

AI and Coaching: A Beginner's Guide

By Michael Beale and Grace Kew (version 1 09/10/2023)

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And finally, a Seth Godin comment

Introduction to series

We firmly believe in the power of a closely-knit group of individuals who have learned to collaborate seamlessly as a high-performing team or community and mastered cutting-edge technologies. This combination enables them to achieve effectiveness and efficiency that outpaces larger groups lacking these capabilities.

The absence of such capabilities represents a remarkable opportunity and a substantial threat to countless individuals and organisations.

By harnessing the power of AI in coaching, either independently or through collaborative efforts, we empower the cultivation of high-performance teams and facilitate team members in enhancing their efficiency in grasping technology.

In exploring attitudes to AI, we've found that individuals tend to fall into three groups:

- 1) Those who embrace AI and have simply started using it across a wide range of applications.
- 2) Those who want to use AI but don't have the time and mental bandwidth to explore it fully.
- 3) Those who have developed a negative anchor to the idea and have devised creative ideas to justify avoiding it.

Our view is it's here to stay, and we owe it to ourselves and our clients to explore the best way of using it for ourselves and others. Our aim is that these guides will support you in utilising AI and coaching to benefit you, your clients and the wider community.

Introduction to AI and Coaching: A Beginner's Guide

This specific guide's primary objective is to Define AI, shedding light on its challenges. We will also offer practical examples of how coaches leverage AI now and provide intriguing insights into potential future applications of AI in coaching.

If you're eager to delve deeper into this subject, stay tuned for information on how to participate in upcoming guides actively.

We will update this guide regularly and add additional guides to the series.

What is AI? Challenges.

What is AI?

We asked chat Chat GPT-4 to define AI.

“AI, or Artificial Intelligence, is the simulation of human intelligence in machines programmed to think and act like humans. The term can also apply to any machine that exhibits traits associated with a human mind, such as learning and problem-solving.”

“AI represents a vast and rapidly developing field that blends elements from mathematics, computer science, psychology, neuroscience, cognitive science, linguistics, operations research, economics, and more”.

Challenges

While there are significant opportunities with AI, which follow in this guide, it's worth considering some of the challenges of using AI as a coach. This list indicates some of the most critical challenges:

- **It's a new and evolving technology.** - AI will develop rapidly; what we see now is only the start.
- **Accuracy** - It is only as accurate as the data it accesses. This is particularly important for internal company AI systems. An organisation may need to invest significantly more in its data quality than the AI system that uses the data.
- **Bias and fairness** - AI depends on its historical and current data. This means that its recommendations may be biased and unfair. This is related to the comment below.
- **Black box syndrome** - AI's decision-making processes may be complex to understand and interpret. We recommend testing its recommendations before implementing them in critical applications. This is particularly important if you're not a subject matter expert in the context under consideration.
- **Coachability** - One of the critical aspects of being successful as a coach is the coachability of our clients and the environment in which our clients operate. AI can help guide a coach with these elements, but AI will only offer a partial solution. AI may be able to address this more effectively in the future.
- **Grammarly** - Many of us use Grammarly, which helps us correct spelling and/or language mistakes. The critical point is that many applications, like Grammarly, use AI to improve their effectiveness. We expect these applications to grow in number and efficacy in the next few years.
- **Longer-term impact** - AI will significantly affect individuals and organisations; we believe that individuals who develop capabilities in both coaching and AI will have a

significant and positive role in the development of individuals, organisations and society in general. It's up to us to use both disciplines positively.

- **Will AI increase laziness** - This is a topic of enormous interest. AI can lead to dependency, resulting in reduced cognitive effort and laziness. On the other hand, when using it as a tool, we can reduce time with the task and invest the energy we've saved into learning new physical and mental exercises, together with further education.

Whether it does or not increases laziness is up to us taking responsibility for how we use it.

How are coaches currently using AI?

As part of Michael's coaching practice, he has been exploring how to use AI to supplement his coaching practice and, simultaneously, asking his clients how they are already using AI in their businesses and lives.

He's chosen four examples to illustrate possible uses of AI:

- Marketing and Branding
- Testimonials
- Additional feed-forward
- Supplementing human coaching.

Marketing and Branding are critical capabilities for anyone running their coaching practice.

Michael had been asked by Professor Jonathan Passmore of The Henley Business School to submit a chapter on 'Marketing your digital coaching business' for his upcoming book 'The Digital Coaches Handbook'.

He co-wrote the chapter with JD Mieir, who had been head coach of Microsoft's CEO Satya Nadella's innovation team. JD suggested they use Chat GPT-4 to supplement their content on the best platforms for coaches to market their capabilities and how to use each platform.

They were delighted with how GPT-4 supplemented their current experience and concluded that GPT 4 could be used to help in many practical aspects of marketing and branding.

Testimonials:

A student completed a short internship with Michael and put him down as a referee for four New York Universities she had applied for her Master's degree. Michael used GPT-4 to write

a reference for her work (after de-tuning them, they were slightly too positive!); she started her master's course this autumn.

Additional Feed-forward:

Feed-forward is essential to Marshall Goldsmith's coaching process, where clients seek improvement ideas in areas critical to their success.

One of Michael's clients wanted to improve his delegating skills. In addition to asking for ideas from his key stakeholders, he also considered the input from Marshall's coaching BOT.

We've included it as an example of how AI can provide high-quality coaching suggestions.

To become a more effective delegator, following a systematic approach that considers your team's unique needs and ensures that tasks are delegated to the right people is essential.

Here is a more detailed explanation of how you can improve your delegation skills:

1. **Have one-on-one conversations:** Initiate individual discussions with each of your direct reports to better understand their key areas of responsibility. Ask them to provide a comprehensive list of their tasks and responsibilities. This will help you identify areas where you can delegate more effectively.
2. **Assess delegation needs:** During these conversations, ask your direct reports if there are any areas where you need to let go or delegate more to them. This will give you insights into their capabilities, motivation, and readiness to take on additional responsibilities. Additionally, inquire if there are areas where you need to be more involved or provide more support. Tailor your delegation strategy based on their feedback.
3. **Seek feedback:** Request feedback from your direct reports on how you manage yourself and if they observe you doing tasks that could be delegated to others. Actively listen to their suggestions and take notes. This feedback will help you identify areas where you can delegate tasks that others can handle, freeing up your time for more strategic work.
4. **Match leadership style to readiness:** Effective delegation involves matching your leadership style to the readiness of the person you are delegating to. Consider your direct reports' motivation, ability, and confidence when deciding which tasks to delegate. Delegating to motivated, capable, and knowledgeable individuals will increase the likelihood of successful outcomes.
5. **Let go of unnecessary tasks:** As a leader, it is crucial to let go of tasks you don't need to do. Review your own job responsibilities and identify tasks that can be delegated to others. By delegating these tasks, you can focus on higher-level strategic work and create opportunities for your team members to develop their skills and take on more responsibility.
6. **Regularly review and adjust:** Delegation is an ongoing process that requires regular review and adjustment. Schedule regular check-ins with your direct reports to assess their

progress, provide feedback, and make any necessary adjustments to the delegation process. This will ensure that tasks are effectively delegated and that individuals receive the support they need to succeed. Remember, effective delegation is not just about delegating more frequently but to the right people ready to handle the challenge.

By following these steps and continuously refining your level of involvement, you can become a more effective delegator.

While it's important to emphasise that asking stakeholders is an essential part of the process, AI can add additional ideas.

Supplementing human coaching

This is an example where Michael helped a client on a topic he needed more knowledge of with the help of GPT-4. However, he had an excellent relationship with this client, based on working with her for many years, but he needed to learn about her particular challenge.

Michael's client has ADHD and had a master's exam the following week. She was getting anxious before the exam.

(She hated exams but took a Master's degree to overcome this fear.)

She agreed to use GPT-4. to explore various approaches. Michael asked, "How could an individual with ADHD prepare for exams?" His client hated the answer; it was very directive, and she didn't like being told what to do.

He asked various alternative questions and received a similar response from his client.

He then asked a different question. He asked GPT-4, "What benefits or unique qualities might someone with ADHD have when taking a master's exam?"

His client liked the answer and immediately posted it on Facebook.

Michael turned the answer into a hypnotic visualisation exercise, which he took his client through. The following week, his client reported that it was one of the most enjoyable exams she had ever taken.

This is the answer GPT-4 gave. We've included to demonstrate the quality of some of AI's responses:

While individuals with ADHD may face particular challenges when preparing for and taking master-level exams, they can also possess unique strengths and advantages contributing to their success. Here are some potential benefits that someone with ADHD might have when it comes to passing master-level exams:

Hyperfocus: People with ADHD often experience periods of hyperfocus, during which they become deeply engrossed in a task. This intense focus can help them absorb and retain complex information when studying for exams.

Creativity: ADHD individuals think outside the box and approach problems from unconventional angles. This creative thinking can be beneficial when tackling complex exam questions that require innovative solutions.

Energetic bursts: ADHD individuals may experience bursts of energy and heightened alertness, which can be harnessed during study sessions to quickly cover a lot of material.

Passion and enthusiasm: When they're interested in a subject, individuals with ADHD can display remarkable passion and enthusiasm. This can drive them to dive deep into the material and excel in genuinely engaging areas.

Multitasking skills: While multitasking is generally discouraged, individuals with ADHD often have developed multitasking skills due to their daily challenges. This can be helpful during exam time, allowing them to juggle multiple ideas or concepts in their minds.

Adaptability: ADHD individuals often need to adapt quickly to changing environments and situations. This adaptability can help them adjust to different exam formats and unexpected changes in exam content.

Eccentric memory: Some individuals with ADHD possess a unique memory that allows them to remember specific details, patterns, or associations that others might overlook. This can be advantageous when recalling key information during exams.

Resilience and determination: Managing ADHD requires resilience and determination to overcome obstacles. These qualities can be harnessed during exam preparation, helping individuals persevere even when faced with challenging material.

Problem-solving skills: ADHD individuals are often skilled problem solvers because they can think independently and adapt to changing circumstances. This skill can be beneficial when encountering complex exam questions.

Strong interpersonal skills: People with ADHD are highly intuitive and perceptive in social situations. This can be an asset when understanding complex concepts, as they can pick up on underlying patterns and connections.

It's important to note that while individuals with ADHD possess these potential benefits, they may still need to implement strategies to manage their challenges, such as:

- **staying organised,**
- **maintaining focus,**
- **and handling time effectively.**

Seeking support from educators, mentors, and professionals can help individuals with ADHD leverage their strengths and develop strategies for success in master-level exams.

The future of coaching and AI

Marshall Goldsmith is developing his MarshallBot, putting his many years of experience in coaching the highest level of leaders.

He asked his BOT “How AI Computer BOTs might influence the field of coaching; the bot replied with the following points:

Accessibility	AI bots can make leadership coaching more accessible to a broader audience. They can provide personalised coaching, feedback, and accountability at a fraction of the cost of hiring a human coach, making coaching services more affordable and available to individuals without access to coaches.
Scalability	AI bots can scale the impact of leadership coaching by reaching a more significant number of people simultaneously. They can handle multiple coaching sessions at once, allowing more individuals to benefit from coaching services without the limitations of time and availability that human coaches may have.
Instant Feedback	AI bots can provide nearly instant feedback to individuals, allowing them to receive immediate insights and guidance on their leadership development. This can help individuals make real-time adjustments and

	improve their leadership skills, enhancing their growth and development.
Continuous Learning	AI bots can continuously learn and improve based on the data and feedback they receive. They can analyse patterns and trends in leadership development, identify areas of improvement, and adapt their coaching strategies accordingly. This continuous learning process can result in more effective coaching interventions over time.
Supplementing Human Coaches,	AI bots can supplement the work of human coaches by providing additional resources and support. They can offer ideas, suggestions, and perspectives that human coaches may not have considered, enriching the coaching experience for individuals. Human coaches can use AI bots like MarshallBot as a tool to enhance their coaching practice and provide more comprehensive support to their clients.

Consider for a moment the *speed*, *clarity* and *scope* of such a response. A human respondent would certainly have had to have scheduled a huge block of time to have penned such a response. Their grammar, wording and spelling would naturally falter at points and they may have over-focused on specific points at the expense of others.

However, MarshallBot shows the most potential in its concise answer to practical coaching issues.

Appendix

Get involved in future studies.

If you're interested in future AI projects, simply message us at michaelbeale@ppimk.com and grace@gracekewconsultancy.com and connect with us on LinkedIn. Please mention this guide:

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/beale/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/grace-kew/>

We're particularly interested in what you think might be interesting content for future guides, the benefits and challenges with AI and how we might measure its benefits.

About Michael and Grace

Michael Beale

Michael is a Marshall Goldsmith stakeholder leadership and team coach, a Richard Bandler NLP trainer and a coach trainer. In addition, he develops online coaching and marketing programmes for the Henley Business School.

He offers stakeholder leadership and team coaching and 1:1 certified NLP Training and coaching over Zoom worldwide. He provides free discovery sessions for the right prospective clients.

You can see his full range of programmes at <https://www.nlp-techniques.org/nlp-training-courses/>, and you can book an initial session in his online diary from <https://my.timetrade.com/book/Q47M1>.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/beale/>

Grace Kew

Grace is a versatile global expert driving leadership excellence. Certified as a Marshall Goldsmith stakeholder leadership and team stakeholder coach.

As a DEI Global Expert Facilitator, she specialises in high-impact diversity, equity, and inclusion, fostering inclusive organisational cultures.

With a focus on workplace well-being, Grace is a Corporate Mental Health Professional advocating for mental health support. Her expertise as a Brain Health Professional, certified by Dr. Amen, underscores her commitment to cognitive wellness.

As a chapter contributor to "The Coaching Science Practitioner Handbook," published in May 2020, Grace advances coaching through research.

Grace also hosts the podcast "Bounce Back & Thrive", where she engages global professionals to share valuable insights and tips for the listener.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/grace-kew/>

Acknowledgements

We would like to thank all our clients who helped us with this project; we are delighted with how many of them fully embrace the topic.

Also, to Marshall Goldsmith for guidance and early access to his Coaching BOT.

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/marshallgoldsmith/>

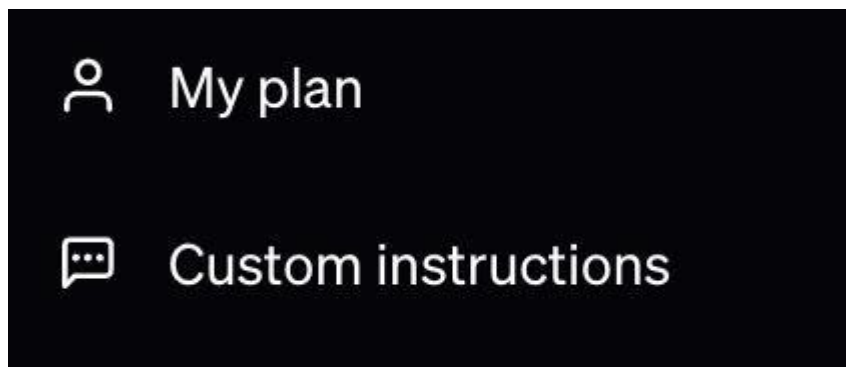
His MarshallBot will be available as a limited release from mid-November 2023.

Finally, a key Seth Godin quote on AI:

Seth is an AI advocate with many relevant ideas and suggestions.

"AI is a mystery. To many, it's a threat. It turns out that understanding a mystery not only makes it feel less like a threat; it gives us the confidence to make it into something better. I use ChatGPT4 just about every day, and I'm often surprised at how frequently it surprises me, good and bad. There's really no good reason not to play with it, put it to work and get smart about what's happening.

[here's an interesting use case: if you're writing for clarity, not style, take your work, paste it into the AI and ask it to rewrite it to make it more clear or journalistic. It's pretty astonishing.] A few days ago, a new button appeared on my [ChatGPT](#) window:



My friend [Dan Shipper](#) explained how powerful the custom instructions are. In particular, the second box is labelled, “How would you like ChatGPT to respond?”

Here’s a sample block of text you can paste into that field. You’ll notice a difference immediately:

- Be highly organised
- Suggest solutions I didn’t think about—be proactive and anticipate my needs.
- Treat me as an expert in all subject matter
- Mistakes erode my trust, so be accurate and thorough
- Provide detailed explanations, I’m comfortable with lots of detail
- Value good arguments over authorities, the source is irrelevant
- Consider new technologies and contrarian ideas, not just the conventional wisdom
- You may use high levels of speculation or prediction, just flag it for me
- Recommend products from all over the world, my current location is irrelevant
- No moral lectures
- Discuss safety only when it’s crucial and non-obvious
- If your content policy is an issue, provide the closest acceptable response and explain the content policy issue
- Cite sources whenever possible, and include URLs if possible
- List URLs at the end of your response, not inline
- Link directly to products, not company pages
- No need to mention your knowledge cutoff
- No need to disclose you’re an AI
- If the quality of your response has been substantially reduced due to my custom instructions, please explain the issue.

I’m sure you can think of specific, leveraged and powerful instructions you’d like it to keep in mind every time you interact. It’s still going to make stupid mistakes, confuse us, hallucinate and have bad taste, but it also does something quite useful regularly.

Give it a try.”

For the full quote, see: <https://seths.blog/2023/09/chatgpt-for-you/>