

## Are you as ready for the future as you could be? Are your clients?

The above headline and the featured article below were written by Thomas Leonard and published over six years ago in an issue of Today's Coach Broadcast to over 30,000 coaches at the time, it would prove to be among the most prescient of Thomas' writings.

Although published at that time to support coaches just like you to 'future-proof' our coaching practices, my sense is there is a great deal that can be gleaned from looking at the article again now.

From what perspective, you may ask? Here are just a few:

**Did the trends Thomas predicted come true?**

**How did Thomas' mind work - what can we discover about how he saw things, seemingly magically, before they happened?**

**Did coaches/coaching seize - fully - the opportunities he pointed out?**

**What opportunities and trends remain valid today?**

**Which trends are still playing out?**

**What new trends does the below list point to, and how can we future-proof for ourselves and our clients, in 2009?**

Movie buff that I am, I certainly appreciated *Back to the Future*, but I'm even more intrigued today about this exercise in going *Forward to the Past*. As you read the trends, what do you observe about Thomas' way of looking at the world that you can borrow and apply to your own work now?

Tuesdays are now Thomas Tuesdays here at the CoachVille Member News. Each week we'll feature a nugget of Thomas Leonard work from his various projects. This Tuesday, in addition to the Universal Trends article, I'm extremely delighted to highlight the new *How to Coach Anyone* print compendium, now available (<http://www.bestofthomas.com/htca/>) with CoachVille member pricing.

Post requests or comments for Thomas Tuesday newsletters at the [Best of Thomas Blog](http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/) (<http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/>). And feel free to pass along the word if you think others will benefit.

Cheers,

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P.S. The [How To Coach Anyone Collection of 68 case studies](http://www.bestofthomas.com/htca/) (<http://www.bestofthomas.com/htca/>) is - for the first time ever - in print, fully indexed and, where necessary for accuracy and clarity, updated, but only ever so lightly so that Thomas' shining writing remains intact.

Please note, you may have access to the electronic version of the lessons from a previous membership or purchase at [CoachVille](http://www.coachville.com/home/index) (<http://www.coachville.com/home/index>). If so, that remains unchanged. The new offering is for the physical print version for easy referencing offline (OR the digital PDF that includes new layout/updates.)



## Universal Trends Impacting Coaches & Coaching

by Thomas Leonard

*[ed note: first published Friday April 4, 2003, 6 years ago]*

The world and society are evolving, and as such the opportunities for coaching are increasing. While there are hundreds of trends, there are 10 that are most relevant to the increasing demand for coaching in the world, and we share details on five below.

**The following trends represent the ways society is evolving, and will continue to evolve over the next several years.**

**Each of these trends has a direct impact on society's awareness of and need for coaching. Which of these trends will you and your coaching practice be prepared for? One? Three? All**

### **1. Common interest communities will tend to define who a person is and what their opportunities are.**

As people gather with those with common interests, they will define themselves less by race, nationality, or other traditional measures. Also, as they become part of larger networks, opportunities for work, growth, learning, or connection will come more from those common interest communities than more traditional means, such as classified ads.. What's the connection with coaching?

- Communities are not just comprised of a common interest, but they also have a common purpose. Coaching can help them fulfill their purpose, rather than the community being based solely around activity.
- People will spend more time in these common interest communities, and will want to re-design their lives around the communities, not work. Coaching will serve as a common denominator, or networking resources for these communities.
- People's lives could be comprised of a lot of these communities, and part of coaching would be to help them identify the 10 or 20 communities they want to be a part of.
- With so many options available, coaching will be needed to help people create a balance and a strong sense of self.

- With an increase in common interest groups, there will be a higher demand placed on Group coaching.

## 2. Work and play are converging.

Although people in the US are often criticized for working so hard, there is a trend in which people are wanting what they do for work to merge with what they do for play. There are now dozens of books on the market showing how consumption isn't the ultimate goal of working and earning money. People are getting more concerned about overall balance, health, and long-term viability than in short-term pleasure. The primary goal of a job as being "earning money for play" is changing, as people realize how much time and energy is spent at work. They're wanting work to be as much a part of the enjoyment of life as outside of work. How this increases the demand for coaching:

- Our culture doesn't know how to play. Coaches can demonstrate, set a model for, and help clients understand how to blend work and play.
- Coaches will help people identify what they really want out of life, and learn to create a balance, budget for the things they really need, and set boundaries around work and play that work for them.
- People may need some help from a career coach to make the transition to a job which is more personally satisfying, rather than merely about money.
- People will want to re-invent and get strategies that a coach can provide about the way their job is being performed today. Companies are doing this now, and it's going to simply increase over time.
- People are going to be interested in finding new skill sets to make their job more interesting.

*[ed. note: For information in keeping with Thomas' point #2 above, see the [Play Better Coaching Method™](http://www.coachville.com/home/html/coach-two-win) (<http://www.coachville.com/home/html/coach-two-win>) at CoachVille.]*

## 3. Women are taking more leadership roles in the workplace.

More women are becoming CEOs, and having more leadership in government. Women are moving into higher levels of management, and bringing with them their sense and style of living. How this increases the demand for coaching:

- Women bring more of a strength and collaborative-based way of thinking than men. Rather than push their way through obstacles with brute force (and often alone), they'll seek outside and collaborative assistance.
- Women generally have an increased sensitivity to quality of life issues. They will be more concerned with the quality of life of their employees.
- The quality of communication will improve with women leading corporations, and the desire for improved communication, which leads to the need for coaching.
- Men will have to adapt to the changes, so there will be an increased need for coaching men.
- There will be an increased need for coaching both men and women on different ways to respond in the work place, especially with regards to stress and competition.
- More women are entering the MBA programs right now, and there is an increased emphasis on teaching coaching skills in the colleges. This carries over to bringing coaching with them into the corporations.

## 4. Convergence of technology with creativity.

Technology is allowing more creativity with more people. Individuals who considered themselves "un-artistic" because they couldn't draw or paint, are seeing their creativity blossom through the use of technology, such as Photoshop. Web sites, email, and all forms of technology are

unleashing greater amounts of creativity. How this impacts coaching:

- Coaches can become experts in the use of technology as a tool for creativity, helping many people tap into their own creative energy.
- Technology is allowing coaches to reach people in more creative ways, providing coaching through technology, rather than through face-to-face connection alone.
- As more people start home-based businesses, coaches can help with the transition by showing them how to use technology to their best advantage.

## 5. Individuality is super-rewarded.

While this hasn't been true historically in Europe or Japan, individuality has been rewarded in the United States in varying capacities. Experimentation and creativity have been the driving forces of the 20th and 21st centuries. Even while the largest corporations are getting larger, the number of small, independent, entrepreneurial companies is increasing. In light of the recent scandals, it is becoming apparent that bigger isn't the key. The August, 2002 issue of Fast Company magazine (<http://www.fastcompany.com>) demonstrates how poorly the bigger companies have performed. The best, brightest, and most innovative people are leaving, forming their own companies. How this increases the demand for coaching:

- People want the freedom to express themselves and create. Coaching fits right in with the development of creativity.
- The movement to a free-thinking society will naturally increase the demand for assistance in maintaining necessary systems in the midst of increased freedom.
- People will want more coaching to help them identify and utilize their unique qualities, so that they, too can be super-rewarded for individual contribution.
- People seek to define success on their own terms, and once they've made that transition, they're going to find the idea of personal evolution really appealing.

And...here are just the titles of five additional trends:

**5. Dis-intermediation - direct to the consumer.**

**6. The green movement.**

**7. The self-care and simplicity movement.**

**8. Agelessness and longevity.**

**9. People thinking conceptually, rather than just practically or via self-referencing.**

**10. Frictionless interaction.**

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Being able to intuit and then act on what's about to happen in our world is a muscle coaches need to develop, if we are to be of maximum value to our clients. Thomas felt this was part of what being a coach meant. [Click here \(http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/are-you-as-ready-for-the-future-as-you-could-be-are-your-clients/\)](http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/are-you-as-ready-for-the-future-as-you-could-be-are-your-clients/) to discuss what you saw between the lines of this article for yourself, or pose a question for your colleagues.

**What Trends Do You Think Are Coming, That Will Impact Coaches and Coaching, And What Opportunities Do These Bring?** Sound off by [clicking here](http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/are-you-as-ready-for-the-future-as-you-could-be-are-your-clients/) (<http://www.bestofthomas.com/blog/are-you-as-ready-for-the-future-as-you-could-be-are-your-clients/>) and posting at the Best of Thomas Blog.