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Growth & Development

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President's Note



Dear APAC Family,

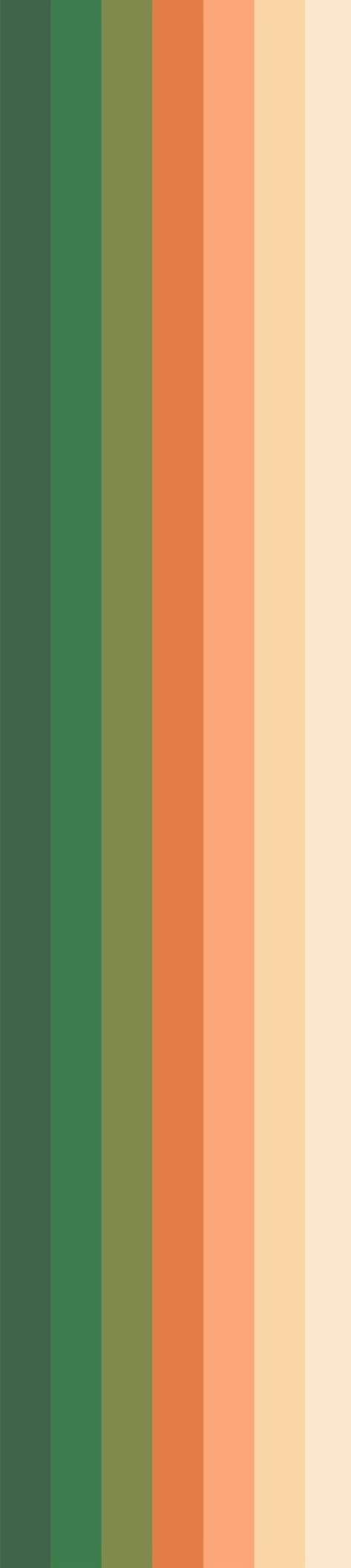
Welcome to the second quarter of 2026. Time is moving quickly.

As we step into the second quarter of 2026, I am struck by how quickly the world continues to evolve and how essential it is that we evolve with it. Across our region and beyond, shifting economic landscapes, geopolitical changes, and the accelerating pace of technology are reshaping the way we live and lead. Yet within this uncertainty lies extraordinary possibility. As the Chinese wisdom teaches, every challenge carries the seed of transformation. This is our moment to lean into clarity, courage, and collective purpose. Here in APAC, we are choosing to meet this moment not with hesitation, but with imagination. Not with fear, but with a renewed commitment to growth.

It is in this spirit that I am thrilled to announce APAC's first regional collaboration on a new course offering. This is an initiative that beautifully reflects our mission to honour both global coaching excellence and the deep wisdom of our region. APAC is a tapestry of cultures, languages, and leadership traditions, and this collaboration marks a meaningful milestone in how we come together to co create approaches that are relevant, resonant, and uniquely ours.

Our new programme, "**Archetype Compass: The Dao of Leadership in the AI Era**," invites us to explore leadership through a powerful fusion of Eastern philosophy and Jungian archetypal psychology. It offers a fresh, profound and igniting lens on how leaders can navigate complexity with balance, presence, and purpose. In an era shaped by AI, this programme focuses not on technology itself, but on the kind of leadership the times call for, which is leadership rooted in wisdom, humanity, and conscious choice.

This is more than a learning opportunity. It is a step toward building a more connected, aligned, and future ready APAC community, one that leads with depth, clarity, and heart. I encourage you to take advantage of the exclusive APAC pilot launch investment, along with the special rate for APAC



members. This course has been successfully delivered multiple times with our collaboration partner CrystalMind. It has received outstanding feedback from participants and been validated in real business settings, driving tangible impact. The program is widely acclaimed by learners as a more profound and practical upgraded version of “Leader as Coach”. An incentive is granted to individuals who successfully refer a coach or friend to sign up for the course, in the form of the **Archetype Leadership Assessment** (valued at SGD 360). What a rewarding way to recognise your support while enhancing your own leadership growth, right?

As we move into this new quarter, I invite each of you to embrace both the uncertainty and the promise of the path ahead. When we stand together, we have the power to transform complexity into momentum and possibility into lasting impact.

Thank you for the work that you do, the heart that you bring, and the difference you make.

Warm regards,



SUYIN ONG

President, Asia Pacific Alliance of Coaches (APAC)

From the Editor



Growth is often spoken about as progress, something to strive for, achieve, and be recognised for. Yet we rarely speak about what it truly asks of us.

Those who have experienced real growth know that it is rarely comfortable. It brings uncertainty, tension, and moments where familiar ways of thinking no longer hold. What can appear as resistance is often something deeper, a response to the anxieties that growth inevitably evokes: questions of identity, role, and what may be lost even as something new begins to emerge.

This issue begins with the inner experience of growth, the often unseen shifts in identity, visibility, and self-perception that accompany development. Growth rarely happens in isolation. It begins within and extends into relationships, leadership, and the wider system. As these internal changes unfold, they begin to reshape relationships, expectations, and the social dynamics around us.

Growth in leadership brings a different set of challenges, where increasing responsibility tests not only capability, but also one's sense of self, authority, and alignment. The coaching perspective offers a deeper lens into this process, revealing growth not as linear progression, but as a non-linear movement of awareness, disruption, and integration.

The issue also considers the more practical dimensions of development, including how growth is supported through mentoring and intentional practice.

Finally, the issue widens to a systemic view, examining how growth within organisations often introduces new complexities, and how developing the capacity to think systemically becomes essential for sustainable progress.

Across these contributions, a shared understanding emerges. Growth is not simply an upward movement. It is a process that stretches individuals, reshapes relationships, and unsettles the systems within which we work.

For leaders and organisations, this requires a shift. Growth is not

only about building capability, but about developing the capacity to navigate complexity, stay with difference, and remain thoughtful under pressure.

The reflections in this issue invite us to look beyond surface-level development and consider what it takes to grow in ways that are both meaningful and sustainable, not only in what we achieve, but in who we are becoming in the process.



SONALI BHATTACHARYA

Chief Editor, APAC Voice

Leadership & Systems Coach | Founder & Chairperson, Group Relations Singapore



Growth Begins with Disruption & Discomfort

Growth starts with tension, not clarity.

The Molting Season: What No One Tells You About Growing Up in This Profession

by Jaye Lee, MSocSc, PCC, ESIA

Let me say the quiet part out loud.

Most of us didn't enter the helping professions to be visible. We came to serve. We came because somewhere in our bones, we knew that sitting with another human being in their pain, their confusion, or their becoming was a sacred act. We came for the work. Not the spotlight.

And then growth happened. And suddenly, growth asked something of us that service never did: it asked us to *take up space*.

This is the identity reckoning that no CCEU module prepares you for.

The Paradox of the Healer-Leader

For much of my career, I have occupied the intersection of several worlds: the systemic rigour of coaching supervision, the deep empathy of trauma-informed counselling, and the strategic precision of digital marketing. In working with helping professionals striving to establish their own practices, I have noticed a consistent developmental pattern. Growth for these individuals is not just about getting more



clients or scaling revenue. It is about resolving the internal tension between the healer and the authority.

Many coaches enter the field with a helper identity, rooted in service, empathy, and a professional invisibility where the focus is entirely on the client. Growth eventually demands that we step into the role of the leader, the business owner, the person with something to claim. That is where the discomfort begins.

We are forced to market our brilliance, set firm boundaries, and face the quiet but potent rivalry whether from professional competitors or from the loudest critic of all: the internal voice asking, *who do you think you are?*

Growth Is a Nervous System Event

Here is where my background as a trauma specialist intersects with my work as a business strategist, and it is, I believe, the missing conversation in most coaching development programmes.

Growth is not merely a strategic shift. It is a *somatic* one.

When a coach moves from a contained one-to-one practice into a systemic leadership role or transitions expertise into a digital ecosystem, they are not just changing their business model. They are changing their relationship with visibility.

For many practitioners, visibility carries an unconscious threat signal. To be seen widely is to be scrutinised. To be scrutinised is to be found wanting. For individuals whose nervous systems learned that safety lives in smallness, scale does not feel like opportunity. It feels like danger.

This is not a mindset problem you can fix with an affirmation. It is a nervous system response that needs regulation.

The identity shifts required for true development often feel like loss. To become the person who can lead an organisation or influence a culture, we must grieve the version of ourselves that felt safe in smaller, more contained roles. If we do not acknowledge this and hustle past it in the name of momentum, we hit a glass ceiling of our own making. Not because we lack skill. But because our nervous system has not yet integrated the weight of our new authority.

“To become the person who can lead an organisation or influence a culture, we must grieve the version of ourselves that felt safe in smaller, more contained roles.”

The glass ceiling so many skilled practitioners hit is not external. It is also neurological.

The System Always Reacts to Your Growth

There is another dimension that practitioners rarely anticipate moving us from the internal landscape to the external field we are expanding into.

When you grow, the systems around you respond. Not always warmly.

In many APAC cultural contexts where hierarchy is respected and professional lanes are clearly demarcated, stepping into an expanded identity generates quiet but effective resistance. True developmental growth requires the courage to remain regulated and centred even when the field around you is in flux, to stop waiting for permission to grow, and to grow anyway. That takes a kind of internal sovereignty that most business development programmes will never address. They were not designed for the healer-turned-leader.

The Grief Nobody Mentions and Why Ours Is Different

Let us also name this: growth involves grief. The grief of the helping professional is categorically different from that of a corporate leader changing roles or a consultant pivoting markets.

When a helping professional grows into greater visibility and authority, what they grieve is not just a job title or a familiar routine. They grieve the ethical shelter of the background role. The moral clarity of being the one who serves, never the one who sells. The professional identity where their value was demonstrated quietly, in a room, with another

person, not performed publicly in a marketplace that will judge them before it knows them.

They grieve the version of themselves that never had to choose between integrity and income. That never had to put a price on their presence.

This grief deserves to be named specifically. Because if we do not, helping professionals will interpret the discomfort as evidence that they are not meant to grow; that it is a signal to retreat rather than a threshold to cross.

Grieving that version is not weakness. It is integration. If we skip it, we build businesses that are structurally sound but existentially hollow.

Growth without integration is not expansion. It is fragmentation wearing ambition's clothing.

The View from the Other Side

Growth is a courageous act of reclamation, reclaiming the parts of ourselves we previously thought were too much or not enough for the professional stage. As coaches and supervisors, we are uniquely positioned to model this. To demonstrate that authority and empathy are not opposites. That visibility and integrity can coexist. That you can scale your impact without shrinking your humanity.

For much of my career, growth felt less like a ladder and more like a molting process. Uncomfortable. Messy. Demanding a fundamental shift in identity at every threshold. But on the other side of each molt, more capacity, more clarity, more of the practitioner



I was always meant to become.

The APAC coaching community is growing in influence and reach. My hope is that we grow in depth too, that we resist the temptation to perform development while quietly avoiding the real thing.

*The view from the top is indeed expansive.
But it is the climb that defines us.*



Jaye Lee, MSocSc, PCC, ESIA, is the Co-Founder of Oneness Consultancy & Academy. As a Certified Clinical Trauma Specialist - Individual (CCTSI) with a Master of Social Science (Professional Counselling), she helps practitioners navigate identity shifts required to transition from healer to leader.

Jaye's strategy is built on high-stakes results; she founded and scaled a seven-figure dental clinic from scratch in under a year without being a dentist, showing that human-first systems drive radical profit. Jaye is an ICF Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and EMCC ESIA Supervisor. She also holds advanced digital marketing certifications from Nanyang Technological University and Singapore Polytechnic, giving her clients the technical leverage to match their depth of care. She is dedicated to helping the coaching community grow in both influence and depth. Explore her work at www.oneness360.com.



Growth in Motion: When the World Shifts Before You Do

Growth is often recognised externally before it is understood internally.



When Growth Changes the Room Before It Changes the Title

by Shane Warren

For a long time, I thought growth would feel triumphant. I imagined it would arrive with a kind of internal fanfare, a moment where things clicked, the room shifted, and suddenly everyone updated their mental file on you. Promotion. Recognition. A round of nods from people who previously looked slightly through you.

In my experience, that is not quite how it works. More often, growth starts quietly, internally, and slightly awkwardly. You change before anyone around you notices. And then the room; the relationships, the dynamics, the unspoken contracts you've had with people for years starts to feel a bit like something familiar

but no longer fitting in the same way. Still recognisable. But not quite fitting the same way.

Someone once told me that, in life, there will always be two-thirds of people who see you as who you once were, rather than who you are today. Think of that great-aunt at family events who still sees you as a teenager, not the adult you have become. This reflection is about that gap. This reflection is about the gap between who you are becoming and who others still think you are. It is, I suspect, one of the most under-talked-about parts of professional development.

The internal shift nobody announces

Growth in leadership and professional life tends to happen from the inside out, and the inside often moves faster than the outside is ready for. Judgement sharpens. Boundaries clarify. The things you once absorbed without complaint start to feel, subtly, like they're costing something. You may not yet hold any

formal authority. The org chart hasn't changed. But something has.

It's a strange feeling, a bit like you've quietly moved house, but you still spend most of your days at the old address. You're different on the inside. The external geography hasn't caught up yet.

In practice, this shows up in small, very ordinary ways. The experienced practitioner who realises they can't remain endlessly available and still do good work. The emerging leader who notices that being well liked is starting to compete with being clear. The founder who understands, with some discomfort, that absorbing every tension in the room is now part of the problem, not the solution.

Growth changes the room. And the room doesn't always love that.

Once you start changing internally, something else shifts: how others relate to you. The agreeable colleague becomes more decisive. The diligent team member develops a stronger point of view. The once-reluctant voice starts shaping the meeting rather than just attending it.

“It's a strange feeling, a bit like you've quietly moved house, but you still spend most of your days at the old address.”

This should be straightforwardly good news. But humans are not always brilliant with transitions, especially when the person transitioning is standing right beside us. Growth can trigger admiration, yes. It can also trigger rivalry, discomfort, and a particular kind of social wobble that nobody names directly, but everyone feels.

Old relational contracts begin to fray. People who were quite comfortable with your earlier version may be considerably less comfortable with your newer one, not because you've become difficult, but because your development changes the pattern. And whenever a pattern changes, the system notices — often expressed through subtle shifts in distance or behaviour.

A long-time colleague may interpret your firmer boundary as distance. A friend may experience your developing authority as ego. A team that said it wanted leadership may react uneasily when leadership stops looking like constant availability. Nobody has done anything wrong. The map has just changed, and people are still navigating with the old one.

Why growth feels lonelier than advertised

This is, I think, one of the genuinely underestimated parts of professional development: that becoming more yourself can, for a period, feel somewhat isolating.

You can become more coherent internally while briefly becoming less legible to people around you. You can grow in competence and

clarity while simultaneously unsettling the social ecosystem you've been part of. Both get to be true at the same time.

Herminia Ibarra's research on professional adaptation describes "provisional selves" — the process of trying out possible ways of being before those identities are fully settled. Development, in that frame, is not a clean handover from one stable self to another. It is a period of rehearsal, testing, and revision.

That rings true. Real growth often looks untidy before it looks confident. A leader starts speaking with more authority but still feels strange hearing their own firmness. A coach known for warmth begins asking harder questions and worries, for a while, that they've become cold. A senior practitioner realises that what once looked like care now sometimes functions as overextension. It's not a performance failure. It's identity work. Which is considerably messier.

It's not just about skills. It's about who you're becoming.

Here's the thing about real development: it changes identity, not just performance. People don't simply become better at what they've always done. Often, they become different in how they relate to time, power, standards, obligation, and self-respect.

Someone who once felt valuable because they were always needed may begin to find worth in clarity rather than rescue. Someone rewarded for agreeableness may start feeling the strain of being more direct. Someone whose identity was built around being the

reliable second-in-command may find themselves being asked to hold vision, ambiguity, and accountability in ways that genuinely unsettle old habits. Lord and Hall's leadership research supports this: development isn't only about adding visible skills. It involves shifts in underlying knowledge structures, emotional regulation, metacognition, and identity itself.

This also explains why the outer role can move faster than the inner self. Many developing leaders know how to look composed long before they feel settled. They can manage the room, say the strategic thing at the strategic moment, and still privately feel as though their internal wiring has been rearranged by internal tension during transition. That gap between presentation and integration is not hypocrisy. It's transition. And good coaching, in my experience, makes room for it.

A note on context: the APAC dimension

A sidebar for us to better understand the internal discomfort of change is to understand leadership development is never culturally neutral, and this conversation gets more textured in APAC settings. Across many Asia-Pacific contexts, group harmony, collective success, respect for hierarchy, and more indirect communication norms shape what leadership looks and feels like. Which means the standard developmental advice such as speak up more, be more visible, own the room, may not always be wrong; it may just be culturally clumsy.

Sometimes the issue is not a lack of ambition or insight. It's that the behavioural packaging of leadership conflicts with values of modesty, relational sensitivity, or social harmony.

Australian research has noted the way Anglo leadership norms can be overvalued while quieter forms of authority are underestimated, which is a real and ongoing issue in how we talk about what 'good leadership' looks like.

A leader may be growing in competence and influence while simultaneously wrestling with inherited messages about not taking up too much space. A coach may observe that a client isn't resisting growth itself, they're resisting a culturally loaded performance of leadership that feels inauthentic. Those are very different problems, and they require different conversations.

Research on identity leadership in Korean workplaces suggests that leadership which builds a shared sense of "we" can strengthen relational energy, embeddedness, and creative performance. Growth in leadership, in other words, does not always require a more individualistic self-display. Sometimes it means becoming more skilled at creating trust, shared identity, and collective movement. That is not a lesser form of leadership. It is, in many contexts, a more sophisticated one.

The question underneath the question: integration

Visible growth is not always mature growth. It is entirely possible to become more confident while becoming less reflective, more accomplished while becoming harder to work

with, more authoritative while becoming less humane.

When development is not integrated, people can mistake defensiveness for discernment, control for leadership, certainty for wisdom. Integration asks harder questions. Are stronger boundaries still warm? Is greater authority still ethical? Is sharper judgement still curious? Has a more defined sense of self remained relational, or simply become harder to challenge?

The task is not merely to rise. It is to remain trustworthy while changing shape.

“A coach may observe that a client isn't resisting growth itself, they're resisting a culturally loaded performance of leadership that feels inauthentic.”

So, where does this leave us?

When growth changes the room before it changes the title, the task is not simply to push forward until recognition arrives. It's to remain steady in the ambiguity. To deepen judgement without performing superiority. To hold firmer boundaries without losing warmth. To let identity evolve without becoming inflated by it.

And, at times, to tolerate being misread without rushing back into an earlier version of yourself just to make the room comfortable again.

Not all growth looks impressive while it is happening. Sometimes it looks like pause. Sometimes it looks like strain. Sometimes it looks a bit like grief for a way of being that once served you well but can't carry what comes next. Sometimes it looks like standing in a shape that is not yet fully recognised, while trusting that integrity matters more than immediate affirmation.

Development, in the end, is not only about becoming more capable. It's about becoming more congruent. The deeper challenge isn't simply to grow; it's to grow in a way that leaves you more grounded, more discerning, and more trustworthy in how you hold power, relationships, and self.

Because growth, in the end, is not only about getting bigger. Sometimes it's about getting honest enough, grounded enough, and brave enough to let the room adjust.

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Shane Warren is a coach, counsellor, supervisor, and leadership consultant working across mental health, organisational development, and professional practice. With a strong foundation in resilient psychology, he is interested in how people grow through complexity, identity shifts, and change, and how development can remain both relational and ethically grounded.

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The Inner Shift: Becoming Someone New

Growth reshapes identity before it becomes visible.

Growth Changes the Person Who Started the Journey

A faith-aligned reflection on leadership and development

by Annie Yahaya

Growth sits at the centre of coaching and leadership.

We speak about it as expansion, opportunity, progress. Organisations reward it through promotion. Leaders pursue it because growth signals movement and success. And yet, anyone who has worked closely with leaders knows a small truth: That growth changes the person who began the journey. And it rarely arrives without discomfort.

Across coaching conversations with professionals, founders, and leadership teams, I see the same pattern. Growth is rarely linear. It stretches identity, reshapes relationships, and challenges how we carry authority. From a faith-aligned coaching lens, growth is not only reflected in achievements. It is actualised in transformations, internally, as much as externally.

When competence meets a new level

Early in my own leadership journey, a former colleague stopped me and said something I have never forgotten: *“Your promotion proves you were competent there. But the moment*



you arrive here, you begin again, at a new level of incompetence. Now you must earn your place all over again.” That sentence captured the reality many leaders quietly experience.

Promotion rewards competence at one level. Growth demands new capability at the next.

Many expect promotion to bring confidence but instead, it often brings uncertainty. What once felt natural suddenly feels unfamiliar again. Expectations increase and decisions become harder. The leader must relearn how to lead from a different position.

Growth humbles before it strengthens.

Growth disrupts identity

Most professionals build their careers around capability. They are recognised for being dependable, effective, and knowledgeable. Then growth happens. The role shifts from doing to enabling. From solving problems to

shaping direction. From personal execution to developing others.

This creates an internal question many leaders struggle to articulate: “If I am no longer the expert, who am I now?”

In coaching conversations, this often appears as frustration, self-doubt, or unexplained fatigue. The external story looks successful but the inner experience feels uncertain.

Faith-aligned coaching introduces a different lens here. Growth invites us to detach from titles and outcomes, and reconnect with intention. When purpose remains clear, identity becomes less dependent on external validation.

“Growth invites us to detach from titles and outcomes, and reconnect with intention.”

The hidden tensions of growth

Growth changes more than the individual. It shifts the environment around them. Peers become comparators. Visibility increases. Influence attracts scrutiny. Relationships evolve. Comfort seems like a distant past.

Many leaders interpret such changes as personal conflict but in reality, growth naturally reshapes dynamics. It’s what it does. Not

every relationship grow at the same pace. The real challenge is emotional maturity, learning to navigate change without losing humility or clarity.

Faith offers a grounding principle: expansion without awareness risks ego; expansion anchored in intention builds character.

Authority as an inner responsibility

Authority is where growth becomes most visible. True authority shows in composure.

As leaders grow, subtle tests emerge:

- Do they become controlling when pressure increases?
- Do they withdraw to avoid criticism?
- Or do they learn to hold responsibility with calm conviction?

In coaching practice, many leadership challenges are not strategic problems. They are alignment issues where the external role expands faster than the internal foundation.

A faith-aligned perspective reframes authority as amanah, a trust. Leadership becomes stewardship rather than ownership. This shift, therefore, changes decision-making. It strengthens accountability while softening the ego.

Patterns emerging in coaching today

Across sectors and cultures, several patterns appear consistently:

- High performers experiencing inner fatigue despite success.

- Founders struggling to evolve beyond the identity of the builder.
- Professionals promoted faster than their emotional adjustment.
- Leaders experiencing isolation as their responsibility increases.

These patterns reflect growth moving faster than integration.

The role of coaching is to create space for integration, where leaders can align internally before continuing outward expansion.

Growth and the inner landscape

In faith-inspired coaching, sustainable growth begins from within. External skills matter. Strategy matters. Yet long-term development depends on the inner landscape: intention, emotional regulation, and self-awareness.

Growth reveals character as much as capability.

Can we remain patient when progress slows?

Can we hold gratitude while carrying heavier responsibility?

Can we choose wisdom over ego when influence grows?

These questions determine the quality of leadership far more than technical skill.

Organisational growth and collective identity

Organisations experience similar tensions. As companies grow, agility meets structure. Informal culture bumps into process. Early closeness gives way to complexity.

Leaders often try to preserve the past while scaling the future. This creates friction because growth requires adaptation. The task is not to copy the early culture exactly. It is to preserve the values while allowing systems to mature.

Growth requires conscious design. There is very little space for nostalgia.

A more honest understanding of growth

Perhaps we need to redefine growth itself. Perhaps it is not simply upward movement.

Growth is becoming capable of carrying greater responsibility without losing clarity of intention. It expands opportunity while exposing unseen gaps. It offers influence while demanding deeper self-awareness.

From a faith-aligned lens, growth is measured not only by outcomes but by who we become while pursuing them.

A closing reflection

As coaches and leaders, we often ask: “How do we grow faster?”

A better question may be: “Who are we becoming as we grow?”

Whether we like it or not, growth will come. Roles will evolve. Influence will expand. What really matters is whether the person leading the journey grows in wisdom, humility, and alignment alongside their success.

That is where meaningful growth begins.



Annie Yahaya is the founder of Muslim Women Coaching (MWC) and The Conscious Muslim (TCM). She is a practitioner–scholar and coach-trainer shaping the next wave of faith-aligned coaching and human development globally. She builds coaching systems that strengthen emotional capacity, sharpen thinking, and translate belief into consistent, observable action. As the founder of the International Muslim Women Coaching Academy, she has developed structured certification pathways that have trained and certified hundreds of coaches and reached thousands of women across multiple countries. Through The Conscious Muslim, she extends this work into a broader platform integrating faith, leadership, and personal development for individuals and organisations navigating modern demands.

Annie is the creator of the I.S.L.A.M. Coaching & Conversation Model, a proprietary framework used to guide individuals from intention to disciplined action through clarity, reflection, and accountability. Her current focus is advancing faith-aligned digital innovation to increase the global adoption of coaching, particularly among Muslim professionals.

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Growth Is Not Linear: From Plans to Emergence

Development does not follow a straight path; it unfolds through reflection, disruption, and integration.

From Linear Plans to Living Practice: How Supervision Supports Non-Linear Growth in Coaching and Business

by Rossella Pin, MCC, ESIA

As coaches, we are deeply familiar with the non-linear nature of growth. We witness it in our clients every day. A client may move quickly at the beginning of an engagement, only to hit an unexpected block. Progress slows, doubt creeps in – and then, often without warning, a breakthrough emerges. A “light bulb” moment, a shift in perspective. Suddenly, movement resumes, sometimes faster and more powerfully than before.

“Trust your client. Trust the process. Trust yourself.”

We are trained for this. We learn to trust the process, to hold patience, and to believe in our clients’ capacity to find their way. We understand that growth is rarely linear.

And yet, when it comes to building our own coaching businesses, many of us abandon this understanding.

The Tension Between Linear Expectations and Non-linear Reality

In the world of business development, we are often told a different story. Success is framed as something that can be engineered step by step. At the same time, marketing narratives often reinforce the illusion of rapid, linear growth, such as “How to build a six-figure business within three months.”

So when things don’t come together as quickly as expected, it can feel like failure.



We might think: “Why is this taking so long?”
“What am I doing wrong?”

For many coaches, this creates an internal conflict. On one hand, we know – through our practice – that growth is emergent and unpredictable. On the other, we feel pressure to conform to linear models of success.

But what if coaching businesses are not meant to grow linearly?

Research suggests that meaningful transformation often occurs through disruption, reflection, and sudden shifts rather than steady, incremental progress.

From Planned Development to Evolutionary Development

For some coaches, the journey does not begin with a fixed vision or a detailed roadmap. Instead, it starts with something far less defined – a blank piece of paper, accompanied by a sense of what wants to emerge. This has certainly been my experience.

Rather than building toward a predetermined outcome, the business evolves through action, reflection, and adaptation. Each step informs the next, opportunities arise unexpectedly, directions shift, and clients appear.

This is not a lack of strategy – it is a different kind of strategy. It is a move from planned development to evolutionary development, from controlling the path to participating in it.

In this non-linear approach, the question is not “How do I execute my plan?” but rather: “What is emerging, and how do I respond to it?”

“The Inner Dimension of Non-linear Business Growth

However, working in this way requires something more from the coach.

In non-linear growth, your internal state is not separate from your external results – it is part of the system. How you show up, what you believe, and how aligned you are within yourself all influence what unfolds in your business.

If there is a sense of incompleteness, doubt, or internal conflict, this too becomes part of what you bring into the world.

It is not uncommon to feel frustration – something I have also experienced along the way: “My work isn’t coming together as quickly as I want.” “Why is this not happening yet?”

But often, what is unfolding is not a delay – it is preparation. There is development required not just in the business, but in the person building it.

You are becoming someone for whom these next steps are possible.

The Outer Dimension: Systems, Relationships, and the Context

Non-linear growth in a coaching business is not only internal – it is also shaped by systems, relationships, and context.

Business development is deeply relational. Trust, reputation, and networks often play a significant role in how opportunities emerge and evolve. Growth is frequently influenced by ongoing conversations, referrals, and long-

term relationships rather than purely transactional strategies.

At the same time, many coaches operate within structured, performance-driven organizational environments. In this context, developing a coaching business becomes less about executing a fixed plan and more about engaging with a living system where cultural awareness, timing, credibility, and connection all interact.

Recognizing this helps reframe growth: not as something to control, but as something to engage with – relationally and systemically.

Supervision as a Space for Integration

This is where coaching supervision becomes essential.

Supervision offers a space to explore not only what you are doing in your coaching sessions, but who you are becoming in your practice and business. It allows you to step back from the urgency of outcomes and reflect on the deeper processes at play.

“Supervision offers a space to explore not only what you are doing in your coaching sessions, but who you are becoming in your practice and business.”

It acknowledges the well-established three core functions outlined in the EMCC Global Supervision Competence Framework:

1. Qualitative – Enhancing the quality of practices
2. Developmental – Cultivating professional growth
3. Resourcing – Providing support and sustainability for practitioners

Additionally, supervision is increasingly understood as a multi-stakeholder collaborative practice, co-created within the broader environment in which coaching takes place. Drawing on systemic and developmental perspectives, supervision supports coaches in working effectively with complexity, uncertainty, and emergence.

Through supervision, coaches can:

- Notice the tension between linear expectations and non-linear reality
- Explore emotional responses such as impatience, doubt, or comparison
- Recognize patterns that may be influencing both their coaching and their business
- Reconnect with their values, purpose, and way of working

Supervision helps integrate the outer and inner dimensions of growth.

Being in Practice While Developing Your Coaching Business

A powerful insight that emerges from this perspective is simple, yet demanding: *“Your own transformation is not separate from your*

business development. In fact, it is the foundation of it.”

The depth of your coaching is shaped by the depth of your self-awareness.

The quality of your presence influences the opportunities you attract.

The way you relate to uncertainty in your own life mirrors how you hold it for your clients.

Supervision supports this ongoing practice. It creates a disciplined space for reflection, challenge, and growth. It helps ensure that as your business evolves, you are evolving with it.

Trusting the Process – Again

Perhaps the invitation here is to extend to ourselves the same trust we offer our clients.

To recognize that:

- Plateaus are part of the process
- Delays may be developmental, not problematic
- Breakthroughs often follow periods of uncertainty

Non-linear growth is not inefficient, it is organic.

Conclusion

Coaches have a unique opportunity: to bring their understanding of non-linear growth into the way they build their businesses. This requires a shift from control to curiosity, from rigid planning to responsive engagement, from external metrics alone to inner alignment.

Coaching supervision plays a vital role in this shift. It supports reflection, integration, and the

ongoing development of the coach as both practitioner and entrepreneur.

In a non-linear world, success is not simply built – it is grown. And like all meaningful growth, it begins within.



Rossella Pin is an ICF Master Certified Coach, an ESIA Supervisor, and the Lead of the Mentoring Centre for Excellence at EMCC Global. She also holds the certifications of Certified Mentor Coach, Certified Team Coach, Certified Professional Mentor, and Certified AI-Powered Coach.

As an invited speaker at international conferences, Rossella brings nearly three decades of expertise to the coaching and mentoring fields. Her background in organizational development and programme management enables her to guide leaders and organizations through complexity and transformation with a practical and grounded approach. She partners with Fortune 500 companies, providing leadership coaching, developmental mentoring, and tailored training and supervision for internal coaches and mentors to enhance leadership at all levels.

Rossella’s mission as a supervisor is to support practitioners in thriving in both their practice and their business through a deep understanding of the interconnected nature of personal and professional development.



Enabling Growth: The Role of Coaching

Growth requires structure, support, and intentional development.

Growth and Development Through Coaching

by Ram S Ramanathan

Growth and development through coaching is a process of learning grounded in a safe and trusted partnership between coach and client. Through active listening and reflective inquiry, clients develop awareness of limiting beliefs that may be holding them back from realising their aspirational goals.

A coach's ability to be objective, not knowing, curious, empathetic and generative plays a significant role in the level of awareness and therefore the client's growth.

The Non-Linear Nature of Growth

Growth rarely arrives on schedule as planned. Growth happens in bursts and spurts, sometimes circularly, sometimes spirally, rarely linearly, whether physical, emotional or spiritual. Anyone who has worked as a coach, or with one, knows that development does not follow a tidy upward arc. It loops, stalls, accelerates without warning, and sometimes looks like regression before resolving into something new. Understanding this reality is not a postscript to coaching practice. It is the beginning.

Robert Kegan's constructive-developmental theory describes how people make meaning from experiences, and how that transforms



individuals across a lifetime. What looks like resistance or confusion on the surface is often the inner process of a person's enhanced awareness of themselves and the world.

Similarly, neuroscience confirms that the brain rewires through cycles of disorganization and reintegration, rather than through smooth incremental change. Neural networks form and die. Yoga philosophy carries the same insight through its shift from subjective attachment to objective detachment by a deeper understanding of *vritti* mind states.

In coaching, discomfort during a developmental period is not a sign of something going wrong. It is frequently the sign that something is being set right, as a positive unlearning expansion.

Identity Shifts Through Development

When someone moves through a meaningful developmental milestone, what shifts is more than skill or behavior. It is identity. The self that was about a set of conditioned assumptions, roles, or emotional responses becomes insufficient for the life now being lived. This is Kegan's subject-object move: what was once subject, the invisible water the person swam in, becomes object, something they can now see and examine.

In coaching, these moments often surface when a client says they no longer recognize who they used to be, or feeling caught between two versions of themselves, and beginning to recognise limiting beliefs. This causes disturbances in relationships.

Spiritual intelligence research, including the work of Cindy Wigglesworth's SQ21 and Danah Zohar's 12 SI principles are about how we, as energy beings encased in mindbody matter can create the higher witnessing energy awareness consciousness. These principles of self-development and life practice draw from Eastern spiritual wisdom.

Coaching Through Developmental Transitions

A coach's role during developmental transitions is not about providing answers. It's about being a safe, trusted container. Kegan and Lahey's research on immunity to change shows that people are not simply resistant to growth. They are actively, if unconsciously, protecting existing commitments that feel

existentially important. The coach who can see this with compassion, non-judgmentally, and without knowing becomes a trusted partner in the client journey.

The coaching presence is a developmental competency. The coach accepts the client's ambiguity without needing to resolve it, to trust the process even when progress is invisible, and to stay curious about what the disruption is pointing toward. In Yogic terms, this is the practice of sthira and sukha, steadiness and ease held simultaneously, applied to the relational field.

“A coach's role during developmental transitions is not about providing answers. It's about being a safe, trusted container.”

Organizational and Systemic Growth Tensions

Individual development does not happen in a vacuum. When a leader grows, the ecosystem may resist. Colleagues conditioned to an earlier version of the leader may experience the change as threatening or inauthentic. Organizational cultures built on control, hierarchy, or fear are structurally incompatible with the later-stage developmental capacities that coaching often cultivates, including

self-authorship, systemic thinking, and genuine collaboration.

The coach needs dual awareness of honoring the leader's growth while recognising the systemic forces that constrain it. Richard Barrett's work on organizational consciousness maps this tension directly, showing how cultures can be stuck at earlier levels of values development even when individuals within them are operating at higher ones.

This is often not possible in one-on-one settings. Over time, I observed capable client leaders leaving organisations that had invested in their development, as the ecosystem struggled to accommodate their evolving leadership. This led me to shift towards systemic teamwork. Systemic teamwork, using Coacharya SPEED and Peter Hawkins' 5C frameworks, addresses this dysfunction effectively.

Cultural Perspectives on Development

Western developmental models have tended to privilege individuation and autonomy as markers of maturity. Ubuntu philosophy from southern Africa and the Vasudeva Kutumba of Gita, offer alternatives. A leader becomes more complete through deepening relationships, moving from a more selfish space. Similarly, the Vedantic concept of dharma frames development not as personal achievement but as the progressive clarification of one's unique contribution to a larger whole. These are not soft alternatives to

science. They are frameworks that research in interdependence, relational neuroscience, and collective intelligence increasingly confirm.

Growth is not something a coach delivers. It is something the coach partners in — with trust, safety, presence and collaboration — non-judgmentally, in a not-knowing stance, with curiosity, empathy and generative caring.



Ram S Ramanathan is the co-founder of Coacharya. Ram has over 4 decades of corporate leadership experience, paralleled by a personal spiritual journey. His passion is integrating the wisdom of ancient Vedic and Buddhist scriptures with modern scientific research, such as books, courses, and webinars, to create spiritual intelligence awareness in Millennials and Gen Z.



Growth Through Relationship: Trust & Mentoring

We grow in relationship; through trust, challenge, and connection.



Matching, Trust, and Symbiosis for High Quality Mentoring

by David Hosmer

Mentoring programs can yield enormous professional benefits, such as career acceleration, performance development, employee engagement, and retention. According to one study, mentoring can result in promotions for participants five to six times more than non-program participants (Schnieders, 2018). Conversely, poor mentoring experiences can backfire. In another study, researchers found that negative mentoring experiences for mentees can be predictors of stress, depression, and psychological withdrawal. On the other hand, mentors may experience burnout (Hu et al., 2021). Given so much is at stake, career

practitioners should expend their effort in mentoring programs that foster high quality relationships. This is where matching, trust, and symbiosis play a role. Like an enduring marriage, successful mentoring comprises complex, interacting factors beneath the surface. These factors matter whether mentoring results from an informal program or a formal organizational program.

In an informal program, two individuals might meet by serendipity and agree to continue to meet as mentor and mentee, without arrangement by an organization. Formal mentoring emanates from an organization-supported program with structure, such as an application, matching, and timebound process. Formal programs are rooted in business objectives and are sometimes measured.

Matching

When mentoring takes place informally, matching occurs naturally without a formal process. An organization that sanctions a deliberate launch of mentoring partnerships

involves more oversight. For example, at MIT there is more access to mentoring across the institute in a planned way. Participation begins with applicants who seek to enter a collaborative learning relationship. An organized approach for matching mentors and mentees is crucial in the pairing process to minimize mismatches. Program objectives and participant goals should serve as a backdrop during matching. “A personalized mentoring relationship—one responsive to the needs, goals, interests, and priorities of both the mentor and the mentee—is likely to be more effective than one that is not personalized” (Lund & Byars-Winston, 2019, p. 105).

Suggestions for Matching:

- Garner ample information from mentors and mentees including why they want to enter into a mentoring partnership, whether they have been a mentee/mentor before, the mentor’s key strengths, skills, competencies, and what characteristics a mentee prefers in a mentor.
 - Use an information-gathering format, such as an application, that requires applicants to be clear about what each wants from mentoring, going beyond what they want to learn.
 - Don’t accept that mentoring is the appropriate solution in every case. For example, mentoring is not typically extended to employees are in a performance improvement plan (PIP).
 - Don’t assume all volunteers will be effective mentors.
- Establish a 3–5-person diverse ad hoc team to serve as a matching committee if you have the resource to do so. Using the information submitted by prospective participants, the committee will pair mentors with mentees, reach out to applicants to address any gaps in information, and surface biases.

Trust

Trust and honesty should not be assumed in a mentoring relationship. Rather, mentors and mentees must openly discuss and earn each other’s trust. First, both parties should agree that whatever is discussed in mentoring meetings is confidential and will not be shared elsewhere. To learn, mentees need a safe place to think aloud and to be vulnerable with their thoughts and concerns (Marshall, 2013). “It’s a relationship where one can let one’s guard down, a place where one can get honest feedback, and a place, ideally, where one can get psychological and social support in handling stressful situations” (Staff, 2007, para. 12).

Second, the mentor must be aware of their intentions, as the mentee needs to know that their mentor has their best interests in mind (Johnson et al., 2021). Mentees must trust that their mentor shares information, guidance, and feedback in the spirit of caring, support, and growth.

Third, both partners must consistently be honest with each other. In studies on mentoring relationships, mentees identified honesty as an essential characteristic of an effective mentor. “Just being honest and telling

someone ... you know that this idea is not a good idea, or they need to be doing something else.” (Straus et al., 2013, p. 84). Trust holds hands with integrity. If participants have an agreement, such as completing an assignment or agreeing to make an introduction, they should follow through or openly discuss otherwise.

Finally, both parties should be aware that they will endure challenges during the work of mentoring. The mentee should trust that if they open up or display emotion that the mentor demonstrates empathy as they work through issues together.

Mistakes occur, and trust can be compromised. These offer powerful moments in the relationship as both parties discuss the situation openly. By working through such times, trust can be re-earned, evolving into a stronger mentoring bond.

“The mentee should trust that if they open up or display emotion that the mentor demonstrates empathy as they work through issues together.”

To Build Trust:

- Discuss the expectation of trust at the

beginning of the relationship and what it means in this context.

- Follow through on agreements. If one cannot, because of unforeseen circumstances, bring it up first, to take responsibility.
- Match words with behavior. Communication is 90% non-verbal. If what a person says does not match what they are doing, they send mixed messages.

Symbiosis

Mentoring has evolved beyond the traditional idea that a younger person learns from a senior wiser person. One emergent mentoring type is symbiotic, the social definition of which refers to “a relationship of mutual benefit or dependence” (TheFreeDictionary.com, n.d.). This type of mentoring is also referred to as a relational mentoring, that is “one that includes mutual learning and a communal, dyadic, and reciprocal relationship which extends beyond the traditional standpoint” (Abegunde et al., 2022, para. 5). For example, Don Graham, CEO of the Washington Post, and Facebook CEO Mark Zuckerberg have a symbiotic relationship. In 2005, Mark rejected Don’s \$6 million investments propositions for another offer. Despite this, they developed a relationship in which Mark benefited from Don’s years of experience, and Don received online strategies advice from Mark (Toledo, 2018).

Considerations for Symbiotic Mentoring:

- For informal partnerships, forming a symbiotic partnership starts with both

parties agreeing to have a mutually beneficial relationship in which they share mentor and mentee roles. What they learn from each other depends on what each wants to learn from, and offer to, the other.

- In a formal program, the mentor and the mentee should state what they want to learn in the partnership.
- In a formal program, mentors should express their openness to mutual learning in a non-traditional arrangement. Both parties should agree to share the roles of mentor and mentee, relative to their needs.

“What they learn from each other depends on what each wants to learn from, and offer to, the other.”

Transformative Benefits for All

Quality mentoring experiences can have transformative benefits for mentees, mentors, and their organizations. While some relationships occur naturally, conscientious matching in a formal program will maximize the potential for meaningful mentoring. Many develop into long-lasting relationships evolving from trust, openness, and rich learning.

The article, *Matching, Trust, and Symbiosis for High Quality Mentoring* by David Hosmer, originally appeared in NCDA's web magazine, *Career Convergence*, at www.ncda.org. Copyright © December, 2022. Reprinted with permission.



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Growth at the System Level: When Organisations Evolve (or Don't)

Growth at scale reveals deeper systemic dynamics. As organisations grow, unseen dynamics shape complexity and performance.

Why Bureaucracy Grows Even When Leaders Try to Simplify

Why Organisations Experience Dynamic Complexity As Detailed Complexity

by Sheila Damodaran

In everyday corporate life, complexity rarely announces itself as “dynamic complexity.” It is experienced far more concretely. Leaders encounter it as **structural thickening, rule proliferation, and meeting inflation**. Policies multiply. Reporting expands. Approval chains lengthen. Oversight units appear. Dashboards proliferate. The organisation feels heavier each year, and leaders often conclude that complexity is simply the price of growth.

But much of this **detailed complexity** is not the original problem. It is the residue of something deeper.

Dynamic complexity operates through **feedback loops, delays, and reinforcing patterns that unfold over time**. These structures are rarely visible in the moment. They appear first as patterns in behaviour — repeated crises, recurring bottlenecks, sudden strain after periods of success, or persistent organisational friction that returns even after interventions.



When the underlying feedback structures remain unseen, organisations compensate. They add rules to prevent recurrence. They increase monitoring to improve visibility. They introduce new committees to strengthen oversight. Over time, these compensations accumulate into the administrative density leaders recognise as complexity.

In other words, **dynamic complexity descends into detailed complexity**.

What leaders experience as operational overload is often the structural outcome of unresolved feedback tensions. The organisation builds administrative scaffolding around loops it has never learned to see.

Understanding this distinction is essential because it changes the level at which intervention becomes possible.

Two Forms of Complexity

Detailed complexity refers to situations with

many variables and interactions where cause and effect are largely visible. Operational coordination, logistics management, supply chains, and large-scale projects all contain detailed complexity. The challenge here is managing volume — aligning tasks, clarifying roles, and coordinating interdependence.

Dynamic complexity, by contrast, arises when cause and effect are separated by time and feedback. Actions produce delayed consequences. Reinforcing loops amplify behaviour. Balancing loops counteract it. Systems respond in ways that are disproportionate or unexpected.

The difficulty is not the number of variables but the **invisibility of the structure generating behaviour**.

When these feedback structures remain hidden, organisations attempt to manage symptoms rather than causes. Administrative mechanisms expand. Over time, detailed complexity thickens even though the underlying dynamics remain unchanged.

How Dynamic Complexity Becomes Detailed Complexity

The pattern can be observed repeatedly across organisations.

Dynamic Systemic Tension	How It Appears in Detailed Complexity
Short-Term Relief vs Long-Term Capacity	Crisis task forces, escalation protocols, standing committees created to manage recurring issues
Visible Events vs Underlying Patterns	Reporting inflation, dashboard proliferation, monitoring units
Growth vs Capability	Micromanagement, training backlogs, quality audits, turnover management
Performance Targets vs System Health	Audit layers, compliance frameworks, metric policing
Stability vs Adaptation	Reorganisations, restructuring cycles, strategic restarts
Accountability vs Psychological Safety	Defensive documentation, long email chains, approval layers
Efficiency vs Resilience	Emergency procurement, overtime cycles, supply disruptions
Intervention vs Delay	Frequent strategy resets, consultant cycles, project restarts
Success vs Hubris	Hierarchy inflation, administrative expansion, communication apparatus growth

These manifestations appear operational. They are discussed in meetings as **process challenges, governance challenges, or coordination challenges**.

But they originate upstream.

They originate in **unresolved dynamic tensions** that the organisation has not yet learned to perceive.

Why These Structures Remain Hidden

Dynamic complexity rarely reveals itself through isolated events. It appears through **patterns over time**. Behaviour gradually accumulates until the organisation feels strain, at which point the immediate instinct is to intervene quickly.

That instinct is understandable. Leaders are expected to act. Yet rapid intervention often addresses the visible symptom rather than the reinforcing loop generating it.

This is where the discipline of systems thinking becomes relevant.

The work introduced in **The Fifth Discipline** emphasises learning to perceive patterns that operate beneath events. It trains leaders to observe **feedback relationships, delays, reinforcing and balancing loops**, and the structural conditions that produce recurring behaviour.

When leaders begin to see these patterns, the level of intervention changes.

Instead of expanding oversight structures, they begin asking different questions:

- What reinforcing dynamic is generating this behaviour?
- What capability has been underinvested?
- What delay is distorting our perception of cause and effect?
- What balancing force are we unintentionally suppressing?

These questions shift the conversation from managing detail to understanding structure.

The Organisational Consequence of Seeing Structure

When organisations begin to address dynamic complexity directly, something surprising happens.

Detailed complexity often begins to **reduce naturally**.

Policies shrink because recurring crises decline.

Meetings reduce because escalation becomes less frequent.

Reporting simplifies because visibility improves through structural understanding rather than surveillance.

The organisation becomes lighter not because it has aggressively simplified processes, but because **the feedback loops generating complexity have been corrected**.

The implications are significant.

Organisations that learn to see dynamic complexity often achieve two outcomes simultaneously:

- **Lower administrative cost**
- **Higher productivity**

The reduction in rule proliferation and structural thickening releases capacity that was previously consumed by coordination and oversight.

In effect, the organisation moves from **managing complexity to dissolving its reproduction**.

Companion Diagnostic Tool

Recognising dynamic complexity requires practice. To support this learning, a **Companion Diagnostic Tool for Coaches and Leaders** is being developed. The tool will help identify whether organisational friction originates in detailed complexity or unresolved dynamic tensions.

It asks structured questions such as:

- Are problems recurring despite repeated interventions?
- Does strain appear after periods of growth or success?
- Are additional rules or monitoring structures added after each failure?
- Are targets improving while morale, capability, or resilience decline?

If several of these conditions are present, the organisation may be experiencing **the downstream effects of unresolved feedback structures**.

The online diagnostic tool is shared here: <https://strldi.weebly.com/blog/companionidiagnostic-tool>

A Question for the Community

For those working in leadership development,

executive coaching, and organisational transformation, this distinction raises an important question.

When we encounter organisations that feel administratively dense, procedurally heavy, and operationally overwhelmed — are we helping leaders manage the **detailed complexity they experience?**

Or are we helping them learn to perceive the **dynamic structures that created it?**

Because the difference determines whether organisations become progressively more bureaucratic — or progressively more intelligent.



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The Future of Growth: AI & Coaching

As technology evolves, the nature of growth and coaching is being redefined. Technology and human-AI collaboration are reshaping the evolution of coaching.

Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Impact on Coaching

by Dr. Lise Lewis

I cannot believe it was 7 years ago in 2019 that I presented on AI at the APAC Conference held in Bangkok. I wasn't a 'techy' expert then and I still don't make claim to be although I do have a fascination, curiosity and willingness to explore and use AI. So, please understand that I write this short overview from a practitioner's viewpoint underpinned with a level of underpinning research.

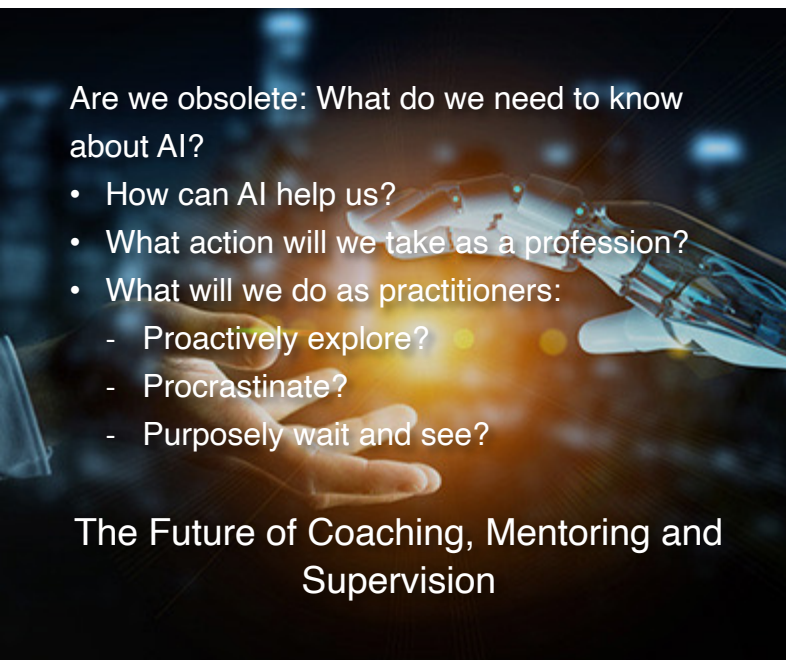
Here's a copy of the final slide presented at that conference. What intrigues me now is that although AI has developed significantly we still reflect on much of what was mentioned back then about the capability of AI:

- profile analysis and job matching
- ability to contribute to 'chemistry' meetings and contracting
- offers a wide range of tools and techniques
- has total recall of everything said
- doesn't get distracted
- identifies action planning and evaluates progress
- displacement of transactional coaching through coaching avatars, chatbots and apps
- available 24 x 7, doesn't need a break and doesn't need a holiday

A final question back then was "Is the human

element missing especially relational energy, critical reasoning, original thought, intuition, emotions, cultural sensitivities and emotion generated by ‘heart’?”

The session ended with this slide:



The obvious question to ask in 2026 is where are we now with understanding the impact of AI on coaching, mentoring and supervision?

What implications arise from the APAC research on Readiness of Coaches for a Future with AI: Insights from the APAC Research Survey 2025

Let’s begin with this survey covering Southeast Asia, Australia-New Zealand, East Asia, and other regions with a sample of 343 respondents. A sample of the main findings from the survey are that:

- 57% of respondents are using AI in coaching
- cultural sensitivity, ethics and emotional

presence are some of the key concerns among APAC coaches

- independent coaches focus on ethical and human-AI boundaries
- there is a growing interest in hybrid coaching models blending AI insights with human intuition
- a preference for hybrid coaching (AI + human)

Clearly these research findings signal adoption of AI by coaches with a preference for a hybrid approach along with concerns still to be resolved.

Some of the concerns highlighted by practitioners are reviewed as follows:

Ethical Practice:

How has ethical monitoring of AI progress since these questions raised in 2019 and those emerging from the APAC 2025 research?

Some thoughts:

- Who programmes AI and how does this reflect the needs of the global population now impacted with the introduction of AI into everyday use? The emphasis on potential bias, societal norms and blind spots of algorithm programmers responsible for the backend activity of building software.
- How is confidentiality covered with the introduction of ZOOM AI companion and the increasing frequency of uninvited ‘Alexa’ joining conversations? The responsible and ethical use of these platforms calls for a reminder to alert those attending meetings

about AI support and to cover any concerns. I'm remembering a recent group supervision session where use of AI reviewed the question does "Can we agree that what is discussed today remains confidential?" We surprised ourselves about the length of our conversation especially when systemic practices revealed how the 'leaky holes in a sieve' dismissed hopes of total confidentiality. Especially for client data, without knowledge of how the data is stored. A reminder to contract fully with the level of personal data likely to be shared.

- How far have we developed in implementing regulation for the use of AI? Social media is increasingly under the spotlight for breaches of confidentiality and misuse of AI with the apparent growth in overdependence on technology.

EMCC, AC and ICF adopted Ethical frameworks (2024-2025) with specific regulations. The EU AI Act (2025-2026) 'prohibits manipulative AI that can influence human behaviour and places high-stakes AI in coaching under strict scrutiny.' US State Regulations (2025-2026) 'define AI companions that handle emotional topics – which includes AI coaching – requiring disclosure, crisis-detection safeguards, and transparent data practices.'

The Relational Presence of Being Human

The reference to emotional intelligence arises from accepting that AI is not a sentient being with the ability to experience feelings and sensations. With coaching accepted as a

relational practice comes the capacity to generate trust, to feel and show compassion and sensory perception when a client needs support. This energy that naturally flows between humans is the agent of connectivity and stimulates willingness to work through complexity and encourages reciprocal understanding. Coaches cannot be complacent, however, when AI's capability can identify how a client is responding emotionally during written exchanges or recorded sessions.

Intuition appears to be regaining credibility as an innate resource worthy of attention that cannot be replicated through AI. Even with the amorphous characteristics of intuition humans know the sensation of differentiating between what feels 'right' and 'wrong' when making decisions.

A likely scenario for the future is that good coaches who adapt and leverage AI tools will enhance their skills. Those choosing not to engage may attract becoming redundant when replaced by AI tools viewed as more competitive. Some may prefer the apparent anonymity of AI rather than working alongside human presence.

Skills for the future will include:

- Emotional Intelligence
- Social Intelligence
- Cross cultural awareness
- Virtual collaboration across digital networks
- Critical thinking and problem solving
- Agility and adaptability to meet the unknown
- Some unknown!

The Role of Professional Bodies

The choice appears to be one of supporting the augmentation of AI into coaching.

The APAC Executive Summary September 2025 identifies that willingness to adopt AI in coaching needs support and upskilling. A sample of the ideas listed as enablers include:

- AI awareness workshops
- Peer-led case studies and demonstrations
- Ethics and cultural sensitivity training
- Access to affordable, user-friendly AI tools
- Ongoing learning communities and coach-specific platforms

Let's Bring In AI's Voice

ChatGPT suggests AI is reshaping coaching in ways that are both exciting and a bit uncomfortable by transforming coaching from a craft shaped by experience into a discipline enhanced by intelligence at scale. A few examples are using AI as:

- an augmented coach
- highlighting the shift from intuition to data-informed coaching – *how do we as coaches react to this supposition?*
- excels at pattern recognition and consistency although lacks empathy, ethical judgement and relational depth – the future lies in integrating machine intelligence with human insight
- lowering the barrier to entry for high-quality coaching previously lacking due to cost, geography or time constraints
- reliance on AI risks over standardisation, data privacy concerns and potential erosion of critical human skills such as deep listening and contextual judgement.

Claude.AI suggests AI as the analytical engine with humans as the relational anchor offering coaching at scale without losing the human touch. A few examples:

- AI as a 'co-coach' tracking progress, spotting patterns, flagging blind spots freeing human coaches to focus on what they do best: relationships, motivation and nuanced judgement.
- The personalisation revolution with AI processing far more data about an individual than human coaches, enabling hyper-personalised feedback at scale. Suggestions are performance analysis, tailored training plans
- The tension with coaching being fundamentally a human relationship. The question is what gets 'lost' through dependency on AI?
- New skill demands on coaches needing to be data-literate and comfortable working alongside AI tools. Coaching itself is evolving.

Apparently, the combination of Humans and AI is more powerful than either alone.



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Dr. Lise Lewis is a practising EMCC accredited coach, mentor, and supervisor working globally with leaders, individual practitioners, groups and team coaches. She is the Founder of Bluesky International, offering accredited coach, mentor and coach supervisor training, supervision and research-based feedback skills training. She has been an EMCC Global volunteer for 20+ years initiating and contributing to the creation of professional standards in coaching, mentoring and supervision. She is a researcher, author, keynote conference speaker and award-winning supervisor, coach and Mentor. She is also a survivor of tank driving, go-karting, a sky dive parachute jump and crashed air balloon.



Featured Insight: Leadership Archetypes

Understanding leadership patterns and how they shape behaviour and decision-making.

Leading Like Water: When Jungian Archetypes Meet the Taoist Wisdom of Wu-Wei

by Dr. Sandy Chen

As a leader, have you ever defined yourself with words like these?

“I’m a straight shooter through and through.”

“I only care about results—no fluff for me.”

“My style is to lead from the front and fight the tough battles with my team.”

These self-definitions often come from the leadership archetypes we’re most comfortable with: the hero’s fearless drive, the sage’s rational insight, or the ruler’s structured control, to name a few.

Yet Taoist wisdom offers a deceptively profound insight: when you cling to **who you are**, you lose the freedom to become **who you can to be**.

Wu-Wei in Modern Terms: Letting Go of the Ego

The Taoist idea of **wu-wei** (often translated as “non-action”) does not mean doing nothing at all. Rather, it means **not acting recklessly, not clinging, not being rigid**. It means



setting aside subjective attachments and forceful intervention, and instead, following the natural order of things—allowing people and situations to find their own rhythm and fulfill their potential.

True *wu-wei* is about **letting go of the ego**: refusing to tie your identity to a single archetype. It means moving in harmony with the moment—with the right time, the right context, and the right people—and drawing on the archetype that fits for each situation, instead of being defined by just one.

In management, *wu-wei* means not imposing your personal archetypal preference on the team. Instead, you sense what the situation calls for, awaken the right archetypal energy, and let the diverse archetypes within the team complement one another, creating natural momentum.

Going with the Flow: Context Determines Archetype, Not the Other Way Around

Every leadership archetype holds a unique core energy and thrives in specific contexts—there are no superior or inferior archetypes, only those that fit and those that do not.

To **"go with the flow"** in archetypal leadership is to not cling to the archetype you're most used to. It's to resist the urge to apply the same energy to every situation. Instead, you read the *flow*—the context—and flexibly call upon the archetypal energy that fits.

In leadership terms, **"context"** means: What kind of team are you leading? What stage of development is it in? What core challenges is it facing?

The same leader may need to draw on completely different archetypes in different scenarios. Going with the flow means letting the archetype serve the context—not forcing the context to serve the archetype.

A Simple Practice: Be a Flowing Leader, Like Water

Lao Tzu said: "The highest good is like water. Water benefits all things without competing with them."

Water has no fixed shape. It takes the form of its container—round in a round vessel, square in a square one. It can surge forward like a Hero to break through obstacles, or nurture gently like a Caregiver. It can break through barriers like a Rebel, or gather still and strong like a ruler.

This is the highest state of archetypal leadership: **fluid, adaptable, context-aware**. Great leaders are not defined by a single "dominant archetype"; they are *facilitators* who channel the right archetypal energy at the right time.

"There are no superior or inferior archetypes, only those that fit and those that do not."

They do not force the team to adapt to their personal style. Instead, they see the core archetypes in each team member and help them thrive in roles and scenarios that fit.

In team collaboration, they combine different archetypes according to task needs: balancing masculine drive with feminine grounding, rational analysis with emotional connection, structured control with nurturing warmth.

Each Monday morning, ask yourself four questions:

- What context is my team in this week? Crisis, chaos, fatigue? Or a push for breakthroughs, innovation, or celebration?
- What archetypal energy does the team need most in this scenario?
- Does my go-to archetypal role match the current needs of the moment?
- Am I willing to set aside my go-to role, and become who the team needs right now?

In Closing: From “Owning an Archetype” to “Using Archetypes”

Blending archetypal leadership with the Taoist principles of *wu-wei* and "going with the flow" shifts leadership from **forceful effort** to **mindful navigation**.

It means letting go of attachment to your own style, reading the context and the capabilities of your team, and flexibly channeling archetypal energies—so that every strength finds its place, and every ounce of energy is released naturally.

This is the essence of *wu-wei*: the leader does not do everything, but does what is needed to guide with the flow. In the end, this empowers the team to reach a state of *you-wei* (purposeful action), where everyone fulfills their potential, and everything unfolds in harmony with the moment.



The 12 archetypes are a powerful tool. They reveal the endless possibilities of leadership. But the value of any tool lies not in being defined by it, but in having the freedom to choose. True leadership is never just “who I am”. It is always about “**who the team needs me to be, right now**”.

May we all, in our leadership journey, let go of the obsession with one single archetype, flow like water, and be as natural as the Tao. With the heart of *wu-wei*, and the practice of going with the flow, we can become leaders who are calm, capable, and truly free.



Dr. Sandy Chen is Co-Founder & Chief Product Officer at CrystalMind Transconsulting, bringing over 3,000 hours of executive coaching experience and 16 years of global leadership in multinational corporations. She holds a PhD in Organizational Development and Change from Fielding Graduate University. As a leading voice in integrating Jungian archetypes with business coaching, Dr. Chen brings a rare and powerful synthesis of depth psychology, Eastern wisdom, and corporate strategy to transform leadership development in the AI era.



**APAC Community
Announcements &
Updates**

APAC Xpressions



Nils Den Tex

Chair – Membership, Thailand

What attracted you to coaching?

Primarily what attracted me to coaching was to serve individuals, teams and communities and contribute to their personal and professional growth. What I found most appealing and empowering in coaching is not providing them with the answers for their problems or challenges but instead through actual presence of the coach in combination with active listening and asking powerful questions raise the awareness of the coachee – in my operational context humanitarian workers, managers and leaders - find their own solution to the problem or challenge and taking full ownership of it.

This so powerful. It is a partnership of co-creation. The additional benefit is that those coached will feel empowered to make decisions on their own and henceforth contributes to localization of decision making

and take ownership instead of relying on a team leader operating from distance.

You can apply coaching in different personal/professional or life situations and with different people through asking powerful questions to friends of family member who are in a challenging personal situation and seeking greater clarity on the way forward.

How has it affected you personally?

Coaching has contributed to increased levels of self-awareness as a person. It has enabled me to learn from other people challenges and the ways to overcome them and a strong belief that self confidence helps you finding a way forward for whatever situation you are in with the strong belief you can do it.

It has made me a good listener, be fully present in the moment through mindfulness all for building trust and for holding the safe space for a coachee to share their feelings and emotions. In managing complex development and humanitarian assistance projects in volatile context such as in Myanmar, this belief that there is 'always a way' being confident in combination with creativity and resilience has enabled me to overcome numerous challenges and instilled a belief in continuing learning and growing. I always wear the coaching mindset hat. It comes handy in professional and personal settings whether in project or teams or with family or friends over a coffee to resolve a conflict, overcome a challenge, resolve a problem and find a way forward and people are grateful for it.

Describe a pivotal moment in your coaching journey.

The pivotal moment was when I learned coaching by asking coaching questions to managers and hold the space for them to find solutions – learning by doing. It enhanced confidence and self-belief – having the ability to do it and witness the results of managers feeling more empowered and confident because of the coaching approach. This led to developing and facilitating a Management & Leadership Development Coaching in CARE Bangladesh with a colleague for CARE for RLP managers. So, start doing it when you have gained the confidence and belief you can do it.

I integrated coaching in my management and leadership role through asking coaching questions in team meetings on defining the problem, explore the options for a solution and find the way forward using GROW. As head of project for WHH-RSSD (2019-2025) in Myanmar I led the team through the COVID pandemic and political crisis through a problem – options – way forward coaching framework navigating a complex context filled with uncertainty, which enhanced team cohesion and empowerment of the team to handle complex situations themselves.

The coaching certification and credentialling followed much later: ICF Leadership Coaching in 2020 attending remotely during COVID pandemic from Myanmar followed by ICF accreditation – ACC. That has enabled me to move into external coaching of humanitarian professionals and professionals in career transition.



Joanne Teh

Chair – Special Projects, Singapore

What attracted you to coaching?

In many ways, coaching found me. When I first experienced it, I remember thinking—what is this, that a conversation can open up such clarity, courage, and possibility? There was something quietly powerful about it that stayed with me.

During my maternity leave, I found myself returning to that question. I decided to learn coaching, not just as a skill, but as a way to better understand myself and to make a meaningful difference to others. What began as curiosity became something I felt deeply called to pursue.

How has it affected you personally?

Coaching has shaped both how I live and how I lead. It has helped me become more aware of my own patterns, more grounded in my values, and more deliberate in the choices I make. Some of those choices were not easy, but they were necessary.

It has also changed how I relate to others. I listen more carefully, hold back from reacting



too quickly, and create space for people to think and find their own clarity. Over time, that coaching mindset has also started to shape how I show up, at work, as a parent, and in everyday life.

Describe a pivotal moment in your coaching journey.

A pivotal moment for me was realizing that coaching is not primarily about technique, but about presence.

There was a conversation where I let go of trying to “get it right,” and simply stayed with the person in front of me – listening, being there and allowing the moment to unfold. The shift was immediate. The conversation became deeper, more honest, and more impactful for the client.

That experience reshaped my practice. It reinforced for me that the depth of a coaching conversation is less about what we do, and more about how we are willing to be – with ourselves, and with another.

At its heart, coaching is the quiet, committed work of helping a fellow human come home to themselves, and I am thankful for that privilege to be part of that journey.



Community Highlights

In the past few months, we've brought our community together through a mix of in-person and virtual experiences.

We hosted a Walk & Talk event at Fort Canning Park, Singapore. We also held two insightful webinars: "Personal Change Using Schema Coaching" with Dr. Iain McCormick and "Understanding Archetype Leadership to Thrive in an AI-Driven World" with Dr. Sandy Chen.

Coming up next is our webinar "Breakthrough Coaching: Human First. AI Assisted." with Mel Leow, MCC, and Maverick Foo.

More learning opportunities are on the way, including the Team Coaching Circle led by Clémence Blondel and Suman Balani. Stay tuned as we continue to learn, grow, and support one another as a community.

Ways to Get Involved

If you have contacts or opportunities for individual pro bono coaching, or organisations interested in exploring team coaching, we warmly invite you to reach out. These partnerships allow us to extend our impact, support underserved communities, and create meaningful development opportunities for our members.

We also welcome your feedback and suggestions on how APAC can better serve your needs. Your voice shapes our direction and strengthens our community. Please feel free to write to us at info@apacoaches.org

Upcoming Events

For the full list of events and more details, visit our website:

<https://apacoaches.org/events/>

Breakthrough Coaching: Human First. AI Assisted.

Speakers: Mel Leow, MCC, and Maverick Foo

When: Wednesday, 6 May 2026 at 12PM – 1PM SGT

[Learn more and register >>](#)



Team Coaching Circle: Ethics in Team Coaching

Team Coach Supervisor: Suman Balani, PCC

When: Monday, 18 May 2026 at 7PM – 8:15PM SGT

[Learn more and register >>](#)



Gestalt Practice: A Conversation on the Pursuit of wHolism in Coaching

Speaker: Mary Ann Rainey, Ph.D.

When: Wednesday, 3 June 2026 at 6:30PM – 8PM SGT

[Learn more and register >>](#)



Team Coaching Circle: Listening Deeply in Team Coaching

Team Coach Supervisor: Clémence Blondel, PCC

When: 15 June 2026 at 7PM – 8:15PM SGT

[Learn more and register >>](#)



Leadership Coaching for Innovation and Change Using a Systemic Lens

Speakers: Dr. Henry Toi and Thomas Lim

When: Wednesday, 5 August 2026 at 6:30PM – 8PM SGT

[Learn more and register >>](#)



Welcome

A **WARM WELCOME** to the (6) new members who joined us since the last APAC Voice in January to April 2026! We wish you a long and fruitful association with APAC!

Our **SINCERE THANKS** to the introducers as well! Thank you for supporting us in continuously growing this professional, diverse, learning, serving, and engaging community. Your help is highly appreciated!

Individual Membership (6):

LOCATION	NAME	INTRODUCED BY
JAPAN	Osamu Sato	CoachU Faculty: Belinda MacInnes
MALAYSIA	Eric Toh	Suyin Ong
	Vilva Anthony	Suyin Ong
SINGAPORE	Andelina Chong	
	Yui Fai Tung	Trainer Coach
TAIWAN	Joseph Cohen	Sonali Bhattacharya



Membership Overview

TOTAL NO. OF APAC MEMBERS

As of 7 April 2026, APAC has 142 current members.

Australia	Malaysia
China	Philippines
Germany	Singapore
Hong Kong	Taiwan
India	Thailand
Indonesia	United Arab Emirates
Italy	United Kingdom
Japan	United States

JOIN US AND HELP APAC GROW!

Share your benefits and recommend your colleagues to join us today! Share your skills and experience and become a sub-committee member! Contact us at membership@apacoaches.org

- Coaching voice of Asia Pacific
- Unique regional community
- Professional development & support
- Pro bono coaching and R&D projects
- Newsletter – APAC Voice
- “Find a Coach” listing
- APAC Coaching Conference

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By renewing your APAC membership, you are supporting APAC in giving impact to society through Coaching.

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Full Page	8”w by 10.5”h	120	105	100	90
Half Page	8”w by 5”h	60	45	40	35
¼ Page	3.75”w by 5”h	30	25	20	15
FOR NON-MEMBERS					
Full Page	8”w by 10.5”h	200	180	160	140
Half Page	8”w by 5”h	100	88	80	75
¼ Page	3.75”w by 5”h	60	50	40	35

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Rectangle (medium)	3.13”w x 2.6”h	450	800
FOR NON-MEMBERS			
Leaderboard (top)	8.13”w x 0.94”h	1200	2100
Leaderboard (bottom)	8.13”w x 0.94”h	660	1140
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Pricing per insertion in SGD. Pricing valid through 31 July 2026.

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