

**Book review**

# Foundations of Professional Coaching: Models, Methods and Core Competencies By James Gavin

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## Article history

Accepted for publication: 11 January 2022

Published online: 01 February 2022



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Published by Oxford Brookes University

(Champaign, IL, USA. Human Kinetics. 2021. £68.00 (ISBN: 978-1-71820-083-8) 312 pages)

The intention of this book examining the foundations of professional coaching is to pull together all the practical wisdom that is essential to an understanding of coaching practice. It is an extremely comprehensive, useful and well written text that is first and foremost a book for practitioners. The author advises working through the text from the beginning through to the end in order to gain an understanding of the evolution of the profession and then an understanding of the essential models, principles, competences and skills that comprise the foundations of the field.

That said, however, I can see that this is not just a book for novice coaches, it is a book for all. I found every chapter most stimulating and there was something new to learn in each. I even learned from Gavin's reading and interpretation of some of my own writing!

Foundations of Professional Coaching is an oversized book aptly reflecting the oversized topic that is professional coaching. The book is divided into three parts. After part one, examining the roots of coaching and the importance of goals, part two comprises two chapters that survey the 'guiding models', including well known change models as well as the popular coaching models such as GROW. Part three, by far the biggest section, moves on from models to the skills and attributes that the coach brings to the partnership. These include ethical awareness, elements of partnership agreement, trust and listening. I particularly liked the Art of Inquiry chapter that brought together so much knowledge in one place. There is also an important chapter relating to the coach's voice, which explores aspects such as sharing feedback, challenging the client, self-disclosure and making direct inputs. The book ends with a consideration of coaching as a way of being which is grounded appropriately in humility.

The author, James Gavin directs and teaches in an International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredited training programme and throughout the book, there are explicit links to how the various features and properties that comprise professional coaching connect to the eight ICF Core Competencies. This feature is a most valuable reminder of the proficiencies and aptitudes that underpin one of the most trusted coach accreditations worldwide.

Tables, vignettes, summaries and appendices are included throughout the book and there is also a very useful glossary. The coaching profession has become flooded with a variety of terms, adopted from different fields and this addition is most welcome as an attempt to clarify terminology that has been integrated into the coaching lexicon from other disciplines.

My favourite feature of this book is its open yet academic quality which is established at the very beginning of each chapter by the 'My Story' reflection pieces. These disclosures are welcome gifts that highlight the author's thinking in relation to the topic under discussion in that chapter and set the honest, humble tone for the whole volume.