

# Finding Firm Ground: a Coachee Perspective of Executive Coaching

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## Statement of Academic Honesty

I declare that this dissertation is entirely my own original work.

I declare that, except where fully referenced direct quotations have been included, no aspect of this dissertation has been copied from any other source.

I declare that all other works cited in this dissertation have been appropriately referenced.

I understand that any act of Academic Dishonesty such as plagiarism or collusion may result in the non-award of a Masters degree.

Signed ..... Dated .....

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## Abstract

*Coaching as a form of executive personal development has exploded in popularity in recent years. With this growth comes a plethora of models and theories, each purporting to be the most effective. Presently the literature is still biased, representing the interests of practitioners rather than prospective companies or executives considering coaching. This has resulted in calls to obtain deep case study research of the coachee perspective. This research addresses this need and focuses on the meaning of the coaching experience to shed light on what it is like to receive coaching, and, at the same time, to demonstrate how coaches help instigate positive change. To meet this sensitive aim, the research is based on an in-depth auto-ethnographical study of the researcher's personal experience as a coachee, supported by semi-structured interviews of additional executive coaching participants.*

*Evidence is provided in the form of auto-ethnographical story vignettes along with coaching dialogues and interview results to share the subtleties of the coaching experience with the reader. Meaning is both explicitly discussed and implicitly described through vignettes and woven around keys found to help coachees unlock positive personal change. This study suggests that these keys form a distinctive competency unique to coaching including: providing a safe sounding board; setting and connecting to goals; asking questions; focussing action; reflecting critically; exploring mental models; giving advice; and inspiring their coachees to practice coaching. The main conclusion drawn from this research is that Executive Coaching in most cases proved to be rewarding and satisfying, and the experience is fundamentally about adult learning supported by numerous underlying learning theories.*

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(Excluding Title Page, Acknowledgements, Statement of Academic Honesty, All Tables, Figures, Captions, References & Appendices)

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## Acronyms and Terms

Executive	Refers to any manager within an organisation.
Coach	Refers to the individual giving coaching.
Coachee	Refers to the executive being coached.
Executive Coaching (EC)	The terms “EC”, “coaching” and “executive coaching” will be used interchangeably throughout the document to describe the process of coaching an executive. This excludes mentoring, consulting, therapy, or group coaching alternatives.
A/E	The term “A/E” is used in place of auto-ethnography, auto-ethnographic, or auto-ethnographical research method.

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## *1.1 Background*

The 21<sup>st</sup> century is characterised by organisations that are flatter, have less job security, merge, downsize, and outsource (Bradley, Alimo-Metcalfe, Alban-Metcalfe, Mariathasan, and Samele, 2008). Rapid changes in our world have contributed to the growth of coaching in response to the “increased sense of isolation and anxiety” that can put executives under significant pressure to modify their skills and responsibilities every few years (Dembkowski, Eldridge, and Hunter, 2007, p16).

Executive Coaching (EC) growth has been exponential (Bluckert, 2004) and faster than any other consulting area in recent times but it is still forming its identity (Morgan, Harkins, and Goldsmith, 2005; Sailing, 2005). By 2003, organisations around the globe were investing more than \$1billion USD in EC, 40% of US Fortune 500 companies used executive coaches, and there were an estimated 40,000 coaches in force around the globe (Ellinger, Hamlina, and Beattie, 2008). Many argue this growth is influenced by the move away from classroom-based training to real-time or periodic forms of learning and development (Parsloe and Rolph 2004; Berg and Karlson 2007). Others argue this growth is due to a lack of effective in-house mentors, and that coaching delivers “improved management performance, helps executives manage business complexity, and accelerates their leadership development” (Coutu and Kauffman, 2009, p.24).

There is a myriad of positive coaching literature from academic and practitioner perspectives but little reliable evidence exists of what to expect from coaching to help prospective coaches decide if it might be the right personal development option for them. Not everyone is convinced that coaching is effective, arguing it is only a fad and is no more than hiring a friend (Clark, 2007; Morgan, 2005). Many are confused as to what EC really means (Berg and Karlson, 2007). Definition plurality and ambiguity are due to the many theories and methods underlying coaching (Sailing, 2005). Coaching has been influenced by the fields of psychology, behaviourism, psychoanalysis, existentialism, new age philosophy, personal development, emotional intelligence, learning theory, cognitive fields, and sports (Dembkowski et al., 2007).

This chapter will set the scene for the study by introducing research question and objectives, and justify the method required to fulfil the overall aim of the study. Nine significantly diverging approaches to EC will be shown suggesting that the tools available to coaches are diverse which creates something of an issue for the discerning coachee who would like to consider tools and

approaches before the selection of a suitable coach. This complexity will be reduced to a manageable list of commonly used coaching tools that can be evaluated within the study.

## ***1.2 Rationale***

### **1.2.1 Aim**

The aim of this research is to clarify some of the mystery of what goes on behind closed doors in Executive Coaching, to explore coachee perspectives of coaching to determine what is it like to receive and be involved in coaching, and finally to discover what can be expected from a coaching experience. The research question is:

*‘What is it like to receive coaching, and  
how do coaches help effect change throughout the process?’*

### **1.2.2 Objectives**

To answer the research question the following objectives were established:

- Evaluate existing coaching literature from the last 10 years (1999-2009)
- Assess literature regarding approaches and tools used by coaches
- Investigate personal experiences of coachees to determine what can be expected from the coaching experience
- Reflect on my personal experience as a coachee
- Assess commonality across coaching experiences to determine if common keys exist to effect personal change.

### **1.2.3 Research Value**

My review of academic and practitioner research during 1999-2009 (Appendix D) discovered that research has typically centred on characteristics of successful coaches, the practice, effectiveness, and the models of coaching (Paige, 2002). Little research exists from the inside out i.e. coachee - rather it is oriented towards a ‘do better, be better’ standpoint to help a growing professional discipline (Vandaveer, 2007).

Less than 10% of the articles reviewed (see summary in Table 1.1) involved coachees and these focussed on effectiveness, satisfaction or return on investment. No literature was found where the coachee was both subject and researcher nor where research directly offered a chance to make sense of the coaching phenomenon from the coachee perspective.

Perspective	'99	'00	'01	'02	'03	'04	'05	'06	'07	'08	'09	Total	% Total
Coachee as subject and researcher												0	0
Coachee as subject							2	2	2		2	8	9
Coaching Practice	4	1		8	4	7	11	8	6	3	6	58	67
Human Resource Management			2	2	1	1		1				7	8
Leadership					3				2	1		6	7
Mixed Coach/Coachee						1		1	1		1	4	5
Philosophical					1							1	1
Coaching as Learning					1					1	1	3	3

Table 1.1 - 1999-2009 Literature Review Research Summary

Studies researched from the standpoint of the coach do not advance our understanding of the root effectiveness of coaching as a practice (Morgan et al., 2005). The Handbook of Organisational Psychology suggests there is a need for additional qualitative research from the perspective of the coachees themselves to better understand the outcomes of coaching (Hellervik, Hazucha, and Schneider, 1992). Diedrich (2004) states that the coaching profession is insular and self-reinforcing and calls for the coachee voice to be heard. Both meaningful qualitative and more rigorous quantitative studies are required. The value of this research is that it will answer this call for the coachee perspective. To avoid the risk of simply participating as an academic tourist (Humphrey, 2005) I offer both a coachee survey and a detailed study of my personal coaching.

### ***1.3 Report Structure***

The project report contains five chapters.

- Chapter one is introductory describing the background, purpose of the study, relevant literature on the meaning of coaching and value of this research.
- Chapter two describes in detail the project methodology including auto-ethnography, coaching diary, approach to interviews, and limitations.
- Chapter three contains the findings of how coaches effect change with evidence delivered as multi layered vignettes that describe the coaching experience, entwined with coaching dialogues, and results from coachee interviews. *Meaning* is implicitly described through story.
- Chapter four is a discussion section that compares relevant literature against the findings from the research study and explicitly discusses the meaning that is implicitly described throughout the vignettes.
- Chapter five includes conclusions, contribution to knowledge and self-reflection.

## ***1.4 Preliminary Literature Review***

### **1.4.1 Meaning of Executive Coaching**

The word ‘coaching’ comes from the Hungarian word ‘kocs’, a town where closed four-wheeled horse drawn carriages were built. Coach was used as the name of the driver (and the wagon) where it eventually became a symbol for taking people from one place to another (Berg and Karlson 2007) – perhaps even a better place. Kilburg defines EC as a

Helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organisation and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client’s organisation within a formally defined coaching agreement (Kilburg, 2000, p.17)

Zeus and Skiffington (2002) advocate EC means: “Change and transformation – about the human ability to grow, to alter maladaptive behaviours and to generate new, adaptive and successful actions” (p. 3).

Dotlich and Cairo’s (1999) objectives of coaching include:

- Increase the coachee’s consciousness, understanding of behaviour, strengths and weaknesses,
- Improve performance, and
- Achieve a fundamental transformation in attitudes and behaviour.

Coaching is a goal based process (Bowles, Cunningham, De La Rosa, and Picano, 2007) designed to be adaptable as the coach and coachee learn more, a journey of discovery, learning, and change, designed to support people during a transition of change as it usually comes with some level of anxiety (Winch and Ingram, 2004).

There is growing support for the premise that coaching is beneficial personally and professionally (Maynard, 2006). One study found positive results in learning, management skills, working more efficiently with staff, and insights to individual management and leadership behaviours (Prom-Jackson, Cooper, Martin, Kategile, Palmisano, and Arango, 2002). Wasylyshyn (2003) concluded the following benefits viz., changes in behaviour in relationships, work family balance, sustaining progress delivered from coaching, increased understanding of self in regard to motivation, more accurate thinking, emotional competence, pro-activity, accurate perception of others, and clearly seeing one’s organisational fit.

The language exhibited in these authors' definitions, objectives, process and benefits feels formal and detached from the reality of the experience. With little offered in the form of deep case study research there is still a sense in which coaching is more personal and emotional, that the essence of coaching sits deeper than all these alternative descriptions. How can the coaching profession grow to help coachees more effectively without the knowledge of the coachee perspective?

#### **1.4.2 Coaching Approaches**

There is no universal approach to coaching (Barner and Higgins, 2007), however most include aspects of "relationship building, assessment, intervention, follow-up, and evaluation" (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001, p142). Differences in EC can be traced to their theoretical origins i.e. behavioural, psychodynamic, relational, developmental, system, or existential models, and give the coach many tools to reach the desired end result for the coachee (Lowman, 2002). Stakeholders will naturally look at coaching from different approaches and perspectives, implying preferential differences in the tools they use. This has resulted in tension and debate between the interested parties and has resulted in fragmentation. I found nine approaches, all of which have long histories and much literature written about them.

- Existential approach: focus on subjective meaning, living your passions, responsibility and choice (Soloman, 2007).
- Humanistic approach: focus on feelings and the spiritual nature and an individual's need for self-fulfillment (Maynard, 2006; Maslow, 1968).
- Behavioural approach: focus on behaviour, looking for ways to constructively adapt behaviour to the expectations of organizations (Zeus and Skiffington, 2002).
- Psychodynamic systems approach: focus on cognitive processes which are outside of conscious awareness (Bluckert, 2005; Passmore, 2006; Berglas 2002).
- Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP) approach: focus on communication and successful behaviour patterns (Adler A, 1992; Dowlen, 1996).
- Systems approach: originated by Kurt Lewin's research on Field Theory (Maynard, 2006) where leaders are viewed as intricate parts of organisational systems (O'Neil, 2000; Jex, 2002).
- Social constructionist approach: a new model focused on how identities are socially constructed. (Barner and Higgins, 2007).
- Biological approaches: the EMDR (*eye movement desensitization and reprocessing*) protocol was created to assist people recovering from an upsetting event that may be impairing performance (Maynard, 2006).

- Personal Traits approach: assessments sometimes include these types of analysis, such as Myers-Briggs, to assist the coach (Maynard, 2006; Sperry, 1993).

### 1.4.3 Tools

As the known approaches to coaching have increased so too have the tools and techniques, making it confusing for the executive to decide which coach and associated practices to work with (Anderson and Anderson, 2005). The Encyclopaedia of Industrial and Organisational Psychology (Vandaveer, 2007) simplifies this underlying theoretical complexity by creating a list of 20 commonly used coaching tools (see Table 1.2).

1. Coaching plan	2. Goals or objectives	3. Success criteria	4. Measures	5. Meetings
6. Exercises /action plans	7. Assigned reading	8. Facilitating thinking	9. Surfacing of assumptions	10. Educating
11. Explaining	12. Reframing of issues	13. Events	14. Thinking quality	15. Challenging and confronting
16. Personally supporting	17. Suggesting Solutions	18. Working through issues	19. Gaining insight	20. Role playing

Table 1.2 - Common Coaching Tools, (Vandaveer, 2007, p. 226)

### 1.5 Conclusion

The preliminary study of EC literature in relation to the research aim revealed that while there are robust definitions, objectives, benefits, and defined approaches for coaching – the personal perspective is entirely missing. This study will strive towards finding out what it means to be a coachee, to receive, and to be involved with EC. The next stage of this paper will explore the methodology to be used to capture and analyze data to answer this paper’s research aim.

## **Chapter 2 Methodology**

### ***2.1 Introduction***

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and justify methods chosen to conduct research that looks at the coachee perspective of EC. The research philosophy in this paper is of an interpretive nature to assist the creating and analyzing of narrative in the search for meaning. The inductive research approach is used to assist this goal with its social, personal, subjective nature and the open ended exploratory focus. I set out to explore the meaning of the coaching experience primarily researching from the inside out, as a coachee myself, using an auto-ethnographic (A/E) research method supported by and compared to qualitative, semi-structured interviews with other coachees.

### ***2.2 Auto-ethnography***

The popularity of A/E research has grown in recent years (Wall, 2006), however, it is still dwarfed by the more institutionalized objective studies. Over the years A/E has taken many different forms; Anderson (2006) offered a range from conservative, analytic, post positivist objective forms to the more artistic, evocative and empathetic critical ideological forms. It has many different names including personal narratives, self-stories, experimental ethnography, confessional tales, evocative narratives, first person accounts (Ellis & Bochner, 2000; Clarke, 2002; Given, 2008).

Leading academics define A/E as:

- “an autobiographic genre of writing and research that displays multiple layers of consciousness, connecting the personal to the cultural” (Ellis and Bochner, 2003, p209).
- “writing and research which is connected to ‘meaning-making’ and ‘emotional life experiences’ which literally makes the researcher’s own experience a topic of investigation in its own right” (Ellis, 1998, p49).

### ***2.3 Research Strategy***

What happens during the coaching process can be deeply personal and difficult to represent in an objective passive positivist voice. The tension between the positivist perspectives and the post-modern was common in the literature (Manning, 2007; Wall, 2006; Whittemore, Chase and Mandle, 2001). Rather than debate these perspectives, I focused on selecting the strategy that offered me the best chance of answering the research aim, as Flyvbjerg (2006) recommends.

A multi-layered exploration is used to help the reader gain a complete understanding of coaching, and it is my hope that the accounts may move the reader intellectually, emotionally and perhaps even to question their current self-development approach.

## 2.4 Research Design

A/E offered some advantages with immediate access to vibrant data, permission and no obstructions as I was fully immersed in the process. Exposing ‘self’ as data can be seen as risky and dangerous (Winch and Ingram, 2004; Boyle and Parry 2007) but despite this risk, I saw this research as a real chance to stretch in a direction that is unexpected, exciting and perhaps even liberating. A/E suited the requirement of this study’s setting for capturing the richness and emotional complexities of the coaching experience and provides the reader a unique opportunity to get a glimpse of the process and feel the emotions and experience with me.

I undertook EC for authentic personal reasons rather than as a subject to be researched. I did not begin any research (see Table 2.1) until my coaching had been completed; otherwise, the research could have interfered with the coaching process itself.

	2009												2010			
Activity	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	
Received Coaching	■															
A/E Research								■								
Participant Research											■					
Synthesis													■		■	

Table 2.1 - Coaching & Research Timeline

Many researchers acknowledge that while A/E allows the researcher to be true about one’s state, (Clarke, 2002) it is unlikely that this is an objective truth in the positivist sense. To address this validity challenge head on, I elicited interviews with five other executive coaches.

## 2.5 Research Methodology

### 2.5.1 Collecting Data from Self

To collect data on myself I used coaching journals and transcribed session records as a rich source to help make sense of the experience and assist the search for meaning (Vickers, 2007), and I used field notes taken as the events happened from in between sessions with actions, progress and insights.

### 2.5.2 Collecting Data from Participants

Executives being senior people have little time and are less likely to take disclosure risks. This, combined with the difficulty of finding executives who have received coaching, led me to adopt a purposive/convenience sampling strategy by selecting interview participants through my coach’s coaching network. This approach was appropriate because I was not trying to find how a representative proportion of any population give a particular response but rather I was searching

for meaning of EC from the coachee perspective, nevertheless, coachees in this study were not coached by the same person in order to give a broader view of coaching approaches.

I chose the semi-structured interview as a tight process may interfere with the phenomena under investigation (Hancock, 2002). I ran a pilot interview with an early questionnaire design that resulted in increasing the number of questions from 15 to 20, and re-wording some questions for better clarity. The final questionnaire used consisted of three parts (Appendix B):

- Part one asked forced response questions on the functional aspects of the coaching experience, and to determine the levels of satisfaction on a similar scale between coachees.
- Part two asked what tools (Table 1.2, Vandaveer, 2007) that the coachees perceived were being used by the coach to effect some sort of change in the coachee.
- Part three asked open ended questions to explore the effectiveness and meaning of the coaching experience. The reason for open questions in this section is so the coachees could use their own words and not be limited by forced responses.

Forty-five minute recorded interviews were conducted with executives to support the research aim either face to face, or by telephone for coachees located outside of the UAE. These interviews were used to stimulate discussion, deepen reflection, add more evidence, and to boost the study's credibility. To avoid any personal risk participants were sent an information and consent form (Appendix A) that contained information, risks, benefits, commitments, and interview logistics. I asked the coachees to sign it beforehand, and I guaranteed that their participation remained anonymous by only referring to them by number rather than name in my research.

### **2.5.3 Self Analysis**

From the personal data store of my own experience I carefully reviewed transcripts, journals and field notes to check relevance and indication of changing behaviours or thought patterns, looking at dialogues, volume and tone. Coaching did not occur in a vacuum, therefore reflection on personal history and life experiences that define me were analyzed for relevance and further indication of changes. With different coloured highlighters I coded themes from coaching sessions, insights, key actions, overall value, energy levels, moods, and my confidence levels. This analysis resulted in the creation of the coaching journey map (Appendix C) to piece together a holistic overview of my coaching journey. Next I recorded my experience in story through a process of careful event selection and creative non-fiction writing. One of A/E's distinguishing features included me writing in the first person with emotions and details from my private life (Richardson, 2000; Clarke, 2002; Given, 2008).

## 2.5.4 Participant Analysis

The sequential story-line was not where my analysis ended. I set out to include interview responses to assist my search for meaning, and to look for patterns on how coachees achieve change. The interviews were conducted during a three months time period (see Table 2.1). Once all interviews were completed, I then listened to the recorded interview transcripts, and analysed others' experiences in conjunction with my own experiences, looking through for commonalities and differences in the use of words, phrases and intellectual or emotional connection.

I reviewed self data and participant data to discover which of Vandaveer's (2007) "tools" (from questionnaire part two) were most instrumental in achieving change within the coaching journey. I identified these as "keys" that appear to function by unlocking the doors to change within individuals.

Figure 2.1 provides a sequenced graphical depiction of the research methodology.

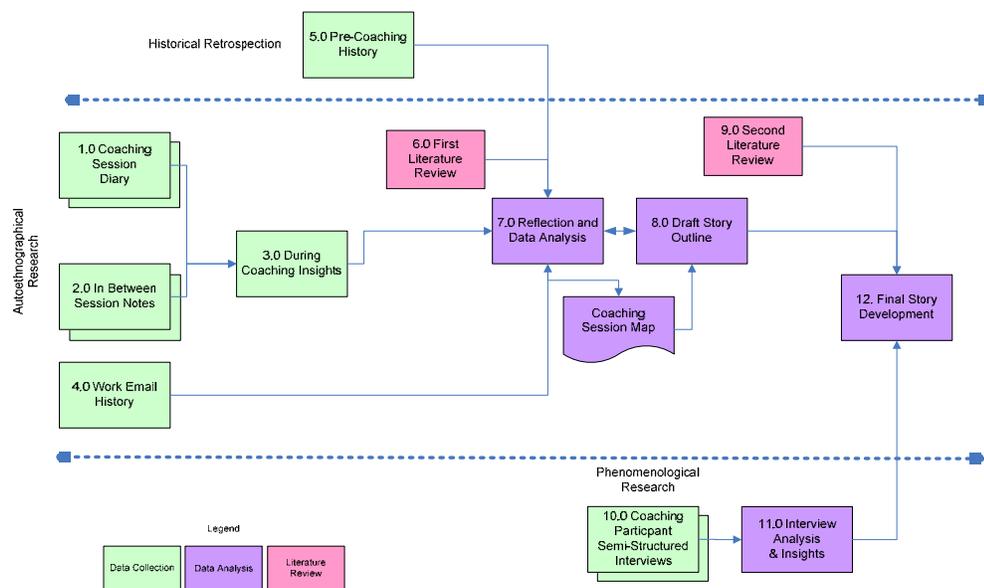


Figure 2.1 - Research Methodology

## ***2.6 A/E Quality Criteria***

“The emergence of A/E and narratives of self . . . has not been trouble-free, and their status as proper research remains problematic” (Sparkes, 2000, p. 22). There are many scholars (Given, 2008; Bullough, Jr and Pinnegar, 2001; Whittemore et al., 2001) who offer advice on quality criteria: is it a believable, authentic, humble, and reflective presentation of findings; is it vivid, creative and thorough, does it show sensitivity to social and cultural contexts? The quality criteria for A/E research is not measured in the same manner as positivist research, however, to address these potential criticisms I chose measures as adopted by Duncan (2005) demonstrating:

1. clearly delineated research boundaries with appropriate descriptors e.g. time, location,
2. instrumental utility i.e. usefulness of the research,
3. construct validity i.e. clearly demonstrated operational measures e.g. multiple data sources,
4. reliability in terms of a clear protocol that allows another researcher to follow your research, and a
5. scholarly account by appropriate advisor relationships.

Measures 2 through 5 above can be found in the conclusions chapter, meanwhile the research boundaries I have detailed in the following paragraph.

I participated by telephone in 12 coaching sessions from January 2009-July 2009. Each session lasted for 60-90 minutes spaced every two-three weeks apart depending on the demands from work or the MBA programme. During this time I was a Programme Manager working within an IT outsourcing company in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates.

## ***2.7 Conclusion***

A/E research “has been criticized for being a self-indulgent, introspective, and individualized” form of research (Holt, 2003, p. 15), however, this was the best method that could have answered my quest for meaning since it is the most efficient way to access the coachee perspective that is missing from EC research.

The next chapter begins to use A/E and interview data in the search for meaning of EC positioning the reader as co-participant as opposed to passive receiver of knowledge.

## Chapter 3 Findings

### 3.1 Functional Findings

Functional findings from part one of the questionnaire that captured the forced response elements from the interviews<sup>1</sup> are included in Table 3.1. The principle findings include: a common length for the coaching engagement is 6 months; the most popular method for delivery by telephone for 60 minutes, either weekly or fortnightly; the coachees sometimes understood the coaching models being used on them, and almost all noticed the quality of their thinking and behaviour change because of the programme; all coachees were at least somewhat happy with the coach's performance and the coaching outcomes; 5 of the 6 studied would repeat coaching again.

	Coachee 1	Coachee 2	Coachee 3	Coachee 4	Coachee 5	Myself
<b>Questions</b>						
Did you notice the quality of your thinking change?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	In Some Cases	Yes
Did you notice any changes to your behaviour or action?	In Some Cases	Yes	In Some Cases	Yes	No	Yes
How long did the coaching engagement last	6-12 months	3-6 months	3-6 months	< 3 months	3-6 months	6-12 months
How often was coaching held?	Fortnightly	Weekly	Fortnightly	Weekly	Weekly	Fortnightly
How long were the coaching sessions?	1-2 hours	1-2 hours	60 Minutes	1-2 hours	60 Minutes	1-2 hours
What was the primary method of conducting the session?	Telephone	Face to Face	Telephone	Telephone	Telephone	Telephone
Did you understand the models being used?	Some Idea	Some Idea	Yes	Yes	No	No
How satisfied were you with the coach?	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied
How satisfied were you with the coaching experience?	Extremely Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied
Would you be coached again?	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Sex	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male

Table 3.1 - Interview Data, Part One

<sup>1</sup> My response data from the questionnaire is also included.

### 3.2 Coaching Tools

Table 3.2 includes what coaching tools from part two of the questionnaire were perceived to be used during the coaching programme including:

- Exercises/actions, personally supporting, using goals or objectives, reframing of issues, facilitating thinking, meetings, and thinking were experienced by all coachees interviewed.
- Gaining insights, challenging and confronting the coachee, working through issues and the surfacing of assumptions were in use 5 out of the 6 cases.
- Suggesting was used 4 out of the 6 cases
- Using measures to evaluate performance, coaching plan and directly educating were 3 out of the 6 cases
- Assigned reading, explaining, and documenting were used 2 out of 6 cases
- Success criteria were only used in one case, and the use of special events or role playing were not used at all.

Coaching Tools (Vandaveer, 2007, p. 226)	Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4	Interview 5	Myself
Exercises/actions	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Personally supporting	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Goals or objectives	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Reframing of issues	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Facilitating thinking	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Meetings	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Thinking	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Gaining insight	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Challenging and confronting	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y
Working through issues	Y	N	Y	Y	Y	Y
Surfacing of assumptions	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y
Suggesting	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Measures	Y	Y	N	Y	N	N
Coaching plan	N	Y	N	Y	Y	N
Educating	N	N	N	N	Y	Y
Assigned reading	N	Y	N	N	Y	N
Explaining	N	N	N	Y	N	Y
Success criteria	Y	N	N	N	N	N
Events	N	N	N	N	N	N
Role playing	N	N	N	N	N	N

Table 3.2 - Interview Data, Part Two

### 3.3 Eight Keys

As described in chapter two, I chose the name “keys” because of the ‘unlocking the door’ metaphor, and the names act as descriptors of what coachees perceived as enablers of sustained change. I analysed which of Vandaveer’s (2007) “tools” (Table 1.2) were most instrumental in achieving change within the coaching journey, and I identified and named eight keys including: Safe Sounding Board; Setting Goals; Asking Questions; Focussing Action; Reflecting Critically; Exploring Mental Models; Giving Advice and Coachees Practicing Coaching. The analysis of these keys with tools is depicted below: the left hand list in Figure 3.1 represents the keys; the right hand list represents the tools; these two perspectives are connected to each other with bi-directional arrows to represent their conceptual similarity e.g. the key Giving Advice can be equated with the tools Suggesting, Educating and Explaining.

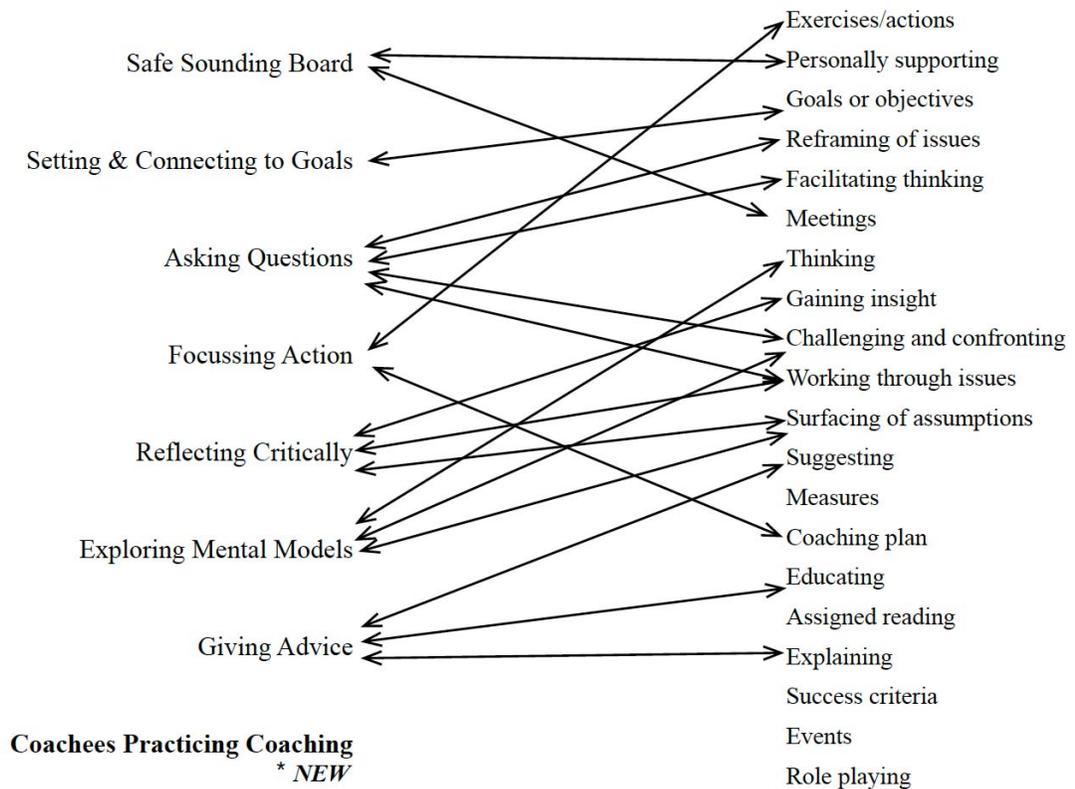


Figure 3.1 - Matching Keys to Tools

The last key, Coachees Practicing Coaching on colleagues, friends and family is not referred to in Vandaveer’s (2007) common toolset. I found the key to be the result of an unconscious assimilation of coaching practices through the process of receiving coaching. This appears to be a new idea in the literature (Griffiths and Campbell, 2009) to re-enforce change. Coaches use the tool so the coachee can self monitor and self coach, but I found no mention of coachees using coaching on others. The following sections describe these keys in more detail.

## Key 1: Providing a Safe Sounding Board

“Sometimes the clearest mirrors come from those who are outside looking in.”

Jennifer Neal, (2009, <http://www.nakedjen.com/nakedjen/2009/06/>)

It was common to start the coaching experience initially feeling vulnerable. Nonetheless, all six of all coachee interviews highlighted the value of a safe and thought provoking sounding board to discuss concerns, fears, hopes, and to understand the relevance to confusing thoughts, feelings and memories.



Coachees interviewed described what worked well for them in this regard:

- “Just being able to talk in a neutral non technical manner, like the holding up of a mirror reflecting back what they hear with delving is very motivating” (3)<sup>2</sup>
- “There comes a certain relief upon clarifying problems. Providing the right supporting atmosphere to reflect on the past, current and future, I looked forward to every session and felt relaxed afterwards.” (4)
- “A powerful sounding board to look at a concerned reality, exploring the right answers for me” (1)

I, like other coachees, loved this ability to use a professional as a sounding board. This is the case in the following vignette where I discuss my insight into my social interaction maturity.

\* \* \*<sup>3</sup>

### “Alone”, 25<sup>th</sup> December, 1975, New Zealand

My grandparents have a sheep farm, only 30 minutes from home but it seems like a very long journey winding over the lower mountains when you are 6 years old. There was much activity today, aunts and uncles – really big important people organizing things. “So who is going to be Santa Claus this year?” someone asks, “Dad of course” another replies. My grandfather puts on the funny red hat with the white pompom on top! I can smell the pine needles from the very large decorated tree – yes it is Christmas Day!

I feel really excited, my blood pumping, Christmas – presents – salted peanuts, lovely food, happy people... yes, wonderful!

“Michael come and sit over here for a minute”, it all seems to go quiet.

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<sup>2</sup> Number refers to coachee as in Table 4

<sup>3</sup> \*\*\* used throughout the text to indicate changes in temporal shift

There is a loud knock at the door. I look around... everyone is looking at me.... I'm confused, my internal temperature rises, and I feel a little sweat come with all the attention. I don't like attention.

“Well go and answer it boy, and see who is there?”

Weird, I think. So I go over to the door and there is a sizeable package all wrapped in thick brown paper...my uncle brings it in to the centre of the room....“Well, open it then!”, they seem to laugh. I do as I am told. My heart races, I feel all the attention on me, and what is in the package?

“Wow” I say, a brand new bike. The tricycle has a red metal frame, a bright yellow plastic seat and best of all a blue open boot at the back so I can transport things like my Dad. I feel special.

One of my uncles picks up the bike and takes it outside, it is a warm summer's day typical for Christmas time. There is a group gathering as I mount my bike! There are wooden pedal pads added so I can reach them, I push with one leg, and I ride off down the drive way on the left hand side where the grass in between the two concrete payments act as my motorway. The crowd roars, I disappear around the corner...

When I return some minutes later, I expect another roar from the crowd, but they have gone back inside. My moment of glory is over. I feel alone, I am conscious I am alone, but strangely I find comfort in my own company... I shrug it off and I carry back around to do another loop of my made up motorway!

\* \* \*

### **Coaching Session 11**

“Coach,” I start excitedly. “You see this feeling of being alone in this memory is not what I want to emphasize but instead the comfort I have with it. If I am honest with myself, this same feeling carried on ALL MY LIFE. The insight, here is that while I want to manage interaction better with people, and yet I am young in terms of socializing as I have avoided socializing with people for decades.”, I laugh nervously, I've taken Jean-Paul Sartre to heart that ‘Hell is other people’. I love getting these sorts of aha moments and sharing them, “How about that for an insight?” I then have a second insight, my stepson may feel the same – but not as comfortable as I in it!! I keep this to myself.

“Yes.... But....”

“But...? No buts!” I retort angrily.

Interrupting, “No, what is your thinking today, right this minute, about that insight? Do you need social interaction?”

“Actually, I do... I am a manager. People need other people.”

“Good clarity.”

\* \* \*

## **Key 2: Setting Goals and Connecting**

“Winners can tell you where they are going, what they plan to do along the way, and who will be sharing the adventure with them”

Denis Watley, (cited 2007, <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/3127.html>)

Universal across all interviewees was the process of setting goals and connecting to them to achieve desired outcomes from the coaching agreement. The timing for goal setting was done in the first 3 sessions. Some coaches helped the coachee take a close look at the reality surrounding their goals and encouraged them to be committed to achieving them.



Coachees interviewed described how goals were important:

- “Good process of becoming emotionally attached to the goal and achieving it. I had to be focused, the quality of goals improved, and I learned to make them public, and now I continuously use this skill with new goals- years after coaching” (2)
- “Setting goals was an anchor, enabled me to connect and to set direction toward achieving outcomes.”(5)
- “I personally use the coaching model called GROW where ‘G’ stands for what is your goal?” (3)

In my own case, goal setting began on the very first session, as is illustrated in the following dialogue.

\* \* \*

### **“Making a start”, Coaching Session 1**

The New Year begins in Injazat with little change from the previous year, and finally the first coaching session is here. Fifteen minutes before, I find myself rushing to put together three goals that I would like to achieve: be more emotionally resilient; be less nervous with important people and improve my listening skills.

I telephone Sandy, I am based in Abu Dhabi, and she is based in England. We begin with the coaching contract and some questionnaires and Sandy introduces the process. I am quietly excited and finding it hard to hide it. I have no idea what is before me – often how I begin on something new.

The session starts and Sandy asks if I can ‘clear the space’, a form of emptying all my baggage into the sub-conscious so we can make the most of the session. I can.

“I think we need to work on the wording of these goals, Mike”

“Ok”, perhaps she wants them SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realizable and Timely)

“As coach and coachee it is important that we both feel comfortable with the goals, that they are achievable and inspiring!” We debate the language and she focuses me...“Perhaps, you can think about them in this way – what I really want is....”

I think it through... we bounce ideas around and settle on:

1. *I want to feel more confident and secure in the next 6 months*
2. *I want to engage in conflict without fearing the consequences*
3. *I want to effectively manage interactions with people*

“How do these goals sound, can you connect to them?”

“Yes, excellent”

“Michael, now we are going to see how you might connect to them. This is called shining the goals. Now I want you to imagine a time when you felt really confident that we might associate with goal number one.”

I think into my past... and tell her about Cotopaxi.

\* \* \*

### **“Cotopaxi”, December 2002**

It’s now 5am, from the starting height of 4,800 meters we have been climbing now in the dark since after midnight. The air is getting thinner now and each step gets a little harder. This is the highest mountain I have attempted at 5,897 meters – it is called Cotopaxi, it resides in Ecuador. It means “mass of fire” and the guide says it is the second highest active volcano in the world. My friend Will is in front of me, and the guide in front of him. The guide has been pushing us to a brisk pace to reach the summit by dawn as the trek down can be treacherous as the ice melts. In the darkness we only have our headlamps and cannot see a great deal, but I notice we are manoeuvring over some crevasses. Will is heaving a little, then I hear “oh shit!”, and the rope between us instantly tightens, he falls down the crevasse and the guide and I urgently brace ourselves and hold his fall. It happened fast, but I felt a frightening sense that our lives might end here. His headgear disappears into the abyss but he hangs in between us. “Are you okay, Will?” I ask. He replies, sounding a little embarrassed, “My crampon got hooked in my trousers and I have lost my head light.” “Okay, fella,” I reassure him. “It is not far to go now.” We reached the summit about 6:30 am, and as the sun rose I was filled with so much pride – I thought I would burst. The view was immense as we admired the other lower peaks around us. The training and the pain had all been worth it. I felt invincible.

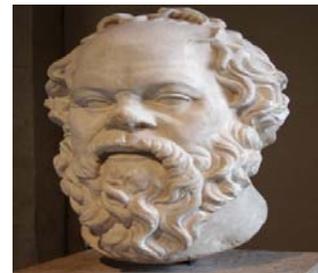
\* \* \*

At the end of this session I had connected to my first goal.

### **Key 3: Asking Questions**

“Asking questions is the ABC of diagnosis. Only the inquiring mind solves problems”

Edward Hodnett (cited 2010,  
[http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/edward\\_hodnett/](http://en.thinkexist.com/quotes/edward_hodnett/))



Socratic questioning was a prominent way in helping coachees move forward on stated goals and their personal discovery. Seldom did coaches offer advice directly, but rather worked towards finding solutions to surfacing issues from within the coachee. All coachees supported the idea that self-designed solutions are much more likely to be tested and completed.

Coachees interviewed agreed that coaches were experts in the art of asking questions:

- “Coach asked, how would you do that? If you don’t know, what is the next thing you will do to find out?” (2)
- “Coaching changed my approach to asking people questions” (4)
- “It’s all about validating assumptions and obtaining more information, and allowing me to find a path that works for me” (5)
- “Because of my coach’s large appetite to ask questions, I learned to ask them of myself and with others to take things in the direction I wanted to” (1)

\* \* \*

### **“Angry”, Coaching Session 7**

“Coach, I have been noticing that I have been quite angry.” I try to explain my thinking... I feel a little lost and embarrassed but it feels good to bring this anger idea into the open.

. “How many times per day to you find yourself feeling angry – about anything.” Silence

“A lot, internally a lot.”

“Are you conscious of what is dissatisfying you?”

I pause. “Sometimes it is because people, life, the company etc. are not living to my expectations if you like. I hit a pretty dark zone internally – which is disturbing.”

“Can I ask a few questions around that? When do you devote time to the dilemma?”

“Uh....I don’t think ever... This is the first time I have brought it up and we are in session 7 and, I am using the word anger for the first time. If I am honest I would say it was always there.”

“How much are you focussing on a solution?”

“To be honest, I don’t even understand it.”

“Do you think this impacts your daily life in someway?”

“Yes, and others as well, and it impacts family.” I feel ashamed and embarrassed.

“You know it impacts others, you know it has been there for sometime, this is the first time you are using the word publicly even?”

“Yes”

“But you have not given time for this issue to resolve? What is your thinking on it?”

“Um, I think I understand the source...., I don’t know. It is partly relating to a source of guilt that I have about my children living in another country with their mother, and the guilt can be dealt with straightforwardly, but overall I think the anger is much more complex.”

“Okay, are we narrowing down the cause of the anger and guilt? Is this source where it is focused or does it spill out into other areas?”

“Um...I don’t know how to deal with it or where to start. I’ve got a feeling that I have to focus on it. In my mission I mention I aim to be ‘secure and at peace’. When you are angry you are not at peace. I am not sure if I am creating difficult expectations for others to live up to... or almost on purpose which is pretty self-sabotaging,” I nervously snigger. “But going through these sessions, I can now see that it is possible to self-sabotage.”

“Absolutely, but not all do it knowingly, and that is what coaching is there to do, is raise your consciousness about certain behaviours, certainly the way you are thinking about people and issues.”

“You want to resolve your anger issues, a lot of things trigger you, make a note of these things and just note what it is doing. Why might you devote a mountain of your time thinking about a small thing that somebody did not do correctly that morning? What choice did I make – when I think negatively? Look at the negativity, at the internal language; you have been noticing that you are quite angry... But don’t be too hard on yourself because being totally accepting is a major step from where you are today. Look at the thinking that is wrapped around the anger. One thing we learned that sometimes when you get angry, or hurt, you exclude those people who made you angry. That is anger – exclusion is a strategy.”

She finished nicely, “Now let me give you some feedback: you have done a tremendous job on this self exploration.”

\* \* \*

## Key 4: Focussing Action

“The self is not something ready-made but something in continuous formation through choice of action”

John Dewey (1988, p.361)

All coachees were assigned homework between sessions, and some of those actions were about designing your own strategies for achieving set goals.



Coachees interviewed described how they felt by finding new strategies and moving to action:

- “I felt empowered, very motivated and focused to get results” (4)
- “Being action oriented with measures kept me honest during the coaching process” (1)
- “At the end of each session work was committed to be completed by the next, if it was not completed we surfaced why not. I became a lot more driven, instead of coming home and doing some menial random act, I would focus and work on the achieving the goals” (2)

\* \* \*

### “Strategies”, Wednesday, March 4, 2009, Oman

It’s 7pm and I present my passport at the border. The policeman says “Assalam alikum”. I reply “Alikum Assalam”. “Where you going?” he asks, “Buraimi to see a friend...” He waves me through, disinterested.

Tonight, I am taking the trouble to come and see a friend to work on some strategies to solve problems so I can be ready for the next coaching session. It is quite dark out, the moon is hidden and they seem less generous with street lighting here on this side of the border. I weave my way through some roundabouts, feeling a little anxious coming to talk with someone who has some experience with developing strategies.

I park, Phil invites me in and chirpily asks “Coffee?” I reply, “Love a coffee thanks”. He disappears. I wait in his majiliss, which sounds grand, but it is bare – old worn out furniture and tired pictures mounted on the walls. I set up my laptop beside his. We are going to use a tool called Decision Explorer to develop my strategies by focussing on issues. He returns with coffee and explains the process.

“We need to identify certain issues that bother you, and ladder down to find root causes and ladder up to the goals you have agreed on with your coach”. I look with hope at the computer programme he opens... this will be great – if I can think outside the box on this one, I bet none of Sandy’s coachees have ever gone to this much detail before. She will be pleased. So, what might be an issue for you?”

“Well, sometimes I don’t care for others needs?”

“What might be a cause of this?”

“Often, I am focused on what I am doing, which in many cases is driven itself by a need for being recognized”

“Where does that come from?”

Ouch, straight into a place I don’t like to go – my mother....

We spend about three hours creating a cognitive map, it is exhausting, depressing at times, but it has been good to stretch myself. I’m drained but quietly excited that so much was discussed. I feel ready now to talk about strategies with my coach.

\* \* \*

#### **Coaching Session 4**

“So, what strategies did you come up with?”

“Um, well, let’s take one, to deal with lack of recognition in the past – the negative desire for recognition.”

“If I was to give you my thoughts on that one Michael, it would be that these sort of issues are not addressed by the sort of coaching that we are involved in, and if you wanted to do that, you should take it outside of this environment and deal with it separately, with a different person because you are going backwards dealing with things that were no good in the past, you are not going to change them.

“You are not going to change your behaviour because you will find out why, then you have a logical reason why, and then what? You won’t have any actions to make it different. Sometimes it is a real good thing because it is a stretch, and you can gain insights about yourself that might

be uncomfortable. But what does Michael do well, what is it about Michael that Michael likes about himself? Where is that on this map?

“This is an interesting approach, but what it does is the mere fact that you sit down and write all these issues, ‘feel nervous, feel judgment, felt bad as a child, need to feel good now, find a safe place,’ they are all reinforcing the things that are your fears and obstacles, and they put them right there in the forefront of your thinking. *And the way we are approaching the coaching is what is the strategy, what is the action you can take, what is it that you want to do?* So what are all the positive activities and actions you can take, not the childhood fears let’s just stop that habit for a minute and let’s look forward to the positive actions we can take to help you feel more confident.”

\* \* \*

### **Key 5: Reflecting Critically**

“By three methods we learn: first, by reflection which is the noblest; second by imitation, which is the easiest; and third by experience, which is the bitterest.”

Confucius (cited 2007, <http://quotationsbook.com/quote/41561/>)

To varying degrees coachees felt it desirable to ‘surrender’ to the process to allow them to reflect deeply and critically, in terms of their past, current situation, and future. One coachee suggested that reflecting helped surface assumptions, reveal internal dialogues and mental models. My coach was always ready to help me explore, to take me to a place where I could see myself in my environment more realistically.



Coachees interviewed demonstrated the reflective process:

- “Coaching revealed internal dialogue to me that I was stick on, dialogue not previously questioned” (5)
- “Reflection helped me surface assumptions professionally and personally, I can explore, can feel and research more easily” (4)
- “One spends time in the past, present and future in positive and negative places, travelling around but one always try come back to the present” (2)

\* \* \*

### **“Cost”, Coaching Session 9**

“Any reflections on what makes you angry?”

“I realized a couple of things, ah, one is my tiredness, stress level and sleep which has a very big part to play. My level of acceptance is less. This week was a bit tough, and I had to drive to Abu Dhabi everyday and I noticed that my fuse was a lot shorter. I need to be honest on fitness and sleep. There is a linkage to anger and projection, critical self-judgment, and I think there are certain DNA types that just never seem to get angry, but I am not one of them. I am competitive, I like to dominate, I am impatient, I am demanding, all of these things are my own attributes that don't help.”

“The amount of energy that my anger costs me is great. Energy is limited so there is a bit of a negative re-enforcing cycle going on here, if you take away some sleep, it takes a little bit away from my ability to choose my response. I go into old scripts really quickly, I get angry, it's not rage but I can feel on occasion that I am getting really close. Then having less energy is making me more tired, can you see the cycle for me?” We discuss my reflections, scenarios, and different ways I might approach my thinking. It is a tough, very long, emotional conversation, draining even, but Sandy wraps up the session nicely:.

“It is not about removing anger, but dealing with it appropriately, dealing with it to the right degree, and asking the question – ‘am I going to take any action?’. If not, then let it go and move on!! Ultimately, you control your reactions but you need to practice.”

\* \* \*

### **“Learning to be less people centred!”, Tuesday, May 26, 2009**

My addition to the car pool was a change for all, that morning we met at Andrew's, I jump into his blue Volvo S60, and within a few minutes we sped off onto route 22 –The previous morning I was really enthusiastic about some Foucault concept that the planet is a prison, and I had engaged my friends on the way in to work. Today, I sensed that Andrew was a little grouchy, and my feeling was soon to be confirmed.

“Frankly, Mike your early morning speech yesterday about your MBA and power was just too much. At 6:00 am, the most intellectual topic we can cope with is Pamela Anderson's tits, alright? This is about the level of complexity we get to in the morning.” He continued after a moment, “Look Mike, I don't know if anyone has said this you before, and I don't want to offend you, but you are so intense – and your conversation yesterday first thing in the morning was not appropriate.” He was in a bad mood, “I don't want to drive to your place anymore...”, he kept on letting it all out while I remained quiet.

I thought. I smiled inside when I realized that none of what he said had actually affected me. My reaction was controlled.

I replied, “Thanks for your honesty and for sharing that, I acknowledge the change here for all.” I continued, “I kind of realized at the time that you were not that interested in what I was talking about – I apologize.” I could see this was Andrew’s problem, his way of dealing with it, I accepted what he said, but I did not let it reflect on what I felt about me. I said to myself, their experience of me is not my experience of me. It was cool, I heard, I paused, I responded, but it didn’t affect me. Before I would have got quite upset and perhaps even beaten myself up for a while. The coaching is really paying off, I thought.

\* \* \*

### Coaching session 9

“So, You are learning to learn, intellectually you are more than capable of learning, and I think you are catching up now with your emotional learning.”

“Yeah, I think, I’m trying to reach a point where I accept myself for who I am, and ah, and also to give myself a break sometimes, we are not perfect beings...”

“I think that showed where the person called you intense, you did not let that bother you – you find me intense, maybe I can be...because you are *slowing your thinking process down* you are able to make choices.”

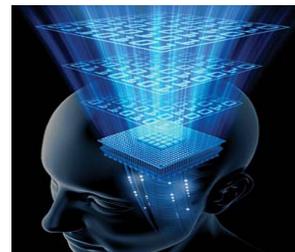
\* \* \*

## Key 6: Exploring Mental Models

“There is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so”

William Shakespeare, (cited 2005, <http://absoluteshakespeare.com/trivia/quotes/quotes.htm>)

In all interviews, coachees indicated that during the course of coaching the quality of their thinking/mental models improved. Underpinning this change was the need to be certain of the facts, assumptions, values, history, desires and motives. This resulted in the coachees having the capacity to ‘press the pause button’ and ask more questions before responding in any situation, and in turn often resulted in appreciating other people’s values more.



Coachees interviewed frequently talked about where their mental maps were modified:

- “I became more collected, more focused and much closer to reality” (1)
- “I am much less affected by possible negative outcomes and focus more on the inputs, get closure to events and ask what to DO next” (3)
- “I appreciated others viewpoints more” (4)
- “We surfaced many assumptions I had about finance, business and personal relationships” (2)

\* \* \*

#### **“Be kind to yourself”, Coaching Session 5**

I gave Sandy an example of making a difficult decision one year ago around money that I knew people would not agree with or be happy with, but I put it through my reasoning, made my decision and said – people will not agree with this but that is ok. I was quite proud of myself at the time. “I need more of that right?”

“That is courage.”

“If I could get that on a more frequent basis that would be nice....but how do you rewind 40 years of certain habits and go in a new direction...wow that’s a challenge.”

“It is a challenge but it is completely doable isn’t it! Positive thinking and self talk. It won’t be easy or happen over night but start with the end in mind”.

“One of the interesting things on self-esteem I now see is that it underpins confidence. There were two kind of strange concepts that um, the idea of particularized self efficacy and meta physical efficacy, strange names but the basic concept that I had not really thought about before was that it is ‘completely ok that I don’t know how to fix an engine on a car’ even though previously I kind of felt a bit negative because other people know how to do it and I don’t – I feel less of a man because I don’t know how to fix a car. Right? And yet if you look at the particular efficacy, there are many things in my life that I am really good at. The more important concept was, it is not what I am good or not good at, but having the confidence that if something comes up I will deal with it. Recently, a colleague invited me to take the family four wheel driving, but truth be told I felt fear and a strong peer pressure *to be a man* and do it.”

“Were you doing it because you really wanted to or because others egged you on?”

“Oh, I didn’t want to do it, as it highlights the things that I am not good at. But by accepting the fact we are not good at everything, that we are at least competent at something, then that’s ok. Not being competent is not going to be a bad reflection on me. I’ll have to accept that... Even if they have that judgment, I must not let it affect myself.”

“Absolutely.”

“It does affect me today as I am going through it intellectually at the moment.”

“Yes, but you don’t believe it yet. It is an intellectual remark.”

“This is a reasonable insight, but what actions and strategies should I try to do in the next fortnight? Do I read...I do like to have some intellectual input into these things. How might I do this on my own?”

“Ok, what would you like to be different in the next two weeks?”

I should have known by now she was not going to answer my questions! “I would like to... I would like to find a way to ground myself and find my centre.”

“Ok.”

“I just don’t know what that looks like.”

“Let’s look at you making a promise to yourself. Think positive thoughts about yourself. Because you know the adage, *what you think is what you see, which determines what you do and ultimately what you get.* Be kind to yourself. You have got all the desire in the world and the only thing we need to fill in is the skills. Do a random act of kindness but don’t tell anyone. It is about you feeling good, not about others’ affirmation. Smile, breath deeply and say it is not the end of the world, is it? Don’t over analyse it. In a situation, don’t analyse it – walk away from it. . You might try for a full day not to have the negative self-talk, and when you have some negative self talk replace it with three positive things about yourself. Thinking of the going into the desert with the 4x4, well you are not good at that – it is not your thing, but, you know you are good at X and brilliant at Y... be a bit gentler on yourself.”

I laugh out nervously. “It sounds like I am harder on myself than my mother which is a bizarre concept.”

“Personally, I think, that you have had some real insights about what is going on here which is quite different than when we started a few sessions back.”

I pause... “I was quite pleased that I uncovered this week the relationship between security and confidence to self esteem.”

“I think you have pulled a master stroke here because it is a lot clearer what is driving your feelings and the bits of your life you are not happy about. It was painful for you.”

I never realised how tough my thinking was, how unfair I was on myself, seeking some perfection from the virtual world with perfect managers, perfect men, perfect fathers... Ah, it is time to give myself a break! It feels nice not to have to be perfect.

\* \* \*

## **Key 7: Giving Advice**

“If a problem has no solution, it may not be a problem, but a fact – not to be solved, but to be coped with over time”

Shimon Peres, (cited 2007, <http://www.quotationspage.com/quote/25945.html>)

According to interview evidence, solution giving was not a commonly used tool by coaches, however, in my own case I sometimes got stuck on how to deal with some challenges, so the coach stepped in with advice like a mentor. Through my coaching sessions, I discovered where I might have picked up that ‘being found out’ feeling around senior executives, i.e. that they are going to find that I am not really as good as they might think I should be.



\* \* \*

### **“COO”, November, 2008, United Arab Emirates**

I have been sweating since I arrived – meeting with senior executives has always had this effect although I do not know why. I stand, follow behind the secretary’s happy persona and enter George’s office. He is signing some forms or letters, very nicely laid out in a purposefully built folder. Where does he want me to sit today? He remains silent, I feel awkward and can feel the sweat dropping under my armpits like a washer in a tap not working correctly. George is a strong and tall man, tight curly hair, commands a certain regal presence – his office is immaculate, almost so perfect it looks like he doesn’t do anything but approve things.

Finally, and coldly, “Michael take a seat.”

Nervously but trying to force confidence into my voice, “Ok, George, how are you today?”

He does not reply. My project (called the Service Improvement Programme – SIP) has been floundering, and I am wondering if this will be the last time I enter this office....

“Ok, we are not making any headway on the SIP, Michael – what shall we do about it?”

I can’t believe he is asking me this... He knows that his people are ignoring his repeated calls for effort on these identified improvements.... But, again, I know I am failing, and badly. I am going to be *‘found out’* here.... My usual enthusiasm and project management skills are not working in this politically charged environment. I feel an urgency to have some answers.

“Michael, I think that you are getting stuck in the process, when I think you need to be more delivery focused.”

“Yes, George.” I pause, hoping to impress him. “While on vacation, I have been analyzing why change is not forthcoming, did you get a chance to read the document I sent you?”

“No.” He seems not to be really interested in real change--there is a board meeting in a few weeks, and he wants some quick wins. The conversation strays in to a kind of philosophical tangent. Perhaps we are connecting here on a personal level. 15 minutes pass... I have relaxed a bit more, but nothing seems to come out as clearly as I articulate in my head. The secretary interrupts, “George, your next meeting is here.”

He thanks her and turns back to me, “Michael this has been a wonderful discussion for you, but for me this meeting was absolutely no use at all. Please come to our next meeting more action oriented.”

I feel pressure to step up. I’m in shock from this meeting, I feel insecure... I don’t understand what is really going on here. My shirt is soaked but hidden from view – at least I can go and have a cigarette, and relax until the next meeting in two days time...

\* \* \*

### “Cupboards”, Coaching session 5

“Can I have permission to say something frank?” Sandy began.

“Shoot”

“If you are not careful you could become a victim.”

“Maybe I already have.”

“No, I wouldn’t make that judgment, there are some skeletons you need to put in a cupboard, and if you are clever enough you can open that cupboard, because you just do, and you look at it and say ‘ those are still there’ but CLOSE the cupboard and move on! If you can get to that state in your life, you will not let it shape you and define who you are.”

It’s true I have skeletons in the cupboard. I walk Sandy a bit into memories of my relationship with my mother and her extremely high expectations....

\* \* \*

#### **“Being Found Out”, sometime in 1981**

I’m hungry. Mum is struggling financially since Dad died but I’m still hungry. I open the fridge door, there is plenty of food but Mum knows even if I take a spoonful. What can I eat? She is at work, and my sister is in her room. I feel sad, why can’t I just eat? I get an idea!! I run to the back garden across our gravel driveway. I grab two beautiful but dirty deep red tomatoes. They are shaped strangely compared to those in the shops, but they are delicious! I run back into the house – my heart is pumping hard, I must be quick – someone might see me. I grab two slices of bread from mum’s Tupperware bin, oh they are so soft to touch. I spread them thick with butter, slice the tomatoes, and cover them in plenty of salt and pepper. Yummy. My stomach says ‘thank you’, my conscious says ‘you are in trouble now’, and I tell them both, ‘Shut up!’

The next morning, Mum startles me as she storms into my room and yells, “Have you been eating bread without telling me?” Quickly I reply, “No, of course not!” I lied. Not sure why I lied, but it is just a habit now. She looks at me carefully, like only a woman can look at a man – with suspicion, “hmmm, perhaps I was wrong”. She goes away... I relax. I stay out of sight.

Later that day, she storms in again, “Do you have something to tell me?”, I hate it when she says that – I feel guilty even when I am not guilty of anything, “um, No”, she swipes me in the face, it hurts, but something inside hurts more. “Don’t bloody lie to me, you know I hate lying. I just counted the slices of bread from a new loaf, and I know your sister would not eat without telling me, so it must have been you.” She launches at me. Shit! I have been found out... The rest I

repress. This feeling of darkness, of shame comes from deep inside, and is often more powerful than the light...it's how it feels when I am found out.

\* \* \*

### Coaching Session 7

“So, let me clarify two things that you talked about. You have never lived up to her expectations and, Michael, can I be really open here?”

“Yeah”

“What is written all over this is that you are not living up to an expectation that YOU may have created. That people in this position expect you to do this, I have heard you say that a lot, and all of this is based around other people, I think *your thinking today is people centred and not self centred*. And I don't mean that in the traditional way of self thinking, but in terms of self esteem, monitoring and awareness. A lot of your actions around pleasing other people, around avoiding conflict with people because they may not think highly of you. This is very people centred. I think we need to help you become more self centred. The key for me, is you cannot control others expectations but who can you control?”

“Me!!”

\* \* \*

### Key 8: Coachees Practicing Coaching

“Every man who observes vigilantly, and resolves steadfastly, grows unconsciously into a genius”

Edward Bulwer-Lytton (cited 2008, <http://creatingminds.org/quotes/genius.htm>)

In most cases the coachee reported that by the end of his journey he had begun to use coaching practices ‘as a coach’ in his own life. In only one of these cases was trying to learn coaching itself one of the stated goals in the programme, suggesting that this is largely a unconscious process by osmosis.



Coachees who had successful coaching experiences demonstrated the continued use of coaching with themselves, and others in their lives:

- “I am currently a project manager, but I use coaching with my team to get better results. In time I would like to become a full time coach” (4)
- “This programme confirmed my belief in coaching, I have now changed jobs from Finance to working in Organizational effectiveness” (1)
- “There are no circumstances where the coaching techniques cannot be used with others – I don’t get your comment on being stuck in the process instead of living the content” (3)

\* \* \*

**“Choices”, Monday, 22 June, 2009**

“Good morning Richard”

“Good morning”

Noticing his dissatisfied state and fast driving this morning, instead of listening to my iPod I mistakenly ask, “What’s up?”

“Our maid is a liar and might be pregnant?”

No way – is it his?, “What happened?”

“Well, through a friend’s maid we have found out that she asked her to ask her employer to buy a pregnancy test.” This would make sense, in the United Arab Emirates as it is illegal to have sex outside of marriage, and a Philippine woman without her passport would be exposed or at least fear being reported.

He continues, “The audacity, she has been telling her friends it is mine. If this got out I could lose my job. Bloody stupid girl.”

I listened to more of his rationalizing and fears. Thinking he was at times a bit harsh, “So what are you going to do?”

“Well, I could take her straight to the police, could take her directly to the airport and send her back to the Philippines or, just let her go and cancel her visa.” I find myself getting annoyed at the injustice here, and not toward him in his privileged position but towards his maid who I have never met nor seen. We are driving in his BMW 3 Series, a hard top convertible, it is very small inside, and the lack of air and climbing temperature outside is taking its toll on my patience. I try to keep him constructive, but eventually I weaken and just I tell him what I think. “It sounds like you want to punish her!”

He backs off... then charges in again with more evidence and complaints.

“Richard, don’t forget that the lower class workers here get paid bugger all, their living conditions are tough, get their passports taken off them etc. it is like paid slave labour, so the odd bit of pleasure on the side from someone like your maid does not sound unreasonable and her lying to you might be out of fear or respect”

“Well apparently she had two or more boyfriends grrr, what do you call it in Spanish – Puto?”

“Put a – it is referring to a female whore, but this is beside the point, if I were you I might think also about her point of view here, and perhaps consider doing the best thing by her, considering her disadvantages...”

He seems displeased by my remark and tone...he ignores the comments and spends the rest of the journey supporting his version of the story. For the large part I stay silent although I was angry inside...

On the return journey that evening, it seemed that he started where we left off, but I also noticed that whatever I said he would say the opposite. I thought to myself this argumentative, judgmental and hypocritical man. My internal temperature was hotter than Cotopaxi... and about to erupt. I pause. I think and say to myself, this is obviously a very toxic relationship, you can choose to stay in it or opt out. We arrive at my place and we say our goodbyes.

“Richard, I have to make my own arrangements for the next few days – so it is best we go in separately”. He drives off, I am thankful. Proud even of the choice I made for me – perhaps the coaching is working!

\* \* \*

### **“Opinions not worth anything”, Coaching Session 10**

“Sandy, so what do you think?”

“I will tell you what I was thinking as you were talking. I think, when you use an expression like, ‘If I was you’, what you are really saying is that ‘I am not actually listening to you but I am comparing you to me and you are found wanting’. What you have done by walking away from that is not actually dealing with the issue, there is no closure in that issue. Your comments were toxic for him.”

She pauses. “Don’t ever forget that your opinion is worth nothing! Often when people ask what you would do, it is more valuable to help people consider what they might do instead of what you might do. When ideas are not their own, it is very seldom that they will even use your idea!!! I don’t actually mean your opinion is not worth anything, it means holding the mirror up sometimes and asking - is my opinion useful, or valid here, will it add anything. Who says your opinion and thinking is right? The point is that voicing your opinion isn’t often helpful.

*“What you are hearing from me is a real coaching approach to life, which says, better to get the person thinking for themselves rather than to force it on them....”*

Wow. I must admit – I have never thought of it that way before... I thought people actually wanted to hear my opinion!

\* \* \*

I remembered Sandy’s coaching later that year when approached by a friend seeking advice. The conversation reminded me of something that happened to me, but I fought the need to tell him my story and took him to a place where he can find solutions by himself that work for him. This interaction was clear evidence to me that I had assimilated some of the coaching practice. The vignette follows:

\* \* \*

**“Fired?”, Wednesday, December 16, 2009**

Mohamed, a fellow MBA student, approached me in the Strathclyde car park one day after a group work session. I noticed he was a bit down.

“Hi Mohamed, how are you?”, He replied “Not good” My sense of his body language was right. “What’s up, fella?”. Mohamed had always been nice so I decided to give him a few minutes.

“I have been asked to take a lower level position in Bahrain with the bank, or I have to leave. They have put me on two weeks special leave while I think about it. I feel really bad. I wanted to commit suicide last night, my family is away and I am alone.”

I thought to myself...shit, how do you reply to that? I ignored the suicide comment to see how real it was by asking some more questions... ”You know, last April I thought I was going to be fired, it was a scary time with so much uncertainty, but I had some help to process the possibilities. Do you know what I was asked?”

“No, what?”

“In times like these one needs to get back to basics and ask yourself - is this a minor set back in your career? What are your strengths? What are you about? Is this a major obstacle in front of you or a minor blip? To determine what you need to do, you first need to ask in terms of what you really want.”, I continued, “so you are obviously processing the news, and that takes time, but have you thought about what you REALLY WANT?”

“No Mike, but what would you do?” I replied, “You know I would look at all the options on the table and try to be as positive as possible, but you know, I am not in your shoes, and it might be more valuable for you to think about solutions. I do recommend though to constantly check your assumptions and thinking. These two things weigh heavily on how you process and feel about situations.” We continued, and I listened, fighting the desire to solve his problems with my advice. Eventually we wind down, and he adds, “Thanks Mike, really that was very helpful.”

\* \* \*

### **“Review”, Coaching Session 11**

“Coach, I’ve realized a continuum that goes on: at one end there is passion and desires i.e. being in the content of life, in the thick of it, real living if you like, and at the other end of the continuum you have reflection, consciousness, and self awareness. I think if you treat it as a dichotomy, at either extreme, they both suck! You could live your life to the fullest without much care for others, or at the other end be in a state of paralysis... you are just reflecting. I think you have to loop around from one to the other, you can’t stay at any one end – you just keep moving. I think this coaching process has been about reflection but also about action learning too... to see if stuff works.”

“Absolutely”

“It is kind of weird, I am more reflective, but I am also more consciously passionate. I think I have thought a lot in my life about the past, and dwelling on that too much, and equally on the future. I think you can have bits of that, but equally don’t forget to live your life.”

“Very deep thinking, Mike, and, I think, on the button. You hit the nail on the head when you talked about coaching, coaching as a loop, coaching base is called the dance – you move in circular motions as you encourage your coachee to think, like a dance step, can I stretch you, I ask a question, I feedback what I hear, then ask more, there might be an insight... I think the circle you are describing is absolutely right, the key for me was – purposeful passion!”

### **3.4 Findings on meaning**

All interview participants were asked the following question: ‘what did the coaching experience mean to the participant both intellectually and emotionally?’ Interviewees who were more than somewhat satisfied with their experience were very positive and this is perhaps why coachees begin to practice coaching in their own lives by the strength of the following comments:

“Coaching is wonderful, uplifting, egoistic, unexpected, intellectual and a personal buzz. It is about having someone to listen and the subject is YOU – your thoughts, fears, challenges and your own thought process.” (1)

“Coaching has enabled me to be more effective at finishing things, through a safe, positive, supportive, and non judgemental focus on goals where the probability of achieving my goals is much higher. I ask myself frequently, what would a 5 percent do?” (Referring to the top 5% of achievers) (2)

“For me it meant stopping old behaviours and old strategies that no longer worked for me anymore, and replacing them with new behaviours and strategies.” (3)

“Coaching was a concept that can help me solve any difficulties in my life and importantly these new skills can help me help others solve their problems! It was exciting, a place to explore, feel and research new things in a safe place. I achieved a real sense of pride and self worth.” (4)

The interviewee who was only somewhat satisfied with his coaching experience said...

“Emotionally no meaning at all, but intellectually it was logical and focused on something tangible. I found myself in the same situation some 5 years later and I admit my thinking and behaviour was identical to the first time around. In the end coaching had a positive impact at the time but 3 months did not allow the changes to bed in and results were lacking.” (5)

This last participant was a clear outlier from the dataset and the only coachee who would not repeat the coaching experience. To discuss causation is not possible here, but it could be hypothesized that this person who was under significant stress having to find a new job at the time was focussed on that goal only, and perhaps fully surrendering to the process was not possible. This engagement was only for three months, and in my own case, coaching discourse did not enter my vocabulary until about three months, so it is possible six months or more is required to really get the benefit from the coaching approach. It is equally probable that coaching as an intervention simply does not work for the entire population.

## Chapter 4 Discussion

The literature review found little research from the coachee perspective and zero examples where coachee is both the subject and the researcher. Perhaps it is difficult to implement, too risky or time consuming for executives, nevertheless, the call for coachee research is growing as prospective coachees and HR Departments look for evidence of value. The sparseness of coachee research and the interpretive nature of this study I found the need to return to the literature a second time from the unique perspective of the eight keys to see how these findings match current literature. The discussion chapter is broken into three parts: part one reflects on the keys as a system; part two looks at coaching in relation to learning theories; and part three looks at the keys with current practice literature.

### 4.1 Keys as a System

The keys are not unique to coaching as other interventions such as performance management, academic programmes, therapy, mentoring, and consulting also use discrete aspects of the keys identified. I found myself asking why these keys together might be so effective? My research suggests that these keys have related causes and effects, that they interrelate as a system and when used together form a phenomenon unique to coaching (Figure 4.1). The system is a distinct competency and perhaps difficult for alternative interventions to copy. This system when compared to other authors including Kilburg (2000) and Griffith and Campbell (2009) who have researched coaching systems proved to be quite similar. See Figure 4.2 for this colour coded comparison. Where a key is similar it will be shown in another system with an identical coloured box. Although different language can be used to describe each system the ideas are similar and they seem to be saying the same thing. It is not limited to the keys themselves but how the system concepts inter-connect.

There seems to be a common process across each system including establishing safety, asking questions, setting direction, implementing, and evaluating the outcomes. The Griffith and Campbell system includes some additional concepts such as taking responsibility, being accountable and listening; Kilburg's process goes further to create multiple inter-relating links across all parts of the system to show that coaching is not linear, a shortfall which is missing from my own analysis. In hindsight, I can see these concepts throughout the research data, however, were learned after the keys had been developed.

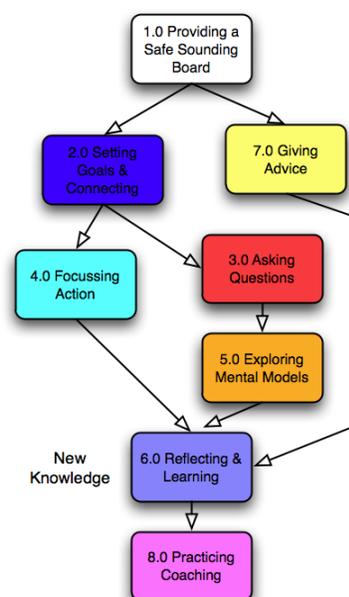
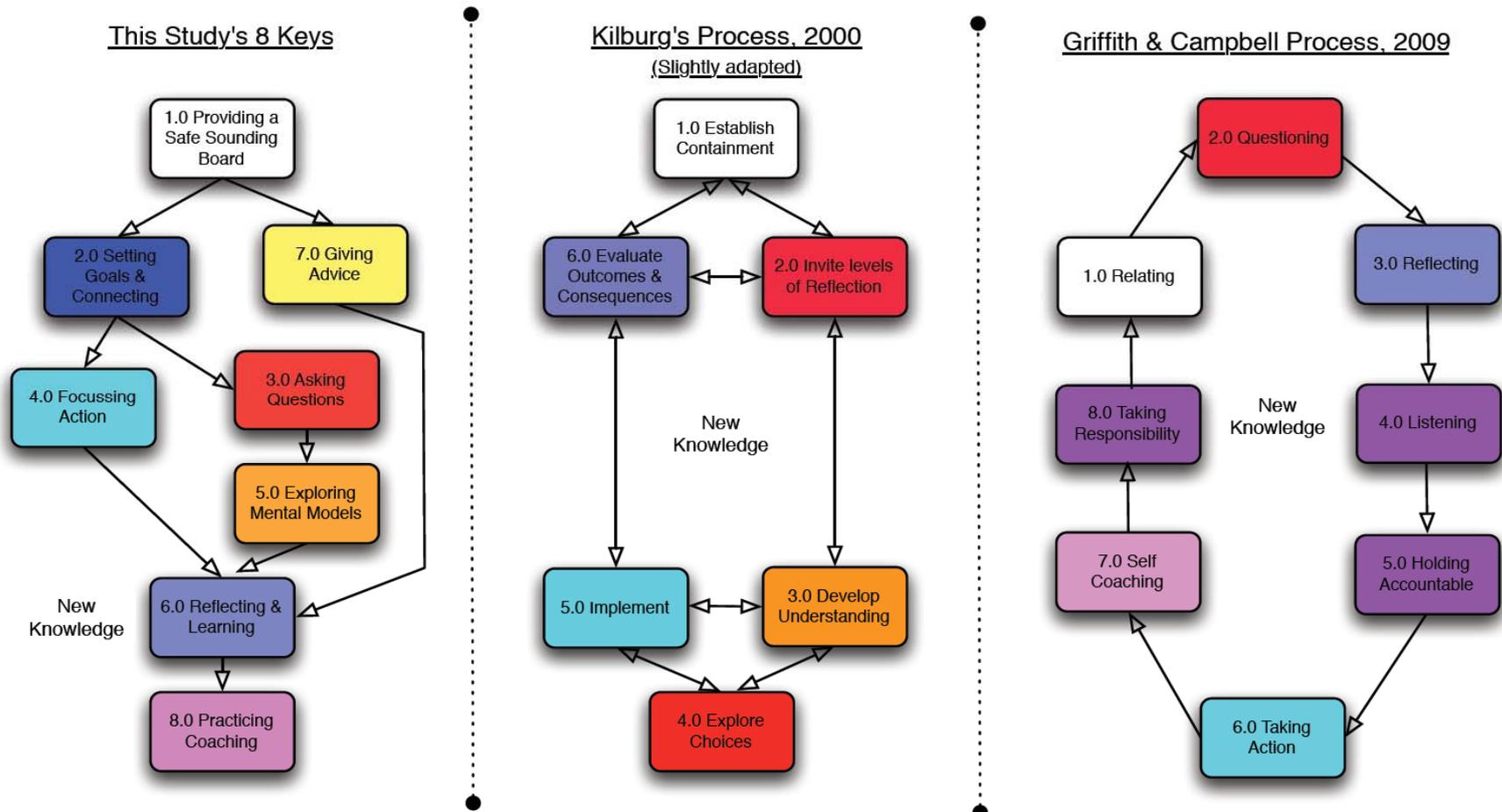


Figure 4.1 - Keys as a System

Comparison between the eight keys and other established models



Same colour key represent similar concept shared between models.

Figure 4.2 - Coaching Systems Compared

## 4.2 Keys and Learning Theory

“Learning is at the heart of coaching” (Zeus & Skiffington, 2003, p30) and the essence of my own coaching experience was a journey of ‘learning to learn’ both intellectually and emotionally. Looking into the learning literature has highlighted strong links between the coachees experience and the process of learning, with no one theory dominating the coaching phenomenon. Griffith and Campbell (2009) argue that while learning in coaching is implicitly understood there has been little research in this area. While no one theory dominates, Experiential, Double Loop Learning, and Transformational Learning theories indicated a particularly strong relationship to coaching and to the change keys identified in this study (Table 4.1).

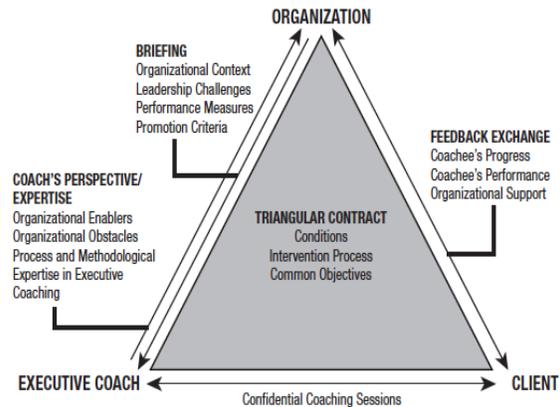
A post facto review of the literature *between* coaching and learning theory suggests that little has been done in this area, or as in some cases the coaching approach has been aligned directly to one particular theory e.g. behavioural learning theory aligned to the behavioural coaching model. The contrary looks likely from these findings i.e. that multiple theories can be seen in the coaching experience.

	Johari Theory	Experiential Learning	Situated Learning	Kolb's Learning Theory	Double Loop Learning	Transformational Learning	Conversational Theory	Constructivist Theory
Author	(Luft, 1982)	(Rogers & Freiberg, 1996)	(Lave & Wenger, 1990)	(Kolb, 1984)	(Argyris & Schon, 1996)	(Mezirow, 1990)	(Pask, 1975)	(Bruner, 1966)
Eight Keys								
1. Provide a safe Sounding Board		Yes					Yes	
2. Setting Goals & Connecting		Yes						
3. Asking Questions	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
4. Focussing Action		Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes		
5. Critical Reflection	Yes	Yes		Yes	Yes	Yes		
6. Exploring Mental Models	Yes			Yes	Yes	Yes		
7. Giving Advice							Yes	
8. Coachees Practicing Coaching			Yes	Yes				

Table 4.1 - Keys linked to Learning Theories

### 4.2.1 Providing a Safe Sounding Board

Recent research argues that coaching is like sitting with a therapist or a close friend and it is the coach's responsibility to make it safe (Rock, 2009). The Experiential Learning perspective holds that learning is threatening to the self, and perhaps this might be why the coach first removes the threats for better learning



(Rogers and Freiberg, 1994). From the

Figure 4.3 - EC Contract (Dembkowski et al., 2007, p.12)

Transformational Learning perspective establishing a horizontal relationship is necessary to create a sense of “safety, openness and trust” (Taylor, 1998, p58). One must feel that he or she can open up and discuss the past or the future without the feeling of being judged, but how can this be so in reality? There can be three participants in the EC contract (Figure 4.3) the organisation, the coach and the coachee. Valerio and Lee (2005) comment that all coach, coachee and organization may wish to see somewhat different outcomes. They stress the need for exploration and agreement of expectations.

### 4.2.2 Setting Goals & Connecting

Starting coaching is not a silver bullet on its own. Effective coaches will not only hold a mirror up for clients but they will use tools like goal setting in the search for successful coaching outcomes. Dembkowski (2007) suggests the objectives are to assist the executive to develop their specific goal(s), ensure personal relevance and help the executive to focus. Experiential Learning perspective suggests that personal growth can only be achieved when clarifying the purposes and control of direction for the learner is achieved (Rogers & Freiberg, 1996). The findings are consistent with this approach; however, what is new is that the coachees felt their coaches helped ensure the goals were not only relevant (Hall et al., 1999) but that they were sufficiently connected to their goals.

Coachees interviewed had goals as varied as handling finances better, plucking up the courage to leave their job and start a business, and in one case getting over the fear of having a family. In all cases where the organisation funded the coaching, the coachees' goals were a mixture of personal and professional supporting this premise, however, contrary to the literature (Dembkowski, 2007; Valerio and Lee, 2005) line managers were not involved in setting coaching direction nor the evaluation.

### 4.2.3 Asking Questions

Coaches ask delving questions throughout the journey as a principle tool so coachees can see their own mental models, and learn from experience through observation and reflection (Kolb, 1984). This study supports this premise and Socratic questioning underpins many learning theories. Constructivist theory orients the coach to lead the learners on a journey of discovery in an active spiral organisation but determined by the coachees themselves (Bruner, 1966). The coach uses the

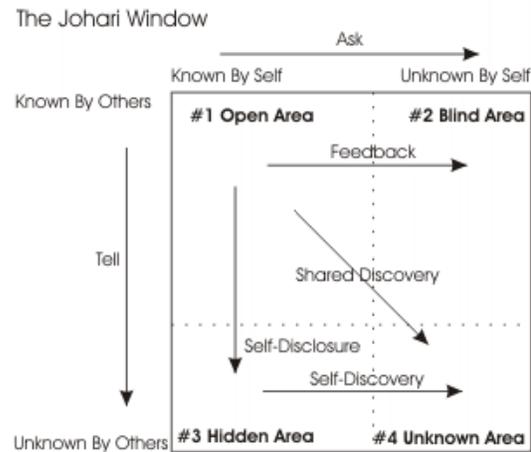


Figure 4.4 - Johari Window, (Mindtools.com, 2010)

technique of asking questions to reduce the size of blind spots, and offer the chance to bring down facades, in the overall goal of coachee self discovery. This is described within the Johari Learning theory (Figure 4.4).

### 4.2.4 Focussing Action

Witherspoon and White (1996) state that coaching is a process of action-learning to enhance performance. Learning by action is supported by many learning theories including: Experiential, Double Loop, Situated, and Transformational learning. Weiss (2003) says that coaches help executives release dormant energy and create excitement about future possibilities so they move forward with a sense of hope that energizes action. Weiss adds that through action planning - both clarity and commitment is established along with the detailed steps necessary to accomplish the overall goal. It is not only a plan, it is also a process whereby the coachee receives feedback and help to stay on track. This study firmly supports these claims.

### 4.2.5 Reflecting Critically

Critical reflection is important in learning throughout the literature (Kolb 1984; Sanders, 1990; Senge, 1990). Gallwey (2002, p66) is correct, when we combine our capacity for reflection with our ability to learn from our actions (Figure 4.5) - “we have a most formidable asset”. When coaching is done well, according to Anderson and Anderson (2005, p18), coachees learn to learn by “reflecting on experiences to gain meaning and insight”.

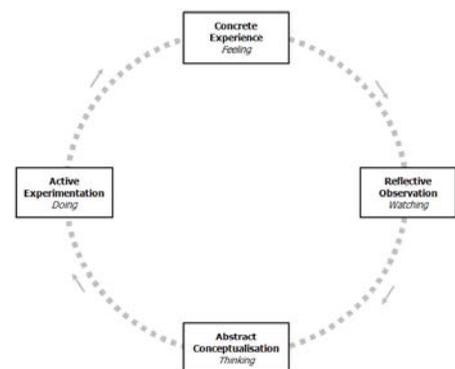


Figure 4.5 - Learning Cycle (Adapted, Kolb, 1984)

A fundamental attribute of effective adult learning from the Transformational Learning perspective is the process of moving back and forth between reflecting and acting (Taylor, 1998). But what if the coachee does not want to surrender to the process? It was noted by Coutu and Kauffman (2009) and Kyprianou (2009); and supported by my analysis that for coaching actions to be successful the coachee must have some interest in improving themselves and being reflective. All participants in this study agreed that the coachee needs to ‘want to’ change, or see the benefit of change, otherwise a lot of time is wasted simply breaking down the barriers and obstacles to change.

#### 4.2.6 Exploring Mental Models

Kilburg (2004, p249) argues that 'dysfunctional patterns of thinking lead to poor leadership' and will result in poor performance. Research and practical evidence has shown that these mental, social and emotional patterns exist outside of conscious awareness but influence certain conscious behaviours. Argyris as cited by Laske and Maynes (2002, p703) says that people have “*theories of action*” i.e. espoused values, attitudes, and beliefs, and “*theories actually used*” i.e. easily observed. Kilburg believes that a central mandate within coaching is to look at the coachees mental models to enable the maturing of the coachee’s cognitive abilities and reconstruction of dysfunctional maps. The Double Loop Learning perspective (Figure. 4.6) suggests one can bring the “espoused” and the “in use” theories into congruence (Argyris & Schon, 1996). Coaches listen not only to what is being said but to the way coachees are thinking, including how their attention is focused and how they define the key elements of the story (Gallwey, 2002). It is through being more conscious of one’s thinking that one can develop new behaviours (Sanders, 1990). This key is consistent with literature (Galway, 2000; Laske and Maynes 2002; Kilburg, 2004; Rock, 2009) that coaching helps coachees to see their own thinking process and modify existing mental models, and is closely linked to the key focussing action, in which learning situations are created to examine and experiment with.

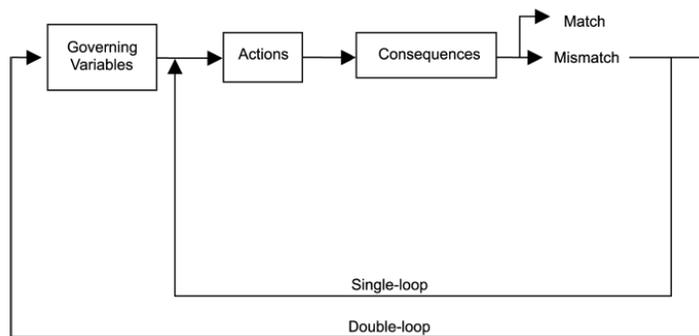


Figure 4.6 - Double Loop Learning, (Argyris & Schon, 1996)

### 4.3 Keys and Literature

Although theoretical origins of underlying coaching approaches were not visible to the coachee, executives in this study were aware of how their coach helped them to make small or significant changes. In this study I have identified eight coaching keys that appeared to effect real change in coachees' lives. Re-examining the literature I found that the coachee and coach perspectives of these change keys are very similar:

- The first 6 keys are representative of current coaching thinking and are extensively referred to in the EC literature.
- Key 7 - Giving Advice, while mentioned in the list of commonly used coaching tools (Table 1.2) is not supported by practice literature. (See below 4.3.1)
- Key 8 - Coachees Practicing Coaching as a tool for change is a newly reported phenomenon. (See below 4.3.2)

Books	7 Steps of Effective Executive Coaching	The Inner Game of Work	Executive Coaching	Coaching the Counts	Coaching Competencies and Corporate Leadership	Executive Coaching
<b>Authors</b>	Dembkowski et al., 2007	Gallwey, 2002	Valerio and Lee, 2005	Anderson & Anderson, 2005	Weiss, 2003	Kilburg & Hopkins, 2000
<b>Eight Keys</b>						
<b>1. Safe Sounding Board</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>2. Setting Goals &amp; Connecting</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>3. Asking Questions</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>4. Focussing Action</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>5. Reflecting Critically</b>	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
<b>6. Exploring Mental Models</b>	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
<b>7. Giving Advice</b>	No	No	No	No	No	Yes
<b>8. Coachees Practicing Coaching</b>	No	No	No	No	No	No

Table 4.2 - Keys and the Literature

The following section 4.3.1 and 4.3.2 will discuss the two remaining keys: Giving Advice, that was mentioned in the academic literature but not strongly supported in the practice literature; and Coachees Practicing Coaching, that was not mentioned at all in either the academic or practice literature.

### **4.3.1 Giving Advice**

Suggesting and Educating were both tools mentioned by Vandaveer (2007) and proved to be the case in my own coaching experience. This is contrary to most EC literature as this is generally regarded as a therapist's or consultant's domain. Gallwey (2002) states the coach's role is not to give advice and must avoid taking on the responsibility to solve the problem. Instead a coach should simply ask the coachee to think out loud to allow a view into their thought process. Gallwey's perspective is common and consistent with the coachee interviews, however, in my own case - I appreciated my coach stepping in with helpful advice. Perhaps this highlights that coaches only achieve this mantra to varying degrees, or perhaps I misinterpreted educating as advice, or the coach had crossed into a mentor relationship.

### **4.3.2 Coachees Practicing Coaching**

A study on the process of learning in coaching indicated it is not only about new knowledge but the application of knowledge in the coachee's life (Griffiths and Campbell, 2009). Two quotes from the Griffiths and Campbell study (p24) highlight this phenomenon that I and others experienced:

“...true learning is not what you read or hear about,  
it's what you integrate... it's all about application and integration.”

“The coaching that I've had thus far, I feel,  
has automatically integrated into me”.

Perhaps it is obvious that through the process of learning a new skill, and the success that comes with its application - that it will be practiced. My surprise was that fact that this learning by osmosis was not discussed beforehand with my coach as a possible benefit or side effect! Should the 'coaching way' become something that we all do naturally? Is that beneficial? While I am able to support the whole coaching paradigm I do have one concern that a little knowledge might be dangerous when there might be can be serious problems underlying the person you are coaching. Valerio and Lee (2005) say that emotional issues need to be dealt with by professionals trained to handle them, e.g. clinical psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, and others. If coaches (professional or amateur) are not careful, they can make a person's and organisation's situation worse (Kilburg, 2004). This is something I think about often, so much so that in my current coaching of a fellow colleague I have called it a “sound boarding” to make the distinction clear.

\* \* \*

#### ***4.4 Limitations***

The meaning I derived from my coaching experience is not independent of the rest of life, particularly with me completing the MBA in parallel. This can make it difficult to separate the reflective practice taught on the MBA with the reflective practices of coaching.

Convenience sampling can be problematic therefore I do not suggest that these interviews will be representative of any larger population. The manner in which I used my coach's network to find candidates left me with little control over who volunteered to be involved and could have resulted in skewed data.

Sample size was restricted to only 5 participants due to shortages of executives volunteering and personal time constraints imposed by the A/E research method.

#### ***4.5 Addressing Quality Criteria***

I have attempted to avoid the criticism of this being only a self-serving exercise by filling in a gap in the research, aiding the readers with a better understanding of coaching and anticipating future possibilities; resulting in I believe the demonstration of utility. I have shown construct validity by using multiple sources and a traceable audit trail. I achieved reliability with a clearly documented study protocol, and with the observation from my university advisor I have tried to ensure there are appropriate theoretical linkages, story relevance, and adding to coaching knowledge to ensure a scholarly account.

## **Chapter 5 Conclusion**

The aim of this research was to go behind closed doors of the coaching experience and offer a coachee perspective. Specifically the research question was *‘What is it like to receive coaching and how do coaches help effect change throughout the process?’* To answer the research question I evaluated 10 years of coaching literature (1999-2009), assessed approaches and tools reportedly used by coaches, investigated personal experiences of coachees, deeply reflected on my own coachee experience, and assessed commonality across coachee experiences to determine keys used to unlock personal change.

### ***5.1 Keys to Change***

Eight keys were discovered, named and explained including: Providing a Safe Sounding Board; Setting Goals and Connecting; Asking Questions; Focussing Action; Reflecting Critically; Exploring Mental Models; Giving Advice; and Coachees Practicing Coaching. The power of coaching comes from the combination of these keys into one system. This understanding offers those undergoing coaching to check that these keys are being used, and if not, challenge the coach and ask - why not? The first six keys were commonly mentioned throughout the literature; however, the 7<sup>th</sup> key - giving advice was referred to only in academic literature, and while found to exist in my own experience, it was contrary to the practice literature and interviews. The 8<sup>th</sup> key where coachees practice coaching is not mentioned in the literature and proved to be the most powerful key that re-enforces change by practicing the other keys with self or others. This learning by osmosis and practicing coaching seems to be a new phenomenon.

### ***5.2 Meaning of Coaching***

Staying true to A/E, I resist the temptation to bring closure to the meaning of coaching from the coachee’s point of view, in fact, there is more research needed to continue to develop our understanding of this unique perspective. For executives thinking about coaching there are meaningful ideas to take from this paper to make the most of a coaching experience viz.: work with your coach to build a strong relationship to quickly establish safety; once trust is formed, surrender to the process; make time available for meaningful exploration; be open to change; and be ready to reflect deeply to look for long lasting solutions. Coaching ultimately means to go on a personal, unsettling yet empowering, surprising yet rewarding journey for the executive that wishes to expand what they can see and do both personally and professionally, for themselves, and for others.

### ***5.3 Contribution to Literature***

My review of coachee research identified a gap in the literature, which tends to promote coaching from the coaching practice perspective (Goldsmith and Lyons, 2006; Paige, 2002; Vandaveer, 2007). I offered a personal account of my experience to allow the coachee voice to be heard to free coaching research from its self-reinforcing dialogue (Diedrich, 2004). The coachee perspective is important and the body of literature in this regard is sparse. This study has shown that there is some congruence in the coach/coachee understanding of what it actually means to be coached. It calls for more research to understand:

- the multiple learning theories that underpin coaching rather than the current single theory to single model based literature.
- whether the benefits, the dangers and effectiveness of the 8<sup>th</sup> key - coachees practicing coaching.

### ***5.4 Self Reflection***

This dissertation for me represents the largest single piece of work I have ever undertaken on my own outside of the business context. A/E research and story writing of my selected experiences has been surprisingly therapeutic and liberating, and ultimately deepened my own coaching experience! Research is a lot more time consuming than I had expected and after I had put together a draft story I thought – ‘well that’s it, I have broken the back of this’. When stretched to perform second-order analysis by my advisor, I started to delve inside my interviewees’ experiences and that was when the coaching system started to take form, and an argument appeared from the findings. From that point it was all about writing, re-writing, and, yes, re-writing until the argument was clear to a typical reader. In a bout of frustration quite late in my writing I finally drew up a graphical argument map. This is something I recommend to others to be more effective, as it will reduce the amount of re-writing and will be helpful to keep one’s friends who help with the proof reading!

I stand behind this study’s claim that the coaching keys for me unlocked the door to personal change and growth. Day after day I get into situations that I would have unduly fretted about prior to coaching. I now perform coaching sessions with all of my five direct reports every three weeks in addition to a few others.

Coaching meant a great deal to me, a wonderful exploration and wise investment. Through coaching I arrived somewhere different than where I started,

– somehow with much firmer ground!

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# **Appendix A – Information & Consent Form for Research**

‘Finding Firm Ground’ – a coachee perspective of executive coaching

## **INFORMATION**

From January until July 2009 I was a participant in an Executive Coaching programme through which I discovered many insights about myself, and the world around me. As a result I have decided that my MBA dissertation will be designed to help readers understand the meaning of coaching. I will describe the coachee perspective to coaching through the sharing of personal stories, coaching dialogues and academic theory. My secondary goal is to help the readers explore the potential benefit that coaching may offer them personally

I would like to invite you to participate in my research study. Obtaining input from you via a one to one interview (either in person or by phone ) will greatly help the project by adding multiple perspectives to analysis of my own coaching experience.

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to participate in a 30-45minute semi-structured interview asking you questions such as: “What things worked well for you on your coaching programme? How did the coaching make you feel? Did you notice the quality of your thinking change?

## **RISKS**

No personal data will be used in the final report.

Special care will be taken in terms of the wordings and approach to the interviewee so not to undo or negatively affect outcomes from the coaching programme e.g. reviewing previously negatively re-enforcing thought patterns.

## **BENEFITS**

By participating in this study, you will be able to contribute to a gap that currently exists in the coaching literature that is dominated by coaching practice, coach perspectives and ROI/Benefit proofs.

## **CONFIDENTIALITY**

The interview will be recorded (via digital recorder), however, all information will be kept strictly confidential during the project, and deleted at the end of the project. Any information will be stored securely in password protected files with only a record number to identify you. No reference will be made in oral or written reports that could link you to the study.

## **CONTACT**

If you have questions at any time about the study or the procedures, you may contact me – Michael Cowen, at (+971) 50-448-3369 or at [kiwicito@gmail.com](mailto:kiwicito@gmail.com).

If you feel that you have not been treated according to the descriptions in this form or that your rights as a participant in research have been violated during the course of this project, you may contact my advisor Dr Barbara Simpson, Senior Lecturer, GBS, [barbara@gsb.strath.ac.uk](mailto:barbara@gsb.strath.ac.uk) or telephone (+44) 141-548-6141 (EXT. 6141).

**PARTICIPATION**

Your participation in this study is voluntary and you may decline to participate or later withdraw from the study.

**CONSENT**

“I have read and understand the above information. I have received a copy of this form. I agree to participate in this study with the understanding that I may withdraw at any time.”

**Participant’s signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Michael Cowen signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

Please sign the two copies of this form. Keep one for your records and return the other signed form via post to **Michael Cowen, PO Box 66219, Al Ain, Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates** or by email to [kiwicito@gmail.com](mailto:kiwicito@gmail.com).

## Appendix B – Interview Questions

### Coachee Semi-Structured Interview

#### Part One: Functional Aspects of Coaching

##### **Question 1: How long did the coaching engagement last?**

Less than 3 Months	three to six months	Six to 12 months	More than 12 months	
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##### **Question 2: How often was the coaching held?**

Weekly	Fortnightly	Monthly	
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##### **Question 3: How long was the coaching session?**

Less than 60 minutes	1-2 Hours	More than 2 Hours	
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##### **Question 4: What was the primary method of conducting the session?**

Telephone	Face to Face	
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##### **Question 5: Did you understand the model/tools being used during the programme?**

No Idea	Some Idea	Yes, a good idea	
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##### **Question 6: How satisfied were you with the coach?**

No Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	
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##### **Question 7: How satisfied were you with the coaching experience?**

No Satisfied	Somewhat Satisfied	Satisfied	Extremely Satisfied	
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##### **Question 8: Would you choose to be coached again?**

No	Maybe	Yes	
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## Part Two: Tools Coaches used to effect Change

**Question 9: What from the following tools were used by your coach?**

coaching plan		exercises/actions		Educating	
explaining		personally supporting		goals or objectives	
assigned reading		reframing of issues		suggesting	
success criteria		facilitating thinking		events	
working through issues		measures		surfacing of assumptions	
thinking		gaining insight		meetings	
challenging and confronting		role playing		Other	

**Question 10: Which were most effective?**

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Part Three: Coaching and Meaning.

**Question 11: What 3 things worked well for you on your coaching programme?**

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**Question 12: How did the coaching make you feel?**

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**Question 13: Did you notice the quality of your thinking change?**

No		In some cases		Yes	
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**Question 14: Can you provide examples where your thinking changed?**

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**Question 15: Did you notice any changes to your behaviour or action?**

No		In some cases		Yes	
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**Question 16: Can you provide examples where your behaviour changed?**

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**Question 17: What 3 things might not have worked so well for you on your coaching programme?**

**Question 18: What was the big take away for you from the Coaching Programme?**

**Question 19: What did coaching mean to you – intellectually and emotionally?**

**Question 20: Do you believe that coachees needs to be in the right place for coaching to be successful?**

Reference: Part One Functional questions based on ICF Global Coaching Client Study, 2009

## Appendix C – Journey Map

The following table describes in detail the individual journey I took on the coaching programme from Session 1 through Session 12. It highlights the themes, insights, key actions, potential vignette stories, overall value and my confidence level (-5 to +15) from the session, and any comments post the session. It can be used in its own right to get a feel for my personal journey or in support of the Vignette stories.

	Session 1	Session 2 (2 weeks since)	Session 3 (2 weeks since)
<b>Date</b>	Friday, January 09, 2009	Thursday, January 22, 2009	Friday, February 06, 2009
<b>Theme(s)</b>	Clearing the Space Discussing the Process Session Structure Recording Action Items Refining the goals	Shining the goals - Connection Confidence - "Cotopaxi" and Conflict/Curiousness "Julia"	Looked at strategies for–first goal” Discussed internal dialogue an” looking for a conflict opportunity. Revised strategies for first goal.
<b>Insights</b>	None	Julia - outburst "what is different?"	Insight to 'being found out' physical–reaction to being nervous. Realized I am not putting enough into it due to MBA & Potential new work promotion, still nervous - have not asked about compensation and the new role.... Not sure if it appropriate or avoiding conflict! I am not sure if I sense any changes? But that could be due to effort. Most concepts I know so why are they not practiced?
<b>Key Actions</b>	Create action item list	Shine the third goal	Reviewed Progress, Created template, Two meetings with COO, Two VOCs, Read Crucial Confrontations for Conflict Process Steps, worked on example of conflict as per the action agreed
<b>Key Vignettes</b>	Pre-coaching. Sandy - "Ops board meeting".	Story of climbing Cotopaxi and the feelings experienced Julia - outburst "what is different?"	Imposter Syndrome... 'being found out'... –Meeting the COO or CEO?
<b>Overall Value</b>	Positive - defined goals	Positive - Connecting to goals	Not happy with the session as we did not achieve–the goals set out and I do not understand the process steps verse strategies?
<b>Confidence Level</b>	-5	-5	-5
<b>Post Coaching Comments</b>	Start up contracting documents and questionnaires not really used until the end of the show...		

	Session 4 (2 weeks since)	Session 5 (2 weeks since)	Session 6 (4 weeks since)
<b>Date</b>	Friday, February 20, 2009	Saturday, March 07, 2009	Friday, April 03, 2009
<b>Theme(s)</b>	Authenticity and being in the moment Nervousness verse Confident: When feelings Taking a lot of responsibility on my shoulders to make relationships work.  Shifting focus from me to you...  Working on confidence.	Quality of thinking Issues Map discussion, past/present/future  Getting deeper, and working on the confidence.  Put the past into a cupboard!  Working on confidence.	Hurt/Anger/Fear and De-motivation Quality of Thinking My Focus or lack of... Need for recognition  "LOST the programme"
<b>Insights</b>	Sometimes my reaction is not appropriate to people criticizing or questioning: I do not need to defend. What is the other persons needs? There are people you can work with and others you cannot, introduce coping strategies for people you cant! An openness to vulnerability (making things safe with superiors) is a risky strategy. Boston Box! Move focus from ME to the other Person TOTALLY, If I am thinking "what do they think about me?" means I am not thinking about them.	My thinking is quite negative and re-enforcing Think/See/Do/Get Model My thinking is very people centered and not self centered	None
<b>Key Actions</b>	Try and practice 'being in the moment', the here and now in each interaction, where can I add value, what outcome do we want together?  Coach noticed more re-enforcing negative hardwiring, keep checking internal language, keep checking assumptions	Make a promise to yourself and keep it Do a random act of kindness Be gentler on myself Try a full day without negative thoughts, but if I have one replace it with three positive thoughts Get stuck into a new challenge	Take a few days off work to review values, mission, and goals  As previous actions were not completed due to MBA Exam study, roll them forward
<b>Key Vignettes</b>	"Meetings with COO" Fear, Demands, On the spot  for VoC, Ran a softer"- positive meeting on HR SIP...	Conflict Examples with ROB and Abdul...	"Losing the EPO and the SIP in one week"
<b>Overall Value</b>	Top session, very happy with the discounting the being in the moment point at the beginning but ending up there anyway!	Excellent	Low but due to coachee spinning not the coach
<b>Confidence Level</b>	-3	-1	-5
<b>Post Coaching</b>		Seeing an improvement in my thinking quality. I notice post that with openness does come the possibility of being attacked or criticized and that is why some people around me are perhaps very private learning's/Close Cupboards	I do a lot of ranting and raving with my stories in this session...

	Session 7 (2 weeks since)	Session 8 (3 weeks since)	Session 9 (4 weeks since)
<b>Date</b>	Friday, April 17, 2009	Friday, May 08, 2009	Friday, June 05, 2009
<b>Theme(s)</b>	Quality of thinking Focus on self rather than other people Processing Anger and confusion	Anger: work crosses over to the personal Thinking Quality Company bash	Review of coaching progress  Positive re-enforcement
<b>Insights</b>	I have a hierarchy of values: fairness over honesty for example. 'Grounding comes from Values and Mission' A grounded person CAN REALLY 'BE AVAILABLE' to another person I am a bit of a half empty person...	Company and Change Agent Readiness Leadership/Change Overlap Biology Influence on moods/anger etc. My own natures influence on Anger Costs of poorly managed Anger	Self talk being very important, being more centered, multiple realities. Learning to learn about oneself Silence and self monitoring; MBA is very intellectual. SLOWING DOWN the thinking process and better quality thinking Anger and ACTION test - will I take action? It is about managing anger and not removing it.-
<b>Key Actions</b>	New goal: to stop feeling angry Make a note of what triggers my anger Look at the internal language around the anger Continue living/refining the values and mission	Reflect on learning's in past 6 months	Replace negative thoughts with positive ones Learning's don't just notice the negative, do something with them. Reflect on learning's in past 6 months
<b>Key Vignettes</b>	"Making the call to my daughter" Learning to press the pause button!	Therapy from writing/studying MOC helping-losing the SIP Struggling with obedience	"Mike, you are intense story" (shows progress) Agency items: Director review, silent in workshops" and quietly taking control Billy Graham - Anger/Fairness insight
<b>Overall Value</b>	Good	Poor due to a very low state of mind	Good review with some obvious progress
<b>Confidence Level</b>	0	-3	5
<b>Post Coaching Comments</b>	Coach kept me action oriented I can see a better quality of thinking emerging and being kind to myself I seem to have a problem with Covey references. The is a link between fairness (perhaps win-lose) and anger	24 minutes time wasting in the beginning Coach bashes company I was quite upset Perhaps it was getting closer to therapy	"Sandy" Coaching language is entering my own language....

	Session 10 (3 weeks since)	Session 11 (2 weeks since)	Session 12 (2 weeks since)
<b>Date</b>	Friday, June 26, 2009	Friday, July 10, 2009	Friday, July 24, 2009
<b>Theme(s)</b>	Opinion and Value Trouble with Anger re-framing Projection - good and evil from myself? Content verse Process "everything is a C-aching Moment?"	Looking at outcomes/deliverables Positive Re-enforcement  Sentimental or driven by the will?	Coaching Review
<b>Insights</b>	Opinion mirror; value; rather than give your opinion - consider their thinking and get them to think what they might do.  Believing is seeing too	Passion - Reflection cycle. Pressing pause after a physical reaction! Confide-t and more secure BUT with more control over sharing opinions Looking at situations CLOSELY and ACURATELY Avoiding socialization from a young age... Power of observation and awareness of others.. With better people interaction and self confidence plus self control (opinions) is there still fear in conflict - Less conflict altogether.	
<b>Key Actions</b>	Revisit the goals and document the learning  Press pause on any internal debates - let + dominate	Perhaps: look at a new goal. Getting closer to emotions...	
<b>Key Vignettes</b>	"Toxic Relationship - OR NOT?"	"Apology" HSBC and Tricycle story	"Review"
<b>Overall Value</b>	Good Session	Good Session	Bland Session
<b>Confidence</b>	6	10	10
<b>Post Coaching Comments</b>	Some arguing Clearing the space is physical and intellectual (Tim Galway) Another MBA and intellectual start Bit overwhelmed that so much falls back on the self!	Playing catch up and therefore not being in the moment Coaching is a dance - think, question, stretch, think, q... Bummer - I still needed a re-phrase from a negative phrase on emotions e.g. -'m not good... to be 'I'd like to be better...' Question: Do I need to socialize better, reality'	

## Appendix D – 1999-2009 Literature List

Section	Category	For/ Neutral /Against	Perspective	Title	Year	Author	Source
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	Action coaching: How to leverage individual performance for company success	1999	Dotlich D and Cairo P	Book
Theory	Certification	For	Coaching Practice	Executive leader Coaching as a Strategic Activity	1999	Lee Smith and Jeannine Sandstrom	Strategy & Leadership
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Framing the construction of coaching knowledge in experiential learning theory	1999	Wade Gilbert Pierre Trudel	Sociology of Sport Online
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	What Really Happens in Executive Coaching	1999	Hall, D, Otazo K, Hollenbeck, G	Organization Dynamics
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	Executive coaching: Developing managerial wisdom in a world of chaos.	2000	Kilburg, Richard R., Johns Hopkins U	Book
Effectiveness	Academic	For	HRD	Executive Coaching: the route to business stardom	2001	Steve O'Shaughnessy	Industrial and Commercial Training
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Learning	How professionals learn in practice: an investigation of informal learning amongst people working in professions	2001	Graham Cheetham and Geoff Chivers	Journal of European Industrial Training
Effectiveness	Academic	For	HRD	Maximizing the Impact of Executive Coaching: Behavioral Change, Organizational Outcomes, and Return on Investment	2001	Joy McGovern, Michael Lindemann, Monica Vergara, Stacey Murphy, Linda Barker, Rodney Warrenfeltz	The Manchester Review

Theory	Dangers	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Beaten at your own game?	2002	Glover, Carol	Online
Effectiveness	Practitioner	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Coaching: Who, What, Where, When and How	2002	Jonathan Gale, Anne Liljenstrand, Joyce Pardieu, Delbert M. Nebeker	Online
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Examining the Effectiveness of Executive Coaching on Executives	2002	Helen Paige	International Education Journal
Theory	Education	For	Coaching Practice	Growing the Top Management Team	2002	Otto E. Laske and Barbara Maynes	Journal of Management Development
Theory	Book	Neutral	HRD	Organizational psychology : a scientist-practitioner approach	2002	Jex, Steve M.	Book
Theory	Book	Neutral	Coaching Practice	The California School of Organizational Studies Handbook of Organizational Consulting Psychology	2002	Rodney L. Lowman	Book
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	The Effectiveness of Coaching	2002	Master Coach Alliance	Online
Effectiveness	Academic	For	HRD	The impact of executive coaching and 360 feedback on leadership effectiveness	2002	Elizabeth C. Thach	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Effectiveness	Academic	Against	Coaching Practice	The Very Real Dangers of Executive Coaching	2002	Berglas, S	Harvard Business Review
Theory	Definitions	For	Coaching Practice	The inner game of work	2002	Gallwey, W. Timothy. The inner game of work	Book
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Why coaching?	2002	Suzy Wales	Journal of Change Management

Theory	Leadership	Neutral	HRD	A Cross cultural exploratory study of the linkage between emotional intelligence and managerial effectiveness	2003	Frank Shipper, Joel Kincaid, Denise M. Rotonondo, & Richard C. Hoffman, IV	The International Journal of Organizational Analysis
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	Coaching competencies and corporate leadership	2003	Tracey B. Weiss	Book
Effectiveness	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Does Wording with an Executive Coach Enhance the Value of Multisource Performance Feedback?	2003	David A. Waldman,	Research Briefs
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Mixed	Executive Coaching An Outcome Study	2003	Karol M. Wasylshyn	Consulting Psychology Journal
Theory	Education	For	Leadership	Executive development: meeting the needs of top teams and boards	2003	Sheila Jackson, Elaine Farndale and Andrew Kakabadse	Journal of Management Development
Theory	Book	Neutral	Leadership	HANDBOOK of Psychology - VOLUME 12 INDUSTRIAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY	2003	Walter C. Borman Daniel R. Ilgen Richard J. Klimoski Irving B. Weiner	Book
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Leadership	How can we make sense of leadership in the 21st century?	2003	Higgs, M	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Ideas on Fostering Creative Problem Solving in Executive Coaching	2003	James T. Richard	Consulting Psychology Journal
Theory	Philosophy	Neutral	Philosophy	Philosophy in management A new trend in management development	2003	Small, Michael W	Journal of Management Development

Theory	Dangers	Against	Coaching Practice	When executive coaching fails to deliver	2003	Anonymous	Development and Learning in Organizations
Theory	Meaning	For	Coaching Practice	Activating learning through the lifetime navigator: a tool for reflection	2004	Alison Winch and Hadyn Ingram	International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Dealing with issues of the self-concept and self-improvement strategies in coaching and mentoring	2004	Tatiana Bachkirova, PhD	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Executive Coaching	2004	Blackman-Sheppard	Industrial and Commercial Training
Effectiveness	HRD	For	Coaching Practice	The Relative Effectiveness of External, Peer, and Self-Coaches	2004	Christina Sue-Chan Gary P. Latham	Applied Psychology
Theory	Existentialism	Neutral	HRD	The search for meaning and career development	2004	George Schultze and Carol Miller	Career Development International
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	The state of play in corporate coaching current and future trends	2004	Peter Bluckert	Industrial and Commercial Training
Theory	Practitioner	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Understanding the experience of experience: a practical model of reflective practice for Coaching.	2004	Peter Jackson	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	When Shadows Fall: Using Psychodynamic Approaches in Executive Coaching	2004	Richard R. Kilburg	Consulting Psychology Journal
Theory	Definitions	For	Coaching Practice	A pilot Study to develop an effective e-coaching programme....	2005	Hunt, C and Fielden S	Online

Effectiveness	Academic	For	Mixed	An Empirical Study Comparing the Effect of Feedback, Training, and Executive Coaching on Leadership Behaviour Change	2005	Nona Saling	Online
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	Coaching That Counts: Harnessing the Power of Leadership Coaching to Deliver Strategic Value	2005	Dianna L. Anderson Merrill C. Anderson	Book
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	Coaching: The Successful Adventure of a Downwardly Mobile Executive	2005	John Blattner	Consulting Psychology Journal
Theory	Practitioner	For	Coachee	Effectiveness of a High-Potential African American Executive: The Anatomy of a Coaching Engagement	2005	Paul C. Winum	Consulting Psychology Journal
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coachee	Executive Coaching From the Executive's Perspective	2005	John H. Stevens Jr	Consulting Psychology Journal
Theory	Book	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Executive Coaching: A Guide for the HR Professional	2005	Anna Marie Valerio and Robert J. Lee	Book
Theory	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	How do we describe coaching? An exploratory development of a typology of coaching based on the accounts of UK-based practitioners	2005	Peter Jackson	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Integrating action learning practices into executive coaching to enhance business results	2005	Vicki Vaartjes, PhD	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Effectiveness	Academic	Against	Coaching Practice	Leadership group coaching in action: The Zen of creating high performance teams	2005	Manfred F. R. Kets de Vries	Academy of Management Executive

Effectiveness	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Literature review: coaching effectiveness – a summary	2005	Dr Sandra Fielden	NHS Leadership Centre
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	The Art and Practice of LEADERSHIP Coaching	2005	Howard Morgan, Phil Harkins, and Marshall Goldsmith	Book
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	The foundations of a psychological approach to executive coaching	2005	Peter Bluckert	Industrial and Commercial Training
Theory	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	The significance of behavioural learning theory to the development of effective coaching practice.	2005	Dave Peel	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Theory	Practitioner	For	Mixed	The 'Aha' Moment in Co-Active Coaching and its Effects on Belief and Behavioural Changes	2006	Leigh Longhurst	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coachee	A Quasi-experimental Study on Management Coaching Effectiveness	2006	Will. J. G. Evers, Andre´ Brouwers, and Welko Tomic	Consulting Psychology Journal
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	Business impact of executive coaching: demonstrating monetary value	2006	Vernita Parker-Wilkins	Industrial and Commercial Training
Effectiveness	Academic	Against	Coaching Practice	Coaching at the Heart of Managerial Effectiveness: A Cross-Cultural Study of Managerial Behaviours	2006	Robert Hamlin Andrea Ellinger Rona Beattie	Human Resource Development International
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	Coaching for Leadership	2006	Marshall Goldsmith and Laurence S. Lyons, Editors	Book

Theory	Certification	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Coaching for results	2006	Dave Ulrich	Business Strategy Series
Theory	Definitions	For	Coaching Practice	Coaching psychology: Applying Integrative coaching within education	2006	Jonathan Passmore,	The British Journal of Leadership in Public Services
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Developing Sustainable Leaders Through Coaching and Compassion	2006	Richard Boyatzis Melvin Smith Nancy Blaize	Academy of Management Learning & Education
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coachee	The executive coaching trend: towards more flexible executives	2006	Renae A. Jones Alannah E. Rafferty Mark A. Griffin	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Theory	Academic	Against	HRD	The role of executive coaching in performance management	2006	Kaufman, B	Handbook of Business Strategy
Theory	Book	For	Coaching Practice	The seven steps of effective Executive Coaching	2006	Sabine Dembkowski Fiona Eldridge Ian Hunter	Book
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	The targeted assessment coaching interview	2006	Robert Barner	Career Development International
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coachee	Coaching leaders in middle and executive management: goals, performance, buy-in	2007	Stephen Bowles Christopher J.L. Cunningham Gabriel M. De La Rosa James Picano	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Theory	Book	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Encyclopedia of Industrial and Organizational Psychology	2007	Steven G. Rogelberg	Book
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Leadership	Enhancing coaching skills and emotional intelligence through training	2007	Anthony M. Grant	Industrial and Commercial Training

Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coachee	Executive Coaching Effectiveness: a pathway to self-efficacy	2007	Hilary B Armstrong PhD Peter J Melser PhD Julie-Anne Tooth	Online
Theory	Alternative	Against	Coaching Practice	Get a Life, not a Coach	2007	Clark, Donald	Online
Theory	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	Mental Models in Project Management Coaching	2007	Morten Emil Berg Jan Terje Karlsen	Engineering Management Journal
Theory		For	Leadership	On the journey toward wholeness in leader theories	2007	Constance R. Campbell	Leadership & Organization Development Journal
Trends	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	Trends in Corporate Executive Coaching	2007	Cannon-O'Connell	Online
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Understanding implicit models that guide the coaching process	2007	Robert Barner Julie Higgins	Journal of Management Development
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coaching Practice	What Coaching Can and Cannot Do for Your Organization	2007	Mike McDermott	Human Resource Planning
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	Becoming simultaneously thicker and thinner skinned	2008	Erik de Haan	Personnel Review
Theory	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	Breakdowns to breakthroughs: an ontological approach to thought loops and growth edges	2008	Karen Staib Duffy	The journal of information and knowledge management systems
Theory	Many Definitions	Neutral	Coaching Practice	The emergent 'coaching industry': a wake-up call for HRD professionals	2008	Robert G. Hamlin, Andrea D. Ellinger and Rona Beattie	Human Resource Development International

Theory	Leadership	NA	Leadership	The impact of engaging leadership on performance, attitudes to work and wellbeing at work	2008	Beverly Alimo-Metcalfe John Alban-Metcalfe and Margaret Bradley Jeevi Mariathasan and Chiara Samele	Journal of Health Organization and Management
Theory	Academic	For	Learning	What is 'Coaching'? An Exploration of Conflicting Paradigms	2008	Yossi Ives	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Effectiveness	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	A Survey of Executive Coaching Practices	2009	Joyce Bono Radostina Purvanova Annette Towler David Petterson	Personnel Psychology
Theory	Academic	For	Learning	Discovering, applying and integrating: The process of learning in coaching	2009	Kerryn Griffiths, Marilyn Campbell	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coachee	International Coaching Federation (ICF) Global Coaching Study	2009	Price Waterhouse Coopers	Online
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Mixed	The 2009 Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey	2009	Sherpa Consulting	Online
Effectiveness	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	The Coach-Coachee Relationship in Executive Coaching: A Field Study	2009	Louis Baron, Lucie Morin	Human Resource Development International
Effectiveness	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	The Coaching Conundrum 2009	2009	Blessing White	Online
Effectiveness	Academic	For	Coachee	The Effect from Executive Coaching on Performance Psychology	2009	Frode Moen and Einar Skaalvik	International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring
Theory	Practitioner	For	Coaching Practice	The History & Evolution of Life Coaching	2009	Life Coach Training	Online
Theory	Academic	Neutral	Coaching Practice	The Realities of Executive Coaching	2009	Coutu, D and Kauffman, C	Harvard Business Review