



## FROM THE DESKS. . .

### Of the Co-Editors

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One of us recently engaged a Hollywood-based metaphor when describing the state of professional coaching during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. In many ways, professional coaching resembles the Wild West of old movies and early TV series. The frontier village of professional coaching is filled with interesting characters who come from many other fields, aspiring to “find gold” in the enterprise called “professional coaching.” In some instances, this “gold” is to be found buried deep in the human psyche or the dream of a more humane world community. In other instances, the “gold” looks a little less precious: improved performance by managers in a specific organization or the renewed hope that comes with increased clarity regarding one’s personal values or career aspirations. For others who are seeking the “gold” there is an even more tangible quest for income, a job, or at the very least a new strategy to use in conjunction with consulting or counseling services. These entrepreneurial and enterprising men and women have brought with them a vision, a willingness to innovate and take risks, and a capacity to embrace (not just tolerate) ambiguity, complexity and unpredictability. This issue of *IJCO* provides a brief history of and reflections offered by many of these remarkable leaders.

The frontier village has also attracted men and women who seek to bring order and stability to this community. They want it to become legitimate and a place where impact can be documented and from which a new profession—or even a new discipline—might emerge. In the old Western movies, the sheriff, a preacher or a school teacher was usually assigned the role of reformer or community-builder. In the frontier village of professional coaching, these roles have often been played by men and women who come with ample wisdom gained from their experience in other (already established) professions, academic disciplines or innovative enterprises. These remarkable men and women are dedicated to the maturation of this field, profession or discipline (“professional coaching” or whatever its eventual moniker will be). We have attempted in this issue of *IJCO* to capture something of the history of coaching as seen not just through the eyes of the entrepreneurs, but also as seen through the eyes of these reformers and community builders.

We hope that this issue of *IJCO* provides an accurate or at least compelling portrait of the frontier village called professional coaching. A village that is filled with characters, culture and conflict. A village that may be on the verge of becoming an established (though potentially less interesting) city or at least a chartered town. This village that might even become a global meeting ground for seekers of social-economic equity or a sustainable future. At the very least, we hope that we have contributed to a growing appreciation for the unique and potentially quite powerful role that can be played by professional coaching in the challenging world of our 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

Our historical perspective on professional coaching opens with a hypothetical case study offered by one of us (WB) that illustrates some of the tensions and polarities that exist in contemporary professional coaching. We then turn to a brief history of professional coaching and the diffusion of coaching philosophies and practices. This brief history and analysis is authored by Vikki Brock, who bases her work on more than 150 interviews she has conducted with many leaders in the field. The third and fourth articles in this issue of *IJCO* highlight the contributions made by four people: Sir John Whitmore, Tim Gallwey, Thomas Leonard and Laura Whitworth. One of us (DD) was able to capture an oral history directly from the first two of these leaders (Whitmore and Gallwey) through his joint interview with these two men. A narrative regarding the lives and contributions of Leonard and Whitworth is

constructed by Vikki Brock, based once again on her interviews with many of Leonard and Whitworth's colleagues (and with Whitworth before her untimely death).

From these initial articles regarding the past history and present condition of professional coaching we turn to an article that one of us (WB) wrote about the potential future of professional coaching, returning once again to the hypothetical case study offered in the first article of this issue of *IJCO*. In the sixth article, Jackson and Cox offer a broad and penetrating analysis regarding the potential future of professional coaching as a field that is built on a strong, philosophical foundation. Jackson and Cox identify the major contributors to this philosophical foundation, focusing on the epistemology of Socrates, Locke, Hume, Kant, and Dewey. Linda Page makes a similar appeal in the seventh article regarding the future of professional coaching. She turns to the contributions made by several different disciplines (including the newly emerging field of social neurobiology) in building the foundation of professional coaching and addressing five fundamental coaching questions. Finally, one of us (DD) provides a summary analysis regarding the present and future state of professional coaching, identifying four domains of knowledge and drawing important distinctions between “coaches,” “coaching” and the “coaching profession.”

This issue of *IJCO* concludes with two additional contributions that continue the traditions in this journal of providing reviews of recent coaching-related books by senior practitioners and peer-reviewed articles by practitioners and researchers from throughout the world. In this issue, Donna Karlin provides a review of Tony Simons' *The Integrity Dividend: Leading by the Power of Your Word*. Our colleague from Mexico, Alberto Beuchot, concludes this issue of *IJCO* with a description of his powerful ARC Ontological Coaching Process—a set of three coaching steps that moves coachees in an organizational setting back from the periphery of their lives to the Center.

We welcome you to this account of life in the frontier village of professional coaching. As a reader, you might be someone who has lived in this village for many years or someone who recently arrived in the village. You might instead be a visitor to the village and are curious about what animates the commitment and courage to be found among those who inhabit this particular corner of 21<sup>st</sup> Century civilization. Whoever you are – welcome. We wish you a pleasant and insight-filled perusal of this village's fascinating historical archives.

William Bergquist

David Drake

## Themes for 2009 and 2010 Issues of *IJCO*

**The *IJCO* Editorial Board has selected the following themes:**

### **2009**

**Issue Two:** Organizational Coaching and Communications: The Leading Edge

**Issue Three:** Coaching to the Unconscious: Implications and Challenges for Organizational Coaches

**Issue Four:** Organizational Coaching in Financial Institutions

### **2010**

**Issue One:** Organizational Coaching and Organizational Development/Organizational Effectiveness

**Issue Two:** Organizational Coaching to Create a Coaching Culture

**Issue Three:** Organizational Coaching in Health Care

**Issue Four:** Organizational Coaching and Change