1 Setting the Scene

What is coaching (and mentoring)?

It is customary for the initial chapter of a book to set out the scene, to let the reader know what to expect, to provide some clarification and even definitions of the topic. When I first planned this book, that's what I expected to do. I was assuming that there would emerge, before long, some agreed ways of categorizing and defining various types of **coaching**, including how to differentiate it from **mentoring**.

Time has passed and the coaching and mentoring profession is probably even more confusing than it was. There are many more books available and many more coaching formats. The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), of which I was a founder member and then President as it spread across Europe, made a policy decision to refer to **coaching/ mentoring** as a single term. At least, in that way, we felt that people would be prompted to spell out their definitions rather than realizing too late that they had been discussing different things.

Hence, I'm writing this book for you regardless of the type of coaching or mentoring you engage in. I believe that **supervision** and **self-reflection** (both of which I *will* define) are valuable to anyone who engages in an activity that is intended to contribute to the development of another human being. Such activities include approaches other than coaching – consulting and therapy come to mind – but I will concentrate on coaching and I will also invite you to explore the boundaries of coaching and how these influence the processes of reflection and supervision.

I considered including at this point a list of all the labels that are applied to coaching, such as life coaching, sports coaching, executive coaching, and so on. I decided against this in case I left out the label you prefer to use and hence influenced you against reading the rest of the book. Instead I will provide a framework later in this chapter that is intended to help you think about the approach you apply, what distinguishes it from other formats, and what the implications might be for your practice, reflection and supervision.

What is supervision?

This I will define. I think of it as two words – super and vision – as in supervision. To me, it is the process of helping you to step back, metaphorically,

from your work so that you can take a meta-perspective, or broader view, of your practice.

This use of the term 'supervision' is of course very different to the way it is customarily used in industry to mean the activities of supervisors or first-line managers when they watch to see that work is undertaken in the way that their organizations (or said supervisors) expect. There may be elements of this managerial function within coaching supervision but the emphasis will be quite different, as will the way it is implemented. People are unlikely to re-view their development needs openly with supervisors who may later in-corporate such information into an annual appraisal and use it to justify a lower salary.

A helpful way to consider the nature of supervision is through three elements described around twenty years ago by Brigid Proctor (1986): nor-mative, formative and restorative. I have renamed restorative as supportive as I think this better captures what is needed for coaches, who tend to encounter less 'distressing' client issues than the counsellors that Brigid was writing for.

For the normative aspects, the supervisor has a responsibility for ensuring that the coach is practising in ways that are competent and ethical. This includes checking that the coach is working within whatever professional, organizational and national rules and laws apply. In other words, it is about ensuring that the coach is behaving as a good coach should and meeting the norms of the profession.

When it comes to formative, the supervisor has a role in the development and growth of the coach and may do this via feedback, direct guidance, role modelling or a variety of other options. The aim is to develop the skills, theoretical knowledge, personal attributes, self-awareness, etc. of the coach so that the coach becomes increasingly competent.

For the supportive element, the supervisor is there to support the coach when the inevitable doubts and insecurities arise, and to challenge and confront (supportively) when the coach's personal issues become evident. This includes providing a safety valve for those times when a coach unwit-tingly seems to pick up the issues that the client has and starts behaving as if these are the coach's own issues. It also includes prompting the coach to see a therapist whenever the coach's own issues are getting in the way.

> *Harry and Betty*
> Harry was the supervisor for Betty. Both of them worked within a public sector organization that provided coaching for individuals who were unemployed and hoping to set up their own businesses.
>
> For the normative element, Harry was expected to check that Betty was staying within the boundaries set by the organization, which included providing up-to-date information on grants avail-able, but excluded providing direct assistance with form-filling to

claim them. Hence, Harry needed to check regularly that Betty had not only read all grant-change announcements but also that she could explain what such changes meant. Betty was aware that failure to stay up-to-date could mean that Harry insisted on her doing extra study time, and, if that did not rectify the problem, on Betty ceasing to coach until the issue was resolved.

When it came to formative, the organization had a clear policy of developing their staff. Harry was therefore expected to provide feedback, with advice too where appropriate, so that Betty could continually improve her coaching skills. This led to Harry concentrating on a couple of areas where Betty lacked experience.

Finally, for supportive, there were times when Betty's clients became despondent and doubted their abilities to set up successful businesses. Some of this seemed to transfer over to Betty, who began to doubt her own abilities as a coach. Harry was there to listen, empathize and prompt Betty to keep things in perspective, and reassure her that she was doing a good job.

The attention paid to the three elements of normative, formative and supportive will vary according to the type of coaching being practised and the nature of the supervisor/supervisee relationship and context. I am intending at this point in the book to give you just the basic model, which I will develop later. So, in Chapter 2, I will prompt you to consider the balance that is right for you and Chapter 3 will provide some ideas on how you find a suitable supervisor. In Chapter 3, I will also prompt you to think about how these elements may conflict with each other.

Peer supervision, intervision

You can, of course, engage in a process of taking a meta-perspective with a colleague instead of with a formal supervisor. This is often referred to as peer supervision, and sometimes called intervision. You can still use the three elements as a framework.

When it comes to normative, it is not appropriate for someone to accept responsibility for checking that a colleague is doing their job properly. However, with a strong enough relationship, you can certainly draw your colleagues' attention to any potential shortcomings in their professional activity.

On formative, there may be a significant contribution to the supervisee's learning because people often pay far more attention to a colleague's opinions than they do when an authority figure is involved. Comments from those in authority may well be dismissed on the grounds they have no idea

what the job is really like. The same comment cannot be dismissed so easily when it comes from a colleague who is actually doing the same job as the supervisee.

Colleagues can be highly supportive *and* challenging. They become involved in similar situations so can empathize from the basis of their own experiences, which also makes it easier for them to spot and challenge inappropriate or inauthentic responses. However, if you engage in peer supervision, you will need to guard against relating too strongly and losing your objectivity.

What is reflective practice?

Reflective practice refers to the same concept as super-vision but without the involvement of a supervisor or colleague. You can reflect as you review your practice across three timeframes – past, present and future. When you reflect on the past, you consider what you have done; how you and the client behaved; what the outcomes were; how you might have acted differently and what that might have led to. Reflecting on the past can be done from memory but may be enhanced considerably through the use of recordings.

When I began training as a transactional analyst, I was introduced to the notion of tape-recording my work and then analysing it afterwards. This was many years ago and taping was an unusual thing to do, even for counsellors and therapists. I quickly saw the benefit of the process even though I had to steel myself to play the tapes to colleagues and my supervisor. I spent a lot of time noticing with horror how many significant aspects of the interaction with the client I'd missed. I was often shocked to realize that I had completed missed something the client had said, or I had failed to pick up at the time on the tone the client used. I also noticed there were parts where I could now, belatedly, identify much better interventions than I had chosen at the time. I persevered and gradually learned to accept these insights and improve my competence for the future instead of beating myself up over my perceived inadequacies.

As you become accustomed to reflecting, it becomes easier to continue the process while with a client and therefore to reflect on the present. Practice builds an ability to run a 'stream of consciousness' reflection in the background of the mind, while still paying attention to the client. You may find it easier to reflect in the present if you choose a simple framework that you can bring to mind without needing to refer to notes. This is what led me to devise the donkey bridges I explained earlier. For instance, using the **C5P5A5** that I will describe in Chapter 5 means that I can easily recall that I want to pay attention to the five aspects starting with a C during the early stages of coaching, then shift to five aspects labelled with a P during the middle stages,

and finish off paying attention to five things starting with an A as we reach the end of the session.

The point of reflection is to enhance capability, so time spent reflecting on how to behave in future situations allows you to identify more options and to plan for increased flexibility, with specific clients and more generally. NLP has a technique called future pacing, in which we are invited to go into the future in our imagination. The more vividly we imagine the future scene, the more real it feels. Our brain then records the future scene as if it has already happened. That way, when we reach that specific point in the future, it feels familiar to us and we are therefore more likely to behave in the way we previously chose. This can increase considerably the benefit we get from reflecting.

In addition to the significant learning that comes from reflecting and reviewing, the supervision you receive will be far more effective when you have prepared for it via a process of self-reflection. Prior analysis of your own practice saves supervision time and enables supervisors to operate at a higher level of intensity when they support and challenge you.

> *Michael*
> Michael obtained client agreement to tape-record the sessions. After each session, Michael listened to the tape and noticed that sometimes the client spoke so quietly, and Michael interrupted so frequently, that it was as if the client was irrelevant. Michael then selected one occasion on the tape when he seemed to be ignoring the client and analysed what he could hear. Michael realized there was a sequence where the client made a comment and immediately commented that 'it's probably nothing'. Michael also then recognized that he felt irritated when he heard that comment, and responded by hurrying the client on to talk about something else.
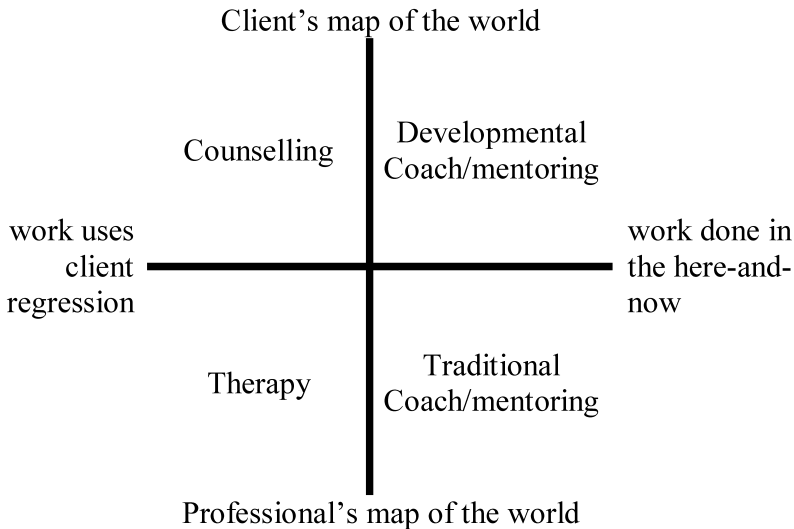>
> On listening to more of the tape, Michael could hear more apparent 'throwaway' remarks by the client, after most of which Michael talked about something else. Having identified this pattern, Michael was able to plan some other options for the next and future sessions with this client. These included pausing from time to time to encourage the client to say more, confronting occasionally by pointing out that what the client says is 'probably *not* nothing', and questioning occasionally to draw the client's attention to their habitual throwaway remarks. Michael was careful to plan to use confronting and questioning only sometimes, as to do so every time the client made a throwaway remark could well have seemed punitive.
>
> Michael also thought about how interrupting the client had been meeting his own needs and realized that he was working at the

limit of his professional competence with this client so was colluding in overlooking some of the client's issues. Having recognized this meant Michael was able to initiate some support and advice from more experienced colleagues.

Positioning your practice

Before going on to think about your own reflection and supervision needs, take some time to review the format of coaching you apply. What 'type' of coach are you? How is what you do distinguishable from counselling or therapy? What are the boundaries for your work with clients? Figure 1.1 shows a way of thinking about this, based on two key dimensions: whose model of the world, and how much in the here-and-now. Once you've read my explanation of the figure, there are two activities: one set of prompts for positioning your practice and another to help you clarify your reflection and supervision requirements.

Client's map of the world

Counselling	Developmental Coach/mentoring

work uses client regression ———————— work done in the here-and-now

Therapy	Traditional Coach/mentoring

Professional's map of the world

Figure 1.1   Positioning your practice

1 Whose model of the world underpins the work?

Are you working to your own model of the world, with you as the professional, helping the clients to prepare for a future in which they behave in line with the expectations of society (or their organizations)? Are you aiming to be the 'good enough' parent figure or mentor, who interacts with the clients in

ways that include role-modelling and providing the kind of experiences the clients may have lacked access to previously?

Or are you intending to be 'non-directive', working within the clients' maps of the world, avoiding any role-modelling or any hint of influence? Are you taking care to identify and set aside your own ideas and opinions? Within an organizational context, is there agreement that the clients may be encouraged to consider options that involve leaving employment – even when they are valued employees?

2 Is the work done in the here-and-now or is the client re-experiencing the past?

Do you aim to have 'here-and-now', reality-based conversations with your clients, during which they are invited to consider various options that may originate from your map of the world or theirs? For instance, a client may propose new career options that you have no experience of, so the two of you then review potential sources of information. Or you may make a suggestion based on your knowledge of a specific vacancy within the company but prompt the client to ensure it is the client's own decision about this rather than simply accepting your proposal.

On the other hand, you may work more deeply with clients, allowing them to regress so that they re-experience events from their past, complete with the original emotions being replayed now and having the same impact they had in the past. We all regress from time to time without realizing it, such as when we sit down in a classroom and feel like we're back in school. If we had a traumatic experience at school, the feelings we replay may be hard to handle. Working in this way requires the ability and resources to provide a secure holding environment so that clients are kept safe while they explore sensitive issues.

Therapists often use involuntary **regression** as a way to enable a client to surface issues from the past that are limiting current functioning. I once heard this described as 'jacking up the house while the client re-arranges the poor positioning of the bricks in the basement'. Note that you can still work with the past without the client regressing. Clients can recall events and talk about them in the here-and-now, so that any strong emotions experienced in the past may be remembered but not felt again with the same intensity.

Four broad approaches

These two dimensions allow us to consider our work in terms of four broad approaches: (1) traditional coaching; (2) developmental coaching; (3) therapy; and (4) counselling. Clearly, there will be times when what we do does

not fit neatly into such a box. There may also be counsellors and therapists who do not feel my descriptions of their practice do them justice. However, from the point of view of a coach, this framework will enable you to reflect on how you work and hence clarify your boundaries.

Traditional coaching

I consider traditional coaching to be those ways of working where coaches have some special expertise and/or experience that equips them to act as a role-model or expert adviser. Typically, the organization wishes to have talented individuals developed so they can fulfil defined future roles, or to have someone coached in specific tasks. The mentors or coaches know what competent performance looks like so they decide when coachees or mentees have attained the necessary standard. Note that the recipients are not usually referred to as clients within this approach.

Coaches operating in this traditional format are often highly successful in the areas in which they are coaching. Thus, mentors are frequently senior managers who have demonstrated their ability to operate effectively within the organization. Coaches are likely to be leading practitioners of the skills they teach, albeit that they may have moved on from active participation into coaching newcomers.

Although this approach is run on a here-and-now basis, with the clients being invited to consider what they are learning and review this with the coach, there is still an assumption, often unspoken, that the coach knows best. It is, therefore, the coach's map of the world that counts – this is generally because of the coach's increased awareness of corporate norms and requirements.

Developmental coaching

Developmental coaching is the term I use when the work is based in the here-and-now, with coach and client interacting in logical, discussion-based mode. It differs from traditional coaching in terms of whose model of the world applies. Any additional skill or knowledge possessed by the coach is intentionally suppressed so that the client's map of the world takes precedence.

The coach aims to prompt clients to explore the clients' own world maps so much use is made of questioning and reflecting skills, and of encouraging clients to investigate and explore options. The coach avoids offering opinions or advice, so that responsibility for significant life and career decisions is left firmly with each client.

Organizations that operate developmental coaching schemes are those that recognize that valuable employees are more likely to stay, and work with commitment, if they are treated as gold-collar workers (Kelley 1985) – given

opportunities for continual development that are not too closely tied to their current role; invited to consider other options so that they *choose* to stay; provided with evidence that the organization is willing to invest in them.

Such organizations also realize that it is better to lose an employee and recruit a motivated replacement (and free up internal promotion opportunities) than to continue paying the salary of someone who stays in post due to fear of the unknown.

Therapy

There is, of course, any number of formats used by therapists. However, to clarify the differences from coaching, I tend to focus on the way in which therapists utilize regression in order to help clients. Hence, although much therapy will of course take place in the here-and-now, the key to significant therapeutic movement is generally in the way that the therapist responds to a client when that client regresses to childhood or to traumatic events in adulthood.

In addition to creating the holding environment I described above, the therapist acts in the role of 'good enough' parent figure, providing more appropriate responses to clients than were available to them from significant others in the past. This enables clients to work through issues while being supported. This does require, of course, that the therapist/client relationship is sufficiently well established and will continue for as long as needed – something that cannot always be guaranteed for coaching arrangements.

It also needs the therapist to have a map of the world that contains plenty of options for healthy 'parenting' behaviours, and that these cover a range of issues that may arise. It will not help the client if the therapist is shocked by the client's admissions, or cannot provide a supportive reaction. In effect, the therapist needs a map of the world that encompasses much good parenting – in this way, the therapist is able to make good the deficits in the client's experiences of interactions with others.

Counselling

There is probably as much confusion between the terms counselling and therapy as there is about coaching and mentoring. I reiterate that the descriptions I give here are my own and may be challenged. However, in the interests of clarification, I have taken the notion of non-directive forms of counselling for the fourth quadrant. It is similar to therapy in that regression by the client is likely and must be worked with. It differs from therapy in that the client's map of the world is more likely to hold sway.

At the risk of making it sound as if counselling is a 'lite' version of therapy (which it is not), it is generally the case that people seek counselling for issues

that they believe to be less serious than those for which they seek therapy. Hence, the regressing tends to be less extensive and there is therefore less need for a re-parenting type of approach. The counsellor can set aside their own world map and work instead with how the clients make meaning.

Activity 1.1   Prompts for positioning your practice

Check out where you 'fit' in the quadrants in Figure 1.1 by considering your responses to the following prompts. In addition to self-reflection, you might review your answers with a peer or supervisor:

- How comfortable are you when people regress and need patience and support?
- How aware are you of your own map of the world?
- How skilled are you at listening and empathizing?
- Do you have specific skills that you could pass on to others?
- How skilled are you at questioning and reflecting?
- Would you enjoy being a role-model?
- Do you prefer to interact with others in rational mode?
- Do you have organizational and/or business experiences to pass on to others?
- How comfortable are you about the maps that others have of the world?

Activity 1.2   Reflection and supervision needs

Having used the above prompts to consider where your practice fits onto Figure 1.1, what are the implications for your reflection and supervision arrangements?

How important are the *normative* aspects?

- Are you able to monitor yourself for competent professional practice (perhaps because you are already a recognized expert in your area of application)?
- What ethical issues might arise in your work – and can you handle these without any involvement of your peers?
- Are you a member of any professional body that requires you to have regular supervision?
- What are the expectations of your clients regarding professional oversight of your work?
- Are there any rules or regulations within your professional context about who would be acceptable as a supervisor?
- Are you a relative beginner who needs a supervisor who can be a role-model and/or provide direct advice and guidance?

How significant are the *formative* aspects?

- Have you finished learning around your area of practice? (This is not meant as a trick question – you may genuinely be 'the' expert in your area and therefore unlikely to learn more content from another.)
- Even though your skills and knowledge may be as advanced as required, how will you benefit from development of your self-awareness and personal attributes?
- Are you a relative beginner who needs a supervisor who can 'teach' you the skills and explain the theories?
- Who do you know (or know of that you could approach) that you believe would stimulate you to personal and professional growth?
- What are the expectations of your clients regarding your commitment to your own development (while you help them to develop themselves)?

How extensive are the *supportive* aspects?

- How likely are client personal issues to arise in your type of coaching practice?
- How likely are your own personal issues to intrude into your practice?
- How much will you need to be able to discuss 'difficult' clients within a safe environment?
- Might you need separate arrangements, such as your own counsellor or therapist, to handle any significant personal issues that affect your professional competence?
- Are you an experienced practitioner – do you need a supervisor who will confront you if you are tempted to stray across the boundary between providing coaching and acting as counsellor/therapist?
- Are you a relative beginner who needs a supervisor who can help you avoid the 'traps' generated by your own and a client's personal issues?

What is transference?

I had intended to include material on **transference** later in the book but realized when I came to write it that it has just as much significance for anyone who is thinking of becoming a coach as it does for their potential supervisors. I am, therefore, including it here so you can check out your responses to Activities 1.1 and 1.2.

In order to explain it, I will also be borrowing from transactional analysis (see various books by Eric Berne or mine entitled *Working it Out at Work – Understanding Attitudes and Building Relationships*) and referring to the concept of **ego states** of **Parent**, **Child** and **Adult**. In particular, I will mention Parent, Child and Controlling Parent, meaning here simply that we

behave as if we are parent-like or even as if we are clones of our own parent figures, and child-like or as if we have regressed back into our own childhood. The initial capital letters are used to signify **ego states**, which are ways in which we think, feel and behave, rather than referring to an actual parent or a real child.

Everyday use of English tells us that 'transfer' means something gets shifted across – as in footballers joining new teams. Transference occurs when clients shift across the characteristics of someone else onto the coach. So clients may project their own good or bad points onto you, which will mean that some clients like you a lot because you seem to be just like them and some clients dislike you a lot because they have invested you with their own failings – in this case, the clients probably also manage to repress any awareness of having the faults themselves. This is why it is easier to get on with people once we accept that we are not perfect ourselves. Once we recognize that we are still OK even with faults, we no longer have to project those faults onto others and can relate to people as who they really are.

Or it may be the characteristics of someone else that the clients transfer, as when they relate to coaches as if they are parents or caregivers – even to a coach who is younger than the client – or as if the coach is the client's own child, or a niece or a nephew. An interesting variation of this pattern is when a male client relates to a female coach as if she is his mother – potentially reinforced unwittingly by the coach responding as if the client really is a small boy who needs to be scolded. This reaction from the coach is termed **countertransference**. However, what is thought of as countertransference will sometimes be simply the person's own transference.

Professional helpers monitor their reactions for countertransference because this gives them valuable information about how to help their clients. If you recognize feelings of wanting to take care of the client, you can check whether this is a realistic, here-and-now reaction that is also an appropriate thing to do – or whether it is a reaction to helplessness being exhibited by the client. For instance, if a client is clearly unable to deal with being bullied by a local manager, it may be appropriate (and an organizational requirement) for you to report this to senior management. However, a strong urge on your part to intervene with the client's manager over something like management interference in a project may be outside the **contract**, part of a **psychological game** of 'Let's you and them fight'; and triggered by a combination of the client's avoidance tactics and your tendencies to act as a rescuer.

When we look more closely at transference, we can identify several formats. Michele Novellino and Carlo Moiso (1990), writing of therapy, refer to: the client merging self with the therapist; the client projecting all of the 'good' or all of the 'bad' that the client believes exists within the client onto the therapist; and triadic, where the client projects her or his own Parent ego state, the content of which has been copied from others, onto the therapist.

Petruska Clarkson (1991) wrote about different types of transference: complementary, where the client seeks a symbiotic (meaning co-dependent or sharing one set of ego states) relationship with the therapist; concordant, where the client projects aspects of self onto the therapist so client and therapist seem to be alike; destructive, which is acting out or similar and means therapy cannot proceed; and facilitative transference, where the client chooses a therapist so that the client can still use effective behaviour patterns from the past.

Applying these ideas to coaching, we can categorize on two dimensions: whether we are projecting elements of our self or of someone else (a third party) onto the person we are transacting with and whether we are projecting so that we appear to get on well with the other person or so that we have a problem relating to each other. We can then show four options as in Figure 1.2.

	project self	
	competitive	**concordant**
have problem in relating	we project elements of our own Child or Parent ego state onto the other person and then get into a competitive symbiosis about whose Child or Parent will take precedence	we project elements of our own Child or Parent ego state onto the other person and then believe they are just like us and we are empathizing with each other
	conflictual	**co-dependent**
	we project elements of 'a third party' onto the other person and then feel we must 'fight' in a Parent-Child or Child-Parent interaction	we project elements of 'a third party' onto the other person and then seek a Parent-Child or Child-Parent relationship
	project someone else	**appear to get on well together**

Figure 1.2   Transference formats

Competitive transference

In the following examples, Chris would set up a Parent–Parent competitive pattern, while Vijay would set up a Child–Child competitive pattern. Both create scenarios where there is an apparent rivalry over who gets to exhibit one particular ego state.

Chris was a client who had a tendency to 'take charge' of coaching sessions. Chris would display Controlling Parent behaviour, while at the same time believing that the coach was being overly controlling. Chris would challenge many of the coach's interventions, try to run an agenda and determine time allocations for topics, push forward decisions without giving the coach a chance to intervene, while at the same time complaining that it was the coach who was being overly controlling.

Vijay, on the other hand, would get into a competition with the coach about who was the most needy. Whenever the coach talked about needing a break or asked Vijay to take the lead in a coaching session, Vijay would feel a similar need for a break and would want the coach to take the lead in the next session. In this way, Vijay and the coach would end up competing over who was going to get taken care of while the other one did the work.

Concordant transference

In the following examples, Lauren creates a false Parent–Parent empathy while Peter opts for Child–Child empathy – in both cases the assumptions of being the same mean that the parties avoid certain topics, either because they think their opinions are the same or because they think they know how the other person feels.

Lauren worked as an external coach. When meeting new commissioning clients such as HR directors, Lauren had a tendency to assume that she had the same values about how a healthy organization should operate. This would mean that Lauren made assumptions instead of checking thoroughly to establish the commissioning client's opinions and requirements. With some, the assumptions Lauren made were close enough to reality for it to be virtually unnoticeable. However, every so often, Lauren would have major problems when it transpired later that the commissioning client had very different views. Coaching interventions undertaken by Lauren with individual clients would then turn out to be in conflict with the requirements of the organization.

There are also, of course, commissioning clients who assume the coach shares their opinions, so they commission the work and then rely on trust rather than any accurate monitoring of how the interventions are conducted. Such clients may also conclude that any shortcomings are caused by the individual clients rather than the coach being at fault.

Peter was a coach who would imagine that the client felt the same way, had the same emotional responses and wanted the same things in life, as he did. Peter would therefore feel that a very high level of empathy had been established. This would mean that Peter avoided raising the sort of topics or feedback that he would have found personally upsetting. Because of this,

the client was denied opportunities for increased self-awareness and development.

Clients may operate the same kind of transference – they then avoid telling the coach about anything that the coach might find upsetting or embarrassing. Instead, the client censors their own comments and might, for instance, be afraid to use the coach to help them review the pros and cons of leaving the organization because they believe the coach will be upset to lose their client.

Conflictual transference

Lim-Lim has grown up with an overly-controlling caregiver, with whom Lim-Lim had consistently behaved rebelliously (and been punished). Lim-Lim spent several years transferring these controlling characteristics onto managers, and being rebellious towards even the most easy-going of them. This resulted in many Parent–Child interactions in which managers tried unsuccessfully to tell Lim-Lim what to do and Lim-Lim agreed and refused to comply. Lim-Lim began working with a coach who had also grown up with a very controlling caregiver but who had opted to copy that person and therefore unwittingly began to fill the parent role that Lim-Lim seemed to need to rebel against.

Pat had children and had adopted a very Controlling Parent way of behaving towards them. When at work, Pat behaved as if other staff, especially subordinates, were really rebellious children and needed to be treated as such. This led to much conflict – even the fairly easy-going members of staff found themselves feeling resentful and rebellious over the way Pat interacted with them. Pat, of course, saw these reactions as proof of the need to treat people as children.

When someone like Lim-Lim ends up being coached by someone like Pat, they both feel that their views of how to treat people are validated.

Co-dependent transference

Due to circumstances, *Alia* has grown up without nurturing caregivers but had been aware that other children, especially those in films and TV programmes, seemed to have caring parents. Alia was therefore yearning, out of awareness, for such a parent figure. This led Alia to behave in a 'helpless' way, while transferring nurturing tendencies onto almost everyone who was older and/or more senior then herself.

At the same time, *Kim* had grown up in an overly-nurturing environment and had somehow opted to adopt very nurturing characteristics. Having practised with siblings and dolls, Kim was 'programmed' to take care of

anyone younger or more junior – so would expect to adopt a Nurturing Parent role to their 'needy' child.

Once Kim became the coach for Alia, they seemed to be locked into a Parent–Child relationship. These ways of behaving led each to believe that the other somehow completed them – in effect they shared one set of ego states.

Note that it is possible to have a healthy dependency of a real child with a real parent. This is because such a relationship reflects reality and does not involve transference – children really do need parenting until they reach a certain age. Couples may also set up functional arrangements that look like transference but are not. For example, one does the gardening and the other cares for the house. No transference is involved as long as both recognize these as *choices* – and know that they are capable of swapping tasks if necessary.

There are several ways in which we can become aware of these processes so they can be eliminated when appropriate. I've referred above to ego states – we can analyse these using questionnaires, feedback from others, role-play or similar activities – anything that helps us recognize how much time we spend in Parent or Child ego states that are reflections of the past rather than being parent or child-like behaviours that we have chosen to use based on current reality.

We can also analyse our interactions, or transactions. The transactional analysis approach uses ego states to check out whether we have com-plementary, crossed or ulterior transactions. A complementary transaction is one where our ego states seem to match, as when we engage in an Adult to Adult problem-solving conversation or match a Parent with a Child response. A crossed transaction might be when we respond to Parent from our own Parent, thereby initiating an argument, or when we respond to a rebellious Child ego state with a problem-solving invitation from Adult. An ulterior transaction is one where what is said on the surface masks some underlying dynamics, such as when we seem to be having a straightforward conversation about some aspect of the client's work while out of our awareness both we and the client are operating on the basis of an unrealistic belief in the power of the coach to miraculously change the life of the client.

Another way of identifying possible transference is to analyse our **stroking**, or recognition, patterns. Eric Berne (1964) coined the term **stroke** to mean a unit of recognition, which is any form of interaction between humans that lets someone know that their existence is recognized by another. So catching someone's eye is a low intensity stroke, speaking to them is more impactful, and hitting or hugging would be a very intense form of stroking. We exchange many strokes with clients in the course of our coaching ses-sions. Because all humans need some level of human contact, we can un-derstand this theoretically as how we give and receive our strokes and can therefore analyse the patterns.

For instance, a coach may take on quite a prominent position in a client's pattern because the experience of receiving unconditional and focused attention may be a fairly rare experience for the client. If clients lacked adequate parenting when they were growing up, they may unwittingly feel as if the coach is now making up the deficit – and come to depend on these extra strokes which they do not seem to get from anyone else. Hence you may come to feel that such clients book sessions they don't really need, or are reluctant to end the coaching arrangement even when the agreed outcomes have been achieved. It can be very tempting to hang on to such clients because they appreciate you so much.

Stroking is of course a two-way process. You may find that the strokes from clients are quite seductive. Having someone act as if you are wonderful because you are helping them can be addictive – you may be reluctant to finish the coaching arrangement at the appropriate time. Claiming feelings of loss and the need to grieve when a client moves on may well be a rationalization of your own loss of the stroking that client was giving you. It is important that you have a healthy stroking pattern in your life generally so you do not become dependent on client strokes and keep a client on just to meet your own needs.

Activity 1.3   Reflecting on transference

- Who does this person remind me of?
- How does interacting with them leave me feeling?
- Are there things I want to say to them that I'm keeping to myself?
- Do I feel drawn to reacting to them in a particular way?
- Do I wish I could behave differently towards them?
- Does the way I'm reacting to them have any similarity to ways I've behaved in the past with other people? Is that significant?
- Do I keep repeating unsatisfactory interactions with this person? Why might that be?
- Do I think this person is being childish? Or bossy? Or helpless? Or argumentative? Or any other annoying way of being?
- Do I get an urge to tell them what to do? Or take care of them? Or argue with them? Or let them take care of me? Or any other inappropriate way of behaving towards them?

The benefits of transference

We may also want to use the transference. It may seem strange to suggest this but therapists do so routinely to enhance their work with clients. A client who thinks the coach is a good parent will be more likely to act on the coach's

advice; a client who thinks the coach is 'bad' can be allowed to work through their issues without being punished by the coach. Awareness is the key – once transference and/or countertransference are recognized, the professional uses this knowledge to plan more effective ways of interacting, as outlined in Figure 1.3.

<div align="center">

project self

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	competitive	concordant	
	Parent – Parent check out the other person's views and paraphrase these; avoid direct disagreement	**Parent/Parent** look for aspects where you have different opinions; emphasize these if necessary	
	Child-Child acknowledge the other person's stated needs; avoid sympathizing and avoid playing 'My problems are bigger than yours'	**Child/Child** look for areas where you experience different feelings; emphasize these if necessary	
have problem in relating	conflictual	co-dependent	**appear to get on well together**
	Parent-Child clarify what they want you to do and explore their rationale for this; avoid making excuses or arguing	**Parent-Child** look out for this when someone seems intent on taking care of you; thank them politely (and profusely) and explain you're fine without assistance	
	Child-Parent have a clear rationale when you ask for help; check you do not expect someone else to make your decisions for you	**Child-Parent** watch out for times when you wish someone would take care of you; check whether this is appropriate and, if not, do it yourself	

<div align="center">

project someone else

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Figure 1.3   Avoiding transference

I can think of many instances where a client or supervisee has behaved as if I were a father-figure. Although I'm female, I have a strong inclination towards acting like a macho male which I do my best to convert into positive controlling behaviour. Being aware of this allows me to act as a role model to let the individual acquire positive ways of being firm when a client has to deal with, for example, an unreasonable colleague.

On other occasions I am perceived as a mother-figure and can then adopt a nurturing style to encourage supervisees or clients to be more confident about their own abilities – such as by expressing confidence in a nervous individual's ability to make a good presentation.

I may also need to avoid transference when I realize that a client or supervisee is making unrealistic assumptions about shared views. In such cases I will explain that I am about to play devil's advocate as a way of prompting the individual to consider other views – or I may of course play devil's advocate without explaining first.

Another example is when I spot the signs of a competitive transference by a client or supervisee. The trap (that I still fall into sometimes) is to end up arguing my point. The antidote is to spend time clarifying the client's or supervisee's ideas and options; this means the individual can't argue with me and I avoid getting into countertransference.