Proceedings of the First ICF Coaching Research Symposium

November 12, 2003
Denver, Colorado USA

Edited by Irene F. Stein
and Laura A. Belsten

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A Message from the ICF Board President

I'd like to offer huge congratulations to the brilliant team that put together the first-ever ICF Coaching Research Symposium. The timing is perfect for this exciting new initiative, and this effort fills a need that becomes increasingly clear each week as we receive inquiries from the media, corporations and organizations, academic institutions, students, coaches and potential clients. The ICF's R&D initiative is near and dear to my heart—a passion of mine—and I am delighted to be supporting this multi-faceted effort. The shared wisdom represented by contributors, organizers, presenters and attendees will contribute to excellence in coaching and success for coaches and their clients.

The ICF is committed to be a world-renowned repository for research on professional coaching. This parallels and reinforces ICF initiatives in support of the gold standard for coaches—honoring past, present and future efforts.

- From the near past: we recognize the importance of collecting, organizing, cataloging, publicizing and disseminating research that has been completed.
- For the present: we support research in progress and invite our members to participate.
- In the future: we identify needs, set priorities and lay the foundations for future research.

There is a strong need for quantifiable results, specification of the benefits of coaching, case studies that include a wide variety of coaching situations, and, above all, the continuation of rational discourse about coaches and the coaching profession.

This Coaching Research Symposium has a very direct positive effect on the ICF's most important initiatives, and helps us move forward with ever-increasing credibility, respect, and support for our high standards. Just a small sample of areas that will be enriched by research initiatives:

- In corporations, where leaders, managers and employees are working hard to create workplace environments that encourage loyalty and trust. The increased use of coaching and coaches is not an accident, and we welcome insightful measurement of results.
- For the public, whose trust has been shaken. They are demanding higher standards of competency and ethics from their professionals and professional bodies.
- Credentials and Ethical Standards. ICF credentials and the ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct are becoming the gold standard for public trust...and a model for our path to becoming a self-regulating profession. How can this be measured?
- For statistical purposes. We have so many important questions about professional specialties, niches, client types, situations, numbers of coaches, income, education, etc. Professional coaching is an ever-changing universe…so our research must remain ongoing.
- And, above all, we are a global profession and a global organization. With ICF members in more than 33 countries, we face the challenge of creating flexible models that support and nurture members and chapters around the world. The recent

creation of the ICF Blue Ribbon Global Commission addresses international opportunities and concerns, and the need for further research.

I thank you all for your contributions to these important efforts.

Best regards,
Judy Feld, MCC
ICF President, 2003

Judy Feld, MCC, is the 2003 ICF President, and has served on the Board since 1998. Judy launched her coaching business in 1995, with an international practice serving a wide variety of executives, business owners and professional people, including corporate and professional groups. She is co-author of the book SmartMatch Alliances, *www.coachingsuccess.com, and co-founder of Coaching Success TeleForums.*

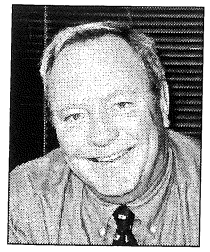
A Message from the ICF Executive Director

The First ICF Coaching Research Symposium and the publication of these *Proceedings* are important milestones in the continuing process of developing and enhancing coaching as an independent profession. As with similar professions, defining a specific Body of Knowledge and independent, reliable research for coaching is critical.

ICF's Research and Development Committee is working diligently to position ICF as the coaching profession's leading research advocate and as the place where coaches, scholars, and other interested people come for independent, reliable research.

I congratulate the scholars and coaches who worked together to produce the Symposium and these *Proceedings*. You have made a significant contribution to the growing body of coaching knowledge.

Daniel A. Martinage, CAE



ICF's Executive Director Daniel A. Martinage is a Certified Association Executive (CAE) with more than 23 years experience. Dan is responsible for overseeing all management and operational issues at ICF including the association's $2.5 million budget and eight professional staff. ICF currently has 7000 members and 146 chapters operating in 33 countries.

A Message from the ICF Research & Development Committee Chair

It is a wonderfully exciting moment in the development of coaching research. The first International Coach Federation Coaching Research Symposium, which was the occasion for this collection of papers, brought together a growing community of academics and practitioners seeking to enhance our understanding of the process and effects of coaching.

These *Proceedings* include the thoughtful submissions presented at the Symposium. The very publication of these *Proceedings* is further evidence of the keen interest in coaching. It reflects the recognition by the ICF, on behalf of its member coaches, that there is much to be learned by applying formal research methods to the study of coaching.

I acknowledge the development team that has planned the Symposium, published these *Proceedings* and all those who submitted materials for this volume. As this volume is the formal *Conference Proceedings*, I also want to put on the record the very special recognition due Irene Stein for creating the Symposium (and these *Proceedings*), and for her leadership in bringing about their successful fulfillment.

I thank the International Coach Federation for its generous sponsorship of the Coaching Research Symposium. Such support puts ICF wholly on its mission, "To be the global forum for the art and science of coaching."

Building community has been a fundamental goal of our efforts. I would like to invite participants of the Symposium and readers of these *Proceedings* to join the ICF in its efforts. Innovation and excellence in coaching will emerge from the dialogue between researchers and practitioners. Specifically, I invite you all to visit the research area of the ICF website at http://www.coach-federation.org/coaching_research and help us expand our offerings.

Thank you for being part of this special and growing community of researchers and coaches.

Richard Zackon
Chairman, ICF Research & Development Committee

Richard Zackon has come to coaching after stops in academia, advertising, and the law. He has been coaching since 2000 specializing in work and business. He currently chairs the ICF Research & Development Committee. His professional mission is to support people in being productive, joyful and satisfied in their work.

First ICF Coaching Research Symposium, November 2003, viii-xii

Introduction:
Beginning a Promising Conversation

Irene F. Stein

As I write this introduction, the *First International Coach Federation Coaching Research Symposium,* scheduled for November 12, 2003 in Denver, Colorado, is still two months away. And yet, by providing a focal point for the coaching research community, the promise of its coming arrival has already made an appreciable impact. Since the start of planning for the Symposium last January, coaching researchers and scholar-practitioners from around the world have begun to find each other and develop a community that did not previously exist.

The need for such a gathering is readily apparent for anyone who, like me, has tried to find where the scholarly conversations about coaching were taking place. I now kid with the chair of my dissertation committee that instead of doing a literature search, I invited coaching researchers to come to me—by organizing a gathering within two hours of my home. And now I, like the rest of the Symposium attendees (whether presenting their own research or not), look forward to the conversations we will have when we are gathered together in person, and afterward as we continue to converse through personal correspondence, group calls, and through the written word.

As the opening messages in this volume attest, the sponsorship of the International Coach Federation (ICF) of this Coaching Research Symposium marks the increasing awareness of the ICF, and the professional coaches it represents, of a need for research to provide quantifiable results as to the benefits of coaching. For those of us in the academic community, we also see the need for further definition of the theoretical foundations for the concept of coaching itself. Without an accepted body of theory to distinguish coaching from similar practices such as therapy, teaching, mentoring, and consulting, we are left with the rather fuzzy observation of "well, I know it when I see it." More definition is needed for meaningful research to occur.

Certainly, a field of *coaching studies* would draw its roots from many existing bodies of theory—just as most new fields arise from previous knowledge. And the application of coaching theory can be very broad, encompassing such diverse practices as "executive coaching," "spiritual coaching," and using coaching skills as a parent. Figure 1 is a model that depicts the trunk of a tree as the set of theories and practices that is common to different coaching applications. I see that trunk as being what "we know when we see it." Though I would define the field of *coaching studies* as the whole tree from just below ground-level, a big part of our work as researchers and scholar-practitioners is to define the trunk that is supporting the whole tree. The stronger the trunk, the more bountiful the branches can become.

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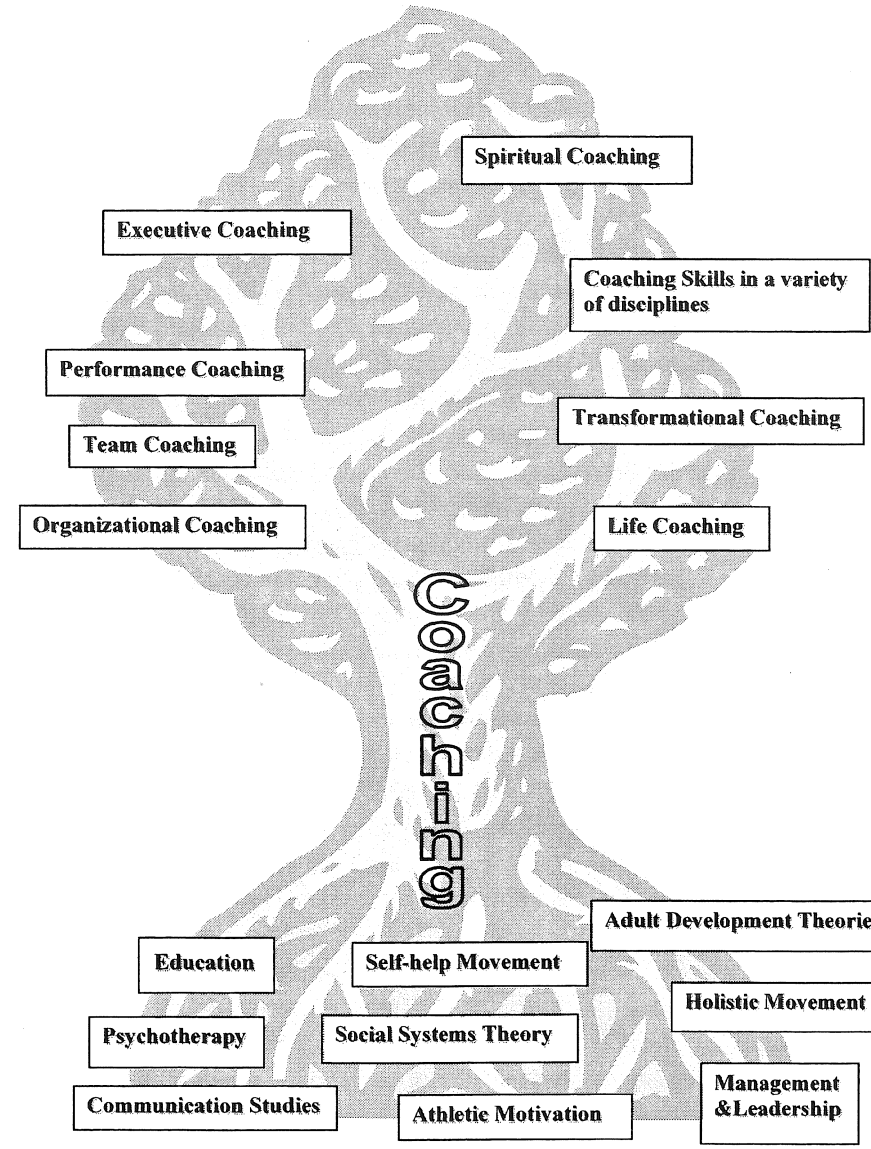

Figure: The field of *Coaching Studies* draws from many "roots" and supports many "branches"

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Many of the papers included in this volume address coaching's theoretical underpinnings, some by tying coaching to existing bodies of knowledge, some by developing original models in an attempt to distill the "essence" of coaching—defining the trunk of the tree. Taken together, these papers contribute to an interesting conversation that will continue well into the future.

Other papers focus on constructs that are well-established in other contexts and apply those constructs to the coaching field—delineating aspects of the trunk of the tree. These constructs include use of metaphor, collaboration, dialogue, and archetypes. Still other papers in this volume focus on effectiveness and outcomes of the coaching process. These papers are generally situated in a single branch of the "tree" of Figure 1, and yield valuable information about coaching in a particular context.

Dr. Anthony Grant, the Symposium's keynote speaker, and the author of the keynote paper in this volume, writes eloquently of the need to delineate coaching and develop a theoretical framework. His paper summarizes past research and the current state of coaching research, while his call for a profession of coaching "scientist-practitioners," speaks to the future of coaching research. A comprehensive bibliography, compiled by Tony, of coach-specific research papers from the peer-reviewed behavioral sciences database PsychInfo is included as an appendix of his keynote paper. Tony speaks from the experience of being the founder and Director of the world's first university-based Coaching Psychology Unit at the School of Psychology, in the University of Sydney, Australia, and of being the sponsor of *The First Australian Conference on Evidence-Based Coaching* this past July. We feel fortunate to be able to have Tony as our keynote speaker, and I highly recommend his paper in this volume as setting the stage for the rest of the symposium papers.

In planning this Symposium we set out to "cast a wide net," including as broad a set of submissions as we could entice. It was our contention that there were a number of researchers working in the coaching studies field who did not know of each others' existence. Since the field is not yet well-defined, we had little criteria for excluding any serious scholar who thought they should be included, and we sought inclusion to create as lively a discussion as possible. The papers included in this volume are authored by the speakers and poster presenters selected due to their scholarly contribution to coaching research.

The main objectives we set out for the Symposium were:

- To provide a venue for researchers to showcase their work;
- To build community among researchers and promote sharing for the growth of coaching research;
- To build a stronger bridge between the coaching research community and practitioners (particularly the ICF); and
- To set a precedent for the presentation of excellence in the coaching research field.

To best meet those objectives in a one-day format, the Symposium includes a keynote address, two separate panel discussions, six speaker presentations, a group discussion, and poster presentations that are set up before, during and after the Symposium. Speaker presenters were expected to submit papers for these *Proceedings*, but all the poster presenters were also invited to do so. All authors were asked to limit their work to around 3000 words.

While the six speakers were chosen by a blind peer-review process, these *Proceedings* should not be considered a "refereed" work. There is a wide range of scholarly experience

represented in these pages, and readers can use their own judgment about the scholarliness and/or the usefulness of each entry. That said, I am very pleased at the offerings in this volume, as well as the collection of presenters that will appear at the Symposium. The reader, whether an academician, a practitioner or both, will find something of value in each paper presented here. This volume is proof that the coaching research field has a wealth of talented scholars who are making important contributions.

As a newer field, the coaching research community has the opportunity to give many who have something to say a platform to say it. Authors don't yet have to be "in," nor have impeccable credentials to be published, as is the case in many, more established, fields. While we do intend to keep setting higher standards for ourselves in terms of rigorousness of thought, clarity of writing, and the careful planning, conducting and presentation of research, we also have an opportunity to build a research community full of practitioners—people who actually coach for a living. And since we are a *coaching* research community, those of us who are more experienced can use our practical skills in assisting newer authors to conform their work to a more scholarly standard. That was the intention surrounding the creation of this volume, and I hope for that spirit to remain for future projects.

A project such as the *First ICF Coaching Research Symposium* cannot be undertaken without a lot of volunteer support. I would like to acknowledge first the ICF, and in particular the ICF R&D chair, Richard Zackon, for his support in getting the Symposium started and in supporting the ongoing effort. Diane Stober, submissions chair and backup lead organizer, John Bennett, program chair, and Ada Gonzalez, logistics chair, have been the key "go-to" people on the Symposium Organizing Committee. I especially appreciate their compassion and wisdom as they go about the tasks necessary to produce such an event. I know I could not have done my part without their support. This group has set a tone of kindness in excellence that I hope will continue as the coaching research community grows and formalizes itself through further symposiums and publications.

Many others have volunteered to help in preparing for, and work the day of, the Symposium and I thank them for their time and energy. Also, ICF Executive Director Dan Martinage, the ICF staff, the ICF Board of Directors, and the 2003 ICF Annual International Conference Planning Committee have been extremely generous in their assistance and we could not have produced this Symposium without their help.

Peer-reviewing requires many experienced scholars as volunteers—the submissions and reviewing process to select speakers and poster presenters required nine qualified reviewers. For these *Proceedings*, I had help with the editing process from Laura Belsten, as well as others on the organizing committee. One thing I learned was that it takes many sets of eyes to edit and to proofread submissions. I am grateful for everyone's help in that regard. The thoughtful, coach-like, comments by reviewers and editors, though more time-consuming to compose than terse, deprecating, remarks, helped to train us all in the craft of scholarly writing.

This volume is organized according to the author's role in the Symposium. The keynote paper is first. Those that were invited to give live presentations are listed under "Speakers' Papers," while papers from poster presenters are in their own separate section. A few poster presenters did not submit papers and only the abstract of their presentation is included in this volume. Within each section, papers are organized alphabetically according to the lead author's last name.

While it is important to me to publish a volume that is free from spelling, grammatical, punctuation, and typographical errors, I am humbled by hard that is to do. Errors and inconsistencies in those areas can be attributed to my own mediocre ability to edit and proofread. Otherwise, the work presented by the authors is their own and they retain the copyright to their own material. Please respect that copyright by properly citing the authors' work where appropriate, and by obtaining permission to use or distribute large portions of any paper in this volume. Each author has included contact information for that purpose. The ICF retains copyright to the volume as a whole and will continue to sell these *Proceedings* from their website at www.coach-federation.org as long as there is a perceived demand.

In planning for this Coaching Research Symposium it was tempting to picture academic scholars, high in their ivory towers, looking for a place to present and publish coaching research. What we have found, however, are researchers who are very much grounded in the practice of coaching—indeed the "scientist-practitioner" of Tony Grant's keynote paper—which makes the site of this first Symposium, the "mile-high" city of Denver situated at the foot of the rugged Rocky Mountains, all the more fitting. Here, Symposium attendees will find that the air is thin and the rarefied, yet informal, atmosphere conducive to grounded, yet enlightening, conversation.

I expect we will be "drinking from a fire-hose" in trying to absorb all the presentations and discussions while connecting with so many newly found colleagues—all in a single day. And yet, we will also leave that day feeling thirsty—not only from the altitude, but because there is so much more we can learn from each other. I expect readers of this volume to also feel thirsty as the papers included just begin the coaching research conversation.

And what a promising conversation it is!!

Irene F. Stein, ACC is currently enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Human and Organizational Systems through Fielding Graduate Institute and combines her academic studies with her professional coaching experience to research and develop coaching theories and practices. Irene was the Lead Organizer and Proceedings *editor of the* First ICF Coaching Research Symposium *in 2003. She can be reached at: irenestein@att.net*

First ICF Coaching Research Symposium, November 2003, 1-19

KEYNOTE PAPER:

Keeping Up with the Cheese! Research as a Foundation for Professional Coaching of the Future

Anthony M. Grant

The next five years (2003-2008) will be a critical and a fascinating time for professional coaches. The coaching industry has outgrown its existing theoretical and empirical research knowledge base. Those who employ coaches and potential students of coaching are becoming more sophisticated and better informed, demanding evidence for the effectiveness of different types of coaching, and seeking an articulation of the underpinning theoretical frameworks. Consequently, many professional coaches have moved away from reliance on the proprietary coaching systems taught in many commercial coach training schools, and are seeking to work within the scientist-practitioner model as both producers and consumers of coaching-related research. This is a fascinating time, because research into coaching offers far greater opportunities than just calculating effectiveness or return on investment. Evidence-based coaching interventions are an ideal means for investigating the personal and systemic mechanisms and processes involved in real-life human change in individuals and organisations. Furthermore, the increase in coaching-related research marks a new stage in the maturation of the coaching industry, and the adoption of the scientist-practitioner model will be a critical factor as coaching seeks to further establish itself as a respected, cross-disciplinary means of facilitating human and organisational change. This paper discusses these issues, presents an overview of the key themes and emergent patterns in the peer-reviewed literature on coaching since 1937, and highlights the relevance of research to evidence-based coaching practice.

Introduction

Coaching is at a cross roads. Someone's moved the cheese again! Coaching is changing. There are signs that the coaching industry may have reached a new and vital stage in its maturation. On one hand, many coaches whose primary training was in the proprietary coaching systems taught in many of the commercial coach training schools, are now seeking to ground their practice in a theoretically-grounded evidence-based approach. And on the other hand, individuals whose primary training was in evidence-based organisational and human change, are stepping forward as professional coaches. In addition, other change agents from a wide variety of adult education, business and management disciplines are declaring an interest in coaching and working as professional coaches.

At the same time consumers of coaching services have grown progressively more sophisticated. Human Resource professionals who employ coaches for their organisations are now often well-informed, and coach assessment and interview processes for corporate coaching assignments have grown more demanding. Individuals who are seeking coach

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