

Compassionate coaching using intentional change theory to enable resonant 21st century leaders

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Abstract: Executives wanting to improve their leadership effectiveness are faced with a dizzying array of definitions of leaders and leadership. While leadership skills can be learned, the behavioural changes required are hard to sustain because old neural pathways have to be rewired. Intentional Change Theory offers a useful model for change and is a powerful tool for coaches. When combined with coaching with compassion, resonant relationships are formed that benefit both the leader and the coach.

Keywords: resonant leadership, emotionally intelligent leadership, intentional change theory, coaching with compassion, 21st century leadership, behavioural change.

Introduction

I have seen first hand the profound impact (often negative) that leaders have on their teams/organisations. No leader sets out to destroy value in an organisation and yet so many unwittingly do just that. Faced with a rapidly changing and uncertain external landscape, under pressure for short-term results and paralysed by the chronic stress that accompanies many leadership roles, leaders often ‘push’ on the only levers they know. They have been taught that ‘what gets measured, gets done’, and so the focus goes to the metrics. Even with the more enlightened ‘balanced scorecard’ approach, the emphasis is on the ‘numbers’. The reality is that the teams on the receiving end of this performance focused approach, feeling the pressure to produce the results, actually ‘close down’. People become defensive, less innovative, closed to feedback and learning, and unwilling to change. They are physiologically incapable of producing the very outcomes that the leader wants/needs and so the leader pushes harder. I have seen this pattern over and over again in the organisations in which I have worked and to which I have consulted. The leader becomes increasingly frustrated, but is effectively stuck in a vicious cycle. Eventually the culture reflects the leader’s approach, compounding the problem.

What if instead leaders could find a way to build a culture where people feel optimistic, challenged, valued, inspired by the future and the possibilities, and energised to exceed expectations? Organisational climate alone has been shown to influence up to 20-30% of business performance. What if the leader could unleash that potential?

We learn the habits of leadership from experiencing leadership from others, often from a very early age. We are the recipients of leadership in schools, in our early careers and our lives outside work, in fact whenever we observe leadership being modelled. As Goleman et al. (2013) say, when we step into our first leadership roles, we try out these leadership models. We encounter other leaders and try out their behaviours, adding this to the scaffolding that we are building. At the same time, we lay down brain circuitry for leadership habits, which determine how we will tend to do things automatically in similar situations in the future. It is no wonder then that it is very hard to change these behavioural patterns, even when faced with evidence that they don't seem to be working.

What if I could help improve the effectiveness of my own coaching and arm other coaches with an understanding of what effective 21st century leadership looks like, why behaviour change is hard, and why some coaching models that focus on feedback and addressing gaps don't have lasting results? What if I could offer instead a model that drives sustainable, desired behavioural change? If we, as coaches, can use this approach to enable effective, resonant, 21st century leaders, then imagine the impact we can have, not only on our clients, but also on the organisations that our clients lead. That aspiration is what drove me to research this topic and write this paper.

This paper explores how the nature of leaders and leadership have changed over the past 100 years and why I chose to focus on resonant leadership from amongst the plethora of models currently in vogue. I then look at why sustaining behavioural change is hard, before offering a model (intentional change theory) and a coaching approach (coaching with compassion) that coaches can use to help leaders improve their leadership effectiveness.

Review of Selected Literature

To understand how coaches can coach with compassion and use intentional change theory to enable resonant 21st century leaders requires (a) insight into the nature of leaders and leadership in a 21st century landscape (b) a definition of resonant leadership and why it is of interest (c) an understanding of how leaders can develop/improve their leadership skills and why it is hard to do (d) a description of

intentional change theory and its relationship to leadership development and (e) a review of coaching approaches with a particular emphasis on coaching with compassion.

The literature reviewed for this paper came from many sources. I started by reviewing the reading I did 18 months ago for Richard Boyatzis’ course on *Inspiring Leadership Through Emotional Intelligence* offered online through Case Western Reserve University. I scanned the reference list in those papers for other papers that would add to my knowledge. Knowing that I had to situate my topic within the landscape of 21st century leaders, current approaches to coaching and sustaining behavioural change, I used the Columbia library, Google Scholar and the Web to search for related materials.

The nature of leaders and leadership in a 21st century landscape:

Few would disagree that the world in which we live today is vastly different from that in which our parents grew up. So intuitively one would expect that the role leaders play and the nature of leadership has also changed. To understand what effective 21st century leadership looks like, it is necessary to understand the landscape in which it sits and how that landscape has evolved. Curry and Peck (2014) offer a useful summary and provide a number of adjectives to distinguish the 21st century from the 20th century (Table 1.1).

Table 1.1: Characteristics of the 20th and 21st centuries

20th Century	21st Century
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disconnected • Closed • Fixed – order, stabilising demand, predictable, centralised administration, driven by rules • Volume • Mass production • Risk • Products, services and consumers • Charismatic leaders (who nonetheless are the centre of power) • Strategy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Networked • Open • Fluid – devolved responsibility and accountability, expanded workplaces, driven by values and guiding principles • Value • Reducing mass, doing more with less • Opportunity • Social and personal engagement and citizens • Horizontal leaders (who understand that participation and freedom is more important than control) • Culture

Curry, Andrew and Peck, Jules. (2014). *The 21st Century Business; Planning for success in a changing world*. The Futures Company: United Kingdom.

Good et al. (2013) comment that the demands on modern executives are overwhelming. “One must adapt to ongoing technical advancements and manage a hyper-competitive landscape while facing the changing tides of an expanding geography and more complex demography” (Good, Yeganeh and Yeganeh 2013 p. 175-6). “Today’s business climate has been described as fast changing and disruptive, hostile and turbulent. The era of globalisation, of the knowledge worker, and of relentless technological innovation has given rise to unprecedented complexity, uncertainty, and dynamism in today’s business environment. This hyper-competition, characterised by intense and rapid competitive moves, makes sustainable competitive advantage extremely difficult to achieve and leads to environments where discontinuous change occurs more rapidly thereby placing particular demands on today’s strategic leaders with respect to interpreting the environment, crafting the appropriate strategy, and building an organisation that thrives in such contexts” (Crossan and Mazutis 2008 p. 54).

So if the landscape has changed significantly, what of the leaders within it? Various authors, including Northouse (2012), Allio (2102), Rosenbach (2012) and Bambale (2011) have outlined the evolution of leadership definitions and leadership models since the start of last century. Northouse’s text is widely used in universities and leadership programs and is cited more than 6,000 times according to Google Scholar. It offers in one place a critique of the major leadership theories and models in use today. I have drawn heavily from it in this literature review.

In line with a closed, fixed organisational setting with an emphasis on mass production and limiting risk, the definitions of leadership appearing in the first three decades of the 20th century emphasised control and centralisation of power with a common theme of domination. The early 1900s saw the emergence of the pioneers of leadership (e.g. DuPont, Ford, Edison, Durant, Carnegie) known as the “heroes of capitalism” (Rosenbach 2012). Thereafter one of the first systematic attempts to study leadership emerged. It was known as the trait approach. Leadership traits were studied to determine what made certain people great leaders. “The resulting theories were called ‘great man’ theories because they focused on identifying the innate qualities and characteristics possessed by great social, political, and military leaders” (Northouse 2012 p. 19).

In the mid-20th century, while personal factors related to leadership continued to be important, leadership was reconceptualised as a relationship between people in a social situation. These models

proposed that style – or how the leader interacted with the followers – was the primary determinant of leadership effectiveness (Allio 2012). This was the post WWII era and generals like Patton and MacArthur were seen as prototypical leaders; strong willed individuals who could bring order and efficiency to the organisation (Rosenbach 2012). Northouse (2012) states that three themes dominated this decade. These defined leadership either as what leaders do in groups, or based on the behaviour of the leader, or on the ability of the leader to influence overall group effectiveness.

With the climate of litigation that accompanied the 1960s and 1970s successful lawyers were considered model leaders, so as to “rein in risky practices and pursue legal strategies” (Rosenbach 2012).

By the mid to late 1970s the group focus gave way to the organisational behaviour approach, where leadership became viewed as “initiating and maintaining groups or organisations to accomplish group or organisational goals” (Northouse 2012 p. 3). In 1978, Pulitzer Prize winner James MacGregor Burns contributed one the most important concepts of leadership to emerge at the time, namely that “leadership is the reciprocal process of mobilising by persons with certain motives and values, various economic, political, and other resources, in a context of competition and conflict, in order to realise goals independently or mutually held by both leaders and followers” (Northouse 2012 p. 3).

The 1980s saw the explosion of scholarly and popular works on the nature of leadership, however several themes persevered, including, that leadership is getting followers to do what the leader wants. Leadership traits also came back into the spotlight. In addition, Burns is credited for initiating a movement defining leadership as a transformational process (Allio 2012). The transformational leaders of the time, such as Gandhi, Nelson Mandela or Martin Luther King, Jr all enunciated an inspiring vision and challenging goals (Allio 2012).

By the close of last century a dizzying number of definitions for leadership existed. Bambale (2011) comments that the 20th century administrative leadership approaches were the products of top-down, bureaucratic paradigms. These models were eminently effective for an economy premised on physical production. Examples include:

- Autocratic leadership
- Democratic leadership
- Laissez-Faire Leadership
- Bureaucratic leadership
- Initiating structure and consideration
- Level 5 leadership

With the dawn of the 21st century there was still little agreement about what leadership really is. Allio (2012), Northouse (2012) and Rosenbach (2012) all agree that there are almost as many definitions as there are people attempting to define it and yet we know good leadership when we experience it.

Rosenbach attempts to summarise the situation when he says that “there is no one best way to lead – the most effective leadership style is dependent upon the organisation’s culture, the characteristics of the followers, the external environment, and the personal traits of the leader. Leadership is all about character, integrity, and competence. Effective leaders are confident, adaptable, and collaborative, and they take the initiative for their own self-development. They have a high degree of self-awareness resulting from introspection and proactive reflection, which leads to self-regulation and the ability to align their values with their intentions and behaviours” (Rosenbach 2012 p. 4).

Allio (2012) commenting on the lack of a Grand Unifying Theory suggests that we have to make do with working definitions of leadership, which include:

- The early simplistic paradigm (leadership is good management).
- The semantic description (leadership is the process of leading).
- The transactional definition (leadership is a social exchange between leaders and followers).
- The situational notion (leadership is a phenomenon that precedes and facilitates decisions and actions).
- The aesthetic concept (leadership is an art or a craft).

In his analysis Northouse (2012) clusters the various definitions to those that:

- Focus on group processes.
- Conceptualise leadership from a personality perspective.
- Define leadership as an act or behaviour.
- Define leadership in terms of the power relationship that exists between leaders and followers.

- View leadership as a transformational process.
- Address leadership from a skills perspective.

These are in addition to what Allio (2012) describes as the “endless avalanche of self-help books in the popular press on leadership [in which] there are recommendations for how to become a leader, behave like a leader, train other leaders, be a pack leader, a change leader, a mentor leader, a Zen leader, a tribal leader, a platoon leader, an introverted leader or a triple-crown leader, that offer us a myriad of case histories of leaders [and] that showcase an example of success, formulate a set of principles based on it and prescribe those practices for leaders everywhere” (Allio 2012 p. 4).

Finally Bambale (2011) and Northouse (2012) detail the many leadership models prevalent in the literature today (Table 1.2). Bambale’s review of the literature categorises them as adaptive leadership – the emergent leadership approaches that focus on enabling the learning, creative, and adaptive capacity of complex systems. He comments that unlike the models of the 20th century, these approaches may be more suitable for knowledge-producing organisations.

Table 1.2: 21st Century Leadership Models

Bambale (2012)*	Northouse (2012)**
• Charismatic leadership	• Trait approach
• Ethical leadership	• Skills approach
• Spiritual leadership	• Styles approach
• Legacy leadership	• Situational approach
• Transactional leadership	• Contingency theory
• Respectful leadership	• Path-Goal theory
• Dispersed leadership	• Leader-Member Exchange theory
• Transformational leadership	• Transformational leadership
• Servant leadership	• Servant leadership
• Authentic leadership	• Authentic leadership
• Righteous leadership	• Team leadership
• Adaptive leadership	• Psychodynamic approach
• Transcendent leadership	
• Open leadership	

* Bambale, A. J., Shamsudin, F. M, and Subramanian, C. (2011). *Stimulating Organizational Citizenship Behaviour (OCB) Research for Theory Development: Exploration of Leadership Paradigms*. International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, August 2011, Vol. 1, Special Issue.

** Northouse, Peter G. (2012) *Leadership Theory and Practice, 6th Edition*. Sage Publications Inc.: USA.

A description of each is beyond the scope of this paper. However, synthesising the literature presented, I would suggest that 21st century leadership models cluster around:

- The leader – either traits and skills approaches (who the leader is) or style approaches (how leaders act).
- The follower and the context – e.g. situational leadership, contingency theory and path-goal theory.
- The specific relationship between leaders and followers e.g. leader-member exchange.

What else is beyond this paper, but worthy of consideration, is the influence of country culture on the effectiveness of leaders and leadership models and the impact of the gender of leader. Since the 1970s with the increase in globalisation and growing number of women in leadership roles, academic researchers have turned their attention increasingly to these two areas. Boyatzis, who is quoted extensively in this paper, discusses “male hubris and female humility” and its impact on measures of emotional and cognitive intelligence (Boyatzis et al. 2015). He also discusses the cross-cultural implications on emotional and social intelligence competencies in a paper he co-authored with Robert Emmerling (Emmerling et al. 2012). Northouse (2012) devotes an entire chapter to each of Women and Leadership and Leadership and Culture. I recently completed a second online course run by Case Western Reserve University offered by Professor Diana Bilimoria and entitled *Women in Leadership: Inspiring Positive Change*. This addressed a number of differences not only in how women lead, but in how they see themselves and how others see them in leadership roles. These are important topics that need further attention if we are to have a diverse slate of leaders in senior roles in all organisations around the globe.

More recently with the advances in neuroscience (the sciences which deal with the structure and function of the nervous system and brain and especially their relationship to behaviour and learning), a new model of leadership – primal or resonant leadership – has emerged, which Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee describe in their book *Primal Leadership* (2013). I am drawn to their work because they focus on the leader (who is the client in a coaching context), and the behavioural styles leaders can employ in a variety of situations (which gives the coaching relationship a very practical orientation), and they back it up with the underpinning neuroscience.

Resonant Leadership – What is it and why is it of interest?

Goleman et al. (2013) describe *resonance* (in human terms) as when two people (regardless of gender or cultural background) are on the same wavelength emotionally – when they feel in sync. In terms of leaders, “resonant leaders are leaders who are attuned to people’s feelings and move them in a positive emotional direction. Resonance amplifies and prolongs the emotional impact of leadership” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 20). Boyatzis et al. say that after conversations with resonant leaders “people feel optimistic, engaged, challenged, and lifted — they feel inspired about the future and its possibilities. In this state, people exceed others’ expectations and even their own sense of what they can do. And then they want to do more. Because of the increased openness and higher functioning, people in this state are more adaptive, innovative and creative, and are more capable of learning and changing” (Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten and Woolford 2013 p. 19).

This is an ideal situation, but one that is rarely seen in organisations on a sustainable basis. More often, business culture places great value on intellect devoid of emotion and yet emotions, in a very real sense, are more powerful than our intellect (Goleman et al. 2013). The authors contend that while intellect and technical skill are critical for leadership, they are threshold characteristics. In other words they ‘get you in the door’. “Leaders need the prerequisite business acumen and thinking skills to be decisive, but if they try to lead solely from intellect, they’ll miss a crucial piece of the equation” (Goleman et al. 2013 p. 29).

Crosbie’s work (2005) supports this notion. She quotes research from the Protocol School of Washington, DC conducted by Harvard University, the Carnegie Foundation and the Stanford Research Institute, that showed that technical skills and knowledge (often thought of as synonymous with intellect) accounted for about 15% of the reason an individual gets a job, keeps the job and advances in that job. The remaining 85% of job success is based on the individual’s ‘people skills’ (a term often associated with affective or emotional skills).

Boyatzis et al. (2013) explain the difference between the neural systems responsible for the intellect and for the emotions; they are separate, but they have intimately interwoven connections. “The brain circuitry, that interweaves thought and feeling, provides the neural basis of primal leadership. While emotions have guided human survival through evolution, a neural dilemma for leadership has emerged

in the last 10,000 years or so. In today’s advanced civilisation we face complex social realities with a brain designed for surviving the physical emergencies. And so we can find ourselves hijacked – swept away by anxiety or anger better suited for handling bodily threats than the subtleties of office politics” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 28). Fortunately, the authors say, such emotional impulses follow extensive circuitry that culminates in the pre-frontal area of the brain (which is the brain’s executive centre) where the information is analysed and a decision made. “The dialogue between neurons in the emotional centres and the prefrontal areas operates through what amounts to a neurological superhighway that helps to orchestrate thought and feeling. The emotional intelligence competencies, so crucial for leadership, hinge on the smooth operation of this prefrontal-limbic circuitry. These competencies are separate from the purely cognitive abilities like intelligence, technical knowledge, or business expertise, which reside in the neocortex alone” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 29).

“Emotional and social intelligence competencies have been shown to predict effectiveness in leadership, management and professional jobs in many countries of the world. To be an effective leader, manager or professional, a person needs to understand and skilfully manage his emotions appropriately based on each person or situation and understand the emotional cues of others in order to effectively interact with others” (Boyatzis, Smith, Van Oosten and Woolford 2013 p. 20).

So what are the necessary emotional and social intelligence competencies? Table 1.3 offers an abbreviated list (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 39).

Table 1.3: Emotional Intelligence (EI) Domains and Competencies

<u>Personal Competence</u> (managing ourselves)	<u>Social Competence</u> (managing relationships)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Self-Management</i> – emotional self-control, transparency, adaptability, achievement, initiative and optimism • <i>Self-Awareness</i> – emotional self-awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Social Awareness</i> – empathy, organisational awareness and service • <i>Relationship Management</i> – inspirational leadership, influence, developing others, change catalyst, conflict management, building bonds, and teamwork and collaboration

Goleman, D., Boyatzis, R, and McKee, A. (2013). *Primal Leadership*. Harvard Business Review Press: USA.

Goleman et al. (2013) contend that no leader they have ever encountered, no matter how outstanding, has strengths across the board in every one of the 18 EI competencies. Highly effective leaders typically exhibit a critical mass of strength in a half dozen or so of the EI competencies. “Moreover there is no fixed formula for great leadership: there are many paths to excellence, and superb leaders can possess very different personal styles. Still, [they found] that effective leaders typically demonstrate strengths in at least one competence from each of the four fundamental areas of emotional intelligence” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 38).

Other authors refer to the foundational role of emotional intelligence in effective leadership. For example Crossan and Matzulis (2008) suggest that effective leadership begins with the EI competencies of self-management. “Much of the discourse on leadership has focused almost exclusively on leadership of others and occasionally on leadership of the organisation as a whole, yet little has focused specifically on perhaps the most integral component of leadership: leadership of self. Managing in increasingly complex and dynamic environments, today’s strategic leaders can benefit greatly from learning how to ‘master themselves’ (in addition to others and the organisation) by developing self-awareness and self-regulatory capabilities” (Crossan and Matzulis 2008 p. 52).

Why is management of self so important in a leader? Neuroscience is beginning to explain *emotional contagion* or the powerful transmission of our emotions to others. Boyatzis et al. (2013) have shown that people set off stress in each other in milliseconds and start a self-perpetuating cycle without having to say a word. This is a significant problem for leaders because in any human group “the leader has maximal power to sway everyone’s emotions. The leader sets the emotional standard” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 5 and p. 9). This in turn has an impact on organisational climate; “the percentage of time people feel positive emotions at work turns out to be one of the strongest predictors of satisfaction and therefore, for instance, of how likely employees are to quit” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 14). Thus coaching a leader can have a multiplier effect on the organisation he/she leads.

Returning to resonant leaders – resonant leaders interweave intellect and emotions. They execute a vision by motivating, guiding, inspiring, listening, persuading – and, most crucially, through creating resonance; building shared hope, compassion, mindfulness and playfulness in their relationships.

However not all resonant leaders look alike: Many authors make the point that there is no one style of effective leadership, rather it is situation dependent. I have chosen to focus on the six leadership styles outlined by Goleman et al. (2013) for two reasons. Firstly these styles (although given different names) appear in other models in the literature that I reviewed, in particular the initiating and consideration behaviours that underpin the Styles Approach, Situational Leadership Model and Path-Goal Theory reviewed by Northouse (2012). Secondly the authors link each of the styles to this notion of resonance. While a detailed description of each style is beyond the scope of this paper, it is worth noting the impact of each on resonance in the organisation. The first four leadership styles are the resonance leadership styles.

- Visionary Leadership: This style builds resonance and is the most strongly positive in terms of impact on organisational climate. It is best employed when changes in the organisation require a new vision, or when a clear direction is needed.
- Coaching Leadership: Leaders who employ a coaching style connect what a person wants with the organisation's goals. It is appropriate to help an employee improve performance by building long-term capabilities and it has a highly positive impact on organisational climate.
- Affiliative Leadership: Affiliative leaders create harmony by connecting people to each other. This leadership style has a positive impact on culture and is helpful to heal rifts in a team, motivate others during stressful times or strengthen connections.
- Democratic Leadership: Leaders who employ a democratic approach to leadership value people's input and get commitment through participation. This style too has a positive impact on climate and is best used to build buy-in or consensus, or to get valuable input from employees.

The remaining two styles (which other models also refer to by similar names) can be helpful, but so often are not executed effectively and therefore are referred to as dissonant styles.

- Pace-Setting Leadership: Leaders who employ this style effectively (and in small doses) can create resonance by leading others to meet challenges and exciting goals. It is best used to get high-quality results from a motivated and competent team, however because too frequently it is poorly executed, its impact is often highly negative.

- Commanding Leadership: A commanding (or directive) leadership style can be useful in a crisis, to kick-start a turnaround, or with problem employees. It soothes fears by giving clear direction in an emergency. However because it is so often misused, it tends to have a highly negative impact on the climate of the organisation.

Does resonance and positive mood matter when it comes to organisational success? Goleman et al. (2013) cite (p. 14-15) a study conducted by Barsade et al in 2000 of 62 US-based CEOs and their top management teams including some of the Fortune 500 companies, as well as leading service companies (such as consulting and accounting firms), not-for-profit organisations, and government agencies. The study found that the more positive the overall moods of the people in the top management team, the more cooperatively they worked together – and the better the company’s business results. They also talk about (p. 17) a study in a global food and beverage company in which positive climate readings predicted higher yearly earnings in major divisions. Finally (p. 17) in a study of 19 insurance companies, they reported that the climate created by the CEO among their direct reports predicted the business performance of the entire organisation. In 75% of cases, climate alone accurately sorted companies into high versus low profits and growth. The authors summarise that climate can account for 20 to 30% of business performance. Getting the best out of people pays off in hard results. If climate drives business results, what drives climate? “Roughly 50-70% of how employees perceive their organisation’s climate can be traced to the actions of one person: the leader. More than anyone else, the boss creates the conditions that directly determine people’s ability to work well” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 18).

So if resonant leadership has a positive impact on employee climate, which in turn has a beneficial impact on organisational success, how can leaders learn the necessary skills and improve their effectiveness?

How do leaders develop/improve their leadership skills and why it is hard to do?

The literature is full of advice on becoming a leader, in particular what leaders need to *do*, however less appears to be available on *how* to learn the requisite skills and how to sustain the necessary behavioural changes specific to leadership.

While historically it was suggested that leaders were born, that the skills and characteristics required for effective leadership were innate, this view is now out-dated. A number of authors (Goleman et al. 2013, Crosbie 2005, Adair 2013, Toegel et al. 2012, Karp 2012 and Allio 2008) agree that leaders aren't born, nor can you learn to be a leader by reading a book or attending a course. They do however agree (although with varying emphases), that the behaviours of effective leaders *can* be learned through experimentation and practice.

Allio (2008) picks up this theme of practice. He sorts leadership skills into two buckets. He calls the first technical competencies, including how to communicate, craft a vision, make effective decisions. The second group of skills, about learning and adapting, must be addressed with a personal learning strategy and to practice the second group successfully, leaders must achieve a high level of self-awareness. "The bottom line for aspiring leaders is that they must learn from experience, develop and apply a personal learning strategy, and practice their craft as they perform it" (Allio 2008 p. 8). Karp (2012) agrees, maintaining that leadership self-development is not about the training of skills, nor is it solely dependent on cognitive strategies. "It does not happen as a result of the development promoted in many leadership training programs or quick-fix self-help books, [rather, it occurs] when a leader involves himself or herself in deep processes that build the necessary self-awareness, relational strength, environmental capabilities, and qualities" (Karp 2012 p. 137).

Goleman et al. (2013) take this one step further and suggest that for leaders to grow their repertoires of styles, the key lies in strengthening the underlying emotional intelligence abilities that drive a given style. "Great leaders, the research shows, are made as they gradually acquire, in the course of their lives and careers, the competencies that make them so effective. The competencies can be learned by the leader at any point. The challenge of mastering leadership is a skill like any other, such as improving your golf game or learning to play the guitar. Anyone who has the will and motivation can get better at leading, once he understands the steps" (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 101).

The authors go on to explain the underpinning neuroscience. "Research shows that skills based in the limbic areas (e.g. emotional intelligence) are best learned through motivation, extended practice, and feedback. Compare that kind of learning with what goes on in the neocortex, which governs analytical and technical ability. The neocortex grasps concepts quickly, placing them within an expanding

network of associations and comprehension. This part of the brain can figure out from reading a book how to use a computer program, or the basics of making a sales call. When learning technical or analytic skills, the neocortex operates with magnificent efficiency. The problem is that most training programs for enhancing emotional intelligence abilities, such as leadership programs, target the neocortex rather than the limbic brain. The limbic brain is a much slower learner – particularly when the challenge is to relearn deeply ingrained habits often learned early in life. Re-educating the emotional brain for leadership learning, therefore, requires a different model from what works for the thinking brain” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 102-3). Such a model, they say, should emphasise the need for lots of practice and repetition in a safe environment. This has important implications for coaching, which supports an ongoing process of learning and experimentation by the client.

As Boyatzis (2008) points out, behavioural change requires both effort and intent, and sustained, desired change is at the heart of leadership development. Adults will only develop characteristics of effective leaders if they want to be leaders. Goleman et al. reinforce this point. “When it comes to building leadership skills that last, motivation and how a person feels about the learning, matter immensely. People learn what they want to learn. If learning is forced on us, then even if we master it temporarily (for instance, by studying for a test), it is soon forgotten. That may be why one study found that the half-life of knowledge learned in an MBA course was about six weeks. So when a company requires people to go through a one size fits all leadership development program, participants simply go through the motions – unless they truly want to learn” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 99).

It is possible to infer that it is just a matter of time and practice. The literature would suggest that this is not the case. “Whenever people try to change habits of how they think and act, they must reverse decades of learning that reside in heavily travelled, highly reinforced neural circuitry, built up over the years of repeating that habit. That’s why making lasting change requires a strong commitment to a *future vision* of oneself – especially during stressful times or amid growing responsibilities” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 111). Leadership roles often come with growing responsibilities and there is plenty in the literature about the chronic stress that accompanies leadership roles. Trying to make changes in one’s leadership style adds to that stress. “Managing emotional impulses is real mental work: the stress of the intentional effort to alter one’s mood can deplete the energy it takes for self-

control. A person has to override his emotional impulses, which adds to the burden of the learning and can make him lose his focus” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 158).

Toegel et al. (2012) concur, commenting that efforts to change our repertoire of behaviour that get at our underlying preferences, take their toll. The danger of burnout is high and unless the person can figure out how to recover and recharge, the changes are not sustainable.

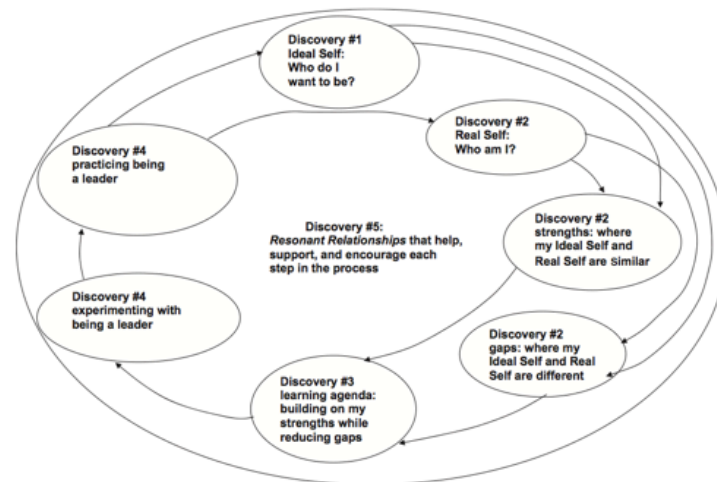
While behavioural change generally is well documented, there would appear to be less written in the literature about models that could help *leaders* in corporate environments make sustainable desired change. Intentional Change Theory (ICT) is discussed later. I also looked at the work of Good et al. (2013) on cognitive behavioural executive coaching, which has been adapted from the well established cognitive behavioural theory (CBT) used in psychological treatment. It differs however from CBT and other cognitive behavioural coaching models in that the client is a senior executive and the initial focus is on defining an ideal future state (a similarity it shares with ICT). Given the proposition that change is about relearning and undoing old habits, I turned to the field of healthcare and additive behaviours, where the need to make sustainable behavioural change for positive health outcomes is high. Interestingly the ‘recipe’ is consistent and revolves around motivation, an articulated ideal future state, and support while experimenting with new behaviours. Specifically Miller and Rollnick (2002) state that motivation is fundamental to change and that constructive behaviour change seems to arise when the person “connects it with something of intrinsic value, something important, something cherished. Intrinsic motivation for change arises in an accepting, empowering atmosphere that makes it safe for the person to explore the possibly painful present in relation to what is wanted and valued” (p. 12).

Intentional Change Theory and its relationship to leadership development

I chose intentional change theory as a model for helping leaders develop the behaviours necessary for resonant 21st century leadership, because it is elegant in its simplicity, whilst being supported by contemporary science. In addition, from first-hand experience while coaching, I have seen the power it can have. Finally it neatly dovetails with the Columbia coaching process. That said, while referred to by a couple of authors (Good et al. (2013) and Lawler (2011)) ICT appears to be neither highly advocated nor criticised in the literature, a point worth exploring in future research.

Intentional Change Theory (ICT), originally named Self-Directed Learning, was developed by Richard Boyatzis and Daniel Goleman in 2002. It is represented pictorially in Figure 1.1. It comprises five discoveries, and is based on the premise that the crux of leadership learning is intentionally developing or strengthening an aspect of who the leader is or wants to be or both (Goleman et al. 2013).

Figure 1.1: Intentional Change Theory



Discovery 1: Invoking the Ideal Self

Boyatzis (2008) says that positive visioning is an important technique for creating new neural circuits that help to guide future behaviour. “Creating a positive vision seems to arouse hope, which in turn stimulates the parasympathetic nervous system (PNS) with a resultant increase in openness, cognitive power, and flexibility” (Boyatzis 2008 p. 304). In this state neurogenesis (the growth of new neural tissue) can occur and the person can derive benefit from the healing powers of an engaged immune system. In addition the ideal self is a driver of intentional change (Boyatzis and Akrivou 2006) and that while the popular strengths-based approach to development or training is useful, it is “not sufficient to yield a potent ideal self and thus drive intentional change. “Each person needs a clear image of a desired future. By building the articulation and awareness (consciousness) of the core identity, the person is prepared for the development of the image of a desired future, and the accompanying sense of hope. Without this additional jump into the fantasised future, a person may feel compelled to recreate conditions of the past in order to continue utilise their ‘strengths’ and not experiment with new behaviour” (Boyatzis and Akrivou 2006 p. 633).

An important aspect of the process of invoking the ideal self is to avoid triggering the ‘ought self’. “When parents, spouses, bosses tell a person something should be different, they are describing the person they want. This is called the ought self and it often causes conflict with the ideal self. As a result of these factors, people often get anesthetised to their dreams and lose sight of their deeply felt ideal self” (Boyatzis 2008 p. 304).

While powerful, the ideal self isn’t static. Goleman et al. (2013) suggest that with changes in habits, emotional intelligence, and leadership styles, come changes in your aspirations and dreams; your ideal self. And so the cycle continues – a lifelong process of growth and adaptation.

As it relates to leaders, Goleman et al. (2013) say that connecting with one’s dreams releases one’s passion, energy, and excitement about life. In leaders, such passion, via emotional contagion, can arouse enthusiasm and a positive mood in those they lead.

Discovery 2: The Real Self

Goleman et al. (2013) describe the second discovery, uncovering your real self, as being “akin to looking into a mirror to discover who you actually are now – how you act, how others view you, and what your deep beliefs comprise. Some of these observations will be consistent with your ideal self, and can be considered strengths; others will represent gaps between who you are and who you want to be. This realisation of your strengths and gaps prepares the way for changing your leadership style” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 111).

However “awareness of the current self – the person others see – is elusive and notoriously difficult for leaders to achieve. The human psyche protects itself from the automatic intake of information, but this ego defense mechanism can confuse us into an image of who we are. The greatest challenge to an accurate self-image is for the person to see himself or herself as others do. Several factors contribute to false positives. First, others around the person may not let him or her see a change. They may not give him or her accurate feedback, and they also may be unaware of their own behaviour. Second, those who forgive the change, are frightened of it, or do not care, may allow it to pass unnoticed” (Boyatzis 2008 p. 305).

As Boyatzis (2008) points out, before a person can change, he or she must know what he or she wants to maintain. The approach most often taken by organisations (in both their leadership training programs and in their annual performance reviews) focuses on deficiencies and how to overcome ‘gaps’. Even the language around ‘development needs’ implies a deficit. Goleman et al. (2013) put it this way, “emphasis on gaps arouses the right prefrontal cortex – that is, feelings of anxiety and defensiveness. Once defensiveness sets in, it typically demotivates rather than motivates, thereby interrupting, even stopping, self-directed learning and the likelihood of change” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee p. 137). Boyatzis (2008) makes the point that it is no wonder that many of the procedures intended to help a person, instead create a feeling of defensiveness under stress, with the resulting decrease in cognitive ability.

The second discovery can be achieved by using multiple sources of feedback about the real self, including 360-degree feedback, behavioural feedback and psychological tests, which can help determine explicit aspects of the real self, such as values, philosophy, traits, and motives (Boyatzis 2008). For a leader this can be more difficult than it seems, as it requires a great deal of self-awareness, as Goleman et al. (2013) say, if only to overcome the inertia of inattention that an accumulation of habits inevitably produces. The most emotionally intelligent leaders actively seek out negative feedback as well as positive. “Those leaders understand that they need a full range of information to perform better – whether or not that information feels good to hear. They use their self-awareness and empathy, both to monitor their own actions and to watch how others react to them. They are open to critics, whether of their ideas or their leadership. They actively seek out negative feedback, valuing the voice of a devil’s advocate” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 133). Interestingly the authors also point out that the research has shown the views of subordinates and peers – rather than that of bosses – appear to have the most predictive validity of a leader’s actual effectiveness.

Discovery 3: Developing a Learning Agenda

“Too often leadership coaching revolves around a performance improvement plan, a phrase that conjures images of a remedial rehabilitation project. A learning agenda, however, focuses on the possibility of change that will eventually lead to better performance at work (and probably more contentment in life in general)” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 141).

Boyatzis (2008) explains that the third discovery is the articulation of a way to get to the desired ideal self, using strengths and building on some weaknesses. The most critical element of this discovery is that the learning agenda is a plan for things the person *wants* (and maybe even is excited) to try and explore. “The openness to new activities and experiences is in contrast to the often felt obligatory nature of fulfilling to-do lists or complying with an agenda for the future that a person’s boss, spouse, or others want for him or her” (Boyatzis 2008 p. 305).

Goleman et al. (2013) explain that breaking habits that have become automatic – routines that take hold over time without us realising it – is hard and so bringing them into awareness is a crucial step towards changing them. “This cueing for habit change is neural as well as perceptual. Because leadership skills are part of an unconscious repertoire of habits learned a long time ago, the old response won’t magically disappear. It takes commitment and constant reminders to stay focused on undoing those habits. Over time, the need for reminders will diminish as the new behaviour becomes a stronger pathway in the brain” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 142).

A learning agenda needs to include goals, and the authors offer insights into goal setting that go beyond the typical SMART goals favoured by organisations and many coaches. They suggest (p. 144) that goals and plans need to:

- Build on one’s strengths, not be focused on one’s weaknesses.
- Be a person’s own – not goals that someone else has imposed.
- Flexibly allow people to prepare for the future in different ways – a single planning method imposed by an organisation, or coach, will often prove counter-productive.
- Have manageable steps: plans that don’t fit smoothly into a person’s life and work will likely be dropped within a few weeks or months.
- Suit a person’s learning style otherwise they will prove demotivating and attention to them will rapidly diminish.

Discovery 4: Experimentation and Practice

Boyatzis (2008) states that the next discovery in leadership development comes in the form of experimentation and practice with the behaviour characteristics of effective leaders, until they become second nature. This may include reinforcing some behavioural habits that have been effective in the

past or trying new ones. Kolb and Boyatzis (1970) showed that the person needs flexibility to experiment, possibly fail, and then succeed with the new behaviour and that he/she needs safe settings in which to do this. Goleman et al. maintain that it is possible to improve your leadership skills if you do three things: “bring bad habits into awareness, consciously practice a better way, and rehearse that new behaviour at every opportunity until it becomes automatic” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 156).

The challenge for leaders is that the lessons they get in leadership start very early in life, from observing teachers, coaches, or anyone who has been in the role of the leader in their lives. Goleman et al. (2013) say that as the person steps into their first leadership role they put those models into practice. They encounter new leaders and try out new leadership behaviours, adding on to that early initial scaffolding that they had built. “Virtually none of these lessons involves explicit instruction in elements of leadership – they arise naturally in the course of life. But they lay down the brain circuitry for leadership habits determining what a person will automatically tend to do in similar situations throughout life. Each time an individual heads a team, he will repeat what he did before as a team leader – and each time he repeats it, the neural connections for that habit become stronger. Cognitive scientists call such automatic strengthening of a habit *implicit learning* as opposed to the explicit variety provided in school courses” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 155). The authors go on to state that for the most part, the brain masters the competencies of leadership – everything from self-confidence and emotional self-management to empathy and persuasion – through implicit learning.

This kind of learning takes months, rather than days, because the emotional centres of the brain are involved – not just the neocortex, which is why Goleman et al. (2013) say that it is hard to learn leadership abilities effectively in a classroom. “What’s needed is practice: the more often a behavioural sequence repeats, the stronger the underlying brain circuits become. People thereby literally rewire their brains: learning new habits strengthens pathways between neurons, and may even foster neurogenesis – growth of new neurons. And that level of mastery lasts for years, if not an entire lifetime” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 156).

Discovery 5: Resonant relationships that help support and encourage at each step

Boyatzis and Akrivou (2006) explain that each of the discoveries is facilitated by the observations, interpretation, feedback, and encouragement of others with whom the person has a trusting (or resonant) relationship. “Such relationships provide a sense of identity and create a context within which people interpret progress on desired changes, the utility of new learning, and even contribute significant input to the formulation of the ideal self” (Boyatzis 2006 p. 617).

Boyatzis et al. (2010) suggest these resonant relationships invoke a positive mental state in the other person (what they refer to as the positive emotional attractor or PEA). “Arousal of the PEA helps a person function at their best. Research in neuroscience, endocrinology, and psychology has shown that arousing a person’s hope for the future stimulates the PNS. This is the state in which the human mind and body is at its cognitive best, can create new neural tissue which allows for learning, engages the immune system, and enables the person to be more open to new ideas, feelings, and other people. Arousal of the PEA helps a person prepare for and engage in sustained, desired change.” (Boyatzis, Smith and Van Oosten 2013 p. 70)

Goleman et al. (2013) suggest that a coach may offer one such resonant relationship and that talking with a trusted coach, mentor, or friend becomes a safety zone within which to explore more freely the painful realities of a politicised work setting or to question things that don’t make sense but which are imprudent to raise with the person’s boss. “Experimenting and practising new habits require finding safe places and relationships. These relationships can offer not just the hope of change, but also the confidence to embrace that hope. Positive groups help people make positive changes, particularly if the relationships are filled with candour, trust, and psychological safety” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 162).

The authors go on to say that for leaders, such safety may be crucial for authentic learning to occur. “Often leaders feel unsafe, as if they are under a microscope, their every action scrutinised by those around them – and so they never take the risk of exploring new habits. Knowing that others are watching with a critical eye provokes them to judge their progress too soon, curtail experimentation, and decrease risk taking. In these ways and others, leadership is intrinsically stressful. When people feel stressed, they no longer feel safe and are further inhibited in practising new ways of acting. Instead

they become defensive, relying on their most familiar habits. When stress is high and sustained, the brain reacts with sustained cortisol secretion, which actually hampers learning by killing off brain cells in the hippocampus that are essential for new learning. For all these reasons, learning for leadership works best under conditions where people feel safe – but not so relaxed that they lose motivation” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 163).

Goleman et al. (2013) suggest that mentors or coaches, can help people, including leaders, to discover their dreams, to understand their strengths and gaps and their impact on others, as well as guide them through the steps in their learning plan. “Hiring an executive coach can provide the opportunity to talk more freely than one could with a boss or peer. Having a coach (or mentor for that matter) offers benefits beyond simply honing leadership skills: it gives you another set of eyes and ears, and so can be an antidote to the peril of the information quarantine that too many leaders suffer. Coaches help you see outside of the balloon surrounding your daily experience” (Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee 2013 p. 165). However, as will be seen in the next section, for the greatest and most enduring impact, there must be a resonant relationship between the coach and the client; just calling someone a mentor or a coach isn’t enough – the relationship must be one of candour, trust, and support.

Review of coaching approaches with a particular emphasis on coaching with compassion

So how can coaches help leaders develop and what more can be learned about the nature of an effective coaching relationship?

Similar to the definition of coaching offered in the Columbia coaching program, namely “moving valuable people from where they are to where they want to be”, Boyatzis et al. (2012) suggest that most of the various definitions of coaching offered in the literature converge on its being a “facilitative or helping relationship with the purpose of achieving some type of change, learning, or new level of individual or organisational performance” (Boyatzis, Smith and Beveridge 2012 p. 154).

There are a number of approaches used within the coaching profession to achieve that objective. In addition to the Columbia coaching model, others include the GROW model developed in the 1980s (Passmore 2010), the Co-Active Coaching approach (Kimsey-House et al. 2011), and a number of behavioural coaching models (Ducharme 2004, Good et al. 2013, and Neenan & Palmer 2013).

With any of the approaches, the challenge for coaches is to help clients reach their goals without falling into a number of common traps. Boyatzis et al. (2010) list four such traps:

1. *Wanting to do the coaching quickly and efficiently.* This typically leads to a short-term fix and impatience with the process. It also puts pressure on the person being coached to get on with the changes, adding pressure and stress.
2. *Assuming that the coach knows what the client needs.* This creates a major ought self push in the coaching. When the coach thinks he/she knows how the other person should change, the other person picks it up through emotional contagion. Now compliance is in full swing with its attendant negative consequences.
3. *Working on the weaknesses.* This tends to be derived from a desire for fast action and a belief that by working on the weaknesses you will have the most impact on the person improving.
4. *Using data to drive the motivation to change.* In today's world we are all socialised to look for our weaknesses and by offering the data too *early* in the coaching process, coaches can seduce the person into looking at their weaknesses. Regardless of its origins, the data can become a sledgehammer, which in turn invokes defensiveness.

Although opposite to the coach's intention (of helping the other person), in each of the situations described above, the coach arouses what Boyatzis (2010) calls the negative emotional attractor (or NEA). This effectively puts the person into a state of stress and diminishes his/her ability to make sustainable change. "The person being coached often feels on the defensive, feeling a need to justify or prove himself/herself. Or, the person feels that he/she should go along with the coach's desire for them to change some aspect of their behaviour. In other words, the person being coached is pushed to move toward the coach's image of how he/she should behave. In this manner, we often slip into *coaching for compliance*. Instead of invoking the person's ideal self, their dreams of a possible and desired future, the coach, manager, trainer, or teacher invokes the person's ought self. That is, they stimulate the image of the person he/she ought to become. When this ought self is imposed and is not consistent with the person's ideal self, it arouses the sympathetic nervous system (SNS) and contributes to the person closing down their mind and willingness to change" (Boyatzis, Smith and Van Oosten 2010 p. 71).

The authors go on to suggest that, by contrast, when people are coached with compassion the PNS is activated with all of the enhanced cognitive and emotional functioning and ability to learn that goes with it. “The physiological and emotional renewal process (the only non-pharmaceutical antidote to the ravages of chronic stress) then allows the person to consider possibilities of change, and allow him/her to be more open to the coach and other people around them” (Boyatzis, Smith and Van Oosten p. 70-1).

Boyatzis et al. (2012) define coaching with compassion as an interpersonal process that involves noticing another person as being in need, empathising with him or her, and acting to enhance his or her well being in response to that need. Coaching with compassion amplifies the impact of ICT and achieves the activation of the PEA in the client in two ways. The first is through the individual “describing his or her ideals, dreams, aspirations, or passions in response to the coach’s probing. Focusing on the ideal self is a powerful, positive emotional event and creates the tipping point necessary for arousing the PEA and activating neural circuits that allow the [client] to consider possibilities that they might otherwise have ignored” (Boyatzis, Smith and Beveridge 2012 p. 162). Secondly the authors suggest that because the client is sharing their ideal self with someone who listens with interest and strives to help them achieve their aspirations, they feel safe and perceive that the coach cares for them. The authors point out prior research that shows that feeling cared for is associated with lower blood pressure, enhanced immunity, and overall better health, all of which are indicators of arousal of the PNS. They add that feeling safe is also associated with PNS arousal.

“If the coach succeeds in creating a safe space and establishing a trusting relationship, the experience will be even more emotionally salient for the [client]. This kind of support, called a ‘secure base’ in attachment theory terms, is known to have a lasting effect on well being, willingness to take risks and try new things, and development. If the coach is able to help the [client] articulate a compelling personal vision, this vision can inspire a powerful ‘pull’ toward sustaining efforts toward a desired future. Moreover, people with whom the [client] has ‘life-giving’ relationships can remind them of their vision, listen to them when they encounter problems, and inspire them to persist when discouraged by setbacks” (Boyatzis, Smith and Beveridge 2012 p. 166).

Coaching with compassion and ICT are intertwined. ICT provides a useful process to follow for achieving sustained, desired behaviour change, while coaching with compassion describes the disposition and behaviour of the coach and is central to the fifth discovery of ICT. “Coaching with compassion is more than a simple sequence of steps. To be successful, the coach must establish a trusting relationship with the [client], so they discuss their hopes and dreams openly, and develop in them a sense of safety to explore new thinking and behaviour” (Boyatzis, Smith and Beveridge 2012 p. 155).

Interestingly due to the contagion of emotions, coaching with compassion also arouses compassion in the coach, as well as in the person being coached (Boyatzis et al. 2010) and thus the coach will experience the same psychophysiological benefits as the client (Boyatzis et al. 2012). There are important implications for both coaches and for teaching leaders to coach with compassion.

Summary of Major Findings

Much has been written on leaders and leadership, the nature of behavioural change and coaching, and my Literature Review touched only a small subset. That said, the following are some consistent themes coming from my research. The role of coaching will be developed in the next section, however the balance of the findings, which are beyond the scope of this paper will be developed in future studies.

On leaders and leadership

There is general agreement in the literature that the 21st century is a very different landscape to that prevailing in the 20th century and that the demands on leaders are greater than ever, especially around managing complexity in a constantly changing environment. Leadership as a field of study really only took off from the latter part of the 20th century and yet there are already so many models of leaders and leadership in both the academic and popular press that it is impossible for the lay reader to get a clear picture of what constitutes either an effective leader or successful leadership. While academics don't agree on any particular approach to effective leadership, they do agree that there is no one way to lead. Successful leadership depends on the situation, the characteristics of the followers, the external environment and challenges, and the style and behaviours of the leader. There is also growing agreement that country culture and gender impact the nature of leadership. It is hard to summarise the literature concisely, however it would appear that contemporary leadership models cluster around

either the leader (skills, traits, behaviours), or the followers and the context, or the relationship between leader and followers.

Through emotional contagion, the leader sets the emotional standard for those around him/her. Resonant leaders, who are the focus of this paper, are leaders who are attuned to people's feelings and move them in a positive emotional direction. This is good for business, as emotional tone or climate can account for between 20% and 30% of organisational performance alone. The reasons why this is an effective approach are explained by drawing upon current thinking in the field of neuroscience. While resonant leaders draw on intellect and technical skills (skills that are necessary but not sufficient for effective 21st century leadership) they also have highly developed emotional and social intelligence across at least six of 18 competencies, with strengths in at least one competence from each of the four EI domains (competencies that are significantly more predictive of successful leadership).

Effective and resonant 21st century leaders utilise a variety of leadership styles – the four most powerful in terms of creating resonance in organisations are the visionary, coaching, affiliative and democratic leadership styles. Unfortunately the pace-setting and commanding leadership styles, which generally create dissonance and have a negative impact on organisational climate, are more common in business today.

On the nature of behavioural change

There are a great number of self-help guides and reference materials on how great leaders should behave, but relatively few on how leaders can make and sustain the necessary behavioural changes. Unlike technical skills (which are learned in the neocortex and are well suited to classroom instruction), the emotional and social skills required for effective leadership (which are seated in the limbic areas of brain), require implicit learning, (i.e. through motivation, extended practice and feedback to relearn old habits); literally rewiring the brain's circuitry. This is why so many classroom based leadership programs have such a short half-life and why coaching can help create more sustainable results.

Sustained, desired change is at the heart of leadership development. Adults will only develop the characteristics of leaders if they want to be leaders. Next they need to activate an ideal future self. The

ideal self as the key to sustained, desired change holds true in leadership development, behavioural change in general, or in treating addictive behaviours in the medical field.

Intentional change theory (and its five discoveries) is a useful model for sustained behaviour change. It relies on invoking an ideal self, ensuring that it isn't being influenced by an ought self, comparing the ideal self to the real self and developing a learning agenda to build on current strengths while addressing some gaps. The key to success comes from experimentation and practice in a safe environment. At all stages, it is critical that support is available from a resonant relationship (e.g. a coach, mentor, or friend).

On coaching

Coaching is ideally suited to support leaders as they embark on intentional change, however the coach and client need to be in a resonant (compassionate) relationship for maximum effect. Coaching with compassion involves noticing the client as being in need, empathising with him/her and acting to enhance his/her wellbeing in response to that need. In a compassionate relationship, the client feels safe and cared for. A positive emotional state is created and the parasympathetic nervous system is activated which renders the client cognitively open. In this state renewal is possible, which can ameliorate the chronic stress associated with most leadership roles. Through the power of emotional contagion, coaching with compassion not only activates the parasympathetic nervous system of the client, but may also do the same for the *coach*.

However, many coaches fall into common traps (such as coaching quickly, assuming what the client needs, working on weaknesses and using data too early in the coaching process) and invoke a negative emotional state in the client that activates the sympathetic nervous system (i.e. the stress response), which diminishes the client's ability to make sustainable change.

Coaching with compassion and intentional change theory represent a disposition/behavioural orientation and a process, and are well suited to be utilised together. Additionally, intentional change theory has a number of parallels with the Columbia coaching process, and coaching with compassion with the coaching competencies described in the Columbia approach: Both can easily be incorporated to help enable effective 21st century leaders.

Application And Implications For Coaching Practice

The coaching topic I wanted to explore was how coaches can use coaching with compassion, together with intentional change theory to enable resonant 21st century leaders. In other words my focus was individual leaders. However, it is clear from my research that this approach is equally applicable to *all* clients wanting to bring about significant change in their lives, or indeed to *organisational* change. While there are many implications of my research for leaders and their organisations, which I will develop further in future research, the following discussion is, by necessity, limited to the application and implications of my research for coaches and coaching practice.

From the coach's perspective, Intentional Change Theory (ICT) at its core can be summarised as:

1. Activating the client's ideal self and disconnecting it from his/her ought self.
2. Helping the client understand his/her real self.
3. Supporting the client in creating a learning agenda focused on building on signature strengths and things that the client *wants* to do (versus should do).
4. Encouraging the client to practise the desired new behaviours.
5. Providing a safe place and a resonant relationship in which the client can experiment, practise, fail, get feedback and try again until he/she masters the new behaviour at a neural (limbic) level.

While ICT is the *process* that the coach can use, coaching with compassion is all about the *behaviour* of the coach and can be summarised as noticing another in need, empathising with that need, and acting to enhance the person's well being. Coaching with compassion puts the client in a positive emotional state (by arousing the PEA); a state where cognitive skills are enhanced and openness to feedback and willingness to change are increased, and the client's parasympathetic nervous system is activated offering opportunities for renewal against the ravages of the chronic stress that often accompanies leadership roles.

Below, I address the application and implications of my research firstly for the Columbia Coaching program specifically and secondly for coaching practice more broadly.

Application and Implications for the Columbia Coaching Program

The Columbia Coaching Model (CCM) is built on four components:

1. The four guiding principles
2. The nine coaching competencies
3. A four prong model for questioning (ORID) together with four response modes
4. A nine step coaching process

How ICT and Coaching with Compassion Support the CCM: Coaching with compassion, using ICT not only fits with, but also underscores the value and efficacy of, each component of the CCM.

- *Guiding Principles.* Adhering to high standards of ethical conduct (the first guiding principle) is consistent with coaching with compassion. As a coach if you are noticing someone in need, empathising with that need and acting to enhance the person's well-being, it is highly likely that you are also behaving ethically and honouring confidentiality. Empathising and understanding the person's need also means being focused on the other person, not on you (aligning with the second guiding principle of focusing on the client's agenda). The process of supporting the client as they invoke their ideal self, separate it from their ought self, discover their real self, build a learning agenda, and practise and experiment in a safe place (the elements of ICT), is all about building commitment through involvement and earning the right to advance at each step (the third and fourth guiding principles).
- *Coaching Competencies.* Coaching competencies are analogous to Coaching with Compassion. The centrepiece of coaching with compassion is a caring relationship between the coach and the person being coached; one where both parties are on the same emotional wavelength (the coach is attuned to and in touch with the feelings of the person being coached) and both parties have some sense of commitment to the relationship. Relating, coaching presence, questioning and listening, i.e. the 'big four' of the coaching competencies are necessary to sustain that sort of relationship. Questioning is also central to the effective use of ICT. Asking powerful questions is what initiates the process of invoking the ideal self. Challenging questions delivered with a caring concern and level three listening to hear the spaces in the conversation, help the client separate the ideal self from the ought self. Questioning and listening also underpin the discovery of the client's real self,

and together with testing assumptions, support the development of the learning agenda. As the client practises and experiments with new behaviours, the coaching competencies of reframing, contributing and business acumen play a prominent role.

- *Questioning and Response Modes.* While there is no ‘prescribed’ questioning approach in coaching with compassion and using ICT, ORID and the four response modes are well suited to the process. Objective and reflective questions together with the exploratory and affective response modes help surface hopes, which is the start of invoking the ideal self. Reflective and interpretative questions are the keys to separating the ideal self from the ought self and identifying the real self, and they go hand in hand with the listening and affective response modes and the occasional honest label. Interpretative and decisional questions, and especially the listening response mode, support the creation of the learning agenda. Lastly interpretative and decisional questions, together with the all four response modes, including the judicious use of honest labelling, create the safe place for sustained desired change to occur.
- *The Coaching Process.* ICT is a methodology that is analogous to the Columbia coaching process. The table overleaf compares each component of the Columbia coaching process with the comparable phase in ICT (with a specific focus on leadership development).

Table 1.4: Comparison of Intentional Change Theory with the Columbia Coaching Process

COLUMBIA COACHING PROCESS	COMPARABLE PHASE OF INTENTIONAL CHANGE THEORY
ENTRY AND CONTRACTING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify the nature of the presenting problem, trigger, challenge or opportunity • Surface hopes and concerns • Clarify expectations of the coaching process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfacing hopes is the start of invoking the ideal self (Discovery #1) and includes exploring whether the client really wants to be a leader
DEVELOPMENTAL FRAMES <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How does the client see the world? • Determine client’s emotional/social capacities • Build the capability for growth and change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Invoking the ideal self (Discovery #1) • Understanding the ought self and how and why it might be different from the ideal self. A strong ought self that conflicts with the ideal self can be common in leadership roles.
SITUATION ANALYSIS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify questions to focus data collection and feedback • Co-create data collection strategies • Diagnose the situation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering insight into what constitutes effective 21st century leadership approaches (styles and behaviours) to provide a framework against which the client can reflect on his/her leadership desires and current ‘leader state’ to help inform the data collection strategies • Using EI tools as a valid source of data gathering for the discovery of the real self (Discovery #2) given that the emotional intelligence competencies underpin resonant leadership
FEEDBACK <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Focus the client on the feedback • Summarise and interpret • Examine hunches about disparities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Uncovering the real self (Discovery #2) • Examining signature strengths • Noticing gaps between the ideal and the real self
EXPLORING OPTIONS <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stimulate imaginative thinking about the future • Feed-forward various options to illuminate possible futures • Consider potential benefits and costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using the feedback to create a learning agenda (Discovery #3) • Exploring what options exist within the client’s daily life (professional and personal) to leverage strengths and use them to develop skills in other areas that fit with their ideal self
PLANNING <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate insights and determine focus • Create a coaching plan and SMART goals • Align goals with personal values and organisational priorities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creating the learning agenda (Discovery #3) matched to the client’s learning style, building on strengths not gaps, using the client’s own goals, and integrated with the client’s daily life • Understanding which EI competency is the focus and designing the first pilot
ACTION STRATEGIES (Experimentation / Pilots) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discover opportunities for ongoing learning • Combine challenge and support • Celebrate success and capabilities for continued growth 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experimenting, practising and integrating (Discovery #4)
GROWTH AND RENEWAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct honest, ongoing self-appraisal • Translate insights to focused commitments • Explore ways to promote self-renewal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing outcomes of pilot(s). What worked? Where does the client need to make changes? How/where/when will the experiment be repeated? What is the next experiment?

COLUMBIA COACHING PROCESS	COMPARABLE PHASE OF INTENTIONAL CHANGE THEORY
<p>EXECUTION</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow up on commitments • Recognise teachable moments • Model flexibility and adaptation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing progress against commitments, i.e. the learning agenda • Reflecting insights in an updated learning agenda • Checking in against the ideal self • (Over time) re-checking real self (further feedback) to understand progress

Suggestions for consideration: The purpose of the foregoing discussion is not to suggest that coaching with compassion using ICT is ‘better’ or ‘worse’ than the Columbia approach. On the contrary, this research supports the power and validity of the CCM. As can be seen, the two approaches are very closely aligned and can be easily integrated. That said, I would offer the following insights that may help strengthen the Columbia approach as taught during the CCCP.

- *Build in explanations of the underpinning neuroscience.* Coaching is about taking valuable people from where they are to where they want to be. Change is an inherent part of this process. Explaining to CCCP students the underpinning neuroscience can further strengthen the CCM in a number of ways:
 - Explaining the physiology of change makes it easier to understand why change is hard and what conditions are necessary for sustained desirable behaviour change, in particular how and why invoking the ideal self drives sustained change.
 - Showing the difference between learning technical skills (centred in the neo-cortex) and the limbic/implicit learning required for learning behavioural skills helps reinforce the importance of the Conduct phase of the CCM.
 - Explaining the nature and power of emotional contagion and the physiology of stress offers coaches the opportunity to pass on that knowledge to clients for their benefit.
 - Showing CCCP students how to invoke the PEA and the NEA and when to do so or avoid doing so, can add power to a coaching session beyond the response modes currently taught.
 - Explaining how coaching others with compassion can help coaches manage their own stress and provide a vehicle for renewal.

- *Integrate ICT into the Columbia Coaching Process.* There are a number of points as illustrated in Table 1.4 where ICT can be integrated into the CCM. The following are worthy of consideration:
 - Given that a clear picture of one's ideal self is a driver of sustained, desired change, explicitly integrate the exercise of invoking an ideal self and distinguishing it from the ought self. This goes beyond determining the focus of a specific coaching session and is more aligned with what both the Columbia and Co-Active coaching models call the big A agenda.
 - Use the language of the ought self to create a more holistic picture or framework against which development frames can be considered and/or explained.
 - Explain the advantages of a learning agenda that is focused on leveraging strengths and what the client wants to do (versus should do) to avoid invoking the NEA, which can happen when the coaching plan becomes focused on gaps.
 - Explain the common pitfalls associated with creating SMART goals so that the plans that coaches help clients create have a greater chance of being implemented.

- *Situate the coaching competencies within the broader context of coaching with compassion.* When coaching with compassion, the coach utilises all nine of the Columbia coaching competencies. However coaching with compassion goes even further. Offering insights into how the term compassion is defined in the context of coaching, what constitutes a resonant relationship and explaining the neuroscience that explains the impact of that relationship on both parties, reinforces the importance of the coach needing to create a safe and caring place for the client to learn and practise, a key component of the Conduct phase.

Application and Implications for Coaching Practice Generally

The following ideas are simply headlines for a range of applications and implications that are worthy of further analysis in future work.

- As it relates to using ICT to help develop leaders, Discovery #4 is about experimentation with the behavioural characteristics of effective leaders. Coaches have an opportunity to contribute to that conversation their own knowledge of the four resonant leadership styles and the underpinning EI competencies.

- Given the foundational nature of the emotional intelligence competencies that contribute to effective leaders, coaches could benefit from being certified in one of the psychometrics that measures EI (e.g. ESCI or EQI).
- Learning how to coach with compassion (i.e. offer a resonant relationship) stimulates the PNS of the client. The client is more open, willing and able to learn and change and it also helps the client ameliorate the chronic stress associated with leadership roles. There is also some evidence in the literature that the coach enjoys the same benefits. Coaching with compassion is good for the health of both the client and the coach!
- In the same way, role modelling coaching with compassion and helping clients who are leaders adopt a coaching approach with their teams, helps not only the team (the recipient of the leader's coaching), but also the leader (through the potential renewal benefits it offers).
- Coaching leaders so that they in turn can create resonant relationships in their organisations is good for business. Through the power of emotional contagion, the leader drives the culture of the organisation, which in turn significantly impacts business performance.

Conclusions

Time poor leaders often don't know what they don't know about how to be an effective 21st century leader; those who take steps to find out, are greeted by an avalanche of information. There is so much in the literature and much of it is confusing at best, contradictory at worst. Only the most tenacious and dedicated are likely to persevere!

The notion of how leaders can grow their repertoire of leadership behaviours to become resonant 21st century leaders is a large and important topic. With organisational climate driven largely by the leader and accounting for some 20-30% of organisational performance, effective leadership not only has a profound impact on those being led, but a significant impact on the bottom line.

Contrary to the historical literature, leaders are not born or made, nor can leadership skills be learned solely in a classroom. Mastering effective contemporary leadership behaviours requires limbic learning – literally rewiring the brain and replacing the well-worn circuits associated with old habits.

That said, it is possible for a leader to make significant behavioural changes, but a number of conditions need to be satisfied in order to do so. The person (the client in the context of coaching) needs to:

- Want to be a leader. This seems obvious, but the truth is often masked by the ought self.
- Have a powerful and ‘solid’ vision of his/her ideal future self.
- Deeply understand him/herself, as he/she is today, especially his/her signature strengths.
- Have knowledge of contemporary effective leadership styles, together with when and how to deploy them.
- Develop and be excited by his/her personalised learning agenda (created to learn the necessary skills).
- Be able to experiment and practise new behaviours, over and over again until they become ‘second nature’ and to have a safe place in which to do so.
- Have a resonant relationship(s) (someone who genuinely cares about the person and is in ‘sync’ with him/her) to support, encourage, provide feedback and hold him/her accountable for his/her commitments.

A compassionate coach, utilising the structure of the CCM, especially incorporating the recommendations of the preceding section, is ideally suited to help leaders (regardless of culture or gender) achieve their aspirations. The power of ICT is that it uses the ideal self as the driver of change; the ideal self is the “beacon” that draws the client steadily towards it. It serves as the constant light when the client is buffeted by the storm of current crises, self-doubt, negative feedback etc. that often accompany the leadership journey.

Over the past six months with five clients, I have explicitly employed the initial discovery of ICT, invoking the ideal self and disconnecting it from the ought self. Although not all clients held a ‘traditional’ corporate leadership role, the impact has been striking. It is a powerful and liberating experience and one I have experienced personally. I will share details of just three of the situations.

In the first two invoking the ideal self was literally like watching a light bulb being switched on; the energy generated in the client was visceral and it led to the client resigning their current employment for a future better suited to their skills, aspirations and dreams.

In the first of these the client was a young Japanese female executive. Her ideal self is linked to a strong sense of the greater good, in particular bringing the traditional crafts of Japanese artisans to the world so they will not be lost. As she is still quite young, she identified that she needs to continue to work in a corporate environment for a while yet to pay the bills. That said, she was able to build a learning agenda that will (a) serve as a guide for many years to come as she puts into place the building blocks for her ideal self and (b) help her maintain energy if her current (well paid) job doesn't satisfy all her needs. This was a particularly interesting experience because it showed me that while cultural norms play an important role, especially with the ought self, ICT can transcend cultures.

In the other, there was a powerful ought self at play, which had led to the client considering multiple and quite diverse career options with such rapidity it was dizzying to watch. When he finally chose an option (which, it turned out, was more closely associated with his ought self) he found himself caught in a toxic environment that didn't value his skills or allow him to realise his considerable potential to impact the organisation. The identification and separation of the ideal self from the ought self was the key to slowing down the swinging pendulum. It allowed him to see why his current role wasn't going to serve him well in the long term, and it gave him the confidence to leave and pursue a career path that more closely reflects his ideal self. Additionally his ideal self has given him a framework against which to consider future career options. This experience also served to remind me that as we experiment with, and master new skills and behaviours, we need to occasionally revisit the ideal self to ensure it is 'solid' and/or to see whether it has changed or needs to change.

In the third case the 'client' was a colleague, an established leader, who had engaged a coach at enormous expense to the organisation. This coach was 'internationally well-regarded'. When I spoke to her and asked how the coaching was going, she said that she felt it was "drifting", and that the coaching was "helpful, but not really going anywhere". As we talked more it was clear that, with the support of the coach, she was trying to address some difficult behavioural issues related to her leadership style, and yet they had not had the conversation about where or who she wanted to be – did

she actually want to be a leader, what did that ideal future self look like? All she could tell me when I asked her that question was that she knew she didn't want to do "more of the same". I offered her the opportunity to invoke her ideal self and write her personal vision. We have not had the chance to continue the conversation at any level of detail, but she described the process as 'hugely settling' and enormously helpful.

The preceding section is, by necessity, focused on coaching. While I set out to help coaches (me in particular) become more effective in helping clients become resonant leaders, what I learned has application not only for coaches, but also for the leaders themselves. Going forward, I want to continue my research and write something specifically for my target audience – leaders and aspiring leaders. I want to address the gap that I perceive in the literature, to help simplify the complexities of what constitutes effective 21st century leadership, and offer leaders some pragmatic ways to improve their leadership skills that go beyond the 'what' and get to the how', and to help create sustainable value and bottom line impact in the organisations they lead.

What I have learned has already made me a better coach. My understanding of the power of emotional contagion (even over the phone) helps me recognise and use it to draw clients into a positive emotional state. My knowledge of the supporting neuroscience has taught me why the things I am trying are working.

I understand and can explain to my clients why leading others is hard work, and why behaviour change is notoriously difficult. I have an enhanced model for behavioural change and I can use my natural orientation to the tenets of coaching with compassion to provide a safe and caring place for my clients to learn, explore and experiment.

I have a greater understanding of what constitutes effective 21st century leadership. This has increased my confidence to talk to leaders about why the things they are trying with their leadership teams aren't working and the implications of continuing as before. I have also gained confidence in my ability, through coaching, to positively impact not only my clients who are the leaders, but also the teams they lead.

This research project has been an exciting journey for me. It was daunting at first because I had not attempted something like this before, but in the end I found it invigorating. I have learned that I can research, integrate and write in a way that has meaning for others. It has also rekindled my love of learning and encouraged me to do more. I am intrigued by the fact that beyond a small number of authors, ICT doesn't feature strongly in the literature, and I would like to understand why.

I first encountered ICT and the concept of resonant and dissonant relationships in a course led by Richard Boyatzis that I undertook 18 months ago. His work has inspired this research and this is reflected in the literature review. The personal vision I developed at that time (my own ideal self) has guided me in my own journey and I have shifted careers to capture my dreams. I would not have stayed the course however without my own 'coach', a dear trusted friend. The resonant relationship we enjoy, has allowed me to 'try on' my new life.

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