

Book Recommendations

This is a list of some of the books that I have found to be helpful for exploring what coaching means and for getting an introduction to related disciplines such as psychology and psychotherapy.

Book	Comments
<p><i>Coaching - Evoking Excellence in others</i></p> <p>James Flaherty</p> <p>Coaching</p>	<p>Overview of the art and science of coaching that reflects deeply on the coach as a human being and how this influences the practice. Each chapter contains suggested reading with a brief description of each book - which I found a very useful guide to next steps into specific topics. Combines a psychological and philosophical view to create a very well-rounded primer on coaching.</p>
<p><i>Mastery in Coaching</i></p> <p>Jonathan Passmore (editor)</p> <p>Coaching</p>	<p>Provides a chapter on each of the main strands of coaching practice with a summary of the scope and a review of the supporting research. Can be quite heavy going at times, but a very useful introduction and comparison of each of these areas. Some useful reading guides and sources of information on each subject area at the end of each section.</p>
<p><i>FT Guide to Business Coaching</i></p> <p>Anne Scoular</p> <p>Coaching</p>	<p>This was the book that helped me realise that I wanted to be a business coach. It sets out in a very clear way the overall process of coaching and how this can be used in a business environment. It also provides a good overview of the "infrastructure" - the training providers, the accreditation and some of the major texts. It also provides a useful guide to setting up a coaching business - how to market and position your services and what you might expect to earn.</p>
<p><i>The Coach's Coach</i></p> <p>Alison Hardingham</p> <p>Coaching</p>	<p>One of the set texts for the Henley Certificate programme, this is a great stepping stone between the introductions to coaching (e.g. Scoular) and the more philosophical or academic texts (e.g. Flaherty or Passmore). It provides a lot of practical advice - drawing on Alison's many years as an executive coach, and that of her co-authors who have sports coaching backgrounds.</p>
<p><i>Coaching Essentials</i></p> <p>Patricia Bossons</p> <p>Coaching</p>	<p>A good basic introduction to coaching with an emphasis on practical skills and examples. It provides a wide selection of tools and models that can be used to help structure a coaching session, and perhaps allow for some alternate approaches to be used. Perhaps more useful as a reference rather than a coaching text.</p>

Time to Think

Nancy Kline
Coaching / Listening

Kline has created the concept of a "Thinking Environment" based on active listening. She suggests that "the quality of a person's attention defines the quality of the other people's thinking" making a powerful case for really listening deeply to other people to enable them to fully realise their potential. The book provides many useful examples and sets out a series of steps to achieve this. As listening is a key attribute for any coach - this is an excellent source of ideas and guidance to help strengthen and deepen this key skill.

Narrative Coaching

David Drake
Coaching

David Drake has built a coaching methodology around the concept of narratives – the stories we tell ourselves and others, and how we see ourselves in these. This book describes how this can be applied, but also provides a very helpful structure for thinking about coaching in a broader sense – with a simple model that can be applied to a wide variety of situations. He also talks about myths and folk tales, and how many of these familiar stories represent psychological archetypes that are very relevant today. Highly recommended.

Wherever You Go, There You Are

Jon Kabat-Zinn
Mindfulness

Jon Kabat-Zinn is well known from his TED talks on stress reduction and the benefits of mindfulness. This book provides a good introduction to the benefits of mindfulness with some basic techniques and examples. It also has several philosophical musings on life and how mindfulness and increased awareness can change the way we view our world and our lives. Very relevant to coaching as an enabler of greater self-awareness and more openness to the moment which leads to more empathy and deeper engagement.

The Brain That Changes Itself

Norman Doidge
Neuroscience

Describes neuro-plasticity and recent research around how the brain can be healed to address specific issues such as handicaps or strokes. Overview of how brain - body interface works and some really encouraging examples of how directed training and intervention can help cases previously thought to be hopeless.

The Idiot Brain

Dean Burnett
Neuroscience

Fairly light-hearted introduction to neuroscience which highlights the various imperfections in how the brain processes information. Useful to help understand some of the underlying motivators and cognitive biases in the way we interact with each other.

Man's Search for Meaning

Victor Frankl
Psychology

Frankl was a successful psychiatrist who survived Auschwitz and wrote this as an insight into what fundamentally drives us. His perspective on humanity in the most difficult situations and how this can drive greater meaning on our lives is profound. It is a short book but can change the way you view life and why we are here.

<p><i>Me, myself, us</i></p> <p>Brian Little Psychology</p>	<p>Highly readable introduction to personality psychology from a leader in the field. Provides an overview of current thinking about how our personalities vary and how they influence the way we operate and interact. Worth watching his TED talks to get an entertaining summary of his propositions.</p>
<p><i>Strangers to ourselves: discovering the adaptive unconscious</i></p> <p>Timothy Wilson Psychology</p>	<p>A description of our unconscious and how it influences the way that we perceive others and react to situations. Some good reflections on unconscious bias and what we may be able to do to recognise and perhaps address it. A very good introduction to the subject, with a summary of recent research and current theories.</p>
<p><i>How to win friends and influence people</i></p> <p>Dale Carnegie Psychology</p>	<p>I'd never actually read this book although it is so well known. Was pleasantly surprised at the relevance of the content despite its age. The earnest style grates a bit after a while, and the recommendations are very much on the "Top 10 ways to..." style - but there are some useful nuggets in here which are useful to keep in mind.</p>
<p><i>Nonviolent Communication</i></p> <p>Marshall Rosenberg Psychology/ Communication</p>	<p>Marshal Rosenberg specialises in conflict resolution and how the use of language impacts the way that we interact with other people. It provides a thought provoking view of how we see situations and other people and what we need to understand about this in order to move forward toward a deeper level of communication.</p>
<p><i>Seven Languages for Transformation</i></p> <p>Robert Kegan / Lisa Lahey Psychology/ Communication</p>	<p>Although this book does not mention coaching - it provides several well set out examples of how changing one's mindset or articulating a concern in a different way can have a transformative effect. The authors have worked in adult learning and change management and their models and recommendations are directly applicable to coaching situations.</p>
<p><i>The Examined Life</i></p> <p>Stephen Grosz Psychotherapy</p>	<p>A series of vignettes of people's lives based on the experience of a psychotherapist over 30 years. Really easy to read - the stories are short but give an intriguing and thought-provoking sense of the difference in people's experiences and what their underlying motivators may be.</p>
<p><i>On Being a Person</i></p> <p>Carl Rogers Psychotherapy</p>	<p>Carl Rogers is recognised as the founder of "client centred" therapy with a well-articulated and profound theory of how the therapy process works, and what this means for the client and the therapist. Although written in the late 50's it is directly relevant today for any coach trying to establish a deeper relationship with their clients, and prepared to put themselves on the line. The book is a series of essays based on various lectures, and covers a range of topics including the evidence supporting the benefits to be gained from this client centred approach. Very highly recommended.</p>

Once Upon a Midlife

Alan B Chinen
Psychotherapy

This book uses myths and legends from around the world that reflect the lives of people who are no longer young and are coming to terms with their place in the world and their legacy. The actions taken by the characters in these stories – be they Kings and Queens or farmers and their wives – reflect some deep truths about the way we recognise our male and female sides, and how this changes as we get older. Alan Chinen illustrates this with some examples from his own practice as a psychotherapist.