

REINVENTION • OPPORTUNITY • FUTURE OF WORK • RECIPE FOR CHANGE

# choice

the magazine of professional coaching

## REIMAGINING *Coaching*

How our profession is  
pivoting



VOLUME 20 • NUMBER 1  
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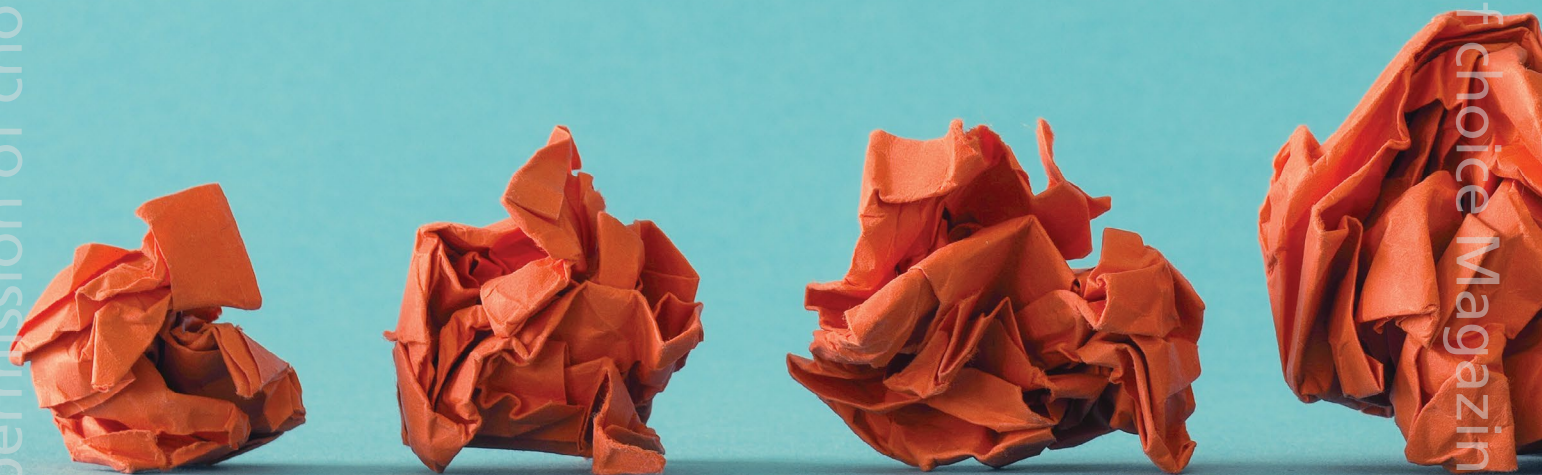
In what ways are you reimagining your coaching business? In what ways does our industry need reinvention? What part of your business is not serving you? What do you have to deconstruct in order to pivot to what is needed? What are the indicators that reinvention is needed?

How do you know? Join us as we explore this exciting topic.



# REINVENTING *the* BUSINESS *of* COACHING

By Jennifer Britton, MES, CPCC, PCC, BCC, CHRL, CPT



It is said that the world is changing faster today than it has before.

This, in tandem with the disruption and uncertainty the pandemic has ushered in, has sped up the pace of business change.

With turbulence comes the opportunity to transform, and our profession has been responsive to many of the changes happening, many times even being ahead of the curve. For coaches, the shift to virtual has not been completely new.

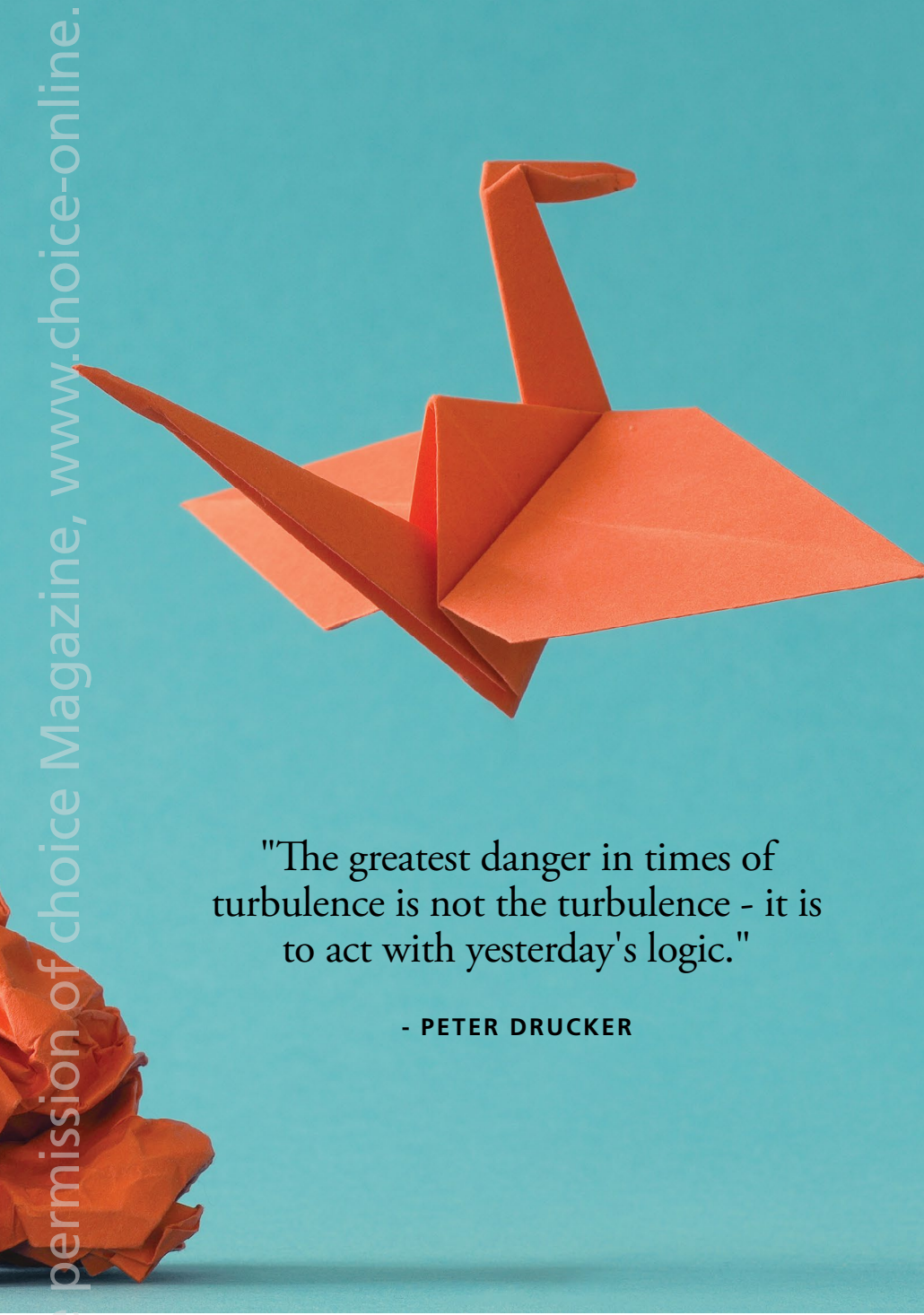
Think about the layers of change that have impacted the coaching profession in the last three to four years including:

- Technology
- Industry
- Business skills
- The needs of our clients
- Digitalization
- Virtualization

In this article, we look at how the layers of change have impacted, and continue to impact, the coaching

profession. We explore the ongoing evolution from the landscape of technology, industry, business skills, our clients, digitalization and virtualization.

According to PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), the coaching industry is the second fastest growing sector in the world. Since its inception in the 1990s to current day, the coaching industry and skills we lead from have been tremendously static, even with the changing context in which we operate.



"The greatest danger in times of turbulence is not the turbulence - it is to act with yesterday's logic."

- PETER DRUCKER

Consider the changes to the world of our clients since the original International Coaching Federation (ICF) competencies were drafted back in the mid-1990s. The internet had not yet arrived to much of the world. In those days, I would send an email from my office in a capital city of South America, where it would sit on a server overnight at a university in Trinidad before being sent forward the following morning.

Consider these other technological changes:

1999 – Emojis created by Shigetaka Kurita in Japan  
 2003 – The entry of Skype  
 2007 – The Advent of the iPad  
 2014 – Zoom arrives on the scene.

The world of our clients has continued to go through tremendous change since the start of our work. From the three billion people who went digital overnight in March 2020 to the

dramatic changes since then, coaching continues to be a safe harbor to many, providing a space for pause, reflection and other deeper levels of thinking and connection.

We operate in a world that is 24/7 global in nature and diverse. Working from home has become standard place, blurring the lines between roles, and digital nomadism was on the increase in the fall of 2021.

### BUSINESS SKILLS

The Great Resignation, along with a growth of side hustles, has led to an increase in many individuals turning to entrepreneurship as a vehicle for financial livelihood, self-expression and impact. This may have attracted many in this profession as well.

While developing coaching skills has always been the focus for most coach training schools, running a business has been a pain point for many coaches from the time I entered the marketplace of coaching.

In addition to exceptional coaching skills, great coaches can benefit from having exceptional business skills in the areas of strategic thinking and planning, financial management, customer service, marketing and business administration. This is in addition to supplementary skills with product and program design for those who may want to scale beyond a one-on-one model.

A recent study by McKinsey noted that post-pandemic, professionals can also benefit from “critical digital and cognitive capabilities, their social and emotional skills and their adaptability and resilience.”<sup>1</sup>

What skills do you want to further develop?

### INDUSTRY & CLIENT NEEDS

The coaching industry as a whole has also shifted. From the early years of coaching providing a deep dive for executives, today coaching has scaled to many. It's not uncommon to find best-in-class case studies across industries, as well as robust examples of the many different types of coaching – group



coaching, team coaching, peer coaching, and coach as leader.

Coaching has changed the way people connect and intersect, as well as how they approach different life transitions. Supporting clients through major life changes has always been a key part of

web, and this has afforded coaches the ability to work across distance, culture and time on multiple levels. While virtualization has remained quite stable in the last decade, with Skype and then Zoom being primary vehicles for coaching conversations, in the future it

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the coaching process, with coaches having played a key role in recent times with support around navigating the Great Resignation, return to work, and ongoing changes and lock downs.

With 93 percent of employees indicating during 2021 that they wanted more flexibility in the ways they work, a surge in entrepreneurship has been seen, expanding the need for business coaching.

Environmental sustainability has also become a mainstream issue for many with climate crises becoming visible in many locations where our clients live – from the West Coast of Canada to Germany and China. Many coaches today are rallying around the 17 Sustainable Development Goals of the United Nations, which provide a valuable framework to connect our work with clients to.<sup>2</sup>

## DIGITALIZATION & VIRTUALIZATION

The pandemic ushered in an urgency to digitalize many processes, from currency to products.

The adaptation of digital approaches in coaching has been seen in many formats – from working on whiteboards together in Zoom and creating more visual anchors, to card sorts being done online.

Coaching was an early adopter to the virtual space, with many coaches always having provided coaching via phone or

will be interesting to see the incorporation of VR (Virtual Reality) and other augmented elements.

An ICF study found that during the pandemic, “83 percent of coaches increased their use of audio-video platforms for coaching, while 82 percent indicated a decrease for in-person sessions”<sup>3</sup>

At the fall 2021 ICF Converge conference, futurist Mike Walsh shared how some professionals, like Deepak Chopra, have been pioneering with Artificial Intelligence (AI) in order to clone their message.

Grabmann and Schermuly share in their 2020 research that while “AI generally appears capable of guiding clients through many steps in the coaching process and establishing working alliances” it may not be as effective in “problem identification and in delivering individual feedback.”<sup>4</sup>

As much as things change, many things remain the same. Regardless of the ongoing and often unanticipated changes, still at the core and heart of the coaching process and relationship is an exceptional space for trust, safety and connection. Whether a coach is sitting down one-on-one with a client or is connecting with peers in a group or team coaching process, coaching is one of the few relationships which allows for such space of vulnerability and focus on what’s important RIGHT NOW.

In short, coaching is just as important today as it has been over the last three decades. First, people are hungry for connection. Belonging and connection are fundamental human needs. The ability to sit down and have a conversation with another person cannot be replaced by any technology we currently have, or may have in the future.

Second, challenges and opportunities are becoming more complex, rather than simpler. Coaching provides an invaluable space for pause and reflection. The coaching process can also stimulate deeper levels of thinking, and an expansion of the possible options which may be available.

Even with the vast changes since the start of the coaching profession decades ago, it’s likely that the human need for intimate conversation spaces like coaching will be as relevant 50 years from now as it is today.

What do you want to create the space for during your lifecycle as a coach? What’s important to support you in your continued growth? Here are some questions to consider regarding what’s required of us as coaches:

- Continuous learning has been a central component of coaching certification and ongoing evolution as a coach. What do you want to continue to learn?
- We don’t operate in a vacuum but an ever-evolving landscape and ecosystem. What are the connections you want to make with others?
- Clients continue to be at the heart of any great coaching process. What is important to note about their needs and evolutions? •

## NOTES:

<sup>1</sup> [mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/to-emerge-stronger-from-the-covid-19-crisis-companies-should-start-reskilling-their-workforces-now](https://mckinsey.com/business-functions/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/to-emerge-stronger-from-the-covid-19-crisis-companies-should-start-reskilling-their-workforces-now)

<sup>2</sup> [sdgs.un.org/goals](https://sdgs.un.org/goals)

<sup>3</sup> [coachingfederation.org/blog/industry-recovery-from-pandemic](https://coachingfederation.org/blog/industry-recovery-from-pandemic)

<sup>4</sup> [sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1534484320982891](https://sagepub.com/doi/full/10.1177/1534484320982891)