

# Innovation in Coaching Psychology: Interviews with speakers from the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference

Stephen Palmer & Siobhain O'Riordan

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**T**HE 3rd European Coaching Psychology conference will be hosted by the British Psychological Society's Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP). This year the event will be held at City University London, on 13 and 14 December 2011. Further information and registration details are available on the conference pages of the BPS SGCP website: <http://sgcp-conference.bps.org.uk>

This year we have interviewed keynote speakers and our European invited speakers via email for *The Coaching Psychologist* to find out more about them, seek their views on a range of different coaching psychology topics and also to learn more about their forthcoming speeches.

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## PROFESSOR STEPHEN PALMER

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as a keynote speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Stephen:** I'm really looking forward to attending the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference for a number of personal reasons. I like meeting and networking with colleagues and conferences are an ideal for this activity. I am interested to learn about their area of practice and research. And, of course, I hope I can gently persuade them to submit papers to one of the British Psychological Society Special Group in Coaching Psychology (BPS SGCP) publications, *The Coaching Psychologist* or the *International Coaching Psychology Review*.

However, conference attendance also has other benefits beyond just networking and Continuing Professional Development. I regularly receive queries from potential trainee coaching psychologists who want my input about possible course and career advice. Unless they are questions about the specific courses or doctorate programmes



I'm involved with, I refer them to the SGCP and International Society for Coaching Psychology websites as I don't have the free time to enter into extended email dialogues about this type of issue. I may email them a

few articles on the topic too. Often I suggest that if they want an informal chat (it's not coaching) I leave time available at the conferences I attend to network and meet up with psychologists who want to discuss any relevant issue. Just to clarify as I am a coaching psychologist, I'm not suggesting that I would turn away potential coachees who want to pay for careers coaching!

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your keynote at the Conference?*

**Stephen:** In a nutshell, the keynote will be about the development of coaching psychology as a profession and discipline. There has been continued interest in this field over the past decade which has seen the growth in membership of coaching psychology societies and interest groups internationally.

It will be a joint keynote with Dr Siobhain O'Riordan and Dr Alison Whybrow. They have both been closely involved with the BPS SGCP since its inception. In the past year I've been giving keynotes on the development at congresses around the world and it occurred to me if I give this paper in London it would be a good idea to get fresh input from SGCP colleagues who may have a different perspective from me.

*You are also chairing a roundtable in technological innovation in coaching and coaching psychology. What is it about?*

**Stephen:** I want us to discuss technological innovations in the practice, teaching and supervision of coaching psychology. For example, we have gone beyond just using the telephone for coaching, many of us use emails, Skype, texting, Moodle and so on. I want to hear about the difficulties that have been encountered and how they were overcome or managed. Delegates will also be able to ask questions from the floor.

Using technology to communicate has always been an interest of mine. I've been a 'radio ham' since I was a teenager although I wouldn't use Morse Code to work with clients! Joking aside, in 2001, I chaired a British Association for Counselling and

Psychotherapy committee on online practice and co-authored guidelines for online counselling and psychotherapy in an era when there was a fair amount of negative feelings towards online practice (see Goss et al., 2001). Later, I wrote a paper (Palmer, 2004) on comparing working with one client face-to-face and by using the telephone, emails and online 'chat room'. My client had returned to her own country and was unable to see a local Rational Emotive Behavioural practitioner so she continued to work with me. In the paper we both reported on the process concerned. She found the email conversation really useful as it allowed her time to think about some of the Socratic questions I asked her. It was constructive feedback for me too as it highlighted the benefits of asynchronous email sessions over face-to-face sessions (with me). It was really great that she was prepared to write up her experience for the paper. It convinced me that modern technology could be beneficial for our practice as psychologists.

*You have been heavily involved in the development of coaching psychology. Do you have any reflections?*

**Stephen:** As I reflect on the past decade, we have seen coaching psychology develop in three key areas. First, as a sub-discipline of psychology; second, as a professional area of practice; and third, as an international community of psychologists. Let me explain. If we go back a decade getting coaching-related articles published was not straightforward. Then the BPS SGCP and the Australian Psychological Society Interest Group in Coaching Psychology launched the *International Coaching Psychology Review*, a peer-reviewed journal abstracted in psycINFO and other databases too. This journal alone has greatly increased the number of academic papers being published in the field of coaching and coaching psychology. In addition, *The Coaching Psychologist* has been responsible for the publication of really useful and interesting shorter articles on a range of coaching psychology

related topics. This journal too is peer-reviewed and abstracted in psycINFO. Dr Alison Whybrow and I were keen to edit the *Handbook of Coaching Psychology* so the new profession would have a handbook for practitioners.

Unless I'm mistaken, in Australia coaching psychology is now an area of competence expected of organisational psychologists whilst in Switzerland the coaching psychologist designation is recognised too. In South Africa coaching psychology is likely to be recognised as a specialism too. If the BPS SGCP are given the go-ahead by the BPS to launch the Register of Coaching Psychologists we will see many more psychologists joining us in this area of practice.

Last, but not least, the International Congresses of Coaching Psychology have really captured the imagination and have become a real success story around the world. In the past 12 months I've attended the congress events in London, Dublin, Pretoria, Stockholm and Barcelona. These have been excellent and have achieved one of the key aims in bringing the coaching psychology community together. Congresses are being planned for 2012 in Australia and Scandinavia; and for 2013 in Italy and Brazil. Others may also take place too. It's always worth visiting the International Congress website to keep up-to-date with events, especially if you like travel.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Stephen:** I've been interviewed a number of times for the SGCP Conference section in *The Coaching Psychologist*. This time I've intentionally provided a more personal response than usual.

On a more academic point, in recent years the field of coaching psychology has developed in parallel with positive psychology. I'm interested to see how this will play out. The BPS does not have a special group or section for positive psychology yet. Most of my positive psychology colleagues are SGCP members. I wonder if the setting up of the SGCP has provided the natural home for BPS members who are 'positive' psychologists or whether or not a new member network will be set up eventually.

Over the past decade I've enjoyed working with my SGCP and overseas colleagues in developing coaching psychology. It's a great community.

## References

- Goss, S., Anthony, K., Jamieson, A. & Palmer, S. (2001). *Guidelines for online counselling and psychotherapy*. Rugby, UK: British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy.
- Palmer, S. (2004). A rational emotive behavioural approach to face-to-face, telephone and internet therapy and coaching: A case study. *The Rational Emotive Behaviour Therapist*, 11(1), 12-22.

## Website:

International Congress of  
Coaching Psychology:  
[www.coachingpsychologycongress.org](http://www.coachingpsychologycongress.org)

**DR SIOBHAIN O'RIORDAN**

*We are pleased to welcome you again as a keynote speaker. What are your hopes and expectations for this year's event?*

**Siobhain:** A key hope and expectation for me is that we will continue to build on the significant developments of the European and international coaching psychology community by coming together again to share our learning and developments.

*As the Editor of *The Coaching Psychologist* (TCP) how does your work link to the conference activities?*

**Siobhain:** Following on from each conference event we actively encourage speakers and presenters to write up their conference sessions and submit them for consideration for publication in *TCP*. As such we hope *TCP* can offer a forum to promote coaching psychology and offer some of the most current professional developments and research updates. For some years now we have also conducted interviews with conference speakers, which we hope provides some further insights and information in advance of each conference and encourages people to come along and join us.

*What will be the important message you wish to convey in your keynote speech?*

**Siobhain:** This year I am delighted to be sharing a keynote opportunity with Prof. Stephen Palmer and Dr Alison Whybrow,



who are both key figures in the international coaching psychology community. It is an exciting time for coaching psychology across the European landscape and we will be exploring key developments and achievements.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Siobhain:** Yes, I would like to take a moment to acknowledge the ongoing efforts of the SGCP conference team and thank them for all of their hard work and energy over the last year.

**DR ALISON WHYBROW**

*You have delivered keynotes and facilitated master-classes at a number of our previous conferences. This year at our Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference we are pleased to be welcoming you back to give another keynote speech. What are your hopes and expectations for attending the conference this year?*

**Alison:** It is eight years now since the Coaching Psychology Forum (the precursor to the SGCP) started the movement in the UK to create a voice for psychology in the practice of coaching, and to recognise coaching psychology as an area of practice for psychologists. That initial focus and energy has been part of a significant shift in the landscape of psychological practice and the development of the coaching industry. The development of coaching psychology is reaching a tipping point globally where it is much more recognised and accepted. A lot of people have put a huge amount of time and energy into making that happen. This conference is a great opportunity to see the fruition of that hard work by many. I am really looking forward to seeing the emerging ideas and research that is happening, to engaging in sessions for my own professional development, to meet new people who are passionate about the field of coaching psychology and their own practice, and of course to reconnect with many old friends (have I said that before?). The SGCP Coaching Psychology Conference has always had a great energy, openness and friendliness to it and I am looking forward to being part of that. My hope? Well, it's a certainty that I will be freshly inspired.

*In your previous interview as a keynote speaker for the 1st International Congress of Coaching Psychology Conference you shared that you were expecting to learn and have your thinking challenged, as well as establishing connections with old and new colleagues. Can you tell us more about ways in which this aspiration might have been realised over the last year?*



**Alison:** Oddly enough, I had my thinking challenged in ways that I was not expecting. I was really pleased last year to be able to invite two organisations to share their stories about using coaching methods, principles and practices as a means of shifting the culture of their respective organisations. It was incredibly useful to hear how coaching and coaching psychology impacts in a very meaningful way both strategic and operational thinking in organisations as they work to balance, manage and deliver in an ever changing and challenging context. The challenge for me was just how do we sharpen our focus a little, clarify the messages we are delivering and 'up our game' to enable better, more effective delivery of all that we do: the research work, thinking and practice that we have to offer. I don't think we can be complacent, I don't think we are complacent, but perhaps we don't know what we don't know yet in this area. It would be interesting to find out as I think it would open up more options for us as a profession if we were better at (dare I say it), marketing ourselves.

*Last year you also talked with us about your interest in exploring and sharing emerging research themes and research practices that might shed light on what we do and the shifting requirements of the clients and customers of coaching psychology research and practice. Can you tell us about any developments in this area?*

**Alison:** In last year's keynote, I encouraged people to explore what they were doing a little more critically – certainly from a research perspective. Whilst that may or may not have landed, I notice that others have taken the theme of critiquing the research base and have written about it over the past year. Quite unintentionally, through word of mouth, I have become the 'go to' person for those who are crafting their research ideas for their Master's theses on the programme that I work on. One thing that I notice in the coaching psychology and coaching publications is that there is a much more confidence among writers and practitioners to critique rather than absorb accepted wisdoms. There seems a stronger appetite for inviting contributions from other academic and practice based disciplines in order to strengthen the rigour of our own field. I see these two developments as a shift in maturity as we develop

the confidence to exercise our critical muscles which will benefit the field. The one piece that I regret is that I have yet to write up the keynote I presented in 2010.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your keynote speech at the Conference?*

**Alison:** I have the pleasure of being part of a joint keynote address that will be the opening session for the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. For me the keynote is about exploring and articulating in the broadest sense the base of coaching psychology, drawing on new data from coaching psychologists who are practicing in the field and where feasible, looking across coaching psychology and coaching as professional areas of practice. Whilst the focus of the conference is European, there are also exciting global developments that I know yourself and Prof. Stephen Palmer will be able to share. I think that there will be some new challenges that we will want to pose to the conference.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Alison:** No.

## SIEGFRIED GREIF

*At both our previous 1st and 2nd European conferences you delivered a keynote. This year at our Special Group in Coaching Psychology (SGCP) 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference we are pleased to be welcoming you back to give another keynote speech. What are your hopes and expectations for attending the conference this year?*

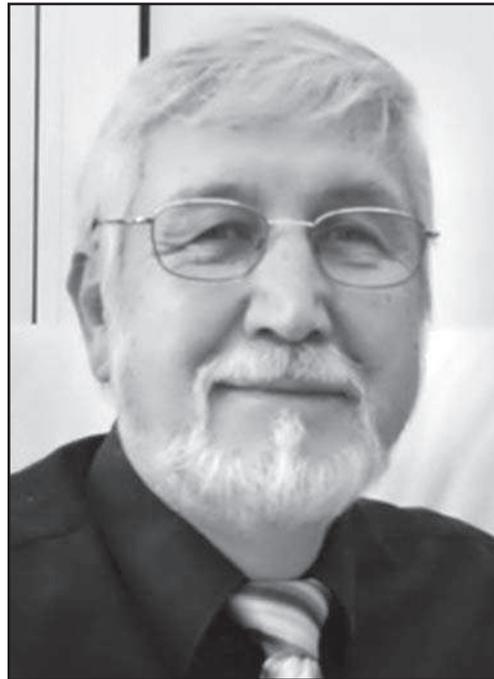
**Siegfried:** It is great to be back to participate at the European Coaching Psychology conference. I am convinced that the conference is the best event in Europe on the state of art of the coaching profession! This time a focus is on innovations. Therefore, I hope to be stimulated by many new and useful ideas, both for my practical and my scientific work.

*In your previous interview as a keynote speaker for the 2nd European Coaching Psychology Conference you noted that you were looking forward to continuing your learning and deepening the networks. Can you tell us more about ways in which this aspiration might have been realised over the last couple of years?*

**Siegfried:** Every time I attended, I have learned so much. To name just one example, inspired by the presentations and discussions on Positive Psychological Coaching, I focus more on strength coaching. However, after critical discussions with colleagues about a limitation of the approach, which I see in not allowing to analyse problems, I tried to clarify for myself, how it might be possible to design a strength-oriented problem analysis.

In relation to the deepening of my networks I can tell that I met colleagues from the UK, Sweden, Denmark and Australia on the conferences that I have attended until now. With one of them, we introduced coaching in an international Scandinavian-German research project on coping with stress at work.

*Again, you have shared with us previously your research interests in change management, coaching and mentoring. What updates are you able to tell us about?*



**Siegfried:** Together we presented concepts, methods and research on coaching in a complex changing world at the ICAP 2010 Conference in Melbourne and gave workshops in Australia for ICF and APS professionals in different cities.

A major field is the development and study of qualitative and quantitative evaluation methods in the field of change management and coaching. Our preferred qualitative reflection and evaluation method is called 'Change Explorer'. It can be used by coaches for self-reflection and self-evaluation of individual coachings in the final session together with their coachees. We have started a follow-up study with professional coaches with our latest guidelines. Participants of a symposium at the ICAP 2010 Conference in Melbourne and workshops in different cities of Australia for ICF and APS professionals (with Michael Cavanagh, David Lane and Sunny Stout Rostron), where I presented it, encouraged me to test its application also in other countries.

Another field is stress-management coaching with bio- and neurofeedback. The work and methods of Stephen Palmer has

inspired me to come back to my earlier research in the field of stress at work and to integrate it into a further development of stress-management coaching. Together with the psychophysiological Wolfram Boucsein and Ralf Stürmer and their spin-off consultancy from the University, we started to test the approach. It will be presented at the conference.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your keynote speech at the Conference?*

**Siegfried:** Health and stress-management seem to face a technological evolution by bio- and neurofeedback devices. The techniques are not new, but similar as has been observed for other technological changes, if there is a demand and if the devices are miniaturised, user-friendly and affordable, we can expect that their use will spread like a virus epidemic. Today several biomedical firms have constructed or are about to

construct such an affordable technology for the growing wellness-market. However, if not applied responsibly, they can be easily misused, for example by those who use them uncritically as 'scientific instruments'. As professional coaches and researchers we should examine their potential risks and limitations. If we integrate them, based on our professional knowledge, into holistic concepts of health and stress-management coaching, their use intensifies the body awareness of the coachees and supports their self-calming-skills.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Siegfried:** I will not mention names, but I see... and... and... at the conference. I hope that there is a nice pub around the corner. I am German who in good company (not only, but also) likes to drink English beer.

I look forward to the Conference!

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## REBECCA VINEY

*This is your first time contributing at a BPS SGCP conference and we are pleased to be welcoming you as a keynote speaker. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Rebecca:** I hope to inspire more coaching psychologists to become involved in coaching patients to health. It empowers and enables people, therefore, promoting self-care and change.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Rebecca:** I studied fine art painting in London and Brussels for six years; in my last year I attended a Further Education College in King's Cross to gain another A-level, and then studied medicine at St Bartholomew's Hospital. I worked to support myself throughout my studies, had my first child in year three.

I have been an Associate Director at the London Deanery for the last 10 years, and for the last three years I have led the coach-



ing and mentoring service for London doctors and dentists. We have had over 1000 mentee applicants since we started. Helping

doctors and dentists to release and fulfil their potential is my aim.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Rebecca:** One of my sons was taught coaching and mentoring conversations at his inner-city secondary school as part of the anti-bullying strategy. A friend who trained as a coach used me as a guinea pig and I was astonished at how a little leverage, challenge and motivation transformed my life.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Rebecca:** But coaching for health was more complex than I realised, and this is the psychology aspect, I am sure.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your keynote speech at the Conference?*

**Rebecca:** That psychologists are perfectly placed to help roll out patient coaching and change the culture of patient care. To tackle the future health needs of our ageing population we will together need to coach patients to health. Advice is rarely effective in lifestyle change, but coaching works.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Rebecca:** I first learned about the power of coaching patients to health at the Coaching for Leadership in Medicine annual conference at Harvard University, and from the Minnesota health coaching programme 2008, and have been greatly impressed by the recent published work on positive psychology by Seligman and Fredrickson.

These are challenging times – never has it been more important to grow people's resilience using coaching psychology.

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## PASCLE REINHART

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Pascale:** Hearing and meeting international colleagues; I wish to strengthen my view on psychology as applied to the specific modality professional coaching is, as opposed to the so often seen 'translation' of psychology theories by non-specialists.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Pascale:** I live in Paris, France, and work in most European countries. Speciality is international/intercultural team coaching and negotiation. My background is as an investment banker for 12 years in the US, Australia, PRC, Hong Kong and Switzerland. I have completed a MBA in Finances, and a PhD in Art History. Then I went back to studying (at age 37) in psychology and now practice professional coaching. I have been



vice-president and president of Société Française de Coaching for four years, until recently.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Pascale:** A natural link after going back to school at 37 and understanding that my former experience in the business could cross this new field of interest for me. Truthfully, back in the early 2000s, not too many people spoke about coaching, and the first exposure I had to it has been a conference by John Whitmore, whose teaching I then followed.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Pascale:** Sound experience in psychology, and not 'just' light training. Better understanding by practitioner of potential mental issues (while maintaining strong boundaries and ethics and not going into non-requested psychological sessions).

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Pascale:** Supervision even for senior practitioners is a must. Various issues covered such as the hygiene of the coach.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Pascale:** Thank you for inviting me. However short my stay in London can be in December, I'll be glad to make the best of it!

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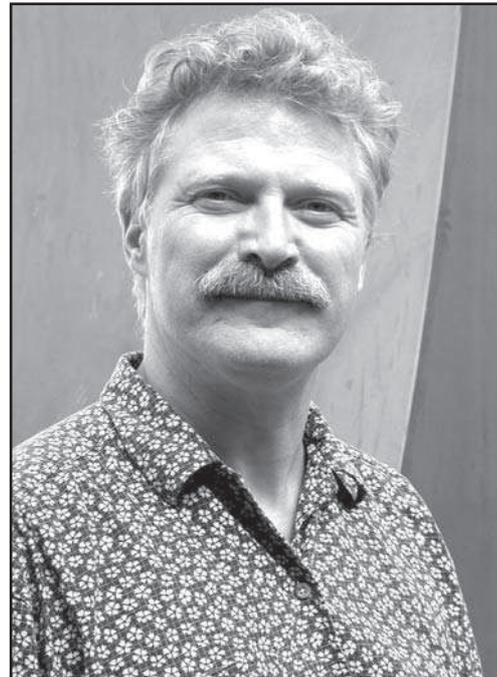
#### **OLE MICHAEL SPATEN**

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Ole:** Thanks for the invitation; I guess that the Conference will be full of people enjoying the varied programme with challenging lectures and motivating workshops. I am sure it will be two days of learning and also get together with professionals from Europe. No doubt there will be a lot of new research presentations as well.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Ole:** I am both an academic and a practitioner. At the University I work as a director of the Coaching Psychology Research Unit at the Department of Communication and Psychology and I have recently been promoted to Head of Studies. At the graduate level I train the students during their 18-months' coaching modules and lecture clinical skills and I belong to a small university group of associate professors with double



education: qualified by being both licensed psychologists and PhD.

In my private practice I have been doing counselling, teambuilding and coaching for 20 years at private companies and at the

clinic in Copenhagen. I have always found this combination very vivid and nourishing.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Ole:** When I was a young university student I was engaged in therapeutic work besides an experienced psychologist and she continued to be my mentor for years to come. She led the groups and I became co-leader, both observant and acting close to the encounters and team-building exercises. I was impressed to witness how her few interventions, for example, her carefully formulated questions in a soothing, empathetic atmosphere, resulted in human insight and growth. Questions posed with great awareness are at the cornerstone in excellent coaching and counselling. Later during one of my first extended commitment to a leadership programme we missed some kind of educational follow-up regarding the leadership improvement. We tried to envision how we could direct and support the manager's individual and group development? Our answer to that question was coaching done by psychologists. Most large companies in Denmark today use some kind of coaching during programmes for executives and middle managers, so my interest hasn't waned for two decades.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Ole:** I think there is a huge difference between coaching psychology and just coaching. Coaching psychology is done by psychologists and grounded in scientific psychological theories and evidence-based-practice. In spite of the fact that we cannot demonstrate that psychologists do better coaching (see, for example, Linley or Passmore) I think that psychologists are far better equipped to do coaching. Not only, but also when it comes to coaching in the

grey zone where the coach had to ask himself/herself if the client suffers from anxiety or if the client is edgy, nervous or irritated. A coaching psychologist must – as an ethical duty – be able to assess if this client should be referred to a colleague if you identify depression or stress instead of the appearance of being sad, tired or rushed.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Ole:** The invited paper is entitled: Middle managers challenging and successful experiences with coaching and a skills evaluation – a mixed methods approach. We do not find much research investigating the relationship between coach and coachee and assessment of the quality of business coaching. How do both actually evaluate the coaching sessions? As it is mixed methods research I will present findings from interviews with the coaches as well as results from surveys where the coaching skills are evaluated. A special section of the presentation includes issues of power and relationship prominent between manager and employee.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Ole:** While I have been attending coaching conferences I reckon that the knowledge base of coaching psychology develops very fast, and every year new remarkable research and practice appears. So I am really looking forward to another interesting and inspiring coaching psychology conference in December later this year.

## References

- Linley, A. (2008). *Highlighting the psychology in coaching*. Paper presented at the 1st European Coaching Psychology Conference, 17–18 December, London.
- Passmore, J. (2010). *Leadership Coaching: The state of play and the future to come*. Keynote presented at the 1st International Congress of Coaching Psychology, 14–15 December, London.

**ANNA SYREK-KOSOWSKA**

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Anna:** I expect to meet a number of experts from all over the world. I would like to learn about new ideas in coaching and especially in coaching psychology. I would like to share my experience related to the development of coaching in Poland. I hope that this conference will be a very inspiring event and that it will give me a lot of energy for my further activity as a coach.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Anna:** I have over 13 years' experience in running business projects related to the implementation of developmental projects for employees of all levels of management as a trainer and manager of projects. I have many years experience in providing therapy and supporting people in personal development as a psychologist. As a coach I provide the coaching process for managers in international corporations and I have created a model of postgraduate study in coaching as a director and supervisor of a one-year postgraduate course called the Academy of Professional Coaching at the University of Business in Dabrowa Górnicza in Poland. I have founded a community for coaches at the Coaches' Club of csipb.pl and the University of Business in Dabrowa Górnicza. This is the place where coaches can develop their knowledge, skills and share practical experience with other coaches as well as receive supervision. As a member and co-founder of the Coaching Chamber, the first Polish organisation implementing working standards for coaches, I am also the co-creator of supervision standards. I am the author of many publications in the field of HR and I promote coaching as the way to help people to achieve their goals and the life satisfaction.

For 12 years I have been a partner at the Business Psychology and Training Centre



dealing with consulting, trainings and coaching. I have the pleasure to be Honorary VP of the International Society for Coaching Psychology in Poland.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Anna:** Because I have been a psychotherapist and trainer in business organisations for many years, coaching was a natural step on the path of my professional development. Thanks to my contact with the International Society for Coaching Psychology and meeting with Professor Stephen Palmer I had the opportunity to extend my knowledge and skills in the area of coaching psychology.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Anna:** In my opinion, coaching psychology is based on scientific track record, positive psychology and evidence-based approach. This gives coaches an opportunity to use reliable tools and methods for the clients to benefit from. In comparison with other types of coaching, clients choose a coach and a psychologist in one and they can be sure that

they work with a competent and professional person with wide knowledge and skills.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Anna:** In my presentation I would like to share with the audience the information about the Polish coaching market and key challenges for coaching psychology. Also, I want to show my own model of a postgraduate programme in coaching at the University of Business in Dabrowa Górnicza in Poland.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Anna:** I really look forward to meeting the coaching psychology community at the conference soon.

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### IDA SIROLI

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Ida:** I will be attending the event together with a delegation of Italian coaching psychologists and we look forward to connecting and networking with our colleagues coming from different parts of the world. Since coaching psychology has only very recently been introduced in Italy, it is important to learn and gain support from more experienced coaching psychologists. Secondly, we are eagerly looking forward to listening to how coaching psychology has recently developed, been applied and researched internationally. Thirdly, we will be presenting the outcomes of our first research on Coaching Competencies and Values (‘Coaching Competencies and Values: How Italian coaches – psychologists and non-psychologists – face present and future challenges’) and hope to stimulate discussions and debates on this topic.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Ida:** I currently work for the HR department of a major Italian telecommunications company. I am also co-founder and Secretary of the Society for Coaching Psychology Italy ([www.scpitaly.it](http://www.scpitaly.it)), the first association to



address coaching psychology in Italy. I have worked at length in the HR department of different companies, mainly managing projects related to recruiting, training and development, talent management, performance management, internal communication. I have also managed different coaching projects within organisations, from design to deployment. I am both an Organisational and Clinical Registered Psychologist and have worked as a counsellor and psychotherapist for a short period of time. My continuous

development programme is at the moment focused on evidence-based coaching.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Ida:** Together with Silvana Dini, Grazia Paolino Geiger and Alessandra Rosicarelli, I co-wrote the *Guidelines for the Work and Organisational Psychologist in the Practice of Organisational Coaching* which were published in April 2010 by a branch of the National Italian Psychological Society. During our study and research prior to writing the guidelines, we discovered coaching psychology and realised it was just what was missing from the coaching scene in Italy and, above all, that the goals and activities of this new discipline strongly matched with the spirit that inspired the guidelines.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Ida:** First of all, coaching psychology values and spells out psychological competencies often used in coaching but never really explicit and, therefore, frequently applied superficially and with little awareness on coaches' behalf. Secondly, it allows a long tradition of different psychological theories and paradigms to be applied to coaching, strengthening its effectiveness and applicability to different contexts such as educational and health, other than mainstream organisa-

tional coaching. Thirdly, coaching psychology's research and evidence-based approach are an important contribution to the development of coaching as a profession.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Ida:** The keynote speech will illustrate the profile of Italian coaches (both psychologists and non-psychologists), which are the main competencies coaches use and believe are most effective in their practice, which competencies they believe will be necessary for the future, which values inspire them, which are the main areas they feel they need to develop and through which channels they wish to do so. Our research team (I. Sirolli, S. Dini, G. Pappalepore, A. Chirumbolo, A. Di Rienzo and A. Rosicarelli) were inspired by two main studies (Bono et al., 2009; Whybrow & Palmer, 2006).

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Ida:** I wish everyone a great Conference and I'm looking forward to meeting you there!

## **References**

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## RICHTA IJNTEMA

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Richta:** Two years ago I attended the 2nd European Coaching Psychology Conference in London. I remember this event very well. It was my first coaching psychology conference and I was surprised by the warm welcome I got as one of the first Dutch participants. Since more European countries have joined the international coaching psychology network, my first hope for this conference is that all new participants will feel as welcome as I did several years ago. Second, as the founder of the Dutch interest group in coaching psychology, I hope to meet many more fellow-country (wo)men!

The theme of the conference for this year is 'Innovation in Coaching Psychology'. This title really appeals to me, because it covers what I think is a necessary step in the development of our profession. Let me explain this. Coaching is first and foremost an industry and as scientists we are running behind. That makes me wonder: To what extent is the science of coaching affected by the (increasing) demands of the industry? And to what extent does the present speed of responsiveness prevent us from being explorative and reflective? I also wonder: How are we as a young discipline affected by (established) disciplines like clinical, sport and positive psychology? What is actually our own point of view as coaching psychologists?

In the same way we offer our clients a reflective space in coaching, we – as scientists and practitioners – need a reflective space to grasp and rethink the content and future of our profession. (Re)considering the essence of our profession and moving from there is exactly what the conference theme 'innovation' means to me. This conference offers a space to reflect on these important issues. I expect we grab this opportunity and take position as coaching psychologists!



*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Richta:** For more than 10 years I have been working as a lecturer at the department of Work and Organisational Psychology at Utrecht University. I combine my work at the university with running my own coaching practice. I am a registered psychologist and trainer (Dutch Association of Psychologists) and a coaching psychologist MISC Accredited.

I have an educational background in clinical and health psychology. After graduating I was fed up with the clinical focus on abnormal human behaviour. I longed to learn more about 'normal' human processes and switched my focus to social and organisational psychology. Through the years I specialised in skills training, career coaching, developmental coaching and consultancy. Since 2009 I can add research to my curriculum, when I took the initiative to do PhD research on workplace coaching efficacy. What fascinates me is the coach as a person and what the influence of his/her attributes is on the coaching relationship and coaching outcomes. In short this is the topic of my PhD project. I hope to present interesting results to you in the future.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Richta:** My curiosity started in 2002, when we developed our first course in coaching (now coaching psychology) at the Department of Work and Organisational Psychology at Utrecht University. Whilst reading about and lecturing on coaching I witnessed the rise of coaching psychology as an applied science in psychology and it inspired me to want to make my own contribution.

But, there is another way of answering your question and that is by telling you what really drives me in my work as a practitioner, lecturer and researcher. I derive this from two experiences: My first experience is that a lot of people forget to take a proper look in the 'mirror' and are too quick to want to change. They overlook the potential that is already there. Second, I notice that people tend to problematise feelings and behaviours that we know are part of normal human functioning. I consider these two things to be the dark side of the 'change' culture we live in. It makes me wonder whether change is always necessary and whether we make enough time for change. As a consequence I am eager to learn what it means to be human, our strengths and shortcomings and the processes we are subject to. In psychology I have found a lot of answers to my questions. In coaching, teaching and writing I have found a platform to share my knowledge and insights and help people live up to their potential and accept (their) limitations at a human pace.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Richta:** The risk of making this distinction is that we drive a wedge between psychologist and non-psychologist coaches and may even come to believe that the one is better than the other. I do not believe that to be true. However, psychology is one of the underlying disciplines of coaching, which means

that every coach can benefit from psychological knowledge. The only benefit from drawing a distinction between coaching and coaching psychology is because it makes us (psychologists) more aware of our responsibility to share our (accumulating) knowledge with the interdisciplinary field of coaching.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Richta:** I would like to take you on a journey to my country. Inspired by similar research in the UK, we have studied the practices of coaching psychologists in the Netherlands: What do they do? How do they do it? Who do they coach? And how do they develop professionally? In my opinion these are important questions. In the fast growing field of coaching the desire for evidence based practices instigates the temptation for researchers to miss out on answering these questions and directly start studying the effectiveness of coaching. As a consequence an important question will remain unanswered: Does your research reflect current coaching practice? In order to answer this question myself, I started my PhD research by first studying the practices of coaching psychologists. At this conference I will present the results of this study to you and I hope to discuss the following topics: Are the Netherlands ready for coaching psychology? How do Dutch coaching psychologist compare to coaching psychologists in other countries? Is there anything typical about the Dutch? I believe the results will be interesting for researchers as well as for practitioners.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Richta:** A lot of hard work has to be done to make an event like this happen. I would like to thank the conference team in advance for their effort in creating this opportunity to meet one another, exchange ideas and learn together. It is greatly appreciated!

## REGULA STAMMBACK

*We are pleased to be welcoming you as an invited speaker at the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. What are your hopes and expectations for attending this event?*

**Regula:** I look very forward to the 3rd European Coaching Psychology Conference. It is enriching to meet other professionals and learn about their experiences and research.

This is the third time that I will be attending and each time I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting old colleagues and being introduced to new ones. This conference is one of the highlights of the year for me: Inspiring, motivating and educational.

*Can you tell us about where you work and your professional background?*

**Regula:** My academic background is in sociolinguistics and psychology. My dissertation was on corporate identity. The approach I developed there is the conceptual platform for my work with clients. I have my own international management consultancy firm. We have offices in Zurich and Basel with operations out of Frankfurt as well. We are a dedicated Swiss boutique firm specialised in Leadership Assessment and Development with over 20 years' international experience.

*How did you first become interested in the field of coaching and coaching psychology?*

**Regula:** Besides clinical and social psychology I was trained in psychoanalysis and systemic therapy and worked with children. In 1988 I changed careers and began working for a large international American management consulting firm. Many mandates there had a dynamic that could best be understood by looking at the personal characteristics of the decision makers. That is what got me interested in coaching. At that time there was no conceptual framework in coaching psychology. I transferred concepts from psychodynamic and systemic theory to build my own set of tools.



At that time I was considered an oddball among my colleagues and psychologists in Switzerland. There was one senior executive I met early in my career who was very supportive in my coaching aspirations. He mentored me into what has now become a flourishing business.

*In your opinion, what distinguishes coaching psychology from coaching, if anything?*

**Regula:** Coaching psychology is a professional specialisation resting on psychology, an academic discipline with a long tradition. We believe that our success with our corporate clients is a direct consequence of rigorously applying psychological methodologies and theoretical concepts to coaching. Our clients very much appreciate our high quality approach and sophisticated toolbox. They know that by assigning us to a mandate they are buying into best practice and highly developed methodologies.

*What are some of the key issues you wish to convey in your invited speech at the Conference?*

**Regula:** Today in the management consulting business 'relationships' are more than ever considered of tremendous importance. Consulting is very much a people business. Between the client and the consultant there is a complex dynamic that can be best understood and managed by applying basic principles from coaching psychology.

Our executive clients are under a lot of pressure to perform and are often lonely. They sometimes view us as their only trusted person. We offer them a comfort zone and space from which to explore and create meaning in their work or even private life. To manage their high expectations our close attention needs to be on the coach-coachees dynamic. We do this by utilising 'the relationship' as a 'tool'. Transference/counter-transference issues and planned systemic interventions guide our work with our clients.

*Is there anything else you would like to add?*

**Regula:** I would like to thank the conference organisers, Professor Stephen Palmer and Dr Siobhain O'Riordan, for all the work they have done in building coaching psychology in the UK and internationally. It is of enormous help in our daily work with executives.

Knowing that there is a professional body of coaching psychologists worldwide gives our work a good standing in the market, a sense of belonging to a professional community and is an important pillar in my work.