

**Trust and Presence as Executive Coaching Competencies:
Reviewing Literature to Inform Practice and Future Research**

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Abstract

Selected literature on *trust* (relational examined and reliability) and *presence* (a dimension of self awareness and self regulation) are using the adult learning theory lens of learning from and through experience to expand what is known about building trust and enacting presence as executive coaching competencies in this emergent field of professional practice; and importantly to inform a future research agenda. For each area of literature the origins, definitions, descriptions of key components (or taxonomies), and sampling of existing research are presented and discussed. The paper concludes with a discussion of insights combined with implications for HRD practice and future research.

Keywords: trust, coach presence, and executive coaching

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The explosive growth in the field of coaching over the past decade is one response to major shifts occurring in the world of work — e.g., globalization; rapid advances in transportation and communication technology; hyper-competition; demanding expectations of shareholders, financial markets, and customers, and changing demographics (Pietersen, 2002). Consequently, learning demands for leaders today have never been greater, nor have been the stakes associated with success or failure. Trust has been linked to many of these trends as a result of heightened uncertainty and complexity (Lewicki, McAllister, & Bies, 1998).

Brotman, Liberi & Wasylyshyn (1998) call for standards and accountability by researchers and practitioners alike to “inform and educate corporate decision makers about the core skills, competencies, experience, and related professional issues critical to successful outcomes” of executive coaching (p. 40). Additionally, Corporate Leadership Council reported that while organizations around the world indicate a growing excitement about the potential impact of executive coaching as a leadership development intervention, it is also a costly preference showing inconsistent implementation and returns to date (Dalrymple 2003).

Kilburg (1996) positions “executive coaching as an emerging competency in the practice of consultation” in the forward of a special issue of *Consulting Psychology* (Finkelman, 2010, p. 59) devoted to the topic. Further, more than a decade later, executive coaching combined with team development was named as one of five new and emerging practices in consulting psychology. We focus in this paper on whether and how the literature on *trust* and *presence*, informed by the perspective of learning from and through experience, might support the professional practice of executive coaches working in and for organizations. Our focus is framed

by experience associated with launching a university-based, graduate level coaching certification program during the Fall of 2007 designed to prepare seasoned professionals interested in entering this growing field of practice or enhancing their current capabilities. In this paper we draw on The Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching Programs' (2007) definition of executive and organizational coaching:

...A development process that builds a leader's capabilities to achieve professional and organizational goals.

The focus of this form of coaching is on leaders who are in a position to make a significant contribution to the mission and purpose of their organization. This form of coaching is conducted through one-on-one and group interactions; is driven by evidence and the inclusion of data from multiple perspectives; and is built on a solid foundation of mutual trust and respect. Coaches, clients, and their organizations work in partnership to help achieve agreed-upon goals. Table 1 lists competencies that various professional coaching associations suggest are critical to success with highlighted references to *trust* and *presence*.

Problem Statement, Purpose, and Research Questions

The problem this paper addresses grows out of a lack of a clearly documented theory and research to support the use of two commonly-espoused, core coaching competencies of trust and coaching presence. As highlighted in Table 1, claims are made about the centrality of *trust* and *presence* as relational competencies needed to help clients achieve the results they truly desire. Our focus in this paper centers on the core question: *What evidence can be identified to support these claims?* We are guided by two research questions with a focus on enhancing the skill-development of practitioners:

Table 1

Core Coaching Competencies

Association	Coaching Competencies
International Coach Federation (ICF)	Since the early 1990s ICF has developed, refined, and promoted the use of 11 core coaching competencies including: #3. establishing <i>trust and intimacy</i> with the client & #4. <i>coaching presence</i> .
Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC)	Since 1997 WABC has worked to define the emerging practice of business coaching and distinguish it from other forms of coaching—competencies include: <i>establishing trust and respect</i> ; and <i>awareness of self as instrument</i> .
International Coaching Community (ICC)	ICC has identified 9 key competencies coaches need to demonstrate as part of the certification process including: #3. <i>relationship building</i> and #5. <i>self-management</i> .
Graduate School Alliance of Executive Coaching Programs (GSAEC)	In 2007 GSAEC identified the following coaching skills, arranged in three clusters, as part of a broader, more comprehensive set of 20 academic standards targeted for university based coaching programs (currently beginning revised), coach competencies include: <i>establishing trust</i> & (b) <i>coaching presence</i> .

Sources: <http://www.coachfederation.org/research-education/icf-credentials/core-competencies/>;
http://www.wabccoaches.com/includes/popups/definition_and_competencies.html;
<http://www.internationalcoachingcommunity.com/default.asp?mode=page&ID=29>; and
<http://www.gsaec.org/curriculum.html>

- *In what ways are the concepts of trust and coaching presence defined in selected literature?*
- *In what ways might the available literature: (a) inform the practice of executive coaching (with and emphasis on developing the foundational competencies of establishing trust and coach presence) and (b) suggest implications for further competency research in the area of executive coaching in organizations?*

Figure 1 displays the conceptual framework, based on Kolb’s (1984) work, used to integrate selected literature applied to the executive coaching process. This paper’s focus is on the relational competencies of *trust* and *presence* in helping clients learn from their experience to achieve their intended outcomes.

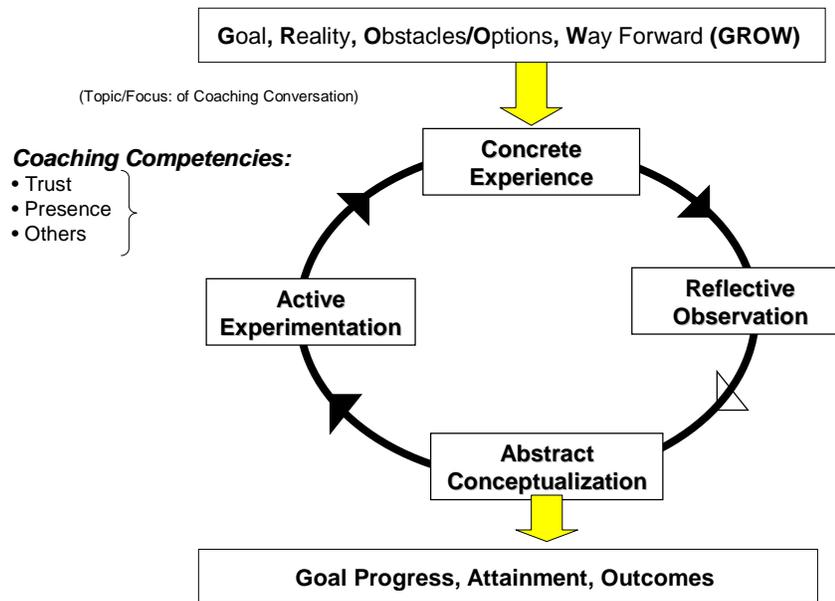


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

We contend coaches employ these two relational competencies, per this framework, at the beginning of the coaching process to establish a professional alliance with their clients with a focus of building the solid foundation needed to navigate the middle of the process and bring the engagement to successful closure at the end. We are specifically interested in how the relational competencies of *trust* and *presence* potentially help coaches earn the right to request that clients be truthful and transparent while: 1) clarifying focus through inquiring about **goals** (i.e., desired state), current **reality**, current and future **options** for action; and 2) determining the **way forward** by identifying priorities, next steps, and supporting structures needed for goal attainment (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006, pp.14-17).

Using the lens of learning from and through experience (Kolb, 1984), we also examine the literature (and supporting research) to better understand how coaches partner with clients to build ongoing and deeper self-awareness (combined with awareness of others) as they make sense of strategies employed between sessions through guided reflection (the middle of the process). And finally, we will explore whether and how trust and presence help coaches make the learning from experience explicit by working with clients to extract insights — e.g., what did or did not work, how to leverage supports and address barriers, other lessons learned — in order to take informed, future action (the end of the process). The framework should enable insight into how coaches employ these capabilities to help clients monitor their progress enroute to goal attainment.

Methodology

An integrative literature review was selected by the co-authors as the method of choice to ground future research on this topic in “what is known.” This review is a “form of research that reviews, critiques, and synthesizes representative literature on a topic in an integrated way such that new frameworks and perspectives on the topic are generated” (Torraco 2005, p. 356). The co-authors conducted a preliminary review of empirical and research-based articles in academic, refereed journals, as well as books by “key thinkers” found in major citation indices (e.g., EBSCO, ERIC, ProQuest, PsycARTICLES, PsycLIT, JESTOR, Sociological Abstracts and Business Source). “Google Scholar” was used to identify sources (Pan, 2004). The analysis procedures for this review were largely inductive (Miles & Huberman, 1994).

We employed a multidisciplinary perspective to examine trust, drawing on areas such as communication, leadership, game theory, negotiation, performance management, labor management, self-management teams (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995); anthropology,

economics, organizational behavior, psychology, and philosophy, and sociology (Sheppard & Sherman, 1998). Key words and phrases included trust theory, building theory and trust research. Our review of conceptual and empirical research on presence covers three fields (e.g., helping professions, virtual reality, and organizational development). Keywords and phrases included: definitions of presence, consciousness, awareness, attention, levels and layers of presence, physical and psychological presence. Only peer-reviewed articles pertinent to these areas guided the integrated review of the literature on the conceptualizations of trust and presence.

Selected Literature

We summarize our major findings by: (1) providing a brief summary of the various ways two areas of selected literature have been defined (i.e., content related to the foundational coaching competencies of establishing trust and coach presence), (2) listing the major components and related processes of each, (3) making connections between these literatures in an integrated manner including sample research related to each, and (4) outlining insights gained from this inquiry.

Trust as a Relational Competency

According to ICF, a leading global organization dedicated to advancing the profession of coaching, “establishing trust and intimacy with the client” is a key coach competency (see Table 1). In this section we look at the origins of *trust* and how it has been defined and conceptualized. Trust has been viewed as salient to effectiveness in complex social organizations (Doney, Cannon, & Mullen, 1998; Rotter 1967). Jones and George (1998) document research by a diverse group of scholars acknowledging the role of trust in cooperative behavior among individuals, groups and organizations. Nonetheless, the concept of trust has remained problematic for a number reasons, including a lack of conceptual clarity regarding its meaning.

In the balance of this section we: (1) identify key themes based on definitions of trust (see Table 2) and (2) discuss components, indicators, and potential outcomes of trust based on sample research (see Table 3).

The Meaning of Trust. Table 2 presents a chronological overview of definitions over a half of century dating back to the 1950s. Early researchers framed the concept of trust (and distrust) in the context of human interactions as individual expressions of confidence in others' intentions and motives in situations involving risks and/or uncertainty (Deutsch 1958, 1960; Rotter, 1967). These scholars related trust to *personality predispositions*. Interpersonal trust was seen as influenced by level of confidence one has in others (intentions and capabilities), assured anticipation of occurrences of future events, and degree of predictability of positive expectations compared to degree of risk taking. Trust seemed to require interdependence or investment between parties.

During the 1970s theorists further examined accompanying *environmental states* (Schlensker, Helm, & Tedschi, 1972). This research emphasized the degree of either party's *willingness to be vulnerable* to the actions of another in the context of uncertainty, at times irrespective of ability to control the other party. Researchers in the 1980s pushed the boundaries of trust beyond intrapersonal and interpersonal processes to include an *environmental perspective* by focusing on trust as a *relationship-specific boundary condition* (Johnson-George & Swap, 1982), as well as a *social phenomenon* (Lewis & Weigert, 1985). Johnson-George and Swap (1982) developed a "Specific Trust Measurement" tool. Typologies were developed to catalogue the dimensions of relational trust.

In the early 1990s the International Coach Federation named *trust and intimacy* as one of 11 *core coaching competencies* for professionals, marking the birth of opportunities to apply

trust theory to executive coaching. Additionally, Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman (1995, 2007) sought to integrate findings of various studies in their “*integrative model of organizational trust*” (see Table 3) with an important focus on the perspective of both the trustor and the trustee. This work also clarified the meaning of a number of concepts that had often been previously used synonymously with trust: (1) *cooperation* - e.g., cooperation can exist without trust if there are external control mechanisms that will punish deceitful behaviors or if it’s clear that other motives will drive desired behavior and/or outcome; (2) *confidence* - i.e., trust requires recognizing and accepting that risk exists, where as this is not a necessary condition for confidence; and (3) *predictability* - i.e., one can believe trustees to be predictable when the trustee influences resource distribution between *trustee* and *trustor* (p. 712-714).

Table 1

Trust Defined

Author(s)	Definition/Description
Deutsch (1958, 1960)	“An individual may be said to have trust in the occurrence of an event if he expects its occurrence and his expectation leads to behavior which he perceives to have greater negative motivational consequences if the expectation is not confirmed than positive motivational consequences if it is confirmed” (1958, p. 266).
Rotter (1967)	<u>Interpersonal trust</u> : “an expectancy held by an individual or a group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (p. 651).
Schlensker, Helm, & Tedschi (1972)	“a reliance upon information received from another person about uncertain environmental states and their accompanying outcomes in a risky situation” (p. 419).
Johnson-George & Swap (1982)	<u>Trust in context of interpersonal bargaining</u> - “two parties who are inter-dependent with respect to the outcomes ... (of) joint choices, and one of the parties (P) is confronted with the choice between trusting or not trusting the other (O)... both P and O are cognizant of the risk to which P exposes himself in his decision to trust O... i.e., P knows that O can betray him and O knows that P has extended his P's trust even in the face of that risk (p. 1306 quoting Kee & Knox, 1970); <u>Specific trust</u> - both trust in a specific other person and a specific type of trust... mutual faithfulness... indispensable in social relationships, yet always involve an element of risk and the potential for doubt (p. 1307).

Lewis & Weigert (1985)	“trust exists in a social system insofar as the members ... act according to and are secure in the expected features constituted by the presence of each other or their symbolic representations” (p. 968).
ICF	The ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces on going mutual respect.
Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995, 2007)	“willingness of a party to be vulnerable to the actions of another party based on the expectation that the other will perform a particular action important to the trustor, irrespective of the ability to monitor or control that other party” (pp. 712-713).
McKnight & Chervany (1996; McKnight et al (1998)	“one believes in, and is willing to depend on, another party... high-level trust concept can be broken into two constructs: (1) trusting intention and (2) trusting beliefs (1996, p. 474).
Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer (1998)	“Trust is a psychological state comprising the intention to accept vulnerability based upon positive expectations of the intentions or behavior of another” (p. 1998).
Viljanen (2005)	Drawing on the work of Diego Gambetta, “trust (or, symmetrically, distrust) is a particular level of the <u>subjective probability</u> with which an agent assesses that another agent or group of agents will <u>perform a particular action</u> , both before he can monitor such action (or independently of his capacity ever to be able to monitor it) and in a context in which it affects his own action [12]” and Building on the work of Audun Josang, “trust in a passionate entity is the <u>belief that it will behave without malicious intent</u> ... Trust in a rational entity is the <u>belief that it will resist malicious manipulation</u> by a passionate entity [15] (p. 176).
Baron, L., & Morin, L. (2009)	<u>Working Relationship</u> - establishing a relationship of <i>trust</i> constitutes the first step in the executive coaching process... three key elements for a good relationship include the connection between the coach and the coachee, their collaboration, and their mutual commitment to the process (p. 88).

A special topics issue of the *Academy of Management Review* on trust published in the late 1990s includes 16 articles. Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) overviewed the articles: key assumptions, areas of agreement and disagreement on the meaning of trust (see Table 2), the construct’s dynamic nature, variations across disciplines and implications for future research. Throughout the 1990s and 2000s, researchers *framed trust* to include *cognitive and emotional components* (Viljanen, 2005) with specific attention to trust as a major component of relational work in the context of executive coaching (Baron & Morin, 2009).

The above review of selected literature helps in framing the concept of trust as a relational executive coaching competency. These themes can be organized in four categories: (1)

Dispositional Aspects of Trust (including *cognitive components* related to belief systems about human nature in general and that others are benevolent, competent and honest; and *emotional components* related to factors such as the personal bond that one establishes with others or loyalty); (2) *Conditions that Promote or Influence Trust* (i.e., risk and the probability of loss or disappointment; level of dependency and/or interdependence; situational factors such as incentives, potential rewards and punishment, or government policies / laws); (3) *Phases of Trust* (i.e., building, sustaining, and dissolving/restoring); and (4) *Roles of Trust* (i.e., as cause, outcome, or moderator of behavior). These capacities are critical factors: when clients need assurance that coaches will protect their interests; so clients feel confident about disclosing personal information; and for sharing mutual frank feedback to facilitate learning and growth.

Trust Research. Table 3 summarizes components found to be related to, the result of, or moderated by the concept of trust. Deutsch's research examined trust as a key feature of cooperation or potential conflict based on confidence in the intentions and assessment of the capabilities of parties in the relationship. He found that an individual's behavior is congruent with expectations of the other, and that expectations are also congruent with their own behavior toward the other. Deutsch concluded that the "personality predispositions tapped by the experimental game are not simply one-sided internalized orientations toward another or internalized expectations from another but are instead internalizations of a reciprocal pattern of interrelationships with another" (1960, p. 139). Rotter's (1967) Interpersonal Trust Scale was one of the first empirically grounded assessments for trust (see Table 2). This research highlights the connection between expectations and behavior in the coaching relationship. Further the table suggests ways coaches can build initial trust, recognize conditions that foster trust, and restore trust if broken.

Table 2

Building Trust: Components & Processes

Author(s)	Components/Elements
Deutsch (1958, 1960)	<p><u>Process of Mutual Trust</u> - complementary social trust; I trusts II to behave in a certain way and is willing to do what II trusts him to do; the same is true for II. Each perceives that the other person is aware of his intent and his trust (p. 267);</p> <p><u>Conditions Affecting Trust</u> - (1) as the individual's confidence that his trust will be fulfilled is increased, the probability of his engaging in trusting behavior will be increased; (2) as the ratio of anticipated positive to anticipated negative motivational consequences increases, the probability of his engaging in trusting behavior will be increased; (3) open-communication, (4) power dynamics and (5) influence of third parties (pp. 268-277).</p>
Rotter (1967)	<p><u>Generalized expectancy</u>: individuals differ in belief that statements of other people can be relied upon based directly or indirectly on behavior and statements of significant others (p. 653); Measure's focus variables: (1) Interpersonal Trust Scale, (2) Trust Self-Rating, and (3) Trustworthiness; Measure's control variables: (1) Dependency, (2) Humor, (3) Gullibility, (4) Popularity, (5) Friendship, and (6) Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale (pp. 661-664).</p>
Schlensker, Helm, & Tedschi (1972)	<p><u>Conditions Affecting Trust</u> - (1) expressed confidence in another's intentions, (2) sincerity of another's words and actions, (3) reliance upon the communication behavior of another person in order to achieve a desired but uncertain objective in a risky situation, (4) reception of relevant interpersonal information providing cues of the probability of the occurrence of an expected, future event, and (5) credibility of a communicator (pp. 419-421).</p>
Johnson-George & Swap (1982)	<p><u>Characteristics of "High Trusters"</u> - independent and trustworthy; honest and open to seeking psychological help (p. 1307); Specific Trust Measurement Factors: (1) overall trust (e.g., I expect "x" to play fair), (2) emotional trust; and (3) reliableness - pp. 1308-1311.</p>
ICF	<p>ICF promotes six indicators associated with trust and intimacy as a core coaching competency in action: (1) <u>Shows Genuine Concern</u> for the client's welfare and future; (2) continuously <u>Demonstrates Personal Integrity</u>, honesty and sincerity; (3) <u>Establishes Clear Agreements</u> and keeps promises; (4) <u>Demonstrates Respect</u> for client's perceptions, learning style, personal being; (5) <u>Provides Ongoing Support</u> for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk taking and fear of failure; and (6) <u>Asks for Permission</u> to coach client in sensitive, new areas.</p>

- Lewis & Weigert (1985) *Dimensions of Relational Trust* - trust is (1) based on a *cognitive* process which discriminates among those that are trustworthy, untrusted, and unknown (p. 970); (2) also constructed on an *emotional* base characterized by affective bonds of friendship and love (p. 971); and (3) a *behavioral* enactment, i.e., undertaking a risky course of action on the confident expectation that all parties involved will act competently and dutifully (p. 971);
- Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman (1995, 2007) *Proposed Model of Trust* - the combination of (1) Factors of Perceived Trustworthiness and (2) Trustor's Propensity serve as antecedents of trust; which is mediated by (3) Perceived Risk; that influences the degree of "(4) Risk Taking in Relationship and (5) the Outcomes that result all serve as a feedback loop for subsequent rounds (pp. 714-720).
- McKnight & Chervany (1996) *Initial Trust Model*: assumes situations where prior experience or first hand knowledge exists, the basis of trust will be informed by: (1a) One's Disposition to Trust or (1b) Institution-based Trust - mediated by (2) Cognitive Processes; resulting in (3) Trusting Beliefs; (4) Trusting Intention; that can lead to (5) Trusting Behavior - voluntarily depends on another, indicators include placing resources in the hands of others, providing open and honest information, cooperating and completing tasks, taking risks, increasing vulnerability while decreasing need for control, etc. (pp. 474-477).
- Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, & Camerer (1998) *Forms of Trust* - (1) Deterrence-based trust - emphasizes utilitarian consideration of costly sanctions in place for breach; (2) Calculus-based - based on rational choice; (3) Relational - based on repeated cycles of exchange, risk taking, fulfillment of expectations over time; and (4) Institution-based - case promote forms 2 & 3 because of one's confidence that reputation matters and is influenced by factors such as laws that acts as deterrents from opportunism (pp. 398-401).
- Baron, L., & Morin, L. (2009) *Working Alliance Determinants Related to the Coach* - (1) Personal attributes - e.g., flexibility, warmth, interest, respect, and openness and (2) relationship building techniques - i.e., behaviors that promote a sense of connection with the client and favor in-depth reflection and exploration, creating self-awareness, using awareness of self as a form of observational feedback with clients (p. 91)
- Viljanen (2005) Nine factors required or used in the evaluation of trust: (1) *Identity Awareness*; (2) *Action*; (3) *Value*; (4) *Capability*; (5) *Competence*; (6) *Confidence*; (7) *Context*; (8) *History*; and (9) *3rd Party* (pp. 177-183).
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Studies conducted by Schlensker, Helm, and Tedschi (1972) outlined five conditions affecting interpersonal trust as defined by Rotter and others (see Table 3). Johnson-George and Swap (1982) outline three characteristics of what they call “high trustors” building on the dispositional trust research from the 1950s and 1960s. Lewis and Weigert (1985) catalogue nine bases for trust painting a picture of the diversity of pathways toward building and sustaining trusting relationships.

Rousseau, Sitkin, Burt, and Camerer (1998) looked at various forms (or bases) of trust. Mayer, Davis, and Schoorman’s (1995, 2007) provided an early, comprehensive process model of organizational trust. McKnight and Chervany (1996) focused on the initial formation of trust. Viljanen (2005) shared considerations for the evaluation of trust. Baron and Morin (2009) have recently tested the “Working Alliance Inventory” for its relevance to coaches and clients.

Presence as a Relational Competency

ICF identifies “coaching presence” as a key competency to master. This section reviews “presence,” its origins, definitions, and how commonalities and differences in conceptualization inform “coaching presence.” Presence can be of two types namely, *physical presence* and *psychological presence*, where physical presence refers to the current location of one’s body and psychological presence refers to the current location of one’s mind. Thus, a higher level of presence implies both physical and psychological availability and attentiveness in the current fragment of time (Welwood, 2000). Three fields of study have to date explored the concept of presence: *helping professions* (e.g., nursing, psychotherapy, medicine – e.g., Epstein, 2003; Liehr, 1989; Pederson, 1993), *virtual reality* (Wiederhold & Wiederhold, 2005), and *organizational development* (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004).

The Meaning of Presence. Table 4 shows commonalities and differences in how disciplines conceptualize presence. A chronological review of the extant literature on psychotherapy reveals Carl Rogers's (1979, 1980) notion of therapeutic presence in writings on person centered therapy.

Table 3

Presence Defined By Discipline

Field	Definitions
Helping professions (e.g., nursing, therapy, medicine)	<p>Presence is the quality of a therapist connecting with his/her patient (Rogers, 1979; Rogers, 1980).</p> <p>Presence in relation to the patient and the clinical process is the experiential heart and soul of my effort as a therapist, the essential élan vital of my contribution to patients' growth toward greater psychological well-being; bringing one's complete self to the client with little or if possible no self-centered purpose in mind (Craig, 1986).</p> <p>Presence is a name for the quality of being in a situation or a relationship in which one intends at a deep level to participate as fully as she is able. Presence is expressed through mobilization of one's sensitivity - both inner and outer- and bringing into action one's capacity for response (Bugental, 1987).</p> <p>Presence is experienced as an enveloping comfort that emerges from the nurses' gifts of authentic being and time (Gilje, 1993).</p> <p>Therapeutic presence involves bringing one's whole self into the encounter with the client, being completely in the moment on a multiplicity of levels, physically, emotionally, cognitively, and spiritually (Geller & Greenberg, 2002).</p> <p>Presence is an affective quality with somatosensory components, felt by clients, which changes their state from suffering toward a sense of well-being. (Curry, 2003).</p>
Organizational Development	<p>Presence is the core capacity needed to access the field of the future by being fully conscious of and aware in the present moment - an act of deeply connecting with any point in time; listening deeply; being open beyond one's preconceptions and historical ways of making sense; letting go of old identities and the need to control; and making choices to serve the evolution of life... leading to a state of "letting come," of consciously participating in a larger field of change (Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers, 2004).</p>

Rogers was quoted as saying in an interview published by Baldwin (2000):

I am inclined to think that in my writing I have stressed too much the three basic conditions (congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding). Perhaps it is something around the edges of those conditions that is really the most important element of therapy — when myself is very clearly, obviously *present* (p.30).

Since Rogers, many have defined and expanded on the criticality of this capability. What comes across as central in these early conceptualizations is that therapeutic presence embodies “client-centeredness” and centers around how the therapist attends to and responds to their client.

James Bugental (1987) shifted an early focus on the therapist’s presence to ways that a client’s level of presence can be addressed in therapeutic dialogue, therefore positioning the concept in more relational and interpersonal terms. He noted the therapist first needs to experience (e.g., psychological presence) and exude (e.g., physical presence) presence for the client to then respond and experience presence as well. According to Gilje (1993), individuals needing care due to a particular illness are more likely to sense the caregiver’s attention because they are typically more receptive to sensory stimuli than a healthy person. Thus, this necessitates therapists to practice both psychological and physical presence at the same time. Geller and Greenberg (2002) described therapeutic presence as a combination of kinesthetic and emotional sensing of the client’s affect and experience through connecting with the client at a deeper level.

Curry (2003) further described *Healing Presence* as a “subtle energetic event experienced in the body, and perceived in the heart and mind” (p. iv). Senge, Scharmer, Jaworski, & Flowers (2004) in organization development embed presence in a continuum that ranges from relatively *reactive forms of learning* (i.e., “thinking governed by established mental models and doing by established habits of action”, p. 10) to comparatively *deeper levels of learning* (i.e., “increasing awareness of the larger whole -- both as it is and as it is evolving - actions that increasingly

become part of creating alternative futures,” p. 11). In providing an evolving definition of presence, Senge et al. (2004) share:

We first thought of presence as being fully conscious and aware in the present moment. Then we began to appreciate presence as deep listening, of being open beyond one’s pre-conceptions and historical ways of making sense. We came to see the importance of letting go of old identities and the need to control (p. 13).

Presence Research

Table 4 summarizes components found to be related to, the result of, or moderated by the concept of presence in the three disciplines discussed above. Craig (1986) articulated presence in therapy as a series of steps that he refers to as “constant discipline” (see Table 5). Bugental (1987) demonstrated the dynamic nature of presence by providing descriptors for accessibility and expression. Gilje’s (1993) research clarified what presence looked like in practice in the context of nursing. Geller and Greenberg (2002) described specific steps in a working model of therapeutic presence. And, Curry (2003) grouped characteristics of healing presence into categories that characterizes it as a somatosensory experience desired by both the client and the therapist or the caregiver.

Finally, in explaining “U theory”, Senge et al. (2004) identify three steps (e.g., sensing, presencing, and realizing) that help one forego fixed identities shaped by the past and build fluid identities that allow one to become a part of the natural flow of life from moment to moment. Senge et al. (2004) encourage one to reflect in the midst of activity using the example of martial arts to explicate this concept. This constant iteration of “letting go” of a historical self, connecting deeply with the present moment, and allowing the present moment to inform action is comparable to the death and re-birth cycle. *Theory U* - (1) sensing: includes the 3 subcomponents of *suspending* - the process of seeing our seeing, *redirecting* - seeing from the whole to focus attention on the source rather than the object, and *letting go*, that together transforms perception;

(2) presencing: the work of transforming self and will that include the 1 subcomponent of “letting come” by seeing from within the living whole; and (3) realizing, or transforming action: includes the 3-subcomponents of *crystallizing* - envisioning what seeks to emerge, *prototyping* - enacting living microcosms, and *institutionalizing* - embodying the new (Senge et al., 2004, p. 213-234).

Summary of Insights: Integrating the Literature on the Relational Competencies of Establishing Trust and Coach Presence

Our review of sample literature on *trust* and *presence* revealed, that while two distinct constructs, they appear to be complementary and relevant in advancing our understanding of the *working relationship* between the coach and client as a critical component of successful executive coaching. In short, *trust* and *presence* can be viewed as two sides to the same coin. Through the examination of various definitions for each, we can see that *trust* is an essential condition of the executive coaching process that is often part of the decision set for matching coaches with clients in organizations, combined with the coach’s relevant experience and expertise. All things being equal, clients are likely to select coaches’ they trust, this decision is often made in the early stages of the coaching process with limited information. As a result we contend executive coaches have a clear and explicit “initial trust model” (such as the one proposed by McKnight and Chervany, 1996) to inform their approach for framing the coaching engagement as displayed in Figure 1 (i.e., GROW) in a manner that fosters client confidence and facilitates their positive expectations in terms of the coaches’ *competence* (cognitive trust) and *intentions* (emotional trust).

Experiencing *presence* at the beginning of the coaching process serves to strengthen the personal bond needed for both the coach and client to successfully navigate the vulnerability,

sense of risk, and personal reliance often associated with seeking help from others. Our review makes clear that presence contributes to trust when the coach is completely there for the client and no where else. For example, coaches can apply Geller and Greenberg's (2002) three

Table 4

The Components of Presence

Field	Components/Elements/Processes
Helping professions (e.g., nursing, therapy, medicine)	<p><i>Disciplines Required for Presence</i> – (1) remaining open to all aspects of one’s experience with the patient; (2) working to understand the salient features of this experience; (3) discipline in determining just what features of this experience hold the greatest promise for opening new possibilities in the patient’s existence; (5) deciding just how these promising possibilities may be framed and offered to the patient in behavior, language and mood; and, (6) identifying and transcending all those personal needs, feelings, beliefs, and assumptions of one’s own which may be interfering with a fresh, virginal perception of and response to the other (Craig, 1986, p. 272-273).</p> <p><i>Two Facets of Presence</i> - (1) accessibility: designates the extent to which one intends that what happens to a situation will matter, which calls for a reduction of our usual defenses against being influenced by others and a measure of commitment and (2) expressiveness: opening oneself to another’s influence is significantly investing in that relationship; has to do with the extent to which one intends to let oneself to be truly known by the other(s) in a situation, which involves disclosing without disguise some of one’s subjective experiencing, and willingness to put forth some effort (Bugental, 1987, p. 27).</p> <p><i>Presence Encompasses</i> - (1) enveloping comfort in the midst of discomfort, a painful struggle, or a vulnerable time, affirms worth through the response of respectfulness which professes the dignity of the other and permeates one’s core of being; (2) inviting connection to surface through the wellspring of love and authentic being as a result of being with and represents the attentiveness to the other’s being; and (3) glimpsing new possibilities is transforming, transcending time and space by accessing the other’s hope, healing and a sense of wholeness (Gilje, 1993, p. 129-131).</p> <p><i>Three Domains of Therapeutic Presence</i> - (1) preparation for presence occurs prior to or at the beginning of a session (getting in the space to attend to the client); (2) process (i.e., namely <i>receptivity</i>, <i>inwardly attending</i>, and <i>extending contact – with self and related boundaries</i>); (3) in-session experience of presence itself: including the therapists’ experience of being <i>immersed</i> in the moment with the client; the experience of an <i>expansion</i> of awareness and sensation, being tuned into nuances that exist with the client, within the self and within the relationship; and the therapists’ sense of being grounded in their selves while entering the client’s experiential world while maintaining the intention to respond in a way that is <i>with and for the client’s</i> healing process (Geller & Greenberg, 2002, p. 78-80).</p> <p><i>General Characteristics of the Experience of Presence</i> - those which are: (1) felt; (2) viewed as a pre-conditioned need or suffering; (3) promoters; (4) blockers; (5) co-created; (6) interpreted as meaningful by the experiment; and (7) descriptions of lasting change or transformations of heart, mind, or body (Curry, 2003, p. 199).</p>

components for achieving presence (receptivity, inwardly attending and extending contact) as strategies for transitioning into the coaching space with clients. Silsbee (2008) notes that helping professions (e.g., nursing, therapy, medicine) are comparable to the practice of coaching. Although the client is not suffering from any illness in the case of coaching, the coach still needs to exude presence (physically and psychologically) so that the client perceives the coach's presence and responds to the coach. Specifically, he explains the need for the coach to orient to his/her purpose, the client's purpose and the coaching outcomes by noting "a purpose statement provides clear and succinct answers to... what value is created by the activity?" (p. 105). Hence, determining that value and orienting the coaching process towards that value identified jointly by the coach and the client helps the coach to increase his/her, as well as, the client's level of presence for extended periods of time, across situations.

The literature of trust and presence provide additional insight for coaches to *sustain*, or when necessary *restore, trust* throughout the coaching engagement by attending to the conditions that affect trust as they work with clients to make sense of their experience of taking action in pursuit of achieving goals between coaching sessions (i.e., reviewing what happened – objective data; exploring their reactions to what happened – reflective data; abstracting key themes and lessons learned, including the usefulness of various assumptions that might be influences their choices and behaviors – interpretative data; and determining potential next steps – decisional data). Similarly, the various components of *presence* found in the literature provides various options for coaches to access and express this important relational competency as their strive to better understand their client's context, support them in making meaning of their experience, and importantly, encourage them to take informed, future action in pursuit of personal and organizational goals.

Our emerging understanding of the interplay between the relational competencies of trust and presence is that they both appear to involve an *inside-out dynamic* (i.e., an awareness of dispositions, beliefs, emotions, and choices influence one's responses to others and situations) combined with an *outside-in dynamic* (i.e., the dispositions, beliefs, emotions, and choices of others and situations have an impact on our experience). At its core trust and presence, as relational competencies, provide a context for deep level learning and change to occur for both the coach and their clients.

Conclusions, Contribution to HRD Practice and Implications for Further Research

In this review we sought to examine selected literature to help ground two key relationship coaching competencies espoused as critical by various professional coaching associations. The literature additionally underscores the importance of *context* that influences receptivity to trust and the learning relationship. Risk, uncertainty, ambiguity, expectations, and other factors are influenced by prior history and experience within a dynamic environment. Some trust models include such factors, as do Senge et al's (2004) vis-a-vis presence.

As a result of this work we developed some preliminary conclusions to inform the practice of training executive coaches to work in and for organizations:

- There is both theoretical support and empirical support (i.e., definitions, taxonomies, types, levels and types) for the inclusion of *trust* and *presence* as core coaching competencies in coach preparation programs;
- We were able to document important connections between the *trust* and *presence* literature and learning from experience graphically displayed in Figure 1 (i.e., as enablers for establishing a personal bond and connection needed to support clients in developing

insight through guided dialogue and reflection with a trusted thought partner when the stakes are high, to achieve their intended outcomes); and

- The competencies of *trust* and *presence* have been catalogued in both descriptive and operational terms that can serve as a resource for: (1) coach-training providers to develop learning modules designed to enhanced these target competencies; (2) researchers to use as indicators for future investigations; and (3) practicing executive coaches to deepen their understanding of the conditions that constitute productive coach-client working relationships.
- Coaching research should attend to social and organizational contextual factors.

These all appear to be areas that have been addressed separately in existing HRD literature.

Building on the above noted contributions to HRD, some areas of future research include:

- To devise a more complete picture of the role of trust in the executive coaching working relationship, Rotter's *Measure of Interpersonal Trust* combined with Johnson's (et al., 1982) *Specific Trust Measurement*, can be included in battery of assessments in research projects examining the coach-client relationship in organizations;
- Continue to search for existing scales intended to measure presence to complement the assessments listed in the first point and better capture the "co-creating the relationship" component of the executive coaching process;
- Explore the interplay between the *antecedents* and related *consequences* of trust on optimal and excessive forms in coaching engagements and potential outcomes; and
- When assessing coaching effectiveness, research needs to attend to social-organizational factors within which coaching is embedded (barriers, supports, culture, etc.), especially with respect to assessment of progress toward strategic goals.

Establishing general, yet important, connections between the relational competencies of trust and presence, informed by the perspective of learning from experience, suggests further “content analysis” of these factors across these areas of literature to better understand the potential interactions between constructs. Such work could improve the foundation for future studies to examine coach-client interactions and organizational factors at the start, during, and the end of coaching programs within organizations. These insights, in turn, would be a great value to coach training providers.

In addition to implications for HRD this literature review helps inform our on-going research agenda designed to learn from the growing data we’ve collected as part of implementing a graduate-level coach certification program. The insights obtained from the synthesis of the relational competencies of trust and presence in this paper, combined with prior work on the conversational competencies of listening and questioning, will strengthen the foundation of the program, as well as, inform the broader academic standards work underway at the Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching Programs.

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