

Sabbatical Show-n-Tell

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Background: I was granted a sabbatical for the spring 2025 semester to study coaching trends, market demands, and industry needs. Here are my favorite sabbatical gems that I believe are the most useful for coaches worldwide.

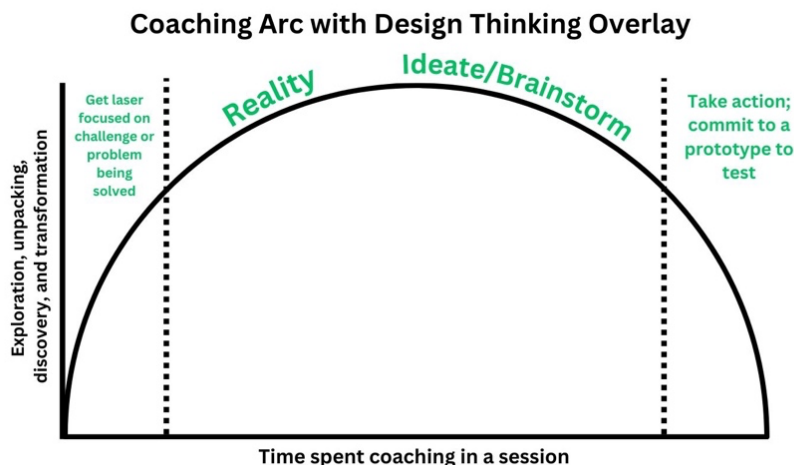
- 1) **Health and Wellness Coaching is on the rise.** This is primarily due to insurance companies becoming more accepting of health coaching as a benefit, as well as the growing need for additional mental health support. [NBHWC](#) (National Board of Health and Wellness Coaches) is the most prominent accreditor for health coaches.

Training programs vary. Here are some examples that caught my attention:

- [UC San Diego](#): You can take one class at a time online. The cost in total is \$5130 USD
- [Mayo Clinic](#): 12-week program; Zoom based; cost is \$4900 USD

How can you incorporate more health and wellness into your coach offerings? How can traditional coach training programs include more health and wellness coaching?

- 2) **Overlay coaching with different bodies of work:** There are bodies of work that align nicely with coaching, such as [Design Thinking](#), [Internal Family Systems](#), and [Non-violent Communication](#). For example, here is a traditional coaching arc overlaid with design thinking.



Adapted by Jen Lara, 2025

- Beginning of the arc: This involves the client becoming *laser-focused on the topic or challenge being addressed*. Use “*how might*” in your powerful questions – for example, “How might you land a new position at XYZ?” or “How might you increase student performance?” or “How might you have a better relationship with colleagues?”
- Part of the arc would include time to “*ideate*” or *brainstorm possible solutions* or ideas; Encourage creative and wildly different ideas, too! Could this be an opportunity to be a thought-partner or agile coach, too (vs. solely the coach)?
- At the end of the coaching arc, the client would commit to action and next steps: What “*prototype*” or idea do you want to try? Then, the client for growthwork would go “*test*” the prototype (or idea) in real life.
- Follow-up coaching session: The client would receive coaching again on the challenge/topic, unpack and explore what they had learned, and then *iterate* from there.

How could you use this version of the arc with the clients you serve? What other bodies of work overlay nicely with coaching?

3) **Incorporating coaching in fresh ways:** An interesting leader-coach I connected with who was new to me is Jeff Joyce, Head of School for [A Plus Academy](#); A Plus Academy is a foundation-supported Norwegian high school that combines sailing, learning, and traveling around the world on a historic tall ship. Joyce infuses coaching into his leadership and work. *What coaching opportunities have you overlooked?*

4) **Organizations are doing interesting things with coaching:**

a) **AEON Vietnam:** [Won an ICF Prism Award](#)

- Offers coaching to all their employees; employees can sign up at will with a choice of an internal and external coach
- Hosts a “Coaching Festival” to showcase coaching (includes demo-ing different types of coaching, offering 1-on-1 sessions, and sharing workshops on coaching)

b) **Tata Consulting Services -** [Won an ICF Prism Award](#)

1. Established a “Coaching Center for Excellence”
2. Besides coach training, 1-on-1 coaching, group and team coaching, they also offer coaching to those who play a significant role in employee’s lives, such as spouses and partners
3. Created their own internal ICF-accredited coach training program

- c) **Sarawak, Malaysia Government** – Yes to more governments prioritizing coaching in their professional learning and development offerings. I especially appreciate [this magazine](#) that the Sarawak government publishes annually.

What coaching experiences does your organization offer? What gaps or opportunities exist?

- 5) **Coaching research and “data-informed information” are plentiful:** Gone are the days when it was difficult to find research and data on the benefits of coaching.

Now, you can find a bounty of it. For example:

- a. My favorite researcher in the field is [Dr. Anna Sutton](#) (University of Waikato, New Zealand). I especially appreciate her co-authored [study on group coaching](#).
- b. ICF co-creates useful reports. You can find a sample of them on the ICF research and resources [webpage](#).
- c. There are many useful podcasts available. This data-informed approach to [organizational coaching](#) is an informative one with Helen Basford, PCC.

How can you incorporate more research and data into your coaching practice?

- 6) **What I notice some organizations and coaches are missing:**

- a. Data: Measuring the impact of coaching on factors such as stress, resilience, performance, goal achievement, job satisfaction, retention, recruitment, number of employees trained, and who received coaching, etc.
- b. Strategic Vision: A multi-year strategic coaching vision and/or roadmap with a dedicated budget (outlining cohesive coaching offerings/initiatives)
- c. Embedded coaching: Missing opportunities to pair coaching with other professional learning opportunities
- d. Being a Coaching Champion (more on that below)

How do you want to foster a more cohesive coaching culture or coaching practice?

What gaps and opportunities exist?

- 7) **Social Prescribing:** [Social prescribing](#) involves healthcare practitioners connecting patients with activities, groups, or programs that help address the underlying causes of health issues, such as loneliness, depression, or high blood pressure. Think of social prescribing like writing a medication prescription. However, instead of prescribing medicine, doctors recommend coaching or another useful service or activity, such as a hike, movie, or trip to an art gallery. You can read about examples

of social prescribing happening in [Canada](#), [Leeds, UK](#), and this [art example](#) at Stanford. I “socially prescribed” myself and watched this documentary, [Join or Die](#) (spoiler alert: It was great!). *How can social prescribing fit into your coaching practice? Who could you partner with to have your coaching services socially prescribed to others?*

8) AI and Coaching: If you haven’t already, embrace AI. Coaching and AI tools are becoming more and more mainstream. One organizational coach I spoke with during my sabbatical said, “If coaches aren’t comfortable with AI, how will they coach leaders who contend with AI daily?” With that in mind, experiment with AI and discover the value it brings to coaching for you and your clients. Some easy ways to experiment:

- a. Ask an AI tool like Gemini or ChatGPT to create for you. Examples include: “create a coaching agreement,” “create a list of new curious and powerful questions,” or “create a menu of homework options for clients.”
- b. Use AI as a coaching assistant and encourage clients to do the same. For example: Ask AI....“My core values are XYZ. What do you think I need to be aware of in my leadership style?” or “My people pleasing saboteur is acting up again, help me process how I am feeling about it.”
- c. Many organizations that have a stable of coaches (like Better Up, Modern Health, etc.) use AI tools and apps in between sessions to nudge clients, gather data, etc. Embrace those tools/apps when you have access to them and see what value they add to clients and to your coaching.

How are you already using AI in coaching? What commitment will you make next to continue experimenting with AI and coaching?

9) Become a Coaching Champion: Coaching in most communities and organizations does not happen by chance; coaching strongholds happen because coaches and allies advocate and champion coaching. A significant takeaway from my sabbatical is that we can all become better “Coaching Champions.” Coaches who advocate for coaching have the following attributes and skills:

1. Data informed: Be prepared to share knowledgeably about coaching and its impact - it’s ROI/ROE – return on investment, return on effort

2. Read up on what the data and science are saying about the impact of coaching. For example, Dr. Sutton's research on [group coaching and self-awareness](#) makes a strong case for group coaching within organizations.
3. Get comfortable connecting with influencers (people in positions of power and influence) as it only takes one "yes" to bring more coaching into a community or organization. Tip: Use the language that resonates with those you are connected to. For example, if you are connecting with the CFO of a company, be ready to frame coaching in terms of finance, cost, dollars, and ROI (return on investment). If you are connecting with an HR leader, consider framing your coaching ideas in terms of recruitment, onboarding, retention, and/or employee performance and engagement.
4. Wrangle your own saboteurs or critical inner voice(s) to show up as your most confident self; get coached on becoming a coaching champion if you need.
5. Show up coachlike vs. sales like when championing coaching. Tip: Connect to the needs and core values of the person or organization. Provide data and research demonstrating how coaching supports individual needs and values.
6. Be open to influence. This will help you remain open to the perspectives, needs, preferences, biases, etc., of others without judgment.
7. Have patience, endurance, and certitude – creating impact through coaching often takes time. "Rome wasn't built in a day, but bricks were laid every hour."
8. Recognize that being an advocate is not title specific; You don't need to have a specific leadership title in your organization or community to champion coaching. Lead and champion from within and then radiate out.

What's missing from this list? How can you turn up the dial on being a coaching champion?

Epilogue:

Of course, I uncovered and discovered more gems than what I shared in this document. These are some of my most practical sabbatical favorites.

A special thank you to Anne Arundel Community College for not only continuing to support our [ICF Level 2 Coach Training Program](#), but also this sabbatical.

I would love to share these sabbatical gems with your organization. Please reach out to me to set-up a time to do so.

With appreciation and zeal,

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