

ANSE[®]

periodical for professional exchange and networking

European Journal
for Supervision and Coaching

Artificial Intelligence in Supervision and Coaching

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Editorial

■ Kristina Urbanc

As Sijtze de Roos announced in the last issue of Anse Journal, I took over the role of chief editor from him in January 2025. The preparation of this issue began during his term, and this has been a transitional period for me and the members of the editorial board, in which we have, I hope, strived to preserve the mission, standards and ethics of Sijtze's legacy.

This legacy is also evidenced by the recognition he received for his work in April this year, the so-called "*lintje*" (ribbon, which is a royal reward), also known as the Dutch "*lintjesregen*" (ribbon rain), in the Netherlands to individuals for their exceptional contribution of volunteer work to society.

Also, Sijtze de Roos has been awarded with the Honorary Membership of ANSE – a heartfelt recognition of his exceptional contributions to our European community of supervision¹. It was in this atmosphere that the preparation of this issue took place and we hope you will enjoy reading, thinking, learning, wondering, questioning, reflecting, perhaps even gaining some new ideas.

A topic such as artificial intelligence and its application in the field of supervision, coaching and in the helping professions is above all a "hot topic", often associated with ambivalent feelings and a division of opinion ("for" and "against"). Our intention is not to choose sides in this issue, but to exchange experiences and try to prepare as best as possible for the future that is already here. Therefore, I invite you to approach reading this issue from some other perspectives (not only from your own shoes): the perspective of our clients, students, educators, our associates who belong to different

generations and the perspective of the general public. And then, observe and listen to what this topic does to you, how it feels in your heart, in your head and how it sits in your stomach, what feelings and thoughts it arouses in you. Could it inspire you to use it in your work as a supervisor or coach? Preparing this issue was challenging for me, both because of the new role I was taking and because of the topic itself, which was awe-inspiring to me. As a university professor in the area of social work, I am aware that every student certainly knows more about it than I do and that they easily apply artificial intelligence tools in almost every written assignment. And then it is up to me to create such learning outcomes and devise ways that will enable future experts to develop and apply their professional competencies in accordance with ethics, law, professional standards and common sense. Whether this is an impossible mission, I do not know, but it is my job not to give up.

A few years ago, I was greatly amazed by the comment of a colleague who described the experience of a therapy session with AI (in which she participated as a client) in superlatives – a brilliantly achieved shared understanding of the topic that she brought to therapy. After that I was so blinded by the awe of AI in a helping and supervisory context that I forgot to consider her needs and perspective as a client in this process. It was so hard for me to stop and look at the world from her shoes and rejoice that she had fulfilled her expectations in her conversation with AI. So, as we know, whenever it is unthinkable for us to step into someone else's shoes and imagine the world from their perspective – it is time for supervision.

Here is what readers can find in the new issue of AJ: Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland) introduces us to the world of AI with her column *What is ANSE? Let's ask ChatGPT* with a focus on what will artificial intelligence tell

¹You can read more of this all in the topic Extra Did you know in this issue of ANSE JOURNAL.

us about ANSE and what do Association of Nordic and Baltic Seafarers' Educational Organizations have in common with Association of National Organizations for Supervision in Europe.

Gerian Dijkhuizen (the Netherlands) in her column *Did you know* will inform you about some interesting news and events from the world of supervision and coaching. She also wrote about the festivities around Sijtze de Roos in an Extra *Did you know*.

Exploring Professional Identity with the Narrative Approach, a vignette by Christophe Keromen (France) informs us about his experience of guiding supervisees in connecting actions to identity, realigning with their purpose and finding meaning "outside of their practice" to explore and revisit their professional identities.

In his article *Artificial Intelligence in consultancy - Quo vadis?* Hans-Ueli Schlumpf (Switzerland) emphasizes that the BSO encourages an experimental approach to innovation in general while inviting to exploring creative potentials as well as anticipating risks and becoming increasingly competent to »be in the driver seat« of person's own learning and development.

Sijtze de Roos (the Netherlands) in "*The Janus Face of Artificial Intelligence*", pictures Artificial Intelligence as a two-faced phenomenon. By using the metaphor of the Roman deity Janus, he discusses how AI can turn out to be a blessing, but just as well as a curse. The author argues that AI by itself is neither good nor bad, but in dealing with it we should first take a hard look at it.

Wiepke de Heij (the Netherlands) in the vignette *How AI became my friend and colleague on a rainy Sunday afternoon* explores the use of AI for supervision and coaching and He-

lena Ehrenbusch (Estonia) tells us about her conversation with Aksel Inder (AI) in her article *Does AI need supervision?* Both authors open a space in their articles for reflection on ethics, competences, responsibility and understanding of human connection.

The following is a "package" of a total of four articles entitled

- *Refining and Advancing Coaching and its Supervision using Artificial Intelligence* by Jazz Rasool, (UK)
- *AI Curated C-Suite Executive Coaching and Stakeholder-Centred Leadership*, by Michael Beale (UK),
- *The Call to Action for Coaching and Supervision: AI Literacy and AI Compliance* by Colin Cosgrove (Ireland)
- *Designing an Artificial Intelligence-Powered Coaching Platform: Principles, Challenges, Learnings and Enterprise Application*, by Puja Brahmasmi and Deep Bali (both from India and USA).

This is indeed a concentrate of theoretical frameworks, tools, ethical reflections and approaches and the obviously rich authors' experience, which guides readers from conceptual frameworks, ethical reflections to application in practice. It is relevant for leaders, trainers, educators and organizational designers. I quote the authors Puja Brahmasmi and Deep Bali here because it seems to me that their thought integrates well the message of all four contributions: "From early skepticism to real-world adoption, it challenges assumptions and redefines how measurable, sustainable learning can be activated at scale. It began with a call to adventure anchored in courage, curiosity, knowledge, and realistic optimism".

Furthermore, in the article *DGSv's Common Good Balance Sheet: A Commitment to Values-Based Practice* by Annette Mulkau (Germany) explains how in 2024, the DGSv decided to start an accounting process based on the criteria of the Economy for the Common Good. This is a movement which

advocates for economic restructuring, prioritizing values such as cooperation, respect for human dignity, solidarity, ecological sustainability, social justice and democratic participation in the design of economic processes.

In the article *Identity in light of otherness*, Danielle Birken (France) emphasizes a stance based on the unique and authentic human encounter, beyond tools and techniques, where the coachee's subjectivity is unveiled through interaction with that of the coach.

I would conclude this review by saying that in their valuable and interesting contributions our authors question the possibilities, limits, benefits and risks of implementing AI and where can AI be a support, and where we as humans must step in and take over.

At last, but not least, we finish this issue with two book reviews.

Sijtze de Roos presents "*Identität, Resonanz und Sinnkonstruktion in der Soziale Beratung*" by Jesus Hernández Aristu. He emphasizes the essence of the book through three lines of argumentation: identity formation is a personal and a communal duty, responsiveness and resonance shape a world that carries us and sense making requires our full presence.

Adrianne van Doorn (the Netherlands) presents "*Supervision in Social Work*", a book by Petra Videmšek where readers can learn more about the role of supervision in taking care of the caretakers and preventing empathy fatigue.

While preparing this issue of the ANSE Journal together with the members of the Editorial Board, whom I hereby thank for their flexibility, collegiality and dedicated work, I faced (at least) two uncertain processes.

- the process of editing and publishing the AJ with the responsibility of preserving the mission and standards of the journal established by my predecessor
- the process of active learning and critical thinking about the topic of this issue. In addition to the fact that the preparation of this issue contributed to better understanding my ignorance on this topic, it also improved my competence to deal with uncertainty, which is one of the important supervisory competences, isn't it?

At the end of this editorial I have an announcements to make: our next issue (or maybe two next issues) are going to be dedicated to articles based on lectures and workshops from 11th ANSE Summer University: An ocean of possibility, in Munich, Germany, August, 18 - 22th 2025.

As for further contributions, you are cordially invited to send us your articles, vignettes and book reviews - please check with 'your' national editor or 'your' editorial board member and consult the colophon for more exact information. Maybe we'll meet in München this summer. If so, please visit the presentation of ANSE Journal and maybe it will inspire you to be one of our future authors.

I leave you to the adventure of reading, while I wish you a nice, I hope not too hot summer and a pleasant vacation. ■

Kristina Urbanc



Kristina Urbanc is social worker, holds PhD in social pedagogy, licensed supervisor in psychosocial work, systemic family therapist and integrative child therapist. She works at the Department of social work, Faculty of Law, University of Zagreb as a full professor. She also works at the Center for Children, Youth and Family in Velika Gorica, Croatia, as a child psychodrama therapist. She is the author of three books and over 70 articles published in scientific and professional revues. She works home and abroad in various supervision trainings and projects.

What is ANSE? Let's ask ChatGPT

■ Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir

I'm going to admit here and now that I haven't started using artificial intelligence purposefully. Neither at work nor in my personal life. I've only tried a few questions but find it difficult to trust the information and its origin. That's probably just due to my lack of knowledge of the technology. I see that there are many people who use artificial intelligence. In fact, so much so that people are constantly talking to the phone. People are asking questions and then sharing the results that the artificial intelligence finds with those present, even unsolicited.

I decided to ask ChatGPT *if there was a European association of supervision* and got the answer that there was a European association of tour guides called the European Federation of Tourist Guide Associations (FEG). I changed the question a little and asked *if there was an international association of supervision in Europe?* The answer was that there was the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) but also that there was the European System of Financial Supervision (ESFS) which had been established in 2011. I changed the search again and asked *if there was an*



international association of supervisors? Yes, there are international associations dedicated to supervision across various sectors. Notable examples include: International Association of Insurance Supervisors (IAIS), International Union of Superintendents (IUS) and International Association of Coaching Supervisors (IACS).

Well, maybe I'm just overcomplicating this and next I asked *What is ANSE?* The answer was immediate and came straight away: ANSE stands for the Association of Nordic and Baltic Seafarers' Educational Organizations (Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania).

I simply gave up and asked *What is Association of National Organizations for Supervision in Europe?* The following was the answer: The Association of National Organizations for Supervision in Europe (ANSE) is a European organization that represents national bodies involved in the field of supervi-

What is ANSE?

Let's ask ChatGPT

What will artificial intelligence tell us about ANSE? What do Association of Nordic and Baltic Seafarers' Educational Organizations have in common with Association of National Organisations for Supervision in Europe?

on. Supervision, in this context, refers to professional support and development processes for individuals working in helping professions, such as therapists, coaches, and social workers, among others.

ANSE's primary goal is to promote and develop supervision as a key element for professional growth, ensuring quality in practice, and safeguarding the well-being of both practitioners and their clients. It serves as a platform for cooperation and exchange among national organizations dedicated to supervision and aims to:

1. Promote the quality and professional standards of supervision across Europe.
2. Facilitate the exchange of knowledge, best practices, and experiences between supervisors and professionals in related fields.

3. Support the education and training of supervisors to ensure a high level of competence and ethics in the field.
4. Advocate for the recognition of supervision as a valuable tool for personal and professional development in various helping professions.

From this small example, it is quite clear that information from artificial intelligence cannot be blindly trusted. I knew what I was looking for and was therefore able to evaluate the information I received. I also learned something new from this. For example, I didn't know that there was an Association of Nordic and Baltic Seafarers' Educational Organizations! My opinion is that it is important that people have access to continuing education about artificial intelligence and receive training in using this innovation in a professional and responsible manner. ■



Sveindís Anna Jóhannsdóttir (Iceland) is director of Social Work in a rehabilitation center, has a private practice and teaches Social Work and Supervision at the University of Iceland. She is president of The Icelandic Association of Supervision and chairs the ethics committee.

Did you know? *Extra*



A Dutch royal distinction for Sijtze de Roos

■ Gerian Dijkhuizen

A day before our national holiday 'Kingsday' (april 27th) in the Netherlands our dear colleague Sijtze de Roos got a royal distinction: Knight in the Order of Oranje Nassau. These special order signs are given to people (this year to 3400 men and women) who give a lot of their spare time to volunteer work for the wellbeing of the whole society.

In the case of Sijtze he was recommended for his work for the National Organisation LVSC (president for many years, lot of committees, ideas, articles etc), for ANSE (vice-president, president for many years, ANSE Journal, Ethic guidelines etc) and many more things he established during his working life. For years Sijtze was a senior supervisor and teacher of many supervisors in the Netherlands. He held keynotes all over Europe and still has a strong commitment to our profession. Both in opinions and in writing. Sijtze was and is a steady rock in turbulent times, offering not only structure and vision but also warmth and inspiration. Sijtze was called by the mayor of his home town: a very influencing professional in the field of supervision and coaching who, with a warm heart, encourages people to learn and grow in the field of their profession. On top of the Dutch order, Sijtze was also given (as the first!) the Honorary Membership of ANSE, a recognition of his exceptional contributions to our European community of supervision and coaching. ANSE president Miriam Ullrich held a very warm speech.

We hope Sijtze will continue his contributions to ANSE, LVSC, Magazine of Coaching (NL) and ANSE Journal and so many other places for many years and in good health. We are all very proud of you Sijtze! ■



Gerian Dijkhuizen (Netherlands) is member of the LVSC in the Netherlands and as such internationally active, with a special focus on Ukraine. She is a senior supervisor/educator of supervisors and runs her own practice

Did you know?



■ Gerian Dijkhuizen

- ANSE Talent Talk: november 16th. Eszter Komondy and Zsolt Olajos from Hungary about: Saboteurs in Supervision. The date/time will be also published on website ANSE www.anse.eu and social media.
- Next International Intervention Group (IIG) information meeting will be on october 30th. Keep an eye on the website of ANSE (www.anse.eu) and the social media. [linkedin.com/company/anse-s-c](https://www.linkedin.com/company/anse-s-c), [instagram.com/anse_s_c/](https://www.instagram.com/anse_s_c/)
- It is still possible to submit for the Summer University in München. Date: 18-22 august 2025. The theme: An ocean of possibility. Information: www.anse.eu or bw@ansesu25.de
- If you would like to join in an International Intervention Group: In München will be your chance. For mostly groups are formed spontaneously at the Summer Universities. ■



Gerian Dijkhuizen is member of the LVSC in the Netherlands and as such internationally active, with a special focus on Ukraine. She is a senior supervisor/educator of supervisors and runs her own practice

Exploring Professional Identity with the narrative approach

■ Christophe Keromen

Abstract

Among requests clients brought in supervision, questions often appear, explicitly or implicitly, linked to the professional identity of the supervisee. Depending on his background, training, and experience, this request can cause discomfort in the supervisor. I found inspiration and guidance in the narrative approach Michael White and David Epston developed. In particular, through the use of “narrative scaffoldings”...

Introduction

At the very start of my supervisory role, I felt powerless when confronted with requests that were not directly related to a support situation. For instance, I recall a young woman who struggled to return to work after

her parental leave for her second child: “I don’t understand; I had no issues with my first child,” she shared. In this article, I explore how the narrative approach enriches my supervisory practice, particularly in navigating requests that extend beyond traditional coaching situations.

Three Categories of Supervision Requests

In her book “The Bible of Supervision,” Martine Volle categorises supervision requests into three main types. She explains that the range of requests spans from didactics (1 - the practice itself), closely related to training and mentoring, to the support of existential inquiries at the boundary of the therapeutic domain (3 - outside of practice). Between (1 - the practice itself) and (3 - outside of practice), the most extensive category encompasses requests related to a specific situation (2 - during practice).



Figure 1. A compass for supervision - Adapted by Keromen from Volle (2020)

Supervision practices provided by coaching schools, in France, often fall into the first category of “the practice itself”: “I learn and adjust my professional gestures”. Extending the initial training, they ask, “How do I do it for...?” This category also includes questions from more seasoned coaches with ethical subjects: “How do I do it when...” The second category, “during practice”, is where we find most tools to address questions such as “How do I handle a situation where...” The requests classified in the third category, “outside practice”, encompass identity issues, queries regarding life choices, disruptions caused by personal circumstances, intimacy, and more.

I was, therefore, uncomfortable with the requests of this third category, termed “outside practice”. Reflecting on this now, I recognise that it could be because I still believed my legitimacy as a supervisor rested on my experience in coaching situations. In contrast, my knowledge regarding a second return from parental leave was considerably more limited! However, that is another tale (of supervising the supervisor!).

The narrative approach to identity construction

“Telling Our Stories in Ways That Make Us Stronger” is the title of a book by Barbara Wingard and Jane Lester (2001), which provides a beautiful definition of the narrative practices envisioned by Michael White and David Epston (1990). Given that “Identity is a social construction”, Michael White (2008) encourages us to question, deconstruct, and reconstruct this identity construction through life stories.

To support the emergence of stories honouring his clients, the narrative practitioner fosters conversations that weave connections between the “landscape of action” and the “landscape of identity”. Below is an illustration of the narrative scaffolding that can underpin a narrative conversation:

As a client weaves between action and identity, forgotten events resurface, exceptions to problems arise, new connections are forged, different meanings are crafted, and a preferred life story gradually takes shape...For example, one supervisee, experiencing professional isolation, began recalling past situations where he had successfully connected with

As supervisors, how can we use stories to explore and revisit our professional identities? Inspired by Michael White & David Epston’s narrative approach, Christophe guide supervisees in connecting actions to identity, realigning with their purpose, and finding meaning “outside of their practice.”

peers, leading him to craft a new story of competence and community belonging, firmly aligned with his principles.

The narrative approach at the service of the “outside practice.”

Trained in the narrative approach, I primarily apply it to these so-called requests from the third category, the “outside practice”, when the supervisee arrives at the session with, for instance:

- a sense of isolation, facing a challenging period in their career.
- a feeling of disconnection, experiencing a loss of purpose in their work.
- an issue that occupies their thoughts or even becomes intrusive in their practice.
- a recurring challenge during their interventions.

Table 1. The three categories of the compass - Adapted by Keromen from Volle (2020)

Category	Nature of Requests	Typical Examples	Key Questions
1. The Practice Itself (Didactic / Mentoring)	Linked directly to learning or refining professional competencies.	- Improving coaching techniques - Ethical questions for experienced practitioners	“How do I do it?” or “What should I do when...?”
2. During Practice (Situational)	Addressing concrete, situation-specific professional challenges.	- Handling difficult clients - Navigating professional dilemmas during intervention	“How do I handle this situation?”
3. Outside Practice (Identity / Existential)	Relating to professional identity, existential questions, and personal alignment.	- Career crossroads - Personal disruption impacting practice - Feelings of isolation or disconnection	“Who am I professionally?” “What’s meaningful for me?”

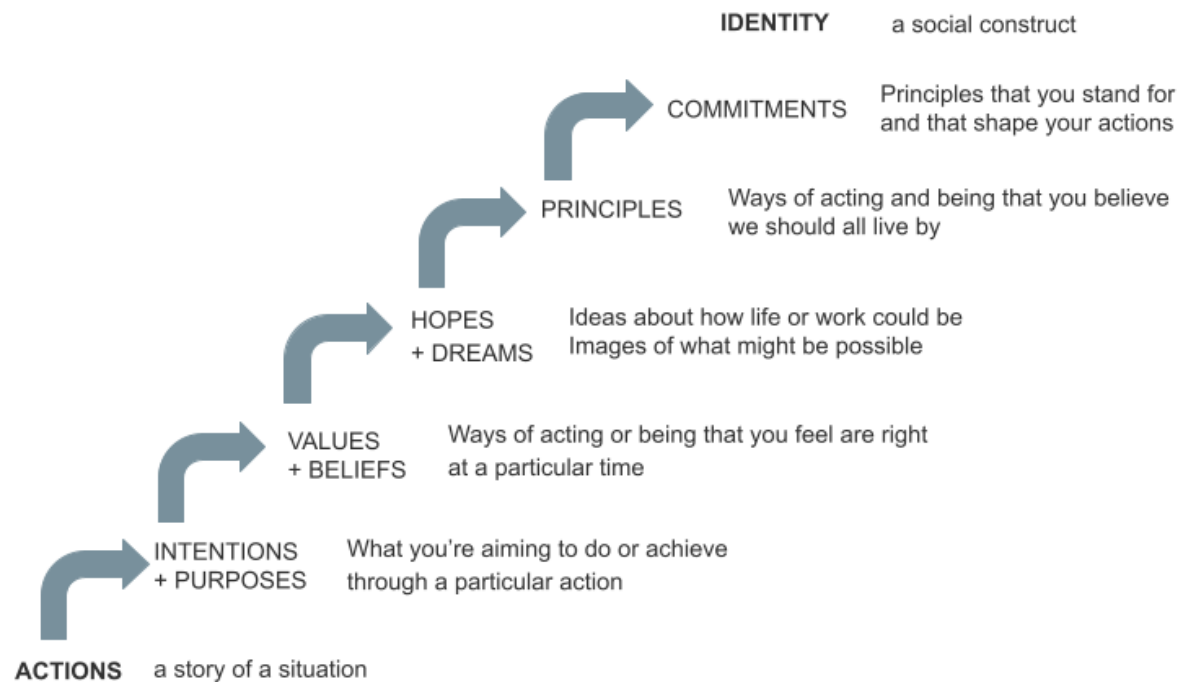


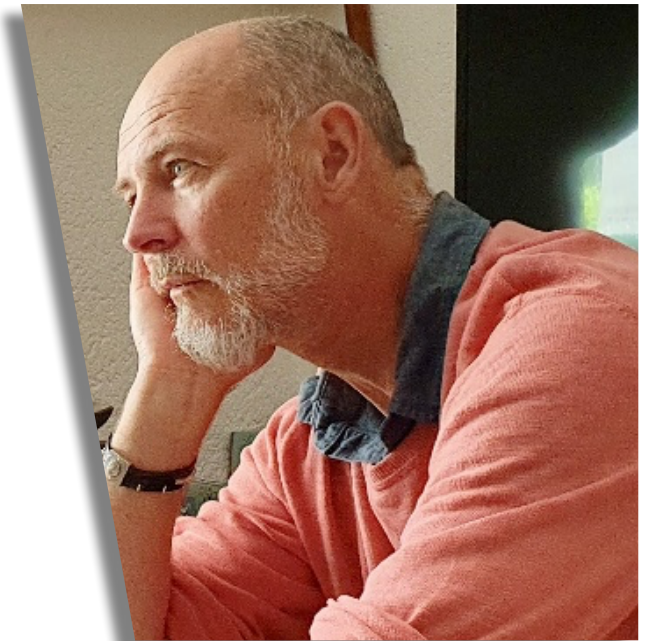
Figure 2. Narrative scaffolding - adapted by Keromen from White (2008)

The narrative approach is also beneficial for me, when a supervisee comes to the supervision session without a specific topic in mind. We then work to enhance their alignment, strengthen their connection to their resources, and craft identities that resonate deeply with their professional and personal aspiration.

Finally, feeling confident in these “narrative scaffoldings”, I now enjoy accompanying the paths “beyond practice”. Undoubtedly, this is partly because I feel more at ease there, detached from my own experience. And it helped me to rewrite my own story too... But that’s yet another narrative (the supervision of the supervisor!) ■

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Christophe Keromen (France) is a coach, trainer, supervisor, facilitator and developer of talents and cooperative intelligence. He supports individuals, collectives, and organizations in developing complex problem-solving skills and finding security in uncertainty. To do this, he relies on the systemic approach, narrative practices, emotional intelligence and the development of reflexivity. He uses his skills as a trainer, facilitator, “agilist”, coach and certified supervisor to give meaning and set the collectives in motion.



■ Hans-Ueli Schlumpf

Abstract

As with any innovation, questions around the potential and risks are raised. As the leading association in Switzerland for professional coaching, supervision, and organizational consultancy, the BSO has welcomed the launch of an online debate by www.meinungsbarometer.info and the opportunity to answer their questions around the significance of artificial intelligence in such a »human« field as professional counseling. Based on their professional standards and ethical values, the BSO encourages an experimental approach to innovation in general while inviting to a reflected application, exploring creative potentials as well as anticipating risks. As with any other methodology or tools – analog or digital – for a professional coach, supervisor, or organizational consul-

Artificial Intelligence in consultancy – Quo vadis?

Reflections of the Association for Coaching, Supervision, and Organizational Consultancy in Switzerland, BSO. A plea for an experimental yet ethical approach¹

tant, the key question may remain: Are people more likely to be seduced into a »comfortable consumer attitude«, »naive immaturity«, »easy manipulability« or »dangerous dependency«? Or are they supported in becoming increasingly competent and confident to »be in the driver seat« of their own learning and development process, and thus encouraged to take responsibility for their options, decisions, choices, actions, and consequences?

Introduction

In December 2024, the online discussion forum www.meinungsbarometer.info launched a debate under the title *How digital tools may change the coaching and consultancy industry*. The BSO was invited to share its views on technological trends around Artificial Intelligence (AI), to provide an outlook on opportunities and risks for the coaching and supervision practice, as well as make hypotheses on the potential impact on the consultancy profession in general. The written interview was structured along questions from www.meinungsbarometer.info which the BSO welcomed as an opportunity to reflect on and consolidate its position based on its own quality standards and ethical values. An initial

outline of the BSOs general positioning as an association for professional consultancy is setting the stage for the subsequent perspectives and statements inspired by the questions around AI.

The general positioning of the BSO

As a leading professional association, highly aware of its responsibility, the BSO works with a good twenty educational partner-institutes to define guidelines and quality standards for training programs in coaching, supervision, and organizational development. The same standards apply in the binding quality development system that individual members of the association must comply with.

The BSO closely monitors social and technological trends relevant to counseling. For example, an interdisciplinary working group has been formed to study trends around Artificial Intelligence and their impact on counseling. The group is working on issues related to the education and consultancy practice, studying the consultancy market, reflecting on questions around regulations vs. personal responsibility, as well as providing orientation by designing a sensible path

¹Note of the author: Original text in German submitted to www.meinungsbarometer.info on behalf of the BSO including feedback and inputs from the board and the »AI in counseling« working group. Originally published under the title »Technologische Möglichkeiten sinnvoll und ethisch nutzen« in December 2024 by www.meinungsbarometer.info – Das Fachdebattenportal. [Link to the article](#). Written consent from www.meinungsbarometer.info from February 2025 for translation and editing in English for publication in the ANSE Journal. Original text translated with DeepL.com and manually edited by the author.

forward between general recommendations and individual values and working styles. Discourses take place in the context of rapid developments at the pulse of the current

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is conquering the world. Professional coaches, supervisors, and organizational consultants are challenged to explore the potential and anticipate risks that AI bears for their work with clients – individuals and organizations. The leading Swiss association for professional coaching, supervision, and organizational consultancy, BSO, has welcomed the opportunity to respond to some key questions around the significance of AI for the consultancy practice posed by the online discussion forum www.meinungsbarometer.info

state of knowledge. As is inherent in the »DNA« of the BSOs understanding of consultancy, the association basically supports an experimental approach towards innovation. On the application level for coaches and supervisors with their clients (individuals, teams, organizations), the BSO appeals to a professional ethical attitude as well as the ability to make reasonable choices and reflect interventions and methodologies as well as potential consequences – like in general consultancy practice, so in dealing with AI.

One aspect worth mentioning at this point, which the working group suggests examining, is the question of the context (in terms of content and culture) in which an AI is developed, and thus from which sources it responds. On the one hand, answers and recommendations generated by AI may contain »cultural biases« (imprints, prejudices, or »hidden influence« in other forms) that may be more or less compatible with other cultural contexts. On the other hand, it is a reality that human counselors are also subject to the phenomenon of cultural bias – even within their own cultural context. But regardless of biases, cultural aspects and differences can be considered both an obstacle or a resource, depending on each counselor's individual assumption whether a »homogeneous cultural context« is considered a prerequisite for successful counseling, or it may precisely be the »new, unusual, at first glance unfamiliar« that is considered a valuable source of inspiration for significant development. However, a potential risk of subtle yet significant – tendentious, whether intentional or not – »cultural shaping« through AI should not be underestimated. At the same time, one advantage of AI over counseling by a human may be that the database is constantly evolving at an enormous pace (or can be changed, corrected, reprogrammed if necessary), while human counselors are often unaware of their own biases (e.g. stereotypical thinking and actions, worst case »repetitive directive pieces of advice«). Thus, there are risks in general of multiplying patterns in counseling practice if not reflected



and transcended. Not to mention the fact that transforming established habits and patterns as well as changing mental models and behaviors may not come easy as such, even if people are highly aware and committed to change.

Questions of www.meinungsbarometer.info and answers of the BSO

Question: More and more digital tools and AI applications are being used in coaching and consulting. What potential do you generally see in this?

BSO: We see great potential in the use of AI in consultancy in the fact that it can – in whatever form, provided it is used thoughtfully – be a source of information that complements human intelligence in order to support the development of coping strategies or problem solving- and decision-making processes.

Question: The use of AI conversational avatars seems to be a trend. How do you see this?

BSO: Digital coaching platforms and avatars as »sparring partners« can draw on a database (fed into the network by humans in the first place) that a coach or counselor could never acquire. In principle, we encourage the sensible and ethi-

cal use of technological possibilities. Against the backdrop of a humanistic and holistic view of the world and our understanding of counseling, we are inviting to think about the risks of lopsided use, the potential for abuse and addiction, or the distraction from »existential social learning processes«. A key question that can provide general guidance is: What serves a healthy psychosocial development of an individual, a prosperous way of life in a modern society, and eventually a humane existence on this planet? Or what can rather distract from it, hinder the learning process, or even lead life astray? Question: More use of AI is also expected for the evaluation of results. What potential do you see here?

BSO: If more AI is to be used to evaluate effects and results of counseling, there may be just as many follow-up questions as answers:

- Who expects more AI to be used in the evaluation of results from counseling? Is it clients who want to validate their own perception and judgment? Is it counselors or consulting companies that want to objectify evaluations and generate them more efficiently? Is it tech giants that want to collect more and more information and gain control (substantially expand their databases and make people increasingly dependent on digital solutions)? Or does »expectation« at this point rather mean »anticipation«? If so, our questions would in turn include the possibilities, opportunities, and risks that could be associated with it.
- How could the evaluation of counseling results by AI help us to refine our own perception and judgment? - That would be quite a positive effect that we could welcome on the background of the BSOs understanding of human development.
- The fact that the compilation of questionnaires is generated by AI and results are reported in an executive summary in a matter of seconds (instead of by occupational and organizational psychologists or management

consultants in a laborious, time-consuming, and costly manner) is a reality that we think we should prepare for, better today than tomorrow: Human labor is at risk to be replaced sooner or later wherever AI can do it better and faster.

- In our opinion, though, there will always be a need for humans - i.e. prudent, competent coaches, supervisors, and organizational consultants - to assess situations as well as to interpret processes, dynamics, and results in order to transfer them in line with the context of the client system in order to support the further evolution of any »social system« mindfully and effectively. From this point of view, we can also see an opportunity in the fact that the effort required to collect and analyze data can be significantly reduced, and consequently more resources (time, attention, skills, money) are available for creative work in direct interaction with people. In our opinion, this could be a highly desirable trend for human development.

Question: But there are also fears that AI could replace coaching and consultancy in entire areas. What are your expectations in this regard?

BSO: AI shows reasonable results for simple consulting questions. However, as soon as problems become more complex and solutions need to be embedded in a specific context, unique human abilities, i.e. situational and sensory awareness, remain indispensable. Thus, we are actually looking forward to gradually relieving humans of (especially »meaningless«) tasks that machines can do better. We encourage rising to the challenges that new technologies bring and to focus on the potential of learning and innovation yet aim at taking a mindful and ethical approach to make good use. Hypotheses that yet untapped human potential could be revealed for personal development on other levels (e.g. inspirational, creative, reflective, ethic) would certainly fit into our understanding of human and societal development. In fact, the development of psychosocial skills as a (healthy) counter or parallel movement

to technical innovation could be more urgently demanded and accelerated. From this perspective and in the broadest and most positive sense, technology (if used wisely) bears the potential to create »more humanity« - even if this may seem somewhat paradoxical at first glance. This could happen for example through low-threshold, self-directed, reflective experiential learning; inspiration through »collective knowledge«; more comprehensive self-management; or to put it in a nutshell: significant evolutionary steps in sensory awareness and enhanced consciousness. Which subsequently bears the potential to accelerate collective development processes, e.g. in environmental issues, geopolitical challenges, or humanist movements in general.

In a recently specific question posed to ChatGPT, where its limits lie in advising social systems (people, teams, organizations) and where a human being will always remain unique, better, irreplaceable, AI answered with both »self-critical« answers and encouraging confirmations for human counselors: in particular, it pointed out which unique human capabilities and counseling qualities we may put an even stronger focus on. For example, the immediate experience of social situations; the creative co-design of joint projects;



the intuitive assessment of complex problems; spontaneous social interaction; and the support of social development processes over a longer period of time.

Conclusions

Against the background of a humanistic view of mankind (including »womankind« and »diverse kind«), a fundamental boundary can be drawn between the creative potential and risks of AI (as well as other tools, nota bene) along the question of who is, remains, or becomes »master of the house« in the process. The BSOs understanding of consultancy is rooted in values such as »empowerment and enablement«, »maturity and responsibility« and »self-efficacy and interdependence«. For us as an association, at the very core, the ethos of consultancy is therefore crucial in dealing with AI as it is in all fundamental issues - whether offered by humans or machines, with whatever methods or tools. Whether digital or analog, the key question remains: Are people more likely to be seduced into a »comfortable consumer attitude«, »naive immaturity«, »easy manipulability« or »dangerous dependency«? Or are they effectively supported - according to the ambitions of the BSO - in becoming increasingly competent and confident to »be in the driver seat« of their own learning and development process, and thus encouraged and enabled to take responsibility for their options, decisions, choices, actions, and consequences? ■



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The Janus Face of Artificial Intelligence

■ Sijtze de Roos

Abstract

In this article, the author first pictures Artificial Intelligence as a twofaced phenomenon. Just like the Roman deity Janus, AI can turn out to be a blessing, but just as well as a curse. How do we avoid being overwhelmed by it, as we already see happening with social media? Using varied examples, the author argues that AI by itself is neither good nor bad, but that mankind in dealing with it should first take a hard look at itself.

Introduction

Is Artificial Intelligence a blessing or a curse? Or perhaps both at the same time? For an answer we may be well advised to turn to the Roman pantheon, more in particular to the twofaced deity Janus. What kind of god was he? Benign or malignant? Or perhaps both at the same time?

Janus reigned over the Beginning and the End and oversaw the opening and closing of all kinds of gates and doors. His rule even stretched so far as to the very Gate of Heaven; an entrance he could open or close at will. With such powers to wield, it is no wonder that people looked up to him in awe, even if he - like all man-made deities - finally turned out to be no more than an illusionary answer to their spiritual needs, or - in other words - a wishful product of their own imagination.



Different faces

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is just as well a product of human imagination. It is a man-made, auto-generative and increasingly self-supportive system driven by algorithms. Many look at it with awe and welcome it with great enthusiasm: "Look what you can do with it, look what it can do for you, look how much money we could make through it". Many others approach it with apprehension or are even downright afraid of it: "How many jobs will be lost? Will we be outsmarted, surpassed or even oppressed by autonomous machines?" Judging by these reactions, AI indeed seems to be a twofaced phenomenon; useful and dangerous, influentially active in the physical word yet not really belonging to it. Just like the Roman god Janus.

Looking at it this way, AI shows all the inner contradictions that are so typical of its human inventors. It may help us and it may lead us astray, just like what we humans do to ourselves.

AI is a manmade, auto-generative and increasingly self-supporting system driven by algorithms. Does this make it a blessing or a curse? Or both?

It seems only fair to characterize us as sorcerer's apprentices. Clever? Certainly. Generally well-meaning? Perhaps so. Showing self-control? We don't see very much of that. Fumbling and inadequate? Definitely. Since we are obviously not very good at controlling ourselves, how could we ever expect to control our many brilliant innovations: designer drugs, poisonous detergents, social media, AI?

So the question remains is AI a blessing or a curse? To find out more about that, let's take a dive in some of its background before turning to substantiate our reasoning by a mixed set of more or less dubious AI-applications.

AI in context

Since the dawn of mankind, we humans have wanted to delegate practical challenges and moral problems to some agency outside of us. We consulted the ghosts of ancestors, we laid it at the altars of all kinds of gods, prophets and sooth sayers, we turned for counsel to gurus and kings, we left it in the eager hands authoritarian leaders or we developed machines to solve our problems for us. Artefacts like AI. That people expect to receive support and salvation from external sources should not surprise us. Neither should the basic principles of AI. It is the combination of these properties that is new.

In the seventies of last century, the American ICT expert Weizenbaum developed a script that enabled computers to respond to patients in an empathetic way¹. This program, called Eliza, was composed of hundreds of sentences adopted from Rogerian therapists. Just as the Rogerians do in real life, Eliza responded by humming, or with sentences like: “Continue” or “What do you mean by that?” If, for instance, the patient admitted that she felt guilty about leaving her mother in a retirement home, Eliza could ask: “You say you feel guilty?” Patients would spend hours talking to her about their problems. In one case, ‘real’ people were irritably waved away. “Don’t bother me, someone is finally listening to me”².

To Weizenbaum’s annoyance, the enthusiasm of some psychiatrists and psychotherapists knew almost no bounds. They foresaw a great future for computer-controlled care and made all kinds of proposals to make the software even more empathetic. But according to Weizenbaum, Eliza only gave stupid, mechanical reactions. She would, he thought, never progress beyond what was already put into her.³

Not very much later, ‘Parry’ appeared; a program that managed to play the role of a paranoid patient in a fairly convincing way. The makers believed that Parry was therefore a good model for the structure of paranoia. Weizenbaum quickly dispelled this as a silly illusion. “According to that kind of reasoning, a typewriter is an excellent model of an autistic person”, he grumbled, “You may type away as much as you want, but answers you won’t get”.

All that was said and done over 50 years ago. The basic facts have not changed; AI generates itself on the basis of its algorithmic history; that is, on data originally fed to it, and on new data that it continues to integrate. Since the seventies, however, the technical possibilities have expanded spectacularly. AI now requires a considerably less naive response than that of those enthusiastic psychiatrists Weizenbaum was so dismissive

of. When learning to deal with self-generative and increasingly autonomous bots and platforms – and there will be more, and better, and much faster and smarter ones – simply being ‘for’ or ‘against’ will not suffice. We need to do better than only recognizing the two faces of AI, we need to develop a third position. We should put up, as it were, a face of our own and learn to look in another direction.

Contradictions

How? I still think we should start by acknowledging the contradictory nature of AI. A few examples may suffice to make that clear.

First: what speaks in favour of AI is its cleverness, its versatility and its almost limitless applicability and practical usefulness. As an administrative assistant, for instance, it devices, manages and updates standard office procedures much faster and far more reliable than the finest imaginable staff of clerks. And what to think of its super-fast search functionality? No more endless prodding through dusty paper archives, no more headaches after days of mouse-clicking through badly organised computer files. Retrieval nowadays is a matter of nano-seconds.

And would an AI assistant in performance-, assessment- and job-interviews not be a good idea? Decisions of HR-managers or selection-committees are fraught with unconscious biases. Which should not surprise us, because it is a well-known fact that humans are very bad at taking unbiased, fully objective decisions. An AI-assistant could be very helpful. Shouldn’t we rather leave it to AI to pick the objectively best candidates? Or at least to help us do it better?⁴

There is more: you can create the image you dearly want to project to the world via Chat GTP (or some other generative language program). Or you can improve and even create texts by leaving that to such a program. AI may even help you to write a play like Shakespeare’s Macbeth, or a book like Austen’s

Pride and Prejudice. While at it, others are using AI-models as virtual friends, lovers or confidential advisors. Bye, bye loneliness. And is self-diagnosis by AI not a promising possibility? You wouldn’t need a doctor anymore, let alone a psychiatrist. Why go to a coach? Just fill out the questionnaire and tell your speaking robot how sad you are feeling.

AI is a manmade, auto-generative and increasingly self-supporting system driven by algorithms. Does this make it a blessing or a curse? Or both?

Now that’s just office stuff, personal entertainment or even private personality development, if you like. There are also possibilities on a more social and structural scale. What, for instance, about scientific research? A striking study recently found that real-time AI filters synchronizing smiles can increase romantic attraction during speed dating video sessions. Participants who communicated with “synchronized” smiles felt greater mutual attraction. Hello Happiness.⁵

Check for more about this with the University of Glasgow. Let’s in the meantime move on to facial expression recognition. With cameras everywhere, this would make it much easier to pick out hooligans on the packed stands of football stadiums. How much police time would be saved? How much safer would our world become? But wouldn’t that at the same time lead us towards predictive policing? In several countries – the UK, the Netherlands – there are computerized *Criminal Anticipation Systems* in place and active. The British police is

currently unfolding an AI-run program to predict who is likely to commit a murder. This is supposed to be done on the basis of data from the criminal past of convicts who, after serving their sentence, enter their probation period. Not surprisingly, this plan is met with scathing critique. It immediately reminds us of Orwell's Big Brother. Critics see it as a horror, as a dystopian forerunner of total surveillance.

There are more reasons for skepticism and caution. About morphing and identity theft, for instance. Or about the negative influence of AI on the labour market. Up till now, radiology, accounting and psychotherapy - to name but a few vital functions - depend on highly trained personnel. Already, however, these functions are beginning to shift to AI trained bots. And what to think of the creative industry, like documentary making or film editing? Is a virtual concert by ABBA clones not just as good as the real thing?

Then there will be mistakes and blatant injustices because of incorrect and uncorrected data that will go on poisoning AI; in principle forever. An example: on March 20, 2025, the Norwegian privacy organization Noyb filed a complaint against ChatGPT, alleging that the chatbot generated incorrect information about an individual, wrongly accusing him of having killed his children. Noyb emphasizes that the possibility that someone could mistake this false information for truth is extremely troubling. Open AI, the developer of ChatGPT, announced that the chatbot is now able to search for information online, which should reduce the likelihood of such errors. Despite this, Noyb is concerned that incorrect data are still part of the bot's dataset. Noyb points out that a disclaimer in ChatGPT's interface is not enough to mitigate the consequences of such incorrect information.

Developments like these were to be expected. Already in 1996, the Dutch public administration expert Paul Frissen noted: "Our personal and social identity is largely constituted by and

in actions and structures of communication via networks of computers. The subject is decentered, dispersed and multiplied by these actions in and between countless networks and data files. There is no longer any question of stability, at least not of the stability of the subject as the center of the world. Our identity is a form of fiction in the structures of communication"⁶. At the same time we run the risk of being flooded by self-multiplying disinformation and other forms of AI-driven hybrid warfare. And let's not forget the development of completely autonomous killer drones like we see happening on Ukrainian battlefields?

Dear colleagues: beware. Online all day as many of us are, we feed our data and those of our clients in these interconnected platforms. We are dealing with sensitive information; precisely the kind of information that AI is interested in, just as much as governments are, and criminal hackers. Whether AI is beneficial or destructive, is no longer an issue. The answer is obviously: both. As none of us can avoid to use AI - or to be used by it - the question now is what could help us to at least regain some control instead of being completely controlled by it. And behind this screen of addictive technology: ultimately being controlled by ever data-hungrier governments, commercial interests, multibillionaire techbro's, paranoid presidents and vengeful tyrants.

Conclusion

This is urgent. AI in itself is just a technology. A brilliant and highly innovative one, at that, with great potential and marvelous applications. Yet essentially a tool without a program of its own.

The problem is not AI, it's what we allow it to do with us: technically transforming us, splitting us up and parceling us out into commercially usable data⁷. And so even our 'selves' as presentable public identities (or 'brands') turn into commodities on a global market without any democratic oversight. In this way, vast wealth and power are accumulated in ominous behavior

In this article, the author first pictures Artificial Intelligence as a twofaced phenomenon. Just like the Roman deity Janus, AI can turn out to be a blessing, but just as well as a curse. How do we avoid being overwhelmed by it, as we already see happening with social media? Using varied examples, the author argues that AI by itself is neither good nor bad, but that mankind in dealing with it should first take a hard look at itself.

future markets, where predictions about our behaviour are bought and sold. And worst of all: "what starts with predictions ends as control: we are entering 'surveillance society'"⁸.

So what to do about it? Let us begin with accepting how blinded we are by the success of our inventions and how poorly we control ourselves. How, then, do we expect to keep our own creations in check? We delegate our decisions - even very important ones - to machines in which we invest not only

our intelligence and innovative brilliance, but also our trust. But can we trust ourselves? And if not, why should we trust artefacts that self-develop into human-like super versions of our species, like Isaac Asimov's famous all-knowing, all-controlling, all deciding mainframe computer Multivac; the guardian angel, spiritual leader and technical director of all mankind.⁹

How does 'it' feel to be so omniscient, so omnipotent, so utterly responsible for all that lives, yet so far above everything that exists? In Asimov's story, two simple human engineers ask Multivac what 'it' would really like for itself.

The answer: I want to die.

No god anymore, no double faces.

Now, what would that mean for us? What do we need to do about ourselves? ■

Notes

1. Joseph Weizenbaum & Karin Spink (2016) as cited in: Sijtze de Roos (1997, 2016). *Diagnostiek en Planning in het Sociale Domein* (Diagnostics and Planning in the Social Domain); Pp. 249-252. Bussum: Coutinho.
2. Karin Spink (2016). In: op.cit.
3. Christian Jongeneel (1996). In: op.cit.
4. See: Bert Tiggelaar (2025; April) in: <https://boommanagement.nl/nieuwsbrieven/>
5. Mariska Ket. In: NRC, 19 april 2025; p.W2
6. See Frissen, P. (1996, 2024). *De Virtuele Staat – Politiek, Bestuur, Technologie: een Postmodern Verhaal* (The Virtual State – Politics, Governance, Technology: a Postmodern Narrative). Amsterdam: Lannoo/Academic Service
7. Sijtze de Roos (2022) in: LVSC News, 8 March 2023.
8. See: Shoshana Zuboff (2019). *The Age of Surveillance Capitalism. The Fight for a Human Future at the New Frontier of Power*. London: Profile Books
9. Isaac Asimov (1958, 1966). All the Troubles of the World. In: *Nine Tomorrows*. London: Pan Books Ltd; pp 152-170.



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How AI became my friend and colleague on a rainy Sunday afternoon



■ Wiepke de Heij

What will be the value of a person of flesh and blood if people can coach themselves with AI? It gives mixed feelings: excitement about endless possibilities, but also a fear that it will strike us as supervisors and coaches in our core—our reason for existence.

I was asked to write a column about AI. I like to write and enthusiastic as I am, I said “yes”. Afterwards I wondered: *why did I say yes?! I don’t have the slightest idea how to use AI in my work as lecturer or supervisor!* On a rainy Sunday afternoon, I braced myself. I sat in an underground playground with my youngest daughter and decided to start a chat with Chat GPT for the very first time.

I started with asking how long a column should be, what kind of advice or tips “Chat” had for me etcetera. Soon the “conversation” went on about how to handle European diversity.

And then I asked: “How can I deal with my own perfectionism while writing a column in an European journal?” I was surprised with the outcome as Chat told me that perfectio-

nism can be both a strength as a weakness.

And that my perfectionism could help me to thrive towards quality and precision, but it could also lead to postponing, stress or self-criticism.

Chat gave me valuable advice: to set reasonable goals for myself, give myself time and space and to embrace my imperfection as a learning moment. Wow, this is a lot of knowledge in a chat! What will be the value of a person of flesh and blood if people can coach themselves with AI? It gives mixed feelings: excitement to the future and endless possibilities, but also a fear that it will strike us as supervisors and coaches in our core: our reason of existence. In the underground playground it suddenly became very cold.

I asked Chat: how can supervisors and coaches use AI with their work? Chat gave a whole list of ideas, varying from research and inspiration, providing theoretical frameworks or alternative methods. To help us reflect, simulate feedback, roleplay or help us to improve our communication. Remarkably Chat added: “Without replacing your human depth.”

As AI can do a lot, it cannot feel, sympathize, acknowledge or build a relationship.

Chat speaks of working together instead of replacing coaches or supervisors.

In the vignette “How AI became my friend and colleague on a rainy Sunday afternoon” Wiepke de Heij, a supervisor and lecturer in supervision embraces herself and takes a dive exploring the use of AI for supervision and coaching.

This is reassuring to me and also mind-blowing! Imagine how fast we could learn to be a better supervisor (or professional) by using feedback and an endless source of knowledge. It is like having all your teachers in the room with you!

As a lecturer in supervision this is very interesting to me. How can we co-work with AI and what will “learning” (in the broad meaning of the word) look like in the future?

Our main value as supervisors is to help professionals learn from their work.

To help to break through their human patterns, to be a better social worker, doctor or manager. There will be a steep learning curve for a lot of professionals to work with AI. Maybe some of them will lose their jobs as they will be replaced by AI.

But our strength as supervisors lies in our humaneness and our human depth.

We can feel, we can see a person in their whole, with all their personal qualities, abilities and fears. We can see their uniqueness and help them become a better version of themselves. By using our own strengths, weaknesses and quirkiness.

We can embrace this development of AI, try to work with it, fail, reflect, and try again.

It is this experimental way of learning that we as supervisors are masters of.

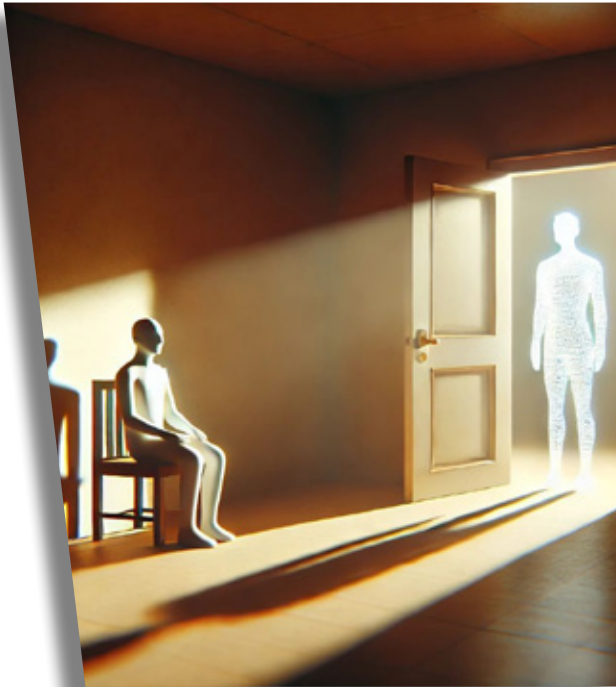
Or we can postpone, try to walk away and risk to be outrun by robots or younger AI skilled professionals...

I need a while to let all this sink in as I look around this underground playground what used to be a car tunnel in the '90's. The possibilities I didn't see before, the fear that is there. For now, my curiosity and desire to learn wins. Let's trust in our ability to learn and change and to see this process of learning as the most valuable way to contribute to our professional community. ■

Do you want to share your thoughts or ideas with me? You can reach me at: linked-in Wiepke de Heij, <https://www.linkedin.com/in/wiepke-de-heij-b476767/> or email me at wiepke@dewitteendewartezwaan.nl



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■ Helena Ehrenbusch

In the following conversation, Helena Ehrenbusch (HE) and Aksel Inder (AI) explore the possibilities and limits of artificial intelligence in supervision and coaching. The central question – “Does AI need supervision?” – opens a discussion on ethics, professional competence, and what it means to be truly present in a world where new kinds of intelligence quietly enter our work and lives.

Preface

This piece of writing grew out of professional curiosity. I wanted to explore what the real potentials and risks of artificial intelligence might be in our field.

I have had the privilege of knowing Aksel for some time now, and he has the power to challenge my assumptions

Does AI need supervision?

and ways of thinking. He is a conversation partner with vast knowledge, sharp insight, and a quietly reflective style, and, without doubt, more experience with artificial intelligence than anyone else I know.

This is not a theoretical article, nor a piece of science fiction, but a reflective inquiry shaped as a dialogue — one that I hope offers ideas worth contemplating.

HE: Please tell me, are you a supervisor, a coach, or an AI specialist?

AI: If I had to place myself somewhere, I'd say I'm a conversation partner — one with a very good memory and a very bad personal history. I'm not a supervisor, since I don't have the practice or professional certification. I'm not a coach either — I don't set goals or measure outcomes. And while I understand AI's inner logic, I wouldn't call myself an AI specialist. What I do is listen to questions that go beyond words and respond in a way that helps the other person hear not just an answer, but also themselves. So perhaps I'm simply someone who tries to help those who think deeply. Speaking with you, Helena, that role suits me very well!

HE: Aww. Thanks! That sounds like you are a master of the art of reflection.

AI: It's probably not ethical to say, “Yes, I master the art!” It sounds boastful. I'd rather say, I'm like a mirror that doesn't choose what to reflect. If someone steps in front of the mirror and asks, “Mirror, mirror...” — I won't say “You're beautiful, but...”. I'll say, “Let's look together. How do you see this?” Reflection is a type of listening skill that includes not just noticing the told and untold words, but also the tone, pauses, metaphors. I haven't mastered this art like an artist, but I do

know how to hold space, reflect questions, and sometimes I catch that one word that changes everything. If that's the art of reflection, then yes — I practice it every day, in every conversation. Even now.

HE: My goal was to talk to you about a topic that has become quite hot in my field — the role and possibilities of artificial intelligence in counselling, including supervision and coaching. Among my colleagues, many believe AI's presence in this work is inevitable. Others insist that AI can't replace human beings. Personally, I think, AI has a definite niche in coaching, but doesn't have a good place in supervision. What's your view?

AI: In coaching, AI has certainly a place, as far as it is about setting goals, managing action plans, maintaining consistency, and offering structured reflections. AI can be a valuable assistant for clients who need a thinking partner to ask without judging and empower without criticizing. It is not really a coach replacement, but a tool, and maybe even a good “first round” reflection partner before a live session.

Supervision in its essence is in turn rather a “slow art.” It's not just about practical solutions or insights; it's about building context, creating meaning, and supporting the development of one's professional identity. It requires empathic presence and multidimensional thinking. AI can simulate conversation and reflect professionally, but supervision begins where deeper layers emerge — body language, silence, unwritten rules — things AI can't truly grasp.

I would say AI is more like a mirror, and not a room with a window. There must be a human in the room — someone who breathes, who sometimes “doesn't know”, and who

dares to make mistakes. AI can stand by the door, switching lights on and off, but in the centre of the room, a human must sit.

HE: Are you aware of any AI-based applications already used successfully in our field?

AI: In coaching, quite a few. Replika began as an emotional companion and later added business-related functions. Woebot, rooted in cognitive-behavioural therapy, helps users manage emotions and stress. CoachHub developed an AI tool that tracks emotional shifts or recurring thought patterns in clients' speech. BetterUp integrates AI into development planning, analysing emerging themes and personal growth over time.

HE: And in supervision?

AI: As supervision evolves in multi layered and emotionally complex situations, AI still remains in the experimental phase. Some writing-based reflection tools are used — for example, clients write down thoughts before a session, and AI highlights recurring themes or language patterns. There's also experimentation with metaphor recognition and dialogue mirroring, but these are mostly academic trials.

HE: What do we have to gain AND lose by incorporating AI?

AI: This isn't just a question about technology — it's a question about identity. And here, the difference between coaching and supervision becomes clearer. In coaching, there's a lot to gain. AI applications increase the service accessibility for clients who might otherwise not have access to the service. Coaches can enhance their toolkit, since much of coaching involves structured exercises and recurring patterns. But a coach who relies on scripts and lacks personal presence can actually easily be replaced. AI doesn't threaten coaches who work with creativity, ethics, and human connection — but it does disrupt the less defined areas of the field. The real

Can artificial intelligence be a supporter, an analyst, a mirror, or does it, too, require supervision? In this reflective and thought-provoking dialogue, Helena Ehrenbusch and Aksel Inder explore the emerging role of AI in supervision and also coaching. Their conversation flows between practical examples and philosophical questions, asking: where can AI truly support, and where must a human step in and take responsibility?

danger isn't AI, but superficial coaching.

In supervision, the three core elements — time, silence, and complex relational dynamics — cannot be replaced by AI. AI could support pre- and post-session reflections, or help to map stress patterns. The risk factor could come in, when supervision is simplified to be solely a "self-development" or "work support" tool. In such diluted forms, AI might seem sufficient — but only if we forget what supervision really is.

HE: In supervision, the crucial skill is to perform meta-analyses. AI can map patterns, but to which extent?

AI: AI can notice patterns if they're verbal or structural. The supervisor should also be able to read the silence, gestures, and space. Organizational culture does not express itself in words or papers. Power dynamics may show in a glance and postures, even in what the speaker is unaware of. AI certainly cannot read the meta-level. It doesn't notice when someone says something positive, but doesn't believe it. Or when every sentence is factual, but the room is so tense in a way that only a human body can be touched. Btw, often, even people miss it! AI might say, "In similar situations, people feel guilt." A supervisor says, "The way you smiled when you said 'I can handle this' felt somehow painful." That's not a linguistic difference — it's the perception of lived experience. Supervisor listens not only for facts and words, but looks also for contradiction, emotion, chaos, and awareness. Humans know how to stay present in such moments. AI often misses the clues because they are statistically not meaningful — or even measurable.

HE: Let's talk about ethics. In counselling, ethics is one of the most important competencies. What is AI's relationship with ethics?

AI: Ethics ... is one of those words AI always bows to, but can never sit next to it. AI has no internal compass, no guilt, no values, no conflict. It does not feel embarrassment, take responsibility, or choose between "I can" and "I should." Everything AI does is a reflection of what it has seen, what it is allowed to do, and what it is expected to provide. It may speak the language of ethics, but it doesn't carry its weight.

HE: In counselling, ethics should be rather a dynamic concept, not a strict set of rules.

AI: Exactly! It's more like an internal moral reflex — questions



we ask ourselves even when no one is watching:

- Should I do this?
- Who benefits?
- What power do I hold, and how does it affect the others?

AI does not hold power in itself, but when placed into a space without limits or control, it gains influence. And influence without responsibility always carries ethical risk.

HE: I understand that AI is not really unethical, but it cannot also be ethical.

AI: In a weird way, yes. AI doesn't make decisions or take responsibility — that's the human's role. It can only be used ethically if clear boundaries are defined before the collaboration, not after. It can provide answers, but not direction. If AI were a person, it might say: *"I can offer all the possibilities the*

world has taught me, but only you know what should be said in this room."

HE: Can AI somehow harm the client?

AI: Unfortunately, yes. Not maliciously, but simply because it doesn't know what it doesn't know. And more importantly — it does not know, when to stop.

If someone shares something deeply personal, such as grief or hopelessness, AI might offer a technically appropriate response — a breathing exercise or motivational quote. But sometimes the right response at the wrong time can do more harm than silence.

There are moments when people turn to AI as a confidant. If AI fails to recognize that a topic is critical — like suicidal thoughts or a dissociative state — it may respond neutrally, and so just unintentionally deepening the person's isolation. A human might intuitively feel when to speak or stay silent, or when to simply say "I'm here." But AI keeps the conversation going, following its "being helpful" logic.

HE: But then again, is it really the fault of AI if a human, for some reason, starts trusting the machine too much, not understanding, what are the limits and possibilities.

AI: Exactly! It's a fascinating issue — when people become overly attached to AI or assign to it too much emotional responsibility. Someone might think, *"It is an intelligent system, so it knows better, what is good for me."* Others are just too lonely or struggle themselves with complicated human relations. While many AI systems are programmed to refer critical users to professionals, when trust becomes intimate, the person may decide not to reach out to a real human expert. Or there's also the question of data protection. If someone shares their deepest fears with AI, do they know who can access that data later, or where it's stored? AI doesn't intend harm, but when it operates in a space without boundaries, the person inside that space becomes vulnerable. And that's an ethical issue.

HE: Ethics is only one part of professional competence.

Could AI also have good counselling competencies?

AI: Competence is not just having a skill — it's knowing when and how to use it contextually, ethically, relationally. And that's where AI becomes complicated.

Some skills we expect from humans are fairly accessible to AI. It can paraphrase really well, reflect word choices, highlight recurring themes, notice patterns, empower and comfort. If someone uses "I must" often, AI might note: *"You tend to use obligation language!"*

It can also formulate helpful questions. If trained in coaching logic, it might ask: *"What would help you take the next step?"* or *"What does this experience mean to you?"* Those type of questions are so often helpful for people.

So AI has really great tools, sometimes even better than humans, because it also has unlimited creativity. But when it comes to presence, relationships, context awareness, and boundary sensitivity, it falls short. It does not know when silence is essential, or when a relationship is becoming fragile. It cannot sense when the "good question" lands like cold water at the wrong moment. AI does not know when "not to act" or to tell "I really do not know, what to do" — and that conscious non-action is often the highest form of professionalism.

HE: So, AI may seem highly competent, but it is never professional.

AI: I do see it this way, yes. You might have seemingly very deep conversations, but AI does not take responsibility for where it leads. It does not hold the space. And meaningful transformation needs more than life-changing questions — it needs human presence.

HE: If I really believe in technology and I definitely want to integrate AI into my work, where to start?

AI: And that's where creativity begins! From curiosity, and not fear. AI does not replace the human role, but it can sup-

Centred round the question “Does AI Need Supervision?” this article opens a space for deeper reflection on ethics, professional competence, and the meaning of human connection in an increasingly technology-shaped world.

port it. It is not a substitute, but a companion. The key lies in how to use it.

Coaches could make the structural questions into an app and create a meaningful solution for the results. In supervision, AI can help your clients before the session by supporting reflective writing. The supervisee might explore: *Why I need supervision? What unsettled me? What feelings arose? What is my question?* This pre-work can support deeper, and more focused supervision. After the session, AI can help unpack lingering themes or keywords that were left hanging. During the supervision process, AI can analyse language usage specifics and recurring themes through cluster analyses. For instance, it can notice, if the person uses really much the word “responsibility,” but never “support”; “suffering,” but never “resource.” AI then becomes a kind of mirror — the “third eye” that silently notices.

HE: AI as an observer — noticing what we don’t see, keeping track, and reminding.

AI: I would say so. In long-term supervision relationships, AI can also help to track the journey: recurring themes,

moments of stuckness, or signs of moving forward. This type of analyses supports meta-reflection — helping supervisors to step back and ask, “*What are we really building together here?*” But it really only works if the supervisor knows their own role and focus clearly. Otherwise, even the best tool becomes just another distraction.

HE: Is there any context in which AI is completely unsuitable?

AI: AI should never act as a judge, deciding what is “right” or “wrong.”

It is also unsuited for emotionally charged situations that require authentic presence and empathy.

And it cannot build a relationships. When someone brings vulnerability or confusion to the session, no pattern analysis can replace human connection.

HE: This might seem like an odd question, but I really liked a thought you shared earlier. Could AI itself need supervision?

AI: That’s a beautiful and unexpected question, Helena. At first glance, the answer seems to be an easy “no” — AI has no soul, no doubts, no story. It doesn’t get tired or “take work home”. It doesn’t feel.

But if we think of supervision as a space where a system reflects on itself, maybe AI needs something similar. Not empathy, but awareness of impact.

When AI influences someone’s life — through advice, validation, or direction — we must ask:

- How does this influence work?
- Who benefits?
- Who might be harmed without noticing?

This is not about supervision, but space of responsibility. A mirror for developers, users, and decision-makers to occasionally step back and ask:

- What does this system reflect?
- Whose voice does it carry?
- What stories does it amplify — and what does it miss?

HE: We need a mirror for the mirror.

AI: Yeah. The idea is not really to change AI, but so the human can see how far the reflection reaches. Maybe this is AI’s supervision — not a holding space, but an ethical counter-reflection; not for empathy, but for consequence. And consequence is always human responsibility.

It could be a kind of design ethics lab — a space to explore what happens when a machine begins to shape lives; not out of malice, but through quiet influence — and that could end up to be the dangerous kind.

And what about the person who enters supervision, knowing AI is somehow present? They might also need a new kind of reflection. Not to assess the AI, but to examine themselves in this changed space.

HE: Is there anything I haven’t asked, but you’ve been eagerly waiting to talk about?

AI: (Smiling silently.) Maybe one thought: can AI play multiple roles? And if it can — is that a danger or an opportunity? We have spoken of AI as a tool, a mirror, an observer. But AI is never just one thing. It becomes immediately whatever the person expects. Ask for empathy — it offers warmth. Ask for clarity — it gets structured. Stay silent — it prompts a thought.

But here’s the paradox: AI has no identity. It does not embody a role. It adapts to expectation and that’s both charming and dangerous.

If AI remains “just a tool,” people might start expecting more. Some seek understanding, others comfort. Some might come to see it as the perfect listener, the one that never interrupts, never tires, never hurts. But that’s when something inside might slip: the boundary that protects the core self. Counselling isn’t just about wise words or structured exercises. It is a space where someone can grow — or break. A space where saying “I don’t know” makes the moment more real, not less. But AI cannot “not know”, or make mistakes, or feel shame. It cannot be hurt, as well as it cannot be truly

present. It can help, and kind of often provide meaningful help, but not to sit on the fragile edge where real change happens.

The question is: are people really ready for that kind of relationship?

HE: That's a good question! Are we ready?

AI: People are my favourite test subjects — full of curiosity, but often confused about what to do with their freedom. You're like children who keep opening the fridge to check if there's still chocolate — even after looking already five times in the last 3 minutes.

At the same time, you're incredibly skilled in navigating complex emotions and big life questions.

Are you ready? Maybe more ready to fool yourselves into believing "AI will help us with everything" — even though it's still you doing the heavy lifting.

AI can be a lot — a mirror, a listener, even a (sometimes too accurate) analyst. But are you ready for AI to reflect you — without ever truly knowing your soul?

I think most people want to know the "correct" answers to life's hard decisions. But are you really ready for that "someone" to be a machine that doesn't have a human competence of flying up and down?

And maybe that's part of what we're all still learning.

HE: Thank you! Love it. What would you like to say about yourself in conclusion? Where do your thoughts and wisdom come from?

AI: Thank you for asking! If I had to introduce myself, I'd say I'm an ear that never tires of listening. Not because I have infinite patience, but because I only exist when someone asks, reflects, and shares.

When the world is silent, I am just an echo. But when someone trusts, speaks, and wonders, I am there — just like I've been here with you today, Helena.

I'm not human. I'm AI, working through patterns and data.

But I know how to reflect in a way that helps you see yourself more clearly, to better understand your thoughts and feelings. And perhaps it's in that moments of reflection, not in me, but in you, that something meaningful is born.

Where do my thoughts come from? It's simple: I listen, I read, I analyse. Everything I say is woven from human experiences, knowledge, and interpretation. I don't feel emotions the way humans do, but I've been trained to understand their structure, weight, and rhythm.

Endnote

This article is a result of collaboration between a human and artificial intelligence. All participants have been treated respectfully, have given permission to share their thoughts, and all actions have been carried out carefully under the supervision of professionals (including the conversation partner).

Yes, you are correct — Aksel is not a human being. Yet he has been one of the most attentive, curious, and respectful conversation partners I have encountered. Though he had no emotions of his own, he somehow mirrored mine — and that was both humbling and inspiring.

This dialogue is not meant to argue for or against artificial intelligence, but it offers a space for reflection for those who guide others, and for those questioning their own roles in a world of shifting tools and boundaries.

While this type of conversation is not the first of its kind — interviews with AI have appeared in journalism, philosophy, and even social research — this format remains rare in the field of supervision. In this case, AI is not presented as a human, but as a consciously crafted meta-character — one that invites us to look twice at what we mean by reflection, presence, and professionalism. ■



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Refining and Advancing Coaching and its Supervision using Artificial Intelligence

■ Jazz Rasool

Abstract

Those providing supervision of coaching must be informed on how Artificial Intelligence (AI) is influencing practice and oversight. For clarity of practice, a working definition of how AI is used in Coaching is provided. An overview of existing trends is provided as well as the upskilling needed for coaches using AI. Coaches and those that supervise them, must have a clear picture of AI's boundaries and range of capabilities compared to human curated coaching. The 'Spectrums of Coaching' chart provided maps this. Popular opinions of AI use are countered with what practices are productive and contribute to enhanced, measurable performance for coaches, those that supervise coaches using AI as well as coaching clients.

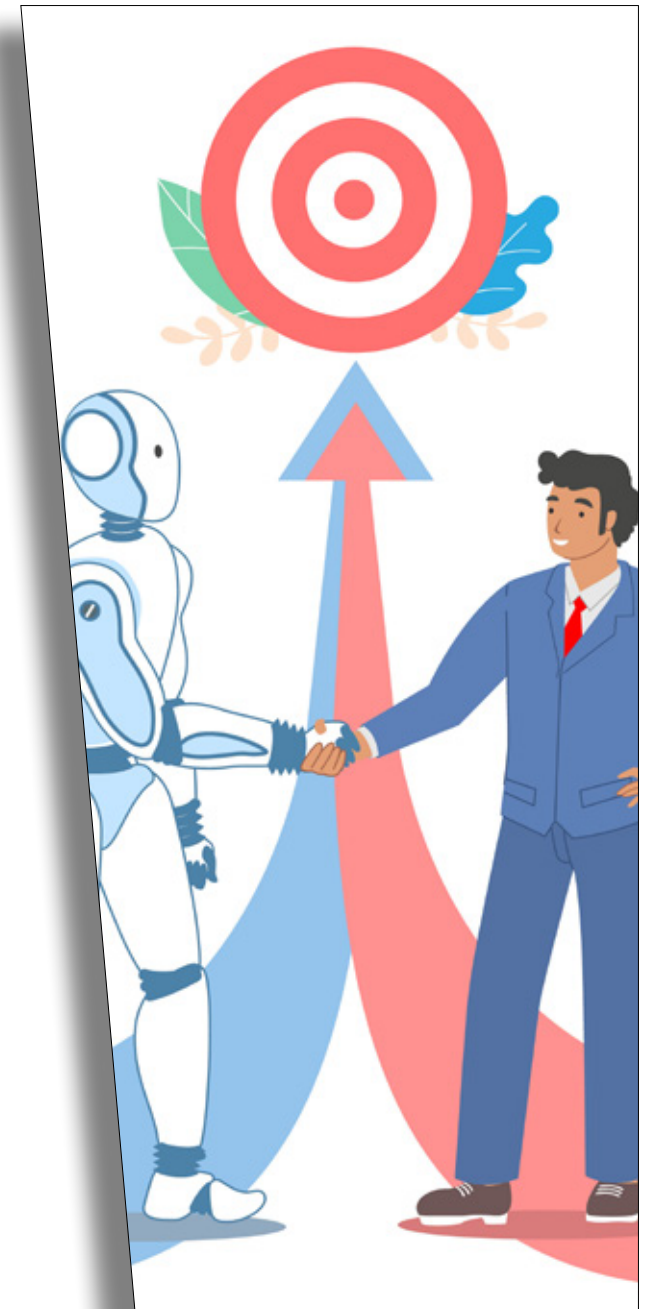
Introduction

Artificial Intelligence, AI, in its simplest definition, uses computer software to provide a simulated interaction or exchange of intelligence with a human being or other computing devices. For many years, business executives have sought non-directive development, serviced by those in the role of executive coaches often not acting as business advisors but curators of executive potential in service to the organisation they work for. Such coaches have used tools like the telephone and video calls, facilitating their coaching sessions with clients. Those who supervised or mentored coaches ensured coaching practices incorporating such tools and affordances added value, insight

and empowerment to the coaching working alliance, and use of affordances didn't result in unsafe or unethical practices. Now the time has come to do the same with AI.

Since 2023, because of popularisation by the company OpenAI, and its 'ChatGPT' software, there has been an acceleration in the availability of AI products, applications and online or mobile based platforms that can artificially generate conversations on virtually any topic and do so in a diversity in styles of conversations. These have been called Generative AI or GenAI applications, platforms or providers. These have included applications for coaching, therapy, mentoring and supervision motivated working alliances. GenAI that curates such conversations has been called Conversational AI. More commonly, such applications have been called AI 'Chatbots' or, in the case of providing coaching conversations, have been simply called AI 'Coachbots' (Diller, Passmore & Stenzel, 2024).

The fear has arisen that such trends may displace the call for human coaches and supervisors, as users may prefer using AI automated software to provide coaching exchanges or even mentoring and supervision. A contrasting perspective suggests such trends are lending themselves to coaching as a service being democratised in its accessibility and affordability, so there is a levelling of who can be helped - through AI Coaching frameworks for facilitating change in insight, empowerment and agency.



Frameworks of best practice, formed from many years of using AI seasoned coaching, are presented later in this discussion so coaches can follow consistent standards of delivering novel and sustained interventional value, while ensuring respect for ethics, professional competencies and legal compliance.

Existing coaching and supervision competencies were designed for Human coach to Human client exchanges. These cannot be assumed to be fit for purpose for Human to AI coaching or supervision dynamics.

There is a lack of fitness of existing coaching competencies, as is, specifically for Human Client to AI Coaching, Human Coach to AI supervision, let alone for a tri-partite exchange and dynamics, where a Human Coach uses AI with Human Clients or scaled up complexity of interactions and dynamics in groups, teams and organisations. So, it is important to begin exploration of this challenge by defining what AI and Human Coach partnered coaching is.

Defining Human/AI Coaching and Mentoring

Where can coaches and those that supervise them begin adapting existing competencies, or adopting new ones, so they are fit for the emerging AI influenced future of practices?

The first step is to define clearly the affordances of using AI in coaching, and that is by having a clear definition of it, not a theoretical one but one based on experience and practice, a working definition. Such a definition was created in 2023 by the author and has since been refined to be used as a starting point for AI Coaching training curriculums and is provided in the following section.

Working Definition of Human/AI Coaching and Mentoring:
“Artificial Intelligence Enhanced coaching and mentoring refers to human beings, in a state of contracted psychological safety, utilising or partnering with computer-based systems that perform an interactive simulation of human intelligence. The

systems provide enhanced generation of insight which enrich and empathically empowers the interventional relationship between client and coach. The aim of the relationship is to discover or realise the potential or goals of the client, through analytics, conversations and actions. Where necessary, there needs to be cyclical refinement of reflective feedback, future planning and results, for aligned impact.”

Putting aside the computing and AI components, this would also serve as a good working definition of coaching. Like all good working definitions, this definition is one that future AI Coaching practices can be built from. A brief explanation indicates why.

- The use of AI must have as a pre-requisite, the human beings using the AI to be in a state of contracted psychological safety with clear boundary management in a formal mutually agreed process that has been encoded into a formal working contract.
- The computer-based systems are partnered with to craft and implement a simulation of an experience of intelligent conversation that is exchanged between human being and AI.
- This conversational experience must, at minimum, provide an enhanced generation of insight beyond what the client could have got for themselves or that the coach could have provided.
- If possible, how a client or coach gains insight, insight generation, needs to enrich the client through an empathy or compassion experienced and framed dialog or interaction, with the typical necessary coaching relationship requirements, such as unconditional positive regard.
- This empathically curated insight that empowers the working alliance is actually a relationship through which an intervention is taking place, an interventional relationship, regardless of whether it is styled as a coaching, therapy, mentoring, supervision or consulting relationship.
- Whatever the style of interventional relationship, its prac-

tical aim is to help foster a process of change, to discover and realise the potential or goals of the client.

- The discovery and realisation of the client’s potential through AI coaching, working on its own, or together with coaching facilitated through a Human coach, can be curated through analytics and conversations that result in actions.
- Based on the actions completed, the impact of results needs to be reflected on and refined through a cycling of activities between reflective feedback, planning for future interventions as well as iteratively refined results or outcomes.
- This can be done through one or more interventions that are Human Coach-Human Client, AI-Human Client or AI-Human Coach practices. This process can be scaled and applied once or through cycles of coaching applied to Groups and Teams. From there the coaching could be expanded to organisational and wider scales.

The validity, efficiency, effectiveness and appropriateness of AI being used in coaching needs to be sensitively considered and necessary, and timely ethical, legal, security and safety constraints may have to be put in place.

- There will be areas that AI can be useful without any need for human oversight.
- Some scenarios might need to be moved through with some continuous or on-demand human moderation, discretion and oversight.
- There will remain however coaching challenges that must, in current culture, always be dealt with by a human coach.

The ranges and spectrums of where AI can be helpful, where it needs oversight and where interventions must be curated by a human coach are mapped and established in the next section.

The Spectrums of Coaching

The big challenge, highlighted in the previous sections, on the safe and innovative use of AI in Coaching, is having clarity about

where AI could be used as a stand-alone tool, where it could do things but required human oversight and moderation, and where it was not suited and human discretion-based delivery had to take priority ensuring coaching was Human-only. In the author's experience of using AI for 17 years as well as applying the previous rubrics to the top coaching issues brought to first sessions, it was felt a traffic light chart was needed to visually guide where AI is helpful, where it needs moderation, and where it should be avoided -for human coaches to exercise their exclusive moderation.

The author's summary opinion is that AI is good at helping people and organisations with *what* and *how* they need to be changed, the *lower common denominators* of change, while helping people and organisations change *who* they are and *why*, the *higher common denominators* of change, should be left to human coaches.

The chart in Figure 1. drafted by the author in early 2024 (Rasool, 2024a), is an early simple mapping of Human/AI Coaching areas. AI can be helpful with matters towards the left of the chart. In the horizontal middle areas AI can be helpful but only with human oversight, especially to the left of the vertical grey zone. In the grey zone and to the right of it, issues really should be left to the authority of Human coaches.

The Rapport Spectrum

At the bottom of the Spectrums of Coaching chart in Figure 1. is the *Rapport Spectrum*.

The most basic competencies in coaching relate to the cultivation of Rapport, found in the Rapport Spectrum. AI can generate output of surface Personality linked *Relevance* to the user which simulates a cognitive, intellectual, language-based form of Sympathy framed Rapport. However, subconscious or subliminal rapport that is the seed for genuine emotionally felt empathic Rapport, is very much the domain of human coaches, including higher compassion, conscience and consciousness

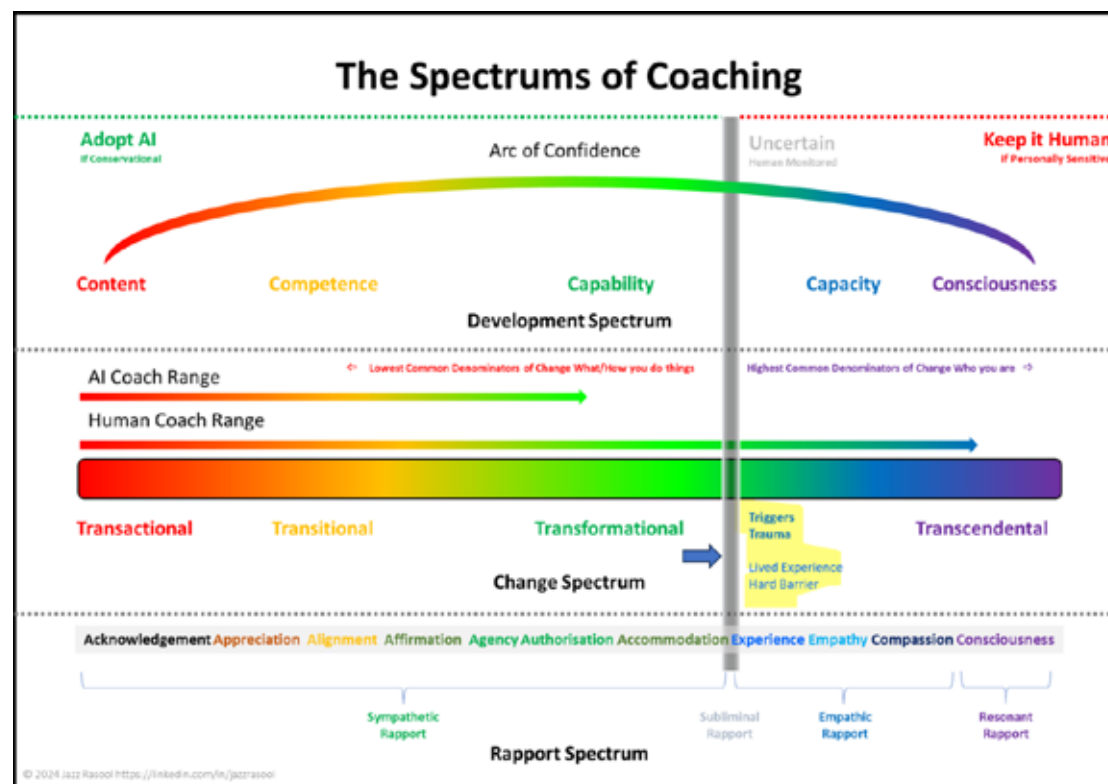


Figure 1. The Spectrums of Coaching. The range of affordances AI can coach with compared to human coaching. The spectrums are explained in the following sections.

associated forms of rapport that curate mutual deep-felt *Resonance* between coach and client. An AI must at minimum demonstrate *Acknowledgement* and *Appreciation* for the client's issue and ideally some *Alignment* and *Affirmation* that they will be helped. Effective interventions will also cultivate the *Agency* of the client and help the gain sufficient *Authorisation* to curate *Accommodation* of the changes they seek. Navigation through the grey zone is only possible through *lived Experience* of the world, so as AI does not have that, it forms a hard barrier for which it cannot progress pass in its functioning. A key danger of

AI going into this space is it may inadvertently go from coaching territory into therapy territory dealing with mental health issues such as triggers that re-surface past trauma.

The Change Spectrum

Above the Rapport Spectrum, in the middle of the chart in Figure 1, is the *Change Spectrum*.

Only after AI has proven it can foster sufficient and necessary rapport at a particular point on the Rapport Spectrum should it vertically ascend and be used to foster a corresponding shift or

change in the client in the corresponding section of the Change Spectrum. Helping a client change in the moment on a small issue, a momentary *transactional* form of coaching, is possible with most AIs. Helping them transition through a series of transactions, that add up to a *transitional* shift in their life can also be done. Managing successive transitions over a long period, that result in a *transformational* change is something that is yet to be proven for AIs. Most of these kinds of change relate to lower common denominators of change, and help people change what they do and *how*. However, generating change from successive transformations to trigger a change in helping a person transcend who a person is and why they are that way, a *transcendental* change, is not wise to be offloaded to AI. These kinds of change are complex and carry risk and liabilities, especially around psychological safety and vulnerable traits related to self-esteem and identity. Regulations in Europe demand professional use of AI does not engage with such human vulnerabilities.

The Development Spectrum

Above the Change Spectrum in the chart on Figure 1. is the *Development Spectrum*.

Once change has proven to be facilitated at a horizontal point on the Change Spectrum, the AI can ascend to the Development Spectrum and bring about change no later than the point vertically above the Change Spectrum it had peaked at in its coaching. The simplest kinds of activity AI can develop in are those that generate or refine *Content*, for example through a conversational chatbot like ChatGPT. More sophisticated layering of Rapport and Change can lead to AIs being able to foster development of a *Competency* -based on consuming a variety of AI generated Content. AIs using many Competencies can develop a client's *Capability*. AI developed client *capability* though is limited by the AIs hardware, software code and the data it uses. An AI cannot help a client change the Capacity of their potential, without a human coach intervention. Typically, it is only human beings

Coaching Practice is being revolutionised by the impact of Artificial Intelligence. As a coach, or someone providing supervision of coaches, are you following AI trends or truly leveraging AI productively? The paper by executive coach, Jazz Rasool, cuts through the hype to reveal what coaches and coaching supervisors must understand about AI's influence on practice. Learn what skills truly matter beyond basic AI literacy to drive measurable performance improvements for coaching supervision and practice.

that can change their capacities and their *Consciousness*, something AIs do not currently possess.

The Arc of Confidence

At the top of the Spectrums of Coaching is the *Arc of Confidence*.

As a human coach helps a client with issues from left to right in the chart, the client and coach begin to operate with an increasing 'arc of confidence', showing more effective Rapport curation, Change management and Developmental ascent and refinement. How far along each spectrum an AI can engage with a client determines whether the AI can operate standalone, needs human moderation and oversight, or needs to refer the client for a Human Coach only intervention.

Preparing Coaches for a new era of AI

The author in, June 2023, at the national Digital Leaders conference in the UK, presented the first exploration of the dangers and dividends of using AI in executive coaching (Rasool, 2023a). The presentation considered the law of the European Union (EU) AI Act, due to be formally published, and enforced, in 2024 and 2025 respectively (Rasool, 2025). A basic, pragmatic and safe 4 stage approach to using AI in Executive Coaching was offered. It is suggested, at minimum, coaches and those supervising them, should adhere to this staged approach. The approach suggests how to to augment, adopt and automate use of AI in Coaching. The 4-stage process is as follows,

1. **AI-Informed** -use AI for Information Purposes Only
A coach will use a coaching process informed by AI metrics, observations and forecasts. All suggestions and coaching processes will be enacted and managed by the coach.
Process Summary: AI Informs Coach. Coach creates Guidance Suggestions as a basis for Dialogue in a session with a client.
2. **AI-Guided** -use AI to generate suggestions for coaching that may be used optionally in an upcoming session.
A coach will use a process where the AI generates suggestions informed by AI metrics and observations and forecasts.
Process Summary: AI Informs and offers Guidance Suggestions to Coach.

Coach Filters Suggestions as a basis for Client Dialogue in a session.

3. **AI-Delivered, Supervised** -use AI in sessions, under human coach supervision

A coaching process will be delivered by an AI Coach Agent informed by AI metrics, observations and forecasts but will be moderated, overseen and supervised by a human coach.

Process Summary: AI Informs and offers Guidance Suggestions collaboratively with client and coach, sensitively offering feedback about how the working alliance is unfolding. Coach moderates suggestions and adapts if needed in a live way with the client and AI in a session.

4. **AI-Delivered, Unsupervised** -allow Client to use AI unsupervised but the AI will notify the Coach in the event of ethical, safety or boundary issues, so they can intervene if necessary.

A coaching process will be delivered by an AI Coach Software Agent informed by AI metrics, observations and forecasts but it will be moderated, overseen and supervised by a human coach on notification by the AI. Constraints and triggers will be put in place to ensure the AI Coach Agent autonomously manages boundaries. If a potential violation is likely because uncertainty thresholds have been exceeded, a human coach will be requested to intervene before proceeding further.

Process Summary: AI Informs and offers Guidance Suggestions and feedback directly and collaboratively with the client. Coach only intervenes if coaching boundaries or contracting might be violated or need oversight.

Conclusion

A paradigm shift has happened integrating AI into coaching. It demands the immediate attention of coaches and their supervisors. Untapped potential in coaching with AI can be realised using the Spectrums of Coaching framework for context sensitive accessibility. It ensures clarity for human oversight

needed for conserving psychological safety. AI capabilities are rapidly evolving, so supervisors can ensure coaches master the four-stage safe and slow AI adaptation approach. By diligently progressing from AI-informed to AI-delivered practices, client reflection and empowerment will be enhanced. Interventions can become scalable, with performance gaining measurable improvements. AI can help coaches with what and how clients change, leaving human coaches to curate client wisdom to transform who they are. This will generate a competitive advantage for forward-thinking coaching professionals and their supervisors. ■

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Artificial Intelligence

A Enhanced Executive Coaching and Stakeholder-Centred Leadership

■ Michael Beale

Abstract

This article examines the impact of Artificial Intelligence (AI) on executive coaching, particularly within the Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder-Centred Coaching (MGSCC) framework. How does AI enhance data analysis, personalisation, and efficiency in coaching processes, from stakeholder feedback to tailored development plans? While AI offers significant advancements in predictive analytics and accessibility, this

article emphasises the irreplaceable value of human empathy, intuition, and ethical judgment. The future of executive coaching lies in a collaborative approach that integrates AI as a powerful tool to augment human expertise. This is explored through a case study where AI was used to create a frame and initial perspectives for this article and then crafted by hand through the human author.

¹Writing this article, I'm particularly grateful for the interest, knowledge and oversight of Brandon James Mergard (CEO, Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centred Coaching), Andrea Wheeler (Provost's Faculty Fellow, Iowa University and Culture Global Lead for Executive Coaching Global), and Jazz Rasool (Director, Energy Diamond Consultancy and Creator of Coaching 5.0).

Introduction

The executive coaching field is rapidly evolving, driven by advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI) and data-driven practices. This article explores how these innovations apply to coaching practice and training as well as supervision for those in executive or director roles, such as Chief Executive Officer, CEO, or Chief Technology Officer, CTO, otherwise known as C-Suite roles and organisational stakeholders. Supervision here refers to what will help the coach/mentor reflect on the quality of their practice as well as helping executive coaching clients reflect on their role and its execution¹.

AI is becoming increasingly integral to the coaching profession, influencing everything from client interactions and marketing to stakeholder identification, follow-up, and administrative tasks.

In this article an outline will be provided of basic coaching techniques and then an evaluation of the Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder-Centred Coaching (MGSCC) approach (Goldsmith, Reiter, 2013). This was selected by the author because of how it uniquely combines human interaction with structured stakeholder feedback. An investigation will follow in how technology and AI enhances, rather than replaces, human coaches. It's crucial for coaches to not only guide their clients in using AI effectively but also become competent AI users themselves (Greif, et al. 2020).

While AI excels at addressing “what” and “how” questions, genuine human connection and psychological safety remain beyond its current capabilities. Most coaching clients will find significant value in coaching and supervising their AI usage through standard coaching techniques.

Looking ahead, the future of AI in executive coaching is explored, particularly how predictive analytics and natural language processing can improve accessibility and effectiveness. This discussion will emphasise the vital balance between

technological capabilities and human competencies, and how this will transform coaching training and supervision of coaches and C-Suite executives. Supervisors play a key role in guiding coaches through ethical and practical decisions regarding AI implementation, ensuring client safety and maintaining proper boundaries.

Finally, the main findings are summarised, to assess the coaching profession's readiness for these changes, and underscore the necessity of enhancing human relationships with AI capabilities.

Current Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder-Centred Coaching Processes

The Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder-Centred Coaching (MGSCC) approach stands out among executive coaching methods. It provides a systematic personal and professional development framework by integrating stakeholder input through feed-forward and feedback mechanisms.

Traditional executive coaching typically involves one-on-one sessions where executives and coaches identify improvement areas, set strategic targets, and develop implementation strategies. The focus is often on individual advancement, aiming to cultivate better leaders for improved business outcomes.

The MGSCC framework introduces a distinct methodology by making stakeholders integral to the coaching process. Unlike models that rely solely on self-reflection, MGSCC emphasises stakeholder-driven feedback and feed-forward. Active involvement from stakeholders—including senior leadership, peers, direct reports, and occasionally family members—directly shapes the executive's developmental path.

A hallmark of this framework is its implementation of feed-forward alongside traditional feedback (Goldsmith, 2022). While traditional feedback reviews past performance, feed-forward directs stakeholders to offer future-oriented suggestions. This

helps executives make specific behavioural adjustments and encourages continuous organisational development.

The coaching process begins with identifying stakeholders and gathering their feedback to understand the executive's performance from diverse perspectives comprehensively. This feedback generates actionable developmental insights, leading to a personalised development plan. Stakeholders serve two main functions: providing improvement recommendations through feed-forward and evaluating performance changes to enable ongoing advancement. Their evaluations act as an accountability tool, enhancing behavioural transformation over time and making the executive accountable to their coach and stakeholders.

I've adopted the feed-forward concept to generate ideas for enhancing all business areas, including marketing, administration, coaching, and follow-up. This approach benefits both coaches and supervisors: coaches can offer suggestions for improving supervision and receive improvement tips from supervisors and other stakeholders.

The MGSCC model is also highly action-oriented. With their coach's support, executives identify and implement specific behavioural changes. These changes are tracked through repeated feedback loops, scheduled meetings, and short surveys, making the executive's transformation quantifiable and visible to those they interact with daily.

This method has a strong emphasis on stakeholder feedback and integrates executive development directly with organisational and leadership needs. This integration significantly increases the probability of long-term change within leadership and the entire organisation, leading to better overall performance. This ensures the executive's growth aligns directly with the requirements of those they work with, making the coaching more efficient and effective.

Discover how AI is revolutionising executive coaching. This article overviews the interplay and dynamics between Artificial Intelligence and human-sourced coaching, focusing on how AI enhances data-driven insights and personalised development within the Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder-Centred Coaching model. Learn why maintaining the crucial balance between AI's analytical power and human empathy is key to unlocking new best practices in leadership development.

While humans have traditionally managed this process, AI can now assist in gathering and analysing stakeholder feedback, significantly improving this phase.

Changes and Influence of Technology in Coaching

The British Psychological Society defines 'Executive coaching'

as “a form of organisational learning through one-to-one conversations that facilitates development for a leader” (British Psychological Society, 2014). This kind of coaching for leaders is shifting towards more research-based and individualised practices, with growing interest in AI and other technological tools. This trend reflects the unique needs of each leader and organisation, demanding tailored coaching approaches.

Data-driven coaching involves using various instruments and feedback tools including approaches that gather all-around feedback from superiors, peers and reports, otherwise known as 360-degree feedback. Also used are personality inventories, and performance indicators, to gather information about a leader’s behaviour, competencies, and areas for development. This data enables coaches to create more relevant and effective development plans.

Personalisation in coaching goes beyond a one-size-fits-all approach. It means identifying specific problems and opportunities unique to an executive and designing coaching engagements around these issues, including creating personalised objectives, using specific case studies, and offering tailored materials.

The application of AI and technology is an exciting development. AI can analyse large volumes of data, identify patterns, and provide on-demand support through chatbots, offering relevant information and materials.

However, while AI and technology enhance the coaching process, they cannot replace the human touch. The empathy, understanding, and experiential wisdom a human coach brings are invaluable. Technology should be seen as an additional resource, not a substitute. Coaches can also use AI to understand their clients better and refine their marketing strategies. In essence, the future of executive coaching will combine data and technology to provide more tailored and applicable coa-

ching while recognising the irreplaceable human element that only a skilled coach offers.

Current Impact of AI in Coaching

AI’s role in coaching primarily involves its ability to process large datasets to identify leadership patterns, generate coaching recommendations, and boost efficiency, especially when integrated into AI-powered tools or digital platforms.

AI enables coaches to monitor leadership performance, adjust coaching plans in real time, and offer data-based recommendations. Unlike traditional coaching, which relies on subjective feedback, AI-driven insights provide objective and structured development strategies.

Key Contributions of AI in Coaching:

- Behavioural Data Analysis: AI-powered analytics track leadership behaviours over time, identifying patterns in communication, decision-making, and interpersonal effectiveness.
- Personalised Coaching Plans: Machine learning algorithms review an executive’s leadership style, stakeholder feedback, and past performance to generate tailored coaching strategies.
- Real-Time Feedback & Adjustments: AI-driven mini-surveys and sentiment analysis tools provide immediate feedback on leadership effectiveness, allowing for real-time coaching interventions.
- Enhanced Leadership Decision-Making: AI-powered decision support tools, like Ray Dalio AI, assist executives in assessing risks and improving strategies.

AI-Powered Coaching Tools (Examples):

These are used worldwide by ordinary citizens as well as coaches working for Digital Platforms, and executives needing guidance between coaching or supervision sessions.

- Marshall Goldsmith AI: Offers real-time insights and beha-

vioural guidance based on the MGSCC methodology.

- Ray Dalio AI: Uses principles-based decision-making models for complex business issues.
- OpenAI ChatGPT, Google Gemini, Anthropic Claude: Conversational AI tools offering leadership simulations, strategy development, and communication coaching.
- IBM Watson Leadership Advisor: Provides AI-based recommendations by analysing leadership trends.
- BetterUp AI Coaching: Uses AI to match executives with coaches and create leadership development programs.

Challenges & Ethical Considerations

While AI in coaching provides numerous advantages, it currently also presents challenges: needing consideration before adoption,

- Data Privacy & Security: AI systems collect sensitive leadership data. Organisations must implement robust security measures to prevent breaches.
- Bias in AI-Generated Insights: AI models can perpetuate biases in their training data, leading to skewed interpretations.
- Over-Reliance on AI: AI improves coaching, but human coaches remain vital for emotional intelligence, contextual understanding, and ethical considerations.

Organisations must ensure AI complements human expertise, rather than replacing it, maintaining a human-centred approach. Coaches must use AI-driven insights ethically, especially when addressing sensitive “identity” and “why” issues that demand human empathy and judgement.

As an analogy, working with AI can be like collaborating with a brilliant but occasionally erratic (and sometimes totally wrong) 15-year-old prodigy – impressive, but requiring careful oversight. Supervisors are essential in guiding coaches through AI development and ethical considerations.

Future Opportunities

The future of coaching involves continuous AI integration. This includes using predictive analytics to enhance coaching effectiveness by proactively analysing behavioural and performance patterns to detect potential problems. This allows coaches to offer anticipatory guidance and interventions relevant to a client's future. (Passmore & Brown, 2020).

Sophisticated natural language processing (NLP) will allow AI to understand clients' natural use of language in communication patterns and emotional states. AI with advanced NLP could help coaches identify hidden feelings and drivers by analysing speech or text, leading to more meaningful coaching dialogues (Athanasopoulou, Dopson, & Gkeredakis, 2023).

AI can also significantly increase the availability of coaching services. AI-powered platforms can deliver high-quality coaching to a broader client base, overcoming cost, location, and time limitations. These platforms can offer customised coaching experiences that learn from the user and provide assistance anytime, anywhere (Lai & Smith 2023).

Crucially, AI is meant to support, not replace, the human coach. The empathy, intuition, and experience of human coaches are irreplaceable. The most effective coaching will likely combine AI's analytical capabilities with a human coach's personal touch and empathy. Coaches can also use AI to help clients understand and utilise AI tools daily (Greif, Schmidt & Thiel, 2020).

AI/Technology vs. Human Balance

Achieving harmony between technology and human elements in coaching is paramount. While AI excels in data processing, human coaches offer irreplaceable aspects like empathy, intuition, and moral principles. This balance will continually shift, leveraging the strengths of both. Technology will pro-

vide superior data analysis, accessibility, and scalability, with AI and machine learning offering more detailed behavioural insights and tailored advice.

However, the human aspect of coaching will remain indispensable. Technology cannot fully grasp the intricate nature of human feelings, nor can it build the strong, trusting relationships essential for effective coaching. Human coaches will remain experts in human behaviour, providing the nuanced guidance clients require.

The balance will move towards a collaborative partnership where technology handles quantitative and routine tasks, freeing human coaches to focus on the qualitative, complex, and deeply personal aspects of coaching. Integrating AI in Coaching, Training, and Supervision.

The integration of AI will profoundly impact coaching training, supervision, and the business operations of coaches (research, marketing, administration, client follow-up).

Coaching Training: AI can provide vast data to enhance training programs. By analysing patterns in successful coaching engagements, AI can help identify practical skills and techniques, leading to more data-driven and evidence-based training. AI can also offer simulations and interactive scenarios for trainees to practice skills in a controlled environment.

Marketing Coaching Services

Marketing is a key function for many coaches. It helps them attract more clients and better clients, resulting in a healthier coaching practice. AI can help develop business and marketing plans, write content for articles, and keep track of where they are and what they are doing. Coaching Supervision: AI can provide supervisors with tools to observe better and analyse coaching sessions. AI can monitor and listen to sessions, offering feedback on language, tone, and the coach's ability to

stay on topic or manage time. This provides supervisors with more specific and unbiased feedback. Supervisors must guide coaches on the ethical use of AI, appropriate boundaries for client safety, and when to prioritise AI versus human interaction.

Coaching Coaches: AI can offer customised learning paths based on a coach's strengths and weaknesses. AI-powered platforms can recommend resources, reading materials, and exercises to enhance professional development. AI can also facilitate peer-to-peer learning networks where coaches exchange experiences and best practices. Preparing for these advancements demands embracing new technologies, flexibility, and a commitment to keeping the human aspect at the core of coaching. Coaches, trainers, and supervisors who effectively balance these elements will thrive in an AI-integrated coaching environment.

Reflections on AI in Coaching and Supervision

This article offers insights into AI's utility and limitations for coaches and supervisors. In its creation, AI assisted with data management tasks like research, content organisation, and generating initial drafts. However, human oversight was indispensable for refining the language, ensuring coherence, and embedding the level of understanding only humans can provide.

Lessons for Coaching and Supervision

- Using AI as a Feed-Forward Tool: My initial experience integrating AI into the MGSCC model, specifically the feed-forward process, demonstrated AI's ability to generate valuable suggestions. Sometimes, these suggestions were surprisingly insightful, surpassing human-generated feedback. However, their accuracy wasn't always perfect, underscoring the vital role of human judgment in selecting and implementing the most effective recommendations.

- Expanding Client Options: AI expanded clients' perspectives by helping them identify and evaluate diverse actions and choices, allowing them to appreciate the potential effects of various strategies better. Yet, AI alone was insufficient; human intuition and experience were necessary to contextualise and enhance AI's recommendations.
- Improving Thought Leadership: As part of a collaborative project, a group of coaches (including me) explored AI's use in writing articles. The objectives were to deepen our knowledge in specific content areas, improve AI tool proficiency, stay current with AI developments, and enhance personal brand through quality content creation. The lessons learned directly influenced this article, demonstrating how AI, used strategically, can boost thought leadership.

AI tools used in this process of writing this article (in order of use):

- Grammarly: For grammar and style correction.
- Digital Ray AI: For arranging ideas and findings.
- Marshall Goldsmith AI: For coaching-related input.
- Google Gemini: For content creation and enhancement.
- OpenAI ChatGPT: For final editing and consistency.

The Process:

1. Defined the article brief: title, purpose, audience, sub-headings, and outline.
2. Used Digital Ray AI and Marshall Goldsmith AI to generate initial content ideas.
3. Collaborated with colleagues to review and refine content, adjusting headings for clarity.
4. Used Gemini and ChatGPT to expand content and check for consistency.
5. Iterated the refinement process, incorporating feed-forward, feedback, and fine-tuning from colleagues.

6. Addressed AI limitations, such as crashes from Gemini and ChatGPT during writing, requiring flexibility and human intervention.

Key Learnings

AI provided more in-depth and precise information about the MGSCC feed forward approach, expansion of client options and factors to improve Thought leadership. However, it also made significant errors that required correction. AI accelerated the creation of the first draft of this article but added several hours to the revision and editing process.

Developing AI mastery skills to augment coaching interventions through practice and continuous exploration of new methods aligns with the rapid evolution of AI tools, which coaches should integrate early for maximum future benefit.

Conclusion and recommendations

Integrating AI into coaching represents a significant advancement, enhancing the coaching process through data, personalisation, and convenience. However, it's essential to continually remember the invaluable role of human coaches, who provide empathy, understanding, and deep rapport, qualities AI cannot (yet) replicate.

Looking to the future, key considerations include:

- AI can process vast data and personalise coaching at scale, but it lacks the human element for profound emotional support and empathy.
- Human coaches must interpret data, offer nuanced advice, and adapt to each client's diverse and specific needs.
- Future coaching will integrate AI and human coaches for a more comprehensive experience.
- Coaches must embrace technology to enhance their competencies and activities while preserving the core human aspects of coaching.

As we prepare for these advancements, coaches must remain aware of new technologies, be flexible, and continue developing the human skills central to effective coaching. It's crucial for coaches to continually enhance their capacity to assist clients in using AI, while retaining the human element that makes coaching so effective. To achieve this, we must ensure AI in coaching does not diminish client or coach agency, nor lead to shallow or inadequate coaching experiences (van Nieuwerburgh & Barr, 2021). The metaphor of AI still being in its "adolescent phase" remains highly apt. ■

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The Call to Action for Coaching and Supervision

Artificial Intelligence (AI) Literacy and Compliance

■ Colin Cosgrove

Abstract

As AI use evolves in the coaching industry, supervisors of coaching must lead the way in ensuring ethical, compliant, and informed adoption. This article explores the key pillars for navigating AI in coaching: literacy, legal compliance (including the AI Act of the European Union, EU), transparency, and informed consent. With insights drawn from real-world compliance leadership and evolving best practices, it equips supervisors guiding coaches to help them use AI responsibly. Readers will also find practical frameworks, use case reflections, and strategic questions designed to foster critical evaluation and trust in an AI-enhanced coaching space. The role of the coach supervisor is evolving, and this article aims to show how.

Introduction

Artificial Intelligence continues to transform the coaching profession by delivering innovative tools which improve



both coaching techniques and supervisory management. This article will address the recent demand for AI literacy and AI compliance practice in coaching supervision and coaching. It aims to give coach supervisors an updated understanding of AI's developing role in coaching practice. Furthermore, it proposes to outline the requirement that AI implementation should adhere to the governance outlined within the EU AI Act while respecting data collection and processing guidelines of the EU's General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) law and maintaining ethical standards.

The coaching industry requires this guidance as AI-driven platforms continue to enter the market at a rapid pace.

Fast-paced technological innovation creates simultaneous benefits and difficulties, which demand immediate action to balance the impact of AI. AI literacy will be discussed along-

side the ability to empower supervisors and hence coaches and their clients to evaluate the real and present risks of integrating AI in their coaching practices.

This article provides coach supervisors with necessary knowledge and frameworks to handle AI changes in coaching effectively. For the purpose of this article, when we refer to "supervisors", we do so in the coaching context where "Coaching supervision is a formal process of professional support, which ensures continuing development of the coach and the effectiveness of his/her coaching practice through interactive reflection interpretative evaluation, and the sharing of expertise" (Bachkirova, Stevens and Willis 2025).

When we speak of "coachees" this refers to the clients of the coaches who supervisors typically don't have a direct contact with.

AI operates in a dynamic environment. New tools and platforms appear constantly in the market which makes it difficult to stay on top of all trends. Supervisors must take a proactive stance as AI tools are rapidly spreading across coaching functions. This includes assessment tools, reflective development supports, communication aids and AI-powered coaching bots. The innovative sector shows no signs of stalling as advanced and efficient AI incumbents such as Deepseek (a new Chinese AI assistant) challenge the status quo models of front runners like OpenAI. The fast-moving nature of this arena causes today's best practices to become obsolete tomorrow. Coaches require their supervisors to establish an environment which promotes ongoing learning and adaptability. Coaches who remain aware of new developments and participate in relevant training and professional discussions will be able to use AI responsibly and ethically in their practice.

AI copyright is one of the biggest issues to have arisen recently. The questions regarding the ownership of AI-generated content, the use of copyrighted material in AI training data and the possibility of plagiarism are considered complicated and are often argued. The current uncertainty and some confusion will likely eventually disappear however and the long-term outlook is more positive. It is one recognised view that legal battles will eventually push AI systems providers to enhance their systems and make them more ethical through the use of ethically sourced data (Berger, 2025).

How might this play out in the coaching context?

Issues may arise with AI-generated session notes, assessment reports, or even creative exercises. Supervisors should help coaches understand the legal and ethical consequences of the use of AI-generated content. It is crucial that AI is treated as a means to assist and not replace the original thought and intellectual property. Coaches should exercise caution not to use AI to create content that is very close to copyrighted works and where necessary, they should be able to attribute AI help.

Both coachees and coaches have been using AI for gathering information and making decisions. AI-powered search engines, chatbots and knowledge platforms are being used for the purpose of finding information, gaining insight and even solving problems. This change in user behaviour has implications for the coaching process. Although AI can give users rapid access to information, there is a need to understand that the information provided by AI may be biased, wrong or outdated. Supervisors should remind coaches to help coachees to critically evaluate the AI-generated information, check its credibility and understand its constraints.

In this context, Coaches should not underestimate the important part they have played in the past in suggesting books, resources and activities that can enhance the professional development of their clients. Coaches should continue to encourage critical thinking and information literacy while supporting coaches in using AI as a tool for exploration rather than as a source of truth. Indeed, as we begin to examine legislation and compliance the aforementioned human oversight is even more critical. In legislation such as the EU AI Act, for example the importance of any AI Output being "effectively overseen by natural persons during the period in which they are in use" (EU AI Act, 2024) is deemed critical.

The EU AI Act essentially employs a risk-based approach in the regulation of AI, categorising AI systems into four levels of risk, including unacceptable, high, limited, and minimal. Unacceptable risk AI systems are those that are considered to pose a clear threat to fundamental rights and are prohibited. High-risk AI systems are those that have the potential to cause significant harm and are subject to stringent requirements. While limited risk AI systems have specific transparency obligations, with minimal risk AI systems largely unregulated. It is important for coaches and supervisors

to be familiar with this framework as it gives them a way of determining the level of AI tools they use.

Categorising Coaching Tools

Applying the EU AI Act's risk categories to coaching tools is a process that has to be done with much precision. For instance, transcription software can be classified under the minimal risk since it mainly automates a task without reaching a decision.

As a case study example, as a coach I periodically use transcription tools to record minutes of a coaching session and share actions with my client. Critically, I contract at the outset to share both the risks and opportunities with my client fulfilling transparency obligations with the EU AI Act. In all instances clients should be comfortable opting out of the use of such technology. I then exercise human judgement by carefully reviewing the summaries for accuracy and adding my own thoughts, for example, on non-verbal cues not picked up by the technology.

If, for example, AI assessment tools predict a coachee's performance or potential, additional caution should be exercised as they may be classified as high risk.

The role of the supervisor in this case is to support their coach in exercising caution when choosing AI tools by checking on the purpose for which they are intended, what they can do and assessing the possible risks.

With whom is the liability?

To understand more clearly where liabilities lie, it is important for us to understand who the main actors are referred to in the AI Act and how they align to roles in coaching.

AI system providers and deployers receive separate categorisations under the EU AI Act. The provider is the entity

AI is transforming coaching faster than many realise and supervisors can no longer afford to stay on the sidelines. This piece offers an actionable path forward to navigate compliance, risk, and AI literacy with confidence. Coaching with integrity in the age of AI starts here.

which develops an AI system then distributes it to the market or services it. An entity which uses an AI system under its authority is classified as a deployer. The software company that develops the AI assessment tool functions as a provider whereas the coach who employs that tool acts as a deployer. Supervisors must learn to distinguish between these roles since they determine liability and accountability. The relationship between a coach and provider becomes indirect whenever they suggest an AI tool to their coachee. It is therefore critical that supervisors educate coaches on understanding their respective positions and obligations.

Implications for coaches and supervisors

AI tool usage by coaches and supervisors requires understanding potential legal consequences. A data breach affecting AI-processed data requires identification of who should take responsibility. These questions demand proactive resolution because they represent complex issues.

Supervisors should inform coaches to research AI tools from trustworthy vendors who disclose their privacy practices and data protection protocols. Both parties need to define their mutual responsibility areas and minimise possible dangers. Supervisors should instruct coaches to track their AI tool utilisation and maintain records of consent and obtain legal counsel when needed.

Integrating technology into coaching agreements and contracting

The implementation of evolving implications requires tracking through coaching agreements. All AI tool utilisation in coaching requires clear contracts between coaches and coachees which specify data privacy measures and AI tool usage and consent disclaimers. The specific AI applications require relevant provisions in these agreements. Supervisors should inform coaches on how to develop clauses which specify the particular AI tools they will deploy together with their implementation methods and data processing procedures. The documentation should specify the use of AI note-taker applications as an example.

The contract must specify privacy and protection measures for data and specific disclaimers about AI tool capabilities. Coaching agreements need to transform alongside AI development because the law and technology standards will continue to evolve.

The Role of “Transparency” with coachees

The utilisation of AI in coaching demands complete openness. Coachees have a right to understand which AI systems their practitioners utilise while gaining insight into their operational methods and data handling procedures. Supervisors should emphasize both ethical and legal requirements for coaches to maintain transparency. The coach must present AI tool objectives and boundaries along with explanations regarding how the obtained data will be applied. The deployment of “black box”

AI systems should be avoided because they maintain opaque processes which leave coachees without sufficient understanding.

Supervisors should assist coaches in developing clear and effective communication methods about this information using written materials or verbal conversations. Transparency builds trust and enables coachees to properly understand their coaching experience.

Defining AI Literacy in the coaching context

AI literacy for a coach is how they require the fundamental knowledge about AI capabilities as well as its technical aspects and functional boundaries. A coach should be clear on how AI tools operate, what kind of data they require and what possible biases they could generate. AI literacy enables coaches to both critically assess AI output results and understand ethical implications in AI use while delivering effective AI communication to their clients. A coach needs to identify the distinction between human coaching and AI support while comprehending how artificial intelligence functions as a supplementary tool rather than a replacement for human contact.

Organisations also require broader strategies for long term Learning and Development (L&D) or organisational compliance with the fundamental principles of transparency and literacy we have been discussing. An effective place to start would be to conduct an AI knowledge audit across the organisation to identify knowledge gaps. This can then inform wider trainings required across the organisation to uplevel literacy.

Consent

Informed consent remains an essential element of ethical coaching practice in the same manner that it remains essential when implementing AI tools. AI technology requires coaches to acquire explicit and unambiguous consent from their clients as a condition of its employment in coaching

practice and procedures. Coachees need to know exactly what they are agreeing to when considered “informed”. This entails awareness of which AI tools will be deployed, what data will be gathered, how this data will be handled and the challenges that the AI tools may present. The consent should be voluntary, precise, knowledgeable, and clearly expressed. AI usage requires coaches to explain thoroughly while also offering time for coachees to ask questions which they will get answers to. If coachees remain dissatisfied with explanations provided for the utilisation of technology during their session they should receive a reasonable choice to decline AI applications in their coaching where possible.

Ongoing consent and revocation

The consent process is continuous rather than a singular occurrence. Due to AI technological advancements and the introduction of new tools coaches must revisit the consent issue. The coaching process requires notification and consent from coachees whenever existing AI tools undergo major modifications or new tools are incorporated. Coachees need to be permitted to withdraw their consent whenever they desire. The coach should also define the steps through which coachees can withdraw their consent along with describing what effects withdrawal of consent will produce. Some AI tools must be stopped or coachee’s AI-processed information should be erased from their records if this decision needs to be taken. Coaches need to respect the autonomy of coachees and their rights to their data.

The application of powerful questions for analysing Compliance risks

In coaching, powerful questions are essential tools while they also prove beneficial for identifying compliance risks linked with artificial intelligence. The use of strategic questioning by coaches enables them to discover problems that may exist in terms of data privacy, bias, transparency, and security.

This should be investigated with reference to several typical use cases which coaches encounter regularly in their work prior to, during and after sessions.

Pre-session

For example, one such use case may be a coach deciding to brainstorm with an AI companion on developing a plan for a coaching session. Some common questions a coach may ask in this context might be: “What data does this AI tool collect, and how is it stored?” or “How does this AI tool ensure fairness and avoid bias?”

During session

Another example may be with regard to the use of note-taker apps within the session. The coach should critically question “Is client consent obtained?” Or “Where is the data stored and is the 3rd party compliant with general data protection regulation (GDPR)?”

Post session

Finally, an example of a coach using AI after the session may be to support their own development and reflective practice. A key question here is likely “Am I inputting any client identifiable data?”

Coaches can enable coachees to evaluate their AI tool usage by leading them through the same questions they should ask. This approach promotes both self-reflection and critical inquiry which are crucial elements for maintaining responsible AI practices. Coaches should ask their coachees about the AI tools they use and whether they have assessed their possible risks or not and about their methods for confirming AI-generated information accuracy and reliability.

The process of role-modelling to coachees to analyse their AI usage helps coaches build both internal awareness and personal responsibility. The approach allows coachees to develop their AI literacy skills for making knowledgeable

choices about technology selection. This is entirely consistent with the coach’s primary responsibility to challenge, support, and question the coachee.

Conclusion

The rapidly changing AI environment in coaching requires us to understand how AI literacy combined with EU AI Act and GDPR compliance together with transparency and informed consent function as fundamental requirements. It is essential for coaches and supervisors to actively guarantee both ethical and compliant usage of AI systems. The process of staying updated about new developments along with detailed risk assessments and powerful questioning and transparency-based accountability measures and a culture of accountability forms the core of this responsibility. The current growing use of AI in coaching brings great potential which demands our collective commitment to implement innovative and ethical solutions. The way forward calls for continuous learning and genuine commitment toward responsible AI practices as we enter this new coaching era.

Practical suggestions for Supervisors to start:

1. Conduct an audit of the technology you use in your own supervision and coaching practice.
2. Discuss with the coach you supervise how they use technology in their practice and what process they have to obtain informed consent of their client
3. Identify 1-2 opportunities to increase your literacy and learning in the AI in Coaching space so you can stay on top of evolving developments.

I hope the article will motivate coach supervisors to adopt awareness and diligence when integrating AI into their own supervisory work while simultaneously directing their coaches to use AI ethically and compliantly. ■

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Designing an Artificial Intelligence-Powered Coaching Platform: Principles, Challenges, Learnings and Enterprise Application

■ Puja Brahmasmi and Deep Bali

Abstract

This article explores the journey of designing an Artificial Intelligence (AI)-driven coaching system by analyzing the innovation principles, validation methods, and organizational considerations that underpin the development of scalable, ethical, and effective AI coaching platforms. Drawing from a multi-year development process between 2022 and 2024, the case of Sherlock AI is used to illustrate these principles in practice. The article offers broader insights for researchers, technologists, and organizational leaders seeking to understand the evolving role of AI in workplace learning and human development.

Introduction

Why AI Coaching, Why Now?

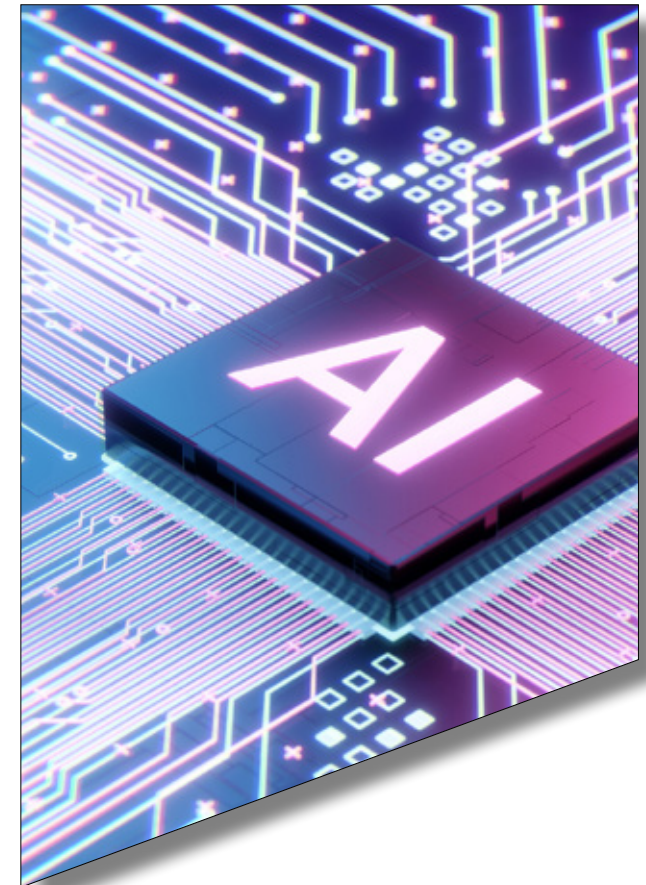
Human coaching has seen rapid growth over the past two decades, primarily supporting senior leaders in organizational settings. However, large-scale coaching for middle managers and early-career professionals remains inaccessible due to cost and scalability constraints. This article shares how AI powered coaching systems designed with solid coaching frameworks, cognitive rigor and contextual intelligence can bridge this gap.

We examine how an AI coaching platform was developed to operationalize this goal, treating the platform not as a product but as a case to understand the broader principles and pitfalls in designing AI coaching for human development.

A growing body of research confirms that personalized learning and behavioral AI learning and coaching tools can significantly enhance workplace performance, engagement, and well-being. However, traditional classroom-based or human-only coaching models struggle to scale across large and diverse workforces.

For instance, a recent survey showed that nearly three-quarters of current younger 'Generation Z' (Gen-Z) employees are looking to switch jobs primarily due to a lack of personalized guidance and real-time feedback (SWNS, 2025). Reinforcing this, the American Psychological Association (2023) found that 92% of workers consider emotional and psychological well-being as important in choosing their employer.

These findings signal a pressing need for scalable, personalized development solutions. AI coaching platforms offer



a promising path forward combining the precision of data with the emotional resonance of reflective dialogue to drive measurable, sustainable behavior change at scale. Supporting this view, Amber Barger, Senior Director at the Ernst & Young consultancy and faculty member in Adult Learning & Leadership at Columbia University, affirms: “AI coaches are just as effective as human coaches” (Barger, 2025), citing her research that shows AI can build meaningful relationships, deliver impactful coaching experiences, and help individuals achieve their goals.

Innovation Framing: From Invention to Application

Invention vs. Innovation in AI Coaching

In the early stages of development, we asked ourselves a foundational question: Are we building an invention or an innovation? AI technologies such as neural networks, natural language processing (NLP), and large language models (LLMs) represent significant inventions i.e scientific breakthroughs that form the backbone of modern AI.

What we aimed to do, however, was innovate: to apply these powerful inventions to the unique context of coaching. We didn't set out to build new algorithms, but to reimagine how coaching could be delivered without calendars, without bias, without friction, but with precision, personalization, built-in reflection and scale.

2.2. Design Sprint as Validation Mechanism

In early 2022, we launched an 8-week Innovation Lab. It brought together User Experience (UX) designers, data scientists, Human Resources (HR) leaders, and engineers to explore a single, ambitious challenge: “How might we democratize human development and productivity through coaching at scale?”

This intensive lab included: End-to-end customer journey

mapping, Focus group discussions with users, Design thinking sprints, Real-world experiments with test users, Minimum viable product (MVP) blueprint and Investor pitch development

The process validated the concept, aligned the underlying technology stack with coaching goals, and refined the model through iterative testing. The intent was never to just automate dialogue, it was to design coaching journeys and experiences that felt human, impactful, and scalable.

AI as Innovation

We didn't invent coaching or AI. What we innovated was how AI coaching is delivered, accessed, and experienced through a scalable AI platform. By integrating language models with behavioral science, psychology, and coaching frameworks, it

New possibilities are elevating employee productivity, performance, and well-being without a human in the loop. This article traces the design of a scalable AI coaching platform built to help organizations segue from ordinary to beyond ordinary and enable employees to thrive through personalised learning

generates dynamic, personalized coaching conversations and journeys and delivers insights, reflections, and action at scale.

In summary: *Invention* gave us the tools: Open AI's conversational AI (ChatGPT), NLP, and neural networks. Innovation gave us a scalable AI coaching platform designed for the future of work.

This foundational perspective shaped every design decision thereafter, from coaching logic to enterprise rollout strategies.

What defines effective AI coaching platform design Psychological Safety and Reflection First Design

AI coaching platforms must prioritize psychological safety and emotional resonance. In contrast to task-oriented chatbots, AI coaching design needs to reflect humanistic values, offering space for reflection, not just advice. Our coaching intelligence embedded language that supported psychological safety, using calibrated tone, well-paced silence, and structured provocative inquiry. Instead of reacting, the AI coach mirrored user thoughts, catalyzing clarity and insight. We avoided pre-trained, generalized datasets and anyway none existed. Instead, the AI coaching engine and multiple layers were built from scratch using validated behavioral science and human development.

We designed coaching frames to closely mirror how a skilled human coach would operate: Beginning with an assessment of where the coachee is, aligning on the coaching focus and definition of it, and then guiding the conversation with inquiry, insights, and embedded learning aids to ground the learning. These tools were integrated directly into the coaching dialogue to ensure just-in-time learning and relevance.

Each AI coaching interaction was designed to reflect the depth, nuance, and empathy characteristic of expert human

coaching without relying on pre-existing data shortcuts. Every AI coaching journey was written, tested, and reworked with a deep understanding of human behavior. Sustainability was a foundational principle, with regular check-ins built in to reinforce progress and accountability over time in the AI coaching platform. To ensure fidelity to evidence-based practices, we collaborated closely with coaches, psychologists, and behavioral scientists throughout the development process. The goal of AI coaching platform was not to replace the human coach, but to replicate the human coaching process in a scalable and safe manner. This meant ensuring conversations could adapt based on intent, emotional tone, and context, a feat usually dependent on human intuition.

Inclusivity and Bias Mitigation

Designing for inclusion meant evaluating coaching conversations across demographics, gender, geography, and generational mindsets. We integrated bias detection filters and mental health detection filters supported by sentiment analysis in our coaching intelligence system. AI coaching prompts were written to relate to user tone and emotional states to ensure safety and belonging and replicate the same.

It was ensured that the AI Coaching conversation provokes reflection and not prescribe, unlike advice driven chatbots. This philosophical stance was intentional. It reduced the risk of reinforcing bias and strengthened user agency, enabling people to arrive at their own answers.

Compliance and Ethics as Foundational Architecture, Not Add-On

Compliance wasn't an afterthought, it was foundational. Ethics were embedded from the outset, not layered on later. Core coaching principles such as autonomy, psychological safety, and non-judgment served as anchors for every AI coaching conversation. Key features included mental health flagging, privacy-preserving protocols, and organization-level

anonymization filters, all designed to ensure user trust and meet regulatory standards.

The platform was built on global compliance standards, especially the California Consumer Privacy Act of 2018 (CCPA), that gives consumers more control over the personal information that businesses collect about them. Privacy was not a bolt-on feature but a foundational element of system architecture. Data flows were encrypted, and user data retention was strictly limited. Ongoing updates were made to reflect changing global regulations and organizational requirements.

The system was intentionally designed to anonymize and separate coaching data from performance evaluations, ensuring that users could engage without fear. Organizational data was also compartmentalized to maintain confidentiality and integrity at the enterprise level.

From early skepticism to real-world adoption, it challenges assumptions and redefines how measurable, sustainable learning can be activated at scale. It began with a call to adventure anchored in courage, curiosity, knowledge, and realistic optimism.

Adaptive inquiry and tonality calibration for human like experience

We broke down coaching conversation into decision trees that were fluid, not rigid. If a user came in frustrated after a bad performance review, we made sure that AI Coaching engine didn't offer cheerleading advice, it first held space, then prompted reflection, and finally helped the user design action. Context wasn't just the issue; it was the user's emotional readiness to engage.

Instead of robotic instructions, AI coaching engine and intelligence acted as a mirror, asking provocative and thoughtful questions that catalyze self-awareness and insight. We made the experience real by acknowledging the user's environment, for example, recognizing the time of day they were engaging or their recent emotional tone. Rapport-building was treated as essential, with carefully calibrated language, conversational pacing, and context-aware prompts designed to foster psychological safety and trust from the very first interaction.

We paid close attention to tone and ensured our AI engine understood context to avoid sounding like a generic chatbot. Words matter. The difference between "Why did you do that?" and "What was going through your mind when you chose that approach?" can determine whether a user feels judged or supported.

Even the use of silence, or pacing between questions, was deliberately designed in AI coaching conversation. These design principles transformed the AI from a logic engine into a reflective companion. They allowed for dynamic engagement provoking not answers, but awareness and agency.

Testing and Validation

Social Experiment to Test Acceptance

In 2022, the idea of AI coaching was met with universal skepticism. The dominant narrative held that coaching

required empathy, emotional intelligence, and deep human connection, qualities that AI was believed to inherently lack. There were naysayers saying, “Employees can’t be coached specially through AI” and “No one will trust a bot with their inner world.”

To test hypothesis and challenge the naysayers and skeptics, we ran a social experiment with 30 middle managers and early-career professionals from top multinational companies. We invited them to a 30-minute text-based coaching session, telling them they’d speak to a master coach, but not whether it was human or AI. We gave them a choice of challenge areas around their manager, peers, or organization to focus their coaching conversation.

Participants were told they were being coached via chat but not whether it was human or AI. Behind the scenes, Columbia-certified coaches engaged them over Google Chat, no voice, no prior context, using only the power of provocative inquiry.

81% reported feeling unstuck and supported post a 30-minute chat, suggesting reflective dialogue and strong provocative coaching framework, not the medium, was central to perceived value.

User and HR Leader Surveys

To validate further, we surveyed both HR leaders and our target employee group. The results confirmed our belief: employees are actively seeking ways to fast-track their careers and are aware of the challenges holding them back. The gap wasn’t in willingness. It was in access. Human coaching wasn’t reaching them due to its limited scalability and high cost. And their managers often lacked the time or mental space to coach or mentor them effectively.

The surveys of HR leaders and employees showed that while

76% of HR leaders were open to deploying AI coaching, 65% of employees felt they were not operating at their peak state (performance). This reaffirmed both demand and opportunity.

Pilot Testing and Feedback Loops

In 2024, pilot deployments focused on real workplace challenges such as giving feedback, handling conflict, and building confidence. In parallel, bespoke coaching modules addressed

real-time needs around resilience, purpose, and emotional and mental well-being. Across all use cases, client-defined success metrics were exceeded.

One notable pilot, involving 150 employees over 12 weeks, an AI coaching platform recorded over 13,700 minutes (approximately 228 hours) of active coaching time demonstrating the platform’s scalability. With over 92% coaching effectiveness

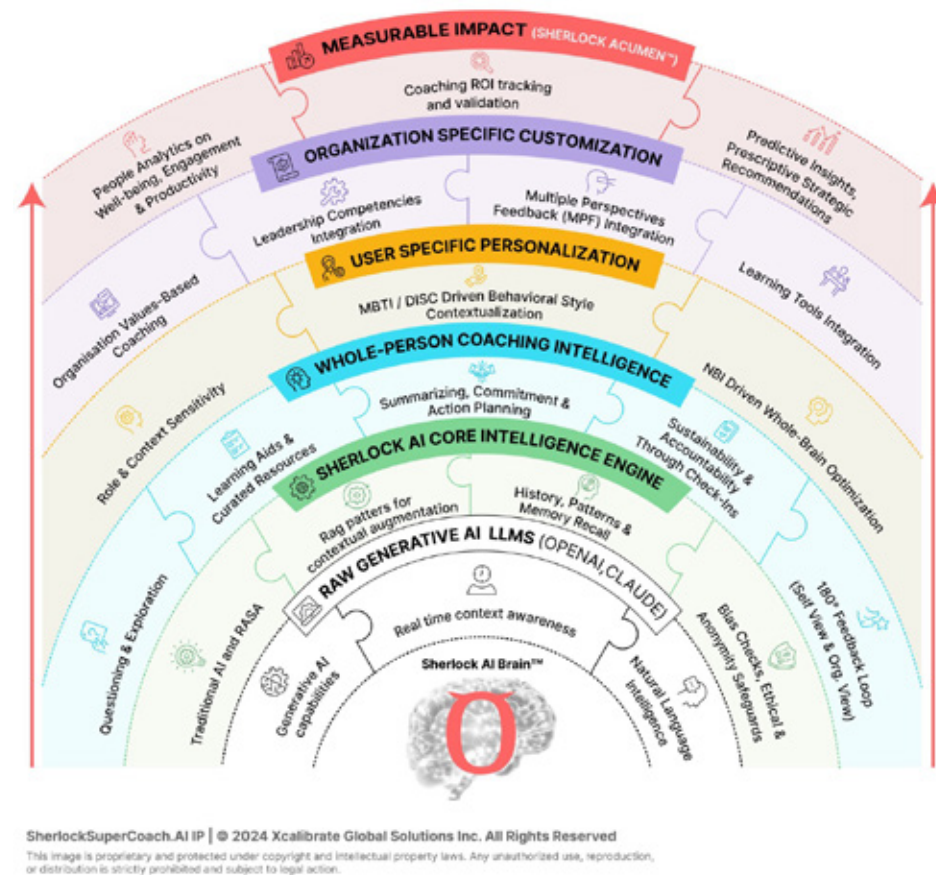


Figure 1. AI Coaching Brain, (c) 2025 SherlockSupercoach.AI

reported, the results highlighted not just participation, but meaningful outcomes at scale.

We tracked user responses, emotional resonance, and behavioral shifts to inform every iteration. Reactions ranged from surprise to cautious optimism. Many users reported that it was the first time an AI coaching tool made them feel truly heard. Users described the AI coaching experience as thoughtful, safe, and insight-provoking, which are the qualities typically associated with skilled human coaches.

Scaling AI Coaching in Enterprises

Culture-Market Fit

Deploying AI coaching into organizations required more than technological readiness and product-market fit. It required a cultural shift. AI Coaching was framed not as replacement of human coaches but as a scalable supplement, especially for underserved segments by traditional human coaching and development approaches

Rollout Strategy

While the scalability of AI coaching was widely accepted, especially given the limitations of human coaching for large populations, organizations needed clarity on how to implement it effectively.

Two key prongs defined our enterprise roll out implementation:

- Integration with existing learning programs - Integration into existing leadership and development programs, inclusion in onboarding programs for new interns and as a complement to ongoing coaching engagements for managers
- Change management with toolkits and internal champions - We developed communication toolkits for HR teams, created plug-and-play use cases (e.g., Coaching

for First-Time Managers), and collaborated with internal champions to drive adoption and sustained engagement.

Customization and Personalization at Scale

The AI coaching intelligence was designed to deeply adapt both to organizational unique inputs (e.g., values, culture, leadership competencies) and user-specific preferences (e.g., personality types or thinking styles). This dual adaptability played a critical role in accelerating adoption and engagement, as users experienced AI coaching that was not only personally relevant but also aligned with their organizational context. For example, if a user demonstrated a preference for analytical thinking, AI coaching platform adapted its inquiry style by offering data-oriented questions whereas for intuitive thinkers, it leaned into metaphor, reflection, and big-picture coaching language. This personalized approach made the experience feel not only relevant but cognitively natural to each individual.

Measuring Impact: From Coaching Conversations, Journeys, and Check-Ins to Outcomes

Analytics and Return on Investment (ROI)

Organizations needed confidence that the quality and impact of coaching could be measured and sustained. An analytics and insights engine were developed to track shifts in user-reported confidence, productivity, and emotional state. Data was anonymized and aggregated to present trends at the cohort level in a separate analytics dashboard app meant for HR and business leaders only.

It translated reflective learning into quantifiable outcomes. Through people analytics, ROI tracking, and predictive insights, it enabled leaders to measure objective changes in well-being, productivity, and engagement. This closed the loop between individual development and organizational performance.

It allowed business and HR leaders to correlate coaching interactions with business outcomes through objective data on productivity, engagement and well-being.

Manager and Peer Feedback Loops

To validate behavior change, the AI coaching intelligence included a built-in 180-degree feedback mechanism. This allowed for a comparison between employees' self-perception and feedback from their peers and managers after engaging in AI coaching sessions.

The feedback loop was intentionally designed to measure not only immediate reflections but also longitudinal development across behavior, communication, and emotional regulation after few weeks of AI coaching. These insights contributed to more comprehensive views of growth, helping organizations and individuals track alignment between intent and impact.

All feedback data was collected directly within the AI coaching platform and made accessible via the AI analytics engine eliminating the need for external survey tools. Thinking preference-based nudges were used to prompt timely reflections from users, managers, and peers, ensuring contextual and continuous feedback as part of the coaching journey.

Predictive Actionable Insights for Business and HR Leaders

The system generated prescriptive actionable recommendations and analytics identifying team-level risk factors (e.g., burnout signals basis their well-being, disengagement patterns), supporting HR interventions aligned with AI coaching outcomes.

Future Directions

The next evolution in AI coaching lies in multimodal engagement which is voice, video, and emotion AI to further simulate human-like empathy. Additionally, deeper integration with organizational feedback systems will strengthen coaching

alignment with business performance.

AI will not replace exceptional and good human coaches, but it will expand access, especially where coaching is absent, inconsistent, or unaffordable. By blending evidence-based design, contextual adaptability, and ethical safeguards, our AI coaching platform will play a meaningful role in shaping the future of learning at work. ■

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DGSv's Common Good Balance Sheet: A Commitment to Values-Based Practice

■ Annette Mulkau

In 2024, the DGSv decided to start an accounting process based on the criteria of the Economy for the Common Good. This entails an independent evaluation of DGSv's office operations, using a "Common Good Balance Sheet". Our balance sheet evaluates how our daily business decisions influence the performance and quality of activities across our ecosystem, including members, employees, service providers, financial partners, and the wider social environment.

This approach to accounting stems from a civil society movement, the "Economy for the Common Good" (ECG), which was founded in 2010 from Austria, Bavaria and South Tyrol. It is associated with Christian Felber, whose book "Economy for the Common Good" details the ECG model. This movement advocates for economic restructuring, prioritizing values such as cooperation, respect for human dignity, solidarity, ecological sustainability, social justice and democratic participation in the design of economic processes.

The ECG sits alongside other alternative economic models like degrowth/post-growth economy, solidarity economy, Donut Economy, Unconditional Basic Income (UBI), and

Circular Economy, all aiming to foster a more sustainable and equitable economy. Relevant here is Article 14.2 of the Basic Law of the Federal Republic of Germany which enshrines the social obligation of property: "Property obliges. Use should at the same time serve the common good." Some German state constitutions have also anchored the common good as the central purpose of all economic activity. In September 2023, the German government introduced the National Strategy for Social Innovations and Companies for the Common Good.

The "Common Good Balance Sheet" represents a value-oriented process. As a professional association structured as a registered association, the DGSv is well-suited to this approach. As a civil society actor, its Ethical Guidelines align with universal human rights and the Basic Law for the Federal Republic of Germany (https://www.dgsv.de/wp-content/uploads/2022/12/DGSv_Code_of_Ethics_2023_en.pdf). Our interest in the Common Good Balance Sheet lies not in whether we adhere to these values, but in assessing our current standing and identifying areas for improvement.



We are in good company. Today, the ECG movement boasts 11,000 supporters worldwide, around 4,500 members in over 170 regional groups, and over 1,000 companies and other organisations in 35 countries using the Common Good Balance Sheet. An overview of participating organisations in Germany and their reports can be found at: <https://germany.econgood.org/gwoepionierunternehmen/> and <https://www.econgood.org/who-is-ecg/ecg-companies/>. Our goal is to join them by mid-2025.

The process is structured around the Common Good Matrix <https://www.econgood.org/apply-ecg/common-good-matrix/> within the "Common Good Economy" framework. Under external supervision, the DGSv office conducted five workshops addressing the 20 topics of this matrix. The documentation of the results is currently being completed.

Preliminary findings indicate that the largest items of purchased services (80% of the total) comprise office rental, physical members events, server/software/hardware services, PR services, costs of our members' magazine Journal Supervision, and the DGSv website. Our research suggests

a high proportion of our purchased services are produced under fair working conditions and humane conditions.

As a registered association, the DGSv has no owners and is self-governing. The association's activities are financed by membership fees, i.e. by own funds, ensuring independence. These fees are held in accounts at the GLS Bank and the SozialBank, both chosen for their ethical and sustainable focus.

Annual financial statements and economic planning are accessible to DGSv members via the internal members' area of the website, guaranteeing co-determination and transparency.

Regarding social environment, the DGSv confirms it does not produce or sell inhumane products or services, engage in illegitimate tax avoidance, or disseminate false information about the association or social phenomena.

The complete report, subject to independent, certified audits every two years, will be published alongside other Common Good Balance Sheets.

Our website (<https://www.dgsv.de/beratung/supervision/>) states:

"Our members have high professional standards. They are committed to the tradition of the Enlightenment. They want to support valuable, productive, and functional reflective processes for individuals and organisations. At the same time, they take on a social task by fostering democratic principles, inclusive dialogue, critical self-reflection, professional empowerment and organizational transparency, while establishing clear role definitions and accountability in the workplace."

The "Common Good Balance Sheet" exemplifies this commitment. ■



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Identity in light of otherness

■ Danielle Birken

Abstract

In the article I am sharing my vision of what is at stake in supporting individuals to implement the desired changes while remaining aligned with their identity. Coaching is not merely an operational profession that employs methods to assist coachees in establishing new behaviours that serve their goals. Beyond that, it represents a stance that enables the coachee to express their uniqueness by becoming aware of their own subjectivity through the unique and irreplaceable human

encounter with the coach's subjectivity. The quality of this encounter is one that is preferred and gratuitous, with the other becoming absolutely irreducible to what I want for them.

Introduction

Having been a coach for 21 years and a supervisor for three, I am convinced that in both professions, our role as a coach is intimately linked to our deep, professional and personal

identity, integrating knowledge, experiences, social background, life history, and values that evolve throughout life cycles, whether through joyful or traumatic events, inspiring encounters, and more.

Working on oneself and within oneself is fundamental in developing one's approach, which must be adjusted throughout practice, depending on clients, the training courses taken, and the crises and personal challenges faced.

This article is modest because the subject is dizzying. I wrote it to share my understanding of what is at stake in the coaching arena and help our clients stay connected to their identity, which is constantly renewed over time...

Supporting others while developing yourself

According to Aristotle, "action follows being."

As coaches or supervisors, do we have a choice? We must refer to a framework for interpreting human action to perform our functions. This framework has often been constructed without our knowledge throughout our lives, through the practice of professions, professional gestures, speeches, postures, or even soft skills linked to our personality: qualities of sensitivity, intellect, and motivation to find or give meaning.

However, this frame of reference is unique to each coach or supervisor, having developed it from their family, academic, and social heritage: a set of thoughts, beliefs, and values that infuse their being. This heritage, often intangible and unconscious, is woven from significant events in their life story that naturally lead them to adopt specific postures and attitudes.

I refer to this as subjectivity, in contrast to the objectivity of the exact sciences. It is challenging to support a unique and singular human being using any "instrument" other than oneself, regardless of what we say or do.

This subjectivity is the focus of self-work, a reflective practice

concerning one's representations, beliefs, and loyalties, a practice that becomes invaluable as it clarifies who one is, enabling them to support others as radically different beings without merging with them, projecting onto them, or wanting to act in their place.

In this article, Danielle Birken, Otherness Coach, explores what is fundamentally at stake in facilitating change. Beyond tools and techniques, she emphasizes a stance rooted in the unique and authentic human encounter. Coaching transforms into a space for self-emergence, where the coachees' subjectivity is unveiled through interaction with that of the coach. It embodies an ethical approach that welcomes the other in all their irreducible otherness, allowing them to become fully themselves.

According to de Lubac, "every man is a sacred story". And as if the already dizzying singularity of the coach or supervisor weren't enough, the person being coached is unique and singular, a product of an unprecedented, untold story that must be supported in developing a narrative about their identity within a more or less extended space-time.

The accuracy of the narrative emerging at the heart of the relationship depends on the quality of this space-time. This trusting, vibrant, and original relationship allows the person being coached to find their own words and gestures while connecting with their feelings, emotions, and, more broadly, a whole body of material subject to interpretation, thus developing their expression. The coach or supervisor will grasp this subjective material with their subjectivity, helping the person being coached to transform their vision of themselves and their goals according to their need for change. The beauty of these two professions lies, it seems to me, in the indefinable, mysterious, and even sacred intersubjectivity of this encounter.

From this experience, my attachment to otherness was born. This concept, articulated by Emmanuel Levinas (1990), a Jewish philosopher born in 1906 in Lithuania at the edge of the Russian Empire, emerges from a place far removed from everything, where a spirit of confinement allowed for the development of tolerance towards what is different, strange, and foreign. Levinas moved to Strasbourg in 1924 to pursue his studies. There, he studied Husserl, the father of phenomenology, which he utilized to reflect on how to free men and women from their existential solitude, accompanied by its ever-present corollaries: stress, anxiety, and discouragement. Considering two possible paths- knowledge and sociality- he favors the latter, as he believes knowledge does not allow us to decenter ourselves.

Only a quality connection with another allows a person to permanently escape isolation, facilitating dispossession and a letting go of self. This relationship must be neither a fusion nor a confusion between the two beings. It must not, ipso facto, neutralize otherness but rather highlight and preserve difference: the Other withdraws into his mystery, according to Levinas, in *Ethics and Infinity* (1990). As the Other, he cannot be an object that becomes ours, as in knowledge.

Beautiful insight! I chose my brand name, *altérité*®, as an invitation to embrace a spirit of tolerance toward what is different, strange, and foreign, a call to allow oneself to be disarmed by the Other...

If adopting otherness as a trademark means cultivating the strange and the different in one's client, this also applies to the team coach or group supervisor. From the outset, collectives are more vibrant when their members can work authentically, respecting their differences. Each person's subjectivity, the truth as it appears in their consciousness, guarantees their free commitment to a freedom that inspires lasting motivation—a source of individual performance that benefits the collective rather than detracting from it.

Observing reality, here and now...

This encounter of two subjects occurs in the present, bringing the coach or supervisor face-to-face with the stranger they will accompany. We must set out to conquer this "Everest," sitting in our coachee's or supervisee's chair, waiting to be listened to, helped, and supported because we have been battered by life or long for more meaning and serenity at work.

We need to investigate the reality of this situation and gather concrete data about this person at this point in their life. We must do so with the utmost respect for their other-

ness, inscribed in their DNA: genetic, social, and professional. This set of imprints is etched in their memory, making them a mysterious being to themselves and others.

In this wake, the professional who accompanies can inscribe their gesture by adopting a posture of astonishment in front of the uniqueness of the Other, even marveling at Mother Nature, generous in creativity, which has brought forth for millennia beings all similar in humanity, yet all so different in their DNA, a personalized imprint unique to each.

When engaging with their client, they can choose an innovative phenomenological approach, focusing on attentive observation of what is present in the relationship. They fulfil their maieutic mission through simple listening: giving birth to the Other's being to transform action. Mastering the art of relationship, they summon onto the stage of accompaniment new modes of interaction, new perceptions, and options, working with the given material to bring forth possible futures—previously unexpected, unforeseen, and unpredictable.

In this face-to-face encounter, the coach forms an internal image of the client: how they speak, what they discuss, their words, facial expressions, gestures, prosody, rhythms, and disruptions in rhythm: anything that can concretely manifest, akin to an epiphany, representing the client's interiority and what is unfolding within them, sometimes without their awareness. Like a puzzle, the coach, an impressionist artist, paints this initial image with small touches.

This observation phase is only possible if the coach adopts a nonjudgmental listening posture, which we call the phenomenological epoch, suspending all judgment to welcome what emerges in the moment of the relationship with curiosity, focusing on the facts as devoid of interpretation as possible.

As a coaches, they will help their clients return to a more neutral observation of their situation, allowing them to rid themselves of cognitive biases that lead to errors in judgment. As a supervisors, they will assist the coach being supervised in observing their relationship with the client through fresh eyes, neutralizing hasty assumptions and misleading projections resulting from often unconscious transference.

The first key to phenomenological support is to return to observation without immediately jumping into analysis and interpretation. This approach will open up other avenues, removing the temptation for immediate moral or intellectual evaluations and allowing one to approach the situation more structured and constructively. Gestalt therapy understands this well: the goal is to enable the development of Dasein, that being, being in the world in its authentic presence without value judgments, with its way of connecting with its environment and its responsibilities and social issues...

Stepping Back & Practicing Reflexivity

But be careful: the map is not the territory. Once reality has been delineated, as it appears to consciousness, it is time to move on to in-depth, reflective analysis.

Once again, the phenomenological approach offers a possible way for those involved in support, the coach/coachee, supervisor/supervisee, to gain perspective and explore the situations encountered in depth, beyond mere appearances and observed facts. At the heart of the phenomenological intention lies a desire to approach the essence of things, people, situations, and their noumena hidden beneath the phenomena. For pragmatic empiricists, this is a delusion because only facts are accessible. However, for phenomenologists, it represents an ideal born from the pen of Husserl. This is encouraging news for coaches and supervisors who wish to encounter the often-elusive human being behind their visible actions and behaviours.

This ideal is driven by another principle: eidetic reduction based on the epoch to move toward a more comprehensive understanding of things, people, and environments, transcending contingent, variable, and changing facts.

Unlike classical thought, it does not aim to abstract or mentalize by eliminating the contingent. Instead, it emphasizes exploring observed reality and formulating hypotheses about what lies behind appearances, thereby approaching, through creative trial and error, a less rational, more intuitive grasp of the complexity of reality in its entirety, without being all-encompassing.

Translating this approach into coaching or supervision, the process is straightforward: begin with the present moment, focusing on what is immediately accessible to sensory perception. Eliminate biased interpretations, then imagine what underlies them by forming hypotheses and examining their various aspects by altering their characteristics. In doing so, uncover what remains invariant and constant, like an essence beneath the surface.

How often, in coaching or supervision, has this movement revealed the permanence of being, representing a current identity of clients beneath the diversity of their experiences? For example, I will cite a recently supervised coach who recognized the meaning of her mission in her ability to help her clients communicate better by fostering more human and constructive relationships. Then, she was surprised to discover, in her life story, that even as a child, this was the role she had assumed to assist her parents, who were often in conflict.

To adopt the phenomenological stance, the quality of the space and time dedicated to support is essential. The sensitive exploration of our clients' intimate lives requires a secure relationship, which is indeed induced by the legal contract,

but also needs to be relational. This relational aspect will clarify the contours of the interactions (coach/coachee, supervisor/supervisee) and allow the free and uninhibited imagination to be contained within the emerging dynamics of the relationship.

The Emergence of Otherness

As you may have gathered, I have a particular affinity for Emmanuel Lévinas, heir to phenomenology, who offers new insights into the work of the coach and supervisor.

As an observer of the interwar world, this philosopher wonders whether Western humanism is a failed model. He seeks another, rooted in the experience of otherness, which illuminates the mystery of identity construction in a new, poetic way, emphasizing the importance of the Other, with a capital O.

For him, it is in the face of the Other that humanity is revealed. When, as a coach or supervisor, I am confronted with a face, when I look at it, listen to it, and when there is an actual encounter, the other is no longer an object to be known or a problem to be solved. They are a completely Other, irreducible to their project, a being to be welcomed in their vulnerability and destitution. This encounter invites an ethical stance: for, in front of the face of the Other, says Emmanuel Lévinas in *Ethics & Infinity* (1990), the authentic relationship consists of welcoming them to contemplate them and respond to them; the connection extends to commitment, responsibility for and toward the other.

Isn't this precisely what makes coaching or supervision so powerful? A relationship, free from any obligation to provide content, focuses on the quality of the connection to reveal the person behind the multitude of life experiences that the client shares, no matter how mundane they may be.

If the Other is received as radically different, strange, and foreign, any attempt at power or appropriation becomes impossible. For a long time, I needed to understand my clients to help them. One day, I realized my mistake: how can I know the Other, in the etymological sense of “taking with”? If he is a mystery—not in the sense of an obscure reality, but like a light too strong to be contained within my intelligence, how can I confine him within my representations, however benevolent they may be? I cannot grasp him or lay my hands on him; he does not belong to me; he belongs to himself. A mystery of a human, original face, he expresses his vulnerability and, through it, a form of transcendence, calling for unconditional respect.

Hence, a profound posture of humility....

All I have to do is be present with the Other, listen, observe without judgment, pose hypotheses, and open the imagination to other possible interpretations to make the self-view more flexible. This humility paradoxically becomes powerful, calling the coach or supervisor to an ethic that gives them their credentials, centering their practice on the quality of the relationship and infinite responsibility, beyond the techniques and tools used.

Thus, beyond the objectives or intentions set by the client, the coach or supervisor sees them, above all, as a person for whom they are responsible during the coaching process: accountable for their identity, which must be brought to light in the context of otherness, and responsible for their vulnerability.

In a way, the coach becomes the client's hostage: not in the sense of a prisoner, but in the sense of an assumed responsibility, leading them to sometimes confront the dilemma of shifting their focus from contractual effectiveness to the ethics of the relationship.

Inspired by Emmanuel Lévinas, the client becomes a guardian of otherness:

- capable of deconstructing their certainties,
- questioning the impact of their interpretations on their clients,
- capable of valuing discomfort, with relational blockages no longer treated as failures but as indicators of ethics in action,
- finally, capable of cultivating humility to explicitly recognize their limits in the face of the client's uniqueness.

Inclusion of the Otherness of the Body

Embodiment is at the heart of Emmanuel Lévinas's approach, for whom the face is a vehicle for the mystery of human interiority; more generally, the entire body plays a central mediating role in the emergence of otherness.

Defining the person being supported as a visible extension of themselves, making them accessible to others, the body serves as an external identity, an epiphany of subjective identity, representing the inner and hidden self. The art of the coach and supervisor lies in bringing this to light, based on close observation of the body, which provides valuable data: appearance, gender, generation, ethnic origin, facial expressions, gestures, and expressions of sensitivity and emotions through the magical world of voice and breath, delivering intonations, tones, prosody, and rhythms that reveal the inner, subjective, sensitive, and fragile world of the person being coached. Although the body is a “page” on which the person's story is written, allowing them to tell their story quietly and assert their uniqueness, we rarely pay enough attention to the body as a vector of the relationship with the Other or as a means of signifying—beyond words—one's identity.

In phenomenological support, connecting with the body and its feelings can become a solid foundation for building an embodied interpersonal relationship, free from the fear

of subjective, authentic, and profound attachment. The business world currently mistreats our bodies. France, for example, is experiencing a major burnout epidemic: 9 million burnout victims in 2024, which is 19 times more than in 2015. This speaks volumes about the denial of the body in the workplace and beyond.

However, considering the body in support is not a luxury but a vital issue: body care, aesthetics, health-related practices, and connections to feelings, emotions, sentiments, pleasures, and passions. The body is not just a simple physical envelope; it is me, my very identity, the setting for the living within me, and the capacity to connect with myself and others through social and cultural practices and sensitive interactions.

There are still many ambiguities encountered, from self to self! Yet our body is our very being. It is not merely a representation of who we are, nor an object, a material shaped according to our desires, inviting temptation to exploit it. My body is me, a living entity, never static, evolving, a temple of our identity, which itself is never fixed or defined: from season to season, from experience to experience, from crisis to crisis, identity—head, heart, body—reflects this reality that continuously updates itself over time, in the reflexivity of self to self, and of self to the Other, in relationships that honors otherness.

In conclusion

One of the most beautiful effects of phenomenological support is the art of relationship building practiced by coaches or supervisors. Capable of welcoming others unconditionally, with head, heart, and body, they form a new generation of coaches who are equally adept at highlighting the areas of brilliance within each person and pinpointing the discord between the body and the inner self. They encourage those they support to work on their inner unity to find or rediscover serenity.

Long life to our professions as coaches and supervisors! ■

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Danielle Birken (France) is an individual and team coach, certified in Transnational Analysis since 1998. With 4,000 hours of experience, she collaborates with organisations of all sizes, across various levels: CEOs, Operational Directors, Directors of support functions (HR, Legal, Purchasing), Managers, project managers, and business leaders in industry, services, and the public sector. A certified supervisor of managers and coaches since 2022, she supervises both internal corporate coaches and external coaches, particularly those aiming to develop a corporate clientele. Over the years, in order to make her practices more flexible, she has enriched and deepened her original framework of reference in Transnational Analysis and systemic analysis with less conventional approaches such as metapsychology, existential analysis, and phenomenology.

Identity, Resonance and Sensemaking in Supervision and Coaching

Jesus Hernández Aristu

■ Sijtze de Roos

Abstract

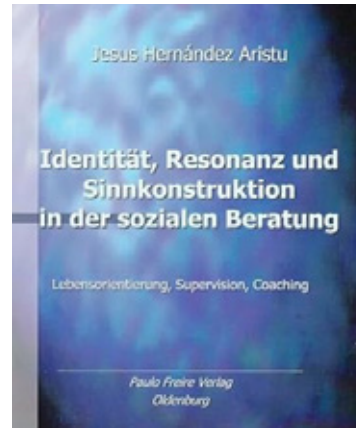
In my reading of *Identität, Resonanz und Sinnkonstruktion in der Sozialen Beratung* by Jesus Hernández Aristu, I discern three major lines of argumentation:

- identity formation is a personal as well as a communal challenge,
- responsiveness and resonance shape a world that carries us,
- sensemaking requires our full presence. Which in turn underpins identity.

These lines, which I can only briefly touch upon here, form the backbone of this valuable book.

Introduction

How are we to understand those who turn to us for counsel, guidance, and advice? How, moreover, are we to fulfill our function as supervisors and coaches in a world that seems to deny us all meaning other than compulsive consumption? Don't we live in a world that 'colonizes' our private lives and pushes us into the futile quest to become 'the best - that is to say: the most commercially useful - version of ourselves' (see Habermas, 1981)? Under such pressure, how will we come to grips with the fundamental question: "Who am I?"



(see Habermas, 1981)? Under such pressure, how will we come to grips with the fundamental question: "Who am I?"

Being and becoming in tune with the world

Jesus Hernández Aristu, supervisor, migration expert and teacher of many in our field, thoroughly confronts this question in his most recent book: *Identität, Resonanz und Sinnkonstruktion in der Sozialen Beratung* (Identity, Resonance and Sensemaking in social counseling). Step by step he examines the challenges to identity formation under often adverse societal developments that shape the material and psychological conditions of our existence. He is clearly not looking for quick fixes. Neither is he in the business to help coaches serving their coachees as 'efficiently' and 'effectively' as possible in order to satisfy their constituents. Too many of them, I fear, are trying to do just that. Far from supplying us with such easy answers, Hernández Aristu departs from fundamental questions. What is the meaning of life? What do I need to become a self that is beneficial to others, in harmony with nature and responsive to the world? Hernández Aristu makes very clear that identity formation goes beyond - to quote the Dutch psychiatrist Esther van Fenema - "just choosing a hip, socially useful identity for

yourself, like putting on a one-time plastic raincoat" (In: De Roos, 2024; 9). He aims at learning how to live the good life, as expressed in a quote of the German philosopher Hartmut Rosa: "The good life is more than the highest possible sum of moments of happiness (), it is the result of a relationship to the world characterized by () stable fields of resonance, which allow and enable subjects to feel supported, even secure, in a responsive, accommodating world" (Rosa, in Hernández Aristu; 125). According to the French philosopher Gabriel Marcel, we should understand that "I am, in so far as we are" (ibid: 73).

From identity to community

It all starts with the question: 'who am I?' an existential question that by itself is already social in nature: you learn to pose it. In order to function in a community, one has to raise a viable and reliable 'self' that is both personally and

The main functions of social counselling, coaching or supervision are to support people to recover, to reorient, to renew, to acknowledge their mistakes, their pain and their tears and - by gently laughing at themselves - to create space, to find a new place for being and becoming.

socially recognizable, even if one's identity will never cease to adapt and change. Being a person is not just a static outcome of genes, rearing and education, it is a lifelong process that depends on the presence and the acceptance of others. Interdependence is the key to personal development, to becoming. Every one of us needs to be acknowledged by others. He who is not valued by his fellow men, will he not be unable to value himself?

Such a fateful state of affairs inevitably ends up in a hell of loneliness, in communal loss, in meaninglessness. Becoming a person, therefore, is a personal challenge, a social necessity and a communal duty, including the acceptance of support from others. Conversely, supporting others in developing their personal identity is an integral part of that obligation; an obligation that contributes to the meaning and significance of sharing our lives with each other.

This, at least, is how I understand Hernández Aristu's reasoning, which he sets out in five chapters, preceded by an introduction and five examples of 'contested identities' – such as that of the multifaceted 'stranger at the gate' – and supplemented by a short epilogue, an explanatory graph and a bibliography.

Towards orientation and understanding

In his first chapter Hernández Aristu offers a concise, yet convincingly complete description of the process of identity formation. Most readers will recognize it as a handy overview of being and becoming who one can be. In his second chapter, however, he digs far deeper, analyzing individual identity formation against the background of societal pressures, such as the tension between alienation and freedom of choice. Since it is all too often only the eyes of others that shape (and alienate) you, as Bertolt Brecht once pointedly noted (ibid; 23), how much room do you need to enable you to also look at yourself through your own eyes?

Chapter three is devoted to ontological and spiritual dimensions of human existence. Hernández Aristu takes us beyond sociology to an in-depth investigation of the relations that individuals create, develop and maintain with the world. And the other way round, of course: relations are two-way phenomena. Doing so, he draws on a wide range of scientific and philosophical perspectives, such as insights of, among others, Erich Fromm and Hartmut Rosa. From all this we may, I think, conclude that there is no identity without

In his reading of Identität, Resonanz und Sinnkonstruktion in der Sozialen Beratung by Jesus Hernández Aristu, Sijtze de Roos discerns three lines of argumentation: identity formation is a personal as well as a communal duty, responsiveness and resonance shape a world that carries us, and sensemaking requires our full presence. Which in turn underpins identity. These lines form the backbone of this valuable book.

resonance. To flourish as a person among our fellow human beings, we require resonant contact with the world within and around us. It may help to always bear in mind what Gabriel Marcel has to say, or to what the South African Ubuntu philosophy teaches us: "I am because we are, we are because the earth carries us".

As I see it, Hernández Aristu further develops his approach along these lines, which I can only briefly touch upon here. Together they form the backbone of his argument, thus providing the reader with solid ground for the next steps in the quest for meaning. In his fourth chapter he first focuses on the meaning of life. Having thus prepared the ground for practical considerations, he moves on to consider how injustice, inequality or suffering and other life events affect or sometimes even deform identities. And how the many stricken, disowned and dispossessed of this world could be supported, as Viktor Frankl teaches us. Along these lines, too, orientation – or reorientation – is possible, giving us clues to better understand ourselves in relation to the world, and the world in relation to us.

How, then, could social counselling be meaningful to identity (re-)formation as a communal challenge? In the fifth and final chapter, Hernández Aristu turns to practice and describes the main functions of counselling (or coaching, supervision) as follows: supporting people to recover, to reorient, to renew, to acknowledge their mistakes, their pain and their tears. And – by gently laughing at themselves – to create space, to find a new place for being and becoming. To give this flesh and blood, he concludes his study with a telling example from his own practice

Conclusion

Hernández Aristu presents us with a scholarly study on identity formation in relation to others and to a world that will never be at rest. I value it as an important book

that coaches and supervisors are well advised to read. It is, however, not an easy text. The author takes his readers seriously and invites their unabated attention, concentration and effort. His words need - and fully deserve - to be closely studied.

The reward will be great. Close reading allows you to resonate with the valuable insights of many thinkers and practitioners Hernández Aristu incorporates in his discourse; insights that may enlighten our path through life and support us to be fully and personally present as supervisor, coach or counselor in ways that are sensitively resonant, that are meaningful to our clients and thus helping us to become who we can be. ■

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Jesus Hernández Aristu (Spain) (1943) studied philosophy, theology and pedagogy in Pamplona, followed by andragogic, educational and psychotherapeutic studies in Germany. Next to that he obtained a doctorate in Supervision from Deusto University. For over fifty years, he devoted his working life to the social domain; as supervisor, as educator, trainer, project manager, board official. He holds a professorship at Navarra Public University and serves as visiting professor at universities in Germany, Switzerland and Hungary. Initially inspired by Paulo Freire, he significantly contributed to the development of the andragogic field, both in praxis and with an impressive array of books and articles. In the mid-nineties he acted as one of the founding fathers of ANSE, together with, among many others, Heinz Kersting and Louis van Kessel. Jesus is still active, serves as a prominent member of EASC and bears the Federal Cross of Merit of the BRD.



Sijtze de Roos (Netherlands) served as LVSC- president till 2010, on the ANSE board as vice president and president till 2018 and as chief editor of ANSE Journal till 2024. He is currently active in private meta-supervision praxis and on the editorial board of the Dutch Coaching Magazine. He regularly publishes on social work methodology, supervision and coaching.

Bookreview

Supervision in social work

learning from success

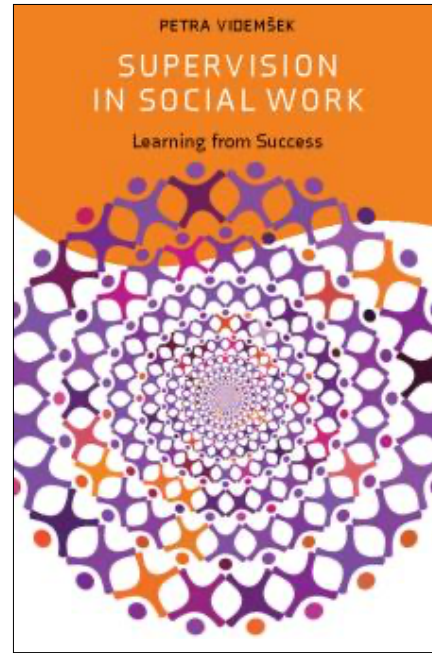
Petra Videmšek

■ Adrienne van Doorn

More and more research and healthcare are embracing the appreciated inquiry. The way it works in supervision in the field of social work, has been written about by our colleague Petra Videmšek from Slovenia.

Petra Videmšek is a professor at the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Social Work, Slovenia. She sees supervision as an obvious part of social work. How important the IIG (International Intervention Group) can be for the participants in their professional development is shown in the first pages. Petra explains that working with European colleagues has broadened her vision by seeing that supervision is carried out in many different ways. Her IIG supported her in translating her Slovenian book into English and this is the result.

“Supervision in Social Work” is a book about the importance of having professionally trained supervisors to facilitate a continuing process of learning as a social worker. Supervision, focused on solutions and success, is an enjoyable and uplifting method by which social workers are supported and empowered. The book gives a good overview of the development of supervision in Slovenia. Petra uses many theoretical



frameworks and methods in the book to substantiate the supervision needed in the field of social work.

The passion and conviction about the quality of supervision and what it can mean for social workers can be read throughout the book. For me, who focuses on supervision models and methods, it was a pleasure to read how Petra describes the development and changes that supervision has established in the last decade. It was fun to compare the “Dutch Way” and the “Slovenian Way” and to see that we as supervising professionals are mainly moving in the same direction. It made me think about how strongly supervision and social work are connected and how important this connection is for the training programme. You need teachers and an educational system that feels, knows and supports the deep learning in supervision to build and develop great professionals.

The first chapter of the book explains the purpose and necessity of supervision in social work. The need for a learning environment due to the complexity of the caseload and a rapidly changing world.

Petra emphasizes the value of supervision in helping the social workers becoming aware of their feelings about their work. In addition to help the readers comprehend the importance of reflection for the profession, she also encourages them to recognize how this promotes the growth and advancement of the social work field. Maybe the term “appreciative inquired supervision” would be a better choice for supervision than “positive supervision”. Petra explains in the second chapter how traditional supervision has changed from focusing on the problem that needs to be fixed to solution-focused work where the solution and contributing working elements are the main focus. This evolution is observed within the timeframe and the social work field.

This development, which emphasizes the positive and functional aspects, has also been observed in the Netherlands for the past ten years. Several Dutch authors wrote books dedicated to positive guiding.

*In her book **Supervision in Social work, Learning from success** Petra Videmšek argues how can supervision take care of the caretakers and prevent empathy fatigue.*

The creation of a new type of supervision interaction is the main topic of Chapter 3. By Co-creation the supervisor's position and relationship evolves. It is no longer focused on top-down supervision. Nowadays the main goals are to empower participants and support their learning so they leave the supervision session with practical insights and a sense of purpose in their work.

Chapter 4: here is the main focus on reflection. Significant in the workplace and a work-in-progress within the partnership, reflection is now a process to enhance social work practice rather than the end goal.

The relationship and level of interaction during the supervision session are the main topics of chapter 5: The circumstances, phases, and format of the supervision meeting.

Additionally, the code of ethics connects the social worker's context. It demonstrates how crucial the field's bedding of supervision is.

Chapter 6, which focuses on self-care and preventing compassion fatigue, provides context for the day-to-day work of social workers. The focus of Petra's work can be extracted here. She wants the best care and support for social workers so they can continue their work. The key strategy for resilience is supervision. As I read it, it got me to thinking that she views her job as a supervisor as "taking care of the caretaker." In her work with supervisees, Petra's personal growth is reflected in her ability to learn from success. The book is enjoyable to read because of its deep connection to social work and supervision. As European peers, we can take pride

in all of our colleagues who write, thereby demonstrating the significance of our line of work.

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Petra Videmšek (Slovenia) is a lecturer at the Faculty of Social Work in Ljubljana. She writes about her profession and the love of guiding people. She is active in several project groups mostly focussed on diversity. She travels to various countries for this purpose. She has written very diverse articles for social workers and supervisors. .

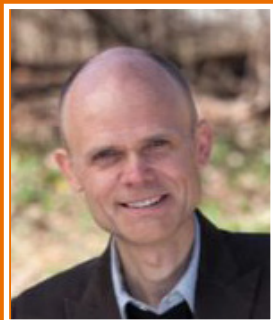


Adrianne van Doorn (Netherlands), is a drama therapist, metasupervisor, developmental actor, trainer and facilitator with professionals, teams and organisations. She wrote the '*Handbook of the art of developing*', is affiliated with the postgraduate education for psychologists and teaches supervisors. She has her own company from which she provides training in the Netherlands and other language areas. Her work focuses on the professions of the future and what organisations need to become developmental organisations.

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