Performance coaching in sport, music, and business: From Gallwey to Grant, and the promise of positive psychology

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The purpose of this paper is to explore performance coaching in sport, music, and business. The paper begins by describing some of the popular, lay methods used by coaches in each field, many influenced by The Inner Game books of Timothy Gallwey. Next, the paper discusses the scientifically grounded theories, principles, and methods that underlie performance coaching today, primarily derived from sport psychology, music psychology, organisational psychology, and coaching psychology. Finally, the paper examines the contribution that positive psychology has and could make by providing new theories, constructs, perspectives, and methods to the art and science of performance coaching in sport, music, and business.

Keywords: *Coaching, coaching psychology, executive coaching, music psychology, organisational psychology, positive psychology, sport psychology.*

HOW CAN WE best coach athletes, performing artists, and executives to reach peak performance? In 1974 Timothy Gallwey published *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Gallwey, 1974). As a tennis coach, Gallwey incorporated Western (Humanist) psychology as well as mindfulness into his coaching. Gallwey proposed that people could improve their performance by attending to their psychology or 'inner game' (Gallwey, 1974, p.xix), and examined the role that coaches could play in facilitating this process. The book was a raging success, with more than a million copies now in print. Gallwey followed this seminal work with *The Inner Game of Golf* (Gallwey, 1981), *The Inner Game of Music* (Green & Gallwey, 1986), and *The Inner Game of Work* (Gallwey, 2000), among others, and continues to write, speak, and consult on *The Inner Game* principles to this day (www.theinnergame.com). More than four decades after the first *Inner Game* book was published, interest in the psychological underpinnings of performance, and the role of coaching in performance, has grown exponentially. There has been a proliferation of coaching services for sport, business, education, health, and life, with the coaching industry now estimated to be worth billions of dollars (Grant & Cavanagh, 2011). Some of these coaching services are grounded in science, while others are not (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007).

The aim of this paper is to explore the theories, principles, and practices that underpin performance coaching in sport, music, and business. The paper begins by describing some of the popular, lay methods used by coaches in each discipline, many of which have been influenced by *The Inner Game* principles. Next, this paper examines scientifically grounded coaching practices that draw on disciplines such as sport psychology, music psychology, organisational psychology, and coaching psychology. The paper concludes by exploring the contribution that positive psychology, the science of positive traits, states, and organisations (Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000), has made and could make to the art and science of performance coaching in sport, music, and business.

Definitions and history of coaching and coaching psychology

There are many different definitions of coaching (in the broad sense), including definitions that emphasise the unlocking of human potential and the improvement of performance (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). Coaching may be instructional (e.g., teaching, training, or tutoring) or facilitative such that a coach seeks to harness the coachee's potential, helping them to learn through experience (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). Coaching psychology, as distinguished from coaching more broadly, is grounded in scientifically valid theory, methodology, and empiricism (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). This field draws on a wealth of psychological disciplines, including sport, organisational, clinical, cognitive, social, and educational psychology (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007; Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). The coach assists the coachee to identify the outcomes they desire, set specific goals, pinpoint their strengths, build motivation and self-efficacy, identify resources available to them, establish action plans, monitor and evaluate progress, and modify action plans accordingly (Grant & Cavanagh, 2011).

Some might suggest that Gallwey is the father of modern coaching, although others point to Sir John Whitmore and Dr Anthony Grant as the pioneers of modern coaching (see Scoular, 2011). However, interest in coaching and the psychology of coaching goes back considerably further than the last four decades. In 1925, Dr Colman Griffith established the Laboratory for Research in Athletics at the University of Illinois. Shortly afterwards he published *The Psychology of Coaching* (Griffith, 1926), quickly followed by *Psychology and Athletics* (Griffith, 1928; Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). Griffith based his approach to coaching on learning theory. It was his contention that a coach was 'more than an instructor. He is a teacher, in the ancient sense of the word…a character builder' (Griffith, 1926, p.2). Although Griffith published prolifically until the early 1930s, the laboratory was closed in 1932, and his ideas on the psychology of coaching waned until picked up thirty years later, when humanist psychology and the cognitive behavioral therapies began to emerge (Palmer, & Whybrow, 2007). Coaching and coaching psychology have developed and evolved considerably since then, not least due to the efforts of Dr Anthony Grant who has continued to develop the scientific legs of the field. Coaching psychology, as a defined and accepted field of psychology, is generally said to have started with the publication of Grant's Ph.D. thesis, and the establishment of the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney in 2000 (Grant, 2007).

However, despite these important scientific advances, coaching is still frequently practiced without the underpinnings of psychological theory (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007). More than 20 years ago, Sir. John Whitmore argued:

> In too many cases [coaches] have not fully understood the performance-related psychological principles on which coaching is based. Without this understanding they may go through the motions of coaching, or use behaviors associated with coaching…but fail to achieve the intended results (Whitmore, 1992, p.2).

The same criticisms remain today. As Grant puts it, 'Eclectic pragmatic utilitarianism, the "use whatever works, and if it works, do more of it" philosophy, heavily influenced the early development of the contemporary commercial coaching industry' (Grant, 2007, p.24). Although Grant acknowledges that eclecticism provided coaching with diversity, he also critiques the anti-intellectualism of the field. Tensions between non-psychologist and psychologist coaches may be decreasing, and a thriving professional coaching industry may require both. However, there is arguably 'unequivocal consensus,' at least among veteran psychologists, that in order for coaching to thrive as a profession,

coaches (whether psychologists or not) must base their practices on coherent theory and empirical evidence (Grant & Cavanagh, 2007, p.239).

We turn now to some of the typical theories, principles, and practices that underpin performance coaching in sport, music, and business today, both popular, lay methods, and those grounded in behavioral science.

Performance coaching in sport

The Inner Game of Tennis (Gallwey, 1974) was one of the first popular books to discuss coaching the mental aspects of performance. Based on his observations as a tennis player and coach, Gallwey (1974) suggested:

> Every game is composed of two parts, an outer game and an inner game. The outer game is played against an external opponent to overcome external obstacles, and to reach an external goal… the inner game…is the game that takes place in the mind of the player, and it is played against such obstacles as lapses in concentration, nervousness, self-doubt and self-condemnation…it is played to overcome all habits of mind which inhibit excellence in performance (p.xix).

Gallwey noticed that typical instructional coaching was often ineffective in improving performance because players got in their own way, being distracted and discouraged by the inner critic that Gallwey termed 'Self 1.' Failure to deal with 'Self 1' meant that 'Self 2,' the player's body and subconscious mind, was not able to execute what it knew to do instinctively (Gallwey, 1974, p.10). Gallwey argued that willpower and positive thinking were not enough to manage Self 1, and that trying too hard to control it often led to worse (not better) results. Gallwey suggested that players who entered 'the zone' being fully absorbed in the game with total focus and awareness in the moment, would perform better than those distracted by Self 1 (Gallwey, 1974, p.14). Gallwey proposed that winning the inner game was about quieting Self 1 through focus and awareness, which would allow for a state of relaxed concentration in which Self 2 could operate at its optimum. He described the sequence of winning the inner game as non-judgemental observation, visualising the desired outcome, trusting the self, and non-judgemental observation of change and results.

Based on this theory, Gallwey suggested that the role of the coach was to facilitate the player's concentration, awareness, focus, and total absorption in the game. He suggested that coaches use a facilitative rather than an instructional approach, so as to avoid activating Self 1 (the inner critic) and to allow Self 2 (the instinctive doer) to express the player's 'embodied potential' (Gallwey, 1974, p.12). The player should be allowed to observe demonstration, and explore different ways of executing a task, learning through experience rather than trying to get it right. He advised players to develop their own model of performance, rather than try to conform to an external model. Gallwey followed up with additional *Inner Game* books on winning the inner game of skiing and of golf (Gallwey & Kriegel, 1977; Gallwey, 1981). A number of high profile, highly successful professional coaches are known to use *The Inner Game* principles in their coaching, including Steve Kerr and Pete Carroll (Ballard, 2016). Steve Kerr is currently head coach of the Golden State Warriors in the National Basketball Association league, and is a six time NBA champion, having won five championships as a player and one as coach of the Warriors in 2015. He was the NBA Coach of the Year in 2015–2016. Pete Carroll is currently head coach of the Seattle Seahawks in the National Football League and in 2014 his team won the NFL championship. In addition, as head coach of the University of Southern California football team, Carroll's team won two National Collegiate Athletic Association National Football Championships in 2003 and 2004. Both coaches have reported having had success applying *The Inner Game* principles in

their coaching (Ballard, 2016). Other popular lay books on coaching have been written by coaches in professional sports, such as Phil Jackson's *Sacred Hoops* (Jackson, 1995) and Pat Summit's *Reach for the Summit* (Summit & Jenkins, 1998).

In terms of the scientific literature, coaching psychology and sports psychology began formally in the 1920s with the publication of *The Psychology of Coaching* (Griffith, 1926) and *Psychology and Athletics* (Griffith, 1928), as mentioned. Today, sports psychologists use many of the same principles and techniques as their lay counterparts do, but the former's practices are necessarily grounded in science. Just as Gallwey did, sports psychologists tend to stress the importance of athletes being in a relaxed state of concentration such that the athlete is 'totally immersed in the present moment' with full awareness of the surrounding environment and what is happening in it (Ravizza & Statler, 2007, p.61). In the sport and performance psychology literature, this state is typically referred to as flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999). Flow is a state characterised by complete absorption in a task, present mindedness, lack of self-consciousness or fear of failure, the merging of action and awareness, time distortion, the paradox of control (feeling in control while letting go), and knowing precisely what to do moment by moment (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990; Nakamura & Csikszentmihalyi, 2002). Flow is predicated upon three antecedents, namely having clear and proximate goals, immediate and unambiguous feedback, and a perception of skill-challenge balance (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990). While there have been more studies on the wellbeing outcomes of flow than there have been on the impact of flow on performance (Aubé, Brunelle, & Rousseau, 2014), flow has been associated with peak performance in the sport psychology and positive psychology literature (e.g., Jackson, Thomas, Marsh & Smethurst, 2001; Schüler & Brunner, 2009).

Contemporary sports psychology literature also tends to focus on goal setting, mental imagery, relaxation techniques, and regulation of performance anxiety (e.g., Porter, 2003; Wang & Zhang, 2015), as well as playing from instinct and intuition rather than via the critical, rational mind (reminiscent of Gallwey's Self 1 and Self 2):

> 'There is no interference from your thoughts or emotions. Things are just happening, both without protest and without consent. You are on autopilot – just reacting to whatever comes your way. Your body just seems to know what to do without any directive from you. There is no conscious thought involved; you're going strictly on your instincts.' (Sugarman, 1999, p.22)

Similarly, Dr. Ken Ravizza counsels athletes facing a big competition 'to do what they do, because that is what is familiar and where they draw their confidence from' (Fifer, Henschen, Gould, & Ravizza, 2008, p.373). In short, the parallels between Gallwey's *Inner Game* principles and sports psychology are evident.

In terms of the modern sports coach-coachee relationship, sports psychologists such as Ravizza and Statler (2007) suggest that coaches act as models for the mental skills that they teach, have patience and wait for the right moment to coach, build an athletes' confidence and resilience, and ensure a cultural fit between coach and coachee. Others suggest that coaches facilitate an athlete's regulation of destructive internal states by changing their environment, reframing challenging situations, having them listen to music, and encouraging positive self-talk (Sugarman, 1999). A recent paper described the approach of China's freestyle aerial-jump coaches, which contributed to the success of the Chinese team over three successive Olympic Games. Their approach included focusing on an athlete's strengths and opponents' weaknesses, promoting process rather than outcome goals, avoiding fear of failure,

and ensuring that athletes were not given too many instructions at once (Wang & Zhang, 2015).

In summary, performance coaching in sport, from a popular, lay perspective and a sport psychology viewpoint, typically involves facilitating a performer's goals, focus, awareness, flow, mental imagery, self-efficacy, regulation of anxiety, positive thinking/reframing, and playing from instinct. The similarities between Gallwey's *Inner Game* principles and the science of sports psychology are evident, and a number of current professional coaches refer to both (Ballard, 2016). However, there is still much to discover in terms of enhancing performance coaching in sport.

Performance coaching in music

There are few lay publications on performance coaching in music. One of the most popular is *A Soprano on Her Head* by Eloise Ristad (1982), who was influenced by *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Gallwey, 1974). As a music teacher, Ristad added her own observations to Gallwey's *Inner Game* principles. She argued that music teachers should de-emphasise instruction and allow musicians to discover and express their voices in a natural and holistic manner, thereby avoiding negative emotions and neuroses. Ristad's approach included silencing the inner critic (Self 1), surrendering control to the subconscious mind (Self 2), and releasing the need to get a performance right. Ristad suggested that coaches should provide musicians with a variety of techniques to shift their focus from concerns they might have to the present moment, thereby facilitating a natural and spontaneous performance. These techniques included laughter, role-play, parody, visualisation, and the famous story of a soprano who found her voice while standing on her head.

Barry Green, a former professional bassist with the Cincinnati and California Symphonies, and lecturer in music at the University of California Santa Cruz, wrote *The Inner Game of Music* in collaboration with Timothy Gallwey (Green & Gallwey, 1986). Green believed that the conditions that allowed for peak performance in sport and in music were similar, given that each involved playing, often in front of an audience, which allowed a performer to share their talents but could also produce pressure and fear. Like Ristad, Green added his own observations to Gallwey's principles, summing up *The Inner Game* in the formula P=p – i, where P was performance, p was the potential of the player (Self 2), and i was mental interference (Self 1) during performance. Green's book followed the example of Gallwey and Ristad by suggesting techniques for reducing Self 1 interference (i) so that Performance (P) ultimately equalled Self 2 potential (p). For example, Green advised musicians to focus on the essential elements of the music, including its visual elements (such as notes on the page), aural elements (such as camber and pitch), feeling elements (such as the tactile nature of the instrument, and feelings experienced by the player), and knowledge elements (an understanding of the meaning and intention of the musical piece). In Green's experience, coaching that emphasised technical aspects of performance or suggested that there was a right way to perform inhibited natural musical expression since the musician would try to control their performance, would focus on a large number of complex instructions, would fear disappointing the instructor, and would forget to simply do what they knew to do instinctively (Green & Gallwey, 1986).

The scientific literature on performance coaching in music has tended to focus heavily on achieving technical excellence, cognition and perception, and management of performance anxiety (cf. anxiety disorders that require clinical treatment rather than coaching for non-clinical anxiety). *The Science and Psychology of Music Performance: Creative Strategies for Teaching and Learning* (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002), for example, is illustrative of this trend. In this text,

the authors describe performance anxiety as a social phobia that is usually derived from fear of humiliation and accompanying negative self-talk. They suggest that the most effective 'psychological treatments' appear to be 'those that combine relaxation training with anxiety inoculation (developing realistic expectations of what will be felt during performance) and cognitive restructuring (modifying habitual thoughts and attitudes that are self-handicapping, regardless of their origins)' (Parncutt & McPherson, 2002, p.47). Many music psychology texts have followed suit, addressing the regulation of anxiety experienced by musicians before and during performances (e.g., Lehmann & Sloboda, 2007). Again, the parallels between techniques for managing performance anxiety and silencing Gallwey's inner critic (Self 1) are evident.

However, performing arts psychology addresses factors other than performance anxiety. Dr Gene Moyle, who specialises in performance psychology for the creative arts, notes that, 'within the performing arts, often it is assumed that one's work takes a psychopathological approach and is only centred on the problems of these "vulnerable, creative, sensitive and artistic creatures"' (Moyle, 2012, para 11). Moyle acknowledges that the challenges that performing arts psychologists assist with often fall toward the psychopathology end of the spectrum, including performance anxiety, loss of motivation, burnout, choking, low self-confidence, substance abuse, eating disorders, destructive team dynamics, and conflict. However, performing arts psychologists also deal with topics at the other end of the psychological spectrum, including goal setting, focus, mindfulness, motivation, mental imagery, and self-efficacy (Moyle, 2012). Flow has also emerged as a popular topic in performing arts psychology given that the arts (like sports) frequently provide the conditions that allow for the flow state to emerge, namely clear and proximate goals, immediate feedback, and a perceived balance of skill and challenge (Jackson, 2012). A number of researchers have explored the role of flow in musical performance, including as a counterbalance to performance anxiety (Kirchner, 2011), as a facilitator of group creativity in music composition (MacDonald, Byrne & Carlton, 2006), and as a state that appears to pass from music teachers to their students via a contagion effect (Bakker, 2005).

In summary, performance coaching in music and in sport have much in common, both typically emphasising goals, focus, awareness, flow, mental imagery, self-efficacy, and regulation of anxiety. This is unsurprising in the lay context given the influence that Gallwey had on music theorists and practitioners such as Ristad and Green, and in the scientific context given the intersections between sports and performing arts psychology. However, as is the case for sport, there is an opportunity for researchers to further ground the field of performance coaching for music in scientific theory and research, and to expand the topics studied beyond those typically explored.

Performance coaching in business

A walk through any airport bookshop will reveal a plethora of popular, lay books promising the secret to performance in business. Some of the most popular or impactful over the last 100 years have been Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* (Carnegie, 2006), Jim Collins' *Good to Great* (Collins, 2001) and, more recently, Sheryl Sandberg's *Lean In* (Sandberg, 2013), to name a few. Following on from his earlier successes, Timothy Gallwey published *The Inner Game of Work* (Gallwey, 2000) at the turn of the millennium. In this book Gallwey examined the tension between achieving a meaningful existence at work (the inner game) while also satisfying the performance requirements of the job (the outer game). As in earlier *Inner Game* books, Gallwey suggested that if managers focused on an employee's innate, natural ability to learn

from direct experience, performance against external objectives would naturally follow. As before, Gallwey promoted facilitative rather than instructional coaching (or management), which would allow employees to learn by doing via non-judgmental observation, awareness, and present mindedness. Gallwey suggested that performance was predicated upon a worker freeing themselves from the inner critic (Self 1) responsible for stress, fear of failure, boredom, and resistance to change, and unleashing the untapped potential of the worker to learn, enjoy work, and perform (Self 2).

Today the lay industry that provides performance coaching in business is usually included under the umbrella term 'executive coaching', recently defined as:

> [A] helping relationship formed between a client (the coachee) who has leadership, managerial, or supervisory authority and responsibility in an organisation, and a coach who uses a range of cognitive and behavioural techniques in order to help the client achieve a mutually defined set of goals with the aim of improving his or her leadership skills, professional performance, and wellbeing and the effectiveness of the organization (Grant, 2014, p.259).

Executive coaching has its roots in executive consulting which has been with us for many decades but emerged as a clear sub-discipline in the 1980s following an increase in formal executive assessment and development programs (Kilburg, 2007). Today, the industry is reportedly worth billions of dollars, with more than 90 per cent of US-based Global 100 companies and almost the same percentage of UK organizations now using executive coaches (Grant, Passmore, Cavanagh & Parker, 2010). Originally many of the principles upon which executive coaching was based were non-scientific, and today the field remains pragmatic (Whybrow & Henderson, 2007). Typically, executive coaches are expected to understand the business of their clients and to add value by facilitating practical and relevant change during the coaching intervention (Stern, 2007). There has also been a move towards systems based models such that an executive coach will consider the structures required to support the coaching relationship (e.g., sponsors, change agents, stakeholders, and the organisational culture; Whybrow & Henderson, 2007).

Although the vast majority of books in the field still fail to include academic references (Palmer & Whybrow, 2007), in the mid-1990s psychological theory and empirical research began to appear in publications on executive coaching (Grant, 2014). The scientific basis of executive coaching today is eclectic, drawing on cognitive behavioral traditions, psychodynamics, behavior change models, developmental psychology, and organisational development and change principles (Kilburg & Diedrich, 2007). In addition, coaching psychology theories and principles are increasingly applied to the executive coaching space (Grant, 2014; Grant & Hartley, 2014), promoting wellbeing and engagement (not simply return on investment) in organisations (Grant, 2012). Over the last 15 years, positive psychology has also been incorporated into executive coaching via the developing fields of positive organisational behavior (Luthans & Church, 2002), positive organisational scholarship (Cameron, Dutton, & Quinn, 2003), positive organisational psychology (Bakker, 2013; Ko & Donaldson, 2011), and positive leadership (Cameron, 2008). *Flow* (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990) and *Good Work* (Gardner, Csikszentmihalyi, & Damon, 2001), the latter of which explores the importance of excellence, ethics, and engagement (i.e., flow) at work, are examples of positive psychology texts that have influenced the field. Space precludes a detailed discussion of the scientific literature underlying performance coaching in business. Suffice it to say that the field is well established and growing rapidly.

The methods of executive coaching

are even more varied than its theoretical and empirical underpinnings. Executive coaches may be external consultants or internal managers (who may or may not have a background in psychology). Coaching may be instructive or facilitative, although is usually the latter when using professional coaches and coaching psychologists (Whybrow & Henderson, 2007). Executive coaches use any combination of assessment and feedback, education and training, modeling and demonstration, rehearsal and practice, role-playing, brainstorming, conflict and crisis management, active-empathic listening, free association, verbal interventions, journaling, reading assignments, among many other techniques (Kilburg, 2007). Bono and colleagues surveyed the field and found this eclectic methodology to be true of both psychologist and non-psychologist executive coaches (Bono, Purvanova, Towler & Peterson, 2009). A recent paper reviewed the literature and suggested that the following were key factors required for a successful executive coaching engagement: trust, confidentiality, empathy, the coach's communication skills, commitment and vocation, and the coachee's need, motivation, and willingness to take responsibility for their own development (Rekalde, Landeta, & Albizu, 2015).

In summary, while performance coaching in business may employ some of the principles and methods that are typical in the fields of sport and music (e.g., goal setting), it is arguably more varied, both in terms of the theories upon which it is based, and the methods used by coaches in this field. Given the pragmatism of executive coaching, there is much overlap between the lay and scientific arms of this field, and numerous academics and practitioners have noted the need for more robust theory and empirical data to support the practice of executive coaching (e.g., Kilburg, 2007). There is therefore an important opportunity for executive coaching to embrace the breadth of evidence-based research and practice available to the field.

The promise of positive psychology in performance coaching

From the preceding discussion, three themes emerge. First, there are overlaps between theories and practices of performance coaching in sport, music, and business. Gallwey was at pains to point out that *The Inner Game of Tennis* (Gallwey, 1974) was less about tennis than it was about learning the inner game of any discipline that an individual might choose to engage in. Other performance coaches and psychologists have also stressed the transferability of coaching principles and techniques across domains (e.g., Gordon, 2007; Green & Gallwey, 1986; Ievleva & Terry, 2008). Second, while many parallels can be drawn between lay practices and the scientific literature (and popular texts can be an important source of observations, case studies, and ideas for the scientific community to test and validate), performance coaching is enhanced in terms of credibility and effectiveness when underpinned by scientific theory, empiricism, and validated methods. While some performance coaching draws on the scientific literature, coaching as a whole has not been as scientifically rigorous as many members of the coaching psychology profession would like it to be (Grant et al., 2010). Third, coaching psychology draws on and develops a variety of psychological disciplines, and this theoretical and methodological diversity ensures that coaching is client-centered and contextually relevant (Grant, 2007). As such, performance coaching would benefit from continued injection of new scientific theories, constructs, principles, and methods.

Positive psychology is a promising source of additional theories, constructs, principles, and methods that could be used in the coaching field, including performance coaching (Linley & Harrington, 2007). Positive psychology and coaching psychology share 'common historical roots' (Grant & Cavanagh, 2011, p.294) and 'common aims and objectives, being the enhancement of optimal functioning and wellbeing' (Green, Oades, & Robinson, 2012, p.116). However, while

cross-fertilisation between these fields is growing (Leach, Green & Grant, 2011), there is still much to learn about the application of positive and coaching psychology in combination, and an opportunity for the two to intersect in the performance context specifically. It is suggested that positive psychology can make a significant contribution to performance coaching by deepening our understanding of positive traits, states, and organisations that predict, facilitate, or otherwise affect performance, knowledge that could be reworked into a coaching relationship (Biswas-Diener, 2010; Linley & Harrington, 2007). It is true that positive psychology has already provided performance coaches with evidence-based suggestions for amplifying performance. For example, in terms of positive traits, identification and use of strengths has been shown to promote goal progress (Linley, Nielsen, Gillett & Biswas-Diener, 2010). In terms of positive states, the facilitation of flow (Jackson & Csikszentmihalyi, 1999) and the development of psychological capital or PsyCap (comprised of hope, self-efficacy, resilience, and optimism) have been shown to predict performance (Luthans, Avolio, Avey & Norman, 2007). In terms of positive organisations, workplaces that employ positive psychology interventions have shown promising results in terms of employee engagement and performance (Meyers, van Woerkom & Bakker, 2013).

However, there is much more that positive psychology can contribute to performance coaching. Four lines of inquiry are suggested for further exploration. First, positive psychology introduces and examines a large number of psychological constructs that may impact performance. The author recently explored developable positive psychology predictors of performance in sport, business, and academics (Mouton, 2015). These predictors included realistic optimism (Schneider, 2001), defensive pessimism (Norem, 2008), self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997), meaning and purpose (Emmons, 1999; Steger, 2009), harmonious passion (Vallerand, Salvy, Mageau, Elliot, Denis, Grouzet, & Blanchard, 2007), flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 1990), deliberate practice (Ericsson, 2003), hope (Snyder, 2000), resilience aspects of PsyCap (Luthans et al., 2007), growth mindset (Dweck, 2006), among others. The results indicated that harmonious passion, flow, and hope were among the key predictors of performance across the three domains, with hope often the strongest correlate of the three. These variables were also typically positively and significantly related to each other (as far as the author is aware, this is the first study to report a significant and positive link between harmonious passion and hope, and between flow and hope). The author concluded, ‘There remains an important opportunity for higher education institutions, workplaces, and athletic environments to…create the conditions that allow for passion, flow, hope, and performance to emerge in concert’ (Mouton, 2015, p. 117). Arguably this is true of any environment in which performance coaching takes place, whether for sport, music, or business. In short, positive psychology provides performance coaches and psychologists with a wealth of variables, mediators, moderators, and higher order constructs (e.g., PsyCap) that might (or do) predict performance in various domains.

Second, positive psychology sheds light on the facilitators of wellbeing, which will be of interest to athletes, musicians, and executives, and their coaches, teachers, and managers. Importantly, positive psychology suggests that mental health is more than an absence of mental illness, and that mental health falls along a spectrum from languishing, to moderate, to flourishing mental health (Keyes, 2009; see also Lomas & Ivtzan, 2015). Since mental health (and illness) affect human functioning (Keyes, 2009), this body of research will be of interest to those looking to facilitate *optimal* human functioning, including peak performance.

Third, positive psychology explores the science of positive relationships (e.g., Ragins, 2012) and positive leadership (e.g., Cam-

eron, 2008), which could be instructive in terms of coach-coachee dynamics, as well as dynamics in teams, families, and peer mentoring groups. At the broader level, positive psychology provides insights into the conditions that allow for thriving organisations (e.g., Cameron et al., 2003). This body of research could assist in creating flourishing athletics departments, Olympic teams, bands, orchestras, choirs, theatre and dance companies, and a variety of workplaces (i.e. environments in which performance coaches might operate).

Finally, positive psychology considers the elements of thriving societies (e.g., Donaldson, Csikszentmihalyi & Nakamura, 2011), and the influence of culture and context on positive outcomes (e.g., Knoop & Delle Fave, 2013; Mouton & Montijo, in press). Understanding these factors would arm performance coaches with much needed ecological and cultural context as they seek to facilitate performance among diverse coachees (Wang & Zhang, 2015).

The ideas presented here are just a few of many possible avenues to explore. Performance coaches have a large and growing body of evidence-based knowledge to draw on as they facilitate the development of positive traits, states, and organisations that amplify performance in sport, music, business, and beyond. It is hoped that the fields of performance, coaching, and positive psychology continue to collaborate and learn from each other as we strive for new and enhanced ways to facilitate peak performance across domains.

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