

# Self as Instrument

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## **Introduction**

In writing this chapter I invite you into the idea that cultivating the self as the instrument of our work is as important as expanding our repertoire of tools and techniques. For me, the heart of supervisory work is paying attention to the “who” we are being – the self. In my years of working as a coach supervisor I have found that the most powerful tool we have is the self we are, and using ourselves well is critical to the interventions we make with our supervisee. Being able to bring our whole self to our work enables more depth in the conversation (Cheung-Judge and Holbeche, 2011).

I am writing here from the perspective of you as the supervisor, focusing on how we can cultivate our self as the powerful instrument of our work. I have chosen three core elements of my own practice to share with you: focusing inwards to access our innate wisdom; getting present with ourselves and our supervisees to hold a deep, broad space for them, filled with trust; and lastly, embodying grounded compassion for our supervisees through strong container-ship, empathy and resilience.

## **The development of this approach to supervision**

The idea of “use of self” has its origins in ancient teachings. It has come to the fore in modern times with Frederick Alexander who introduced the concept of “use of self” within