

**SPIRITUAL DIRECTION,
LIFE COACHING
AND CULTURE**

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ABSTRACT

A preliminary investigation into the growth of life coaching and spiritual direction in the West. The perception that there may be similarities between them is investigated further along with the questions of whether the similarities might be significant, whether they have a cultural origin, and if they are and do, what cultural drivers might be involved. This dissertation critically investigates definitions, and outlines histories and explanations of life coaching and spiritual direction. It then looks at the alleged under-supply of Life Coaches and Spiritual Directors with an assessment of likelihoods, leads for further investigation and potential cultural drivers. It also critically explores the ways in which life coaching & spiritual direction resemble each other and the ways in which they differ. In turn, the investigation relates the similarities and differences so identified to cultural patterns and developments in the west; particularly post-modernism, spirituality, business-capitalism.

It concludes that there do appear to be significant similarities between spiritual direction and life coaching and that the differences are mainly phenomenological. The similarities are both methodological and ideological and the nature and extension of the similarities makes it likely that the cultural drivers behind the rise of life coaching and the current forms of spiritual direction are to some extent shared. In addition the content of client-practitioner interactions often appears to reflect and respond to cultural trends variously labelled as late modernity or post-modernity and the concrete conditions of living in a consumerist society where individualisation has become well-embedded and where employment security can no longer be taken for granted.

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Orientation

Author

I am an Anglican Priest living in England. I have been ordained 18 years at the time of writing and the last five of those have been spent in ministry to a University and a FE College as their Anglican chaplain. Prior to that, my ministry was parochial in various capacities. Thus I write as a practitioner and a recipient of formal ministries of 'spiritual direction'. I mark the phrase with quotes to alert us to the fact that the term is somewhat problematic for reasons that will be explored within this dissertation.

My acquaintance with spiritual direction goes back a number of years, in the early 1990's, to when I became part of a network of Christians actively involved what became the Community of Aidan and Hilda. Part of the discipline of that community was and is "soul friendship"; in effect each person is to have a soul friend [roughly equivalent to a spiritual director in other traditions of discourse]. In the early days we also acted as soul-friend/directors to others. As I continued in parish ministry with a particular concern for the development of leadership in the local church I became aware of the need for mentoring and indeed spiritual direction for developing leaders.

Subsequently also, being involved with helping other people through the process of enquiring about Christian faith through to the point where they would become Christians I began to see the same kinds of dynamics unfolding and so the notion of evangelism as "initial spiritual direction" made sense to me when I was introduced to the book *Speaking of God: Evangelism As Initial Spiritual Guidance* [Johnson, Ben Campbell] by a colleague. As a result I found myself both with other people to whom I acted as a spiritual director and also being part of a diocesan training course for those who are exercising such a ministry and want in service training.

The connection with life coaching came as I became aware of the profession about three years ago through my research in New Age studies; some of the book lists I was using contained books on life coaching in the self-help sections. I became intrigued and on investigation found something that was familiar but in a different setting. Since then I have taken course in Life Skills coaching and been involved in a coaching course run by Staff development at the University of Bradford as well as offering life coaching to the staff of

the University as part of my ministry.

The cultural strand in this dissertation comes from a postgraduate certificate in Cultural Studies undertaken at the University of Huddersfield in 1996-7 as part of my desire to understand better the cultural context of Christian ministry. As I have reflected on my spiritual direction ministry and more recently on the life coaching work I have been undertaking, I have realized that there are issues wrapped up in them which stem from cultural trends. That certain things would simply not be part of the discussion in the same way or even at all, were it not for the cultural milieu we occupy. In other cultural circumstances we simply would not be there. In this dissertation I would like to begin to explore what some of those issues might be and to identify at least some of the terrain to be mapped in the cultural landscape that gives rise to Life Coaching and in which today's spiritual directors operate.

Therefore I come to this dissertation as a practitioner of spiritual direction, life coaching and cultural analysis, desiring to bring the three strands together in a fuller understanding. In what follows in this chapter I will offer some definitions first of life coaching then of spiritual direction along with some historical notes by way of orientation to the respective fields of endeavour. Given that of the three elements to this dissertation, life coaching is the least familiar and least represented in terms of the credit so far accumulated for the MA, a greater proportion of the space will be given over to the life coaching element.

A note concerning sources.

As will be seen below, life coaching has no commonly agreed corpus of knowledge and is a relatively new 'profession' which has not yet produced an extensive academically rigorous literature or research. There is a paucity of books dealing with the topic that are aimed at anything other than the self-help market or as part of training coaches in the perspectives and methods of particular coaching approaches. To help overcome this limitation I have found various web sites for coaches and coaching organizations to give documentary evidence of life coaching in respect of the concerns of this study. These sites give us a direct access to coaches' own definitions of what they believe they are offering and doing in LC and while they are doing so for the commercial purpose of recruiting clients, this bias can relatively easily be allowed for. Webpages are reproduced in an appendix for ease of reference.

Terms and sources.

I shall normally use the abbreviations LC for 'life coaching' and SD for 'spiritual direction'. The terms for those who are involved in the processes are usually 'coach' and 'client' (or sometimes 'coachee') in LC and [spiritual] director and ~directee or 'seeker'. There is some debate in SD about terminology and that will be handled below at a more appropriate points.

It has been interesting to note the different approaches that writers of books and articles in these respective fields have taken: the coaching books are very much more about the ways that coaching is accomplished, the techniques and competencies required and the process. Writings on spiritual direction tend to be more focused on the models one might use and the kinds of things to be achieved and also on issues more directly related to generalising from the issues that arise in direction. There is relatively little by way of reflection on the concrete processes and competencies of direction. Indeed in some cases there is a strong distrust expressed.

Life Coaching: definitions and background

Historical notes. Life coaching in most respects is a relatively recent phenomenon. However it is probably true to say that much of what it involves is not particularly recent or new. The components of life coaching are mostly older, it is their coming together in the environment that is called life coaching that is new. David Rock¹ identifies the skills used in parenting and business leadership at their best as life coaching skills. He even sees life coaching themes in some mythological stories especially those dealing with heroic journeys.

Thomas Leonard identifies Socratic dialogue and Buddhist teaching as precursors of coaching methods and Werner Erhard as first using the term during the 1970's in a way recognizable by life coaches today². Many websites also refer to NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) and the work of Anthony Robbins as an influence on the practice of coaching and there are certainly a good many coaches and coaching practices today that are either NLP practices or for whom NLP is one of the 'styles' of coaching on offer. David

¹ http://www.resultslifecoaching.com.au/become/PDFS/history_coaching.PDF accessed on 05/05/04

² <http://www.brilliantissimo.co.uk/coaching/history.htm> , accessed: 29/04/04

Rock³ sees the precursors to LC mostly originating in the 1950's and afterwards and briefly explores a number of them including personal development, emotional intelligence, adult learning theory, sports psychology, mentoring, NLP, management development, training and creativity.

Thomas Leonard himself began as a financial planner whose approach began to develop in a way that would now be recognized as coaching by broadening some of the kinds of things he would do in financial planning to other areas of life as a result of client demand⁴. This client demand itself seemed to be, in part at least, a result of patterns of work and life among executives and the trend within the business world to restructure in such a way as to place workers in need of new skills and perspectives to cope with a more fluid and transitional working environments⁵.

Most sources seem to agree implicitly or explicitly with the proposition that LC, as such, began in the mid to late 1980's in the USA⁶ and that the term appears to come, unsurprisingly, from sports coaching⁷. The latter probably reflecting, in some way, the importance that the "Inner Game" approach to sports coaching which Timothy Gallwey discovered and popularized in his book *The Inner Game of Tennis*, and applied to organisations by Sir John Whitmore and others⁸.

Then there is the contribution of a cultural trend of 'self-help': "*Ten years ago we saw a boom in the self-help industry. As time has gone by it's become much more socially acceptable to access self-help initiatives such as executive or personal coaching. There is clearly a growing trend for individuals and organizations to employ professional coaches to help them reach their personal and work-related goals.*"⁹.

It is probably true to say that LC came into being in the 1980's from the coming together of a number of strands from business, education and psychology driven by a particular set of cultural circumstances. Most of the techniques and skills it calls upon are not exclusive and all of them are older, some considerably, than the label 'life coaching'. We will be

³ Ibid

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ See <http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html> accessed: 29/04/04

⁶ <http://www.4change.info/life-20coaching.htm>, accessed: 29/04/04

⁷ http://www.byregion.net/glossary/life_coaching.html, Accessed: 29/04/04

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Anthony Grant, <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146>, accessed: 29/04/04

examining the cultural drivers later in the dissertation.

Professionalism.

Life coaching also presents itself as a profession, though it is to be doubted that at present it merits that description though most coaches are professional in their approach to the field. In the keynote address to the International Coach Federation conference in November 2003, Dr Anthony Grant gave a very helpful guide to the issues facing the coaching industry with regard to professionalism¹⁰. He states that, strictly speaking, coaching should not yet be called a profession since it lacks key defining characteristics of a profession.

The defining characteristics of a profession, he gives as: having significant barriers to entry; a shared body of knowledge; university-level qualifications and regulatory standards or disciplinary bodies. At present LC has none of these things. His address on this occasion goes on to call for steps to be taken towards these things particularly in the form of a model of a coach as a scientist-practitioner, which seems to be rather like a medical doctor in general practice: people who may or may not do research but are nevertheless equipped to be "informed consumers of it". He points out that the proprietary nature of coaching schools in relation to their training and materials is a significant barrier to a professional body having or gaining a common body of knowledge.

It is perhaps, then best to think of LC as a profession in embryo. Given that most coaches would see themselves as professionals it is likely that moves towards that and the desire of HEI's to expand their portfolios will make a profession of LC in time.

Towards a definition.

A survey of books and websites will produce a number of definitions from "Coaching is the art of bringing out the greatness in people in a way that honours the integrity of the human spirit. It is both an innate human capacity and a teachable skill which has now become a profession and an industry."¹¹ through "A commonly used definition of coaching is: Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another. ... Development is about personal growth and greater self awareness."¹² to a

¹⁰ http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/coach/ICF-USA-Research_Keynote_AMGrant_NOV_2003.pdf , accessed 05/05/04

¹¹ David Rock , op cit

¹² p.15. Downey, Myles. Effective Coaching. London, Texere 1999, reprinted 2002

simple "It involves clarifying and then planning to achieve goals"¹³. There are, of course, a number of things that are relatively common to the various definitions offered. The word 'goal' or goals' is used in most referring to what the client wants to achieve, either with their life or in a particular part of their life. Although more poetic language may be used as in, "enable and support people to achieve their dreams"¹⁴ it is clear the the focus is on helping people to achieve desired goals but without being too constrained about what those goals are. The lack of specification of goals is precisely because LC is predicated on the autonomy of the individual and therefore the necessity for the individual to decide for themselves what goals they should make their own. There are, of course, a number of things that are fairly common to the various definitions offered. The word 'goal' or goals' is used in most referring to what the client wants to achieve, either with their life or in a particular part of their life. Although more poetic language may be used as in, "enable and support people to achieve their dreams"¹⁵ it is clear the the focus is on helping people to achieve desired goals but without being too constrained about what those goals are. The lack of specification of goals is precisely because LC is predicated on the autonomy of the individual and therefore the necessity for the individual to decide for themselves what goals are desirable.

As a result of the prominence of 'goals' and the client's agenda, it would be easy to dismiss LC for merely opening up a way of pandering to selfish or venial forces in human personalities. However, LC in practice is not usually about helping people to achieve fairly arbitrary goals or fulfilling relatively shallow ambitions. "A life-coach gets you absolutely clear about what it is you really want out of life."¹⁶ which implicitly acknowledges that there may be a difference between what a person may have been socialized into desiring for themselves, or superficially to crave, and what is more central to them and probably more deeply desired. "In most cases the coaching will quickly progress to a deeper definition of fulfillment. It's not about having more -it's not about what fills the client's pockets or closets -it's about what fills the client's heart and soul."¹⁷] Later on the same authors state: "One of the main reasons people come to to coaching is a search for answers about

¹³ Christopher Aune,

<http://www.lifeskillspro.com/about.asp?Q=10><http://www.lifeskillspro.com/about.asp?Q=10>

¹⁴ Marilyn Comrie, director of communications for national life coaching service Excelerate, quoted on http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/features/2004/01/14/life_coach.shtml Accessed: 29/04/04

¹⁵ Marilyn Comrie, op. cit

¹⁶ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/insideldn/insideout/lifecoach.shtml> Accessed: 29/04/04

¹⁷ p.7. Whitworth, Laura; Kimsey-House, Henry; & Sandahl Phil: Co-Active Coaching, New Skills for Coaching People Towards Success in Work and Life. Palo Alto, CA, Davies Black Publishing, 1998. First Edition 1998

fulfillment."¹⁸ In this view, then, it is important to work with clients' deeper motivations and aspirations. In fact when dealing with matters that touch so vitally on motivation, ephemeral desires and superficial wants simply do not give sufficient personal commitment and energy to effect the lasting changes that LC seeks to facilitate.

LC is distinguished from other activities such as counselling and consultancy and the distinctions made are also illuminating of what LC is. "Coaching is different to consultancy in that it sees the solution lying with the client "¹⁹. This emerges from the commonly-held view in LC that "The client is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole."²⁰, so the answers must come from the client since to allow otherwise would be to disempower the client and disable their learning and progress.

In keeping with the valuing of client autonomy, LC distinguishes itself from other forms of helping that may be rather more directive. The valuing of the client's autonomy means that non-directive approaches are preferred.

The distinction between LC and either counselling or [psycho]therapy is a theme that emerges quite often in the texts explored in this study and a basic differentiation seems agreed by the LC sources. Downey sees counselling as "remedial": helping the client towards wholeness and social integration ²¹ whereas LC has more orientation to tasks and work engaged in²². Other sources distinguish between a past orientation in counselling and a future/ goals orientation in LC²³. Others would note that counselling deals with people who are in some way not well-functioning and suffering emotional disturbance whereas LC is dealing largely with well-functioning people who are not dealing with symptoms of emotional distress²⁴.

However there are other sources which seem to see the relationship with counselling in closer terms. So Downey states "The core skills involved in counseling and coaching and even mentoring, are very similar, if not actually the same. These are principally the skills of listening and of asking questions. They are the skills towards the non-directive end of the

¹⁸ Ibid. p.115

¹⁹ <http://www.byregion.net/glossary/lifecoaching.html> Accessed: 29/04/04

²⁰ Whitworth et al. p.3

²¹ Downey, Myles. *Effective Coaching*. London, Texere 1999, reprinted 2002. p.25

²² Ibid p.26

²³ http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/features/2004/01/14/life_coach.shtml and http://psychologydoc.com/executive_&_life_coaching.htm Accessed: 29/04/04

²⁴ Ibid. and <http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html> Accessed: 29/04/04

spectrum of coaching skills. ... For this reason, coaching and counseling are difficult to differentiate."²⁵ and while he goes on to provide some differentiation, he does so in a context of acknowledging many similarities. And Thomas Leonard even speaks of LC in these terms: "We are watching the birth of a new breed of counselor who will help people get more out of life."²⁶ and in so doing affirms both similarity and difference. The author of the wikipedia entry on LC describes LC in terms of it being a form of counselling²⁷. And one website aims to recruit therapists as life coaches "because they already have the requisite skills for effective coaching (such as listening, building rapport, encouraging, facilitating change, empathy and objectivity) that they can easily translate into coaching"²⁸.

In short; LC is a profession-in-the-making which aims to facilitate clients' progress towards fulfilling goals in such a way as to respect their autonomy and honour their innate abilities and resources. Its chief tools in this mission are counselling skills such as listening, reflecting, creating empathy and questioning and a commitment to the client's agenda.

Spiritual Direction:Historical background.

It is arguable that SD goes back to shamanism and within the Judaeo-Christian milieu to Rabbinic practices which were part of the relationships between Jesus and his first disciples and may also be glimpsed between Paul and Timothy [to take one example]. These examples and my own 'discovery' of SD as a ministry suggests that there are strong practical links between discipling, mentoring and SD.

Many writers on the history of SD tend to regard the Desert Fathers (and Mothers) as the clearest start to what might be termed spiritual direction. People went out into the desert in search of those who had found there a place to deepen their own prayer. Those who went after them hoped to find guidance and help in their own search for a deeper prayer-life and greater holiness. In turn the desert Fathers formed the traditions of spiritual Fathers in Eastern Orthodox Christianity and also in Celtic Christianity where the fertile cultural ground had a precedent in the Druid Soul Friends who counseled leaders. Late medieval western Europe saw a rise in lay people wanting help in their devotional life. It was the time of the Dominican and Franciscan movements and the making obligatory of sacramental confession at least once a year. These further fueled spiritual direction.

²⁵ p.25, Downey

²⁶ <http://www.brilliantissimo.co.uk/coaching/history.htm> Accessed: 29/04/04

²⁷ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_Coaching Accessed: 29/04/04

²⁸ <http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html> Accessed: 29/04/04

The formation of the Jesuits disseminated a method of spiritual formation which relied on the work of prayer guides for retreatants doing the Exercises. The insights and experience of the Ignatian way have contributed much to the practice of SD. In the Anglican church the Puritans and the Caroline Divines, each in their own ways and from their own perspectives, contributed much to understanding and valuing the processes of spiritual growth. And in turn the Tractarian movement recovered the practices of SD for many. It is fascinating to read the novels of Susan Howatch to catch a glimpse of the place of SD in Anglo-Catholicism at the turn of the twentieth century in England.

Kenneth Leech documents the ferment of the 1960's which also brought to Christian SD the insights of people such as Thomas Merton and Anthony de Mello. Through all of these times there have been differences of emphasis and cultural milieu which have affected the way that SD has been offered and experienced. Some of that we will examine or at least take note of in this dissertation along with more contemporary developments which are yet too new to be the subject of historical study. At the bottom of it all, though, are people wishing to grow in relationship to God; to deepen their prayer, and to grow in holiness.

Characterizing Spiritual Direction.

There are three elements to a definition of this nature. One is definition in terms of aim or purpose and another is in terms of process and the other is in terms of distinctions with other activities. I will look at each briefly in order to arrive at a working definition of SD which may inform the development of the rest of this dissertation.

In terms of aim or purpose it seems that there are two kinds of definition, by no means necessarily mutually exclusive. One is that SD aims to help a person grow in their prayer life and another that they grow in their spiritual life. It is difficult to distinguish them because defining prayer and spiritual means that the semantic field they cover can have a huge overlap. Only if a very narrow definition of prayer is used is there an appreciable distinction. A broader definition of prayer might be "to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship"²⁹ -prayer in such a perspective is being viewed as the self-placing of a person before God in

²⁹ Barry, William A. and Connolly, William J.. <http://www.providence.ab.ca/spdirection.htm> Accessed: 30/04/04

relationship. It should be apparent from this that the scope of this aim is not at all as limited as it might first appear. "Topics for conversation include work, relationships, prayer life, dreams"³⁰. In such a definition, 'prayer life' is used more narrowly for the explicit activity of focused prayer, but it should be noted that the other activities can be brought into prayer and indeed potentially could be a kind of prayer. So with that in mind we can understand better the intent behind; "... the spiritual director will always have as his primary concern the path of prayer and life which the Holy Spirit holds out to the client;"³¹.

There is another way of defining SD which, again, is linked very firmly and so it would be hard to say it was a definition exclusive of what has just been stated. This definition would see the aim as discernment of the leading of the Holy Spirit in a person's life³² So one website offers this as part of the discussion on what SD is "...listening to that person's life story with an ear for the movement of the Holy, of the Divine..."³³ which, while different in the terminology it uses, nevertheless within a Christian discourse, is recognizably and basically the same. Since prayer is most fundamentally seen as a response to the Divine, it is easy to see how these two kinds of definition can, in fact, be co-ordinated. Since prayer includes responding to the Divine then the process of discernment is a fundamental part of growing spiritually and in prayer.

The process part of the definition tells us the normal means by which SD helps to accomplish the aim, this is mostly about the role of the director. There are, again, a number of images and terms applied to the process. However, a fairly common and frequent image is of the director as "companion"³⁴ who "helps ... to discern ... and act on that discernment ..." ³⁵. There is unanimity among present-day writers that the term 'director' is one that we inherit and for that reason it may well remain but it may be misleading since the real director is God the Holy Spirit³⁶ whereas the person in the role of spiritual director is really 'just' an assistant in the process of direction finding.; someone who comes alongside rather than a leader. The ignatian exercises call for the director to say in the background, to watch and encourage and "allow the Creator to work

³⁰ <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed: 29/04/04

³¹ p.22, Jeff, Gordon H. 1987 *Spiritual Direction for Every Christian*. London, SPCK,

³² See p.42, Leech, Kenneth, 1994. *Soul Friend, Spiritual Direction in the Modern World*. London, DLT [first published 1977 by Sheldon Press], quoting Thurian,

³³ Spiritual Directors International, <http://www.sdiworld.org/html/whatis.htm> Accessed: 30/04/04

³⁴ *ibid.* and <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed: 29/04/04

³⁵ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/117/51.0.html> Accessed: 04/30/04 and see also Leech, p.42

³⁶ Spiritual Directors International, *op. cit.*

immediately with the creature"³⁷.

SD may be distinguished from other activities in various ways. Mostly the sources deal with the distinctions in relation to [psycho]therapy and pastoral counselling. These distinctions are mostly about the respective foci of the disciplines; psychological health on the one hand and spiritual health on the other (and more will be said about this later in the study). SD is not taking place usually because there is something particularly wrong with a person's life, whereas in counselling the usual reason for being there is that something is not going right; there is a problem or an issue which requires healing in some way³⁸.

Under-supply

Much of the coaching advertising material I receive encouraging me to sign up for courses, seminars or workshops, emphasizes that LC is a growing area of work with more demand than supply of coaches. Some websites repeat this kind of claim. In this chapter this claim will be looked at briefly to assess whether it is reasonable to suppose that there is indeed a growing demand for LC or at least a demand that the supply of coaches has not yet met.

Likewise, it is not uncommon to hear diocesan officials who have charge of the SD remit for their diocese say that there are more people wanting to find a spiritual director than they can find potential directors for. And indeed Roy Searle of the Northumbria Community has said something similar, in a private conversation, with regard to finding 'soul friends' for community members (The Northumbria Community is itself a growing organization). So again the question is whether there is good enough reason to take this claim on board.

There is a caveat in doing this. It is beyond the scope and resources available for this study to do an in-depth piece of research into this topic. Such research would, on its own, be sufficient to justify the full output of time energy and other resources available. In any case the focus here is on the similarities and differences between LC and SD and to reflect further on the significance of the findings. However, if it is the case that they may both also be experiencing growth in the West, then there may be further significance to

³⁷ From The spiritual Exercises, 15, Quoted in Leech 1977, p.54

³⁸ <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed: 04/29/04
<http://www.sdiworld.org/html/whatis.htm> Accessed: 30/04/04

that. So the scope of this chapter is merely to look at some of the readily available data bearing on the issue and to ask whether it is reasonable to suppose that there is, in fact, an undersupply.

Undersupply of life coaches.

Some of the claims for the undersupply issues from life-coaching schools and academies. For example one of the largest schools says this in their promotional literature: " Coaching is the world's second-fastest-growing business skill after IT. Demand far exceeds supply."³⁹ Or from another school: "More and more people are now turning to highly-trained professional coaches who can work with them"⁴⁰ Of course, with such claims from such a source it is possible that there may be a degree of 'hype' to encourage enrolments and that the main growth is in training coaches. However, it is the case that the numbers of courses and coaching schools/academies has grown in the last twenty years.

The evidence seems to suggest, furthermore, that the growth in coach training courses and numbers is at least partly driven by an increased perceived demand for the services of life coaches. In the history section earlier in this dissertation, it was seen that there has been a growth of life coaching since the late 1980's. Dr. Anthony Grand of MacQuarrie University points out that there was only one commercial coach training organization operating in Australia in 1996 whereas in 2001 there were at least 12⁴¹. In a similar vein, the UK College of Life Coaching website says: "Coaching started in America in 1988, just thirteen years ago, and yet it has experienced a fantastic growth pattern that, today, sees 34 schools of coaching in that country alone. The USA have been responsible for training over 17,000 Life Coaches since inception."⁴² In a widely-used quotation Start-Ups magazine wrote: "Coaching is the number two growth industry right behind IT (Information Technology) jobs, and it's the number one home-based profession."⁴³. However, I do have to say although this is widely quoted I have been unable to discover on what research it is based, the source is stated to be the U.S. News and World Report .

The UK College of Life Coaching website claims that over 500,000 USAmericans have become clients of life coaches⁴⁴ and considering that there were none twenty years ago,

³⁹ <http://www.lifecoachingacademy.com/career-coach-training.htm> Accessed 24/05/04

⁴⁰ http://www.achievementspecialists.co.uk/life_coaching_home.aspx, accessed 24/05/04

⁴¹ <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146> Accessed: 29/04/04]

⁴² <http://www.ukcollegeoflifecoaching.com/lifecoaching/career.asp?s=38> Accessed: 29/04/04

⁴³ <http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html> Accessed: 29/04/04

⁴⁴ <http://www.ukcollegeoflifecoaching.com/lifecoaching/career.asp?s=38#1> Accessed: 29/04/04

there has quite clearly been growth in numbers seeking coaching. The Life Coaching academy [based in the UK] claims "We have seen a steady increase in coaching over recent months and this growth is increasing month by month."⁴⁵ Of course this does not necessarily mean that there is a shortfall in coaches but it does indicate, at the very least, a growing 'market' and the possibility that latent demand for coaching services is greater than the supply.

On the other hand, one coach⁴⁶ has taken to coaching coaches on 'getting clients'. The existence of this service, and the testimonials on the website do indicate that if it is a market with greater demand for services than supply, then it is not such an undersupply that all coaches find it easy to find paying clients. There is more than a hint in what Mr Woods advises in his webpages, that some stimulation of demand may be required in the form of explaining to~, encouraging and inspiring potential clients. The implications of what he says in the broader context is that when people know what is on offer they are often willing to become clients; the gap is knowledge for what is available on the part of potential clients. If this is so then it has implications for the cultural background issues that are raised later.

Circumstantial as much of this evidence may be, the spread of life coaching, its geographical origins and the notice taken of it in the media as a growing phenomenon, makes a strong case for it being taken to be a growing endeavour for the purposes of this study. However, much of the demand may be latent requiring a degree of educating of the 'market' by life coaches.

Undersupply of spiritual Directors.

On the whole, spiritual direction is not such a commercial endeavour as life coaching, though there are instances, mostly in the USA, where fees are taken for spiritual direction.

One USAmerican Roman Catholic website⁴⁷ tells of a resurgence of interest in spiritual direction which it traces to the years following Vatican II amplified by the growth of interest in spirituality over the last two decades. Similarly with life coaching the number of people seeking SD seems difficult to quantify and can only be tracked by its shadow which is the

⁴⁵ <http://www.lifecoachingacademy.com/coaching-skills.htm#q2> Accessed: 29/04/04

⁴⁶ David Wood, <http://www.firstfiftyclients.com/> Accessed: 29/04/04

⁴⁷ <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed: 29/04/04

number of people seeking training to serve as directors. A quote from the page will illustrate, "Steve Wirth, associate director of the spiritual direction training program in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky. When that training program began 10 years ago, Wirth knew of only three trained spiritual directors in the archdiocese. Now he estimates there are more than 50, the majority of whom are laypeople". Now, of course, this may be true in the USA, but given that in the USA church attendance is between 20% and 40% of the population against some 7%-15% in the UK, it is not necessarily true that growth in the USA means that something similar is happening in the UK.

Kenneth Leech in the introduction to the revised new edition of *Soulfriend* said: "Now, in 1994, where are we? Spiritual direction is certainly 'in' again with a vengeance. There are workshops, institutes, cassettes, courses, books galore. Everywhere and in all traditions, there is a concern with the 'inner life' and with personal guidance."⁴⁸ Which certainly points to an awareness on his part that between 1977 and 1994 there was an increase in interest in SD in the UK where he is based.

Ray Simpson, writes from the perspective of being the Guardian for the Community of Aidan and Hilda, based on Lindisfarne and is involved in both offering SD and helping others to find it. "From the 1990's onwards there has been a large-scale interest in spirituality many Church people, too , are awakening to an interest in spirituality ... This questing generation looks for wise people, well founded in their tradition, yet who enable a seeker to grow spiritually in a way that is true for them."⁴⁹. Later in the same book he gives an example of a "typical" telephone conversation:

'My problem is', I respond, 'that I know of only a handful of soul friends in your part of the country, and they are already overloaded. ...'⁵⁰.

Indeed we should be aware that the stated motivation for writing the book was to help to address the perceived undersupply of soul friends (which for the purposes of this study we can take to mean spiritual directors) and to provide something that could be used to encourage and to train them, to some degree.

There seems to be good enough reason to assume that there has been an increase in interest in SD in the last couple of decades not least because organizations which

⁴⁸ p.xv Leech, 1977.

⁴⁹ p.11, Simpson, Ray. *Soul friendship, Celtic Insights into Spiritual Mentoring*. London, Hodder and Stoughton, 1999

⁵⁰ p.180, op. cit

encourage or promote it claim that they have more people seeking it than they have directors or soul friends to meet the demand. Again, as with LC, there could be an element of 'salesmanship' except that, in the UK at least, there is little profit in SD and there are no real courses being sold since such courses as there are do not qualify one as a director necessarily.

In fact most of the material and pleas in the UK for more directors seems simply to help to meet the perceived growth in demand in relation to existing resources. Now it may be that the real problem is not lack of directors and similar people, but a lack of some kind of 'clearing' mechanism so that those who are being asked to recommend directors have a full and accurate picture of who might be available to fill this role. That stated, it is nevertheless true that at least some of those who claim that there is a shortfall of directors are people who are well placed often to know who is available and exercising the kind of role being sought. There is more room in this for a proper investigation and for figures to be discovered and interviews to be made. However, I am confident looking at what evidence is available to me, that we can assume, for the time being that there is an undersupply of directors.

Similarities.

There appear to be a number of similarities shared between SD and LC, In what follows we shall examine several similarities, many shared also by counselling in varying degrees: skills used; the relationship to counselling; its whole-life scope; a non-deficit view of client/directee; a non-hierarchicality; the role of director/coach; developing potential; and connecting with life's purpose and true desires. Having looked at these there will be an attempt to summarize and reflect on the findings.

Skills used

Most of our sources consider listening to be an essential skill for both SD and LC and for similar reasons shared also shared with counselling. Listening does not simply mean letting someone talk, but is closer to 'active listening' in counselling, where attentiveness is demonstrated by body language, para-verbal signals, summarising, reflecting back and clarification.

Downey, writing about coaching, speaks for many, "The core skills involved in counselling and coaching and even mentoring, are very similar, if not actually the same; These are principally the skills of listening and of asking questions. They are the skills towards the non-directive end of the spectrum of coaching skills."⁵¹ and this would apply also to SD, as evidenced by this summary, "...to serve not in the capacity of judge, but simply as reflector, not giving advice, but merely attending, summarizing, clarifying. The helper might also feed back the feelings he or she hears behind the words. ...an active listener and companion in the search ...not the final decider, the advice-giver, or the subtle persuader."⁵². Listening, in this sense, is a foundational skill which enables the building of a relationship in which deep things can be honestly shared.

Questioning has just been mentioned in conjunction with listening and builds vitally on it -since effective questions are born of what has already been shared. It is notable that questioning is also common to SD and LC. It is given more prominence in the LC literature but is nevertheless noted in SD materials. One website, explaining LC to potential clients describes part of the method of coaches as "using effective questioning and listening,"⁵³. In fact, since raising self-awareness is an important aspect of LC, "It follows therefore that the primary form of verbal interaction from a good coach is in the interrogative."⁵⁴ While Jeff in describing the role of a spiritual director recognises that, among other things, a director is a person "who asks important questions which may or may not have been considered, and leaves the directee to find out his or her own answers."⁵⁵. The idea that questioning is for the benefit of the client/directee is also part of LC, as Whitmore further says; "Questions are commonly asked in order to elicit information ... if I am a coach ... the information is not for me ... I need only to know that the coachee has the necessary information."⁵⁶

Intuition also finds recognition in SD and LC as part of what the coach/director offers to the relationship. Co-Active Coaching explicitly names, defines and explores intuition among the list of coaching 'contexts'⁵⁷. In the SD field, on the other hand one writer shares

⁵¹ Downey, p.23

⁵² p.80, Hart, Thomas N, 1980. *The Art of Christian Listening*. Mahwah, NJ, Paulist Press.

⁵³ <http://www.byregion.net/glossary/lifecoaching.html> Accessed 29/04/04

⁵⁴ p.41, Whitmore, John, 1996. *Coaching for performance*. 2nd edition, London Nicholas Brearley Publishing. 1st edition 1992.

⁵⁵ p.10, Jeff, Gordon, 1987. *Spiritual Direction for Every Christian*. London, SPCK

⁵⁶ Whitmore, p.41

⁵⁷ Whitworth et al. p.29

the experience which they summarized thus, "Discernment came with a bold, apparently crazy spiritual intuition: 'stop praying!' Who suggests that as a method of spiritual growth? But there proved to be something of wisdom in those words ..." ⁵⁸ and it seems to me that Alan Jones has something of the same thing in mind in the description of imagination: "Spiritual Direction is concerned with the creative use of the imagination to enable us to see what is really there." ⁵⁹ and Leech commends the intuitive grasp of situations as part of helping to illumine things for the directee ⁶⁰. One website for a Christian LC company explicitly shows intuition on a diagram illustrating their approach to coaching. However, what they do is a rebranding of SD ⁶¹.

The use of metaphor is also common to SD and LC and indeed is often closely linked with intuition, as Leech makes explicit; "...illumination by metaphor' ...a way of knowing based upon an intuitive grasp of situations, an openness to the myths and symbols of experience." ⁶² and goes on to say that the point is that SD involves a way of knowing that is not simply scientific. Although it should be noted that many a scientific discovery seems to have come out of just such intuitive leaps based in symbolic representation, the discovery of the molecular shape of Benzene being one example. Perhaps we should understand purely deductive methodologies to be in view here.

Some writers in LC recognize the power of metaphor, "The skill of using metaphor is a way to draw on imagery and experience to help the client comprehend faster and more easily. ... It's a whole experience. Often the truth for clients is not in their mind but in their heart or their gut. Metaphor tends to bypass the analysis and target the powerful places." ⁶³. It would be very easy to pass those words off as having been written by someone describing SD. Clearly also, the use of metaphor has great attractions for people in post- or late modernity.

Relationship to counselling

In trying to describe what LC is or what SD is one of the most frequent points of comparison is with counselling and psychotherapy. As I hope will become apparent, I think

⁵⁸ p.61 Anderson, Keith R, and Reese, Randy D, 2000. *Spiritual Mentoring, A Guide for seeking and giving Direction*. Guildford, Eagle. First published Downers Grove, IVP 1999

⁵⁹ p.102 Jones, Alan. *Exploring Spiritual Direction, 1982*. New York, Seabury Press new edition, Boston MA, Cowley Press, 1999

⁶⁰ Leech, p.130

⁶¹ <http://userpages.itis.com/vanzyl/christian.html> there is a copy in the appendix

⁶² Leech, p.130

⁶³ Whitworth et al. p.43

that this is because they are the nearest thing phenomenologically to both LC and SD from within the experience or familiarity of most people. The fact that it is a point of comparison which they hold in common is itself suggestive of a similarity that they themselves may have. However, as a point of comparison, there is both affirmation and distinction, the former mostly is implicit while it is the latter that is made most explicit.

One aspect of comparison is in the respective aims of (pastoral) counselling / psychotherapy, LC and SD. Writers from both SD and LC seem clear that the client or directee is normally someone who is reasonably well emotionally and psychologically and that SD and LC are not avenues for the treatment of personality problems or emotional disturbances. Thus one writer in LC can write: "In Coaching we are not addressing symptoms of an emotional disturbance. We are working with healthy, well functioning individuals who want to improve and expand upon their level of functioning rather than upon treatment of an emotional disturbance. It is future oriented, progress oriented and action oriented." ⁶⁴ and from SD we find; "Psychological counsellors are understood to deal with personality problems--neuroses, psychoses, hang-ups, anxieties, depressions. You go to them to get fixed. Spiritual directors, on the other hand, deal not so much with problems as with progress, progress in the spiritual life."⁶⁵.

Another aspect of comparison, relatedly as seen in the quotations above, is the orientation of SD and LC to the future and to setting and achieving goals (even if they are for ones prayer life) or, more positively still, personal growth. This is contrasted with counselling where the orientation is perceived to be towards understanding and reframing past events and reactions. It may not be an entirely fair comparison but it is one that is oriented to the popular imagination and so perhaps should be taken as marking a definition of SD and LC rather than a rigorous statement about counselling or psychotherapy. Kenneth Leech takes a more nuanced view and so his words may fitly summarize, "

...it remains to be seen how far the association of counselling with sickness will remain central. Certainly the sickness model is a bad model for spiritual guidance since, although Christians would wish to use the concepts of healing and wholeness, the emphasis is not so much on the prevention and treatment of sickness as on the achievement of salvation. Spiritual guidance therefore is not crisis intervention but a continuous process"⁶⁶.

With a different expression and understanding of 'salvation', arising from a different world-

⁶⁴ http://psychologydoc.com/executive_&_life_coaching.htm Accessed 29/04/04

⁶⁵ Hart, p.27 see also Simpson, p.248

⁶⁶ Leech, p.92

view in the background ,it would probably be possible for many a coach to find much to commend that statement.

whole-life scope

A whole-life scope means recognizing and working with those connectedness of human life where mind and body are seen to be inextricably linked, where the different aspects of a person's life are recognized as mutually supportive or influential. To put it with a concrete example, stress at work will very likely be taken into the home-life or vice versa. Most writing on both SD and LC implicitly if not explicitly takes this holistic approach.

A Roman Catholic website promoting SD showcases the experience of various directees, one of whom illustrates the holistic nature of SD very clearly: "Meeting monthly with a spiritual director creates a sacred space where she can articulate and listen for God's movement in her relationships, work, and prayer life. ... Topics for conversation include work, relationships, prayer life, dreams"⁶⁷

In SD there is at least one theological basis for the approach.

"For some, spiritual direction is a clear-cut task of helping a person in their prayer life ... But if God is concerned with the whole of life, then the whole of life is to be directed by God; just as the turkeys in Thomas Merton's story were a proper topic for spiritual direction, so relationships, moral problems at work, and wider political and other issues will be valid areas of discussion in a direction session. We cannot separate the 'spiritual' from the secular: there is only one world and all of it belongs to God"⁶⁸. We note here that the basis is in the wholeness of God's relating to the created order within Christian thought. It is also worth noting, however, the contrast with an approach in which the focus is narrowly on the prayer life. In practice this is difficult to maintain since factors from other parts of a person's life become issues in prayer; tiredness or depression or stress affect the way one relates to God and /or the ability to sustain certain forms of spiritual practice.

There is a similar experience-driven dynamic when we come to examine LC in relation to the theme of whole-life scope. At first sight, LC would seem to be offering a narrow focus on achieving particular goals, especially if one were to encounter it within a business context. So, writing from and for a business context Whitmore's holism is an important

⁶⁷ <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

⁶⁸ Jeff p.18-19

example:

"In our coaching courses for managers we often include a segment on 'life balance'. ... We have managers coach each other to increase their awareness of the balance, or lack of it, in their lives between work and a number of factors such as their partner, children, leisure, adventure, quiet time for the soul, health and fitness, contribution and community."⁶⁹ A Life Coach, Harry Faddis articulates the holistic sensibility well:

*"I am aware that life is a whole. When we look at one area, such as spirituality, it effects the whole of our lives, such as work and money. When we look at eroticism and make an inquiry into our values and goals, it effects other areas such as spirituality and recreation. Finding a root area of imbalance in our lives will uncover the same imbalance in our whole life. Empowering one area of our lives, undoubtedly puts power in the whole of our lives."*⁷⁰

One of the oft repeated words in coaching literature seems to be 'balance' and refers to the idea that there should be a proportionality about each aspect of a person's life in relation to all the other aspects. In fact one of the main exercises recommended in Co-Active coaching is one designed to help the client to take stock of their life balance.

Usually the problem being encountered is that of 'work-life balance':

*"many don't know what's wrong with their lives. They just feel that they're dissatisfied. It could be their work. Or their marriage. Or their lack of spare time. Some people want to slow down, but don't know how. Others want more time for themselves"*⁷¹

Both SD and LC recognize the practical wisdom of a whole-life scope to their work.

Although it is arguable that there is a philosophical basis for this in Christian SD whereas there is less of a philosophical awareness in LC, nevertheless the practicalities of dealing with people means that a whole-life approach has to be taken.

Non-deficit view of client/directee.

By this subtitle I mean a view of human beings analogous to that current in adult education at the time of writing, where the learner is not viewed as an empty vessel waiting to be filled with the knowledge of the teacher, rather the task of the teacher is to help the student to learn by using what they bring with them already to the learning process. This is not the same as saying that they don't lack knowledge, it is to recognize

⁶⁹ Whitmore, p.4

⁷⁰ <http://www.harryfaddis.com/coachqa.html> Accessed 29/04/04

⁷¹ <http://www.inst.org/coach/index.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

that they are co-active with the teacher and have much to contribute to the process of learning other than simply soaking up (to change the metaphor slightly) the knowledge presented to them. The learner already has experiences and other learning which can serve as a basis for extending their competencies and knowledge still further. It is probably not unfair to say that some teaching skills in this vein are also coaching skills.

With regard to LC, a non-deficit view is straightforwardly an entail of the autonomy granted to clients within the modus operandi of LC and relates well to the client base of relatively healthy and well-adjusted people who already have an adequate degree of stability in their lives. It is entailed therefore in the role of the coach as this quotation makes clear; "The coach is the catalyst. It's the client that makes the decisions and commitment, and discovers amazing answers that their inner wisdom held all along."⁷² Similarly: "Coaching is different to consultancy in that it sees the solution lying with the client"⁷³. A non-deficit view of the client is also the implication of seeing LC within the scope of a self-help endeavour, "As time has gone by it's become much more socially acceptable to access self-help initiatives such as executive or personal coaching"⁷⁴

Whitmore makes explicit the non-deficit view: "The coachee does acquire the facts, not from the coach but from within himself."⁷⁵ and later this is linked with the implication for a view of human potential which is looked at below, "To use coaching successfully we have to adopt a far more optimistic view than usual of the dormant capability of people, all people."⁷⁶

Some SD sources are more explicit; "[This chapter] suggests that young people are not in 'deficit'. They already have the Spirit of God in them."⁷⁷. Perhaps the explicitness of this quotation stems from the fact that the book it is drawn from is promoting SD (under the label "accompaniment") and written by church-based youth workers with an educational background. On the other hand, writing in a way that resonates with my own experience and from his own experience Jeff write, specifically focusing on prayer, "... beginners ... often helped to realize that they are already effectively praying when they don't think they

⁷² <http://www.4change.info/life-coaching.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

⁷³ <http://www.byregion.net/glossary/lifecoaching.html> Accessed 29/04/04

⁷⁴ Dr. Anthony Grant, quoted on <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146> Accessed 29/04/04

⁷⁵ Whitmore p.6

⁷⁶ Whitmore, p.13

⁷⁷ p.5 Green, Maxine & Christian, Chandu, 1998. *Accompanying Young People on their Spiritual Quest* London, National Society/Church House Publishing

are. In other words, prayer is a much wider activity than we are sometimes led to believe."⁷⁸ In these few sentences, Jeff articulates a view that affirms that not only is it a non-deficit starting point, even with "beginners", but that the role of the director is to help to explicate what is already there. Given that Jeff is a widely referred to 'authority' on SD, we can take it that his view is shared by many.

There is something of a paradox in all of this, in that many of those who seek LC or SD do so because there is a perceived lack in their lives. Many of the LC websites advertising LC services market their services to just such a perceived lack⁷⁹. The paradox is resolved by remembering that the lack is made up by encouraging the client to find the resources to evolve a response from within, or at least to identify for themselves how they themselves can make progress. The retention of autonomy and confidence in their ability to make such changes as are necessary is what characterizes the non-deficit view.

There is also a difference between LC and SD on this point which will be looked at under the appropriate heading. Suffice to say at this point that there is a degree of suspicion in SD regarding a non-deficit anthropology, therefore it is only fair to point out that the examples above are either not to be taken a totally representative with regard to SD or to be treated as in need of further nuancing, whereas LC is probably unanimous about it.

non-hierarchicality

On the part of SD, under this heading we are looking at something that may be more recent. Indeed the term "director" really seems to have become current some while ago when a more hierarchical climate prevailed in SD. The term is now usually found to be somewhat embarrassing because a more egalitarian cultural climate and a different understanding of the role of the director tends to prevail. Something of the change can be glimpsed in the Susan Howatch novels referenced in the bibliography where the plot development involves SD at various points in the twentieth century. Howatch has been at pains to research such things well.

Because of the embarrassment at the connotations of "director", there have been some attempts to find alternatives, one of the more popular of these, as evidenced by the titles of two books in the bibliography, is "soul friend" drawing from the Gaelic term "anam

⁷⁸ Jeff, p.11

⁷⁹ see <http://www.4change.info/life-coaching.htm> (Accessed 29/04/04) for example.

Chara". In several books and websites the term "companion" is used quite frequently⁸⁰. Pointing to a striving for a term that is far less hierarchical. A good comment on this is the following from an interview with Jeffrey Gaines the director of Spiritual Directors International:

" For many people spiritual direction is a new concept, and some people are uncomfortable with the word "director" because of what it might imply. Is it a problem for you?

*JSG: I would say that "director" really is a misnomer, because God is the Director and I am simply one who companions. There is a tradition of using the word "director", and I don't see that being changed, but truly God is the Director, and the spiritual director simply assists the seeker in uncovering and discovering the direction of God in that person's life"*⁸¹

The unease with hierarchical, 'power-over' terminology is shown almost universally in the contemporary definitions offered for SD. So Jeff explicitly deals with what is feared about a hierarchical approach when he writes of people seeking spiritual companionship "not so as to be told what to do nor to make them childishly dependent"⁸². While Corcoran comments, "The model of friendship seems to be the favored model for the director-directee relationship. This is certainly a more egalitarian model than the parent-child model"⁸³. 'Egalitarian' should not be read as implying complete reciprocity, "The director's role is one of coming alongside, rather than dictating a program. The relationship thus shares some features with the Celtic ideal of a "soul friend" or "anamchara." However, its nurture usually flows only one way."⁸⁴ So while it is conceived as a non-hierarchical relationship, nevertheless one partner to the relationship is serving the other in a particular way that is not necessarily reciprocated. So while the images of friendship and companionship are useful, they too can mislead and so have not gained favour as substitute terms for 'director'.

In Accompanying, Green and Christian offer an insight into the role of SD which makes a very clear link with the concerns and even terminology of LC. "In accompanying, the

⁸⁰ see, for example, Hart, p.17, Jones, p.151 and <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

⁸¹ Jeffrey S. Gaines, <http://www.sdiworld.org/html/whatis.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

⁸² Jeff, p.4

⁸³ p.450 Corcoran, Donald, Sr., *Spiritual Guidance*. In *Christian Spirituality vol 1* ed. McGinn, Bernard; Meyendorff, John; and Leclercq, Jean. London, SCM Press

⁸⁴ <http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/117/51.0.html> Accessed 29/04/04

young person takes responsibility for their life and has the major input into the nature of the sessions by bringing the agenda, setting the pace and deciding at what depth to discuss things."⁸⁵ This makes it clear that there is, in fact, a very real element of service on the part of the director /accompanist, if anything reversing the connotations of the word director. For many Christians this would be seen as only right and proper, given the service ethic that theologically such ministries should have.

LC on the other hand has no particular theological basis on which to place a service ethic. However, the fact of it being a service offered to the public for a fee does tend to direct the focus that way and the apparently human-potential roots of the discipline also tend in that direction. Perhaps the clearest expression of non-hierarchicality is found in *Co-Active Coaching*, "The coaching relationship ... Is an alliance between two equals for the purpose of meeting the client's needs."⁸⁶ The choice of the word 'alliance' implies a fundamental equality between coach and client whilst 'meeting the client's needs' gives a service focus to the role of the coach. In this we have a fairly exact analogy with what we have identified as the main contemporary emphasis in SD. Whitmore talks of "partnership" in a way reminiscent of the way 'alliance' is used above⁸⁷ and goes on to say how the change of perspective that a coaching model brings to a business can affect an organisation: "as the style changes from directing to coaching the culture of the organization will begin to change. Hierarchy gives way to support, blame gives way to honest evaluation, external motivators are replaced by self-motivation, protective barriers fall as teams build"⁸⁸. Clearly non-hierarchicality is at the heart of coaching.

Role of director/coach

It should be evident from the foregoing, that the roles of coach and director share considerable similarities and so perhaps less need to be said in this section than might otherwise be the case, since much has already been mentioned which pertains to the respective roles.

One LC client said, "A life-coach gets you absolutely clear about what it is you really want out of life."⁸⁹ while a coach explains, "The coach is listening for the appearance of the

⁸⁵ Green & Christian, p.37-38]

⁸⁶ Whitworth et al. p.3

⁸⁷ Whitmore, p.16

⁸⁸ Ibid., p.24

⁸⁹ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/insideldn/insideout/lifecoach.shtml> Accessed 29/04/04

client's vision, values, purpose. The coach is also listening for resistance, fear, backtracking, and the voice of that internal saboteur ..."90. A coach serves their client by clarifying, supporting and holding a client accountable for what they choose to do.

Similarly a spiritual director is helping in clarifying both what is happening and what is the way forward for the directee. The term more favoured in SD is 'discernment. Thus Ray Simpson may write: "Now, it is recognised that a soul friend's role is to help the seeker to develop their own discernment."91. The implied contrast here is with a view that handed down discernment and expected the directee to accept it. And similarly to LC "The role of the director is much more that of the person who asks important questions which may or may not have been considered, and leaves the directee to find out his or her own answers."92. The latter sentence with the change of 'coach' for 'director' would not jar in a LC text.

developing potential

I have already characterized LC as having human-potential movement roots in writing about its non-deficit approach to training. So I think that two further examples of the understanding of LC as developing potential should suffice. The first is part of an upbeat sales-pitch for coaching services:

"Coaching will challenge any limiting self-beliefs you may have, so that you no longer limit your potential and create frustration."93

The second is from a counselling /psychotherapy practice where the aim seems to be to help people choose what kind of service they should look for to help them. "Coaching is focused upon heightening ability to achieve potential, to promote optimal level of functioning and to enhance the effective application of motivation to achieve specific goals."94

Dr Anthony Grant of MacQuarrie University in Australia, researching the effects of LC defines LC in a way that brings out its aims to develop potential.

" ... a systematic process in which a coach facilitates self-directed learning, personal

90 Whitworth et al. p.9

91 Simpson, p.76

92 Jeff p.10

93 <http://www.4change.info/life-coaching.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

94 http://psychologydoc.com/executive_&_life_coaching.htm Accessed 29/04/04

growth and enhancement of the coachee's life experience and performance. It aims to bring about sustained cognitive, emotional and behavioural change which facilitates goal attainment and performance enhancement either in a person's work or personal life."⁹⁵

The terms 'personal growth' and 'performance enhancement' signal development of a person's potential in a way suited to making it the subject of investigation in a university psychology department.

It may be more surprising to find that developing potential is part of SD. St. Irenaeus wrote that 'the glory of God is a human being who is fully alive', indicating that from early in the life of the church a sense of developing potential in people has been present. So when Jeff writes, "... the whole exercise is one in which the potential of the directee is being helped to emerge, and not in any sense a pushing of directees into any kind of path of prayer."⁹⁶ he is not simply importing post-enlightenment views of humanity into his Christian faith. And he is not alone, "God's purpose for each of us is that we reach the fullness of our personal potential."⁹⁷ Alan Jones is guarded and skeptical of humanist agendas in spirituality, however, he is able to say of his own perspective on what he is doing in SD, "I have to be committed to the free development of other persons."⁹⁸

Kenneth Leech is even more wary of the potential of consumer capitalism to co-opt spirituality for its own ends and for views that are only "tenuously Christian" to take hold⁹⁹. So when he writes, "... It is this process of spiritual maturing which is the purpose of spiritual direction."¹⁰⁰ we should take seriously the notion that developing potential is part of mainstream Christian SD, given that spiritual maturing has to be taken in a holistic sense as against a gnostic sense which would see merely a 'spiritual' part of a human being as important. 'Maturing' implies, as with any living thing, a bringing out of what is already present in potential. Leech also comments on another Anglican writer on SD, "Thornton sees the Anglican style of direction as empirical, not authoritarian, a mutual working-out of ways towards perfection between two people knit together in Christ."¹⁰¹, the 'towards perfection' similarly signals a completing of what has already begun or that is

⁹⁵ <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146> Accessed 29/04/04

⁹⁶ Jeff, p.10]

⁹⁷ Hart, p.71

⁹⁸ Jones, p.88

⁹⁹ Leech, p.xviii

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, p.33

¹⁰¹ Ibid, p.79

already there at least in embryo, drawing, as it does, on the word 'τελειος' from the New Testament with its connotations of bringing to completion and fulfilling what is already begun.

Connecting with life's purpose and true desires.

'Connecting with' probably seems at first sight to apply very naturally to SD while 'life's purpose and true desires' more to LC. However, each term do fits both SD and LC. The image of Christian faith drawn from medieval history tends to match Christian spirituality with ascetic self-denial and so a phrase like 'true desires' seems counter to such a perception. However, as with the section above on developing potential, there is actually a long tradition of Christian SD attending to deep desires as potentially the voice or the guidance of God within a person . One of the Desert Fathers, Abbot Nisteros is reported as having said to someone inquiring as to what they should do with themselves.

"Therefore, whatever you see your soul desire according to God, do that thing and you shall keep your heart safe."¹⁰²

It is no surprise, then, that SD encourages the listening to one's heart desires as part of the discernment of vocation which is certainly something to do with a life's purpose. Thus Hart is able to write: "When we come in touch with our own deepest orientation and desire, our own real interior élan, we have also found God's direction for our lives. This is the fundamental principle around which the discernment process pivots."¹⁰³

Jeff, describing how he goes about the initial stages of SD, links deepest desires and life-direction.

*"I often try to raise the question 'What do you want?' in a deeper form than merely the setting up of the contract ... unless we know what we really want of life -unless we know what we want at our deepest level - we shall be lacking both in self-awareness and in knowing what is our true direction in life. The path that we are actually taking may be pulling against a much deeper want, which may be either more unselfish or more selfish than our outwardly apparent direction."*¹⁰⁴

Jones links the will of God and true desires in characterizing some of the main questions

¹⁰² quoted in Celtic Daily Prayer, p.426

¹⁰³ Hart, p.75

¹⁰⁴ Jeff p.31

raised in SD as "How can we discern the will of God for us now? How can I get to what I really want? ... How can I get to the place where I really want to be?"¹⁰⁵. More boldly, and in contradicton of the popular image mentioned above, he goes on to say, "The real secret of Christianity, it is said, is self-fulfilment, not self-abandonment."¹⁰⁶ 'Fulfilment' because it is connecting to both true purpose and therefore to deepest desires.

Life Coach Harry Faddis makes a similar connection between fulfilment and 'deepest-felt dreams': "Some expected results of personal life coaching ... the gift of fulfillment, that we are living a life of purpose that is in harmony with our deepest-felt dreams."¹⁰⁷ And from Co-Active Coaching a description of what a coach will be seeking in a client; "The coach is listening for the appearance of the client's vision, values, purpose. The coach is also listening for resistance, fear, backtracking, and the voice of that internal saboteur ..." ¹⁰⁸. In the latter part of that quotation we find something that would also not be out of place in SD: a sense that there are forces at work within the human psyche that push against our best interests and true vocation.

Some of those forces are reckoned with during the course of LC, not least among them is the tendency to be captured by what in SD might be described as 'worldliness':

*"Fulfilment may, especially initially, include external measures of success such as career, financial status and lifestyle. In coaching it will soon progress to a deeper definition. It becomes defining what fills the coachees heart and soul not just their pockets. A fulfilling life is a valued life and a coachee will have their own definition of what they value. Understanding and clarifying values is an important part of coaching, because when lifechoices reflect your values, those choices become much more satisfying."*¹⁰⁹

Other similarities

Probably, on reading coaching promotional literature or glancing through books or materials on coaching, one might have the impression that coaching is about success and positive thinking. Therefore, to read something like the following may come as something of a surprise. "Acknowledging failure is not something that comes naturally to most clients,

¹⁰⁵ Jones, p.58

¹⁰⁶ *ibid*, p.135

¹⁰⁷ <http://www.harryfaddis.com/coachqa.html> Accessed 29/04/04

¹⁰⁸ Whitworth et al. p.9

¹⁰⁹ <http://www.gymuser.co.uk/corporate/life/life-coach-training.htm> accessed 29/04/04

but it's important to coaching and clients need to hear this early."¹¹⁰ The interesting thing in this context is the similarity to the practice of confession which has a long historical association with SD, and in both cases, of course, the acknowledging of failure has ultimately the aim of reform and renewal and gives that opportunity to learn.

At another point in Co-Active Coaching we are told, "One of the defining qualities of coaching is that it creates accountability: a measuring tool for action and a means to report on learning."¹¹¹ and again this kind of perspective is not at all alien to SD.

"Contemplation is simple attentiveness to what is there."¹¹² seems to have much in common with the desire in LC to raise awareness. Whitmore sees awareness-raising, and by that he means becoming aware of what is happening or what is there, is a form of attentiveness. Thus, "the awareness-raising function of the expert coach is indispensable."¹¹³. So it may even be said, that encouraging some form of contemplation is common to both LC and SD

Summary.

Some of the similarities appear to be surface rather than evidencing a likeness which might be attributable to some kinship. Rather, such similarities may be argued to arise from the immediate context of professional relationships within a structured environment which requires personal perspectives and details to be shared. For example, it could be argued that the skills used are simply necessities of doing the kind of work that is being done; clients/directees simply will not be able to share important information if they do not feel listened to and so the battery of listening skills is important. On the other side of the relationship, the coach/director will not be able to make further progress without clarifying and questioning, for example. Similarly the roles of coach and director could be explained as of necessity given the cultural context and the similarity of purpose, but so to say is to admit a similarity of purpose to which the roles and the skills witness.

Both SD and LC position themselves similarly in relation to counselling and psychotherapy and this could be seen as mainly a response to the opening up of a niche created by the therapeutic emphasis of counselling and psychotherapy on the one side and the perhaps

¹¹⁰ Whitworth et al. p.24

¹¹¹ Ibid. p.80

¹¹² Jones, p.121

¹¹³ Whitmore, p.29

the weakening or even loss of support structures of family and friends on the other. If this is so then the similarity indicates a potential commonality of origin or driver.

It could be argued that the holistic approach that both SD and LC use is a pragmatic response to the existential realities of human life. Such an argument would not be fair. SD has a theological anthropology which makes its approach more than pragmatic. And while it may be truer of LC it is not something to be dismissed that the existential realities of human life are recognized and dealt with in both. The fact that Christianity and therefore SD has not always been so hospitable to the insight of human holism and the recent genesis of LC as such may be pointers to commonalities in terms of responses to cultural changes currently being experienced in the west.. It is possible that a non-deficit approach to clients or directees and the non-hierarchy could be viewed in the same way and likewise be pointing to cultural factors in the background of both LC and SD. "Spiritual direction is not a peculiar or esoteric art, but one that is fundamental to ordinary human intercourse."¹¹⁴

Differences.

Having identified various similarities and made initial assessment of how significant those similarities might be, we move now to the differences.

Focus

SD more tightly focuses on prayer and relationship with God. Therefore it is also more heteronomous whereas more anthropocentric LC tends to the autonomous with regard to the human subject.. SD explicitly deals with the spiritual dimension of human being in a framework of shared assumptions between director and directee that acknowledges that God should have primacy of place in the life of the individual, often with the acknowledgments that the enterprise of SD is to help the directee to grow and develop in their relationship to God. Thus "God is the Director, and the spiritual director simply assists the seeker in uncovering and discovering the direction of God in that person's life. This enables the directee to see, claim, receive, own, and reverence God's voice, God's nudging, and God's acting, in such a way that it elicits a natural and genuine response."¹¹⁵

¹¹⁴ Jones, p.4

¹¹⁵ Spiritual Directors International op.cit.

It is in theory and sometimes in practice possible for LC to deal with spiritual coaching and this may substantially overlap with SD in what may actually take place in a session. However, as a whole, LC is at least agnostic with regard to God and so, like much of western society, in practical terms atheist. That is not to denigrate LC simply to recognize its de facto assumptions.

It would be possible from the point of view of LC to see SD as a particular specialized niche of LC: that LC encompasses SD. From the perspective of SD, LC could be seen as something almost entirely other, sharing only some techniques and perhaps an integral view of human being. This would be because of the lack of the Godward dimension to the process. This in turn reframes the role of the parties engaged in the activity for in SD for "The Christian tradition has always emphasized that Christ or the Holy Spirit is the true guide of souls"¹¹⁶ and so SD frames itself within a triadic relationship consisting in director, directee and God. Since this triadic relationship is, in a real sense, definitive, then LC must regard SD as other; having only some techniques and important but not central concerns in common.

For this reason, it is likely that most spiritual directors would find the language of performance (which figures so highly in definitions of LC) especially if explicitly linked to prayer or relationship with God to be very problematic if not wholly inappropriate. Though to be fair, it might well be considered inappropriate in certain arenas of coaching such as relationship coaching, which would be analogous to SD in respects of it being about interpersonal development in some way. So the difference over whether or not seeing the enterprise as one of improving performance may be more to do with the particular area of life that is at issue than anything else.

For LC the difference is mostly one of the main area of life that lies at the heart of the coaching relationship. For SD the difference derives from the perception that the relationship to God is in fact the heart of all life. In LC the spiritual is relativised and so seen as one dimension of human life amongst others (albeit integrally connected). In SD the spiritual is the dimension that relativises all the others.

Having noted such a difference of focus, we should remember that in practice much of the

¹¹⁶ Corcoran, p444

difference we have identified seems to have little bearing since the client-centredness of the process necessitates similarities of praxis. While SD defines the process in relation to God, it does seem to be that the triadic relationship this sets up could also give a triadic analysis of LC in which client, coach and 'goal' or 'task' are mutually related. To do this would be to reframe SD within LC terms. SD could embrace such an approach but would need to note that the third term [that of goal or task] must be positively related to God or become an idolatry. Such an analysis would make possible a Christian LC, an in fact probably yields a good model for what takes place in much SD.

Anthropology

One way to characterize the differences under this heading between SD and LC would be to say that SD is theistic while LC is humanistic. However, that would say little more than has already be basically identified in the section on 'focus'. We would also need to recognize that in practice such differences may be less clear cut in a similar way to what was explored in the 'focus' section. In addition, as we have seen in the chapter on similarities, there are practitioners of SD who are using methods and even holding perspectives that cohere well with LC and there are practitioners of LC who are coaching people in spiritual matters in ways unlikely to be significantly different to many practitioners of SD, the more so when they may be doing so under the label of Christian Life Coaching.¹¹⁷

Probably, more significantly, it is normal for LC to take an optimistic view of humanity while a Christian perspective underlying SD would be either somewhat pessimistic or at least skeptical of human ability to be able to consistently achieve, unaided, its goals. And most in Christian SD would also be skeptical about the ability to choose, consistently and unaided, good goals. The qualifications I make in those last two sentences alert us to the danger of making the differences polar and antithetical. There are debates about the relationship between nature and grace in human life and spirituality and we cannot pick it up in this dissertation.

However, it may not be necessary to do so. It is likely that the divergent approach relates to two different questions. As James Beck writes, reviewing a book on *Sin, Pride, & Self-Acceptance* and commenting on the differences between approaches to humanity based

¹¹⁷ see <http://userpages.itis.com/vanzyl/christian.html> Accessed 29/04/04

on analysis of sin, specifically pride versus those concerned for lack of self-esteem;

*"Theologians are interested in identifying what is at the heart of human separation from God. Psychotherapists seek to determine what is at the core of our clients' pathology. (One could substitute any politically-correct term here as desired: problems in living, angst, maladjustment, distress, abnormality, and so forth). The answer to the question of the theologians should be "sin." And the answer to the psychotherapist's question should be related to some overall theory about the development of psychopathology. Low self-esteem is but one answer. Other answers include anxiety, alienation, faulty learning, erroneous thinking, poor and inadequate parenting, and on and on ."*¹¹⁸.

While this is not directly dealing with our particular issue, nevertheless it does, I believe, have relevance in that the basic difference is between a relatively optimistic approach to human nature against one that is relatively pessimistic¹¹⁹. We might rework part of the quotation thus: " Life coaches seek to determine what is at the core of their clients' inhibition from setting and achieving their appropriate life goals ... the answer to the life coaches' question should be related to some perception or lack of perception of their current dilemma." In parallel to the section on 'focus' this is simply a question of the inclusion of otherwise of God in the thinking. In a sense this would allow a Christian life coach to see a mis/perception as a symptom of sin [if appropriate] when the clients' issue is seen in the context of relationship with God. LC is not, in Christian terms, offering a way to salvation rather a set of techniques to help people improve their lives and in that sense it could be compared to, for example, an education project in central Africa to enable farmers to improve their agricultural techniques and so feed their families. In reality LC has no 'official' anthropology except the belief that human beings can help themselves to achieve greater fulfilment.

However, there is enough in LC literature about finding fulfilment and balance to disturb some SD practitioners. The concern would be that such promise is sufficiently close to what are often perceived to be corollaries of salvation that an implicit challenge to Christian views of humanity and salvation. In effect to claim that one might be able to earn salvation by ones own efforts or alternatively to anaesthetize a person against Christian claims by the substitution of something that appears to be an adequate substitute -in Christian terms an idolatry. It may be that both of these concerns are true in the sense that

¹¹⁸ <http://www.denverseminary.edu/dj/articles2004/0700/0701.php> accessed 10/06/04

¹¹⁹ cf. Leech, p.91

there may be LC clients and even coaches who hold such views or views that amount to them. However, this is not to say that of necessity they are true of the endeavour of LC per se. Merely that some of its users and practitioners may use it thus. Given the similarities in views about human potential between at least some LC~ and SD practitioners and noted in the similarities chapter, it might be wise to see LC as more neutral or agnostic with regard to an overview of the human condition. It is more focused on practicalities and it is capable of being incorporated into a Christian SD framework.

In the similarities chapter, we looked at a non deficit view of humanity which it was argued that to some extent SD and LC seemed to hold in common. This similarity also holds a difference. In LC the lack of deficit is largely seen to be simply the way a human being is whereas many of the SD sources relate the lack of deficit to the work of God, specifically the Holy Spirit, in the life of a person, so there is an implied deficit in such a SD view; that without the Holy Spirit there would be a deficit. A further implication being, at least for some theological standpoints, that for people outside of Christian faith the deficit remains. On the other hand there are theological perspectives that see the work of the Spirit beyond the church and the believer in such a way as to see creative activity and true personal growth as signs of prevenient grace in some way. On the other hand, we also saw that the LC commitment to a non-deficit understanding of humanity did not preclude the need actually to learn or to grow, so there is a kind of deficit implied in that which does not preclude the need for 'outside' [that is to the individual] help. We should also note, as above, that the two views are not at this point seeking to answer the same sort of questions and so the possibility of reconciling this difference is clearly present.

Orientation to social context

LC is, by self-definition, concerned with individuals. In all the material I have read regarding LC, there is nothing that relates the individual to the wider social context except as either a means to goal fulfilment and arena of activity or presenting an obstacle to be overcome as an individual. In a BBC article on LC the question is asked, "Are these life coaches just a symptom of living in an impersonal and busy world, or can they really help in getting your life in order?"¹²⁰ By using the word 'impersonal' , we are alerted to the isolation and individuality of the subject set over against the social context and the implication is that the project of 'getting your life in order' is one in which the individual is

¹²⁰ <http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/insideldn/insideout/lifecoach.shtml> Accessed 29/04/04

on their own, essentially. In this way LC is likely not to function critically in relation to the status quo of the social order.

On the other hand, SD seems to carry an implicit critique of the social order; "But the director would see most of society itself as a far greater 'problem' than most of the problems of a client. In Christian terms it would be entirely wrong to be fully adjusted to the kind of society in which we live, with all its injustices and selfishness and greed."¹²¹. This is probably because setting the purpose of SD within the context of God's will allows the corporate to be embraced. Whereas LC can only really function with individualism and so falls in with much counselling which aims frequently to effect an adjustment to society [cf. Leech, p.98ff] or at least to work within present parameters.

It is possible to conceive of LC being undertaken by and for people involved in social change, justice, peace workers rights etc., however, and so perhaps such a differentiation would not be fair, particularly as viewing SD as offering a critique of society or as tending towards the socially progressive is often more of an idealized view than an actuality. In practice, it is just as possible for SD to be individual-focused and socially-blind as LC.

To close this section I include a quotation which is about the effect of SD on the life of some directees. It is easy to see how it could, potentially at least, apply to LC.

*As people get in touch with "what gives them life," that enthusiasm automatically spills over into relationships, parish life, and social issues, says Poole. It's not uncommon for people in spiritual direction to get frustrated with structures or see inconsistencies in their beliefs and the practices of institutions.*¹²²

Frequency.

SD likely to be monthly or less. LC normally weekly. However there is some evidence that some SD does take place more frequently:

*"The Americans seem to be going in for what some of us here might consider a hothouse type of direction. Their expectation may well be of initial weekly [or even more frequent] direction, eventually settling down to a monthly meeting. My guess is that people in the States are accustomed to being in therapy or counseling, and that to meet with a director only, say, quarterly, might for them seem minimal."*¹²³

¹²¹ Jeff p.23

¹²² <http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

¹²³ Jeff, p.17

However, even in this quotation there is a recognition that 'settling down' involves a return to the more normal monthly pattern. It's also more likely that in SD, sessions are organized one at a time rather than the normal practice in LC which books a whole series (typically three months at first) at once.

It is also the case that for many people SD is even less frequent; perhaps only a handful of times a year. Kenneth Leech even suggests that monthly is too frequent, decrying the tendency as part of a trend towards "excessive reliance" on directors¹²⁴.

Remuneration

The practice in LC of booking sessions in advance is partly a result of the practice of asking for payment in advance, so it is part of agreeing a commercial contract. In recent history in Europe, it has not been the normal practice to ask for a fee for SD. Probably this is because SD practitioners have tended to be ordained or religious who were already paid or supported to do SD as part of their ministry and it would probably further have been argued that such a pricing plan allowed the poorer members of society access to the service. By contrast LC is a commercial service offered in a way comparable to counselling and at similar rates.

Having recognized that basic difference, it should also be noted that in practice things are not always so clearly demarcated. Thus the Spiritual Directors' International website has an interview with Jeffrey S. Gaines, " In certain parts of the world, even the thought of charging a fee is anathema, because it is seen as a charism -- a spiritual gift. In this country (U.S.A.), where it is someone's livelihood . . . the normal range is between \$25-\$45 per session. This is simply saying "I'm taking this seriously." In the USA to take something seriously, we usually put a monetary value on it. "¹²⁵. However, though SD practitioners in the North America may charge they may also do so on a basis of ability to pay or by asking a donation in accordance with means. This is made explicit on one website from the Canada; "The fee for spiritual direction is based upon a sliding scale with the suggested minimum being \$30.00 per session (each session lasts about 1 hour.) A fee schedule is presented at the first session, the fee and frequency of meetings is discussed and agreed upon."¹²⁶. This is regarded with horror by some in SD, "some

¹²⁴ Leech, p.xvi

¹²⁵ Spiritual Directors International, op.cit.

¹²⁶ <http://www.providence.ab.ca/spdirection.htm> Accessed 29/04/04

spiritual directors charge fees for their services, something which would have horrified the saints in every age."¹²⁷

This is an area where the difference between SD and LC seems to be based on cultural and historical background and where there is some discussion in SD about the propriety of fees. However, it does seem to me that the reasons for not charging are probably a result of history and should not, in the absence of theological reasons which are consistent with other areas of ministry, be ruled out. It is the case that now ministers of religion charge fees for various liturgical functions such as officiating at weddings and funerals. It seems to me that in principle this is little different particularly if this were the main ministry of the person concerned and they otherwise had little means of support.

Sessional management.

The normal way of conducting a SD session has been face-to face or in some circumstances by letter the latter is attested by the publications of letters of SD, for example of Jean-Pierre de Caussade under the title of Abandonment to Divine Providence.

In LC there is a propensity to use more technological means of conducting a session: "There are a variety of different ways to deliver coaching. The most common is the weekly phone call, often a thirty-minute conversation, with the client calling the coach. ... Some coaches prefer face-to-face sessions. Coaching even takes place in cyberspace."¹²⁸ It may be that using the phone is in part a result of the fact that much coaching is done in smaller portions of time than SD; 20-40 minutes is normal for a LC session whereas SD typically takes place over around an hour or sometimes 90 minutes. It makes sense in contexts such as modern business to use the phone particularly when travelling regularly to a meeting that might only last 30 minutes may not be regarded as a good use of time. In turn, it may be that the greater regularity enables shorter sessions and that shorter sessions necessitate more frequent sessions. Perhaps there is something here for SD practitioners to reflect upon.

It is easy to think that De Caussade might well have been open to using the telephone or email or IRC for SD, given that his letters of direction were borne of the necessity to

¹²⁷ Leech, p.xvi

¹²⁸ Whitworth et al, p.15

maintain contact after he was called away and face-to-face contact was not possible¹²⁹. I suspect the medium was merely the most convenient means to the end. It would be interesting in this matter to discover what is happening in terms of SD in cyberspace and by telephone.

LC training promotes the use of a structure for sessions. Usually it is one based on the acronym GROW¹³⁰ which stands for Goal, Reality, Options and either Wrap-up or a whole set of Wh-words. It seems to me that this structure is sensible and a making explicit of the logical flow of sessions designed to help to clarify and plan to achieve goals: establishing the goal is prior, checking what the realities are is a precondition to planning, and checking what the options might be in order to identify the optimum means to the goal and then to embed the whole plan by identifying and organizing the practical steps needed to achieve it.

It is this logical, even necessary flow, that probably lies behind the fact that some coaching material does not mention the GROW model¹³¹. It may even be why it would never have been articulated in SD. So while at least some coaching uses the model it is not necessarily a difference between LC and SD. What it does indicate is a difference in 'culture' whereby LC seems much more likely to adopt such management and training tools as part of the practitioner's toolkit.

Training.

As will already have become apparent, LC has quite an advanced network of training school, in competition with each other and seems to be making progress towards becoming a fully-fledged profession although at present there is no universally accepted accreditation¹³². Nevertheless the schools represent steps towards professionalisation even if at the present each one has its own networks and methods.

There is something of this also within SD also, so there is similarity but also difference in that there is a long tradition in SD of there being no training for SD since it was regarded

¹²⁹ see for example the introduction at <http://www.ccel.org/ccel/decaussade/abandonment.all.html#iii> accessed 11/06/04

¹³⁰ see, Whitmore, p.49 & Downey, p.29]

¹³¹ see Whitworth et al. For example

¹³² see International Coach Federation conference Nov 2003. Keynote address by Anthony M Grant PhD: http://www.psych.usyd.edu.au/coach/ICF-USA-Research_Keynote_AMGrant_NOV_2003.pdf

simply as the outgrowth of pastoral ministry and a life of prayer¹³³. There is also something of a suspicion among some which Leech (again) articulates well;

"People are being 'accredited' with certificates, diplomas and doctorates in spiritual direction by the many institutes and departments which have sprung up. Now of course, like St. Theresa of Avila, I prefer learned guides to incompetents. But I am not at all happy with the captivity of some approaches to direction to the professional model which has done so much harm to the pastoral ministry in other fields, and to unexamined concepts of 'training' with all their ideological assumption."¹³⁴

Clearly such suspicion is not shared by all or even many or else there would be no departments and institutes to refer to. However, it is important to note that the professionalisation is resisted by some in SD and seen as not bearing an unequivocal blessing. It is also to be noted that Leech himself later in the book discusses forms of in-service training in SD in relatively positive terms, echoing the concern not to be served by incompetents, no doubt.

Differences consolidated.

Most of the differences seem to come down to differences of historical context or differences occasioned by the way SD relates itself to ultimate reality in a way that LC does not. Many of the differences in observed practice seem to result mainly from different histories. None of the differences are sufficient or of such a kind as to disallow the possibility that the similarities that LC and SD share are in certain cases at least related to our cultural context at this point in history. It is to that context and their relation to it that we turn next.

Synthesis.

Mapping the synthesis

In this chapter we will look at some of the possible cultural drivers for the growth of LC and SD and close with a summary of the conclusions that seem to have been emerging. Use will be made of sociological commentaries on contemporary western societies which seem to bear relevance for the kinds of issues that have emerged so far. Some of the sociological commentary is oriented to sociology of religion because of the religious and

¹³³ Leech, p.xvii

¹³⁴ Ibid.

existential themes that have been and will be seen to emerge from the investigation. The overall effect will be to locate LC and SD within already established cultural and sociological analysis in order to establish the plausibility of the thesis that the growth of LC and SD may be linked to, perhaps even partly driven by cultural and social changes taking place in western societies.

Individualism

In modern societies individuals are now cut adrift and expected to make their own arrangements and to forge their own identities. Previously identity was taken more or less as given in terms of class and gender. Globalisation of capital has torn asunder the bonds that held it together with labour and so jobs for life can no longer be taken to be part of a realistic life strategy. In turn the foreshortening of horizons and expectations that this engenders, devalues long term commitments and helps to reinforce a consumerist mindset. A consumerist mindset further relocates the search for purpose or meaning with the consumer and away from the institutions of society, such as work towards individual choices¹³⁵. Even back as far as 1966 Rieff wrote "The new center, which can be held even as communities disintegrate, is the self."¹³⁶

This could be summarised in the words of Bauman,

*What used to be considered a job to be performed by human reason seen as a collective endowment and property of the human species has been fragmented ('individualized'), assigned to individual guts and stamina, and left to individuals' management and individually administered resources. ... The emphasis (together with, importantly, the burden of responsibility) has shifted decisively towards the self-assertion of the individual.*¹³⁷

Handy sees this happening within the world of work as the job-for-life culture breaks down. His metaphor is that individual actors are like fleas whilst big companies, the kind that

¹³⁵ See the argument of Bauman, Zygmunt, 2003. *Liquid Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity, and Giddens, Anthony. 2003 [first published 1991]. *The Consequences of Modernity*. Cambridge, Polity Press and also Handy, Charles. 2002. *The Elephant and the Flea, New Thinking for a New World*. London, Random House [first published 2001, Hutchinson]

¹³⁶ p.5, Rieff, Philip. 1966 -*Triumph of the Therapeutic. The uses of faith after Freud*. London : Chatto & Windus

¹³⁷ Bauman, 2003, p.29

used to assume that they were offering a job for life, are imaged as elephants. And so he sees little alternative but that most of us will have to live as independent actors in life:

There is, I am convinced, no real alternative for most of us. We shall have to live at least some time as a flea, as an independent actor in life. In fact, since the wealth of organizations will be vested in individuals and what they carry in their heads, even the elephants may come to be seen as communities of individual fleas - a healthy change from seeing organizations as collections of human resources, owned by the shareholders. ¹³⁸

However, the burden of responsibility being placed onto the individual is not always welcome since the means to "to gain control over their fate and make the choices they truly desire"¹³⁹. are circumscribed, ironically, by the loss of enabling public spaces/institutions. So we find increasingly an ideology and necessity for individuals to control and take responsibility for their lives, ends and means ¹⁴⁰ co-existing with -indeed; feeding into- increased anxiety and self-criticism about their own performance and choices. In such circumstances other people are looked to for help, not to make decisions for ~ or to take responsibility away from the individual, but to provide models and ideas to learn from (which Bauman links to the the increasing popularity of chat shows ¹⁴¹). And it is interesting to note, commenting on the development of New Age ideas and practices in corporate and business circles, Ferguson writes: "The growing network of support ... Encourages the individual in the lonely enterprise of changing jobs, starting a business, changing the practice of a profession, revitalising institutions. It is a do-it-yourself revolution, but not do-it-by-yourself...."¹⁴².

As should by now be apparent, this is precisely the kind of context in which LC explicitly operates: ceding control to the individual client to 'do it themselves' yet offering a means to not do it by themselves. It would seem that LC is very much culturally driven by the kind of individualism described above. The cultural formed-ness is further evidenced by the relatively recent origin of LC in its current explicit and self-designated form (that is, leaving aside the ancient precursors which have been understood historically as part of some other endeavour). LC has arisen within a period of time characterized by the kind of

¹³⁸ Handy, 2002, p.12

¹³⁹ Bauman, 2003, p.39

¹⁴⁰ cf Bauman, 2003, p.62

¹⁴¹ p.68

¹⁴² p.345, Ferguson, Marilyn, 1980. *The Aquarian Conspiracy, Personal and social Transformation in or Time*. New York, Tarcher/Putnam books.

individualism Bauman and others document. Ideologically it fits very well with key themes of that individualism. It seeks to offer within an individualized [post-] modernity, a companionship and suitably psychic-space-respecting means of help in handling the anxieties around choice and performance demanded in the new socio-cultural mindscape especially in the arena of work and business which seem to be its heartland.

By the nature of things it is harder to track in SD any such formation to and out of contemporary individualism; particularly as the roots of SD are arguably considerably older in terms of self-conscious and self-designated endeavor. So, while LC per se may have been born out of late consumerist capitalism or even post-modernism, SD has had to make an accommodation with it, or not, rather than being native to it. We need to ask, therefore, whether SD has accommodated or not and what it may mean for it to have done or not done so.

There are signs that SD has been adapting in some degree to the socio-cultural reality and this opens up the possibility that it has been more available and credible as a means to handle the challenges of liquid modernity [to use Bauman's evocative titular phrase] for people for whom the traditional tools and language of spiritual growth have some meaning and function, perhaps, in a way analogous to LC in the lives of others. We have noted the non-hierarchy of much contemporary SD and the way it is framed in terms of a non-deficit anthropology and a non-directive role for the the coach/director. In addition where SD partly envisages its business to be developing potential and connecting to 'true purpose' then it is also capable of working with a contemporary cultural theme related directly to individualism. SD, then, as often practiced in contemporary western culture, may be seen to reflect the growing Self- sacralising¹⁴³ individualism of the culture. It is therefore a strong possibility that the growth in demand for SD is driven, in part at least, by the same or a similar cultural emphasis on the individual as the growth in LC. Of course, it is to be supposed that in SD, the anxieties, project of self-building and self-monitoring of performance are handled in a more explicitly God-related way than in LC.

Contemporary emphases on individuals are arguably both problematic at the level of definition of individual and reliant (perhaps from some points of view 'parasitic') upon Christian faith. In this respect I would draw attention to John Gray's critique of post

¹⁴³ cf. Heelas, Paul, 1997. *The New Age Movement: The Celebration of the self and the Sacralisation of Modernity*. Oxford; Blackwell

Enlightenment humanism in *Straw Dogs*¹⁴⁴. While there are areas where there is a degree of unevenness in Gray's argument, I believe that the main thesis is robust: that there is no particular reason, outside of theistic frameworks of thought, to assign value to human being or to suppose that the human subject may not be, after all, an illusion or a convenient fiction. Much as these conclusions have attracted criticism for pessimism or betrayal of humanism, the broad argument remains unassailed. So in the spirit of cultural critique, if we ask what ideology and whose interests are served in the production and use of the cultural artifacts of LC and SD, we begin to see a possible answer in Gray's thesis.

LC unquestionably draws on the individualist /selfist¹⁴⁵ roots of contemporary culture. And so it is affirming of the humanist themes (in Gray's terms) of individual identity and the unified narrative subject. SD on the other hand, while not being without elements which reflect this trend, contains within its tradition echoes of other ways of seeing the world and resources to critique. Thus, "But the director would see most of society itself as a far greater 'problem' than most of the problems of a client. In Christian terms it would be entirely wrong to be fully adjusted to the kind of society in which we live, with all its injustices and selfishness and greed."¹⁴⁶

It is arguable that the interests of self are served but in turn the fragmentation of society that this entails serves the interests of global capital in a kind of divide-and-rule way. It is here that SD's connection with a broader vision of human being that involves a degree of corporateness, at least, has the resources to challenge the cultural formation of persons as isolated individuals.

Self Actualization and New age connections

Marilyn Ferguson's *Aquarian Conspiracy* has some very helpful material taken from a series of interviews with people who might broadly be characterized as New Age. As some of the quotations and commentary below indicate; there are some close connections between New Age ideas and the underlying approaches of LC. Most of them come from her chapter on education.

One movement in New Age approaches to education is that of transpersonal education. In

¹⁴⁴ Gray, John. 2002. *Straw Dogs, Thoughts on Humans and Other Animals*. London, Granta Publications

¹⁴⁵ Heelas, 1997

¹⁴⁶ Jeff, p.23

the following quotation, it is easy to see connections with LC and, to some extent with some elements of SD as we have seen it in previous chapters.

In transpersonal education, the learner is encouraged to be awake and autonomous, to question, to explore all the corners and crevices of conscious experience, to seek meaning, to test outer limits, to check out frontiers and depths of the self.

... It is education's counterpart to holistic medicine: education of the whole person ¹⁴⁷.

We should note particularly the holistic approach and the exploration of experience through questioning; a coach's role is very much to encourage and support their client in doing such things. We should note, too, the call to be autonomous in the light of preceding comments. The way that such encouragement is carried out and support given is also described in terms that are significant for this study. The following words are very congruent with the way that the coach's role and skills are portrayed in Whitworth et al as seen earlier in this dissertation. "Timing and nonverbal communication are critical ... The true teacher intuits the level of readiness and then probes, questions, leads. The open teacher ... Is a midwife to ideas. ... An agent of learning but not its first cause" ¹⁴⁸.

Particularly I want to highlight the valuing of intuition on the part of the teacher (corresponding to coach) and the use of questioning as a major tool for increasing self-awareness and learning. This valuing of intuition marks a shift from a rationalistic approach which would be uncomfortable or even hostile to intuition and from an approach which sees teaching as conveying a body of knowledge and is rather closer to the model of learner as tabula rasa awaiting inscription of knowledge by the teacher. Of course, not seeing the learner as tabula rasa tends to connote a non-deficit view of humanity.

Heelas offers us a synthesis of the way that New Age perspectives mirror or shadow those that we find in management and education and thus can be pressed into service in commenting on our concern in this section.

A somewhat similar aspect runs from (non-expressivistic) skills-oriented management trainings, through Human Resource Development, to those which serve to unlock spiritually-informed human potential. Another similar chain begins with traditional, disciplinary educational practices (again of a non-expressivist kind), enters the realm of

¹⁴⁷ Ferguson, 1980, p.287

¹⁴⁸ Ferguson, 1980, p.292

*the expressivist 'child centred' teacher, and then moves into the more radical practices of New Age Education.*¹⁴⁹

The point here is that the continuum between what Heelas terms "expressivist" and "non-expressivist" contains both New Age concerns and the kind of management and training approaches, into which LC fits fairly comfortably, both at the expressivist end of the scale. And given the genesis of LC and its current strong uptake in and among business communities we should take seriously the probability that there is a strong link. It is the nature of that link that needs some care in conceptualising. I am not making the claim that LC is a New Age artefact, rather that many of the concerns that underlie both the New Age movements and LC are the same; that they share common cultural drivers. Given the diffuse, diverse and decentralised nature of New Age networks it would be hard to make a case that there is a high degree of deliberate entryism into business and other circles. However, if there are common cultural roots then it should not be surprising to find shared ideas and even a crossover of people between LC and New Age. It would also be likely that some New Age groups or techniques are marketed into business communities and elsewhere. It would also be unsurprising to discover that aspects of business culture had been adopted into some New Age networks and techniques.

It is apposite to have Heelas comment, once more, on the relationship between the world of management and business and some of the New Age connection with it:

One of the main reasons why so much is currently spent on New Age management trainings is that the trainings are presented in much the same language. Talk is of doing away with dependency cultures; of liberating people from restrictive ego-routines; of encouraging self-responsibility; of enabling people to be more creative; of generating energy.

*What makes things even more appealing to the enterprise-minded businessperson is that New Age trainings also resonate with somewhat more humanistic ideas abroad in the world of business. The ideas have to do with the workplace as a 'learning environment', 'bringing life back to work', 'humanizing work', 'fulfilling the manager', 'people come first' or 'unlocking potential'*¹⁵⁰

It is this common language, pointing to some degree, probably a high degree, of conceptual resonance that makes the connection. Heelas would probably argue that the

¹⁴⁹ Heelas, 1997 p.116

¹⁵⁰ Heelas, 1997 p.168

main difference is of degree from the self-development envisaged in management and business to the more explicitly 'spiritual' notions of Self-Actualisation employed in New Age circles.¹⁵¹

Why LC or SD?

Given what has gone before, we may now be in a position to think about why contemporary western people might be attracted to LC or SD, which people they might be and indeed they might choose one or the other. We should begin by reminding ourselves that LC seems to have largely grown out of a business environment. Therefore some of the motivating factors for people seeking LC will come from the workplace.

*The demand for coaching came into being when stressed out executives started seeking help in coping with their professional and personal lives. In addition, as companies started downsizing and outplacing, and baby boomers started turning 50, coaches were hired to ease traumatic transitions and to help people get back on track. While coaching is still most prevalent in the corporate environment, individuals are increasingly turning to coaches for help in enhancing all aspects of their lives.*¹⁵²

and the overall impression of the purposes for which LC is employed in that quarter are to do with managing stress, what is increasingly being called 'work-life balance' and the effects of changes in the way that work is organised for increasing numbers of people, as Lyons puts it : Casualisation, multiple careers, unemployment, and the unprecedented incorporation of women into the labor force have led to our seeing work as a source of fragmentation, insecurity, and uncertainty. [Lyon, 2000, p.89]

Handling the insecurity and the implicit demands for ever improving performance and productivity is clearly a major challenge for people in such positions and so something that appears to offer ways to make the best of ones own abilities and opportunities, particularly when it is used as part of a company strategy for staff development makes life coaching an attractive, if not compelling tool. Given that some of the issues for at least some people concern work-life balance it is then fairly easy for them to make the transition to seeing LC not only as a work-related tool but as something that is transferable to other arenas of living: relationships, personal goals, matters of fitness and health and even spiritual growth.

¹⁵¹ See also *ibid.* p.115-6

¹⁵² <http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html> Accessed: 04/29/04

There are other plausible dimensions to the take up of LC within western culture. Resting on the foundation of individualism, Bauman finds in elements of popular culture the emergence of related strategies for negotiating the demands of contemporary consumerist culture. One such strategy is the observation of other people. Note that this observation is not asking for help from them or even gaining direct intervention from them in ones own affairs. Commenting on chat-shows he identifies how they can act as a kind of checking mechanism allowing viewers to assess whether their own strategies and approaches could be supplemented or whether there might be a clue to enable them to develop their own resources differently.

In a world tightly packed with means yet notoriously unclear about ends, the lessons drawn from the chat shows answer a genuine demand and have undeniable pragmatic value, since I know already that it is up to me alone to make (and go on making) the best of my life and since I also know that whatever resources such an undertaking may require can be sought and found only in my own skills. Courage and nerve, it is vital to know how other people, faced with similar challenges, cope. They may have come across a wondrous stratagem which I have missed; they might have explored the parts of the 'inside' which I passed by without paying attention to or did not dig deeply enough to discover.¹⁵³

It is not hard to see a trajectory from the use some make of chat shows to help identify their own resources and potential life strategies to using a life coach in a similar way as a means to explore "the parts of the 'inside' which [they] passed by without paying attention to or did not dig deeply enough to discover." That last phrase could almost be a piece of advertising for life coaching.

In what Bauman writes above it is possible to see also a hint, at least, of self-doubt also. There is an implied anxiety that something may have been missed, that one may have neglected a vital resource or perspective. McGuigan in talking about 'intrinsic reflexivity' makes a link to the way that this may work in ordinary life:

[following Giddens] 'Intrinsic reflexivity' is the third major dynamic of late or high modernity. Intellectual monitoring of action, self-consciously using fallible knowledges, is routinely built into institutional and personal life. ... keeping it in perpetual transformation. Yet, ... late modern knowledge is characterized by 'radical doubt'. This

¹⁵³ Bauman, 2003, p.68

is ... there in the routine conduct of everyday life.¹⁵⁴

Again, it is not hard to make a link from such reflexivity to the potential role of a life coach in helping to manage the process of observing and assessing the 'perpetual transformations' such as the workplace seems to be increasingly demanding using the dynamic that is already embedded into everyday life and the carrying out of which is already being resourced from popular cultural artefacts such as chat shows. Life coaching is a further resource which is entirely consonant with the dynamics bearing on an individual already.

It is a commonplace now to analyse approaches to life from the point of view of narratives and the way that they are used to bring a sense of meaning, direction and/or unity to a person's self-understanding. If it is true that the English-speaking developed world is currently undergoing a cultural change involving, inter alia, the loss of -and indeed varying degrees of hostility to- grand narratives which are 'owned' communally and function to give direction to individuals' lives, then it might be expected also that the available stories are much more fluid, malleable, and personalized. [Lyon, 2000, p.84-5]. More than that, the stories must be constructed as people go along from the raw materials of life as experienced and remembered. It seems to me that one of the things that both LC and SD offer into a situation where DIY narratives are required, is the opportunity to revisit the personal narrative and to find ways to re-tell the story so that the trajectory projects into the future a better story-arc of who they would like to become and what they would like to achieve. As Lyons goes on to say:

... it must be a minority of people who enjoy a confident sense of going through life, creating a coherent story as they go. Many others feel constraint, oppression, limitations, or just a sense of arbitrariness and caprice, on their capacity freely to forge a future for themselves.¹⁵⁵

LC and to some extent SD, under such cultural conditions, are concerned with enabling people to find ways to recognise if not increase their 'capacity to forge a future for themselves' and often deal with precisely the conditions in people's lives that could be described in the words of the latter quotation.

In keeping with cultural trends related to individualism and self-reliance we have seen growth in self-help publishing and even self-help television programming relating to such

¹⁵⁴ p.98 McGuigan, Jim. 1999. *Modernity and Postmodern Culture*. Buckingham, Open University Press.

¹⁵⁵ p.90, Lyon, David. 2000. *Jesus in Disneyland, Religion in Postmodern Times*. Cambridge, UK, Polity Press.

things as decorating, gardening, cooking and personal make-overs. LC fits into the pattern of development. "Ten years ago we saw a boom in the self-help industry. As time has gone by it's become much more socially acceptable to access self-help initiatives such as executive or personal coaching," says Grant. "There is clearly a growing trend for individuals and organizations to employ professional coaches to help them reach their personal and work-related goals."¹⁵⁶

It is also not hard to see how SD could also mirror or be the object of renewed interest as a result of a self-help mentality. Such a mentality allied to desire for spiritual growth and a felt need for a personalised approach rather than a 'mass' approach in local churches where congregational teaching tends to be of a lowest-common-denominator level would make SD a fairly attractive route to follow assuming that it was visible enough.

The self-help trend has spawned hundreds of books of various kinds as a simple browse at a general book shop will readily demonstrate. It is easy to understand how reading a book, an essentially solitary activity which can be taken at a pace that suits the reader, can be an obvious response to the dynamics we have already outlined. What is possibly less clear is how a life coach or spiritual director might be considered as a means of self-help, given that it appears to detract from the autonomy of the individual. Of course, in terms that have already been mentioned the help of a coach or director is not necessarily perceived in terms of giving away autonomy but of accessing a resource to help unlock in the individual the perspectives or resources that are already there or to hand. And, in the words of one life coach interviewed for a BBC programme on the phenomenon:

So why not use self-help books? Marilyn says: "Good luck to the few in life who are so self-motivated but most of us aren't. Most people struggle to keep new years resolutions and need the extra support and motivation."¹⁵⁷ Thus the personal relationship involved has advantages over the book, as has already been recognised in the rise of the personal trainer and the more demotic version of the same found in the burgeoning gymnasium industry. Perhaps it should also be noted that in the self-help television programmes the 'experts' package their expertise in such a way as to make it possible for the sufficiently interested and motivated viewer to achieve something of what is being, essentially, demonstrated. A coach or spiritual director in many ways simply personalises and individualises the offer to make expertise or support available.

¹⁵⁶ <http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146> Accessed: 04/29/04

¹⁵⁷ http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/features/2004/01/14/life_coach.shtml Accessed: 29/04/04.

At the time of writing there was a prospective suggestion from David Lidsky on the Fast Company web site that 2005 would be the year when "As spirituality in the workplace grows, more companies will offer some kind of spiritual adviser for employees"¹⁵⁸. This coming from someone who is involved in commenting on business developments in the USA is an indicator that the trend is arguably significant, making, as it does, an explicit link between workplace issues and spirituality and the perceived need for people to help negotiate those issues for the welfare of employees and health of the company. If the word 'need' is felt to be too strong then even if rewritten as 'estimation of the usefulness of', the basic significance remains: there appears to be a kind of confluence of the concerns that bring LC into the workplace and those that SD have often been concerned with. In this regard, SD has often been concerned with a holistic approach for individual seekers which includes encompassing their work within their spiritual outlook and practice. Thus it is easy to understand how employees or business people who are or become familiar with what SD offers might see it as a potential route to managing the concerns arising from work in relation to the things that they regard as being the deepest and most important in their lives, perhaps even as a kind of alternative to LC.

Management training is sometimes pilloried for promoting jargonistic ideas to improve performance, yet behind the sometimes strange wordage are concepts that are really simple: prioritisation and basic time management have become commonplace and are even part of school curricula. However, there is a less acknowledged entail in such an apparently simple and uncomplicated exercise: The organization of one's time does, however, require the setting of priorities., the making of choices and learning to say 'No'. That in turn demands that you define what success means, something that you can't do without surfacing your true values and beliefs about life and the purpose of life. Something that starts out as a choice between engagements ends up as a quasi-religious quest.¹⁵⁹ It is, again easy to see a potential trajectory from this to both LC and SD, depending on the circumstances of the individual. Both end up dealing with the making explicit of true values and beliefs which in turn helps to inform decisions about how life is to be lived.

However, I want to point to the possibility that SD has another set of drivers which are culturally significant and that are not so directly paralleled in LC. They are not paralleled

¹⁵⁸ <http://www.fastcompany.com/magazine/88/fast-forward-25-27.html#fastforward26> Accessed: 29/11/04

¹⁵⁹ Handy, 2002. p.14

directly in the sense that they are born out of the institutional context of Christian faith in the European West. However, there still lies behind them a sense of the spiritual, of dealing with ultimate matters of import to persons such as their meaning of and direction in life, the making and maintaining of significant relationships and the relative valuing of the different aspects of life including the explicitly spiritual and Godward.

the Northumbria Community which is a network of Christian people who are seeking to grow spiritually and find in the ethos and companionship of others in the community something that nurtures their spiritual seeking and growing. Roy Searle is a leader in the Community with a particular interest in the dynamics of spiritual growth in postmodern Britain, and he saw it like this:

"As the tide has gone out ... it has left lots of people like islands: disconnected from churches, tradition and so on. There's a Hunger to grow spiritually... After the programmes what next? Don't give me a book or a programme or a set of tapes."¹⁶⁰

I understand 'the tide has gone out' to refer to the situation where the institutional church is in decline and seems unable to nurture spiritual seeking and growing for increasing numbers of people in our society. Mr Searle was answering a question about why he thought that there was a growth in the desire to find spiritual directors at present; a growth which the Northumbria Community is part of trying to respond to.

It is part of the deinstitutionalising of religion that seems to be taking place which is itself a product of the individualisation we have been reflecting on. Individuals are increasingly thrown onto their own resources, distrusting institutions such as churches or even, as Roy Searle says, finding that the churches' approach is too programmatic and, if I may interpret somewhat, too little concerned with the individual struggle or circumstances in the way that spiritual nurture is provided. These are circumstances in which it makes sense to seek SD since it is inherently personal and individual and focused on personal spiritual growth.

Further evidence can be taken from a recent study on the Alpha course in England where the desire to 'do' the course was investigated, among other things, noting that many of those who did it were already Christians.

The pursuit of spiritual growth was a conviction which came out directly during

¹⁶⁰ Roy Searle. Conversation, 15/06/04, cited with permission

*interviews. One or two respondents felt that their church, or previous churches they had belonged to, had not delivered the goods. As one interviewee put it: 'I signed up because I wanted to know God better. People have been let down by their churches. They may go through Baptism or confirmation. But often that's it, you have to then fend for yourself. The churches do little in the form of guidance as where to go from there.'*¹⁶¹

It is worth noting that 'fending for oneself' is indeed in this quotation regarded as something to be remedied but it is guidance that is wanted, the Alpha course is used as a (potential) resource to find clues and perhaps, in a similar way to the use of chat-shows noted above, the small group dimension to the course holds out the promise that the other members of the group " may have come across a wondrous stratagem which I have missed; they might have explored the parts of the 'inside' which I passed by without paying attention to or did not dig deeply enough to discover"¹⁶². A kind of DIY chat-show! This modifies the sense of fending for oneself which seems to me to be about not delivering on an implied promise of offering resources for spiritual (self-) development: I doubt that 'guidance' should be taken to mean anything that would infringe the autonomy of the individual.

Hunt goes on a little later to comment:

*The possibility remains that one of the key reasons that people drop out of the church is because they cannot develop their Christianity Philip Richter and Leslie Francis regard the felt need of people to mature in their faith as one of the principle reasons for doing so.*¹⁶³

This seems to open up the possibility that organisations like the Northumbria Community and practices like SD offer strategies that enable some Christians to negotiate the different pulls on their spiritual development: allegiance to the traditions of faith, hunger for spiritual growth and the detraditionalising and individualistic development of culture.

All of which still leaves open the possibility that we are to some degree dealing with 'biographical solutions to socially-produced problems'¹⁶⁴ that is to say that both LC and SD enable people to retell their personal narratives in such a way as to cast a future life trajectory which they believe will be more fulfilling in some way. However, in so doing they

¹⁶¹ p.73, Hunt, Stephen. *Anyone for Alpha? Evangelism in a Post-Christian Society*. London, DLT, 2001.

¹⁶² Bauman, 2003, p.68

¹⁶³ Hunt, 2001, p.73

¹⁶⁴ Bauman, 2003, p.44 quoting Ulrich Beck

are not dealing with the isolating forces of consumerist capitalism rather, simply working within them or around them. Perhaps to say that appears to echo the Marxian accusations of false consciousness or the existentialist diagnosis of bad faith. Potentially it need not be so; both LC and SD carry the potential to enable seekers or clients to identify such social or cultural origins for the obstacles they seek to overcome or the issues with which they struggle and to facilitate their responding in a more directly political or socially active way. They do both also carry the potential for collusion also.

Although SD is meant to be non-directive, it is in practice difficult to be so. Even if refraining from 'advice' and relying instead on questioning etc in order to move the client forward, it is nearly impossible to ask questions which do not imply or entail something of the questioner's perspectives or assumptions or even blindspots. The theory is that a coach need not know anything about the issues on which they are coaching, however, knowing or not knowing, will lead to different lines of questioning. Believing that one knows may result in some things being assumed that might otherwise be questioned. Thus LC is susceptible to the charge of colluding with the manufacture of biographical solutions in a similar way that Christian SD could be. On the other hand the action-orientation of SD could actually form responses in other ways. The retelling of personal story is not meant to be an exercise in mental perspective and accommodation to the status quo, but a way to make acting and reacting different in the future; to formulate and acquire strategies in interpersonal relationships or approaches to work or other activities.

A potential criticism is that the intense focus on holding the client's agenda means that issues to do with conscientisation in relation to environmental or wider economic and political issues arising from the aggregated lifestyle choices of consumerised individuals may not be in view and so the process of LC is co-opted into serving ends that may seem good to the client but in the long-term and global frames may not be so. Of course it is possible also that LC could be a useful tool in helping people to make personal changes that are consonant with global ecological and social concerns. SD has more of a connection with traditions that take these concerns seriously but, similarly to LC, may also suffer from the co-option into merely going along with the potentially narrow pietistic concerns of the seeker. This parallels Bauman's comments regarding counsellors which seem applicable to LC and to some degree SD also:

The counsels which the counsellors supply refer to life-politics not to Politics with a capital P; they refer to what the counselled persons can do by themselves and for

*themselves ... Accepting full responsibility for doing them properly and blaming no one for the unpleasant consequences which could be ascribed only to their own error or neglect.*¹⁶⁵

Gender

As yet there seem to be few figures available to tell us the absolute and relative numbers of men and women involved in SD and LC either as practitioners or as clients or seekers. There are, however, some indicators in terms of informal observations and clues from texts that could help us formulate some hypotheses. It seems likely that in SD the proportion of women seeking SD is much greater than men, though in the ranks of spiritual directors men are much better represented. LC may be somewhat different as the following quotation suggests.

*Coaching is socially acceptable. Men hate going to a traditional therapist. They don't like to admit they have a problem. But seeking coaching doesn't carry the same negative connotations. There's no stigma. On the contrary, it's quite fashionable. That's why men - and women - are keen to have life coaching.*¹⁶⁶

The difficulty here is assessing how much is based on observation and how much is advertising hype. It seems unlikely that it would have been mentioned in the way it is if the authors did not see some degree of truth in it and given the historical background that we have already looked at it seems likely that men will have been well-represented since LC seems to have appealed mostly at first to those in business and that has been an area of life dominated by men. I think that it is interesting also to note the observation that men hate going to a therapist with the implication that women are more in evidence in therapy. Again, this is something that needs testing but I do not discount the possibility that there is some real basis to the informal observation. On the other hand informal observations at LC training events seems to indicate that a majority of those training for LC are now women. One piece of evidence which suggests that this may be the case comes from The UK college of Life Coaching where in the last quarter of 2004 of all the people who have completed the first step in becoming a qualified Life Coach, on the 'Practicing Life Coaching Course', males were 29%, females were 71% (72 people in sample, 21 men, 51 women). Impressionistically this was felt to reflect a wider trend at that college.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Bauman, 2003, p.65

¹⁶⁶ <http://www.inst.org/coach/index.htm> Accessed: 29/04/04

¹⁶⁷ Source: personal correspondence with staff at The UK College of Life Coaching, The Science Park, Stafford Road, Wolverhampton, WV10 9RU, www.ukclc.net

This is a state of affairs that seems to hold also for the training of spiritual directors. If this latter observation represents a wider trend then it would indicate that the proportion of spiritual directors which was previously substantially a 'male role' may be changing to become more female-inclusive. It may be that LC is reflecting a similar change if there really are more women training as coaches than men. Whether this represents something of the feminisation of the workplace or the relative ease for coaches to juggle the demands of home, children and work and/or even to work part-time to do so is not possible to say with the currently available data. It would need some careful research to pick apart these factors from others which might bear on gender stereotypes or cultural differences and even plausibly biogenic traits such as greater emotional intelligence.

Assuming that these observations are substantially true, we need to ask what they may mean. It is certainly interesting to note the construal of men's attitudes with regard to therapy and LC in the earlier quotation and the reason offered for the relative acceptability of LC in contrast to therapy: 'they don't like to admit they have problems ... negative connotations ... there's no stigma'. Clearly for this writer at least, there is a myth of masculinity at work which constructs the masculine in terms of self-sufficiency, strength (which protects against weakness) and presumably the use of the term stigma indicates a sense that men need to be able to save face. It is presumably the autonomy-respecting emphasis on the client's self determination that enables men to present -and have accepted- their involvement in LC as acceptable and 'okay' without it threatening assumed gender image among peers.

A summary of conclusions

There do appear to be similarities between SD and LC, at least those forms of SD that have formed the main focus of this study, being those most sensitive and responsive to the cultural backgrounds of directees, retreatants and seekers. At first sight, stated in that way, it may appear that there is a vicious circularity of argument in apparently selecting what is studied in terms of the kind of conclusions one is seeking demonstrate. However, it should be remembered that it is the growing edge of SD that is of interest here and it is material that reflects that context that has been used.

The similarities consist of: a tendency towards a non-directive approach which is

respectful of the autonomy of the client or directee; a methodology that involves helping the client /directee to be aware of their reactions and of the strands of feelings and commitments that inform motivation; exploring and fostering a sense of connection with what in SD is most likely to be termed 'vocation' and in LC is likely to be given a variety of labels like 'sense of purpose', 'what gives life' etc; in both there is an element of a 'non-deficit view of human being; they both currently favour a non-hierarchical approach to their work; there is a concern for the development of potential; both tend towards a whole-life view and approach; there are also similarities of method and session management, most of which are rooted in the similarities of purpose and view of the respective roles of client or directee and coach or director.

The nature and extension of these similarities makes it likely that the cultural drivers behind the rise of LC and the current forms of SD are to some extent shared. The relative undersupply of both life coaches and spiritual directors points to something taking place within the culture of a growing concern with the kinds of matters with which SD and LC are concerned.

Both disciplines seem to be concerned with issues of vocation or life-purpose, balancing the various aspects of life, finding practical ways forward in concrete life situations, informed in each case by the resources of belief and faith that the client brings to the process. This would appear to reflect and respond to cultural trends variously labelled as late modernity or post-modernity and the concrete conditions of living in a consumerist society where individualisation has become well-embedded and where employment security can no longer be taken for granted.

Envoy.

In this chapter the main task is to highlight the areas that seem to call for further investigation. It is recognised that this dissertation is fairly preliminary and should be regarded in many places as raising the questions and presenting the issues in the study of LC and SD from a perspective that is interested in their cultural milieu.

Although I believe that the assertion of growth for both LC and SD is reasonable, it is clear that more detailed data would be useful. It would be good to know what kind of numbers

are involved in that growth and the demographics of the growth. How many many and women, proportionally and in relation to the general population? What professional and/or class backgrounds do they represent? Is there a difference in proportions between clients and coaches or between SD practitioners and directees, and if so what explanations are there?

Women outnumbering men seems to hold also for the training of spiritual directors. If this latter observation represents a wider trend then it would indicate that the proportion of spiritual directors which was previously substantially a 'male role' may be changing to become more female-inclusive, perhaps even changing the proportions significantly. It may be that LC is reflecting a similar change if there really are more women training as coaches than men. Whether this represents something of the feminisation of the workplace or the relative ease for coaches to juggle the demands of home, children and work and/or even to work part-time to do so is not possible to say with the currently available data. It would need some careful research to pick apart these factors from others which might bear on gender stereotypes or cultural differences and even plausibly biogenic traits such as greater emotional intelligence.

Assuming that these observations are substantially true, we need to ask what they may mean. It is certainly interesting to note the construal of men's attitudes with regard to therapy and LC in the earlier quotation and the reason offered for the relative acceptability of LC in contrast to therapy: 'they don't like to admit they have problems ... negative connotations ... there's no stigma'. Clearly for this writer at least, there is a myth of masculinity at work which constructs the masculine in terms of self-sufficiency, strength (which protects against weakness) and presumably the use of the term stigma indicates a sense that men need to be able to save face. It is presumably the autonomy-respecting emphasis on the client's self determination that enables men to present -and have accepted- their involvement in LC as acceptable and 'okay' without it threatening assumed gender image among peers.

In a previous chapter the following was quoted: "Timing and nonverbal communication are critical ... The true teacher intuits the level of readiness and then probes, questions, leads. The open teacher ... Is a midwife to ideas. ... An agent of learning but not its first cause."¹⁶⁸ It is also interesting to note the use of the metaphor of midwifery, this is not to my

¹⁶⁸ Ferguson, 1980, p.292

knowledge picked up in LC but it has become a popular image in SD, perhaps mainly as a result of the influence of Margaret Guenther's writing explicitly picking up feminine imagery for the work of SD. Perhaps the different ways that LC and SD have picked up or used language shows something important. It may be that LC as a discipline is more comfortable with the kind of language that is fairly business-compatible; language that is at ease with, perhaps even delights in, the use of nominals-made-verbs and metaphors to do with manufacturing involving words such as 'outputs', 'process' and altogether feels more managerial. SD, on the other hand, may be more at home with more organic and extended metaphors which bear reflection, meditation even. It is beyond the scope of this study to investigate further, but it does indicate a possible further line of enquiry: how the language and imagery that the respective disciplines use differs or is similar.

I am also aware that, though I have outlined a brief history of life coaching, it is yet very provisional and the various strands that appear to contribute to it may need to be reconfigured in relation to one another and to LC and indeed perhaps supplemented. There is clearly further work to be done in this respect to trace the influences more fully and clearly. What does seem clear enough from the available data, is that LC seems to have grown out of the cultural milieu of what might be called late consumerist modernism or post-modernism and seems, in this, to parallel many of the concerns and trends that tend to be labelled as 'new age'. SD has a far longer history and so its relationship to such cultural trends is one of adaptation rather than genesis.

It was noted above that the situation of supply of spiritual directors is not well documented, that while there appears to be an undersupply, the extent of that is difficult to discern and this is an area where further quantitative investigation would be helpful.

Another area of potential future investigation is the respective use of telephone or computer mediated communication in SD and LC. Is usage of ICT increasing in SD and what proportion of LC work is technology mediated rather than face to face?

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http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/features/2004/01/14/life_coach.shtml

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http://psychologydoc.com/executive_&_life_coaching.htm
<http://www.harryfaddis.com/coach.html>
<http://www.harryfaddis.com/coachqa.html>
<http://www.4change.info/life%20coaching.htm>
<http://www.gymuser.co.uk/corporate/life/life-coach-training.htm>
<http://www.byregion.net/glossary/lifecoaching.html>
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_Coaching
<http://userpages.itis.com/vanzyl/christian.html>
<http://media.uow.edu.au/releases/2003/0925a.html>
<http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html>
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Websites on SD

http://www.gracecathedral.org/enrichment/interviews/int_19990513.shtml
<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2003/003/3.34.html>
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<http://www.ccel.org/ccel/decaussade/abandonment.all.html#iii>
accessed 11/06/04]

Please note that the appendix contain the texts of these pages at the time of access and consultation.

Appendix. Text of Web pages used.

Web pages referenced: they have been 'reduced' to text format. Date of access and URL are included. The main text is reproduced without advertising or hypertext link s. Some reformatting may also have been used in order to fit the text better to the printed page. Where appropriate (for example where the material is copyrighted) p[permission has been sought and given to reproduce text here for the purposes of this dissertation. The first part contains pages related to life coaching followed by pages relating to spiritual direction.

<http://www.lifeskillspro.com/about.asp?Q=10>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Christopher Aune, Personal Coach

Christopher brings a deep insight into people, allowing motivated individuals to make quantum leaps in personal growth in a very short time. He brings a Master's degree in counseling and 5 years experience as a personal development agent. He brings expertise in single-session coaching to help people move quickly beyond confusion, frustration, "blind spots," or fear, and conduct a strong campaign to achieve their goals. His clients experience a breakthrough in as little as 20 minutes.

This fresh insight transfers to training modules, available in several focus areas: organization, time management, relationship building, life planning, career advancement, personal spirituality, leadership, team building, and wealth building. Christopher customizes each module to address specific interests, goals, and all ages. Christopher is a regular speaker on these subjects.

In coaching sessions, Christopher helps the individual clarify goals, then customizes coaching to help the person achieve those goals. This approach creates understanding and significant progress in a very short time. Coaching requires a commitment of three months. Sessions can be done in person or by telephone. Christopher requests that you be on time, pay on time, take action between sessions, and enjoy the process of exploring your personal genius and power.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/london/insideldn/insideout/lifecoach.shtml>

Accessed: 04/29/04

To many, life in the capital is a daily battle. The goal is to have a car, a home, a career and ultimately security. However, some have found they need more in their lives. So, more and more Londoners are turning to life coaches for a clearer path to real fulfilment. Brenda Emmanus takes us into the world of life coaches. Brenda has consulted life coaches in the past and sings their praises. She introduces us to two women who persevered with the pursuit of life satisfaction even in the midst of London's rat race.

The first dedicated follower of life training that Brenda meets is the established comedian and presenter, Angie Le Mar. Life training helped her get over issues that had dogged her for years, including feelings of inadequacy and always having to prove herself to others. She says: "I thought there was nothing wrong with me, I felt that my life was fine, but it wasn't until I went on the course that I found out that I was always trying to prove myself." Brenda discovers how Angie was converted from a sceptic to an advocate of life training and ever since has encouraged others, including Brenda to seek out the services on a self help guru. "It took place over a weekend it was really intensive, it was a struggle but eventually when you hear other people's feelings you just let it go"

something lacking

These sessions are lively and jolly - a far cry from the melodramatic wailing that we might expect. However, some of us prefer one on one guidance - and of course, in true life coach style, Brenda finds there is a way.

Fi Campbell had a successful career in marketing, a nice flat, friends and a life she knew many would be happy with. However, she felt something was lacking. Fiona Harold, a life coach and author of the book 'Be Your Own Life Coach', was available to deal with those aspects of Fi's life that she wanted to address. "I think I was at a stage in my life where I needed some change. Everything was kind of stagnating. I think I was looking for the magic"

Brenda meets the new Fi. Like many Londoners, Fi was looking for something special and discovered this uniqueness in herself. Fi changed her career and now lives life to the fullest - and she enjoys it more. She is sure that there is no going back. "A life-coach gets you absolutely clear about what it is you really want out of life." Even so, Brenda discovers that one on one life coaching is no cheap fad. Angie and Fi have no regrets about life training and life coaching. Indeed, they endorse it. But what do you think? Are these life coaches just a symptom of living in an impersonal and busy world, or can they really help in getting your life in order?

http://www.bbc.co.uk/manchester/features/2004/01/14/life_coach.shtml

Accessed: 29/04/04

Life coaching - would you spend £400 to get your life sorted? updated 16/01/04

When I was sent to find out what life coaching is all about, I was more than sceptical about the latest offer to help us sort out our lives in a few easy steps.. writes Lyndsey Boardman

The path to self improvement?

Life coaching promises to "enable and support people to achieve their dreams" according to Marilyn Comrie, director of communications for national life coaching service Excelerate - which has its head office in Wythenshawe.

But at what cost? For around £50 per 40 minute phone session, the latest American craze doesn't come cheap. Life coaching is different to counselling because it aims to look at the future instead of the past. It also sets definite goals: for instance, a set amount of weight loss over two months, whereas counselling is open ended. "It offers more flexibility to do it over the phone" says Marilyn. "The best coach for you may live in Scotland and you may live in Brighton, this isn't a problem with phone coaching."

She added that people prefer the anonymity that face to face coaching doesn't have. "Some people may be revealing things about themselves that they've never even said to their closest friends" she said.

Excelerate life coaching

What is it? A series of personalised motivational sessions to set definite goals to improve your life
What can you be coached on? Almost anything from starting your own business to giving up smoking.

How long does it take? Most clients receive an average of eight weekly sessions. Where does it take place? Most take place over the phone. How much? £50 per 40 minute phone session

Life coaching aims to offer an objective service for those who feel they can't turn to friends or family for help. Marilyn believes a key advantage is the coaches don't have any pre-conceptions. "We are non-judgemental. A coach isn't going to dismiss a client because they think he or she doesn't have the right character to achieve what they want," she added.

Marilyn says the results speak for themselves. The official launch of Excelerate on January 27 will feature 10 "success stories" that Marilyn hopes will silence critics. "What will persuade people it works are the success stories. These are real people whom life coaching has worked for."

So why not use self-help books? Marilyn says: "Good luck to the few in life who are so self-motivated but most of us aren't. Most people struggle to keep new years resolutions and need the extra support and motivation."

So, while I'm less sceptical than I was, I'm probably unlikely to rush out and spend £400 getting myself a life coach. However if you've got the cash to spare and gave up your new year resolution within hours then maybe it's worth a thought.

<http://www.inst.org/coach/index.htm>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Become a life coach. Develop a new career, and help others to achieve their goals. And do all this without taking time off work! Would you like to coach people - and help them get more out of their lives?

If so, why not become a life coach? It's important, fulfilling work; and well paid too. Your clients rely on you to give them direction. Often they're talented people who simply don't know where they should be heading. Sometimes, they don't recognize their needs, and they're pursuing the wrong kind of career. All too often, they'll tell you what they want out of life – within moments of your first meeting. Sometimes, they're just looking for an impartial outsider to say, "Yes, it's OK to make that change."

But many don't know what's wrong with their lives. They just feel that they're dissatisfied. It could be their work. Or their marriage. Or their lack of spare time. Some people want to slow down, but don't know how. Others want more time for themselves. And so, armed with our strategies, you can inspire them to change their lives for the better.

A complete course

We give you the tools and techniques you need to help people. The course is crammed full of activities, suggestions, tips and ideas that you can instantly use with your clients. We explain how to set up your own practice. We show you how to launch and market it, and how to win clients. You'd be surprised how many courses don't cover this adequately.

Life coaching is very flexible. You can coach people by phone, by email, and by face-to-face meetings. And the easiest way to become a life coach is to enroll on our online course, the Diploma in Life Coaching. It contains everything you need to know about coaching. What's more, the course is flexible. You can start whenever you want. You can take as long as you need. And whenever you have a query, you can phone a course advisor or email your tutor.

Life coaches are special

Life coaches are a special breed of people. They're skilled and caring people. They have an excellent standard of living. Their work is intellectually demanding, and they work on a close and intimate level with their clients.

What is coaching?

Coaches help people to achieve their goals. Some clients are stuck in a bad relationship. Others are in a dead end job, or are suffering stress at work. Others are having difficulty in their family relationships. While some are in debt, and can't see a way out.

As a life coach, you can unblock these problems, liberate these people, and set them on a new course. What could be more exciting!

The market is vast. At one time or another, everyone needs advice. And the people who are closest to the client are usually too close to the problem. They can't see it with fresh eyes, the way you can.

Coaching is socially acceptable. Men hate going to a traditional therapist. They don't like to admit they have a problem. But seeking coaching doesn't carry the same negative connotations. There's no stigma. On the contrary, it's quite fashionable. That's why men - and women - are keen to have life coaching.

You have the skill

Understanding someone's concerns and problems is a talent that's inside every human being. But you need the secrets of this course to bring out that skill. Once you've learnt the secrets, you can coach anyone, no matter what their concerns. That's why the Diploma in Life Coaching course is so useful. It will turn you into a professional and successful life coach. Imagine getting paid for doing what you enjoy!

Is there much competition?

Unlike the world of therapy and counseling, there's little competition - because there are few life coaches. Moreover, few coaches learn how to promote their business on the net. Fewer still learn how to properly publicize their business in their locality. All of this we teach you on the course.

When I enrolled on the course, I wasn't really very confident. I didn't think I could make a living out of it. But now I've got to the end, I know I can be a Life Coach. I've already had several inquiries from people asking about my services. Thanks a lot!

- Franklin Colwell, Raleigh, NC

<http://www.brilliantissimo.co.uk/coaching/history.htm>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Brilliantissimo! Coaching and resources for transition
History of coaching

Coaching as a discipline has probably been around for centuries. Certainly, the Socratic dialogues from ancient Greece were very coachlike. Also there is a lot of Buddhist wisdom in coaching. The term "coaching" as we understand it was first used by Werner Erhard (creator of the EST Training, which became Landmark Forum) in the late 1970's/early 1980's. Then along came Thomas Leonard.

Thomas Leonard was a successful accountant and certified financial planner in the San Francisco Bay area. Several of his "yuppie" clients started simultaneously bending his ear about issues such as how many children they wanted, what kind of lifestyle was important to them and when they wanted to retire. And Leonard discovered there was no one to help them make the big decisions that would shape the quality of their lives.

"These people were reasonably well-adjusted emotionally, they had happy families, and they were successful in their business and careers, so they didn't need therapists or even business consultants," Leonard recalls. "What they needed was some kind of objective alter ego who could listen to what they were saying, help them set priorities and then act as a sort of compass to steer them on whatever course they chose."

As a financial planner, Leonard was accustomed to helping people look at the big picture as well as assisting them in getting there. So he used his financial clients as a testing ground for what he originally called life planning.

"There are probably 5,000 full- and part-time coaches today," Leonard says. "We are watching the birth of a new breed of counselor who will help people get more out of life."

Meanwhile, in the UK, coaching and mentoring was being developed by The Industrial Society and at Oxford University.

Thomas Leonard is founder of CoachU, CoachVille and the Graduate School of Coaching.

Invest in yourself because you're worth it!!

http://psychologydoc.com/executive_&_life_coaching.htm

Accessed: 04/29/04

WHAT IS COACHING?

The terms Executive Coaching, Life Coaching, Career Coaching and Personal Coaching all refer to a process of helping normal or high functioning people achieve to their full potential. Coaching may be applied to work related or personal goals and may be used with an individual or with a group of people working as a team.

TYPICAL COACHING GOALS: WHAT IS ACCOMPLISHED IN COACHING SESSIONS?

Positive goals for improvement may be professional, career, education or work related. Goals may be to improve work performance or to expand upon or make changes in career or profession. Goals may also be personal, life style or quality of life related. Coaching is focused upon heightening ability to achieve potential, to promote optimal level of functioning and to enhance the effective application of motivation to achieve specific goals.

WHAT DOES THE COACH DO?

Coaching is a cooperative and interactive effort. The professional coach evaluates, clarifies, challenges and supports a client in actions to achieve performance goals and to achieve greater satisfaction in work related and/or personal related areas of life.

WHAT ARE THE INITIAL STEPS TAKEN IN COACHING?

Evaluation:The coach will help you specify answers to these questions:

Where are you now?

What is your current level of performance?

What are your strengths and weaknesses?

What are your areas of skill and competence?

How can you identify your values, purpose, principles and priorities?

Are you ready for coaching?

Setting Direction: The coach will help you clarify your vision, priorities and goals. The coach will help you clearly define the objectives, results or outcomes desired by you.

Implementing a Defined Plan of Action:

After helping you define the goals and challenges, the coach will help you establish an action plan and timetable, identify likely obstacles and remedies, and support your commitment to follow the timetable to achieve your goals.

Following Through:

The coach will help you evaluate your progress realistically, give you feedback, and help you modify or enhance your plan of action as needed for greater effectiveness.

WHY USE A COACH?

If we think about the role of a coach in sports it helps to clarify what a life coach may offer. A world-class athlete already has the talent and skill to compete in the top echelon of his or her sport. Why would such a supremely talented athlete need to have a coach? Because top athletes know a coach can help them identify certain training or performance actions that will help them achieve up to their maximum potential. The coach helps the athlete make full and efficient use of his or her talent and skills. A similar principle is involved in Executive Coaching, Life Coaching, Career Coaching or Personal Coaching.

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING AND PSYCHOTHERAPY?

Psychotherapy is a method of treatment for symptoms of emotional disturbance, such as anxiety, depression, panic attacks, obsessions or compulsions. Treatment may be directed at the overt expression of the symptom or it may include exploring personal family and history information in order to determine the cause of the symptom. It involves dealing with mental or emotional suffering, or dysfunction, internal conflicts, and psychodynamics. It is usually conducted in face-to-face meetings in the office of a psychologist, typically for 45 minute weekly sessions. Treatment is directed at a diagnosable mental or emotional disturbance and is often covered as a benefit under a medical insurance plan.

In Coaching we are not addressing symptoms of an emotional disturbance. We are working with healthy, well functioning individuals who want to improve and expand upon their level of functioning rather than upon treatment of an emotional disturbance. It is future oriented, progress oriented and action oriented. The basic assumption in coaching is that an achievement oriented person wants to function at a higher level, to be more effective and to make positive changes in his or her life.

HOW DOES COACHING WORK?

Coaching is a way of helping a person expand upon his or her perception of new possibilities and thereby upon an awareness of freedom to make choices. The coach does not tell people what to do, but helps them define the changes they want to make and the goals they want to achieve. It helps them take the step from wishing, yearning and hoping to actually taking practical steps in a realistic, productive way. Coaching focuses upon future possibilities, not past mistakes. It enhances a new learning process and implements effective action through a deliberate process of observation, inquiry, dialog, and discovery. It helps a person recognize and draw upon their strengths and under-utilized psychological resources and to overcome limitations, frustration and

disappointment.

In other words, a coach helps a client recognize options for becoming a more effective person. The coach facilitates experiential learning that results in positive, future-oriented action and helps the client clearly define and strengthen his or her commitment to making positive changes. Coaching is a collaborative, goal directed form of cooperative planning between the coach and a healthy achievement-oriented person.

HOW IS COACHING CONDUCTED?

Because the coach is dealing with someone who is psychologically healthy, there are practical options to face-to-face sessions. Coaching is often conducted with clients by means of telephone conferences. Because of the well defined and circumscribed nature of the goals and because of the cooperative interactive nature of the coaching procedure this process can be effective using periodic consultations of about twenty minutes duration. Because we are tapping latent or under-utilized psychological resources in a basically well functioning, healthy person, coaching usually works on a much faster timetable than psychotherapy.

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<http://www.harryfaddis.com/coach.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

The pace of our lives is fast and the demands on our time and energy seem to increase, taking us farther and farther away from what we really want to be doing. We find ourselves doing more of what we have to do and less of what we truly want to be doing. We often have the feeling of moving away from the spiritual areas of our lives. Consider the idea of "whole-heartedness." What would you be like if everything you did were being done with all of your heart? What would you be like if you lived your life knowing that what you have chosen to do is in line with your destiny and purpose of being on this earth? If creating a life that is whole-hearted and having big dreams is something you feel called to do, you might consider having a coach and spiritual director to assist you.

You might be interested in having me as your Coach/Spiritual Director because of my long experience in Men's Work, because of my experience in the 12-Step approach to life, because of my work as an Instructor at the Body Electric School in Oakland, and because of my work as the Founder of The Order of the Brothers of Mercy and The Holy Wisdom Monastery. As your Coach/Spiritual Director I would be committed to helping you discover the Big Dreams of your life and to doing whatever is necessary to keep you on the path of your destiny.

Coaching for Couples

Many men who are in couples today have the experience of having lost an intimate connection with their partners. This loss happens for many reasons, including differing values, un-shared goals and dreams that are going in two directions. Lots of men have lost their physical/erotic connections with their partners. and seek this connection outside of the relationship.

Coaching for Couples is useful in all of the stages of couplehood:

1. The Beginning Stage or Courtship
2. Early Couplehood
3. Couples with a long history

In each stage, Coaching for Couples can be useful in seeking alignment in viewpoints, understanding and compassion for individual struggles, and for learning practices of Intimacy:

Explore all of the basic areas that are addressed in Coaching:

- Value Clarification
- Goal creation based on value structure
- Creation of Spiritual Sources of energy

- Exploring the idea of individual destiny

Explore the areas that are common to couples:

- Alignment of shared values, goals, dreams, visions
- Creation of new energy sources.
- Practices of Intimacy

Have the possible option of an Intimacy Coach.

Please contact me at 518-692-1255 or at harry@harryfaddis.com

<http://www.harryfaddis.com/coachqa.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

What is Coaching?

Coaching is the action of helping you find your way and of traveling with you. It is an alliance between two equal persons with the intention of meeting the needs of the client.

What is the coaching relationship like?

The coaching relationship is profoundly creative, supportive, and powerful. It is different between each coach and client; and each relationship is created and defined by the client.

What does a coach do?

A good coach puts the focus on you. He listens to you. He is aware of who you really are, of what your goals and values are. He holds you accountable for what you say you want to do in your life. He is completely curious about you. He will help you clarify your goals and create steps to going after them. He is totally committed to what you want to do with your life and he will absolutely tell you the truth, especially where you are strong and where you let yourself down.

A good coach has no negative judgments about you. He is totally supportive of you in your thoughts, words, and all of your feelings. And he will be a witness to you in creating the life you have always wanted to have, filled with power and purpose.

Who has power in the coaching relationship?

In the coaching relationship, the power is in the relationship itself. It is a third sphere, the coach and client being the first two spheres. The relationship is designed by the client, so you can say that the client has the power even from the beginning of the relationship.

What is business coaching?

Business coaching is the process of helping a client to set goals, either realistic or fantastic, and to create strategies for achieving these goals. It is also a process of looking at the assets of the client and at the values he brings to the creative process.

What is personal life coaching?

Personal life coaching is similar to business coaching and also to athletic coaching. Many business people have coaches. We just never see the coaches in the news. All athletes have coaches and we could say that great success in sports is really not possible without strong, positive coaching.

In personal life coaching, you have a coach at your side through the important processes of your life. He is there when you set your goals, and he is there through your daily routine in developing and implementing your strategies. He is there to celebrate your wins and successes, and he is there to share your failures with compassion and understanding. He will remind you that a man with many successes in life also has lots of failures.

What is the structure of coaching?

Coaching may be done in person or on the phone. One of our biggest challenges in life today is finding the time to do what is important to us. Coaching on the phone is the most efficient means of getting the most out of the experience. Sessions are usually had on a weekly basis for half and hour to forty-five minutes.

How does the relationship begin?

The relationship usually begins with a phone conversation about what you are looking for. And then it is a good idea to do an introductory session for a half-hour. That is usually enough for you to decide if you would like to have a life coach. When you decide that you would like to begin, a long interview is done before the coaching sessions begin.

Why would someone think that he needs a coach?

We live in a busy, complicated, and stressful world. We often have the experience that our lives are out of balance. We are doing things we don't want to do and we aren't doing the things we want to do. People come to coaching to restore the balance in their lives.

What is the client's job?

The client's job is to show up for the session, usually on the phone. He might talk about the week and what his goal is for the session. He might report his wins and challenges of the week, along with areas to be addressed.

What is the coach's job?

The coach's job is to be present to what the client is thinking, saying, and feeling. He will also be aware of goals and commitments from previous sessions. The image of dancing is often used to describe the relationship between the client and the coach. We dance together.

What areas do you specialize in?

I specialize in working with men, especially gay or queer men. The areas of our lives that most interest me are spirituality, eroticism, and power.

Are these areas exclusive or inclusive?

I am aware that life is a whole. When we look at one area, such as spirituality, it effects the whole of our lives, such as work and money. When we look at eroticism and make an inquiry into our values and goals, it effects other areas such as spirituality and recreation. Finding a root area of imbalance in our lives will uncover the same imbalance in our whole life. Empowering one area of our lives, undoubtedly puts power in the whole of our lives.

What are some of the expected results of personal life coaching?

Some expected results of personal life coaching are a feeling of power in our lives, the experience of balance in the whole of our lives, and the gift of fulfillment, that we are living a life of purpose that is in harmony with our deepest-felt dreams. We may discover a whole-life.

<http://www.4change.info/life-coaching.htm>

Accessed: 04/29/04

LIFE COACHING FOR YOUR PERSONAL OR PROFESSIONAL LIFE – OR BOTH!

“Life coaching is the newest, fastest and most effective way to reassess and rework any area of your life. What a personal trainer does for your body, a life coach does for the rest of your life.”
The Guardian

IT'S PRACTICAL, IT WORKS AND IT'S OPEN TO EVERYONE
ABOUT LIFE COACHING

Life coaching motivates you to achieve personal and professional success. It provides a no-nonsense, down-to-earth approach, with a practical set of techniques and strategies to achieve success and happiness – fast!

HOW DID IT START?

Life coaching originated in the USA some 20 years ago, and has developed with the influence of sports coaching and coaching for top business executives. The current demand for life coaching has been fired almost totally by word of mouth recommendation from people who have transformed their lives with the help of a coach.

WHAT CAN IT DO FOR ME?

Unlike therapy, coaching focuses on where you are now, rather than the past. It enables you to take control of your life and develop practical ways to make life changes and achieve your goals. It supports and encourages you to clarify what is really important in your life, and helps you evolve your own game plan to make your goals a reality.

Coaching will challenge any limiting self-beliefs you may have, so that you no longer limit your potential and create frustration. You can then believe in yourself totally, and create a positive life where anything becomes possible. By your side, you will have an objective, confidential, supporter who doesn't judge or criticise, and is totally committed to your success.

In a structured and practical way, coaching gives you the power and confidence to achieve your ambitions. It gives you motivation, belief in yourself and self-reliance. It helps you develop action plans and strategies that work. For many, the weekly progress report is the spur that keeps them on target.

HOW BALANCED IS YOUR LIFE?

Are some areas of your life better than others? Are some parts out of control, or do you feel great?

A SAFE PLACE FOR YOU TO DISCOVER YOUR OWN POWER

Coaching provides a safe environment to explore concerns, options and possibilities. It stimulates creative thinking and provides goal planning to create a compelling and exciting future. The coach is the catalyst. It's the client that makes the decisions and commitment, and discovers amazing answers that their inner wisdom held all along.

SUBJECTS FOR COACHING

Some clients need help with a short term goal (e.g. making a presentation or having a happy family Christmas); while others may want longer term support with a major change in their life. The list is endless. Here are just a few examples:

Taking control of your life Achieving a goal Finding a new direction
Changing career Family concerns Self confidence
Wanting home - work balance Having more fun Working more successfully
Starting a new business Improving productivity Building good relationships
Finding fulfilment Retirement Redundancy
Returning to work Having a baby Building a social life
Finance* Keeping fit and healthy* Moving house
Divorce Building that website Parenthood
Making that change ... and much, much more.

(*4Change does not give financial or medical advice)

WHO HAS A COACH?

4Change coaches private individuals, entrepreneurs, business executives and company staff. Not surprisingly, some similar concerns and objectives arise amongst all groups – as they are all human! Coaching is available to everyone – male or female – working or home-based – young or old – married or single.

THE BENEFITS

Coaching allows you to get more out of life, change direction, gain self-awareness and achieve

much more. You can reach bigger and better goals than you ever imagined – all with your personal, impartial and confidential cheerleader to keep you on track.

On the business front, true productivity can be achieved with speedy decision making, focussed actions and individuals being enthused to work for the good of the company.

HOW DOES IT WORK?

Coaching knows no geographical boundaries as it is available by telephone as well as face-to-face. Coaching is usually booked over monthly or three monthly periods, with payment in advance. Special one-off sessions are available for that small, but important goal that you may need help with.

Calls by telephone must be made by the client at the appointed time from a landline 'phone. Calls cannot run over the allotted time due to other client commitments, so you need to be on time!

COACHING BY TELEPHONE OR FACE TO FACE

Coaching is available FACE TO FACE or by TELEPHONE – with email back-up if required.

Coaching is usually booked over monthly or three monthly periods with three options:

PLATINUM 4 sessions of 1 hour's duration per month

GOLD 4 sessions of 45 minutes' duration per month

SILVER 4 sessions of 30 minutes' duration per month

A special one-off 1 hour DIAMOND session is available for that small, but important goal that you need help with. This includes a ½ hour follow-up the next week. One client wanted to plan a special Christmas and another wanted to find a family holiday that everyone would enjoy.

QUESTIONNAIRE

4Change requires every client to complete and return a questionnaire prior to their first coaching session to ensure the best possible results.

PAYMENT

Packages must be pre-paid by cheque or direct bank transfer, and calls for telephone coaching should be made by the client using landlines.

WHAT JUST A FEW CLIENTS SAY:

CORPORATE CLIENT: "I've discovered that the whole problem (with a colleague) was really to do with my own lack of self-belief. I'm working on it now, and it's changed the whole way I work."

RELATIONSHIP: "I've found do love my partner – that puts everything into perspective – and now I can work on ways to enjoy our life more."

LIFE BALANCE: "I was overwhelmed with family demands and work, and was very bad tempered! Now I've got an action plan that really appeals to me. It's made a huge difference....I'm having some time just for myself...and Fiona makes sure I keep on track."

KEEPING FIT: "I've found ways of keeping fit that I enjoy...the gym's not the only way, and that's really liberated my thinking...hurray!"

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<http://www.gymuser.co.uk/corporate/life/life-coach-training.htm>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Life coach - balance

Fulfilment

The definition of fulfilment will differ from person to person and in fact is quite personal. Fulfilment may, especially initially, include external measures of success such as career, financial status and lifestyle. In coaching it will soon progress to a deeper definition. It becomes defining what fills the coachee's heart and soul not just their pockets. A fulfilling life is a valued life and a coachee will have their own definition of what they value. Understanding and clarifying values is an important part of coaching, because when life choices reflect your values, those choices become much more satisfying.

Getting the right balance:

The 'right balance' means different things to different people. We perceive balance to be equilibrium, balance and harmony between and within all the key areas of your life. Quite often coachees can be passionate and focused in one area of their life whilst other areas of their lives are in ruin. Nevertheless they understand the value of balance and may have made several attempts to achieve it – for instance with good intentions to visit the gym and exercise more, or reconnect with old friends – but weeks or months have passed without any sustained action or in fact any action at all.

Life coaching tends to approach the whole of a person's life understanding that all the major areas of our lives are interlinked – health, career, finances, relationships, environment, personal growth, social, recreation and spiritual. Balance is dynamic. It is always in motion because life is dynamic too. So coachees are either moving away from balance or moving towards it. A coach is there to ensure that you keep your compass on the course you want to keep it on.

Are you happy with all the areas of your life such as: career, personal growth, home environment, relationships, finances, fun and health? Whatever it is, a life coach ensures that balance is reached so that contentment is reached and stress kept to a minimum.

Life coach David Bates at Tree of Life Coaching

Realise your potential in this life rather than the next. Specialises in career and business issues, and mentoring new and aspiring coaches. Site includes free tools tips and articles.

Life coaching from The UK College of Life Coaching

The UK College of Life Coaching - accredited life coaching and executive coaching courses - find a coach online.

Pathways Personal Life Coaching

Find new and meaningful direction to transform your career or home life. Understand the things that are truly important to you and build the confidence and belief to attain them.

Our life coaches can help you succeed

Chrysalis Coaching - free initial consultation. Based in Surrey, we are an independent life coaching & executive development company that is committed to you achieving your goals.

Great Life Coach - London life coach

London life coach dedicated to coaching personal, entrepreneurial & executive performance, happiness and transformation. Learn to be what you are in the seed of your spirit. Gain balance and purpose.

Get your life coaching career started now.

Wondering what your next step should be to ensure your coaching success? Register for our free one-hour introductory class. Take this class anywhere you have access to a telephone.

Find life coaching courses at The Coaching Academy

The Coaching Academy was the first UK-based coaching school and we offer a range of training courses for students who want to become life coaches. Find yourself a life coach on our site.

Become a life coach

Become a certified life coach, with the help of this diploma home-study course. You'll have a friendly tutor, plus all the support you need to set up your own practice.

<http://www.byregion.net/glossary/lifecoaching.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Life Coaching

The term coaching comes from the analogy with sports where the athlete has someone unconditionally 'on their side' supporting and bringing out the best in them. Clarifying and achieving meaningful goals, business and personal, is usually the central part of coaching and there is much more, including increased self-care, clearing up your life, building a strong personal foundation and balancing different areas such as work, family, health and creativity. Coaching is different to consultancy in that it sees the solution lying with the client and the work of the coach, using effective questioning and listening, is to help the individual realise and express their own potential by taking appropriate action. Coaches may advise, make requests and use different assessments and programmes that stretch the client but these can be declined and the intention is always for the client to be self-motivated and claim Ownership of what they do.

History

Life Coaching has been developed since the late 80s from a number of different complementary sources, the contributions of all of them being adapted and synthesised by professional coaches. These sources include Coach University and the work of Thomas Leonard, NLP and the work of Anthony Robbins and others, and the "Inner Game" approach to sports developed by Timothy Galway and applied to organisations by Sir John Whitmore and others.

What to Expect

You will be asked for a brief history and to outline both short and long terms goals to work on. The emphasis is on taking action while growing in awareness and choice. You will be asked to prepare for the sessions and to agree to fieldwork in between. You have someone on your side, interested yet detached, to bounce ideas off, formulate strategies, and to share successes and failures with. Clients find that they achieve their goals more effectively, easily and happily when working with a coach. As well as face to face work, a growing number of coaches work by phone with email support. You save on travel time and can work with a particular coach from anywhere in the world (new phone companies have resulted in minimal call charges).

Training & Colleges

Coaches are often consultants or therapists with varied background and training. CoachU training involves 180 plus class hours with extensive study material and practical application and takes 1-3 years.

Professional Bodies and Resources

International Coach Federation
1444 "1" Street NW
Suite 700
Washington, DC 20005

Website: <http://www.coachfederation.org>

CoachUniversity
Hudson InstituteHudson Institute
Coaching From Spirit
Life on Purpose Insitute

Information graciously provided by Holistics UK

Please contact us if you have any questions or if you would like to add a term or information to the

glossary: info@byregion.net

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Life_Coaching

Accessed: 04/29/04

Life coaching

Life coaching is a constellation of techniques utilized by a growing coterie of counselors to aid their clients in transitions in their personal life and in the process of self-actualization. Life coaching draws from a number of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, career counseling, and numerous other types of counseling. The coach, or counselor, applies mentoring, values assessment, behavior modification, behavior modeling, goal-setting, and other techniques in assisting clients.

Coaches tend to specialize in one or more of several areas: career coaching, transition coaching, life or personal coaching, executive coaching, small business coaching, and organizational or corporate coaching. As the internet has grown, life coaching has greatly expanded its online presence. Many life coaching organizations now offer online coaching as well as coaching over the telephone.

Some life coaches extend their services beyond the personal into interpersonal, familial, and organizational realms, advising clients on the best methods of maximizing effectiveness in these areas as well.

See also: Mediation, Negotiation, Conciliation, Philosophical counseling.

<http://userpages.itis.com/vanzyl/christian.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

COACHING FROM A CHRISTIAN PERSPECTIVE

I am solidly grounded in Christian spirituality. I find that some of my clients want that grounding integrated in their coaching and I am pleased to do that integration when it is requested. Faith practices such as prayer and stories from scripture will be used as appropriate to the client's requests and needs.

Client viewpoint:

Sharon can offer guidance with authority since the principles she advocates for her clients are the same principles by which she lives her own life. I have been working with Sharon in counseling, and now with coaching, off and on for nearly 20 years. Every time she touches my life, there is improvement. With Sharon's help I have accomplished many small and big changes in my life – at work, in my marriage and as a parent. Sharon demonstrates God's love in a way that helps you see Him clearly. There are few people I trust in life as deeply as I trust her. Patricia H., Madison
Scroll down for our model of Christian coaching.



ABOUT THE MAZE

About the maze that you see on our materials:

The story of Titoi, the man in the maze, is also the story of every human being, traveling through life as through a maze, taking many turns while growing stronger and wiser as death at the center of the maze comes closer. Tracing the light path with your finger you will find one more turn at the end, away from the center. Here we can look back on the trail and find acceptance of the last step.

– Tohono O'Odham (Native American Indian tribe)

With coaching you have a partner

traveling the maze of life. Your coach helps to make certain that you grow stronger and wiser on the journey so that when you come to that final turn and look back you will do so with immense satisfaction.

<http://www.pr.mq.edu.au/macnews/ShowItem.asp?ItemID=146>

Accessed: 04/29/04

The psychology of coaching

A desire to achieve goals and enhance performance in both personal and professional life has seen life coaching grow from nothing to become a thriving industry. But until now there has been little research into the impact of this new discipline nor the effectiveness of the techniques it employs.

Dr Anthony Grant

Modern times are stressful times - few would argue with that. Job security is flimsy in many sectors, creating more stress and longer working hours than ever before. For most, employment is combined with raising a family, running a house, plus an assortment of other time consuming and brain draining activities that leave very few minutes in the day for personal time. Throw all of these factors together and you have a melting pot of life pressures ripe to explode.

It's this heady environment that could explain the skyrocketing popularity of executive and personal coaching which has increased ten-fold in only a few years. According to coaching psychologist Dr Anthony Grant, who recently completed a PhD at Macquarie University on the psychology of coaching, there was only one commercial coach training organisation operating in Australia in 1996 - in 2001 there were at least 12. Grant has over 15 years experience in facilitating individual and organisational change, and is now Director of the Coaching Psychology Unit at Sydney University.

His research explored three key areas in the field of coaching psychology - whether the theories and techniques utilised in counselling and clinical psychology for the treatment of dysfunctionality are applicable to non-clinical coaching populations who seek to enhance life experience and performance; how coaching for enhanced performance impacts on metacognition, mental health and goal attainment; and what the implications of these issues are for a psychology of coaching.

"Ten years ago we saw a boom in the self-help industry. As time has gone by it's become much more socially acceptable to access self-help initiatives such as executive or personal coaching," says Grant. "There is clearly a growing trend for individuals and organisations to employ professional coaches to help them reach their personal and work-related goals."

Grant defines coaching as a systematic process in which a coach facilitates self-directed learning, personal growth and enhancement of the coachee's life experience and performance. It aims to bring about sustained cognitive, emotional and behavioural change which facilitates goal attainment and performance enhancement either in a person's work or personal life.

Despite its high media profile and growing popularity as an occupation and as a service, however, there has been little research conducted into the actual impact of life coaching and the effectiveness of different techniques that are used.

To Grant's knowledge, his PhD study is the first ever to evaluate the effectiveness of those programs that employ models based on clinical psychology and counselling.

"Psychology has traditionally focused on alleviating dysfunctionality or treating psychopathology in clinical populations," he says. "But it also has a genuine and important contribution to make in terms of adapting and validating existing therapeutic models for use with normal populations and evaluating commercialised approaches to personal development to ensure consumer protection and inform consumer choice."

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of coaching on metacognition - the process of thinking about one's thoughts, feelings and behaviours - mental health and goal attainment, Grant analysed a commercially marketed life coaching program, Coach Yourself, which utilises a range of established cognitive and behavioural techniques employed in clinical and counselling practice.

The participants involved were 20 adults whose focus was on attaining specific goals that had eluded them for periods averaging 23.5 months. Some of these goals included establishing a business, attending to neglected financial affairs, and time management. The program guided each individual through a systemised process of self-assessment, goal setting, planning and action, and showed them how to establish a system by which they could monitor and evaluate their progress towards their goals.

According to Grant, the study provided empirical evidence that a life coaching program can facilitate goal attainment, improve mental health and enhance quality of life.

"It is my conclusion that this particular approach to life coaching can be effective, and it appears that many of the techniques used in clinical practice are indeed applicable to the enhancement of performance and life experience," he says.

"The participants' reported levels of depression, anxiety and stress were significantly reduced, with most reporting a significantly enhanced quality of life. This finding suggests that although the life coaching program was directed at the attainment of specific goals, the benefits generalised to participants' broader life experience, and this provides preliminary evidence of the general value of life coaching in addition to its more specific impact on goal attainment."

While Grant has established that the application of clinical techniques to coaching practice may well be justified, he argues that further research is needed in this area.

"Given that the stigma sometimes associated with participation in psychotherapy can act as a barrier for individuals who would benefit from therapeutic help, life coaching, which is not overtly seen to be a psychotherapeutic intervention, could prove to be an acceptable and effective methodology for enhancing life experience and reducing anxiety, stress and depression in normal or sub-clinical populations," he says.

"Future research should investigate this notion. If life coaching were to be used with this end in mind, this would be a powerful call for the further development of empirically-validated models of

coaching, and would further emphasise the need for sound training and ethical practice."

Grant also believes that future coaching research could examine the relative efficacy of cognitive coaching interventions as compared to behavioural coaching interventions. "This research is of interest to coaching practice for three reasons," he says. "Firstly, this would begin the process of validating and establishing a cognitive-behavioural framework for a psychology of coaching.

"Secondly, such research will assist the design of effective coaching programs. Given that individuals with already high baseline behavioural skills are likely to benefit less from behavioural skills coaching than those with low baseline skills, and that normal populations do not tend to display the behavioural skills deficits observed in clinical populations, it may be that a cognitive emphasis in coaching may be specifically appropriate for enhancing outcomes in non-clinical populations.

"Thirdly, there are a large number of personal development publications which promote a cognitive-only approach to self-development and self-coaching. Empirical research into the relative effectiveness of cognitive and behavioural approaches would provide valuable guidelines for practitioners and the public alike."

One of the major implications of Grant's research is that if life coaching is to avoid the stigma associated with "faddism" and develop as a respected sub-discipline of psychology, it must be able to demonstrate efficacy and develop theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated models of coaching. "Coaching is a new area of behavioural science that has great potential for forwarding the practice of psychology," he says. "And at the same time, psychology is ideally placed to contribute theoretically-grounded and empirically-validated approaches to the practices of life coaching to enhance the performance, productivity and quality of life of individuals, organisations and the broader community."

Story by Fiona Crawford

<http://media.uow.edu.au/releases/2003/0925a.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

First release of life coaching results

Sep 25, 2003

Life coaching has grown substantially in the past few years with considerable media coverage worldwide. However, to date there has been minimal research undertaken to test its validity and effectiveness.

Despite increased public interest and demand for life coaching services, psychologists have been slow to present themselves as possessing the special knowledge and skills applicable to life coaching and have also been slow to undertake research in this area.

Now a research team from the Illawarra Institute of Mental Health at the University of Wollongong, with support from the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney, has begun the process of evaluating the effectiveness of life coaching.

Results of two successful life coaching group programs will be released this week at a celebration for coaching participants at the Northfields Clinic, University of Wollongong. These programs were facilitated and researched by post-graduate Clinical Psychology doctoral student, Suzy Green.

About 50 Wollongong people participated and made significant progress towards their goals.

Ms Green said results would also reveal significant increases in the participants' well-being.

The research project was conducted under supervision from Dr Lindsay Oades, Department of Psychology, University of Wollongong and Dr Anthony Grant, Director of the Coaching Psychology

Unit, University of Sydney.

The study was the first wait-list control study completed on the effectiveness of life coaching. Ms Green has been awarded a Gallup travel grant to present the findings at the International Positive Psychology Summit in Washington DC in early October.

Media please note: Before her departure next week, Ms Green can be contacted on 0412 427373 for any further information.

For more information, contact:

media@uow.edu.au
University of Wollongong
Ph: (02) 4221 5942; fax (02) 4221 3128

<http://www.lifecoachtraining.com/personal.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

What is Coaching?

Why the Coaching Industry is Booming – and why therapists are the best positioned professionals to dominate this cutting-edge industry

"...in the next few years, coaching will become the norm in the business world."

-- The Washington Post

According to U.S. News and World Report, the profession of coaching (sometimes called Personal Coaching or Life Coaching), is the second biggest consulting business, second only to management consulting.

What exactly is coaching – and why has the industry attained such record growth?

Coaching entails working with people who already have a measure of "success" in their lives, but who want to bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be in their profession and their personal life. This is much like a trainer who helps an athlete win the "gold medal" – not just be in the race. Coaches help their clients design the life they want, bring out their clients' own brilliance and resources so that they can achieve excellence and create purposeful, extraordinary lives.

The demand for coaching came into being when stressed out executives started seeking help in coping with their professional and personal lives. In addition, as companies started downsizing and outplacing, and baby boomers started turning 50, coaches were hired to ease traumatic transitions and to help people get back on track. While coaching is still most prevalent in the corporate environment, individuals are increasingly turning to coaches for help in enhancing all aspects of their lives.

"Coaching is the number two growth industry right behind IT (Information Technology) jobs, and it's the number one home-based profession."

-- Start-Ups Magazine

Therapists are probably the most well-positioned professionals to transition into this exciting, lucrative and personally enriching business. That's because they already have the requisite skills for effective coaching (such as listening, building rapport, encouraging, facilitating change, empathy and objectivity) that they can easily translate into coaching.

Therapists who learn the business of personal coaching will find that they really enjoy their clients, earn higher incomes, and even have a level of friendship and community that is neither proper nor

possible in traditional psychotherapy.

"Coaches are in such demand that they can charge from \$600 to \$2,000 a month for three or four 30- to 60-minute conversations. Some charge as much as \$400 an hour. So a lot of them are earning far more than psychologists or psychiatrists."

-- Time Business News

Tele-coaching (coaching by phone) is the most recent trend in coaching. Because it is not dependent on geography, coaches find that they can build their coaching business anywhere ... it's portable, convenient and is more confidential than traditional therapy. As an added bonus, you work with highly motivated (as opposed to problematic) people who want to build better lives.

Distinction Between Coaching and Therapy

Psychotherapy generally deals with emotional/behavioral problems and disruptive situations – and seeks to bring the client to normal function by focusing on his dysfunction. Therapy is usually done in-person, although at times, it may be done over the telephone.

Coaching deals with functional persons who want to move toward higher function – and achieve excellence while creating an extraordinary life. Coaching is a process similar to solution-focused techniques that therapists use for less serious psycho-emotional problems and life stresses.

The coaching paradigm that we teach at the Institute for Life Coach Training treats the whole person, not the dysfunction – and we believe this is the most powerful therapy on earth. When you empower a person and show him what he can do – instead of focusing on what he can't do (weakness) – you can improve his overall mental health and his life dramatically.

Dr. Patrick Williams (Master Certified Coach) and his team of instructors have mentored hundreds of therapists, counselors, mental health professionals, marriage and family therapists, and psychologists who were interested in adding coaching to their practice or becoming full-time coaches. Dr. Williams founded Therapist University in 1998 (later renamed the Institute for Life Coach Training), the first-of-its-kind training institute that specializes in training therapists in building a successful coaching business.

The Institute provides the quickest way for a therapist to translate his/her skills into coaching skills in as little as 30 hours of tele-classes (spread out over 15 weeks). Click here to view a detailed course description.

Or you can give us a call toll-free at 888-267-1206 or email us for more information on how you can quickly learn how to use your professional skills in coaching, make more money, have more fun, have a successful coaching practice ... and a life!

"We Train Great Helping Professionals to Be Masterful Life Coaches"™

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<http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/Life%20coaching>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Life coaching

Word: Life coaching is a constellation of techniques utilized by a growing coterie of counselors to aid their clients in transitions in their personal life and in the process of self-

actualization. Life coaching draws from a number of disciplines, including sociology, psychology, career counseling, and numerous other types of counseling. The coach, or counselor, applies mentoring, values assessment, behavior modification, behavior modeling, goal-setting, and other techniques in assisting clients.

Coaches tend to specialize in one or more of several areas: career coaching, transition coaching, life or personal coaching, executive coaching, small business coaching, and organizational or corporate coaching. As the internet has grown, life coaching has greatly expanded its online presence. Many life coaching organizations now offer online coaching as well as coaching over the telephone

Some life coaches extend their services beyond the personal into interpersonal, familial, and organizational realms, advising clients on the best methods of maximizing effectiveness in these areas as well.

Notes on the file

http://www.resultslifecoaching.com.au/become/PDFS/history_coaching.PDF

accessed on 05/05/04

Coaching isn't new in that the skills it uses and aims it has are used, at their best, in parenting and business leadership. The strands that go to make it up are identified going back into the 1950's but as a cohesive set of principles, knowledge and skills it has only been in the 1990's that it all came together -though perhaps in the late '80's in the USA.

However only in the last 10 years has it really taken off as a service outside of sports training circles.

A definition of coaching: "Coaching is the art of bringing out the greatness in people in a way that honours the integrity of the human spirit. It is both an innate human capacity and a teachable skill which has now become a profession and an industry."

Evidence of growth.

Since late 1980's, there have grown up in the USA over 100 coaching 'training schools' and more recently it has started to be accredited by HEI's in the USA. In Australia in 1995 there were a few dozen practising coaches, now [document written Nov 2002] there are several thousand.

Industry Growth Drivers

Personal growth: citing Joseph Campbell's work on mythic heroic journeys where guides enable the hero to achieve what they have it in them to do. This is seen as an extended metaphor for personal/inner growth.

In science and business thinking has become increasingly holistic as opposed to atomistic. Even the turn among some to ideas of creating ones own reality is cited.

Increasingly people in 1st world are finding that as they achieve financial and professional goals, they are still not fulfilled and they seek resources to help them towards reaching their "personal potential".

The diminished role of the family is cited; leading to less personal "support and sounding boards". Also job mobility and the end of the jobs for life culture, the uncertainties and pressures that this creates, make for a need for coaching. Also decline of institutional religion means that people can't/ won't/ don't use the religious resources the once might for support, guidance or community whilst 'new' [to the West] forms of spirituality are rising. "People are turning to coaching to help them add connection, intimacy and meaning to their lives, both as clients of coaches and becoming coaches themselves."

In the 1970's in some sections of the therapeutic community, Cognitive Behavioural approaches began to be replaced by Brief Solution Focused Therapy. This latter was "characterised by

- clear and specific goal-setting
- strategic planning with the client
- an expectation of change in a short period of time
- emphasis on what will happen (future, not past, orientation)
- recognition of the client's experience and resources for producing change.

[It would need evidencing that this coincidence of approach is actually a flow of one to the other rather than co-incident!]

In the 1960's work on adult learning, particularly in life skills, led to experiential and self-directed learning insights which are core to LC. Seligman's work on optimism and pessimism [1970's] was influential, suggesting that optimism could be learned.

Also insights from sports psychology [eg Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Tennis*]

The personal development movement [arguably starting in the 1950's with Norman Vincent Peal's *The Power of Positive Thinking*] gained momentum in the 1980's and the next logical step from the mass approach was to personalise it.

Motivational speakers and writers have been influential.

Management development: much of the work has used concepts that recur in coaching "with tremendous crossover between business and coaching literature".

NLP, developed beginning in 1975.

Research over the last 20 years into creativity and thinking has also influenced LC.

Also in the last ten years or so a greater emphasis on emotional intelligence.

Communications Skills development has also affect LC especially in the area of listening skills and how people process communications.

Mentoring has been a growth area and this to has contributed to LC.

Spiritual Direction Web pages.

http://www.gracecathedral.org/enrichment/interviews/int_19990513.shtml

Accessed: 04/29/04

Don Lattin is co-author of the book *Shopping for Faith: American Religion in the New Millennium*. An award-winning religion writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, Lattin has interviewed thousands of Americans over the past 20 years about their religious heritage and spiritual search. He's been a fellow at the program in Religious Studies for Journalists at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, and also taught religion reporting at the Graduate School of Journalism at the University of California at Berkeley.

Colleen O'Connor: Describe spirituality in the new millennium.

A lot of people have to leave their tradition and search around to come back. I think that's happened at Grace Cathedral too. With the labyrinth, a lot of people rediscovered a sort of Christian mysticism or contemplative prayer.

Don Lattin: I don't have one grand theory to understand everything because I don't think such a theory exists. There are different things going on. On the one hand, there is a great deal of searching and shopping around for a personal spirituality that really resonates with the individual. But on the other hand, a lot of people go through this search and then discover a mystical tradition within the tradition of their upbringing. I've done a lot of reporting on Buddhism in Northern California and these very successful meditation centers, like the Zen Center in San Francisco and Spirit Rock in Marin County. I've always noticed there are a very high

percentage of Jews interested in Buddhism. Now a lot of them have discovered there's a mystical tradition within Judaism, kabbalah. That's very popular right now--very hot in Hollywood with Roseanne and Madonna and other folks. So a lot of people have to leave their tradition and search around to come back. I think that's happened at Grace Cathedral too. With the labyrinth, a lot of people rediscovered a sort of Christian mysticism or contemplative prayer. All of these people have come full circle that way.

You predict that Pentecostal Christianity and meditative traditions will survive into the next century. Aren't they opposites?

Faith healing is also a very important component of both Pentecostalism and the New Age movement, and so is prophecy.

The first time I noticed this trend was five or ten years ago. I had done a story on a Pentecostal church. It's such a lively, spirit-filled emotional form of worship. People are waving their hands in the air, almost in a trance, with beatific smiles on their faces. It's almost contagious looking at them, and it sweeps through the church. It's very powerful, with all the music. Sometime in the next week or so, I did a story on Stanislav Grof who does holotropic breath work, which is one of the more wild things on the fringe of the so-called New Age movement, or transpersonal psychology. They had the same kind of thing. They had a lot of music. It was a different kind of music: hypnotic, tribal, industrial music like the music at rave masses. People look as if they're going in exactly the same states--they're waving their arms around getting into some sort of a trance state and opening up spiritually, getting beyond the ego, or however you want to understand it. Faith healing is also a very important component of both Pentecostalism and the New Age movement, and so is prophecy. There's a lot of interesting prophecy, whether it's Nostradamus or the Book of Daniel. So there really are a lot of similarities between the so-called New Age movement and Pentecostalism. Now if you ask the Pentecostal preachers about this, they say, "Well, yes, Don, there are many spirits in the world, but some are not of Christ." So it all depends on how you look at it.

Why will the rising numbers of women leaders in churches and synagogues have the most impact on American religion?

One way to predict the future is to look at the seminaries because this is where the future leaders are being trained. I did an article a couple years ago, and looked at all the seminaries in the Graduate Theological Union, along with Golden Gate Baptist Theological Seminary and the Southern Baptist Seminary in Marin County, and then the Roman Catholic Seminary in Menlo Park. It was just amazing the percentage of women. In a lot of these seminaries women out-number men, especially at the Episcopal seminary. Another interesting thing is that women also change the nature of ministry. Sometimes women want to run a parish or congregation more by consensus. It's less of a rigid, hierarchical kind of top-down form of ministry. Of course, a lot of men are also evolving their ministry that way as well. So that's an interesting side of it, there's a more nurturing and collective decision-making.

You predict that the intersection of religion and psychology is one trend that's likely to grow in the new millennium. How will this impact religion in the 21st century?

There are spiritual directors who are sort of freelance. They put out a shingle like a psychotherapist and charge a fixed fee for service.

You see it across the board. Alan Jones has written several books about spiritual direction. He says, "Psychotherapy can help you fix your leg, but it doesn't tell you where to walk." Spiritual direction was traditionally a Catholic or an Anglican thing but now, in a lot of circles, it's hard to tell the difference between psychotherapy and spiritual direction. There are spiritual directors who are sort of freelance. They put out a shingle like a psychotherapist and charge a fixed fee for service. It brings up the point: is there a difference? I think it gets down to people looking at religion as personal experience and personal spirituality. When spirituality is divorced from religion, it lends itself to this personal approach because it's not as institutionally based.

Do you think that the religious right will remain an influential force in American politics?

One of the big crusades they have is for school vouchers. Unlike abortion, where they seem to be losing, they seem to be winning with school vouchers. Some states are already doing private school vouchers, like Wisconsin, and we're just a few test cases away from this really spreading across the country. With welfare reform, a lot of day care is not government funded so there's a lot of religious day care. What's the difference between religious kindergarten and religious first grade? Not much. So in a sense, government-funded religious education is already happening. I think that's going to happen unless there's a clear Supreme Court ruling the other way. But it seems to be going towards more freedom for parents to choose where they send

their children, with some government support. We have a whole section in the book about religious schools, mostly conservative evangelical schools, that are growing like crazy.

How will this affect American life in the next century?

They're very strict. Every subject is based on the Bible. They teach creationism--everything is taught from a conservative evangelical point of view. So a lot of people are growing up with this world view. It's a minority, but it's a significant minority, maybe 15 to 25 percent. People like Pat Robertson will never get elected president, but he can do well in states where there is a grassroots army. So there really is a significant force there, both politically and in terms of the educational structure.

How will religion help address our social problems in the new millennium?

There's been a major change in the last few years--we're basically dismantling the federal welfare system. A lot of federal money now is going through states and counties to churches for job training, soup kitchens, community development and all kinds of things like that. One of the major changes, at least in the next 10 years or so, is going to be the increasing role that organized religion will play in what used to be the welfare state. And that raises all kinds of church-state issues. But also there's a lot of indications that churches can do a better job because people have a sense of community with a church that they don't have going down to the welfare office. There's a lot of one-on-one volunteer mentoring, church members to people in need. From a liberal political point of view, you go into it thinking, "This is just a way for conservatives to pass the buck and cut back on welfare." But when you actually see some of these programs, they really are working and people's lives are changing. So in some ways both the liberal Protestant and liberal Catholic community agrees with the conservative evangelicals on the need for personal responsibility, and for people being empowered in their own lives, and less dependent on government help, as long as there is help to get them back on their feet. That's going to be a major social change in terms of the relationship between religion and the rest of society.

Related Links

Selling Soul: The Packaging of Religion for a Consumerist Culture

The Very Rev. Harry Pritchett, Dean of the Cathedral of St. John The Divine, and Mr. Don Lattin, religion writer for the San Francisco Chronicle, talk about the dramatic clash between religion and consumer culture in America. Forum.

Women and Religion: The Stained Glass Ceiling

A panel of women--a Dominican, a Christian Methodist Episcopalian, and an Episcopalian--discuss the particular questions faced by women in their spiritual and religious lives. Forum.

Psyche and Spirituality: Finding Common Ground

Why has the field of psychiatry historically discounted spiritual and religious practice as irrelevant and sometimes harmful? Our panel reflects on the changing climate of psychiatric practice and discusses whether spiritual health contributes to good mental health. Forum.

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/le/2003/003/3.34.html>

Accessed: 04/29/04

Emerging Values

The next generation is redefining spiritual formation, community, and mission.

Brian D. McLaren

I snuck into pastoral ministry via the English department rather than the theology department. I wasn't planning on being a pastor, but you know how these things go.

There was a moment in graduate school (it was the late '70s) that I won't forget. Not the moment one of my freshman comp students (I had a teaching fellowship) told me he had trouble with spelling, so he wanted to turn in his composition assignments on cassette tape instead of on paper.

No, it was the moment I "got it" regarding a strange new school of literary theory, then associated with the terms "post-structuralism" and "deconstruction." A chill ran up my neck, and two thoughts seized me:

1. If this way of thinking catches on, the whole world will change.
2. If this way of thinking catches on, the Christian faith as we know it is in a heap of trouble.

I couldn't have articulated why these thoughts so gripped me back then, but my intuition was right, I think. I was "getting" some facet of what we now term "postmodernism," a way of thinking that has both continuities and discontinuities with the modernity from which it grows, in which it is rooted, and against which (perhaps like a teenager coming of age) it reacts.

Another moment came in the early '90s. I had left college teaching to pastor a church. A newcomer to our church, a spiritual seeker, highly educated, highly motivated, and highly skeptical of easy answers was asking tough questions, I was giving (thanks to C. S. Lewis, Francis Schaeffer, and Josh McDowell) my best apologetics-informed replies, and I wasn't getting through.

My linear Liar-Lunatic-or-Lord arguments, either-or propositions, and watertight belief system didn't enhance the credibility of the gospel for my new friend; rather, they made the gospel seem less credible, maybe even a little cheap and shallow. Oh no, I thought. That way of thinking I encountered in grad school has caught on, and Christianity as I know it is in a heap of trouble.

Since then, I've grown less anxious and much more hopeful about the future as I've discovered how many opportunities arise along with the challenges of the emerging culture. (Modernity, after all, was no Sunday school picnic for the church.) The way we traditionally expressed Christianity may be in trouble, but the future may hold new expressions of Christian faith every bit as effective, faithful, meaningful, and world-transforming as those we've known so far.

In recent years, as I've met, emailed, conversed, and conspired with many usually-younger ministers in the emerging culture, I've seen three themes—rivers, if you will—that seem to be shaping the contours of ministry. Are these radical, threatening, and revisionist? Or are they continuous, harmonious, and resonant with our past? Perhaps they're a little of both.

The spiritual formation stream

Compare modern Christianity's quest for the perfect belief system to medieval church architecture. Christians in the emerging culture may look back on our doctrinal structures (statements of faith, systematic theologies) as we look back on medieval cathedrals: possessing a real beauty that should be preserved, but now largely vacant, not inhabited or used much anymore, more tourist attraction than holy place.

Many of us can't imagine this.

If Christianity isn't the quest for (or defense of) the perfect belief system ("the church of the last detail"), then what's left? In the emerging culture, I believe it will be "Christianity as a way of life," or "Christianity as a path of spiritual formation."

The switch suggests a change in the questions people are asking. Instead of "How can I be right in my belief so I can go to heaven?" the new question seems to be, "How can we live life to the full so God's will is done on earth as it is in heaven?" Instead of "If you were to die tonight, do you know for certain that you would spend eternity with God in heaven?" the new question seems to be, "If you live for another thirty years, what kind of person will you become?"

I'm not certain any postmodern churches exist quite yet. But even in modern churches we can feel a rising tension, a fomenting discontent: why aren't we making better disciples? Why aren't people becoming more holy, joyful, peaceful, content, and Christ-like?

Why, in a Christian subculture served by 24-hour Christian radio-TV, bathed in books and periodicals of unparalleled quality and quantity, instructed by a state-of-the-art seminary system, and inspired by a state-of-the-heart worship music industry ... why are so few of our good Christian people good Christians? Why is Prozac needed by so many? Why are the most biblically-knowledgeable so often so mean-spirited? Why are our pastors dejected so often? Why do our speakers (both human and electronic) have to blare so loudly to get a response, and even then, why is the response so shallow or temporary?

That discontent may be the ending point for many of us, but it is the starting point for our brothers and sisters of the emerging culture. If Christianity doesn't bear fruit in a way or rhythm or pattern of life that yields Christ-likeness in real measure, they aren't interested. Being "saved" is suspect if people aren't being transformed.

That's why, I believe, we see such a resurgence of interest in Roman Catholic and Orthodox writers, especially pre-modern ones. To find this emphasis on the "renovation of the heart," we have to go back (with few exceptions), way back, to St. John of the Cross, Teresa of Avila, Benedict, Ignatius, the Fathers. That's why good Baptists and Presbyterians find themselves signing up for spiritual direction at a local Catholic monastery.

In this setting, preaching both loses and gains status. Instead of an exercise in transferring information so that people have a coherent, well-formed "worldview" (often an upbeat name for "systematic theology"), preaching in the emerging culture aims at inspiring transformation. It is in a sense demoted from the center of public worship, bookended by bumper music. It steps down from its pedestal to join singing, the Lord's Supper, prayer, silence, and recitation as one formative ritual or practice among many.

This apparent demotion can actually be a promotion: preaching becomes less and less a well-reasoned argument, and more and more a shared practice among preacher and hearers, in which the Word runs among us like rivulets across a meadow after rain, nourishing fresh green life to spring up. The preacher becomes the leader of a kind of group meditation, less scholar and more sage, less lecturer and more poet, prophet, priest.

In this new context, I believe we will see a new kind of religious professional arise: the liturgist, the artist who weaves threads both ancient and contemporary, creating a textured fabric in which people experience both the exuberant rejoicing of the charismatic and the profound quietness of the contemplative, along with the attentive desire to learn (perhaps most characteristic of evangelicals?) that lies between.

Like a symphony conductor, the liturgist will, I believe, transform public worship from a weekly show or lecture to a weekly experience of group spiritual formation.

In my hopeful moments, I see this new emphasis on spiritual formation as making possible a convergence. What we might call post-evangelicals and post-liberals begin finding one another on this common ground of spiritual formation, welcomed and hosted by our Catholic and Orthodox sisters and brothers. What is terra nova for us has been their native soil for a long, long time.

The river of authentic community

Lesslie Newbigin, British missionary to India, may turn out to be one of the most important theologians of the twentieth century and one of the most important guides for innovative Christian leaders in the twenty-first. He was fond of reminding us that Jesus never wrote a book or established a school. Rather, his legacy was a community. The greatest hermeneutic of the gospel, he would say, is a community that seeks to live by it. (See *The Gospel in a Pluralist Society*, Eerdmans, 1990, or *The Open Secret*, Eerdmans, 1995.)

I'm not surprised that megachurches developed in late modernity. In a culture that believed secular science and secular government could solve most of our problems, a culture that assumed religion in general and the church in particular were declining industries, it made sense that Christians would find comfort and confidence in large herds.

"See? We're significant! We're big and strong!" our large numbers said to an unbelieving culture that tried to dismiss us. (I am not "against" megachurches. They have and will have many advantages, but ironically, their size may become an increasing disadvantage.)

What happens when the climate changes, when "post-secular" is an accepted term to describe our times, when ivory tower intellectuals join pierced-and-tattooed teenagers in saying, "I'm not religious, but I am spiritual"?

Now large numbers become less important: quantity of people becomes less important than quality of relationships. So the "church growth" of the '80s and '90s has given way to the quest for community. This quest is essential, but it's also risky and hard.

Wendell Berry describes how communities around the world are destroyed by the proliferation of "publics" (governments, corporations) that appeal to the self-interest of individuals—see *Sex, Economy, Freedom and Community* (Pantheon, 1994). In their lust for votes and sales, publics undermine the virtues needed to sustain community while inflaming the vices that tear community apart.

Consider the car dealer who successfully uses a woman's sexy legs to sell cars, and simultaneously weakens

thousands of marriages by adding one more straw to the tired back of men's sexual fidelity. Those straws add up.

In this tough situation, the church seeks to build a kind of miraculous community of virtue, a community not based on race, culture, status, wealth, or even religious background, but rather a community convened in the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Who else is building community in this world of expanding publics and self-interested individuals? The church is, in more and more places, the only community-builder left in town. Sadly, too many churches function more like publics, sucking people out of their neighborhoods into church activities that isolate believer from neighbor and frustrate Jesus' prayer that his followers would remain in the world.

But the quest for community itself can also beguile with a dangerous idealism. In *Life Together*, Dietrich Bonhoeffer described the danger of "wish dreams," where my ideal of Christian community makes me hate the brother who frustrates the achievement of my ideal because he talks too much, talks too little, is too rude or too polite or whatever.

Similarly, the ideal of community itself can become a commodity that people want to experience, much as they would experience Disney World, simply by showing up. It's hard to imagine a more depressing place than a room with a few hundred people who showed up expecting community to happen to them.

So, this quest for community challenges us not to seek community as a commodity, but rather to pursue love (which is patient, kind, not rude, etc.) as a practice, which yields community as a byproduct. We're working against a lot in the quest—not only our native selfishness and surliness, but also massive systemic problems, like these:

1. Our dependence on automobiles which isolate us in little glass and metal boxes, transporting us from the glass and concrete boxes of our workplaces, shopping malls, and church buildings to the glass and gypsum boxes of our homes, where we watch the world happen in the plastic and silicon boxes we call TV sets and computer screens. This auto-dependency turns neighborhoods into bedroom communities (an oxymoron), so we sleep, not in communities, but in housing developments. Front porches are gone; back decks have replaced them. Nobody walks down the streets anymore, or if they do, they're too preoccupied on their cell phones to wave and say hi to a neighbor, much less slow down and sit a spell.
2. Our manic pace of life that wants community, but fast, like French fries, and without the grease.
3. Our transience, which means right about the time we, against all odds, get close to a circle of friends, half of them will up and move away.

It's no surprise that in this fragmented world, community becomes a higher value, even though it is so darned hard to achieve and sustain. It's no surprise that interest in house churches increases in these times, where the shared life of a few is so important that even bothering with public worship is optional.

Throwing a small-groups program at this hunger for community is like feeding an elephant Cheerios, one by one. What's needed is a profound reorganization of our way of life, not a squeeze-another-hour-for-"community" into the week.

Of course, maybe a little programmed community is better than nothing, but I expect that this thirst for community will lead to a lot of experimentation in the years ahead. Perhaps many of our churches will become more like Catholic churches in the past, where the ideal parish had a few households where monks or nuns lived in community, practicing radical hospitality that would overflow to the community at large.

Perhaps we'll find that if even a few people in our churches practice this radical hospitality and generous community, their extraordinary fervency will warm us all and model new ways of life for us manic, transient, auto-driven denizens of bedroom non-communities. Or perhaps what we now call small groups will morph more and more into house churches, drawing us into truer life together.

Whatever new and varied forms our search for community takes will require new and varied forms of leadership. I expect that leader-as-CEO, leader-as-scholar, leader-as-therapist, and leader-as-hero/martyr will give way to less dominant styles of leadership, less dominant but no less important. Less like the man behind the curtain in *The Wizard of Oz*, and more like young Dorothy, community leaders in the emerging culture will increasingly resemble the lead seeker in a journey, not possessing all the answers, but possessing a contagious passion to find a way home—and to bring others along in our common search for love, courage, wisdom, and home.

The missional current

I thought the word "missional" was awkward when I first heard it. My spell-checker still tries to correct it. But the word is here to stay, subsuming and replacing more familiar adjectives like missionary, evangelistic, and socially active. Mission in this sense includes missions, and more. It brings together evangelism and social action, "home" and "foreign." It integrates Christian concerns that range from racial reconciliation to ecological stewardship, doing good works and doing our daily work with goodness (which is an underrated fruit of the Spirit).

Old categories merge in what I believe is a radical shift in our theology, from a system in which "missions" is one department of theology, to a new place where theology is one department of mission.

I was once talking with Dallas Willard about Islam. He dropped this little thought virus: "Remember, Brian, in a pluralistic world, a religion is valued by the benefits it brings to its non-adherents." The virus has taken hold in my thinking, bringing to mind sayings of our Lord, like "the birds of the air" nesting in the branches of the kingdom of God, people seeing the light of our good deeds and "glorifying your Father in heaven," "by their fruits you will know them."

How different is this missional approach to the "rhetoric of exclusion" that worked so well in modernity: "There are blessings to being on the inside. You're on the outside and so can't enjoy them. Want to be a blessed insider like us?"

In contrast, missional Christianity says, "God is expressing his love to all outsiders through our acts of kindness and service. You're invited to leave your life of accumulation and competition and self-centeredness to join us in this mission of love, blessing, and peace. Want to join in the mission?"

I live in the Middle Atlantic region. Our landscape has been carved and nourished by three great rivers: the Potomac, the Susquehanna, and the Delaware. If you moved here from the Mississippi Delta, or the Sonora Desert, or the Los Angeles Basin, you'd feel the difference of our topography, even if you didn't know about the three rivers that give our land its contours.

If you're exploring the emerging culture, all you learn about these three rivers—spiritual formation, community formation, and missional action—will help you find your bearings, settle down, and feel at home.

Brian McLaren is a pastor with Cedar Ridge Community Church (crrc.org) in Maryland, an author (most recently of *The Story We Find Ourselves In*), and a fellow with Emergent (emergentvillage.com).

http://desertpastor.typepad.com/paradoxology/2003/11/coaches_trainer.html

Accessed: 04/29/04

Coaches, Trainers, and Spiritual Authority

Cyndi, age 30, is the latest friend who has joined the growing trend of hiring a personal trainer. You may be interested in knowing there are over 60,000 working personal trainers in the U.S. alone, not including group exercise instructors! What is a personal trainer? It's someone you pay to tell you how to get in shape and stay there. What a fascinating idea -- paying somebody who will tell you what to do!

But that's what coaches and trainers have been doing for years and years. In fact, it reminds me of one of my all-time favorite quotes from renowned coach, John Wooden. When asked what it was he did as a coach, Wooden replied:

"I make grown men do what they don't want to do, so that they can become all they want to be."

Anyway, this whole idea of coaches -- and personal trainers in particular -- has got me thinking about spiritual authority and the godly people we (should?) submit ourselves to. When Cyndi hired her personal trainer, she had already determined that she needed an expert -- someone more knowledgeable than her -- to guide her, encourage her, and frankly -- to tell her what to do.

Isn't this awfully close to what the pastors and/or other spiritual authorities in our life do (or should do)? And yet when it comes to "spiritual things", it seems to me that people generally don't like others meddling with that part of their life. Why is that? I'm not exactly sure, but I'm inclined to believe the following: The privatization of faith has disconnected us from the benefits of community and spiritual authority. We want

to keep our spiritual lives private and separate from our public lives.

Individualism and egalitarianism have bolstered our human egos into believing that our own spiritual knowledge and mastery is at least as advanced as any one else's, therefore eliminating the need for anyone else. We've become addicted to autonomy.

We've convinced ourselves that people with spiritual authority like pastors and priests cannot be trusted -- not any of them. Although sweeping generalities like this cannot even remotely be supported statistically, the fact that abuses DO in fact happen are reason enough to distance ourselves from such authority figures.

Perhaps factors like these have blinded us to the value of being "under" a spiritual authority. As a result, we're tempted to live a spiritually self-sufficient existence. Well...maybe not exactly. All that's really needed is simply "Jesus and me", right? I don't think so. Despite our culture's thirst for autonomy, there's no getting around the straightforward advice of scripture:

Hebrews 13:17 Obey your spiritual leaders and do what they say. Their work is to watch over your souls, and they know they are accountable to God. Give them reason to do this joyfully and not with sorrow. That would certainly not be for your benefit. (NLT)

We are not meant to live a spiritually sequestered life or be an authority unto ourselves. In some ways, perhaps we're starting to figure that out again. Although there is a lot of talk about spiritual directors of late, the idea of bearing one's soul to another for counsel and direction seems to be emerging rather slowly. I suppose this shouldn't be too surprising. Postmodern thought-leaders have consistently pointed to the end of individualism under postmodernity, yet we have yet to see that materialize either. Despite this, I still think that the growing interest in spiritual direction is promising. Maybe it is signaling a new era -- when one's spirituality is no longer a purely private matter, but where people begin relinquishing control and allow those who are more mature to speak into their lives, give direction, and "watch over their souls".

<http://www.uscatholic.org/1999/07/cov9907.htm>

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Spiritual Guides: How to stop and ask for direction

Heidi Schlumpf

Trying to find God in all the wrong places? Using the stuff of your everyday life, spiritual directors can set you on the right path.

While strolling along the beach in Santa Cruz, California, Mary Francis Giammona stops to enjoy the cool breeze coming off the Pacific Ocean. For this 38-year-old administrator, the wind wafting through her hair is an experience of divine presence. "It reminds me that God can be very gentle or strong, depending on what you need in your life," she says.

This insight did not occur to Giammona on her own. She came to it with the help of her spiritual director, who continually challenges her to see God in all aspects of her life—even walks on the beach. "In spiritual direction I share my experiences of God and I try to see patterns and threads of God's plan for my life—my entire life," she says.

Meeting monthly with a spiritual director creates a sacred space where she can articulate and listen for God's movement in her relationships, work, and prayer life. "A lot of people think God stopped talking with the Old Testament. I think God is speaking to us just as clearly today, but we don't always take the time to read the signs of the times," she says. "We just need to step back and look at it. Spiritual direction has helped me with that."

Giammona's experience is not unique. More and more Catholic laypeople are choosing to explore the deeper dimensions of their lives with the help of a trained spiritual director. The trend took off after the Second Vatican Council and has been further fueled by the explosion of interest in all things spiritual in the past decade or two.

While more Americans seem to tune into Oprah for spiritual guidance than grace the doors of their local parish, this age-old practice gives Catholics a place to explore their spiritual longings, pump up their prayer lives, and even deal with their frustrations with the institutional church. Most important, they learn to draw connections between the God they hear about on Sundays and their experiences in the boardroom or the

family room during the week. If nothing else, it gives them an excuse to spend an hour a month in intense introspection.

The trend is tough to track, but many agree it is burgeoning. Spiritual Directors International, a 9-year-old ecumenical network of spiritual directors, lists more than 3,340 members worldwide. In the United States, some 300 training programs—the majority of them with Catholic connections—are preparing an increasing number of laypeople to serve as companions on the spiritual journey.

In fact, many spiritual directors prefer the term companion, insisting that they merely facilitate the process of direction through "holy listening." "I'm not the director. God is," says Dominican Sister Rita Petrusa, who has been a spiritual companion for 10 years and directs the Institute of Spiritual Companionship, an ecumenical training program for spiritual directors in Chicago. "I'm here to help people find the direction from within."

Most spiritual companions see their role as assisting seekers to uncover and discover the direction of God in their lives. "The director's purpose is to walk with the person, illuminating the directee's journey of faith," says Deborah Keenan, a spiritual director in Hamburg, New York.

Other descriptions of spiritual direction frequently use metaphors such as "midwife," "coach," "mentor," or "spiritual friend."

"I see my role as a kind of fellow wanderer," says Dick Poole, a Lutheran minister and co-director of the spiritual direction training program at the Claret Center in Chicago. "As a spiritual companion, I'm a privileged listener who invites the person to listen and look more deeply."

Karen Williams, who sees a spiritual director at the Wellstreams Center of Feminine Spirituality in Chicago, describes the process as an opportunity to tell her own story. "My spiritual director gently reminds me that I know more than I think I do," she says. "She always brings it back to trusting God within you, your inner wisdom."

That encouragement to trust that God is speaking to her, combined with some practical suggestions about prayer, has made a real difference in Williams's life.

"Spiritual direction really helped me look at myself truthfully—what kind of person I was and what kind of person I want to be," says the Chicagoan. "Now I have a whole different level of acceptance about myself." This empowering approach to spiritual companionship is a long way from the older model in which spiritual directors gave rigid advice or instructed their charges about what their relationship with God should look like.

Historically, spiritual direction can be traced to ancient monastic communities; it was reserved to priests and religious until the past few decades. Only after Vatican II confirmed that all Catholics—including the laity—are called to live a spiritual life did the practice of spiritual direction become popular for ordinary people in the pews.

"There was a shift in the late 1960s from a formal teaching style in spiritual direction to actually listening to somebody's experiences and trusting that God is already there," says Steve Wirth, associate director of the spiritual direction training program in the Archdiocese of Louisville, Kentucky. When that training program began 10 years ago, Wirth knew of only three trained spiritual directors in the archdiocese. Now he estimates there are more than 50, the majority of whom are laypeople.

What it is ... and isn't

Despite its growing popularity, many Catholics are still a little fuzzy on what spiritual direction is—and what it isn't. Jeffrey Gaines, executive director of Spiritual Directors International, defines it as "the art of Christian listening carried out in the context of a one-to-one trusting relationship."

A spiritual director helps people take the stuff of everyday life—last night's quarrel with a spouse, the challenge of parenting a teenager, an ethical dilemma at work—and see God working in their lives through those experiences. A companion's role is to encourage the seeker to go deeper by asking questions, paying attention, and making suggestions.

Most spiritual directors assume an "incarnational theology" that sees God as present in all of life, says Petrusa of the Institute of Spiritual Companionship. "In spiritual direction, people talk about what's going on in their lives and listen to how God might be present and what God is saying," she says.

Topics for conversation include work, relationships, prayer life, dreams—many of the same issues that a therapist or pastoral counselor might discuss with a client. But spiritual direction is not psychotherapy.

Psychotherapy and pastoral counseling assume the client has a problem or issue that is preventing them from leading a healthy life. "In spiritual direction, there's the assumption that the person is already whole, but maybe hasn't embraced their wholeness fully," says Gaines.

While two rooms—one with a psychotherapist and client and one with a spiritual director and directee—might look similar at first glance, a closer inspection reveals important differences.

"In psychotherapy, the clinical distance is crucial to bringing about objectivity and change. But spiritual direction is based on the intimate engagement of two people," says Gaines, who is an ordained Presbyterian minister and spiritual director.

Although pastoral counseling and spiritual direction both contain an element of the spiritual and the psychological, the emphasis is reversed, says Petrusa. "In pastoral counseling the primary focus is on psychological health, but bringing the spiritual into it. The focus in spiritual direction is on the spiritual, but bringing psychological health into it."

Not just navel-gazing

As one of the organizers of the Liturgically Incorrect Players, a group of professional Los Angeles-area actors that experiments with creative ways to present the gospel message, Jane Leyden has plenty of opportunities to explore the spiritual dimension of her life.

But she notices a difference between the conversations with her spiritual director and those with close friends, colleagues at the mentoring program where she works, or fellow Christian actors. "It's more of a professional relationship," says Leyden, who also is an associate with the Franciscan Sisters of Little Falls, Minnesota. "There's something about getting an objective view of your life and how you relate to God."

She says seeing the appointment with her spiritual director in her Day-Timer keeps her on track.

"It's the outward sign of my commitment to develop myself spiritually," says Leyden, a parishioner at St. Monica's Parish in Santa Monica, California. While spouses, friends, small faith communities, and other soul mates may also provide a forum for spiritual soul-searching, those relationships differ from spiritual direction in that they are mutual. "In spiritual direction, the focus is totally on me and my journey," explains Petrusa.

But that doesn't mean spiritual direction is mere navel-gazing. In fact, spiritual direction should help Christians integrate their spirituality into other areas of their lives, including parish and community involvement. "Direction can never be narcissistic," says Gaines. "If spiritual direction doesn't lead someone to be more involved in the world, something's wrong."

As people get in touch with "what gives them life," that enthusiasm automatically spills over into relationships, parish life, and social issues, says Poole. It's not uncommon for people in spiritual direction to get frustrated with structures or see inconsistencies in their beliefs and the practices of institutions. "They're willing to be more out front, even somewhat challenging to leadership," he says. "God has a way of pushing at the edges sometimes."

Wirth also believes spiritual direction must be connected to community life. "It has to, if it's authentic," he says. "Gone is the old stereotype of me and Jesus, that the spiritual life is something private and interior."

That fits with the belief that God works in all aspects of life—not just explicitly religious ones. "We teach that God is available in all of life, and we really mean that," says Wirth. "You can hear the movement of the Spirit at General Motors equally as much as in a parish or on a retreat."

The fruits of spiritual direction

Paul Sadek, a parishioner at St. Joseph Cathedral in Sioux Falls, South Dakota, sees his spiritual director as a wise sage who can teach him about the Christian life. "A spiritual director is someone who is willing to walk with you on your journey, ideally a few steps ahead," says Sadek, who has been in spiritual direction for several years. His sessions with his spiritual director are informal. "He'll ask me what's been going on since we last met, where God is leading me, and how have I fallen away. Then he helps me see how I can try to get myself off my spiritual butt and back in line," he says.

Sadek says spiritual direction has helped him come to terms with his wife's chronic illness and guided him in

the decision to become a secular Carmelite. "I always come away being very aware of the Lord's love for me," he says. Other "fruits" of spiritual direction can include a sense of inner peace, healthier relationships, a more satisfying work life, or the courage to be prophetic without fear.

Gaines won't go so far as to say it will make a person happier. "But spiritual direction allows a person to be more honest about who they are and whose they are and to live a more integrated life," he says.

Wirth of the Louisville archdiocese attributes the growing popularity of spiritual direction to the fact that "people are actually finding God, which is the point of all this religion business," he says. "The coolest thing is that people start to bump into a real God that is different from just their ideas about God."

Is it for you?

Yet spiritual direction may not be for everyone. The process demands a certain level of spiritual maturity and commitment, say both spiritual companions and those who have been in direction. "It takes courage to go through spiritual direction," says Vincent Liberto of St. Catherine of Siena Parish in Metairie, Louisiana, who has been in spiritual direction for almost 10 years. "It can be hard to bare your soul to someone. And it makes you take some areas of your life you might not want to look at and forces you to look at them."

One director puts it bluntly: "If you don't want to go there, don't waste your time."

Gaines believes people are "called" to enter spiritual direction. "It's not something you do just because it's the new thing on the block," he says. An inner yearning or desire for something more usually leads people to try spiritual direction. They may be prompted by their prayer life, vocational discernment, or relationship or sexuality issues. Often people are looking for a safe space to work through grief or transition.

Poole says people often come to direction in "desert times." "If people find themselves against a wall, I invite them to experience that because I think God is present in that experience," says Poole, who has been a spiritual director for eight years. "My job is not to make it better for them, but to invite them to be with that."

Even if they don't name it as such, people often come to spiritual direction seeking intimacy with God. "Sitting with a spiritual director can help one find some clarity about those deeper issues," says Gaines. That clarity comes from within the person, but it is not merely the wishes of the ego, he says. "A spiritual director helps them see the truth within them ... and that truth is God, not some ego truth."

For today's busy seekers, spiritual direction can provide an accountability that otherwise eludes them in the hectic rat race of 10-hour workdays, nonstop carpooling, and the need to return dozens of e-mails each day. "So many people are living at such a fast pace. Spiritual direction gives you time to really slow down and listen," says Petrusa. "I don't think our culture is particularly good at inviting people to reflection," says Poole. "Rather than just skim over the events of their lives, I invite people to slow down and really look at them."

Gaines also sees a craving for quiet among many Americans, and he thinks the Holy Spirit is responding to that need with the option of spiritual direction. "I think one of the reasons spiritual direction is surfacing now as we approach the new millennium is its ability to make people stop and just be—at least for an hour," he says.

Even corporate types are sensing the importance of climbing off the corporate ladder for a few moments, according to Gaines. The latest trend in spiritual direction has nonprofit organizations and even a few progressive businesses hiring spiritual directors to help them discern whether or not they are living up to their corporate charisms.

The trend only continues to grow, as more and more laypeople are finding their niche in the ministry and becoming trained as spiritual directors. Although laypeople who already work in parishes or other church ministry are more likely to be introduced to spiritual direction than the average person in the pew, the gift is not limited to professional church people.

Many spiritual directors discover their calling when they realize that friends and family already tend to seek them out for a listening ear and a comforting or challenging word.

Spiritual directors say they are doubly enriched—as they continue in their own private spiritual direction and also through their conversations with those they serve as companions. Says Petrusa: "Being a spiritual director really helps me to stay faithful to my own spiritual journey."

Heidi Schlumpf is an assistant editor for U.S. Catholic. Reprinted by permission of U.S. Catholic magazine (<http://www.uscatholic.org>). U.S. Catholic is published by the Claretians. Call 1-800-328-6515 for subscription information.

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What is Spiritual Direction

HHN: The first question people usually raise about spiritual direction is, "What is it?"

JSG: Spiritual direction can mean different things to different people, but in my understanding it is the art of Christian listening carried out in the context of a one-to-one trusting relationship. It is when one Christian is trained to be a competent guide who then "companions" another person, listening to that person's life story with an ear for the movement of the Holy, of the Divine.

HHN: For many people spiritual direction is a new concept, and some people are uncomfortable with the word "director" because of what it might imply. Is it a problem for you?

JSG: I would say that "director" really is a misnomer, because God is the Director and I am simply one who companions. There is a tradition of using the word "director", and I don't see that being changed, but truly God is the Director, and the spiritual director simply assists the seeker in uncovering and discovering the direction of God in that person's life. This enables the directee to see, claim, receive, own, and reverence God's voice, God's nudging, and God's acting, in such a way that it elicits a natural and genuine response.

Spiritual direction -- or mentoring, or companionship, or spiritual friendship -- has been part of the Christian tradition for centuries. It's part of the discipling model. People sought out Jesus because they saw that he was wiser, and they respected his walk with God. John Knox sought out Calvin in Geneva and walked with him. In monastic communities a novice might have the abbot as his/her spiritual director. These kinds of prayer relationships have existed down through the ages.

Distinctions Between Direction and Therapy

HHN: Can you say something about the relationship between spiritual direction and pastoral counseling or psychotherapy? Are they the same thing?

JSG: If you were to be looking through two one-way mirrors and on your left was a spiritual direction session and on your right was a pastoral counseling or psychiatric session, they may look quite similar, but actually there are important differences.

In the spiritual direction session there would be a candle or some other non-verbal symbol representing the Holy. It may be an open Bible, a plant, a cross, or maybe some water -- something that is understood to represent the Holy.

Spiritual direction, unlike pastoral counseling, always happens in the context of prayer and spiritual intimacy. This is where intimate engagement happens. Whereas in psychotherapy the clinical distance is crucial to bring about objectivity and healing, in spiritual direction discernment is based upon the intimate engagement of two people walking into the sanctuary of God.

Another difference is that people usually enter pastoral counseling, because something is wrong in their life, whether it is an area of shame, or guilt, or abuse, or addiction, or poor self-image. They're coming because something is wrong and they want it to be made right.

HHN: So they're in some sort of crisis . . .

JSG: Yes. I really believe a crisis is what initially gets a person into therapy. It may not, however, be what keeps the person in the therapy, but it often is the initial threshold crossing. Spiritual direction deals with the assumption that the person is already whole, but hasn't yet fully embraced this truth for themselves.

Another important assumption of spiritual direction is that it is not for everyone, because it presumes some degree of psychological health in one's life. . .

. . . We're really listening for the stream beneath the stream of the person's life, . . . for those moments of encounter with the Holy. A classic question is "Where is God in the midst of this experience. . .?" "Directors do not create relationships between God and their directees, they simply foster these relationships so that they may deepen and grow. . ." (William A. Barry and William J. Connolly, *The Practice of Spiritual Direction*. New York: Seabury, 1981.)

Hearing the Inner Call

HHN: What will impel someone to seek out spiritual direction then? Assuming that the person who is coming to explore this for the first time is not in crisis, is there something else that usually will draw them to this?

JSG: . . . a yearning for God -- to understand meaning in their life; to gain a sense of discernment; to understand where they are going and how to live their life more fully.

HHN: So there might be some hunger or sense of something missing, but the real motivation is being drawn toward the possibility of living a more abundant life, as John 10:10 puts it?

JSG: Absolutely. I believe it really is a call . . . an inner longing and hunger for God -- which is confirmed outwardly when the person finds the right director. . .

Making the Connections

HHN: How does someone who feels this yearning --this inner call -- go about locating a spiritual director?

JSG: Well, they might initially begin by approaching someone whose spiritual life they respect, and asking that person to walk with them. That person may not be "trained" in the discipline of direction, but the directee respects that person's walk with God. This experience will often lead to further reading, which will then lead people to finding out there is such a thing as a discipline of spiritual direction. In terms of resources to learn more about spiritual direction, a wonderful book is "Holy Listening" by Margaret Guenther.

For people seeking a more formal spiritual direction relationship with someone who has been trained in this discipline, they might then ask their pastor or their friends to recommend a director in their community.

Spiritual Directors International (SDI) does not endorse or recommend any particular directors, but we do assist in helping a person . . . by giving him or her the name of one of our regional contacts who may know spiritual directors in their locale. The mission of SDI is to connect people with one another as an individual network of spiritual directors.

HHN: What about monetary compensation for the work of directors?

JSG: It is all over the map! In certain parts of the world, even the thought of charging a fee is anathema, because it is seen as a charism -- a spiritual gift. In this country (U.S.A.), where it is someone's livelihood . . . the normal range is between \$25-\$45 per session. This is simply saying "I'm taking this seriously." In the USA to take something seriously, we usually put a monetary value on it. . .

Training of Spiritual Directors

HHN: Is there any kind of credential or specific training that you would look for in a spiritual director?

JSG: I don't think you can be trained to be a spiritual director. First, you must have the gift, the charism -- the gift then can be fine-tuned by training. I think this is a really key distinction.

There are about 350 training centers worldwide to train spiritual directors, that we are aware of, but there is no certifying body as of yet. SDI may do that in the future. . .

HHN: So you would look for someone who had gotten some kind of formal training in spiritual direction?

JSG: It would be a caution for me if a person hadn't been trained. And if a person was not in direction him or herself, I definitely would not go to him or her.

HHN: Does it matter if the director is a member of your own faith tradition or denomination?

JSG: . . . I don't think that the director needs to be a member of your own faith tradition or denomination, because if a person is truly listening for the movement of God, they are listening beneath all the externals. . .

What to Expect

HHN: What might a directee expect?

JSG: . . . A one-hour session per month which focuses on listening to and noticing what the movement has been in a person's life.

Reaping the Harvest

HHN: One last question. What kinds of benefits or fruit could someone expect from ongoing work with a spiritual director?

JSG: A sense of inner peace and inner calm, a sense of direction in their life, and discernment. And the fruit would be actually living in and embracing the wonder and awe of God.

<http://www.providence.ab.ca/spdirection.htm>

Accessed: 04/30/04

Someone Who Listens...

Our trained and experienced Spiritual Directors are available to meet with individuals who desire a companion to help see the presence of God active in their life. A sliding fee schedule is used, financial limitations need not hinder anyone. For more information on Spiritual Direction, contact Lynnell at (780) 430-9491 or prcprograms@providence.ab.ca.

What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual Direction is a process designed to help people who are seeking to live a more fully human, joy-filled life. One-to-one conversation with a spiritual guide, in an atmosphere of trust, leads a person into a deeper awareness of and appreciation for God's presence and movement in daily life.

Through such companioning, people make their journey to wholeness:

- from addiction to freedom
- from loneliness to community
- from selfishness to service
- from unrest to peace and joy.

"Spiritual direction is, in reality, nothing more than a way of leading us to see and obey the real Director -- the Holy Spirit hidden in the depths of our soul". -Thomas Merton

"We define Christian spiritual direction as help given by one Christian to another which enables that person to pay attention to God's personal communication to him or her, to respond to this personally communicating God, to grow in intimacy with this God, and to live out the consequences of the relationship". -William A. Barry and William J. Connolly.

Who is it for?

Anyone seeking...

- ...a helping hand
- ...a companion on the journey
- ...an attentive listener
- ...a discerning presence
- ...one to help you live a more fully human, authentic life
- ...to deepen one's relationship with God.

How much does it cost?

The fee for spiritual direction is based upon a sliding scale with the suggested minimum being \$30.00 per session (each session lasts about 1 hour.) A fee schedule is presented at the first session, the fee and frequency of meetings is discussed and agreed upon.

What to Expect In Your First Meeting with a Spiritual Director

Your spiritual director will probably initiate conversation about:

- the nature of spiritual direction
- the roles of the director and directee
- the length and frequency of direction sessions
- the compensation
- the process for evaluating and terminating the relationship

Directed Retreats

You might want to check out our Silent Directed Retreats - for a weekend or week-long experience of Spiritual Direction and a time of silence and connection with God

<http://www.christianitytoday.com/ct/2003/117/51.0.html>

Accessed: 04/30/04

Christian History Corner: Got Your 'Spiritual Director' Yet?

The roots of a resurgent practice, plus 14 books for further study.

By Chris Armstrong and Steven Gertz | posted 05/02/2003

Christian counselor and popular author Larry Crabb took the trouble to earn a Ph.D. in clinical psychology. But now he believes that in today's church, therapy should be replaced by another, more ancient practice

—"spiritual direction."

This is one of the classical Christian spiritual disciplines Crabb and others from a wide variety of Protestant, Catholic, and Orthodox backgrounds are examining and recommending anew in a biannual journal, *Conversations: A Forum for Authentic Transformation*, just launched this Spring.

Crabb is not the only modern Protestant digging into this historical mode of spiritual growth. Jeannette Bakke, author of *Holy Invitations: Exploring Spiritual Direction* (Baker, 2000) said in a *Christianity Today* interview, "Evangelicals are listening for God in ways that are different from our usual understanding of discipleship. We are looking at many Christian disciplines, including prayer, silence and solitude, discernment, journaling, and others. ... Spiritual direction is one of these disciplines many evangelical Christians are learning about and exploring."

What is spiritual direction?

Spiritual direction is a voluntary relationship between a person who seeks to grow in the Christian life and a director. The latter is not, notice, a counselor or therapist. Rather, he or she is a mature Christian who helps the directee both to discern what the Holy Spirit is doing and saying and to act on that discernment, drawing nearer to God in Christ.

The focus is on intimacy with God, not on the solving of clinically identified psychological problems. The whole sinful orientation of the self, not any particular dysfunction, is the "problem" to be addressed. The director helps directees identify ways they have sought satisfaction and fulfillment from sources other than God, in the process pushing God aside. Directees are led to hear the Holy Spirit (the "real spiritual director") calling them back onto the right path. The director's role is one of coming alongside, rather than dictating a program. The relationship thus shares some features with the Celtic ideal of a "soul friend" or "anamchara." However, its nurture usually flows only one way.

Being a good spiritual director requires not a doctorate but mature theological knowledge, a degree of holiness, and a knack for discernment.

How did spiritual direction develop in the church?

Spiritual direction has a long and honored place in Christian history. In the New Testament this sort of discerning, directing relationship can be seen with Jesus and his disciples, for example, or Paul and Timothy. And spiritual mentoring continued in the early church, through a spiritual lineage from apostles to bishops (tradition has it that the second-century bishop of Smyrna, Polycarp, was personally discipled by the Apostle John). In fact, spiritual direction was particularly critical before the formation of the canon, when the oral word passed down through bishops complemented the letters circulating in the church that eventually composed the New Testament.

John Cassian (ca. 350-435) provided some of the earliest recorded guidance on the process of spiritual direction. Influenced by the Egyptian desert ascetics, Cassian introduced an intentional process of mentoring into the monasteries. He put every novice under the care of an older monk and warned that great care should be taken in choosing spiritual directors. St. Benedict worked Cassian's concerns into his influential Rule, and by the end of the seventh century, spiritual direction was firmly associated with monasticism throughout the West.

Spiritual direction was limited to the monasteries for the next four hundred years, until the emergence of the Dominican order of itinerant friars in 1216. Dominicans emphasized teaching and preaching Christian doctrine, and these activities soon expanded into a regular program of caring for and counseling souls—particularly in spiritual discernment and perfection. Since many of those who received the ministry of the Dominicans were laymen in the emerging medieval cities, the practice of spiritual direction spread rapidly beyond monastery walls.

Spiritual direction as practiced today—especially in the Roman Catholic Church—owes its greatest debt to the founder of the Society of Jesus (the Jesuits), Ignatius of Loyola (1491-1556). Loyola encouraged the practice of individual and group retreats. Participants worked through his famous "spiritual exercises" in a program spanning four "weeks" (these have subsequently been stretched or compressed to fit various timeframes).

The first week draws participants into a frank consideration of their own sin and its consequences, the second focuses on Christ's life on earth, the third on his Passion, and the fourth on his Resurrection. Loyola also drew up rules to accompany the weeks—for example, the second week comes with guidelines for

identifying and rejecting the workings of Satan in their lives. All of this Loyola intended should be directed by a mentor who is "prudent, discreet, reserved, and gentle."

Since Loyola's time, Catholics have continued the practice, shaped further by such writings as the seventeenth-century's St. Francis de Sales's *Introduction to the Devout Life*.

Protestants, on the other hand, have emphasized the direct, unmediated nature of the individual's relationship with God in Christ, and they have thus tended to be suspicious of the function of spiritual directors. This, however, seems to be changing today, at least among Protestants unsatisfied with what Crabb calls the "standard 'evangelical' means of spiritual growth": moral vigilance, church attendance, and busyness in a variety of programs, conferences, methods, and ministries.

How can I find out more about spiritual direction?

Such prominent Protestant writers on spirituality as Richard Foster, Dallas Willard, and James Houston have written on the subject in recent years. One excellent place to start is Eugene Peterson's valuable guide to books on Christian spirituality: *Take and Read: An Annotated List* (Eerdmans, 1996).

In his chapter on spiritual direction, Peterson offers a broad definition of spiritual direction that includes all forms of spiritual friendship—"the prayerful attention that we give to another person as a spiritual being and the accompanying prayerful conversation" that develops out of this attention. Then he says, "By watching/reading the masters at work, we come to appreciate how important it is to learn and practice this art."

Here are 14 books in which Peterson finds "the masters at work:"

1. Frederick von Hugel, *Letters to a Niece* (1928).
2. Aelred of Rievaulx, *Spiritual Friendship* (twelfth century, available in a 1974 translation by Mary Eugenia Laker, S. S. N. D.)
3. Francis de Sales (1567-1622, Catholic), *Introduction to the Devout Life and Letters of Spiritual Direction* (1988 translation by Peronne Marie Thibert)
4. Samuel Rutherford (a seventeenth-century Scottish pastor), *Letters* (available in an 1891 edition)
5. Kenneth Leech, *Soul Friend*
6. Martin Thornton, *Spiritual Direction* (1984)
7. Thomas Merton, *Spiritual Direction and Meditation* (1960)
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