The Co-Coaching Journey

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"I am because we are."



Welcome!

Right from the start, we decided on our name in a collaborative brainstorming session, in which we went through various references until we arrived at UBUNTU.

UBUNTU means "I am because we are". This word is from a Zulu tribe in Africa. As a team, we aspire to be open to ideas, thoughts and feelings, welcoming reality as it is. Being together is an opportunity to grow and learn. The sum is greater than the parts.

We believe that this orientation also supported us in choosing the theme for our final work in the Diploma program in the Art of Team Coaching: Being with the other is the essence of team coaching and when coaching is carried out in pairs, this makes it even more special.

In our initial conversations, we realized that the team coaching literature focuses mainly on the role of the team coach and their relationship with the team. What struck us was how little literature there was on the relationship between team coaches and co-coaching and specifically its importance, relationship and impact on the team.

While we see ourselves as instruments, we want to explore more deeply the 'we' of co-coaching in relation to team coaching. In doing so, we discovered the power of strengths-based coaching. Each of us has brought and brings different aspects to coaching, which is wonderful and challenging at the same time.

Over the months, we have experienced the possibility of forming ourselves as a team and also the possibility of broadening our view of what co-coaching really means.

In this paper, you will find practical and reflective elements, based on our experience and that of esteemed colleagues, as a starting point. Our desire is not to prescribe how to do it, but rather to promote a space for thinking and feeling in order to enable greater connection between coaches to enable better team coaching.

After all, I am because we are. Enjoy!

Team Ubuntu



Tom is a high-performance chartered psychologist with over 18 years of experience. Tom has a background working in FTSE 100/250 businesses, Private Equity and Venture Capital backed companies, Olympic and professional sports, and the Foreign and Commonwealth office. He draws on his experience as an executive coach, consultant, sports psychologist, and leadership trainer to enable his clients to deliver more aware, impactful, and consistent versions of themselves. He understands what it takes to deliver at the highest level and has supported teams and individuals in achieving success in business and sports.



Zoe works with teams and team leaders to enable them to work together and to realise their collective potential. She is said to have a natural ability to build connection, create the conditions for psychological safety and facilitate courageous conversations.

Zoe's own experience and interest in team-working stems from her 30 years clinical, managerial and leadership experience in one of the largest employers globally - the National Health Service (NHS) in England.

Zoe is an Honorary Lecturer at the University of Central Lancashire where she teaches on teaming, group, and team development.

Zoe is a Team Coach (TCS, AoEC, ORSC), Co-Active Coach (CTI), Time to Think ™ Coach and Facilitator, and Insights Discovery Psychometrics Practitioner.

woo · input · learner · communication · empathy

Team Ubuntu





Lisa is a Gallup Certified Strengths Coach, an ICF-ACC Certified Executive Coach, and recently completed the Team Coaching program through the Team Coaching Studio. A skilled facilitator, Lisa leads the leadership curriculum for the Faribault Future Community Leadership program. She brings her passion for organizational health, executive leader coaching, financial analysis, and human resources to LSS clients.

maximiger · significance · self-assurance · relator · strategic



Caroline work is dedicated to help people and organizations on their self-transformation path. She is the founder of Angatu | People Conscious Development. Angatu in a Brazilian indigenous tribe means "good soul, well being and happiness" which is the base for its philosophy and training programmes.

Caroline's presence and listening skills are widely recognised by her clients, and learning is at the core of her approach as a coach, facilitator and consultant.

Economist with a Master's Degree on Anthropology of Organizations, Caroline is an Executive Coach (Gallup, AoEC and Profit), an ICF-PCC and Team Coach (TCS and AoEC). Also, she is a MBTI (Step I and II) certified. She is a Global Partner at Team Coaching Studio, expanding the brand and team coaching knowledge to coaches in Latin America.

strategic · achiever · relator · intellectual · ideation



Journey of Development

This paper aims to shed light on important aspects of an effective relationship between coaches who are coaching a team in pairs.

In the next pages, you'll embark on a journey of development that you can choose to do alone or together with your colleague co-coach. We recommend that coaches make and discuss practical reflections regarding each step of the team coaching journey to learn and mature the co-coaching relationship.

We believe that the more coaches work in harmony, even when there is difference, and from a space of honesty and transparency the more the team benefits and learns how to work from a place of greater partnership and collaboration.

Bear in mind that this paper in no way replaces the work of a mentor or supervisor in team coaching.



Our Collective Philosophy and Stance



Based on our presence and appreciative look at the reality, our journey as a team began with the establishment of psychological safety. We spent a significant amount of time learning more about each other and, by sharing our realities and different cultures, and holding the space for each other, we were able to build a safe container for our development as coaches and team members.

We lived each meeting with such dedication that when we reflected on our experience we realised that we had created an authorial team coaching methodology: Strengths-Based Team Coaching. This makes us very proud and is the starting point for a greater understanding of what we did from the team coach point of view so that the team could live and be its best.

We can say that our collective philosophy is based on investing time to build psychological safety as a starting point, an appreciative eye for reality and people's talents, adult learning, and a philosophy of change that considers small and large movements as part of the team's learning journey.

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What is co-coaching?

In a co-coaching relationship coaches work side-by-side, unlike facilitation or training where leaders take responsibility for different sections of the agenda or engagement in a planned or predetermined way (Woudstra, p165)

Why might I consider working with a co-coach?

Woudstra reminds us that we don't see the world in terms of reality; we see it through our own lens (p118). Having two people create awareness by sharing their worldview and self-experience offers the team different perspectives from which to grow and develop.

We asked 21 Team Coaches why they work in pairs. The reasons they gave were:

- 1. Size of team (81%)
- 2. Complexity of team dynamic (81%)
- 3. Personal preference (33%)
- 4.To reflect subject matter expertise/team purpose (33%)
- 5. To avoid being pulled into team dynamic (33%)
- 6. Level of experience/confidence to coach alone (29%)
- 7. To reflect diversity of team (culture, language, gender, race, age, etc) (24%)
- 8. Working beyond intact team (at system-level) (14%)
- 9. Length or duration of contract (14%)
- 10. Client's budget (10%)
- 11. Client request (5%)
- 12. My philosophy and approach (5%)
- 13. My availability (5%)
- 14. My belief that it's best practice to coach in pairs (5%)
- 15. To be able to serve the client best (5%)



What does a successful cocoaching relationship look like?

Based on the survey, we may say a successful cocoaching relationship considers the following principles:

- 1. Trust is the basis of the relationship.
- 2. A partnership that enables shared responsibility and genuine exchange and manages the process together.
- 3. Ensure philosophical alignment, clarity about roles and responsibilities, and agreement about what to do when things don't go well.
- 4. Be aware that everything the co-coaches do serves as a model for the team.
- 5. Having a complementary vision can be useful.
- 6. An open and transparent dialogue.
- 7. Courage to build something greater than the coaches.

When reading the responses, what caught our attention was the human side of the relationship. The balance regarding power and authority is an essential reminder that everything we do role models something to the team. At the same time, the co-coaches may reproduce the same pattern of the team's behaviour through a parallel process.

So, when engaging with a team, the co-coaches expand the concept of Ubuntu: I am because we (co-coaches and team) are.



How to read this document

This document is designed to be a companion on the journey for the pair of coaches alongside the team. Use it to reflect with your co-coach and register your ideas and learnings to strengthen your repertoire and impact as a team coach.

The reflections proposed here are based on the assumption that you have already been on a self-development journey and have already spent time reflecting on the elements pertinent to who you are as a team coach, how you coach teams and why.

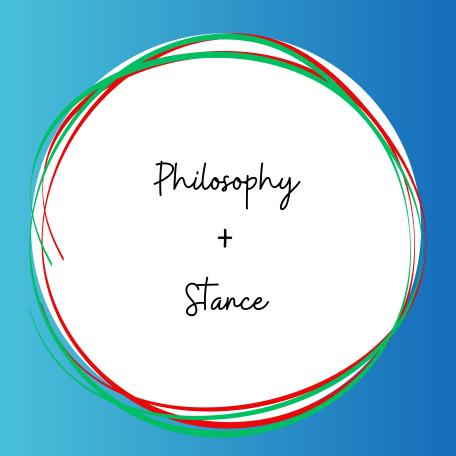
We were guided by Georgina Woudstra's work and the TCS competencies as our foundation for this journal.



TCS Team Coaching Wheel. Woudstra, 2021

The Center

who you are as a team coach



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Our basic frame of reference starts with the team coaching competencies wheel created by Georgina Woudstra, MCC, ACTC. We carried out a questionnaire with coaches who work with co-coaches, as well as observing our classmates, listening to our teachers' observations, and our own experience during the Diploma in the Art of Team Coaching.

These elements enabled us to broaden our view of the relationship between coaches who work in pairs with teams. In this section, you'll find reflections intended to promote the maturing of the practice and the deepening of the relationship between co-coaches.

About Philosophy & Stance

TCS Definition: Embodies a coaching mindset.

Reflection Time:

First, pay attention to what is important to you before inviting someone else to coach with you. Consider the following questions individually and then collectively with your co-coach:

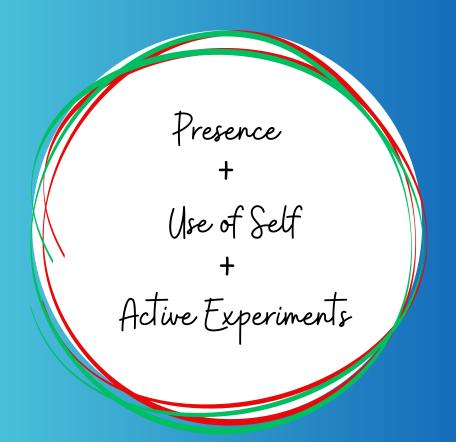
- Why call a co-coach?
- What is the experience that the team needs?
- What do you need to keep you on track?
- What are your triggers when coaching?
- What strengths do you bring? What is the balance that the other person brings?

Recommendation:

- Invest time to get to know each other, remembering contact before contract.
- A key consideration to start the co-coaching relationship is an awareness of each other's philosophy and stance. What are your differences? Where are you aligned?
- Remember to build physiological safety together from the start.
- Discuss joint supervision with your co-coach, beginning this at the start of the relationship.

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

The Meta Skills



Presence

TCS Definition: Ability to be fully present and conscious to create a spontaneous relationship with the team.

Reflection Time:

- 1. What is the 'typical' internal condition you bring to the sessions? How do you feel? What is your mindset? How about for your co-coach?
- 2. What is the combined presence the co-coaches have?
- 3. What is the impact of presence on the co-coaching relationship and the team?

Recommendations

- 1. Observe and be aware of the impact on each other and the team.
- 2. Think of the model "Self-Team-Situation" and then expand to consider "Self-Pair (of Co-coaches) Team-Situation".
- 3. Be aware of the flow between each part of the relationship.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Use of Self

TCS Definition: Ability to self-support and to make use of self as an instrument of change. Reflective practice - with questions to broaden awareness.

Reflection Time:

- 1. What sensations, feelings and emotions do you have/feel when working with your co-coach?
- 2. Are you expressing everything you think and feel to your cocoach as a source of learning?

Recommendations

- 1. Pay attention to your somatic.
- 2. Be aware of parallel process.
- 3. Access mode 2 and 3 to help create awareness between cocoaches in service of the work.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Active Experiments

TCS Definition: Ability to create active experiments to illustrate the team's process and allow the team to discover new ways of working together.

Reflection Time:

- 1. What does creativity mean to you? And to your co-coach?
- 2. How comfortable are you with your co-coach to invite the team to do something different, i.e. active experiments? This might include an experiment in decision making, feedback, etc.
- 3. What do you need to agree on (alignment) in order to have active experiments between the co-coaches and the team?

Recommendations:

- 1. Encourage your co-coach to go to their own learning edge and the collective learning edge for the co-coaches. Build the safety net with the co-coach.
- 2.In the co-coaching relationship, build active experiments generative creativity.
- 3. Experiment with "sidebar conversations" in front of the team.
- 4. Hold the space and support the co-coach during active experiments partnership and nonjudgement, keep the learning in mind.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

Setting the Foundation



Ethical Practice

TCS Definition: Understands coaching ethics and standards and applies them in all team coaching situations.

Reflection Time:

- 1. Have you had the courageous conversation about ethics with your co-coach? Are you in alignment?
- 2. What do you do when a sensitive topic emerges? Examples might include mental health or harassment in the team, between the co-coaches or both.
- 3. What does conflict of interest mean to the co-coaches?

Recommendations:

- 1. Take time to create an awareness on the role of each coach, appropriate boundaries, and the power differential that might exist.
- 2. Together, discuss some what happens if... scenarios.
- 3.Be aware of assumptions and the impact on the co-coach's relationship.
- 4. If you play more than one role within the organization (coach, facilitator, consultant), be aware of boundaries between roles.
- 5. When pairing an external with an internal coach, be aware of radically different starting points and be sensitive to increasing awareness on both sides as necessary.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Contracting

TCS Definition: Ability to understand the required change and agree with the team on the coaching process and relationship.

Reflection Time:

- 1. Contracting is crucial to the success of the relationship to determine how the co-coaches will work together. What is implicit that needs to be made explicit? What assumptions need to be explored?
- 2. How would you apply the 6P's to the co-coaching relationship?
- 3. How will you hold one another accountable to what you have agree upon?

Recommendations:

- 1. Always be contracting with each other! Create space to recontract if necessary.
- 2. Consider using psychometric tests to prepare each coach and create inputs for co-creating the relationship.
- 3. Pause and check assumptions and different perspectives to create common grounds for learning.
- 4. Get alignment amongst co-coaches on your process. Be clear on roles and responsibilities.
- 5. Be clear on which coach the client belongs to.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

Co-Creating the Relationship



Effective Relating

TCS Definition: Ability to be open, "in the moment", actively available and responsive.

Reflection Time:

- 1. When there is a point of decision, how do we know where to go?
- 2. Are we ready to be curious about ourselves and our co-coach? What might we be projecting or transferring into the relationship that belongs to your partner, or team? This might require space for sensing our thoughts and emotions, listening to our intuition and checking in, conversing with your co-coach.
- 3. How do you like to receive and provide feedback?

Recommendations:

- 1. For the co-coaches, it is important that they can and continue to relate with each other. "I'm ok, you're ok." "I'm not trying to change the other person."
- 2. Watch for the non-verbal communication the dance between each other.
- 3. During the team coaching experience, notice your dual philosophy and stance. How does this dynamic impact the pair, team and situation? Share your appreciation for the unique skills and qualities your co-coach brings. Recognize their natural talents.
- 4. Following each team coaching session share clear, specific feedback around areas for growth and development. Be open and honest about what worked well and what could be different. Acknowledge each other's contribution without judgement or attachment. Always assume positive intent.
- 5. Understand and support each other to operate through their strengths in the moment, as well as stretching our range.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Psychological Safety & Trust

TCS Definition: Ability to create a safe and supportive environment for team learning and growth.

Reflection Time:

- 1. How psychologically safe do you feel with your co-coach? Do you trust and respect them? How do you know? Why is this important to you?
- 2. What matters to you in this relationship?
- 3. What are you assuming about working in pairs? What is implicit that needs to be made explicit?
- 4. What commitment do we need from each other and how will we hold each other to account?

Recommendations:

- 1. Before working with a co-coach, dedicate time and space getting to know each other. Seek to understand the other persons philosophy and stance. Learn about their personal values. You will each bring a unique style.
- 2. Remember that *contact before contract* is key to the success of a co-coaching relationship. Create time for this ahead of each team engagement.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

Fostering Effective Communication



Direct Communication

TCS Definition: Ability to communicate in coaching interactions clearly and directly.

Reflection Time:

- 1. How will you role model effective direct communication between co-coaches? What are your individual and combined strengths?
- 2.In what circumstances does your communication become less clear and direct when working in pairs and with teams?
- 3. What triggers you and how is this expressed? What do you need from your co-coach if this should occur? What can you offer your co-coach in these situations?

Recommendations:

- 1. Practice crisping, reframing, and summarizing the other coach's contributions.
- 2. Agree if and how you will provide feedback to your co-coach in action and on action.
- 3. Pay attention to how effective your communication has been during the debrief with your co-coach. Identify what is working well and what needs to be different going forward.
- 4. Pay attention to and talk through your own and collective assumptions and resentments.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Powerful Questions

TCS Definition: Ability to ask questions that provoke insight and learning.

Reflection Time:

- 1. Spend time reflecting on these questions from the perspective of the co-coaching relationship.
- 2. Notice what you are aware of and what it is like to be aware of that.

Recommendations:

- 1. What questions might have moved the team further forward or deeper in their exploration? Ask your co-coach how they might have framed the powerful question.
- 2. Before and after, take the time to ask questions and explore different perspectives.
- 3. Ask powerful questions between the coaches and be open to the team to answer if they don't know the answer.
- 4. Be careful of stacking multiple questions. Choose one question for the team to answer.
- 5. "Yes, and" how do you land different perspectives on the team?

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Active Listening

TCS Definition: Ability to listen deeply to team members, the team and the voice of the system, in the context of the client's desired change.

Reflection Time:

- 1. Regarding mode 1, 2 and 3: which mode are you more comfortable with? Should you agree on modes before (contracting)?
- 2. How would you describe your stance when active listening?

Recommendations:

- 1. Be intentional when having a conversation with your co-coach.
- 2. Be curious and ask questions about the co-coach's perspective.
- 3. Remember to check assumptions.
- 4. Use this in the debriefing for example when having a side bar conversation—actively listening to each other.
- 5. Managing Ego and Attention SPTS (Self-Pair-Team-Situation)

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

Working w/ Systems & Dynamics



Working with Power & Authority

TCS Definition: Ability to effectively understand and work with the power and authority structures in the team's system.

Reflection Time:

- 1. How does each co-coach see and understand power and authority?
- 2. Who holds the contract with the client?
- 3. Is there any difference in roles and responsibilities?
- 4. How do the co-coaches make decisions?

Recommendations:

- 1.Be aware of the power and authority between the co-coaches contracted relationship and perception (gender, age, language, experience, background etc.).
- 2. Take time to understand each co-coach's preference around decision-making.
- 3. Be attentive to the team's opinions of the power and authority of the co-coaches. How does it show up when coaching the team?

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Engaging with the wider context and Stakeholders expectations

TCS Definition: Engaging with the wider context and the stakeholder expectations is the ability to work holistically, bringing the systems in which the team is operating into the room.

Reflection Time:

- 1. Who hired the co-coaches?
- 2. Is there a third party involved? What is the contract in place?
- 3. What are the boundaries of confidentiality and what will be reported to the third party?

Recommendations:

- 1. Appreciate and acknowledge the impact that the co-coaches will have on the system.
- 2.Be aware of individual coach's wider system and how each cocoach's system connects/merges - to make a collective system.
- 3.Be aware of the co-coaches' stakeholders if hired by a 3rd party/consultant firm, etc.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Relationships

TCS Definition: Ability to serve the team collectively in a system whilst acknowledging an individual's interests, strengths, values and needs.

Reflection time:

- 1. What do you know about yourself in relationships generally?
- 2. What type of person or team dynamic can potentially trigger you?
- 3. What coping strategies do you have to manage this?
- 4. How can you and your co-coach support each other?

Recommendations:

- 1. Continuously talk to your co-coach about your relationship and how it currently is for both of you.
- 2.Be mindful of your feelings and how you might express them when you get triggered.
- 3. Sharing different perspectives and interpretations from each cocoach to the individuals in the team of their system.
- 4. Co-coaches should foster/nurture the relationship of each other and be aware of their own system.
- 5. Giving and receiving support to deal with things in the co-coach relationship. This can help to make meaning of whatever is going on and get back to the team. (overtly and privately).
- 6. Pay attention to, invite, and respect each of the co-coach's strengths nothing is right or wrong just different.
- 7. Check-in on team goals (in live time) role modeling the relationship of different perspectives but together, the cocoach is in service of the team and not taking them down individual paths!

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

How can you foster an effective co-coaching relationship?

Facilitating Learning & Growth



Creating Awareness

TCS Definition: Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information to help the client gain awareness as a catalyst for change.

Reflection time

- 1. How do you typically create additional awareness e.g. debrief conversations, check points? Have you put these processes in place?
- 2. What would you like more awareness about? Can you set a contract with your co-coach to ask them for feedback on this?

Recommendations.

- 1.Be clear about what impact you typically have on teams skim through past reflections and psychometrics so you have this in mind.
- 2. Notice patterns between co-coaches, your interactions, and how they might interact with team behavior. (co-coaches feedback to each other).
- 3. Joint supervision for the co-coaches is imperative.
- 4. Co-coaches perspectives, when shared add the greatest value to create awareness.
- 5. Share the "heavyweight" and responsibility of impacting the room by inviting the other co-coach in.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?

Generating Results

TCS Definition: Ability to co-create, with the team, ongoing learning and action that will support the team in achieving their desired coaching outcomes.

Reflection time

- 1. What does success look like?
- 2. What are my strengths? How do I leverage them effectively?
- 3. What do I want to do better? What do I not yet know? What do I want to work on?

Recommendations

- 1. Bring into the initial contracting conversation with your cocoach: What is your professional objective?
- 2. Supporting each other to improve each coach's practice.
- 3. Identify goals which will help you to develop and grow.

- 1. What did you learn? And your co-coach?
- 2. What would you like to do different next time?



Final Reflection

If team coaching is an art, coaching teams in pairs is a fine art. It requires presence and the ability to embrace a coaching mindset first and foremost. Together.

We would like to thank Georgina Woudstra and Allard de Jong for demonstrating the beautiful dance of co-coaching. We would also like to express our appreciation to John McKay, Mary Morand, and our diploma colleagues for creating the space to practice and grow.

We hope this journal helps many coaches who decide to coach teams in pairs to better understand each other, serving their own development and the development of the team they are working with.

After all,
I am because we are.
Our best wishes to you.
Team Ubuntu

As you wrap up your coaching engagement, reflect on...

How are you leaving at the end of the engagement?

How does your experience enrich your philosophy and stance?

What are you grateful for?