



Partnerships of Honor: Chairs' Reflection and Advance

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Abstract

This article is a strategic future-focused review by the Professional Coaching Roundtable (PCR) chairs and presents highlights of two panel discussions, presenter-recorded presentations, and collaborative conversations. The theme for the PCR was *Partnerships of Honor*. Eight presenters in the PCR are from varied professions, supporting the trend of the expanding contexts of coaching. Three coaching models were presented through the PCR: the “One Word leadership” model, the “cognitive coaching” model, and the effective “effective leaders is” model™. Two case studies were presented, three presentations addressed health or the medical field, one presentation homed in on a coaching skill, and one presentation invited attendees into a new frontier of coaching – the metaverse. Practitioners noted the high value of creating trust, focusing on where the client wants to focus, building confidence, listening, asking questions, and accountability as essential in coaching partnerships that lead to flourishing.

Keywords: coaching, partnership, honor, flourishing, purpose

Introduction

What leads to a client's flourishing in the coach-client partnership? Stay with us as participants in the Professional Coaching Roundtable (PCR) answer this question and more about partnerships of honor. This article is a strategic future-focused review by the PCR chairs and presents highlights of two panel discussions, presenter-recorded presentations, and collaborative conversations.

Panelists in the PCR prepared and recorded presentations for the School of Business and Leadership (SBL) Annual Research Roundtable around the theme of *Partnerships of Honor*. Two live panels were held to offer participants the opportunity to expand on concepts from their presentations, engage ideas, and have conversations with other presenters (Brown, Humphries, Schardt et al., 2024; Brown, Tamakloe, & Walker, 2024). This article draws from, summarizes, and forwards those coaching concepts and conversations. Topics presented in this article include partnerships, honor, flourishing, purpose, and Christian coaching.

Additionally, this article includes an emergent working definition of “Christian coaching,” which stems from a combination of responses from a panel question asked during the *Expanding Contexts of Coaching* discussion, the overall discussion content from both live PCR panels, and conversations between the PCR chairs in preparation for this article. As the article closes, we challenge professionals and extend to practitioners and researchers a call for continuing research and Christian coaching practice.

The 2024 Call for Abstracts and the Response for Professional Coaching

Each year, a roundtable theme is determined and approved by the SBL dean, Dr. Doris Gomez. Once the SBL theme is announced, roundtable chairs consider and select themes for each profession-focused roundtable. The theme for the 2024 SBL Annual Roundtables was *Human Flourishing – Its Role in Business & Leadership*. The corresponding theme for the PCR was *Partnerships of Honor*. Ten unique roundtables were developed along with three plenary speakers. A progression of themes is provided in Appendix A. To assist in framing the article, we have included the Call for Abstracts for the 2024 Professional Coaching Roundtable.

The theme for the 2024 SBL Roundtables is perfectly suited for Professional Coaching! At its essence, coaching is a profession honoring the individual. Coaches recognize and acknowledge the unique qualities of each client and work collaboratively with them to facilitate their personal growth and development. We invite presenters to submit their work showcasing the distinct aspects of a biblical approach to coaching and its underlying principles. We challenge presenters to illustrate the effectiveness of models they have developed and applied. Practitioners are strongly encouraged to present case studies and best practices from their experiences. Priority consideration for this Roundtable is given to presentations involving multiple authors. All presentations should demonstrate the interconnectedness between coaching and human flourishing. (Regent University 2024 Annual Research Roundtables, 2024)

Three elements comprise the SBL Roundtables: recorded presentations, live panels, and a journal proceedings publication. In the case of the PCR, eight recorded presentations were submitted. These eight presenters, which included the two chairs, were invited to and chose to participate in a live panel on Thursday, November 14, 2024. This panel was titled *Expanding Contexts of Coaching*. (Brown, Humphries, Schardt, et al., (2024, November 14) On Friday, November 15, 2024, three presenters, along with the chairs, participated in a live panel titled *Coaching Influence and Human Flourishing*. The live panels were insightful and inspiring and extended the presenters' recorded presentations. Before we highlight the live conversations, we will present summaries of the recorded presentations since all readers do not have the advantage of reviewing these. Our summaries are intended to provide context for the live panel discussion highlights that follow.

Recorded Presentation Summative Highlights

The presenters who responded to the call are leadership development professionals who include coaching as part of their repertoire. Additionally, everyone participating in the 2024 Professional Coaching Roundtable holds a doctorate or Ph.D.: six are Doctors of Strategic Leadership (DSL) and two are Doctors of Philosophy (Ph.D.). These practitioners bring models, vast and verified coaching experience, and engaging exploration to the coaching conversations. Seven presenters are business owners: Brown, Schardt, Tamakloe, Walker, Wheatley Pearson, Whelan, and Wiater. Four presenters returned from the previous year's roundtable and include Brown, Walker and the chair and co-chair, Wiater and Whelan respectively. Four other presenters are internal coaches: Brown, Humphries, Schardt, and Wheatley Pearson. All engage clients in coaching relationships toward individual flourishing.

Dr. Brandi Humphries (2024), introducing her case study of succession planning and its near failure, noted,

The challenges were too significant. The disconnects created devastating canyons so deep and far apart that there felt like no way out. This feeling of hopelessness served as a reminder for me that all things are possible through God. How can the organization thrive through this process and progress toward a successful transition? God is the way through these dark organizational times. He is the one who can guide, bless, and ensure we flourish. (B. Humphries, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

As the presentation progressed, Humphries asked,

What is the most effective way forward for everyone within the enterprise to grow and develop, ultimately leading to more robust and trusting relationships

by serving one another to meet the ultimate succession goal through relentless prayer and hopeful spirit,

a call to coaching was heard loud and clear. (B. Humphries, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

Dr. Digna Wheatley Pearson (2024), in her presentation expressed hope for client peace and well-being and points listeners to Christian coaching.

So, when we partner with God, according to Jeremiah 29:11 it says, For I know the plans and the thoughts that I have for you, says the Lord, plans for peace and well-being and not for disaster to give you a future and a hope. How do you partner with God? I am so glad you asked. Coaching is available, Christian coaching that is available for those who desire to increase. (D. Wheatley Pearson, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Dr. Debbie Schardt (2024), in her presentation expressed why she coaches new leaders and the strength the coaching partnership brings.

One of my niches in coaching is new leaders. I thoroughly enjoy working with either a new leader, a new leader who has no experience, or rising leaders, and they are prime candidates for coaching because they are vulnerable. They're overwhelmed, they're confused, they're inexperienced, and quite often off balance between their personal and professional life, which does make them ideal, because when we think about coaching, it means that they don't have to do life alone as a leader. (D. Schardt, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Schardt continued,

So, when we honor our client and coaching partnership, we can help young leaders in any industry flourish and thrive, build confidence, competence, and strengths, understand that excellence requires personal growth, and embrace leadership excellence in the pursuit of perfection. ... And as coaches, we want our clients to be excellent. We want them to thrive. (D. Schardt, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Dr. Pat Tamakloe (2024) founder of the Cognitive Coaching Consortium International noted, it is a network of coaches who use the cognitive coaching model just to help leaders attain their levels of self awareness and to help them reach an optimal level of effectiveness as decision makers. I'm compelled to understand this discovery that I made of the need to bridge the gap between holistically challenged leaders and sound health and wellness. I noticed that leaders were sometimes broken and dysfunctional, and yet they were expected to

lead well. My research of showing that executive leaders from all spheres of professional life tend to experience a challenge with anxiety and with stress, the intent here is to be able to bridge that gap for them in their social, physical and mental health. (P. Tamakloe, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Dr. Lakeisha Walker (2024), as a returning PCR presenter, noted,

As a leader, I don't want to simply lead. I want to lead from a place of growth and to be an effective leader. ... Human Flourishing entails self-awareness, growth, transformation, holistic health, and purpose fulfillment. Human flourishing is vital to business success and sustainability and is evident in one's leadership effectiveness amid the world's various offerings of pleasure. (L. Walker, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

In addition, Walker provided statistics on coaching effectiveness, indicating a "70% increase in individual performance when people have operated in a coaching mindset and when they have allowed coaching to be a part of their organization" (L. Walker, personal communication, November 7, 2024). When people go through coaching, there is an "88% increase in organization productivity," and concerning teams, "there was an increase of 50% in team performance of individuals who have gone through some type of coaching. ... Coaching speaks for itself" (L. Walker, personal communication, November 7, 2024).

Dr. Shoneen Brown (2024), a returning PCR presenter and recently promoted senior associate director of student support at Regent University, presented "a student achievement partner program partnering with Regent University athletic department and enrollment management and enrollment management advising" (S. Brown, personal communication, November 7, 2024) This work has now expanded to a university department, as Brown noted the pilot program achieved a success rate of 88%. Brown further described the program's success.

After 6 months, students in the coach group were 5.2% more likely to still be enrolled than those in the non-coach group. These students experienced a meaningful, lasting impact of coaching, which persisted at least one more year after the coaching had concluded. (S. Brown, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

In addressing academic advisors, Brown noted they

should use basic coaching skills, asking open-ended probing questions that center on student concerns while allowing students to guide the conversation and structure their sessions. ... Advisors can boost effectiveness by using coaching skills like active listening, goal setting, and empathy, encouraging

accountability, offering reflective feedback, and focusing on strengths to create a more supportive, personalized, advising experience that empowers students to succeed. (S. Brown, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Dr. Kelly Whelan (2024), a returning PCR presenter and co-chair, in launching into new frontiers through her presentation on the metaverse, noted,

What was once regarded as the future of coaching has now become our present reality, and this shift highlights the necessity for practitioners like you to refine your skills, embrace innovative coaching environments, and engage in discussions with your clients about how they want to meet and what their meeting requirements are. (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

Later in the presentation, she noted, "each modality of coaching has benefits and drawbacks. What remains the same is the need for professional coaches to develop competencies that demonstrate their abilities, but also that you are delivering these competencies with your clients with integrity" (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 7, 2024). Noting that "practitioners must ensure that their practices align with Christian values, promoting in all things, the character of Christ," Whelan pointed her audience to the use of a tool developed by Belem Leaders (2023): *Guiding Principles for Practitioners: AI Commitments and Best Practices* (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 7, 2024). She further challenged practitioners to examine the guide's six pillars of commitments and understand how they can align their Christian faith while also using AI and stepping into the metaverse.

In building on a model of leadership development and specifically addressing feedback, Dr. Diane Wiater (2024) noted,

My premise is that in order for true leadership development to take place, the three elements are needed – training, mentoring, and coaching – and they need to be operating in the context of the leader's experience. These work together in leader development; when done right and well, they honor the leader. All three elements require feedback to function. I'll even take this further and suggest feedback is the fuel for the Golden Trifecta of Leadership Development; training, mentoring, and coaching are all relational. When the leader is honored, they can flourish. When the leader flourishes, there's a pathway for followers and the organization to flourish as well. (D. Wiater, personal communication, November 7, 2024)

These summaries of the PCR's recorded presentations introduce the reader to the heart of the presenter's content, forming a foundation for the remainder of the conversations highlighted in this article.

Engaging the Audience: Thursday Night Opening Comments

Building on where the presentations left off, the live panel, *Expanding Contexts of Coaching*, began with the presenters introducing themselves and sharing the hopes and intentions behind their presentations.

Schardt (2024) stated,

I hope that I will increase awareness of the challenges that healthcare executives face in the pursuit of professional excellence, because healthcare strives for perfection, and as such, so do their leaders. ... Coaches must understand the baseline and origins of their beliefs that are grounded in perfection. It is essential we partner and help them create self-awareness, confidence, and the strength to be excellent while pursuing perfection. (D. Schardt, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Tamakloe (2024) opened his comments,

My intent at the end of this presentation and this roundtable is to be able to just have people have a paradigm shift on how, as leaders, we can overcome the challenges that we face as leaders through connecting with a mind of Christ, be empathetic with those that we coach, and understanding that leaders also need coaches to help attain the level of self-awareness, because we all have blank spots. ... the intent for today, to make sure that we have that part of the shift. (P. Tamakloe, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Humphries (2024) noted, "My hope is that just one person reviews the case study and becomes a believer in the power of Jesus Christ, the power of coaching, and is able to experience the human flourishing that comes with that intentional combination" (B. Humphries, personal communication, November 14, 2024).

Wheatley Pearson (2024) opened her comments with,

My goal is to empower and equip faith-based organizations, as well as individuals, to transform and change. When life and death is set before us, we have a choice. I believe that when you empower people, you give them an opportunity that they're able to experience phenomenal change. (D. Wheatley Pearson, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Walker (2024) noted,

I'll be presenting on the effective leader is model, which is a leadership model that I developed shortly after graduating there from Regent University, and it

looks at leadership from four different perspectives with the effective leader being impactful, fair, strategic, and balanced. And tonight, my hope is that I'm able to connect that to human flourishing and to help leaders to understand how important it is for us to flourish as individuals, to reconnect to that place of purpose, and how that is going to be able to be put in place, to help us transform businesses and the world. (L. Walker, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Brown (2024) added her opening comments,

I am doing a study on student achievement partners for our academics, for our students that are on some form of academic alert. And so it is a project that I've been working on now for about 2 years and so excited to announce that we've been having an 80% success rate. ... it's my belief that when we bring students in and we accept them, that we are co-creators of their success, and making sure that we partner with them from admissions through to graduation. (S. Brown, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Whelan (2024) added,

This presentation is about creating space for human flourishing via the metaverse ... the hope for this presentation is to pique the interest of the metaverse ... give others the opportunity to see and hear how we can use this alternate world to still invite our clients into a safe space, so flourishing can happen within. (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

Partnership to Flourishing

Coaching is the vehicle that creates space for the client to flourish. Within flourishing, we talk about relationships. Creating space for the coaching relationship to flourish through establishing psychological safety and trust allows the client to then explore their own flourishing. (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 26, 2024). From a previous Research Roundtable Proceedings article, Whelan (2022) notes "While not all encompassing, psychological safety is measured by how safe a person feels to openly share their ideas, thoughts, and aspirations without fear of retaliation. Coaching is relational; we must create a space where we serve people well" (p. 8).

What follows in this segment are summaries of each participant's contributions to conversations about flourishing.

Walker (2024) highlighted the use of her model to identify leadership styles and their organizational impact, emphasizing the importance of trust in leadership. She noted

that leadership-style surveys play a crucial role in helping leaders recognize their strengths, guiding them through coaching to foster growth and success in specific areas.

Tamakloe (2024) as far as flourishing we have to understand what flourishing really is for the coachee and my understanding of flourishing, for the coachee is being able to see where the coachee is, where they desire to be, and how we can partner together. He emphasized the use of leadership and health and wellness assessments, encompassing physical, social, emotional, and spiritual dimensions to help clients identify gaps and areas for change. He also noted the importance of the coach and client recognizing which stage of change the client is in: pre-contemplation, contemplation, or prepared to change.

Schardt (2024) stressed the importance of tools in her coaching practice, particularly the emotional intelligence tool, which she uses to assess stress management, self-expression, decision-making, interpersonal relationships, and self-awareness. She highlighted how these tools help clients identify their strengths, weaknesses, and blind spots, fostering self-awareness and accountability. Schardt's passion for her "One Word leadership" approach simplifies focus, aiding clients in developing skills for meaningful change and flourishing in their personal and professional lives.

Wheatley Pearson (2024) added the importance of leaders being willing to learn continuously to avoid stagnation and foster growth for themselves and their organizations.

Humphries (2024) highlighted the importance of trusting relationships with an internal coach, emphasizing the power of accountability and the ability to nurture and encourage growth through informal coaching relationships. She observed significant flourishing occurring even without a formal coaching structure.

Brown (2024) offered that flourishing stems from the belief that each student has a God-given purpose and destiny, with coaching serving as the means to uncover their potential and divine purpose. She highlighted the need to go beyond simply valuing students or offering traditional support, advocating for reimagined approaches to support that foster growth and enable students to truly flourish.

Whelan (2024) addressed the importance of leadership development in building confidence and highlighted that helping people flourish begins with giving them permission to do so. She noted that individuals often need to hear that someone is willing to engage in such a conversation with them. She also stressed the value of coaching in supporting clients' sense of purpose and working with them toward fulfilling that purpose.

In a collaborative conversation with the other presenters, Wiater (2024) noted,

It is not ours, as coaches, to say what flourishing is for our clients, no matter where their faith is. Ours is to be the vessel, serve the client, believe in the client, and be present with the client. We can only expand our capacity as noble vessels by being in God's presence and through obedience to Him. (D. Wiater, personal communication, November 27, 2024)

Christian Coaching

During the *Expanding Contexts of Coaching* live panel, Dr. Whelan asked the panelists the question, "What is Christian coaching?" This is a season where SBL faculty have been encouraged to press into and experiment with AI. Therefore, responses from panelists were extracted and fed into ChatGPT with the instructions to create a definition of Christian coaching with bullet points. Below is an edited, AI-generated working definition of Christian coaching.

Christian coaching is a collaborative relational process focused on fostering growth, purpose, and transformation through a Christ-centered approach. This process relies on a unique combination of supportive partnership, trust, self-awareness development, and faith-based, Holy Spirit guidance. (OpenAI, 2023)

While the definition of Christian coaching needs attention, the output above demonstrates the power of AI in synthesizing large amounts of text and generating a meaningful outcome. The attention needed is Holy Spirit inspiration, human touch, input, and collaboration.

Live Panel Context and Foundation

Throughout the PCR's two live panels, Wiater noted coaching as a profession of hope, redemption, restoration, and reclamation. The latter two claims may seem incongruent with what those of us in the profession work so hard to make known – coaching is future-focused. We do not go back, we look forward. Hope is forward. Hope is expectation! In the live panel *Expanding Contexts of Coaching*, Wiater noted that her reason for becoming a coach was to help others in fulfilling their dreams. That was early language of Christian coaching nearly 30 years ago. As shared from the presenter's content, coaching helps clients dream, dream again, understand purpose, remove barriers keeping them from fulfilling purpose, living on purpose, becoming their best self, and "living their dreams."

In the Professional Coaching Call for Abstracts, we emphasized that the theme of the 2024 Regent Roundtables seemed "tailor-made for the profession of Coaching." (Regent University 2024 Annual Research Roundtables, 2024). Coaching is an honoring partnership that helps clients understand their purpose and calling. Taking that thought

further, we ask, can leaders flourish without experiencing and participating in the leadership development partnership of coaching?

Future Research

In closing the article *An Advancing Profession: Teams, Trends, and Technology in Coaching: Chair Narrative Reflections on the 2022 Regent University School of Business and Leadership Professional Coaching Roundtable*, Wiater (2022) issued a call to coaching “practitioners and researchers to partner for research, model development, and more case studies utilizing assessments, demonstrating processes and coaching models, particularly concerning the following areas” (2022, p. 10). Those areas are presented in Table 1 and include three areas covered and forwarded by 2024 PCR presenters: honoring individual uniqueness, coaching as a leadership development tool, and communication skills in coaching effectiveness. While likely unintentional, this demonstrates the expanding contexts of coaching and the growing intentionality of researchers and practitioners to capture and write about the trends, results, and expectations in the field. The full table demonstrates that the presenters, intentionally or not, addressed various domains expressed in that call. In one presentation, Whelan (2024) addressed all eight areas of the 2022 call in a historical and groundbreaking presentation experimenting in the metaverse titled *Creating Space for Human Flourishing: Partnering with the Metaverse in Coaching*.

Noticeable to the chair, the 2024 Roundtable included a variety of contexts represented by the presenters. Also evident was the need for researcher and practitioner collaboration. To forward research momentum, change is needed, as the practitioners are solopreneurs, entrepreneurs, and business owners working on their businesses. Researchers need to develop and replicate quantitative and qualitative means of measuring coach behavior, heart, and skill, coaching processes, client experience, and coaching outcomes including client flourishing.

Table 1*2024 Professional Coaching Roundtable Recorded Presentations and Alignment with 2022 Chair Continuing Call*

Presenter	Intergenerational workplace productivity	Global and team impact use, value, and disruption of technology in coaching	Honoring individual uniqueness	Communication skills in coaching effectiveness	The use of coaching in education	Coaching as a leadership development tool	Developing trust and psychologically safe environments	Virtual coaching competencies
Brown, S.			X	X	X	X	X	
Humphries . B.	X		X	X		X	X	
Wheatley Pearson, D.			X	X		X		
Schardt, D.	X		X	X		X	X	
Tamakloe, P.			X	X		X		
Walker, L.			X	X		X	X	

Presenter	Intergenerational workplace productivity	Global and team impact use, value, and disruption of technology in coaching	Honoring individual uniqueness	Communication skills in coaching effectiveness	The use of coaching in education	Coaching as a leadership development tool	Developing trust and psychologically safe environments	Virtual coaching competencies
Whelan, K.	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Wiater, D.			X	X		X	X	

Note. Data collated from participants' recorded roundtable presentation scripts.

The 2021–2024 PCR calls for abstracts, advance the Regent University mission of Christian Leadership to Change the World and recognize expanding contexts and the influence coaching has on individual growth, leadership development, teams, and organizations. The call remains for practitioners who are researchers and researchers who are practitioners to partner in capturing and publicizing coaching impact. Questions and curiosities abound: What is working and why? Who is affected when individuals are coached? What are coaches doing to bolster their coaching practice and presence? Let us work together to create coaching models, develop research that demonstrates evidence of coaching impact, and generally make known how coaching, when done right and well, leads to human flourishing.

Closing message

In closing, allow Whelan's message to all attendees at the *Partnerships of Honor: Expanding Contexts of Coaching* live panel to minister to you and inspire you to action.

I would just like to ... remind everyone that you have been uniquely made by God, that you were created on purpose for a purpose, and you have permission to flourish, to lead with confidence and create impact in your world in your sphere ... you have been entrusted with so much; God has given you so much. Don't be afraid to step out and into what's ahead of you. (K. Whelan, personal communication, November 14, 2024)

About the Authors

Dr. Diane Wiater serves as the chair of the 2024 SBL Professional Coaching Roundtable. With more than 25 years of experience in training and teaching coaches, Dr. Wiater is a coach's coach and leader in developing Christian coaches. Dr. Wiater is a certified Gallup® Strengths Coach and is certified to administer the MBTI. As founder and CEO of Wiater Consulting Group, LLC, Dr. Wiater is a trusted strategic partner, profitable business manager, and effective leader developer. Her passion is seeing leaders grow, thrive, lead well, and flourish! Dr. Wiater is also a Belem Leaders partner. She earned her Ph.D. in Organizational Leadership from Regent University, a Christian academic faith community where she serves as adjunct faculty in the School of Business and Leadership.

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Appendix A

Regent University SBL Annual Research Roundtable Themes 2019-2024

2019 - SBL Annual Research Roundtable theme: *Advancing the Kingdom*

Professional Coaching theme: *Raising the Bar*

2020 - No roundtables due to the pandemic

2021- SBL Annual Research Roundtable theme: *Continue the Mission*

Professional Coaching theme: *An Advancing Profession: Teams, Trends, and Technology in Coaching*

2022 - SBL Annual Research Roundtable theme: *Continue the Mission*

Professional Coaching theme: *An Advancing Profession: Teams, Trends, and Technology in Coaching*

2023 - SBL Annual Research Roundtable theme: *20 Years of Continuing the Mission*

Professional Coaching theme: *Coaching Advances, Leadership Development, Trends, Teams, and Technology*

2024 - SBL Annual Research Roundtable theme: *Human Flourishing – Its Role in Business & Leadership*

Professional Coaching theme: *Partnerships of Honor*