that your personal values make it difficult to maintain an appropriate attitude toward a client.</i>	0.75	9	0.34	12	0.57	11	0.39	10
<i>Distressed by your inability to impact a client's life or work situation.</i>	1.03	5	0.63	1	1.07	3	0.59	5
<i>Troubled by ethical issues</i>	0.66	12	0.43	8	0.57	11	0.39	9

<i>that have arisen in your work with a client.</i>								
<i>Irritated by a client who seems to be actively blocking your efforts.</i>	1.03	3	0.56	4	0.86	5	0.61	4
<i>Unable to comprehend the essence of a client's problem.</i>	0.93	7	0.46	7	0.71	8	0.39	11
<i>Unable to find something to like or respect in a client.</i>	0.41	13	0.28	13	0.34	13	0.34	13
<i>Conflicted about how to reconcile obligations to a client and equivalent obligation to others.</i>	0.90	8	0.57	5	0.64	9	0.69	2
<i>Bogged down with a client in a relationship that seems to be going nowhere.</i>	1.03	4	0.59	3	0.86	6	0.44	8
<i>Frustrated with a client for wasting your time</i>	0.74	10	0.48	6	0.72	7	0.62	3

We now present a table containing mean, variance and rankings for responses to the second question.

**Table Eight: Study One and Two**

**Question Two: When in difficulty, how often do you . . .**

	<b>Study One Mean</b>	<b>Study One Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study One Variance</b>	<b>Study One Variance (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Mean</b>	<b>Student Two Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Variance</b>	<b>Study Two Variance (Ranking)</b>
<i>a. Try to see the problem from a different perspective</i>	3.92	1	0.76	15	4.07	1	0.77	16
<i>b. Share your experience of the difficulty with a client</i>	2.88	7	1.57	3	2.76	8	1.80	5
<i>c. Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague</i>	3.30	4	1.32	9	2.83	6	2.08	1
<i>d. Consult relevant articles or books</i>	2.70	8	1.70	2	2.83	7	2.00	2
<i>e. Involve another professional or organization in the case</i>	1.77	9	1.85	1	1.67	12	1.87	4
<i>f. Make changes in your coaching contract with a client</i>	1.55	12	1.42	5	1.83	9	2.00	3
<i>g. Simply hope that things will improve eventually</i>	0.90	16	0.84	13	0.55	17	0.50	17
<i>h. Seriously consider terminating coaching</i>	1.12	14	0.61	17	1.41	13	1.09	13

<i>i. Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen</i>	3.70	2	1.42	6	3.60	2	1.37	11
<i>j. Just give yourself permission to experience difficult or disturbing feelings</i>	3.28	6	1.35	8	3.22	4	1.44	9
<i>k. See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty</i>	3.31	3	1.45	4	3.47	3	1.55	7
<i>l. Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem</i>	1.43	13	1.41	7	1.40	14	1.79	6
<i>m. Modify your stance or approach with a client</i>	3.28	5	1.17	11	3.21	5	1.32	12
<i>n. Avoid dealing with the problem for the present</i>	0.97	15	0.63	16	0.88	15	0.88	14
<i>o. Show your frustration to the client</i>	0.82	17	0.81	14	0.69	16	0.81	15
<i>p. Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach</i>	1.56	11	0.98	12	1.74	11	1.39	10
<i>q. Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional</i>	1.62	10	1.20	10	1.81	10	1.45	8

Finally, we present the results from our comparison of means, variances and rankings for the third question.

**Table Nine: Study One and Two**

**Question Three: In your RECENT coaching how often ...**

	<b>Study One Mean</b>	<b>Study One Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study One Variance</b>	<b>Study One Variance (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Mean</b>	<b>Student Two Mean (Ranking)</b>	<b>Study Two Variance</b>	<b>Study Two Variance (Ranking)</b>
<i>Do you feel you are changing as a coach?</i>	3.73	7	1.00	4	3.38	8	1.40	3
<i>Does this change feel like progress or improvement?</i>	4.20	2	0.97	6	3.90	5	1.32	4
<i>Does this change feel like decline or impairment?</i>	0.20	11	0.38	12	0.14	11	0.16	11
<i>Do you feel you are overcoming past limitations as a coach?</i>	3.56	8	1.43	2	3.40	7	2.00	2
<i>Do you feel you are becoming more skillful in practicing coaching?</i>	4.13	4	0.92	8	3.91	3	1.17	7
<i>Do you feel you are deepening your understanding of coaching?</i>	4.16	3	0.98	5	4.02	2	1.21	6
<i>Do you feel a growing sense of enthusiasm</i>	3.95	5	1.53	1	3.91	4	1.31	5

<i>about doing coaching?</i>								
<i>Do you feel you are becoming disillusioned about coaching?</i>	0.52	9	0.96	7	0.28	10	0.59	9
<i>Do you feel you are losing your capacity to respond empathetically?</i>	0.19	12	0.56	11	0.10	12	0.09	12
<i>Do you feel your performance is becoming mainly routine?</i>	0.48	10	0.74	9	0.38	9	0.34	10
<i>How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches?</i>	3.81	6	1.42	3	3.52	6	2.32	1
<i>How important to you is your further development as a coach?</i>	4.57	1	0.74	10	4.62	1	0.73	8

## Discussion

In seeking to make sense of results obtained from our initial analysis of responses to these three Development of Coaching questions, we turn first to a comparison between the two surveys that were conducted, then turn to themes that emerge from the three questions that are the focus of this second article.

### Comparison Between Two Surveys

As we found when reporting on results in our first article, there is often a high level of concurrence in the means scores for the two studies. Not only are the mean scores quite similar, the rank order of means for all three studies are similar. Even the variance scores are similar

with regard to both amount of variance in responses to a specific item and the rank order of the variance scores for each item.

The one striking difference in results from the two studies concerns the variance scores for one of the Question Two responses: "Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague." The variance score for the first study was 1.32 and it ranked ninth, whereas the variance score for the second study was 2.08 and it ranked first. This suggests that turning to other colleagues is much more controversial for respondents to the second study than for respondents to the first. I look forward to exploring differences to this item with regard to several of the demographic variables (that might contribute to differences in results from the two studies). Are coaches with extensive experience more likely or less likely to turn to colleagues than coaches with less experience? What about gender, age or cultural background? These are important factors to consider when looking at differences in variance scores.

### **Recurrent Positive Attitude**

As in the case of results from the first study, results from our analysis of the first and third survey questions strongly suggest that those coaches who completed this survey are filled with optimism and a positive attitude about their work as coaches. The mean scores for all items on Question One were less than 1.60 (and in most instances were less than 1.00). Variance scores were also uniformly low. The mean scores for Question Three items tended to be very high (often more than 4.00) indicating that coaches believe that they are thriving and improving. Variance scores were once again uniformly low.

The most surprising result might be the occasional respondent to these two questions who identified anything at all as a recurring coaching problem. Is this a case of remarkable candor on the part of a few coaches? Or does it repeatedly demonstrate that coaches (or at least those completing this survey) feel quite confident about their own work as coaches?

At the very least, these mean and variance scores are hard to dismiss as nothing more than social desirability or acquiescence. There is something quite "real" about the positive attitudes manifest in these surveys. Would we find a similar positive attitude among those working in other human service professions? We will be able to provide a partial answer to this question

when comparing results from these surveys with those reported by David Orlinksy and his colleagues in their study of clinical psychologists.

In the first article I introduced an even broader scope with regard to the profound optimism and positive attitudes expressed in both surveys. Specifically, I described a culture in which many coaches seem to live. I mentioned that a positive attitude and recurrent optimism might be embedded in the social unconscious of the environment that pervades the world of professional coaching.

Taking the absolute scores as "reality," there seems to be an "up" to almost every self perception of the coach respondents. . . . Change seems to be a good thing for our respondents -- even, in this instance, when related to changes occurring among the coaches themselves. In many ways this finding is to be expected, given that coaches are often encouraging their clients to embrace change or at least plan for ways in which to successfully engage the changes they are confronting in their life and/or work.

I went on to relate this positive attitude to the pioneering spirit of those working in this field:

It may be that many people who become coaches have already explored multiple careers in their life and are now trying out coaching. If they succeed then they stay around, if not then they move on. In a previous article . . . I have used the metaphor of a frontier town when describing the inhabitant of the coaching world. This world is inhabited not just by the homesteaders who are in the field to stay, as well as the preachers and teachers who are persistent advocates for highly ethical and knowledgeable coaching, but also by those who are "drifters" or "prospectors" looking for a short-term lucrative venture and (as a result) tend to be attracted to fads, fashion and fantasized futures.

Results from this second set of questions seem to further support this positive and optimistic attitude of those inhabiting the coaching village and embracing the coaching culture.

### **The Autonomous Professional**

I would propose that the coaching culture and frontier town contains yet another element and that all might not be perfect in this culture and town. The element I wish to introduce concerns professional autonomy and isolation. The theme of autonomy and isolation show up in responses to the second question ("When in difficulty, how often do you"). Just as there is very

little indication in responses to the first and third questions that coaches view themselves as in trouble with their clients, responses to the second question suggest that they tend to look to their own internal resources when they do experience difficulties with clients. The highest rated responses to Question Two were:

*"Try to see the problem from a different perspective"*

*"Review privately with yourself how the problem has arisen" and*

*"See whether you and your client can deal together with the difficulty"*

It is only when we turn to the fourth highest rated response ("Discuss the problem with a more experienced colleague") that we find the isolation broken and, as we noted above, this item was quite controversial (high variance score) among those responding to the second survey.

To be totally fair in our analysis, we should note that many of the Question Two responses are oriented toward private and personal resolution of the difficulty. Nevertheless, those few responses associated with Question Two that do suggest breaking out of the isolation are consistently rated low:

*"Sign up for a conference or workshop that might bear on the problem."*

*"Explore the possibility of referring the client to another coach."*

*"Refer the client to some other noncoaching professional."*

None of these results are definitive regarding either autonomy or isolation. However, they do point toward the prevalence of a specific coaching culture that Vikki Brock and I identified in a chapter we wrote several years ago in a book edited by Drake, Brennan and Gortz (Bergquist and Brock, 2008). Brock and I identified six cultures that exist in most human service professions. One of these is the professional culture (the others being managerial, alternative/developmental, advocacy, virtual and tangible). We proposed in this chapter that many coaches are aligned with the professional culture--a culture in which practitioners conceive of coaching as a "profession" and seek to build its credibility through establishing a code of ethics, professional organizations and publications. They promote research and scholarship regarding coaching, and express an abiding concern about the credibility of coaching as a legitimate human service endeavor.

Brock and I note that the motives behind this professional concern are laudable: concern for quality of service and for an adequate foundation of theory-based and evidential research to support coaching practices. However, underlying these legitimate motives is often an unacknowledged thirst for control of the field (with its potentially rich source of money and capacity to influence personal and organizational lives). While those aligned with the professional culture support research on coaching, they are inclined to identify coaching as an “art” rather than a “science,” and cringe at any efforts to quantify (and therefore constrain or trivialize) the specific outcomes of coaching.

Brock and I suggested in our broad analysis of the professional culture that those drawn to this culture tend to value autonomy and social status -- whether they be physicians, attorneys, veterinarians . . . or coaches. There is strong resistance to regulation (though a counter interest in certification and licensing), as well as a distain for quantifiable accountability for their work (though there is a reluctant turn in recent years toward "evidence-based" practices in many professional fields). It is ironic that professional coaches often work with clients who are organizational leaders (and are aligned with the managerial culture) or are seeking to find new purpose and meaning in their life (and are aligned with the alternative/developmental culture). While working with clients aligned with these other cultures, coaches often tend to remain aligned with the professional culture and embrace the resistance in this culture to the other five cultures.

### **The Role of Supervision and Training**

What does all of this mean in terms of the life and future of professional coaching? Does the role played by being an autonomous "professional" hold any implications for what coaches now do or could do? Part of the answer to this question resides in results we obtained from analysis of one response to Question Three: "How capable do you feel to guide the development of other coaches." The mean score for this item was relatively high (survey one: 3.81/survey two: 3.52); however, the variance scores were either the highest (survey two) or third highest (survey one) of any Question Three item (survey One: 1.42/survey two: 2.32).

While survey respondents consistently agreed that their own development is very important ("How important to you is your further development as a coach?"), many of the respondents were less confident that they could be of assistance to other coaches in their development. This

is a major and perhaps disturbing finding. Yes, we are committed to our own development as coaches, but we are not so sure about our guiding of development among other coaches. We must wait to determine in future analyses if these large variance scores are associated with number of years in the field, gender, age, cultural differences or nature of past coach training.

It would seem that a dialogue regarding these results is warranted -- especially given the recent emphasis on mentoring and supervision in the field of professional coaching. [see Issue Six of *The Future of Coaching* located in this library: *the Library of Professional Coaching*] Who does the mentoring and supervision? Do we need to re-examine the reasons why some coaches agree to work with other coaches on their development? What are the reasons that some coaches want to remain independent and autonomous in their work? If coaches feel confident in their own work, finding little difficulty in working with clients, and do not need much assistance from other professionals, then why is there any concern about and interest in either mentoring or supervision?

### **The Bridge: Collaborative Coaching Inquiry**

We concluded the first article by turning to one item that yielded relatively low mean scores and high variance: "How much precision, subtlety and finesse have you attained in your coaching work?" This is an item that might be very hard for any of us to answer. I suggested that it is ironic that the answer any of us might give regarding the precision, subtlety and finesse required to be an effective coach will itself have to be precise, subtle and finessed. It would be hard to measure our own competence by clicking on a bullet point. The same might be the case with regard to one's own confidence as a guide for other coaches: "who am I to tell anyone how to be an effective coach?" It might be particularly challenging to be a guide if professional coaching is indeed an art form requiring precision, subtlety and finesse. At the very least, I would suggest, the challenge of developing oneself continually as a coach with precision, subtlety and finesse involves collaboration and dialogue.

As Francine Campone noted in her request for participation in the first Survey, the field of coaching should build a culture of research and evidence. I would add a further recommendation to this proposal: this culture should move coaching beyond isolation and autonomy. It should move the field to a culture of collaboration, in which thoughtful dialogue is accompanied by evidence-based information, reflective practice and a desire to advance the

inter-discipline of professional coaching through critical inquiry. Hopefully, this set of articles, reporting on results from the Development of Coaches surveys, is contributing in a small way to building such a culture.

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