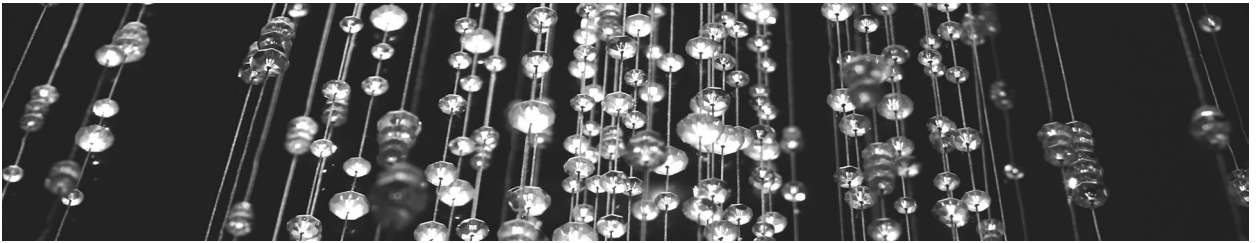
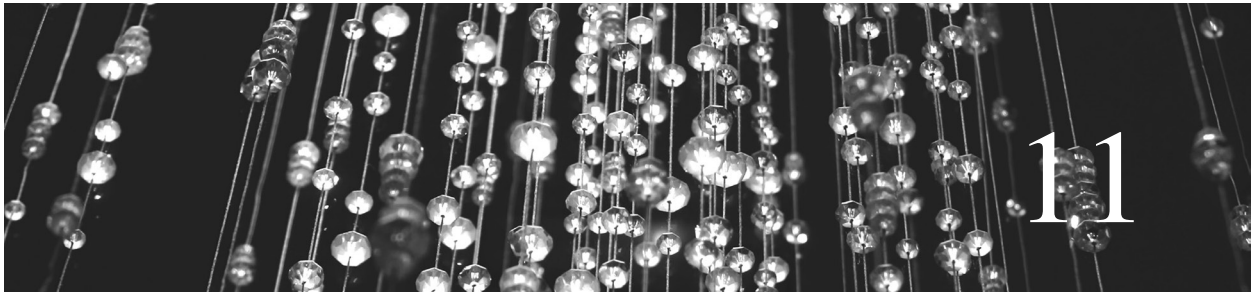


PART II

# Coaching as a Process







# The Coaching Relationship

Erik de Haan and Judie Gannon

## INTRODUCTION

The coaching relationship can be seen to sit centre stage in the practice and research on coaching in accordance with the value we place as human beings on our relationships and need to relate to others (Du Toit, 2014; De Haan & Sills, 2012). Arguably the growing importance of the coaching relationship is particularly apparent where wider societal changes have resulted in less intimacy and stability in personal relationships and the efficacy of the contiguous field of psychotherapy supports the role of professional helping relationships (De Haan & Sills, 2010; Palmer & McDowall, 2010). It is pertinent at this stage to reflect on what might be meant by the term relationship. Jowett, O’Broin and Palmer (2010 p. 20) define a relationship as ‘a situation in which two people’s feelings, thoughts and behaviours are mutually and causally interdependent.’ They also suggest that our concepts of relationships mean they are dynamic, change over time and consist of the actions of both individuals. The quality of

relationships is determined by the interrelations and interactions between the two people concerned and the interdependence they experience (Nelson-Jones, 2006).

Compared with other developmental relationships (such as mentor or sponsor), the coaching relationship is argued to be under-researched (Stern & Stout-Rostron, 2013; Rock & Garavan, 2006; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). As such the foundation for this chapter is based upon the recognition that the coaching relationship stands alongside other relationships which aim to develop ourselves and others, and include the “assessment, challenge and support,” necessary for development’ (Rock & Garavan, 2006 p.331). The ‘infinite variability’ of developmental relationships, as identified in McCauley and Douglas’s (1998) terminology, recognises the possibilities that such relationships may be one-off or long term, formal or informal, initiated by individuals or organisations, or a combination of the two. In addition, they are seen to provide direct or indirect feedback, challenge through the provision of alternative

viewpoints, offer provocation to initiate stretch, and support through opportunities to talk and explore. Fundamentally, it is important to acknowledge the variation in features of developmental relationships.

O'Broin and Palmer (2010a, 2010b) explore the coaching relationship from an interpersonal perspective and draw on three areas of helping relationships; counselling, sports psychology and friendship, to identify distinctiveness or 'unique commonalities' of coaching relationships. They deploy Cavanagh and Grant's (2006) argument of the coaching relationship 'as a complex and adaptive system' and suggest that while all forms of relationships will have differentiating features those associated with the coaching relationship centre around the use of the self of the coach and the commitment of the coachee (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010a; 2010b p.12). Ostensibly this recognises that the relationship sits amongst other key variables in the coaching such as the coaching environment, coaches' approaches and training and clients' readiness to engage in coaching.

Following on from this introduction the first part of this chapter will explore some of the key themes which emerge from reviewing the literature surrounding the coaching relationship, namely developing rapport, the role of trust and transparency, commitment, stages of the coaching relationship, as well as attributes of the coach and coachee, which shape the relationship (Gan & Chong, 2015; Reissner & Du Toit, 2011; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). These features are all influential in the quality of the coaching relationship and the coaching experience itself but may not lend themselves easily to being researched. By drawing upon empirical studies from the key contexts of executive, employee and sports coaching (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck, 2014) this chapter will evaluate our existing knowledge of the coaching relationship and the challenges for future research and developing coaching practice. Consolidated tables (see Tables 11.1 and 11.2) have been developed to provide an overview of some of the recent empirical enquiries into coaching across these three contexts.

## FEATURES OF THE COACHING RELATIONSHIP

### 1. *Stages in the Coaching Relationship*

It is important to recognise that while there are themes which persist across the time a coach and coachee work together some of these themes demand specific attention towards the beginning and end of the relationship, or even at the beginning and end of each coaching session (Cox, 2010; Ianiro et al., 2013). While models with a range of different stages or phases are evident in the literature (Natale & Diamante, 2005; Starr, 2007; Cox, 2013) there is widespread acknowledgement of the importance of focusing upon the coaching relationship early on. As Gyllensten and Palmer (2007 p. 173) argue from their findings 'The relationship was the basis upon which the coaching was built and without a relationship the coaching would not be as effective as it could be.'

Coaching clients report a range of concerns prior to and in early sessions of their coaching relationships, including apprehension, scepticism and fear of their issues being taken seriously (Bluckert, 2005; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Gregory & Levy, 2010; Ianiro et al., 2013). In anticipation of handling such concerns Hardingham (2006) discusses how coaches might handle their clients' fears, specifically in terms of being aware of the potential for coaching to question coachees' competence, real desires and authenticity. A recent study (Ianiro et al., 2013) using an innovative mixed method approach, identified that in the first coaching session the coach's interpersonal behaviour influenced outcome variables as rated by client's ratings of goal attainment. Such insights highlight, the authors argue, the value of the coach displaying confidence and credibility, developing heightened awareness of their verbal and non-verbal behaviours and tackling interactional disruptions specifically in first coaching sessions.

There are, however, also arguments for coaches being aware of these concerns throughout the coaching relationship and indeed within each coaching session (Cox, 2010; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015), critically at the beginning and end of each session when goals are identified and actions agreed to (Ianiro et al., 2013). Indeed an overall goal focused (and task focused) approach to the coaching relationship was seen to reap coaching success in recent work by Grant (2014). These sections of coaching sessions arguably involve critical bridges between the coaching and the client's and coach's worlds and as such seal the credibility, commitment, trust, transparency and rapport significant for maintaining a quality coaching relationship. Surprisingly there have been few investigations into the issues associated with the concluding of coaching relationships. Cox (2010) draws on the fields of psychotherapy, mentoring and a business-to-business relationship model, as well as mini case studies, to explore the ending of coaching relationships. As part of this analysis she highlights how despite the knowledge that the relationship will come to an end, as typically established in initial or revised contracting, both coachee and coach may experience relatively intense feelings. The value of implementing a review stage in the coaching may at least mediate the potential for negative feelings, such as self-blame or sadness where the relationship has to be ended prematurely. As Cox (2010 p.179) argues 'If the ending is not discussed, planned and celebrated and the relationship is left to fade or to end abruptly without closure, then the potential for marking achievement and fully integrating changes may be lost.' The impact for coachee and coach of such lost opportunities could clearly impact on subsequent development activities and coaching relationships.

## **2. Bonds and Rapport**

As shown in Tables 11.1 and 11.2 the bonds or rapport between coachees and coaches are key features of coaching relationship research,

though there may be preferences for different terms depending on context. For example, the athlete-coach relationship in the sports coaching literature, has widely adopted 'closeness' as a representation of this affective aspect of the coaching relationship. Boyce et al. (2010 p.917) define rapport as 'about reducing the differences between the coach and client and building on similarities.' Coach and coachee attributes may have a role to play here, and are certainly topical within the empirical literature, as discussed in a later section of this chapter. However, rapport behaviours are typically identified as being at ease with the other person, showing warmth, genuine interest, mutual attentiveness, and positivity. Overall enhanced rapport means better outcomes satisfaction, compliance, greater self-disclosure and retention within the coaching relationship (Boyce et al., 2010; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007).

Similarly, Gan and Chong (2015, p.479) summarise rapport as 'mutual understanding, liking and agreement between coach and coachee that tend to reduce the differences between them and allow them to recognize, appreciate and respect each other.' Supporting the arguments of Ianiro et al. (2013) that where coaches are aware of how to ameliorate differences between themselves and their coaches, without compromising their own authenticity and credibility, good connections can emerge from cool beginnings. Specific behavioural features of rapport and bonds are said to include trust, listening, rapport and openness and management of disruptions (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010a, 2010b; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). However, bonds in the coaching relationship have been recognised as being viewed differently by participants (De Haan et al., 2011; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007). In their qualitative study O'Broin and Palmer (2010c) identified that there were a variety of approaches to achieving the quality and types of bond in the coaching relationship, but that these differences were not accountable just to coach and coachee respondents. They also highlighted how different types of coaching require different coaching relationship depths

and qualities (Sun et al., 2013; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010c; Ives, 2008) and perhaps most importantly of all that each coachee requires a unique tailoring of the bond in their coaching relationship.

Another aspect of this theme of rapport is that it can be seen to be developing or diminishing all the time and needs reflection and ongoing investment to maintain it (Hardingham, 2006; Ianiro et al., 2013; Sun et al., 2013). As such many have reflected upon the interdependent nature of the coaching relationship where collaboration and reciprocity are evident in this two-way process of respect and support. The transient nature of this connection between coach and coachee occurs at emotional, cognitive and behavioural levels providing researchers with a challenging dynamic to explore and understand (Jowett, Kanakoglu & Passmore, 2012; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010c).

No discussion of the bond in the coaching relationship can pass without recognition of the intellectual and empirical debt owed to the psychotherapeutic literature where the bond is one of the key constructs in the working alliance (Bordin, 1979; de Haan, 2008a; O’Broin & Palmer, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). A more detailed discussion on the working alliance and its role in enhancing our investigation and understanding of the coaching relationship, or coaching alliance, is explored later in this chapter.

### **3. Trust and Transparency**

There is widespread support and evidence for the argument that trust forms a critical element in the quality of the coaching relationship (Du Toit, 2014; Cox, 2012; De Haan, 2008b). Boyce et al. (2010 p. 918) argue that trust is the ‘mutual confidence that supports the client’s willingness to be open, honest and vulnerable and allows the coach to be supportive, non-judgemental and challenging.’ Boyce et al. (2010) identified trust, along with rapport, as one of the significant predictors of satisfaction and utility of the coaching

relationship in relation to leadership coaching. They argue the presence of trust allows sharing of sensitive, personal information and means coach and client are more likely to engage in risk taking behaviours to facilitate the change desired. Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) highlighted trust as a vital part of the relationship, assuring confidentiality which allows the coachee to let their guard down and engage fully in the developmental experience. Likewise O’Broin and Palmer (2010b) recognise that trust affords safety and security, helps establish and manage boundaries and facilitate open and honest dialogue.

The origins of trust in the coaching relationship emerge from the empathetic understanding condition associated with ‘the person-centred approach of Carl Rogers (1967), who argued trust is a vital component in such a relationship’ (Du Toit, 2014 p. 70). Trust is fundamental to achieving the desired levels of openness and transparency (O’Broin & Palmer, 2010c). De Haan (2008a) and De Haan & Nieß (2012) indicate openness is crucial when dealing with critical moments in coaching and successful coaching is dependent on a strong trusting relationship rather than the tools and techniques of the coach.

Gyllensten and Palmer (2007 p.174) emphasise the role of transparency alongside trust in their study of the coaching relationship or as they argue the ‘relationship was dependent on trust and improved by transparency.’ The value of the coach being transparent and explaining the coaching process assisted coachees settle into the relationship from the beginning and work towards their desired outcomes. Transparency also helps reduce uncertainty (Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007; Gan and Chong, 2015). However, Gan and Chong’s (2015) study also emphasises the damage which can be done when there are violations of trust and transparency in the coaching relationship, which can typically result in resistance to change and lower satisfaction. This study of executive coaching in Malaysia did, however, question the role of trust suggesting it was not significantly associated with coaching effectiveness.

**Table 11.1 Key recent empirical studies of the coaching relationship**

<i>Authors, year Outline</i>	<i>Research Method</i>	<i>Overview of study</i>	<i>Key Findings on the coaching relationship</i>	<i>Key observations</i>
<b>Gyllenstein &amp; Palmer, 2007</b> An analysis of the coaching relationship	Interpretative phenomenological analysis approach 9 participants from two organisations – UK and Scandinavian	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Four themes emerged: stress, confidence, the coaching relationship and coaching as staff investment</li> <li>Coaching relationship – value of trust and transparency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust as a foundation for the coaching relationship</li> <li>Transparency – explaining process and theory: ‘The relationship was the basis upon which the coaching was built’</li> </ul>	Number of sessions influences development of coachee. Highlights the value of a coach’s ability to facilitate a good working relationship.
<b>Baron &amp; Morin, 2009</b> Coach’s skills and the coaching relationship	31 coach–coachee dyads Surveys before, during and after intervention using scales from coachee self-efficacy, Working Alliance Inventory, Learning Transfer System Inventory & HR dept data on sessions – North American organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores coaching relationship and self-efficacy of coachee in relation to: Coach’s relational skills (empathy, respect and trust); Coach’s communication skills (questioning, reformulation, reinforcement) and their ability to facilitate learning and results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Relationship plays a mediating role between coaching received and development of coachees’ self-efficacy</li> <li>Quality of relationship correlates with client self-efficacy</li> <li>Only coach’s ability to facilitate learning and results explained variance in coaching relationship</li> </ul>	Successful coaching relationship is critical to coaching success. Value of matching based on not-similar or complementary learning styles. Advocates training to support rapport, trust and commitment development where compatibility cannot be achieved.
<b>Boyce, Jackson &amp; Neal, 2010</b> Matching criteria and relationship processes (rapport, trust and commitment) impact on coaching outcomes	74 coach–client pairs in US military academy leadership coaching program Leadership questionnaire plus items on commonality, credibility, rapport, trust and commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Aspects of coaching relationship may mediate match factors (such as credibility, commonality and compatibility)</li> <li>Explores links between match, relationship and outcomes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>More effective relationships between coaches and clients with complementary learning styles</li> <li>Rapport, trust, commitment and collaboration as key processes in coaching relationship</li> <li>Higher commitment leads to performance improvements</li> </ul>	Highlights issues of managing accurate feedback from employee coaches. Advocates further research exploring variables (supervisor characteristics and behaviours, subordinate characteristics and contextual features), which impact relationship quality.
<b>Gregory &amp; Levy, 2010</b> Employee coaching relationships; construct clarity and measurement	Developed and deployed PQEQR after feedback from 25 subject experts. 2 phases of refinement – 158 useable responses. Plus online survey of 556 employees in multinational manufacturing organisation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Clarifies the employee coaching relationship construct</li> <li>Develops a measure for the Perceived Quality of the Employee Coaching Relationship (PQEQR)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Initially based upon 5 dimensions: distinctiveness of the relationship, genuineness, effective communication, comfort with the relationship and facilitating development. Distinctiveness as a dimension is later removed</li> </ul>	(Continued)

(Continued)

**Table 11.1 Continued**

<i>Authors, year Outline</i>	<i>Research Method</i>	<i>Overview of study</i>	<i>Key Findings on the coaching relationship</i>	<i>Key observations</i>
<b>O'Broin &amp; Palmer, 2010c</b> Coaching relationship formation – coach and coachee perspectives	12 interviews (6 coaches and 6 coachees). Repertory grid interview method used and content analysis undertaken UK setting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Qualities which coaches and coachees prioritise in the formation of coaching relationships</li> <li>How these qualities contribute to the relationship</li> <li>Views on adaptation of coach to individual coachee</li> <li>Nature of the internal coaching relationship as experienced by coaches and coachees</li> </ul>	<p>Three main themes emerged of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach attitudes and characteristics</li> <li>Bond and engagement – linked to engagement and disengagement/disruptions</li> <li>Collaboration – reciprocity and respect in line with co-creation</li> <li>Highlights characteristics of the coach and the client as critical for trust</li> <li>Trust facilitates ability to work at psychological level and use of challenge</li> <li>Highlights value clients place upon the relationship with the coach and coach's qualities</li> <li>Listening, understanding and encouragement</li> <li>Limited distinction between specific interventions of the same coach</li> </ul>	<p>Coach's attitudes and self-awareness as well as ability to adapt to client seen as crucial.</p> <p>Value of trust, openness and transparency.</p> <p>Differing perceptions of collaboration and bonding.</p> <p>Approaching the coaching relationship on an equal footing is suggested.</p> <p>Broad range of techniques is identified as being helpful.</p> <p>Therefore ability of coaches to deploy many techniques alongside and the development of empathic listening skills are emphasised.</p>
<b>Machin, 2010</b> The internal coaching relationship	6 coach and coachee in-depth interviews during mid phase of programme. Used Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores what executive coaching clients find helpful in terms of their coaching experiences</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Highlights value clients place upon the relationship with the coach and coach's qualities</li> <li>Listening, understanding and encouragement</li> <li>Limited distinction between specific interventions of the same coach</li> </ul>	<p>Broad range of techniques is identified as being helpful.</p> <p>Therefore ability of coaches to deploy many techniques alongside and the development of empathic listening skills are emphasised.</p>
<b>De Haan, Culpin &amp; Curd, 2011</b> Helpfulness for executive coaching clients	Online survey 71 responses from executive coaching clients from initial session and six months later. Items included demographics, coaching information, Coaching Behaviours questionnaire items, Learning styles inventory and open ended questions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores the Perceived Quality of Employee Coaching relationship against four supervisor/coach variables: transformational leadership, trust, interactive empathy, emotional intelligence, implicit person theory and organisational feedback environment</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Employee coaching relationships associated with individual consideration, positive feedback environment, building trust and empathy</li> </ul>	<p>Highlights importance of developing coaches' skills in developing trust, demonstrating empathy and creating positive feedback environment specifically in employee coaching relationships.</p>
<b>Gregory &amp; Levy, 2011</b> Variables influencing employee coaching relationships	155 supervisors and 729 direct reports completed survey – part of global manufacturing organisation. Survey included items from Multifactor leadership questionnaire, emotional intelligence, implicit theory, feedback environment scale and PQEQR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines link between feedback orientation and coaching relationship quality as perceived by employee coaches.</li> <li>Examines impact of supervisor/coaches' actual coaching behaviours on quality of employee coaching relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subordinates' feedback orientation had a small but significant impact on perceptions of their coaching relationship quality</li> <li>As expected high-quality employee coaching relationships predict employee coachee ratings of supervisor/coach behaviours</li> </ul>	<p>Frequency of interaction linked to perceptions of coaching relationship quality.</p> <p>Advocates HR professionals consider engaging employees with the development of their feedback orientation and further support supervisors in developing genuine coaching relationships.</p>
<b>Gregory &amp; Levy, 2012</b> Employee feedback orientation: implications for effective coaching relationships	479 professional grade employees in global manufacturing company completed online survey which included items of feedback orientation, PQEQR and coaching behaviours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines link between feedback orientation and coaching relationship quality as perceived by employee coaches.</li> <li>Examines impact of supervisor/coaches' actual coaching behaviours on quality of employee coaching relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Subordinates' feedback orientation had a small but significant impact on perceptions of their coaching relationship quality</li> <li>As expected high-quality employee coaching relationships predict employee coachee ratings of supervisor/coach behaviours</li> </ul>	<p>Frequency of interaction linked to perceptions of coaching relationship quality.</p> <p>Advocates HR professionals consider engaging employees with the development of their feedback orientation and further support supervisors in developing genuine coaching relationships.</p>



<p><b>Jowett, Kanakoglu &amp; Passmore, 2012</b> Application of the 3+1Cs relationship model to executive coaching</p>	<p>Semi-structured interviews with five coach-coachee dyads (10 participants) using open-ended questions based on the 3+1Cs model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attempts to explore how the 3+1Cs model from sports coaching maps onto an understanding of the quality of the executive coaching relationship</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The model appears to work for the coaching dyads explored emphasising the interdependence between the 4 constructs of closeness, commitment, complementarity and co-orientation</li> <li>Clear evidence of reciprocity and role changes between coach and coachee accounts</li> <li>No neat mapping of components onto coaching alliance constructs</li> </ul>	<p>Value of understanding the dyadic relationship in executive coaching using the 3+1Cs model. Opportunity to deploy as a diagnostic tool in coaching relationships.</p>
<p><b>De Haan, Duckworth, Birch &amp; Jones, 2013</b> Executive coaching outcome research – the contribution of common factors</p>	<p>156 coaching relationships Networks of experienced and qualified executive coaches Surveys included demographic, MBTI, credential, intervention style, coach techniques and Working Alliance inventory items</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines 'common factors' influence on coaching outcome study</li> <li>Common factors – relationship, the setting, expectations, coach and client personalities and coaching approach/technique</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working alliance/coaching relationship as rated by the coachee correlates to client rated coaching outcomes</li> <li>No clear impact of client personality, client-coach personality matching on coaching outcomes</li> </ul>	<p>Questions how in tune coaches are with their clients' views of the coaching relationship. Ability of individual coaches and clients to co-create their relationship/alliance.</p>
<p><b>Sun et al., 2013</b> The working alliance and real relationship in two coaching approaches</p>	<p>40 coachees and 23 coaches Surveyed using Coaching Alliance scale, Supervisory working alliance inventory and Real Relationship Inventory Australian mental health services using coaching to deliver new service delivery model</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores the coaching relationship in transformational and skills coaching through the working alliance and 'real relationship' constructs</li> <li>Working alliance – quality and strength of relationship based on: goals, tasks and bond</li> <li>Real relationship – personal relationship perspective: genuineness (will- ingness and authenticity) and realism (realistic, undistorted perceptions)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Moderate to strong relationship between coachee ratings of real relationship and working alliance</li> <li>Stronger coaching relationships in Transformational coaching – as rated by both partners</li> <li>Transformational coaching coachees reported stronger working alliance but only for realism, not for genuineness in 'real relationship' results</li> </ul>	<p>Transformational coaching associated with stronger and deeper coaching relationship compared to skills coaching – value of recognising which coaching approaches are closer to the therapeutic end of the spectrum. Advocate wider adoption of real relationship over time in coaching context. Need to develop validated measures of the coaching alliance.</p>
<p><b>Ianero, Schermuly &amp; Kauffeld, 2013</b> Interaction analysis of the coaching relationship: the role of interpersonal dominance and affiliation</p>	<p>Uses the Discussion coding system to analyse video-ed first coaching sessions of students at two German universities Survey included aspects of similarity quality of coaching relationship and goal attainment undertaken at end</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores role of interpersonal affiliation and dominance behaviour, and coach-client compatibility on clients' views of the relationship and goal attainment</li> <li>Takes perspective from interpersonal dynamics from social psychology field</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Coach's mean dominance behaviour in first coaching session is related to client's ratings of goal attainment at the end of the coaching process</li> <li>Similarity on both interpersonal dynamics for coach and client results in higher ratings of relationship quality and client's end of programme goal attainment ratings</li> </ul>	<p>Highlights how coach might tackle interactional disruptions and the value of coach being confident and aware of verbal and non-verbal dominant behaviours. Identifies the importance of the first coaching session and understanding of impact of non-verbal behaviours. Indicates link between relationship quality and goal attainment.</p>

(Continued)

**Table 11.1 Continued**

<i>Authors, year</i>	<i>Outline</i>	<i>Research Method</i>	<i>Overview of study</i>	<i>Key Findings on the coaching relationship</i>	<i>Key observations</i>
<b>Grant, 2014</b> Autonomy support, relationship satisfaction and goal focus in the coaching relationship	49 postgraduate students undertaking a degree programme in coaching in Australia Survey using items from psychological well-being, depression, anxiety and stress, goal attainment and self-insight		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Examines which of the following aspects is most positively correlated to specific coaching outcomes:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>autonomy support, coach satisfaction with the actual relationship, similarity of the coaching relationship to an ideal coaching relationship and goal focused coaching relationship</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Goal-focused coaching relationship has significantly more impact on successful coachin</li> <li>Humanistic supportive coaching relationship has impact on coaching success but not as evident</li> <li>Association between coaches' experience of coaching as close to ideal relationship and coaching success</li> </ul>	<p>Study focused on solution-focused, cognitive behavioural coaching approach to explore these factors. Highlights the role of goals and goal attainment with the coaching relationship as the instrument to facilitate this process.</p>
<b>Gan &amp; Chong, 2015</b> Coaching relationship in executive coaching in Malaysia	Survey of manager coaches using certified coaches in Malaysia 172 respondents		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explores relationship between coaching relationship factors of rapport, trust and commitment, and match with coaching effectiveness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rapport and commitment significantly influence coaching effectiveness</li> <li>Trust and matching based on similarities had no effect on coaching effectiveness</li> </ul>	<p>Highlight the potential role of Asian culture on results - in relation to deference to coaches which may influence trust and matching factors.</p> <p>Rapport and commitment identified as critical for foundation for successful coaching relationships and outcomes.</p>
<b>Gessnitzer &amp; Kauffeld, 2015</b> The working alliance in coaching: exploring relationship relevant behaviours	Interaction analysis of videos of 31 coaching dyads Questionnaires using adapted Working Alliance Inventory Germany		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No correlation between client or coach WAI and working alliance behaviour</li> <li>Coaching success was 'agreement of goals/tasks' but only if client led</li> <li>Bonding behaviour had no effect at all on goal attainment</li> <li>Only coaches' perception of the relationship was positively related to coaching success</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Working alliance behaviours strongly dependent on who initiates them</li> <li>Shorter coaching relationships emphasise work-focused and goal aspects rather than bonding</li> </ul>	<p>Innovative methodology. Highlights importance of activeness of client.</p> <p>Value of active listening, paraphrasing and open questions emphasised for supporting change in clients.</p>

Gan and Chong (2015) subsequently argue this is probably because of cultural issues in the Asian context where respect and trust are commonplace and not a priority just for the coaching experience (Gan & Chong, 2015; Daouk-Öyry & Rosinski, 2010; Nangalia & Nangalia, 2010). This cultural dimension highlights again the importance of tailoring the coaching relationship in relation to the client and their background and expectations.

Gan and Chong's (2015) findings also underscore the potential role of power in the coaching relationship where traditional views and behaviours confer in individuals with specific roles, such as coaches, the opportunity to wield power over others (Welman & Bachkirova, 2010; Reissner & Du Toit, 2011). Clients may also exercise excessive power within the relationship, to an extent that the work to be done is unachievable and Welman and Bachkirova (2010) recommend coaches explore their own personal predispositions to exercising power as well as developing the knowledge and skills to deal with power when they experience it inappropriately in the coaching relationship. The study by Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) highlights some of the issues which can arise from dominance in the coaching relationship where agreement of tasks and goals had a strong association with coaching success, but only when the agreement was initiated by the client. Dominance by the coach in the agreement of tasks and goals had a negative effect on goal attainment further accentuating the need for self-awareness and facilitative behaviour by the coach and activeness of the client, early on in the relationship.

#### **4. Commitment, Collaboration and Co-creation**

Commitment by both participants in any of the relationships, which fall within the range of helping relationships, is considered a priority (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010b, 2010c; Boyce et al., 2010; Jowett, Kanakoglu &

Palmer, 2012). Boyce et al. (2010) argue that commitment can be seen as the allegiance to the work of the coaching experience by both the coach and the client. Gan and Chong (2015 p. 480) refer to commitment as the 'mutual assurance to fulfil responsibilities in the relationship that includes both task and social emotional behaviour.' It is possible to discern two components of commitment here, those referring to the task elements (time-keeping, attendance, preparation) and social-emotional behaviours (expressing energy, perseverance, identifying weaknesses and limitations, identifying and engaging with goals) (Gan & Chong, 2015; Boyce et al., 2010). Gan and Chong (2015) found commitment had a significant association with the coaching relationship, with clients' dedication and engagement to undertake the work associated with achieving change as critical. In the case of employee coaching and executive coaching evidence suggests that a coachee's attachment to the organisation would influence their willingness to invest and commit to the coaching process (McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Gan & Chong, 2015).

Where coach and coachee are committed to discharging their responsibilities associated with their relationship there is acknowledgement of the need for cooperation between the participants (Boyce, et al., 2010; Ianiro et al., 2013; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). O'Broin and Palmer (2010c) identified that while coaches and coachees might describe collaboration differently the opportunity to do so was valued and could be achieved where each values the others' contributions and share responsibility for goal achievement. Again this aspect of the coaching relationship is seen to be closely allied to the working alliance as outlined in the psychotherapeutic literature (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010a, 2010c; Jowett, O'Broin & Palmer, 2010; Sun et al., 2013). Commitment and collaboration are also distinct within the sports coaching relationship field too where one of the key dimensions of the 3+1Cs model is commitment (3 + 1Cs represents

**Table 11.2 Recent empirical insights on the coach-athlete relationship**

<i>Authors, year Outline</i>	<i>Methods and sample</i>	<i>Themes in the relationship</i>	<i>Positive features of the relationship</i>	<i>Negative features of the relationship</i>	<i>Key insights</i>
<b>Jowett &amp; Cockerill, 2003</b> Olympic medallists' perspectives of the athlete-coach relationship	12 Olympic medallists interviewed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Three Cs – Closeness, Co-orientation and Complementarity plus associations between these constructs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mutual respect, trust, care, concern, support, open communication, shared knowledge and understanding</li> <li>• Clear corresponding roles and tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Betrayal of trust and respect</li> <li>• Focus on the physical performance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Not just a performer also a person.</li> <li>• Value of social skills in coach education programmes.</li> </ul>
<b>LaVoï, 2007</b> Exploring closeness in the coach-athlete relationship	Survey of 431 college athletes in USA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on the three Cs explores closeness specifically</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gender dimension to closeness was expressed</li> <li>• Value of relational expertise of coaches is recognised</li> <li>• Recognises affective, cognitive and behavioural aspects of closeness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Athletes recognise value of closeness but place more responsibility of relationship development on coach</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Closeness as a more differentiated construct.</li> <li>• Communication is the most important factor in a close relationship.</li> </ul>
<b>Trzaskoma-Biscerdy, Bognar, Revesz &amp; Gezsi, 2007</b> Coach-athlete relationship in Hungary	Interviews with successful Hungarian coaches and athletes across three sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explore relationship constructs of closeness, complementarity and co-orientation</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Need to establish respect, esteem and love as basis for coaching relationship</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Personalise relationship based on needs of the athlete.</li> </ul>
<b>Jackson, Grove &amp; Beauchamp, 2010</b> Examines efficacy beliefs in predicting relationship quality	Survey of 63 youth athletes and their coaches	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focuses upon self, other and 'relation-inferred self-efficacy' (RISE) beliefs and quality of coach-athlete relationship perceptions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Suggests that self and other efficacy beliefs may denote cognitive mechanisms which enable the 3Cs</li> </ul>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All three efficacy beliefs shape the quality of relationship processes.</li> </ul>
<b>Jowett &amp; Nezelek, 2011</b> Relationship interdependent and satisfaction in coach-athlete dyads	Survey of 138 coach-athlete dyads in individual sports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examined link between relationship, interdependence and sport-related satisfaction across gender dyads, competition level and relationship length</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher levels of interdependence and satisfaction found at higher levels of competition and in longer relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Female coach and male athlete dyads experienced weaker associations between relationship interdependence and satisfaction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Highlights factors (gender, duration and competitiveness) which impact upon interdependence and relationship satisfaction.</li> </ul>

<p><b>Lafreniere, Jowett, Vallerand &amp; Carbonneau, 2011</b> Passion for coaching and quality of coach-athlete relationship</p>	<p>Survey 103 coach-athlete dyads across gymnastic, volleyball and soccer</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Differentiated harmonious and obsessive passion of coaches</li> <li>• Identified coaches' harmonious passion indirectly predicted high quality relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Autonomy supported behaviours beneficial for quality relationships</li> <li>• High quality coach-athlete relationships lead to higher athlete happiness</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Obsessive passion of coaches has negative implications for athletes</li> <li>• Obsessive coaches tend to be defensive and close-minded</li> </ul>	<p>Role of harmonious passion in other people's subjective well-being.</p>
<p><b>Kristiansen, Tomten, Hanstad &amp; Roberts, 2012</b> Elite Norwegian female athletes' coaching experience</p>	<p>Interview and focus group interviews – case study of two athletes</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Issues of over-training and lack of personalisation of training plans</li> <li>• Training and coaching regimes based on males, unsuitable for female athletes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coach mis-communication</li> <li>• Inexperienced coaches</li> <li>• Number of coaches</li> <li>• Autonomy and social support of other athletes discouraged</li> </ul>	<p>Raises issues of coach education, lack of coordination between coaches and success not clearly defined</p>	
<p><b>Felton &amp; Jowett, 2013</b> What do coaches do and how do they relate?</p>	<p>Survey of 300 athletes competing at a variety of levels</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explores athletes' basic need satisfaction via effects of social environment (coach behaviours) and quality of relationships</li> <li>• Explores athletes' psychological needs satisfaction within the relationship on well- and ill-being</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Psychological needs are fulfilled by supportive autonomous coaching behaviour and quality relationships</li> <li>• Satisfying the competence need may support athletes' well-being and limit ill-being</li> </ul>	<p>Athletes' well-being is promoted by coaches' approaches and behaviours associated with positively relating and satisfying psychological needs.</p>	

Closeness, Commitment, Complementarity plus Co-orientation – see later for a more detailed discussion (Jowett & Cockerill, 2003; Jowett, O’Broin & Palmer, 2010)). As such the prevalence of the theme of commitment and collaboration is captured in O’Broin & Palmer’s (2010c p.140) closing comments that mastery and skills of coaches are needed to be able to manage ‘the complex interaction of coachee and coach interpersonal and intrapersonal processes at work in co-creating the coaching relationship’.

### **5. Coach and Coachee Attributes and Issues of Compatibility**

Another prevalent theme within the coaching relationship literature is the area of coach and client characteristics, and relatedly issues of compatibility and matching within the relationship. Unsurprisingly most of the literature focuses on the impact and effect of coach attitudes, attributes and skills on the coaching relationship, as the authors cited in Table 11.1 testify. Gyllensten and Palmer (2007) highlighted the need for coaches to form strong connections and demonstrate professionalism following on from their empirical study of the coaching relationship. Likewise O’Broin and Palmer (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) suggested that the coach’s characteristics and attitudes towards adapting to the coachee were critical and that this should include warm friendly behaviour, which would help develop the relationship over time and lead to the generation of new ideas. Coaches’ attitudes they argued are based on self-awareness and self-reflection, the coach’s belief in coaching, their approach to coaching ethics and professionalism. O’Broin and Palmer’s (2010a, 2010b, 2010c) repertory grid interview method study also identified that coach self-awareness was visible to the coachee as well as the coach and as such this prioritised supporting coaches’ self-management and self-development.

Evidence from de Haan (2008a; de Haan, et al., 2011; de Haan et al., 2012) indicate

that coaches arrive at improved coaching outcomes results if they are viewed by their coachees as friendly and attentive. Coach behaviours, such as displaying listening, understanding and encouragement in conjunction ‘with non-verbal affectionate cues like eye contact, smiling, the display of facial expressiveness and head nodding’ are associated with better quality coaching relationships (Ianiro et al., 2013 p.28).

In terms of coachee characteristics deemed important for efficacious coaching relationships, motivation, commitment and readiness have been mentioned within the literature but have not featured prominently in coaching relationship studies (Joo, 2005; Bluckert, 2005; Gan & Chong, 2015). Gessnitzer and Kauffeld (2015) also stress the importance of coachee activeness in determining their coaching goals and tasks as do Grant (2014) and de Haan et al. (2016) in more recent studies. In employee coaching Gregory and Levy (2012) identified that employees’ feedback orientations have a small but significant effect on their perceptions of the coaching relationship and as such engaging workers with this orientation could support the development of a positive feedback environment and increase receptivity to coaching for a learning organisation.

The impact and issues of managing coach and coachee compatibility have provided particular challenges and a range of results in the area of coaching relationship. Boyce et al. (2010 p. 915) identified that three characteristics for matching seemed evident. These characteristics include ‘commonality in personal characteristics or experiences, compatibility in behavioural preferences and credibility with coaching abilities meeting client needs’, however, their final results indicated no variation between those ‘systematically matched and randomly assigned client–coach pairs ... in coaching outcomes’ (p.922). Gan and Chong (2015) also found coach and coachee match had no significant association with coaching effectiveness in their study of the executive coaching relationship in Malaysia.

However, they underlined the potential role culture might play here on the perceptions of coaches (mentors or teachers) as highly respected individuals who clients would not attempt to identify similarities with. Sampling issues also led them to suggest that matching was not an evident component of coachee ratings of their coaching relationship experiences.

There is some evidence from the psychotherapy setting where complementarity in dyads leads to more verbal interaction, less physical distance and better outcomes in cooperative tasks. Ianiro, Schermuly and Kauffeld (2013) explored affiliation and dominance based on interpersonal dynamics from social psychological theories. Affiliation, which is seen as crucial for the healthy formation and continuation of most forms of interpersonal relationships, was used as one dimension and dominance, where dominance is captured as self-confident behaviour, was identified as the other dimension. Ianiro et al. (2013) then used affect control theory to understand the impact of similarity and complementarity between coaches and clients. Similarity is based on the premise that social interactions are positive where 'actors have similar needs on both interpersonal dimensions (affiliation and dominance) and thus show similar interpersonal behaviour' (Ianiro et al., 2013 p. 30). Social interactions adhering to the complementarity model, however, exist if the participants show similar needs for affiliation but opposite needs for dominance. The researchers found that the 'Interpersonal compatibility of coach and client seems to be beneficial to the client's ratings of the relationship quality and goal attainment' (Ianiro et al., 2013 p. 37).

Mixed results of the impact of coach-coachee matching on coaching outcome were also evident from the studies of Scoular and Linley (2006) who found that contradictory matches in personality profiles (as determined by the MBTI) was associated with effective coaching outcomes. Conversely, De Haan et al. (2013; 2016) and Wycherley

and Cox (2008) found that matching on the basis of demographics or the personality differences of coachee and coach showed no correlation with effectiveness, and cautioned practitioners to be wary of matching on such parameters. Further evidence of the limits of coach-coachee match was identified by Bozer, Joo and Santora (2015) where gender and perceived similarity on coaching outcomes were not significant. However, aspects of self-awareness were seen to be enhanced by same gender coaching and features of actual and perceived similarity were seen to contribute to coach and client 'fit'. As such many authors caution practitioners (coaches, human resource and organisational development professionals) against an emphasis on matching and instead argue for the value of coach-coachee selection based on the coach's accreditation, qualifications and supervision reports (Bozer et al., 2015; De Haan et al., 2016; 2013; Wycherley & Cox, 2008).

This section of the chapter has highlighted five themes which encompass the coaching relationship, namely; the stages of the coaching relationship, rapport and the bonds, trust and transparency, commitment and coach and coachee characteristics. Further insights are now presented in the last two sections of the chapter by drawing upon empirical studies from across the key contexts of executive, employee and sports coaching (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck, 2014) and then exploring the connections between the coaching relationship and the working alliance construct from the therapeutic relationship field.

## **COACHING RELATIONSHIPS ACROSS KEY CONTEXTS: SPORTS, EXECUTIVE AND EMPLOYEE COACHING**

Three coaching contexts distinguish themselves as presenting particular issues when considering the coaching relationship. The second half of this chapter summarises some of the key studies pertaining to sports,

executive and employee coaching before we turn our attention to the role psychotherapy has played in shaping our understanding and approaches to researching the coaching relationship.

### **Sports Coaching**

Sports coaching has a long heritage and the coaching relationship, or more specifically the coach–athlete relationship, has engaged researchers' exploration of the interpersonal dynamics between competitors and their coaches (Ellinger & Kim, 2014; Lafreniere et al., 2011; Jowett & Cockerill, 2003). Attempts to characterise sports coaching suggest these relationships exhibit high levels of social interdependence, are performance oriented and volitional (Jackson, Grove & Beauchamp, 2010). As such effective and healthy coach–athlete relationships are seen to be based upon the interpersonal factors of coaches' and athletes' mutual trust, respect and communication (Trzaskoma-Biscerdy et al., 2007; Jowett & Neziek, 2011). Table 11.2 provides a brief summary of some of the most recent empirical studies on sports coaching. This area has adopted a range of methodologies though perhaps in accordance with the performance dimension to sports quantitative methodologies have become particularly evident. There is, however, a dilemma for sports coaching researchers in that at the non-elite level surveys requiring large sample sizes are attainable; however, at the elite sports level smaller sample sizes are more evident and appropriate. The format for Table 11.2 is also distinctive as the empirical studies were much more likely to capture negative aspects of, and a gender dimension to, the coach–athlete relationship than either of the other two contexts explored in this chapter. This reignites the previous debate on issues of coach–coachee gender match and similarity which as Bozer et al. (2015) highlight is rife in the mentoring literature (O'Brien, Biga, Kessler & Allen, 2010; Allen & Eby,

2003; Scandura & Williams, 2001). However, it may be that where features of specific coaching and mentoring disciplines are similar the impact of gender (and potentially other aspects) on the coach–coachee/mentor–mentee relationship become more evident (Salter & Gannon, 2015).

A prominent feature in the sports coaching relationship research area is the 3+1Cs model, which is described as providing 'a view into the ties that bind the coach and the coachee as it assesses the quality (content) and quantity (intensity) of the coaching relationship, through a wide range of relational components and dimensions that ebb and flow in social interaction' (Jowett, Kanakoglu & Passmore, 2012 p.195). This model is built around Closeness, Commitment and Complementarity as the first 3Cs and the +1 refers to Co-orientation. Closeness represents the emotional ties and comprises interpersonal features such as trust, respect, liking and gratefulness. Commitment denotes the potentially long-term nature of the cognitive connections between the members of the relationship. Finally, Complementarity captures the aspect of cooperation in the relationship where members' interactions are seen to be correspondent and reciprocal (Jowett, O'Broin & Palmer, 2010). The final element of Co-orientation reflects interdependency between the members in the coach–athlete relationship; however, this element operates at several levels as outlined below; 'Co-orientation is capable of assessing the interdependence of two people's 3Cs at three levels: (a) the level at which dyadic members are *actually similar* in the ways they view their relationship; (b) the level at which dyadic members *assume similarity* in terms of how they view their relationship; and (c) the level at which each dyadic member *accurately understands* the other's view regarding the quality of the relationship' (Jowett, O'Broin & Palmer, 2010 p.21 emphasis in the original).

The Closeness, Commitment and Complementarity features of this model have been developed into a questionnaire, the



Coach–Athlete Relationship Questionnaire (CART-Q) with validated items, with a version for coaches and another for athletes, which can be responded to directly or through the levels outlined above (Jowett & Nezelek, 2011). There have been attempts to build bridges between the expertise in sports coaching and specifically executive coaching, and the working alliance (Jowett, O’Broin & Palmer, 2010; Jowett, Kanakoglu & Passmore, 2012). However, there is no clear mapping across the constructs associated with these frameworks, even if, as discussed in the section on the working alliance (later in this chapter), links can be identified.

### **Executive Coaching**

Certainly the predominant context evident in the coaching literature has been that of executive coaching (Stern & Stout-Rostron, 2013). Executive coaching has been defined as ‘a form of leadership development which takes place through a series of one-to-one conversations with a qualified “coach”’ (de Haan et al., 2013 p.2). Baron and Morin (2009) explored the determinants of the executive coaching relationship and their impact on coaching outcomes and found the coaching relationship has a mediating role in the link between the number of coaching sessions and executives’ self-efficacy development. The work of de Haan and colleagues (2008a; 2011; 2012; 2016) has been particularly pivotal in this area and highlights the explanatory value of the working alliance literature in framing the executive coaching relationship as well as challenging some of the evidence from the psychotherapeutic field. For example, the evidence that while coaches’ specific interventions may not be directly recognised and valued by clients their relational skills (such as empathic listening, supportive feedback) are valued.

Jowett, Kanakoglu and Passmore (2012) building on previous literature (Jowett et al., 2010; Jowett & Nezelek, 2011) apply an

adapted interview schedule version of the 3+1Cs model from sports coaching to the executive coaching context and suggest, ‘The analysis of the data uncovered that the participants recognised the importance of the relationship as a medium for identifying needs and satisfying goals on one hand, and on the other hand they reported that their relationship contained such important relational components as trust, respect, liking, support, responsiveness, cooperation and openness’ (Jowett, Kanakoglu & Passmore, 2012 p. 192). They suggest that this model offers executive coaches a valuable way of assessing the quality of their coaching relationships and highlight some relationship enhancement strategies which emerge from this adopted model.

Finally, Gan and Chong’s (2015) study not only provides a valuable international and cultural dimension to our knowledge of the executive coaching relationship but reiterates the role of rapport and commitment in terms of the relationship and successful outcomes, as assessed by clients. The focus on coaching outcomes, as part of empirical investigations of the executive coaching relationship, is particularly apparent within Table 11.2 and this is perhaps due to the expense and demands for efficacy associated with results in this context (de Haan & Sills, 2012).

### **Employee Coaching**

The rise of managerial or employee coaching has received more limited coverage with some notable exceptions (McCarthy & Milner, 2013; Beattie et al., 2014; Ellinger, Beattie & Hamlin, 2014; Gregory & Levy, 2010; 2011; 2012) to name a few (See Table 11.1). There are clearly challenges and benefits experienced by managerial coaches and employee coaches. For example, familiarity with organisational conventions, context and performance means that managerial coaches may have credibility with their coaches, however where this is not present they will

have to work hard to effectively gain rapport and trust. There are also suggestions that employee coaching can augment the relationship between managers and their staff (McCarthy & Milner, 2013). However, as Machin (2010) points out it can be a challenge to achieve coaching on an equal footing in employee coaching relationships. Gregory and Levy (2010; 2011) highlight the employee coaching relationship may be more complex given the prior history of the subordinate and line manager/supervisor. Their employee coaching relationship research pursued the development of a measure of 'the perceived quality of the employee coaching relationship' (PQECR) (Gregory & Levy, 2010). This instrument focuses upon four key features; genuineness within the relationship, effective communication, comfort within the relationship and facilitating development. Using this measure greater evidence has emerged of the importance of trust, the coach's empathy skills, and the frequency and consistency of coaching interactions. However, this coaching context also raises the profile of coaching from the organisational agenda and the impact of the wider organisational environment in terms of ensuring a positive feedback environment, and support for supervisors and line managers coaching skills and employees' engagement with their own feedback orientations (Gregory & Levy, 2011; 2012).

### **THE WORKING ALLIANCE, COACHING ALLIANCE AND COACHING RELATIONSHIP**

It is widely accepted that the development of coaching owes a huge intellectual and professional debt to other helping relationships and discourses, in particular therapy, counselling and psychology (Du Toit, 2014; de Haan, 2008a; de Haan & Sills, 2012). Drawing on Wampold's (2001) arguments for 'common factors' where the relationship

is seen as a key feature of professional and personal helping approaches, the arguments pertaining to how coaches may benefit from engaging with the relational perspective in psychology and psychotherapy, deserve examination. As the balance of attention in much of the extant literature has firmly rested on the side of the coach, insights from the fields of therapy and counselling emphasise the relational dynamic between client and therapist/counsellor. It is therefore valuable to consider the ways in which coaching relationships and therapeutic relationships are alike and the ways in which they differ in relation to the coaching relationship, exploring where and how mutually beneficial understanding and expertise can be shared.

Wampold's (2001) 'great psychotherapy debate' provided decisive confirmation that therapeutic interventions are effective to the same level as psychiatric medicine and that there is no one psychotherapeutic approach which shows greater success than others (de Haan, 2008a; de Haan & Sills, 2012). Indeed the evidence suggests that all professional psychotherapy approaches offer active ingredients common across the range of approaches. De Haan and Sills (2012 p.5) summarise these as follows: 'Common factors have to do with the setting (meeting at regular intervals, providing an expectation that things may get better), with a client's desire to be helped (the client's expectations preferences and support networks), with the coach (warmth, quality of listening) and finally with the relationship (quality of communication, trust, agreement about the shared endeavour).'

Within the psychotherapy literature the relationship dimension is typically operationalised as the working alliance, as many of the studies identified in Table 11.1 or mentioned previously (Baron & Morin, 2009; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015; Kemp, 2011; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010a, 2010b, 2010c; de Haan, 2008a) identify. Building upon Greenson's (1967) arguments, Bordin (1979) further articulated the working alliance concept, which can be

defined as collaboration between the client and the therapist built on the development of an attachment bond alongside a mutual commitment to the goals and tasks. Collaboration is fundamental to the working alliance and is a crucial feature of the active participation of both the client and therapist. The mutuality of the relationship is based upon the key features of goals, tasks and bonds (Bordin, 1979; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010b, 2010c; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015) where 'goals' are the desired results, 'tasks' are the processes required to reach the goals and 'bonds' are the personal relationship features of trust, confidence and acceptance (Sun et al., 2013; Baron & Morin, 2009; O'Broin & Palmer, 2010b). It is, in particular, the mutual agreement of goals and tasks which may arguably create the state for clarity and transparency in the coaching session and accordingly the precursors to trust and respect (O'Broin & Palmer, 2010c) though empirical evidence in this area remains elusive.

Studying the working alliance in coaching settings has typically been undertaken using the Working Alliance Inventory (WAI) (Horvath & Greenberg, 1989; Baron & Morin, 2009; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015) but with varying degrees of similarity in relation to the results from the therapeutic setting. Baron and Morin (2009 p.87) identified similarities between executive coaching and psychotherapy – particularly in relation to the 'structure of the process' suggesting 'these two forms of personalized relationships both attempt to help individuals understand how their cognitive and emotional reactions interfere with their self-efficacy' (Hodgetts, 2002 cited in Baron & Morin, 2009 p. 87). Using the WAI they found that the coach-coachee relationship played 'a mediating role in the association between the number of sessions received and the development of a manager's self-efficacy.' Baron and Morin (2009 p. 98). These results indicate that the development of the coachee depends upon the amount of coaching undertaken and the coach's ability to facilitate learning and results. While the

coach's relational and communication skills have no direct impact.

While some perspectives on the coaching relationship literature identify the coach and coachee have relational facets in common much of the literature identifies the collaborative dimension to the relationship. De Haan et al. (2012 p. 15) highlight from their study that 'the relationship between coach and client only exists in their respective minds (and in the minds of outside observers), causing them to present an "it" in a completely independent way and moreover evaluate "it" completely independently and according to highly personal criteria and expectations.' Yet empirical evidence from the therapeutic literature suggests there is no one version of the helping relationship with therapists, clients and observers perceiving and evaluating 'relationships' independently (Ianiro et al., 2013; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). It is also relevant to identify the work of Clarkson (1995) on the limitations of the working alliance and the other relationship variations in the psychotherapeutic relationship at this juncture. Adopting a systemic integrative perspective to psychotherapy Clarkson (1995) identified five modes of relationship, which could be used depending upon the features of clients and their phase in therapy. The working alliance features as part of these five modes alongside the transference/countertransference relationship, the reparative developmentally-needed relationship, the person-to-person relationship and the transpersonal relationship. While an adapted version of this model has been deployed in work settings to identify the influence of various relationships by organisational consultants there is limited evidence of its deployment in relation to investigating the coaching relationship (O'Broin & Palmer, 2007).

O'Broin and Palmer (2010c, p. 37) also warn against the conflation of the coaching alliance and the coaching relationship and suggest that the working or coaching alliance is seen as 'The mutual, collaborative process

of agreeing the tasks and goals of coaching and reviewing these on an on-going basis ... [which] acts as a helpful framework for the coach.' As such the alliance is then a standpoint from which to gauge the extent and form of collaboration and purposiveness of the coaching work that is required, and which is occurring. It is interesting to note though that many studies seem to take the coaching alliance as a proxy for the coaching relationship with their widespread use of WAI as central to their investigations.

A useful departure from this predominant use of the working alliance is evidenced in the work of Sun et al. (2013) who used the 'real relationship' construct alongside the working alliance in their exploration of the coaching relationship and coaching outcomes. This construct views the helping relationship from the personal relationship perspective and highlights two components; realism and genuineness (Sun et al., 2013; Gelso & Hayes, 1998). Realism 'refers to the realistic, undistorted perceptions that one person holds of another', while genuineness is concerned with 'a person's ability and willingness to be authentic, open and honest in their relationship' (Sun et al., 2013 pp.7–8). Two coaching approaches, transformational and skills coaching, were deployed in this study and there was seen to be a moderate to strong relationship between coachees' work alliance and 'real relationship' ratings (Sun et al., 2013). However, transformational coaching occasioned a stronger coaching relationship than skills coaching, as rated by both coaches and coachees. With specific reference to the 'real relationship' results greater realism was reported by the coaches experiencing transformational coaching though genuineness was not significantly higher in this coaching approach. Sun et al. (2013 p. 16) state, 'Transformational coaching resulted in stronger and deeper coaching relationships than skills coaching, supporting the notion that coaching models closer to the therapeutic end of the spectrum require relationships more akin to therapeutic relationships.'

This study clearly supports the arguments of Kauffman and Bachkirova (2009) that different coaching approaches will demand different intensities or traits and brings a rarely seen dimension of the 'real relationship' to our understanding of the coaching relationship.

In the literature there is considerable debate concerning the boundaries of counselling/therapy and coaching (Bluckert, 2005; Gessnitzer & Kauffeld, 2015). These can typically be distilled down to coaching's aim to develop professional skills for the work setting rather than day-to-day functioning (Baron & Morin, 2009; Bluckert, 2005), and coaching's focus on the present and future as opposed to the tendency for therapy to place relatively more emphasis on the past (Baron & Morin, 2009). It has also been argued that coaching tends to be more directive and action-oriented (Baron & Morin, 2009; Ellinger & Kim, 2014). De Haan and colleagues (2016 p. xx) provide further clarity in the distinction between coaching from therapeutic encounters in a study that shows 'evidence that a focus on 'tasks' and 'goals' are more important than the strength of the 'bonds'.' Other discrepancies are apparent when the (employer) organisation is financing the coaching, in particular in executive coaching. This creates a connection between the coach and the organisation, which is not typically seen in psychotherapeutic relationships (Smith & Brummel, 2013). Finally the psychotherapeutic relationship tends to go much deeper and as such requires clinical expertise (Baron & Morin, 2009).

## CONCLUSIONS

This chapter has outlined the territory of the coaching relationship literature, highlighting the key themes which have emerged and remain apparent. Rapport and bonds, trust and transparency, commitment, collaboration and co-creation appear as evident in the

literature now as the very earliest studies in the field. As part of this chapter we have provided summaries of recent empirical studies which depict the influences, methods and approaches deployed to explore coaching relationship in recent years. There are clear roots and foundations for our subject knowledge but at this stage it is also vital to question whether we should now be exploring further connections and hybrids as coaching emerges as a fully-fledged profession.

Using the knowledge from different coaching contexts, such as employee/managerial, sports and executive coaching, helps us identify the nuances and challenges of coaching relationships and their investigation. However, this across coaching contexts approach also facilitates opportunities for acknowledging and adopting different methodologies and research instruments and viewing the coaching relationship from different perspectives. Introducing the model from sports coaching into executive coaching research assists in challenging our reliance on the coaching alliance model, for example. Likewise the prospect of approaching the sports coaching context with an adapted version of perceived quality of employee coaching relationship (PQECR) instrument from employee coaching with its focus on genuineness, effective communication, comfort with the relationship and facilitates development (Sun et al., 2013) offers the chance to further challenge knowledge boundaries. There are already clear connections between the ‘real relationship’ and the PQECR in terms of genuineness. Similarly there are comparisons between aspects of the working alliance construct in relation to bonds with the closeness dimension with the 3+1C model. These potential links only tell part of the story though and the coaching relationship research agenda in coming years will hopefully be formed from the established roots and knowledge bases plus the cross-fertilisation of models, constructs and frameworks.

We do have to recognise that exploring the coaching relationship is no easy undertaking as Sun et al. (2013) argue issues of

cross-sectional research make it difficult to understand the quality of the coaching relationship over time. Innovative methodologies encouraging methodologies with interaction analysis and longitudinal dimensions will assist in clarifying further our understanding of the stages of development in the coaching relationship. This sets high hurdles for coaching researchers to surpass but as the coaching relationship plays such a crucial role in the effectiveness of coaching we need to share our expertise and collaborate creatively to meet these challenges.

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