Coaching and Expertise in the Six Cultures

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Over the past twenty eight years, I have recognized the need for cultural analyses of organizations from the perspective of those who lead and work in these organizations. (Bergquist, 1993; Bergquist, Guest and Rooney, 2003; Bergquist and Pawlak, 2006; Bergquist and Brock, 2008) I assumed that those inside the organizations might welcome an understanding of organizational culture, because many organizations seem to be particularly resistant to influence and change. The dynamics of contemporary organizations are often difficult to understand. Any framework that can help bring order to the complexity of these organizations will be greatly appreciated.

Six Organizational Cultures

 It has become increasingly fashionable to describe organizations as cultures. Anthropologists, management consultants, organizational psychologists, and other social scientists have become enamored of this concept and have helped to popularize the notion that cultural analyses yield important insights about the life and dynamics of an organization. Four different, yet interrelated, cultures of leadership and coaching are often found in contemporary organizations. These cultures have a profound impact on ways in which leaders and coaches view their current work, as well as ways in which they perceive the potential for personal benefit and organizational improvement.

These four cultures also influence how those outside the organization perceive the purposes and appropriate operations of organizations, and how they believe they themselves should interact with these organizations. Two of the four leadership and coaching cultures can be traced back several centuries. They are the professional culture and the managerial culture. The other two have emerged more recently, partially in response to the seeming failure of the two original cultures to adapt effectively to changes in contemporary organizations. The first of these more contemporary cultures is referred to as the alternative culture and the second is referred to as the advocacy culture.

 There are additional external influences in our global culture that are pressing upon the contemporary organization, forcing it in some ways to alter the way it goes about its business. Two new leadership and coaching cultures are emerging in organizations as a result of these global, external forces. These two cultures interact with the previous four, creating new dynamics. The first of these two cultures, the virtual culture, has been prompted by the technological and social forces that have emerged over the past twenty years. The second culture, the tangible culture, has perhaps existed in some form for quite some time, but has only recently been evident as a separate culture partly in response to emergence of the virtual culture.

I propose that each of these six distinct cultures (each with its own history and values) yields a specific perspective regarding the most valued sources of expertise that can (and should) be engaged in guiding the short-term tactics and longer-term strategies of the organization. These six cultures also offer distinctive perspectives regarding the very nature and purpose of organization coaching and, in turn, assumptions about the way in which to work most effectively with organizational leaders. In my review of these six cultures, I will address not only the issue of expertise, but also that regarding the nature and

purpose of coaching—for I am seeking in this essay to not only address the challenges of expertise, but also ways in which coaches can help their clients address these challenges.

The Professional Culture

Expertise is valued and engaged based on the credentials of the expert. This culture focuses on an input measure of quality and credibility. "Show me where you come from." When providing expertise and advise, it is critical to identify the source of this expertise and advice. The validity of evidence will not be considered until attention is directed to the status of those delivering the evidence: is this published in a reputable journal or book publisher? Dose this expert come from a prestigious university, research institute or think tank. "Show me his badge!" (rarely "her" badge—in part because of discrimination in many prestigious institutions against women, as well as minorities of all ilk).

What then about the role played by coaches in a professional culture, as they seek to assist their clients with the challenges of expertise. Coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a "profession" and seek to build its credibility through establishing a code of ethics, professional organizations [such as International Coach Federation (ICF)] and publications [such as the International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring] and research and scholarship regarding coaching. In many cases, the established professions (in particular, psychology and business consulting) have claimed that they alone can certify coaches or, at the very least, that the field of coaching should be closely monitored and controlled. 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 this culture support research that establishes "evidence-based expertise, 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. Coaches who associate with this culture often embrace many untested assumptions about the dominance of rationality in the organization—and more generally in the world. They are often "dumbfounded" that "scientifically-generated" and rationally ordered arguments are not immediately excepted when offered by credentialed "experts." They are also likely to assume that rationality saturated the coaching profession. They conceive of the coaching enterprise as the generation, interpretation, and dissemination of knowledge and the development of specific values and qualities of character among leaders in the organization. It is also important to note that those aligned with the professional culture tend to differentiate between managers and leaders. As "professional" coaches they are inclined to associate their work with leadership, rather than the more "mundane" (in their view) operations of managers in the organization.

The Managerial Culture

When it comes to the way expertise is received in the managerial culture, the focus turned not from the source of the expertise, but from its demonstrated (and proven) outcomes. The advice of an expert receives attention if this expert has a track record of successful advice or prediction. This is an output/outcome base measure of expert credibility. "Show me what you've done." Trust is based on

demonstrated competence. The demonstration, in turn, must usually be quantitative in nature and aligned with the specific desired goals and outcomes identified by the person or group receiving the expert advice. "If you can't measure it, then how do I know that you are telling me the 'truth'?)

The ways in which coaches operate in the managerial culture is directly aligned with this emphasis on outcomes and measurement. With regard to outcomes, coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a vehicle for the improvement of managerial performances. Management, in turn, is often identified with a specific set of organizational functions and responsibilities. Viewing management from a professional culture orientation, Warren Bennis (1989), suggests that managers administer, ask how and when, focus on systems, do things right, maintain, rely on control, and have a short-term perspective. Bennis also suggests that managers tend to accept the status-quo, have an eye on the bottom line and imitate. They are the classic good soldier and are a copy. Given Bennis's limiting perspective on management, the role to be played by coaches becomes quite clear. They are to assist managers in performing these organizational functions.

Many definitions of coaching from the late 1970s through the 2000s are oriented toward the management culture. Coaching is seen quite widely as a vehicle for improved managerial performance. Coaches aligned with this culture are often engaged in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of a manager's work—this work being directed toward specified goals and purposes. They often perceive few, if any differences, between management and leadership. Those aligned with this culture tend to value fiscal responsibility and the quantifiable measurement of coaching outcomes (for example, Return-on-Investment). They tend to believe that management (and therefore leadership) skills can be specified and developed through a blend of training and coaching.

These programs, in turn, are founded on a basis of expertise that is results-driven. A solid proposal offered by a management development firm should be based on a program that not only includes both training and follow up coaching, but also has been shown to produce measurable improvement in performance. A return-on-investment measurement such as offered by Jack and Patti Phillips (2015) is "icing-on-the-cake" for members of the managerial culture—for coaches who associate with this culture often embrace many untested assumptions about the capacity of an organization's managers (leaders) to clearly define and measure its goals, objectives and "investments" (both fiscal and nonfiscal). They conceive of the coaching enterprise as the inculcation or reinforcement of specific knowledge, skills, and attitudes in the men and women they are coaching, so that they might become successful and responsible managers (leaders).

The Alternative Culture

When it comes to receiving and accepting expertise advice in the alternative culture, there is a concern, as in the professional culture, with source. In this case, however, the source is found to be credible if it offers a perspective that differs from (and often challenges) the accepted "truth." "Show me something that is new, that is challenging to the existing 'gospel", that shakes things up!" As Thomas Kuhn (2012) noted in his analysis of scientific revolutions, the new, revolutionary studies that suggest alternative paradigms often come from "out-of-the-way" places, such as secondary and "backwater" educational institutions and research centers. Individual researchers and scholars who are not being funded by the "establishment" (such as governmental grants or pharmaceutical companies) are free to offer the "inconvenient truth." As "independent" scholars and researchers, these women and men (often women)

are welcomed in the alternative culture. Their perspectives and practices are often embraced with enthusiasm by members of the alternative culture. At times, this acceptance can be uncritical, and members of this culture are sometimes guilty of promoting the latest "fad" and of hopping from one new idea or plan to another one.

How then, can a coach operate most effectively in the alternative culture to help members of (and especially leaders) of this culture sort out what is valid and useful, from that which is attractive but not anchored in any "reality"? How do coaches help their clients sort out valid and useful expertise, rather than falling victim to the latest fad.? I would first suggest that coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a vehicle for the creation of programs and activities that further the personal (and often the spiritual) growth of all members of the organization (or even more broadly the entire community). Expertise often comes from domains other than management or even science. Those leaders who are aligned with this culture turn to coaches who value personal openness and service to others, as well as the integration of mind, body and spirit. Recent studies regarding wellness, neurobiological integration – often in alignment with a dose of Eastern philosophy and medicine—become welcomed sources of "expertise" for members of the alternative culture.

Both the coaches and leaders often do not accept an "artificial" distinction between personal and organizational coaching. Coaches who associate with this culture often embrace many untested assumptions about the inherent desire of all men and women to attain their own personal maturation. Both coaches and leaders wish to assist the development of others in the organization (or even the broader community). They conceive of the coaching enterprise as the encouragement of potential for cognitive, affective, physical and spiritual development among all members of the organization—not just the formal leaders.

The Advocacy Culture

Experts are invited in and listened to if they have been chosen in an equitable manner (without discrimination), based on carefully negotiated and widely accepted criteria. A process-oriented measure of credibility prevails. As I have already noted, the key question regarding the credibility and use of expertise often is: "Who has been invited to the table? The invitation should provide diverse perspectives—and in particular the perspectives of people who have been victims of long-standing discrimination. "Who invited you to be our expert?" "Show me to invitation list." "How did you decide should be involved in this study?" Has this idea/recommendation been tested out in many different settings?"

Like its counterpart (the managerial culture), the advocacy culture is often about numbers. However, the matrices are now often about the nature and size of sampled populations and about the assumptions being made (often tacitly) in the interpretation of data that has been gathered. Among those aligned with the advocacy culture there is often considerable skepticism—and the bar of credibility and acceptance is often very high. While those in the alternative culture can be accused of accepting expertise and advice too easily, those in the advocacy culture can often be accused of being much too suspicious and closed minded to the ideas being offered by those from the "establishment." They join with those in the alternative culture in residing outside the mainstream but are often unwilling to accept any ideas that come from sources they don't trust.

There is also a tradition of collective bargaining that resides firmly in many branches of the advocacy culture. Data becomes a weapon rather than a source of shared insight. Numbers are used to gain support for a specific initiative. "Experts" are hired to represent a specific perspective and set of priorities. Unfortunately, the crisis of expertise can be profound when the advocacy culture and often-accompanying polarization reigns supreme.

How then does one provide coaching in an advocacy culture—and how is there any genuine contributions to be made by "experts" who are not simply "hired guns"? First, coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a vehicle for the establishment of equitable and egalitarian policies and procedures regarding the distribution of resources and benefits in the organization. Those aligned with this culture often have been associated in their past life with the formulation and/or enforcement of HR (human resource) policies and procedures (serving as "policy police" in a large corporation or government agency).

Leaders who are aligned with this culture turn to coaches who value confrontation and equitable, enabling and empowering strategies that bring all stakeholders "to the table." Leaders turn to coaches who operate a bit like the Mafia *consiglieres* as war-time strategists. These coaches recognize the inevitable presence of (and need for) multiple constituencies with vested interests that are inherently in opposition. They believe that coaching is essential to this engagement. Coaches (and leaders) associated with this culture embrace many untested assumptions about the ultimate role of power in the organization. They frequently identify the need for outside mediation and conceive of the coaching enterprise as the surfacing of existing (and often repressive) social attitudes and structures, and establishment of new and more liberating attitudes and structures.

The Virtual Culture

Expertise is a shifting phenomenon for those residing in this newly emerging culture. Experts come and go, based on their latest result. "What do you have to say that is new and interesting?" "What have you done for me lately". Expertise can also be based on some very much up-to-date assessment of the expert's credibility by someone or some organization that is "hot" right now. They recognize intuitively the powerful role played by exponential growth (Taleb, 2010). Something is "hot" for a moment and then collapses into "cold." Given the exponential growth, "You must show me what you have right now and tell me in a few words why I should believe you and take action based on what you have just submitted to me." In this culture, the expertise often comes from many miles away—thanks to the Internet. Thomas Friedman's (2005) "flat world" is fully apparent in the virtual culture's view of expertise. David Smick's (2008) "curved world" is also fully apparent with its often-dangerous self-reinforcing patterns of diffusion and acceptance (Taleb's description of exponential growth). Much like those in the alternative culture, occupants of the virtual culture are vulnerable to short-term, faddish acceptance of a "new" perspective or practice.

As a coach working in the virtual culture, one is challenged to keep up with its fast-paced dynamics and with the constantly shifting nature and status of specific expertise. VUCA-Plus reigns supreme in this culture—with its portrayal of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, ambiguity, turbulence and contradiction (Bergquist, 2020). The challenge of coaching about expertise is often particularly great. Coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a vehicle for the

engagement and use of knowledge and expertise that is being produced and modified at an exponential rate in our postmodern world.

Those aligned with this culture tend to value a global perspective and make extensive use of open, shared, and responsive learning systems. Coaches and leaders conceive of the coaching enterprise as linking the leader's learning needs to technological resources that enable the leader to access a global market and learning network. They are participants in what Thomas Friedman (2006) describes as a "flat world" which has abandoned organizational and national boundaries—as well as in David Smick's dangerous curved world (with data folding back on itself in a self-reinforcing, exponentially-exploding manner).

Leaders who are aligned with this culture turn to coaches who speak about learning organizations. As Peter Senge (1990, p. 4), one of the early proponents of the learning organization has noted: "The organizations that will truly excel in the future will be the organizations that discover how to tap people's commitment and capacity to learn at all levels in an organization. Learning organizations are possible because, deep down, we are all learners." Furthermore, those aligned with this culture, as learners, do not avoid taking risks and making mistakes, but they do try to avoid repeating the same mistakes and taking the same unsuccessful risks. Ideally, they learn from their mistakes—including their misguided reliance on invalid or useless expertise. At an even higher level of learning, an appreciative perspective is engaged, and members of this culture learn from their successes as well as their failures. Both coaches and leaders associated with this culture embrace many untested assumptions about their ability (both coaches and leaders) to make sense of the fragmentation of expertise that exists in the mid-21st Century world.

The Tangible Culture

Expertise in this culture is based on a long-standing, established, trusting relationship. The expert has been right most of the time for many years. Of greatest important is my trusting of the expert's intentions ("good will"). If I don't know the expert well, then I rely on the expert's well-established reputation and recommendations made by people I trust. "It is good to see you again. How are you and what do you have to tell me?" As we find in many non-Western societies, the relationships must first be established, and then the sharing of expertise occurs. Meals often precede advice, and a tour of the plant may be a prerequisite to sitting at the conference table.

To operate in this culture, one must be patient and respectful. Wisdom is often shared through the telling of stories or through honoring some person or event that holds the potential of embodying important insights from the past that can be brought into the present. The appreciative perspective that I have introduced in this essay tends to be aligned with the tangible culture and its recognition of accumulated wisdom from many years of practice by those who are well-intended as well as informed. Like those in the professional culture, there is respect for expertise coming from prestigious institutions—but also respect for new ideas coming from outside the mainstream (after all the history of human progress has often led us into the "backwaters" of civilization).

Coaches will tend to navigate in the tangible culture from an appreciative and historically based perspective when working with leaders who are seeking credible and useful expertise. Coaches and the users of coaching services who are aligned with this culture conceive of coaching as a vehicle for the

identification and appreciation of an organization's roots, community and symbolic grounding. This organizational arrangement is at the opposite end of the continuum of the virtual culture.

Those aligned with this culture tend to value the predictability of a value-based, face-to-face coaching process. Leaders turn to coaches who focus on deeply embedded patterns (traditions) in the organization. Cultural change is either considered impossible or unwise. A strong emphasis is placed on the full appreciation of the existing and often long-standing dynamics of the organization—this emphasis being most fully articulated by those embracing an "appreciative approach" to leadership (Shrivasta, Cooperrider and Associates, 1990) and coaching (Bergquist and Mura, 2011). Coaches and leaders associated with this culture embrace many untested assumptions about the ability of organizations to "weather the storm" of faddish change. They conceive of the coaching enterprise as the honoring and reintegration of learning from the existing sources of distinctive wisdom located in their specific organization.

The Nature and Purpose of Organizational Culture: Meaning, Leadership and Expertise

 Although most organizational coaches and leaders tend to embrace or exemplify one of these six cultures, the other five cultures are always present and interact with the dominant culture in an actual coaching session. The dynamic interaction among these six cultures is critical. We would suggest that each culture has an "opposite" on which it depends and with which it shares many features and assumptions. Thus, the alternative culture, which has evolved primarily in response to faults associated with the professional culture, is nevertheless dependent on it and shares many values and perspectives with this culture. Similarly, the advocacy culture grew out of opposition to the managerial culture but looks to it for identity and purpose—and shares values and perspectives with it. We similarly suggest that the tangible culture has reared its head in opposition to the virtual culture's lack of acknowledgement of the value of face-to-face or historical contact, and that tangibility and virtuality need one another.

It is important, as we have noted, to acknowledge and seek to fully appreciate the wisdom (as well as distorting assumptions) that reside at the heart of the coaching profession. While it is tempting to be caught up in the often exciting world of the virtual culture, and to find a comfortable home in the professional, managerial, alternative or advocacy culture, the history of coaching enables us to recognize the value to be found in all six of the cultures, and leads us to no longer rest comfortably in one of these cultures when seeking to find credible expertise and when working with leaders in their own engagement with diverse sources of expertise.

A culture helps to define the nature of reality for those people who are part of that culture. People belong to multiple groups and cultures, which provide the lenses through which members interpret and assign value to the various events and products of this world. Culture is composed of artifacts and products (visible and conscious manifestations), norms and values (group's collective answers to universal challenges) and basic assumptions (invisible and unconscious beliefs about universal challenges). If we are to understand and influence men and women in their daily work inside contemporary organizations, then we must come to understand and fully appreciate their implicitly held models of reality.

Ultimately, culture provides guidelines for problem-solving, decision making, influencing, establishing mindsets and directing behaviors. More generally, culture serves an overarching purpose. Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one group or category of people from another. The cultures of organizations must thus be understood within the context of each organization's purposes. The ceremonies, symbols, assumptions, and modes of leadership in an organization are usually directed toward the organization's purposes and derive from its cultural base. Precisely because of its subordinate (though critical) role, culture is a phenomenon so elusive that, unless it is explicitly targeted, it can often be seen only when an organization is struggling with a particularly complicated or intractable problem—as often is the case with contemporary organizations. It can be seen when existing and accepted sources of expertise are failing to provide guidance or even a valid and useful portrayal of reality. Culture is revealed at a moment when the organization must contain its anxiety.

Culture and Leadership—The Containment of Anxiety

Beyond the understanding of the cultures themselves and how they are formulated, it is important for organizational coaches to consider how cultures ultimately serve the purpose of containing the anxiety and fear that is faced by organizational leaders. Anxiety is created in relation to the work of the leader and the formal and informal processes of evaluation and monitoring that are associated with this work. Anxiety is also created at a second level, as the assumptions of one culture collide with those of other cultures. A group creates assumptions and thus develops a culture as it learns to adapt to external circumstances and establish internal integration. The group feels better because the culture provides a solution – a way of perceiving, thinking, and feeling about the challenges it faces.

Organizational cultures do not change easily (as those aligned with the tangible culture tend to emphasize). This is for a variety of reasons. Not the least of these reasons is the ability of culture to assuage the anxieties and fears that develop as we adapt to external influences and seek internal integration. If the assumptions and beliefs upon which our culture is based are challenged through either external or internal situations, or through an organizational change process, we will tend to resist the challenges. We seek cognitive and emotional stability. We avoid fear and anxiety of instability because these feelings provoke pain—and we avoid pain. So, we avoid change. Edgar Schein (1992, p.23) specifically suggests that anxiety is released when basic assumptions are unstable. The human mind needs cognitive stability. Therefore, any challenge to or questioning of a basic assumption will release anxiety and defensiveness. In this sense, the shared basic assumptions and beliefs that make up the culture of a group can be thought of as psychological defense mechanisms that permit the group to continue to remain viable.

Anxiety and Culture

We long for an existence that is comfortable, even joyful, and certainly free from anguish or surprise. Instead, we find ourselves living a temporary life in a world that is filled with the demands for change and the accompanying demands for learning. To the extent that the hazards of learning are unknown and unpredictable, specific fears translate into a diffuse anxiety about that which can't be clearly defined. Culture provides a container. It establishes roles, rules, attitudes, behaviors and practices. It prescribes ways for people to feel safe. Culture provides predictability and ascribes importance to one's

actions and one's presence in the world. It says that when you participate in this culture you are not alone. There are specific roles and responsibilities.

Psychologists tell us that when we become anxious, we tend to regress to a more primitive state of mind and feelings. We become more like we were as children. We are likely, In particular, to become dependent, and look forward to being taken care of by a person who in certain respects is superior. This anxiety and resulting dependency often serve us well. Anxiety, however, is a source of major problems regarding learning. Anxiety not only keeps people from embracing major new learning in their lives, it contributes to the inability or unwillingness of leaders to learn about their own organization and to learn about ways they must confront the emerging challenges of our postmodern era. We propose that anxiety blocks the personal and organizational learning required in our contemporary systems. When we as coaches and leaders come to understand the nature and effect of this anxiety and its interplay with organizational culture, we will begin to unravel many of the Gordian knots associated with resistance to learning and change.

Organizational Culture as a Container of Anxiety

The fundamental interplay between the containment of anxiety and the formation of organizational cultures was carefully and persuasively documented many years ago by Isabel Menzies Lyth (1988). She wrote about ways in which nurses in an English hospital cope with the anxiety that is inevitably associated with issues of health, life and death. Menzies Lyth noted how the hospital in which nurses worked helped to ameliorate or at least protect the nurses from anxiety. She suggested that a health care organization is primarily in the business of reducing this anxiety and that on a daily basis all other functions of the organization are secondary to this anxiety-reduction function.

It is specifically the culture of the organization that serves as the primary vehicle for addressing anxiety and stress. The culture of an organization is highly resistant to change precisely because change directly threatens the informal system that has been established in the organization to help those working in it to confront and make sense of the anxiety inherent in health care. Menzies Lyth's observations have been reaffirmed in many other organizational settings. Anxiety is to be found in most contemporary organizations and efforts to reduce this anxiety are of prominent importance. Somehow an organization that is inclined to evoke anxiety among its employees must discover or construct a buffer that both isolates (contains) the anxiety and addresses the realistic, daily needs of its employees.

 How exactly does anxiety get addressed in organizations? Menzies Lyth (1988) suggested that it gets addressed through the "social defense system"—that is, the patterns of interpersonal and group relationships that exist in the organization. Other organizational theorists and researchers similarly suggest that the rituals, routines, stories, and norms (implicit values) of the organization help members of the organization manage anxiety inside the organization. Yet, these rituals, routines, stories, and norms are not a random assortment of activities. Rather, they cluster together and form a single, coherent dimension of the organization. This single, coherent dimension is known as the "culture" of the organization. As Edgar Schein (1999) has noted, the culture of an organization is the residue of the organization's success in confronting varying conditions in the world. To the extent that an organization is adaptive in responding to and reducing pervasive anxiety associated with the processes of organizational learning and related functions of the enterprise, the existing cultures of this organization will be reinforced, deepen and become increasingly resistant to challenge or change.

Reducing the Anxiety/Increasing the Expertise

Perhaps contemporary organizations can best reduce the fear of their leaders, employees and other stakeholders through bringing together the diverse perspectives that the six cultures bring to the organization. Taken in isolation, each of the six cultures provides a vehicle that is only partially successful in reducing the fears and anxieties of people about their own learning. Furthermore, even when successful, each culture alleviates only the symptoms of the anxiety—not its ultimate source. Fear and anxiety will only be fully addressed when people feel that they are being freely served with the skills, knowledge, strategies and resources of all members of the company—regardless of culture.

I propose that it is crucial to appreciate each of the cultures so that one can receive and engage expertise that comes in many different forms and can operate effectively within and among each culture. With this openness to multiple sources of expertise and with knowledge and appreciation of the diverse cultures, one can also more effectively influence and improve the quality of change that is required in contemporary organizations. With this sense of appreciation, each culture and each source of expertise can become a force for improvement rather than destruction in our organizations. Each new source of expert perspective and practice and each culture can contribute to the learning of leaders rather than reinforcing limiting and inflexible assumptions about the nature and direction of the enterprise in which these leaders are engaged.

Professional Culture

The primary vehicles for containing and eliminating anxiety in the professional culture are the demonstration of wisdom and credibility on the part of the coach. If she can exhibit extensive knowledge of the specific type of business in which her client is working or if she can exhibit a broad-based knowledge of how organizations work and how leaders lead, then her client is likely to feel more at ease and less vulnerable to the leadership challenges that he faces. Even without this knowledge, a coach can be of great value to her client if she can assist the client in finding and evaluating the validity and usefulness of specific sources of expertise. If a coach can show that she is credentialed (such as ICF certification) or if she can relate her client's leadership issues to a specific theory (e.g. model of leadership) or specific expert-based research findings (e.g. leadership competencies) then she gains credibility with her client and is likely to be influential in her coaching interactions with him.

Managerial Culture

When a leader and coach interact under the auspices of this culture, anxiety is likely to be contained and eliminated if the coach can provide services (or recommend services) that yield measurable results – the leader improves her performance in a specific way (such as being able to increase revenues in her department by 30%). The successful managerial coach is often himself an "expert" on matters related to measurement (such as return-on-investment). Measurements and categorizations are often an antidote (even if temporary) to anxiety.

The coach is likely to be particularly effective in reducing his client's anxiety if the performance improvement is linked to specific rewards. Thus, it is not only important that revenues increased by 30%, it is important also that this leader receive a substantial bonus, salary increase, increased responsibility, or promotion in recognition of her improved performance. The coach who is aligned with the managerial culture holds an advantage over coaches aligned with the other five cultures regarding

the reduction of anxiety, because he can commit to specific goals (and this commitment is itself anxiety-reducing). On the other hand, with explicit coaching goals, there is always the danger that if these goals are not met, the anxiety of both leader and coach will be increased, not diminished.

Alternative Culture

The leader and coach who are associated with this culture tend to feel less anxious when the client "feels better," feels more aligned with some greater purpose or higher level of consciousness or feels that he has access to some higher (spiritual) source of energy or inspiration. Expertise resides in multiple fields and is oriented to the psychic, physical and spiritual welfare of the client. It is unlikely that a leader will be a source of health and healing for their organization if they themselves are wounded. In many ways, this culture offers the most accessible and intimate vehicles for the reduction of anxiety: the leader senses that he is physically "more alive," he is experiencing "less stress," or he is "energized "by some external power or presence. There are no standardized criteria for determining the success of coaching in this culture. Success in each case is defined by the client or by the specific community of belief and values in which this specific coaching process is engaged.

Advocacy Culture

This specific culture is often filled with anxiety, given that it inevitably involves some confrontation and some tension between the "haves" and "have nots." The client (or client system) that is receiving the coaching is likely to feel less anxious when he feels "heard" and "appreciated." He will feel even less anxious if he believes he has been influential in the area(s) of greatest concern to him. He is himself an "expert" – or at least someone who is heard. As in the case of the managerial culture, anxiety is often reduced in the advocacy culture if the coach and client can be explicit about their coaching goals. An advocacy-oriented coach is likely to help her client identify specific ways in which (and times and places when) he can be more influential. If "influential" can be stated in measurable terms, then the advocacy leader and coach can celebrate victory (yet also risk the increased anxiety associated with defeat).

Virtual Culture

The leader and coach who operate out of this particular frame of reference are involved in a balancing act with regard to the reduction or elimination of organizational anxiety. On the one hand, the coach is often in the business of challenging his client with new sources of expertise—sharing information regarding the VUCA-Plus world in which her client must operate. or identifying new points of access into a dynamic network of relationships. On the other hand, the virtual coach is also trying to be supportive of his client, providing her with some sense of coherence in a world that is filled with complexity, unpredictability and turbulence.

The virtual coach faces a difficult task in helping his client make sense of her world – it is not only a matter of digesting a large amount of information; it is also a matter of thinking and acting at a very high level. Kegan (1994) suggests that we, of the postmodern era, are "in over our heads" (certainly a source of profound anxiety) and it would seem that coaches to these virtual, mid-21st Century leaders are particularly needed to help their clients address these major VUCA-Plus challenges (Bergquist, 2020).

Tangible Culture

Given the postmodern challenges facing contemporary leaders, it is obvious that the tangible coach is potentially of great value—for leaders long for coaching strategies that are directly aligned with the tangible culture. They want to be able to meet with their coach face-to-face; they seek out a time and space that is safe. They want to be assured that existing sources of expertise can be trusted. When effective, the coach who is aligned with the tangible culture will help create a "sanctuary" in which her client leader can talk about anything and feel deeply.

This coaching client may have no specific agenda, nor does he necessarily want to improve his performance, find a higher level of consciousness, or become more influential. He mostly wants to find a place where he can "be himself," "talk to someone who holds no agenda other than being there for him," or "simply be listened to by someone who cares about my personal welfare." These needs are not easily articulated in a formal coaching contract. However, as in the case of the alternative culture, the coaching strategies associated with the tangible culture may be immediately effective in helping to reduce postmodern anxiety – though this type of coaching is often reserved only for those with sufficient power, wealth or opportunity to meet in person with a coach (often in some retreat site)—and to be in a position of power that enables them to rely on established sources of expertise. VUCA-Plus is a hurricane operating somewhere else in the world. Thus, the tangible culture – more than any of the other five cultures – is often associated with coaching services that are reserved for the elite. The risk is that VUCA-Plus will come swirling in and disrupting (or even destroying) the sanctuary.

Conclusions: Beyond and Beneath the Anxiety

Our analysis would suggest that there are not only many sources of expertise –and sources of anxiety-- associated with leadership of a contemporary organization; there are also many ways in which coaches can help to alleviate the leader's anxiety and assist in the discernment of multi-source expertise. It seems that the coach is herself challenged with diverse sources of expert advice about how best to provide expertise and help her client manage the anxiety.

Many psychological theorists suggest that human service providers should not be in the business of reducing anxiety—for anxiety is a signal that something is wrong in the life of the person being served. The anxiety we are talking about here is a normal (and collective) reaction to stress that helps one deal with a tense situation in the organization—not the disabling anxiety disorder that becomes an excessive, irrational dread of everyday situations. Just as pain is an important source of information for the health care provider regarding the nature of an injury or illness, so anxiety might be a source of information about the "malady" facing an organizational leader regarding his own behavior or some broader systemic problem.

Thus, an organizational coach might wish to examine the ways in which her coaching strategies and perspectives help not only to alleviate anxiety, but also to reveal the underlying problem(s) that have helped to generate the anxiety. This is where expertise comes to the fore. In turning to valid and useful sources of expertise, a client can learn how best to address the underlying problem. In this essay, I have identified several of the strengths associated with each culture and the coaching strategies aligned with each culture. I have also suggested that there are multiple, credible ways in which to access expertise. Potential blind spots are associated with each of the six cultures—which means that expertise is invaluable that helps in the identification and alleviation of these blind spots. We encourage coaches to

explore their own untested assumptions and blind spots, while encouraging their clients to explore what lies beyond and beneath their anxiety. Perhaps a bit of expertise can be applied.

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