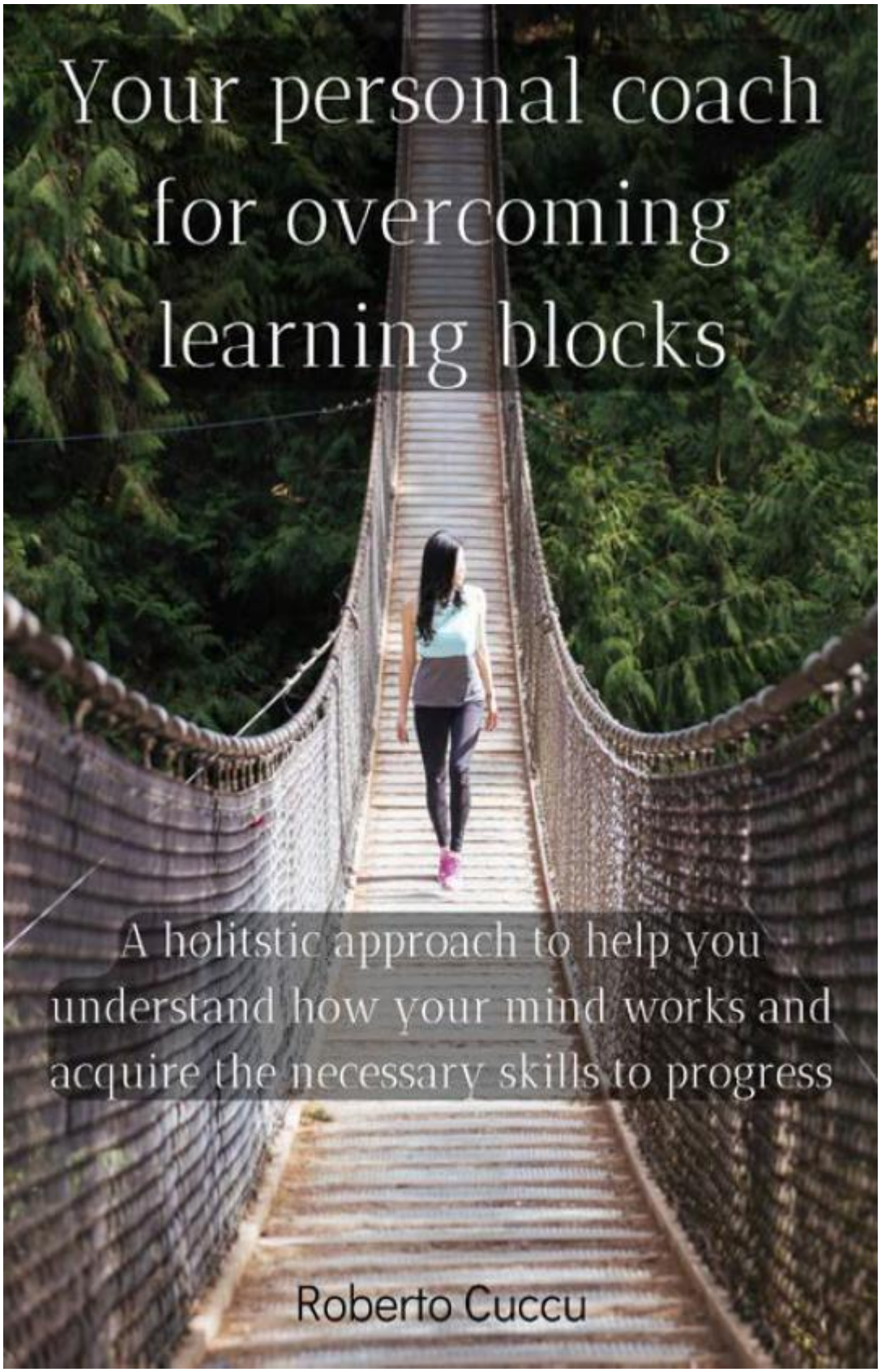

Your personal coach for overcoming learning blocks
A holitstic approach to help you understand how your mind works and acquire the necessary skills to progress
Roberto Cuccu

Introduction to the Book

Coaching a person means understand how the individual works, his or her motivation, the way they learn, the obstacles they find in certain areas and finding a way to move forward in a collaborative effort. A lot of people drag themselves over time on a particular learning field, because they haven't so far found the way to move forward. They keep repeating the same learning patterns that have been proved unsuccessful just because they do not know of any other way.

A key challenge at the start of a coaching relationship is helping the person **identify the right problem to solve**. It is essential to understand if it is a One-time problem or Pattern, if the problem is due to Circumstance or Attitude.
To be able to support an individual in such a way, it is necessary to have a more than general knowledge of how the mind works in a learning situation, how each person has different ways to represent new information and to memorize it.
In a holistic approach it is essential to involve not only the mind, but also the emotions and the body.
At the end of this coaching method, an individual should be able to confidently overcome the targeted obstacle and, last but not least, acquire a new understanding of how to learn and how to study any topic they desire and feel more confident in his/her working environment.

About the Author

Roberto Cuccu has been a teacher of English Language and Literature in an Italian Secondary School.
He collaborated with the University of Cagliari, Sardinia, as contract professor for ESP (English for Specific Purposes) and for Use of Multimedia in Teaching English. In addition, he has worked as teachers' trainers, educational multimedia consultant and designer for online museums, using the M.U.S.E. (Museums United with Schools in Education) approach, based on multiple intelligences.

Realizing the central role of human development in a digital world, he has been experimenting ways to ride these two horses at the same time: a holistic approach to learning along with enhancing learning and teaching through the use of Digital. He has published, among others, a book on out-of-the-box experiences that he has proposed to his students, based on emotional involvement, visualization and collaboration.

Purpose of the Reading Guide

This Reading Guide should help to have a general idea about the facts described in this book, reflect on oneself about his/her learning style and if they have had learning blocks in their life, and see if any of the experiences described in this book could inspire educators, parents or students.

Overview of the Book

The book begins with a theoretical background on Coaching and the working of the learning mind.
It shows how **Connection** is the essential element. In fact, the key element in a coaching relationship is **chemistry**. Getting to know the details of each other's lives unearths the points of connection that **create a bond**. Genuine curiosity, intent listening, and an excitement about the opportunity to work together create a spark that makes people want to work with you. **Empathy** is the language that allows us to communicate with a depth that makes the connection possible. Empathy allows us to understand the logic behind someone's choices no matter how different they are from our own.

Then it moves analysing the working of our mind, and how to improve our memory. It describes also the typical problems we may encounter in learning something.

It describes also the results of a study on the relationship between the grades you get at school and the way you study at home.

The second part of the book is on 5 case studies. These case studies will help build up a rich picture of the topic discussed, using different kinds of data collection and gathering the views, perceptions, experiences and/or ideas of diverse individuals relating to the case.

In each case study, the first step has always been to understand the personality of the trainee, her preferred learning channels. After that, thanks to establishing a mutual trust and sharing of personal experiences, both positive and negative, it was tackled the problem to solve, in order to have the person improve her performance.

Key Themes and Main Ideas

- The difference between a teacher and a coach.
- The best way for each one of us to memorize new information.
- What a coach could do to prepare a learner before a session.
- How to support the learning process.
- The role of error and feedback in the learning process.
- Skills to develop in order to overcome some blocks in learning.
- The role of Neuro-Linguistic programming in understanding the problems in each one of us.

Understanding Learning Blocks

To be able to support an individual, it is necessary to have a more than general knowledge of how the mind works in a learning situation, how each person has different ways to represent new information and to memorize it. **In a holistic approach it is essential to involve not only the mind, but also the emotions and the body.**

It is also often to be included an understanding of the necessary Soft Skills that an individual needs to develop and consolidate in order to feel more self-confidence, be more grounded and overcome some limiting obstacles, both in the individual mind and in the social environment.

Another essential area is the one relative to the Active Listening skills, without them coaching cannot make real progress.

Chapter-by-Chapter Summary

- After an initial introduction there is the first part of the theoretical background on which this approach is based.
- Follows a section about the skills to develop and the results of previous investigations on learning styles, multiple intelligences and school achievements.
- After the first part of this book, the second part describes 5 different Case Studies, each individual with a different block.
- Case study 1: An example of understanding and overcoming a block in expressing oneself
- Case study 2:, An example of putting aside for a moment external and internal conflicts

- Case Study 3: In this case, the problem was in training for speaking in public
- Case Study 4: How to improve one's learning through Art and personal interests
- Case study 5: In this case the objective was to find confidence in herself and her skills
- The last chapter deals with conclusions at the end of this research
- There is also an Appendix with a Questionnaire on Primary representation system. How we experience the world

Important Concepts and Learning Strategies

Given health, given the motivation, connection to a positive personal outcome and access to useful strategies, we can all learn. This does not mean we can all learn in the same way and to the same outcome but we can learn new skills and understandings and we can all be able to transfer them into new contexts.

As learners we will have **different personal preferences for the strategies we use**. These may vary by task and context but they will tend to show a consistency over time. Each brain has a high degree of plasticity, developing and integrating with. Each person is born with a unique blend of intelligences. Because of the different life experiences, we all have some of these intelligences that will develop strongly, others slightly and some not at all.

Trainers can play a significant part in removing some of the barriers that hinder the development of an intelligence while utilizing strategies to develop that intelligence. **If you keep doing what you have always done, you will always get what you have always got.** The more options we have, the greater our chances of success.

Reading Comprehension Questions

- Which is the channel you prefer to use when you have to learn something new: Visual, Auditory or Kinaesthetic one?
- Have you ever managed to find in yourself a way to overcome a learning problem on your own or with the help of another person?
- At the end of the book there are two NLP questionnaires to discover how you prefer to learn something and how to retrieve from your memory some stored information. Complete the questionnaires and see if they correspond to what you already knew about yourself.

Book Club Discussion Questions

- Is there a difference between books written only on a theoretical background or books that are based also on Case Studies to demonstrate how valid those theories are?
- Have you happened to read another book that relates individual cases and how to solve them?
- Would you like to contact the writer of this book and share experiences and ask questions?

Personal Reflection Questions

- Have you ever found a teacher that did not judge you, but helped you empathically to find in yourself alternatives to ways of learning that were not effective for you?
- As we are all different, do you use a different approach when dealing with a person who is your son, daughter, husband, wife or friend?
- Which of the case studies has interested you the most, and why?

Practical Exercises and Activities

- Fill in the two questionnaires at the end of the book and see what are your preferred channels for learning something. Every line of the questionnaire has something to do and three possible ways to do that, Visually, Auditorily or Kinaesthetically. The order of channels changes in every line of the table.
- When dealing with another person try to deal in an empathic way, without judging the ideas different from yours, but try to put yourself in their shoes and see how you would react to some circumstances.

Applying the Lessons to Everyday Life

- If you have children or students, try to see how it is best to deal with each one of them so they can learn and appreciate your contribution, without feeling to be judged or forced to do something they don't feel like doing.

Key Takeaways

- If you help someone who has a problem in learning, behaving, or in another field, you are not only giving something precious to another person, the connection you create in order to understand and help the other one is also something that you receive yourself, from the new relationship you have created. It's a two-way channel, give and receive.

Final Reflections and Conclusion

The cover of this book represents a lady in the middle of crossing a gap using a bridge hanging in the void.

When I was young, I had a problem: when I was on a high building, I felt the urge to jump into the void. I trained myself in Self-Hypnosis in order to solve this problem. When you talk to your subconscious, you should not say: *Don't do this!* That's because if you say "No" to your subconscious, you are reinforcing the

problem. Instead of saying not to do something, I offered alternatives. And it worked! Since then, I have had no longer this problem.

What I want to convey to you is that if you have a problem with your mind, just offer possible alternatives, maybe one of them will work.

That is what I did with each of the individuals who asked me to help them. We tried initially several ways to accomplish our goal, until we found one that worked.

I hope that the Case Studies in this book could inspire you to find alternatives to attitudes, habits that you think are fixed in your mind: you can change them, you could be in control of the hidden mechanisms of your mind, and be free to experiment new ways.