

REFLECT TO CREATE

Hetty Einzig is delighted by this energetic and spirited exploration into the power of creative reflection.

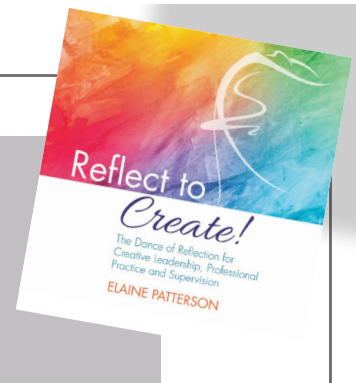
Elaine Patterson is a seasoned coach and coaching supervisor, and this book reflects a rich professional lifetime and a generosity of spirit in sharing its fruits. A cornucopia of tools, gathered and invented no doubt over many years, in support of her mission: namely to promote the creative power of reflection in service of, as she puts it, 'wise living and working in today's constantly changing world'.

These days no one, I think, would dispute the centrality of reflection to creativity, coaching and leadership. But this is not a simple plea for reflective practice – and not to be confused with thinking or mindfulness. In our fast-paced VUCA (volatile, uncertain, complex and ambiguous) world – which makes finding time for reflection almost impossible – and faced with huge and complex global challenges, Patterson cites research by ?What If! that shows nearly 30 per cent of leaders believe their current business model is unsustainable and 60 per cent were failing to lead for innovation. So Patterson's aim is to offer a robust alternative to current repetitive behaviours. Reviewing her research one day, Patterson concluded that reflection is, in itself, an act of creation.

Inspired by Eckhart Tolle's phrase, 'Life is the dancer and you are the dance', Patterson has shaped the book as a kind of dance map. The framework enables us to access the book in an organic way, moving in and out of sections, chapters and ideas as we choose. She begins with *The Dance*, sharing her own epiphany story and offering a map to guide us through: from the Opening of releasing to see afresh; to the Flow involving listening, stillness and freedom; to the Denouement of harvest and action.

From the get-go this book stakes its claim as a must-have for coaches, if only by virtue of its breadth and depth – and its sheer size and weight! Patterson covers a lot of ground. Divided into two parts – philosophy and practices – fourteen chapters burst with techniques, information and thoughtful passages to prompt, promote and assist creative reflection. Chapters address *Suspending Habits*, *Seeing Anew*, *Relating to the Whole*, *Initiating the*

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Invitation, Finding Freedom, Crafting Focus, Working Wisely and Feeding Forward. These headings give you a sense of the riches, and dance patterns, on offer. Patterson's wish for this lifetime opus is that it 'gives us the choreography, disciplines and practices to discover our inner truth and wisdom for change and transformation.'

This is a serious personal and professional undertaking – and a great gift to the coach. You can read the book through or plunder it! I found it easy to dive in and become absorbed within seconds in the wide range of ideas, stories, poetry, wisdom and sources Patterson brings together. I stand in awe at the scale of Patterson's enterprise and respect for her achievement in putting together such an encyclopaedic collection. The ideas, exercises, models, meditations and inquiries in this book will serve, inform and enrich – not just our coaching but also our heart.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Hetty brings over 25 years of psychology and executive coaching experience to global corporate culture change and leadership development, with a key focus on women's leadership and coaching for contribution. She holds a Masters in Organisation Consulting and is a certified coaching supervisor. Hetty is Editor of *Coaching Perspectives*, the AC global magazine. Her latest book, *The Future of Coaching: vision, leadership and responsibility in a transforming world*, was published by Routledge in 2017.

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