Recommended Readings with Annotations
From the Faculty for Coaching From a Systems Perspective

Readers Guide:
If you are new to this topic of Systems Perspective, the single best place to start is Peter Senge's The Fifth Discipline.

If you've read The Fifth Discipline and want more, then we recommend:
- *O'Connor & McDermott, Meadows (the "Primer"), or The Systems Thinker for more on systems thinking*
- *Argyris for reflection and mental models*
- *Fritz for personal mastery and visioning*
- *Brill, Benson, Kopeikina, or Scharmer about effective state-of-mind*
- *Winograd and Flores for philosophical underpinnings*
- *Oconnor and Lages, Rock, Adams, or Flaherty on Coaching*

Coaching in General:
Adams, Marilee, *Change Your Questions, Change your Life*, Berrett-Koehler, 2004.
> *Many authors speak of the importance of framing. Marilee Adams provides a very practical dichotomy for how we frame things. One path leads to "Question Thinking," a more productive and humane workplace, and personal happiness. Refreshing and practical. For anyone, but especially for coaching. Short and readable. A real gem.*

Flaherty, James, Coaching, Second Edition: Evoking Excellence in Others, Butterworth-Heinemann, 2nd Edition, 2005
> *Endorsed by Senge. Coach training available through New Ventures West.*

Hargrove, Robert, *Masterful Coaching : Extraordinary Results by Impacting People and the Way They Think and Work Together*, Jossey-Bass/Pfeiffer; 3rd edition, October 2008.
> *Senge says of this book, "Robert Hargrove's Masterful Coaching sets the context of the coach as steward rather than mere teacher, a critical agent in transforming organizational cultures and developing the skills and capabilities necessary for new cultures to be sustained."*

O'Connor, Joseph, and Andrea Lages *How Coaching Works,* A. C. Black, London, 2007.
> *After creating very readable texts on NLP and Systems Thinking, O'Connor shifted his attention to executive coaching and teaching coaches. Here, O'Connor and Lages provide an insightful catalog of the major schools of coaching. They address, as promised, the very interesting question of how coaching works.*

Whitmore, John, Sir, *Coaching for Performance*, 2nd ed., Nicholas Brealey Publishing, 1996
> *An approach in which the coach helps by directing the attention of the coachee and eventually brings the coachee to pay attention to how their attention is directed to one thing or another. Surprisingly to me, connected to Tim Galwey who became famous in the 80s for his book, The Inner Game of Tennis. See also Pam Brill.*

Systems Thinking and System Dynamics:
Forrester, Jay W., *Industrial Dynamics*, MIT Press, 1961 (Now available from Pegasus Communications, Inc.)
> *The classic text on system dynamics from the creator of the field.*

Meadows, Donella, *Thinking in Systems: A Primer*, Chelsea Green, 2008

Dana Meadows created a draft for this "Primer" in the late 90's, then put the manuscript aside. After her death, the staff at the Sustainability Institute completed this wonderful short work which accurately conveys Dana's spirit, insight, and inspiration.

O'Connor, Joseph & Ian McDermott, *The Art of Systems Thinking*: *Essential Skills for Creativity and Problem Solving,* Thorsons, 1997.
> *Many writers have tried and failed to convey the subtleties of systems thinking. O'Connor and McDermott have a brilliant, insightful, and readable book. Unfortunately, published in the UK and with little promotion, it never got the recognition it deserves. I assisted O'Connor in minor ways. Buy this gem used thru Amazon.*

Lots more material at Pegasus Communications, http://PegasusCom.com

Coaching in the Internal System:

Steve Ober posts from time to time on The Management Blog. See links from the Systems Perspectives main page, http://SystemsPerspectivesLLC.com

Emergent Learning Maps:
Darling, Marilyn, Charles Parry, Joseph Moore, "Learning in the Thick of It" *Harvard Business Review*, July 2005. Also, "From Post-Mortem to Living Practice,"
> *Do we learn from experience? Or does experience just go by without learning? Marilyn Darling has done extensive research on the US Army's After Action Review, and extended this in many ways to create the Emergent Learning Maps process which we use.*
>
> *Web site: http://www.signetconsulting.com has much more on Emergent Learning Maps. Also a detailed report on their research, look for "AAR Study".*

Additional Readings:
Argyris, Chris, *Overcoming Organizational Defenses*, Allyn and Bacon, 1990.
Argyris, Chris, "Teaching Smart People to Learn," *Harvard Business Review*, May-June 1991.
> *Argyris has many articles and books; these two are a good place to start. Credited for the notion of double loop learning and much more in the discipline of mental models.*

Benson, Herbert, *The Relaxation Response*, Harper, 1976. Updated edition, HarperCollins, 2000.
> *In the 70's, extraordinary claims were being made for meditation, included branded approaches like Transcendental Meditation. Benson, at Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital, investigated the claims in rigorous clinical trial settings. Meditation works. For the essence of the practice, without the hype, this is the important text.*

Brill, Pamela, *The Winner's Way: A Proven Method for Achieving Your Personal Best in any Situation*, McGraw-Hill, 2004.
> *We've heard a lot about sports psychology; lots of authors will tell you to get into the "zone" but what exactly is that? Pam is a clinical psychologist and also a sports psych coach for the Dartmouth Hockey team. She has the clearest exposition of what are the dimensions of the effective state of mind, what to watch for, and how to pull yourself back into the zone. State of mind affects all our effectiveness, this is the best place to start. See also Kopeikina, Scharmer, Benson, and Csikszentmihalyi.*

Kopeikina, Luda, *The Right Decision Every Time*, Pearson/Prentice Hall, 2005.
> *The quality of a decision is affected by the state of mind of the decision maker. What's the optimum state of mind for making the right decision? See also Pam Brill.*

Rock, David, *Quiet Leadership*, Harper Collins, 2006.
> *Effective leaders help others change the way they think. Most of us struggle with such conversations. This is a practical handbook, soundly based. I learned much from this book, especially from Rock's "Dance of Insight" model: obtaining permission, establishing context, questioning effectively, and clarifying.*

Rock, David, and Jeffrey Schwartz, "The Neuroscience of Leadership," *Strategy & Business*, vol. 43, Summer 2006. *Available free on the web and as pdf at* http://www.strategy-business.com
> *This article is new, science-based, supports the ideas of organizational learning, and offers several new wrinkles for our field. If you are really interested in what to know in order to make your organization effective, this is an important article.*

Scharmer, C. Otto, *Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges*, The Society for Organizational Learning, 2007.
> *Refreshing new work by a great thinker. What is the internal process for the painter in front of the empty canvas? Where do great decisions and initiatives come from? Serious changes require a state of mind remarkably different from the frenzied state typical of today. Besides this excellent book, I highly recommend that you find an opportunity to hear Otto speak. On line programs at http://www.presencing.com*

Senge, Peter M., *The Fifth Discipline: The Art and Practice of the Learning Organization*, Doubleday/Currency, 1990, revised edition 2006.
> *The book that put organizational learning, the five disciplines, and systems thinking on the map. The best book-length place to start in this field. Still one of the best texts for introductory material on the system archetypes. If you have not played the "beer game," read about it here to get a real feel for how "the system" affects human efforts..*

Senge, Peter M., "The Leader's New Work: Building Learning Organizations," *Sloan Management Review*, v. 32, no.1, Fall 1990
> *This article from 1990 is still the best ten-page introductory reading to the field.*

Senge, Peter M., Art Kleiner, Charlotte Roberts, Richard B. Ross, and Bryan J. Smith, *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization*, Doubleday/ Currency, 1994.
> *Second book in a series. If Senge's first book, the Fifth Discipline is the "call to arms," then this is the "how-to" manual. Fifty independent sections, each is something productive you can do with your team or performance network today.*

Winograd, Terry, and Fernando Flores, *Understanding Computers and Cognition*, Addison-Wesley, 1987.
> *The title doesn't do justice to this book; the first half of this book is an excellent summary of the key elements of modern philosophy that underlie our field of organizational learning. After you've read some of the current authors, go to this book to get a better grasp of the foundations. See also Maturana; see also Dreyfus.*

Other Web site links:
Richard Karash's complete Recommended Reading List and other materials on Systems Thinking http://Karash.com/systemsthinking