



- In This Issue**
- [Coach's Corner](#)
- [The Fun Stuff](#)
- [Pandemic Ponderings](#)
- [Two Online Offerings](#)
- [Resources](#)



Timely Topic

Interglobe offers online workshops and webinars on the topic of **Navigating Unconscious Bias.**

If you're interested in learning more, please

Dear Readers,

"There are years that ask questions and years that answer." -- Zora Neale Hurston



2020 has certainly been the former so far -- and I don't think we'll see a change any time

soon. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity -- it's the perfect VUCA world in which we find ourselves at this moment. The COVID-19 pandemic has been made even more complex by layering another pandemic on top of it -- one that's as old as humankind: the pandemic of racism, not just in the US, but in all corners of the world.

It's hard to speak of a "silver lining," i.e., a potentially positive aspect of a negative occurrence, in this time of crisis -- and yet, for some of us, mainly those who are healthy, have not lost anyone to the virus, continue to be employed and/or have ways to generate income, and/or are able to shelter at home and stay out of harm's way, we have [a lot to be grateful for.](#)

For me, this time of COVID-19 and unrest around questions of racial injustice and inequality has offered me a huge opportunity to re-focus on what really matters to me on the one hand, while at the same time forcing me to look at my vast privilege as a white person in new and uncomfortable ways on the other.

What am I called to do now? I'm not sure yet. All I know is that I need to keep asking questions, keep listening, keep learning -- and doing what I can to stay awake and pay attention and "do my part." It's important to me to be focused on both -- doing my inner work of exploring and understanding racism in all its facets AND doing the outer work of making my voice heard, of protesting, of speaking up in whatever way possible. I hope you're joining me on this refocusing and learning journey.

One final thing I want to say to all of us: it's ok to be tired -- and take breaks! Dealing with uncertainty and ambiguity 24/7 is

[email us.](#)

What's Coming Up at Interglobe



Midweek Mindfulness Meditation -- open to anyone!

Wednesdays, 12-12:30 pm EST

Send [email](#) to receive Zoom link



[Taming our Minds: in July](#)

A 4-month online program focused on mindfulness and meditation in a supportive community.

July 7-October 20, 2020
(meets 1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month, 11-11:50 am EST)



[GACC Webinar: Unconscious Bias in Communications](#)

July 15, 12-1 pm EST

exhausting. Constantly paying attention to the latest developments and news updates and processing and reacting to them, having to [pivot](#) from old ways of working to new ways, dealing with losses, missing in-person contact with people who matter to us, having to stay home when you'd rather plan a trip -- all this is tiring. So, I hope you'll be able to take some time off soon to relax, remember your sense of humor and go out in nature. That's what I'm saying YES to.

With appreciation,
Rita



Coach's Corner

"Coaching: a conversation that supports the client in cultivating greater self-awareness, making new and more refined distinctions and building new behavioral competence."

Coach's Corner is a regular feature highlighting a particular aspect of coaching.



Lessons from Coaching Leaders in Turbulent Times:



[Sietar USA Virtual Conference](#)

October 2020

Details to be announced soon



Mindfulness Online in September - Dalhousie Online Program

September 2020

[Dalhousie University, Continuing Education](#)

Details to be announced soon



Personal Leadership: Leading the Self Before Leading Others Foundations Online Program

October 2020

[Dalhousie University, Continuing Education](#)

The Four P's

Coaching leaders -- like any other group of clients -- requires a particular skillset that we as coaches have a responsibility to hone and develop constantly. Dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty is certainly part and parcel of that skillset, especially when coaching leaders. And, when COVID-19 hit, the words uncertainty and ambiguity took on a whole different meaning for the clients I work with -- as well as for myself as their coach. Here are a few things I have learned in the last 3-4 months about coaching in turbulent times:

Pivoting is vital: While being an effective coach always requires me to "go where my client wants to go," i.e., let them set the direction of the coaching conversation so that they get their needs met, coaching during this pandemic has meant bringing a whole lot more flexibility to the table than before: clients change or cancel on short notice (as a result I "loosened" my cancellation policies somewhat); coaching goals change based on sudden role changes in the organization, so leaders have to adjust (and so do I); my role might change from being a strategic thinking partner to acting strictly as a sounding board; clients might ask me for a totally new set of resources they have never asked for before (for example: How do I talk about racism at work? How do I have difficult conversations with my team?). My job in response to these changes is to pivot quickly and offer any support I can.

Personal is ok: Several of my coaching conversations have changed from being 80% focused on business issues and 20% on personal topics to 40 or 60% being focused on personal topics such as dealing with children at home, dealing with burnout (Zoom or otherwise), lack of good self-care, and dealing with emotional stress and pain. In opening the door to these more personal conversations, new insights and opportunities for growth have come up for these leaders, including showing more vulnerability and developing greater closeness to their staff and team members.

Positivity is helpful: Optimism and positivity are often cited as some of the more effective strategies to build greater resilience in times of crisis. Staying focused on the positive as a coach doesn't mean being inauthentic, "faking it," playing games or minimizing feelings of distress, etc. It simply means applying -- and modeling -- a learning orientation, staying curious and exploring practical ways to navigate adversity with the client. I discuss ways of taking care of oneself with my clients including meditation and other mindfulness practices, getting sufficient sleep and exercise and having a balanced diet. I also bring up compassion for oneself and others as another way of staying positive.

Purpose above all: Research shows that connecting what we do to a bigger purpose tends to result in higher performance, stronger motivation and more engagement at work. Helping leaders identify, rediscover and pay attention to the WHY behind their actions is another helpful way of staying centered and dealing with ambiguity and uncertainty in the midst of a storm. Finally, one of the metaphors many people find helpful in this new pandemic



Quotes and Sayings

"Never forget that justice is what love looks like in public."

-- Cornel West

"How we spend our days is, of course, how we spend our lives."

-- Jannie Dillard



"We are whole: our deepest happiness is intrinsic to the nature of our minds, and it is not damaged through uncertainty and change."

-- Sharon Salzberg

"You can never cross the ocean until you have the courage to lose sight of the shore."

-- Andre Gide

"Mindfulness is about love and loving life."

normal is looking at it as a marathon vs. a sprint: taking the long view, staying focused on the goal, having a support team and sufficient resources are all things that will support leaders in staying the course. My job is to remind them of that whenever it seems helpful to them.

To find out more about our coaching services, please [email](#) or call me at (404) 915-2340.

"The Fun Stuff" -- Ideas for Engaging your Audience During an Online Workshop

My experience with teaching workshops online was very limited before the pandemic. I had presented quite a few 1-hour webinars, had participated in workshops on Adobe as a "student" for many years and facilitated the occasional cross-cultural pre-departure orientation on Skype or GoToMeeting, but I had never facilitated an entire day-long workshop online up until then. Well, now I have. However, rather than repeating what others have already put together so masterfully in terms of strategies for effective virtual workshop design and delivery, I'm sharing some of the "fun stuff" I have learned over the past few months. Please email me if you'd like additional resources.



- **Virtual DJ:** A recent 2-hour interactive webinar on Positive Leadership had a DJ spinning dance music at transition points.
- **Virtual applause:** Can be downloaded and played after a presenter finishes their presentation. [Here's](#) one example -- many more online.
- **Everyone's favorite -- Virtual backgrounds:** Here are some [resources](#). I personally like "Star Wars" or a lovely beach scene. Disclaimer: Don't overdo it. Plus, it can have a more inclusive or even trust-building effect to show your home office background instead of palm trees.
- **Online icebreakers & energizers:**
 - "Find something that's blue, striped, has dots... and show it to us."
 - "Share your favorite piece of furniture or object in your home office."
 - "Whose picture do you have on your desk?"
 - "Who is wearing the most ill-matching top & bottom today?"
- Add **interactive polls** from platforms such as [mentimeter.com](#) or [slido](#) to your workshop to spice things up.
- Provide **virtual (photo) snacks** during breaks & **virtual (photo) prizes** as rewards for contributing actively/doing group presentations/to close out the day, etc. (Hint: a picture of a Porsche goes down really well.)

When you cultivate this love, it gives you clarity and compassion for life, and your actions happen in accordance with that."

-- Jon Kabat-Zinn



"If we are too busy to be kind, we are too busy"

-- Allan Lokos

"Perhaps home is not a place but simply an irrevocable condition."

-- James Baldwin



"Ring the bell that still can ring. Forget the perfect offering. There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in."

-- Leonard Cohen

"To say you don't know is the beginning of now knowing."

-- Chinese Proverb

- Take a **group photo** at the end of the workshop including giving each other virtual "head massages."
- Ask participants to **write "ready"** in the chat at the beginning of a new segment to get everyone's attention.
- Invite people to use the **"rename function"** in the participant list and add their location, pronouns or a nickname.
- Download a **timer for breakout groups** from YouTube. [Here](#) are a few examples.
- Have a joint **pre-arranged pizza dinner** or lunch.
- Mail participants a **"workshop survival kit"** if they're in for a multi-day experience including chocolate, post-its, vitamins, snacks, etc.

(Thanks to these colleagues and online wizards for demonstrating and sharing their ideas: [Magdalena Pertgen](#), [Denise Hall](#), [Nadine Binder](#), [Dani Marquez Piris](#), [Barbara Messer](#), [Lies Wouters](#), [Pari Namazie](#) and others)

Finally, 3 more things to consider:

- **I purchased a 2nd monitor** to have a larger screen, i.e., more "real estate," to play with than just my small-ish laptop screen. It has made a world of difference! I feel more expansive and more creative!
- **Technical awkwardness is okay.** Nobody is perfect at this "new normal" which is good since we need the human element in this new virtual world.
- **Virtual is fun -- and it's tiring** (back to the [beginning](#) of this newsflash). In the virtual space, interactions can seem "magnified" and more intense. There is no small talk to relax, nor any time between online meetings to catch your breath. Allow yourself to take breaks and allow your participants to take breaks. It's a must to avoid online burnout in the long run.

Pandemic Ponderings: What I Have Learned About Myself During the Pandemic

"There is a time to act, and a time to wait, to listen, to observe. Then understanding and clarity can grow. From understanding, action arises that is purposeful, firm, and powerful."

-- Charles Eisenstein

Listen, wait, act -- I have done all these things during the past few months. Plus, I have: meditated regularly with clients and friends...ridden my bike 2 or 3 times a week without a charity ride to get ready for... facilitated online workshops... viewed my clients' home



Client Testimonials

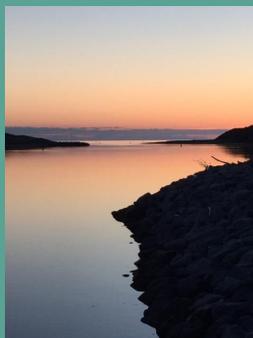


Here's what recent clients have to say:

Taming Our Minds: Mindfulness Class

"Rita's workshop created a space for mindfulness and community that was invaluable. Especially in these challenging times, the ability to meditate and dialogue in such a human-centered environment reliably contributed to my productivity and creativity."

"This mindfulness class was a great experience. Very timely in times of Shelter in Place. Meditating with a group has a certain power that cannot be attained individually. The community we formed was supportive in challenging times. Every session Rita would teach us a new technique and share resources. Totally worth your time investment!! Thanks, Rita!!"



Coaching

"Rita has a systematic

offices ... attended webinars, workshops and other online gatherings on new topics... tried out plant-based recipes... eaten plant-based food... checked websites daily for COVID-19 cases and deaths... played cards online... talked to friends and family I hadn't talked to in a long time... socialized with friends in my backyard staying 6 feet apart... worn a mask in public... attended anti-racism protests... walked many miles in my neighborhood... signed up for a mindfulness meditation teacher certification program... had a pandemic birthday celebration... completed several jigsaw puzzles (early on)... and more. Most of these things for the 1st time.

This is what I have learned about myself from doing these things during this time:

I like routines more than I thought. Daily house routines, cooking, eating, meeting friends, work routines -- all of it! I believe the feelings of regularity, certainty and "being in control" that routines provide have something to do with this. Side note: I don't miss my travel routine.

Online communities are important to me. From the daily Mindful Moments with Congregation Bet Haverim to Sunday morning sitting practice with my Shambhala community to Midweek Mindfulness Meditation sessions to weekly DEI (diversity, equity & inclusion) conversations and coaches' community gatherings. Virtual closeness can be real.

Living in these pandemic times is teaching me about equanimity, holding the long view and acceptance. It invites me to "engage the ambiguity" as a teacher and guide (to quote from the [Personal Leadership](#) framework). Sometimes I can do it - other times I can't. And that's ok.

I can always meditate or go ride my bike. These two "outlets" have been my main self-care practices during this time -- I am so grateful I can do them and have people I can do them with.

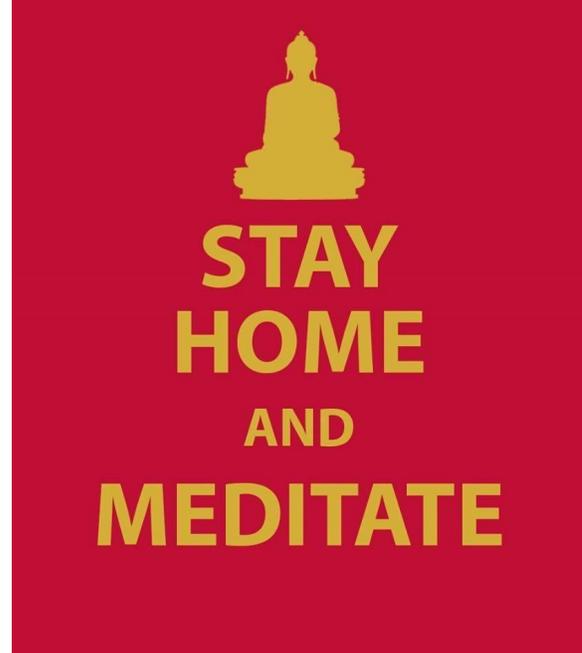
So much learning, so many connections, so much gratitude!

and human-centered approach. Through her coaching, I have been able to better understand my leadership profile, drivers and motivation.

Her approach is collaborative and focused on asking the right questions to uncover my own journey as opposed to dictating a direction. With Rita's support, I am more prepared and able to move to the next stage of my career."

"Rita is very good at keeping her clients accountable and I felt this benefitted what I got out of our time together so that things I needed to do to achieve my success did not slip or fall off the radar. Rita's transparency and direct nature are much appreciated, and I am a strong leader today as a result. ... I would highly recommend Rita for leadership development when you are looking to take your development to the next level of growth."

"I worked with Rita as my leadership coach over the past six months. She inspired me to keep working hard to improve my leadership. Rita guided me through the coaching process to help me see different views of myself and others, and she encouraged me to become a better leader and person. The coaching process improved my performance and brought out the best in me. I am very thankful for the opportunity to work with Rita and highly recommend her as a coach."



Two Online Offerings

"Taming Our Minds: Practicing Mindfulness & Meditation in Community"

If you're interested in learning (more) about and practicing mindfulness and meditation in a supportive community, join this 4-month online program. It meets twice a month for 50 minutes starting on July 7th. Click [here](#) for more information and to register.

Midweek Mindfulness Meditation -- Open to Anyone!

Take a break from your daily routine and join this free meditation session every Wednesday from 12 to 12:30 pm EST. To receive an invite including the Zoom link, [email me](#).



Resources



Webinar on
**"Unconscious Bias in
 Communications"**
 delivered for the
 International
 Association of
 Business
 Communicators

Rita - what an excellent presentation! I appreciate the conscious and compassionate approach you bring to mitigating the effects of bias. I also appreciated your message that the change needs to be systemic in organizations. Thanks for the terrific insights.



Interglobe

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[Email Us](#)
 (404) 915-2340

Here are three articles written by my friend and colleague **Dr. Joel A Brown**, Chief Visionary Officer of Pneumos LLC, a management consultant and coaching firm based in San Francisco, CA, that have helped me better understand different aspects of racism and of living as a black person in the US. Thank you, Joel, for writing these articles.



[Do You Really Want to Help?](#)

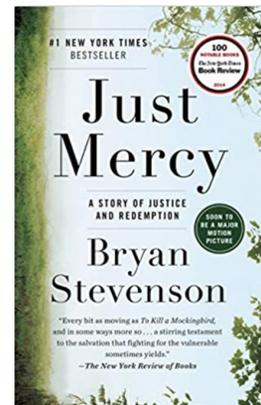
[Blackitis and the Case for Black Self-Care](#)

[Before Juneteenth: How Black People Freed Themselves](#)



I highly recommend this 2016 Netflix documentary about the criminalization of African-Americans and the US prison boom: ["The 13th"](#)

Bryan Stephenson is the founder and Executive Director of the [Equal Justice Initiative](#), a human rights organization in Montgomery, Alabama. He led the creation of the Legacy Museum and National Memorial for Peace in Justice chronicling the legacy of slavery and lynching and racial segregation, and the connection to mass incarceration and contemporary issues of racial bias.



His book ["Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption"](#) as well as a [movie with the same name](#) about a legal case about racial bias he worked on as a young lawyer are both excellent.

THRIVE  GLOBAL

Finally, here's a list of [22 books written by black authors](#) from Thrive Global to choose from for your summer (or winter) reading list, if you haven't already read them.



INTERGLOBE Cross Cultural Business Services

Helping People Bridge Differences
Effectively and Mindfully.