



## Ancient Wisdom and Coaching

### From the Desks of the Co-Editors

The editorial board of this journal (*IJCO*) is committed to an ongoing and open discussion of critical issues facing the coaching industry. Nothing is out-of-bounds, nothing is sacrosanct. There is no orthodoxy. In keeping with this point of view, we continue a conversation in this issue that was begun in the first issue of this journal (in 2003).<sup>1</sup> What is the relationship between Western notions of coaching, and the Ancient Wisdom Traditions? What can each bring to the richness of the other? How can they critique and perhaps complete one another?

In 1950, in the world of Western psychology, there were two orthodoxies: psychoanalysis and behaviorism. Then, in the 1960's, a third force (led by Rogers and Maslow) entered to critique both. What emerged was a new school (or group of schools) called transpersonal psychology. Is there such a thing, or might there be such a thing as "transpersonal organizational coaching"? If so, what might it look like? What might be the promise and the dangers of such a thing?

This issue of *IJCO* is dedicated to the exploration of ancient wisdom traditions and the implications to be drawn from an appreciation of these traditions with regard to the much more modern (or perhaps postmodern) practices of organizational coaching. We begin this exploration with a brief article written by one of us (Willats) which challenges the basic assumption that these two worlds have much to say to one another. This provocative article is followed by Friedman's article regarding ways in which the processes of spiritual and pastoral counseling can be applied to organizational coaching, Bergquist and Goldberg's article regarding the application of another source of ancient wisdom (the Enneagram), and Christopher McCullough's article regarding the use of philosophical counseling processes in organizational coaching.

We conclude this assessment of the interplay between ancient wisdom and organizational coaching with an analysis that the two of us prepared regarding the relationship between organizational coaching and one

specific ancient tradition that is found in most cultures—namely, the tradition of sanctuary. Finally, Marcia Reynolds provides an insightful review of one of the classic representations of ancient wisdom—Martin Buber's *I and Thou*. Completing this issue of *IJCO* is the second in a series of three dialogues regarding organizational coaching that features senior practitioners in the field. This specific dialogue occurs between Val Williams and Joan Wright and focuses on leadership and the future of executive coaching.

We hope that you enjoy this unique interweaving of two worlds—they are both worlds that we respect and that offer us many insights regarding our own lives and work.

William Bergquist

Bruce Willats

### Endnote

<sup>1</sup> John Lazar and Bill Bergquist, "Alignment Coaching: The Missing Element in Business Coaching," *International Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2003, 1(1), 14-27.

---

### The *IJCO* Logo: What Does It Represent

The co-executive editors of *IJCO* have been asked about the logo that adorns all covers of the journal, as well as subscription forms, policy statements, etc. This logo comes from a much larger work of art—a statue called *Kabala*--that was created by Julian Harr. The logo represents two birds (vision), two hands (support) or two flames (energy). We think that vision, support and energy are three of the key ingredients in effective organizational coaching practices.

- William Bergquist

- John Lazar