

# **The Corporate Well-Being Coach**

**Serge Haubourdin**

*'Leven is langzaam geboren worden'*

*'Life is being born slowly'*

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

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## GRATITUDE / WORD OF THANKS

This book is about what you can achieve by yourself and with others, if you discover and use the power of human potential. I would, therefore, like to thank everyone who sees the potential in other people instead of their faults. I am glad that my mentors identified potential in me, even though I did not see it at the time I came into contact with them.

Spotting potential is like wearing a pair of magical glasses that allows you to see the best in people, groups and projects. Through these special glasses, you can look inside yourself – called introspection – to detect the best in yourself, as well as in others and the greater world.

I also thank the people who resisted wearing these magical, ‘potential-spotting’ glasses. Thanks to them, the potential is incarnated in them, as is the mental image of what could have been.

I cherish people who see potential in their fellow man and colleagues as I do. People who give trust and show support to individuals to help them develop their potential and grow, thus, lifting employees and society to a higher level.

I thank my parents who, together with my grandparents (RIP) have brought out the best in me in a natural way.

A very special word of thanks to my wife Sabine Appelmans who has been my buddy for 25 years during our wonderful global journey together and who is still sometimes frightened by her own potential. Her fear seems logical to me, as her potential is way bigger than mine. Thanks to her strong energy, clear vision and unparalleled purity, we are together much greater than the sum of our parts.

Thanks also to our children Obi and Arno who give me energy simply by looking at them. I love seeing their possibilities and ambitions unfold and simply by the way they look at me.

Of course, a very strong “thank you” goes to my co-authors of this book, strong, smart people who radiate the themes of this book in their lives. Also, a big thank you to the Pelckmans Pro team.

Lastly, thank you to all who see and support the potential of this book and the strength of the Corporate Well-Being Movement fully.

## 2.1. What is a coach?

As a young tennis player, I met the Indian coach Aktar Ali, who was invited by the Belgian Tennis Federation to screen, support and inspire talented youngsters.

Back in the eighties, unlike today, there were many strong, Indian tennis players with an incredible feel for the ball and who demonstrated tactical insight into the game. I clicked with Aktar Ali from the beginning. When I met him again as a tennis coach ten years later, he gave me some tips to guide players successfully. The first tip was to embed the goal in the player's mind. "If you do not have a goal, you will never get there," he shared.

His second tip was that no one owns the truth. The more techniques and methods you have as a coach to guide your player, the better. Everything changes, so coaches have to always be alert to technical and tactical innovation, as well as other subjects important for top athletic performance, like nutrition, physical and mental training. I will spare you his other, tennis-specific tips, but an important, universal idea he shared was: 'You can bring a horse to water, but you can't make him drink it.'

This last idea has stayed with me the most through the years. During my days both as an athlete and corporate coach, I have seen many gurus rise greatly in stature within their respective fields, only to witness their value decline to a more apropos level. I have met coaches who made players and work teams completely dependent on their coaching, rather than leading them to soar on their own. But I have also seen great coaches who work effectively with all kinds of players and work teams, bringing out transcendent results for them.

For me, the most important message for a coach is this: your role is to illuminate the path forward for the player/team. You can inspire them and help dissipate the fear of change, but, ultimately, it is their path to own. Just like the horse, your customer will decide to drink the water or not.

Coaching is a form of supervision designed to help people change in a positive way. Effective coaching is based on two things: 1). healthy people interacting for the greater good, and 2). a belief in the possibilities for change that are embedded in the permanent interaction between insight and behavior. Coaching is rooted in positive psychology and should not be confused with therapy, which is a form of guidance that aims to remedy mental blockages or psychological stagnation. Therapy, however, can be part of coaching, as you shall read later in this book.

**Insight**, mentioned above, is a form of collaborative learning where the player synthesizes his own knowledge with the knowledge of the coach and, as a result, becomes more skilled in achieving set goals. This insight, gained through coach/player interaction, almost immediately leads to behavioral change because the player often incorporates the insight intrinsically into themselves.

Carl Jung, the founder of psychotherapy, articulated the basis for me as a corporate coach. A quote from his work *The Practice of Psychotherapy* (Adler & Hull, 1985):

*No analysis is capable of banishing all unconsciousness forever. The analyst must go on learning endlessly and never forget that every new case brings new problems.*

*We could say, without too much exaggeration, that a good half of every treatment that probes at all deeply consists in the doctor's examining himself, for only what he can put right in himself can he hope to put right in the patient.*

*It is no loss, if he feels that the patient is hitting him, or even scoring off him: it is his own hurt that gives him the measure of his power to heal. This, and nothing else, is the meaning of the Greek myth of the wounded physician.*

I discovered the value of Jung's teachings during studies to earn my Masters in Psycho-Energetics (University of Ghent, Belgium) The year I spent studying the pioneering works of the Swiss genius greatly influenced my way of coaching and learning. In section 2.5 of this book, I shall return to highlight some of Jung's psychoanalytical principles. In the meantime, however, the principles of Jung have been adapted and applied by many academics for society, both in and out of the context of work. These include the principles of projection, prejudice, and other unconscious actions that limit our coaching ability, unless we are aware of them.

## **2.2. Sports coach versus corporate coach**

Professional athletes with a lot of passion for and insight into their sport often grow into coaches of their sport. Good sports coaches not only possess the sports bug, so to speak, they also have a strong dose of scientific knowledge which broadens their perspective when coaching players. With elite, international athletes, it is quite difficult to make a difference in their performance with basic coaching. Holistic coaching on a number of important subjects that influence performance, however, can make a big difference. As an international sports coach of top, elite athletes, I have witnessed first-hand the performance improvement gains players experience when coaching them on subjects like mental attitude and nutrition, as well as optical, neurological and orthopedic aspects of their bodies.

Elite athletes and especially their coaches deeply believe that growth is limitless. Plateauing is not an option. However, if you jump to the world of corporate coaching,

only a few coaches can claim their use of holistic coaching techniques. Further, corporate coaches with a deep sense of determination and passion, qualities so typical among sportsmen, are hard to find. Without these qualities, interaction with the coach can feel a bit soulless and lacking in human connection.

If you, as a business leader, choose a corporate coach to achieve your goals, make sure that he shares the same passion and connection that you experience in your work. Only then can you, together with the coach, make the difference you want to achieve.

## **2.3 The different types of business coaching**

As soon as you have determined the objectives and values of the change program, you can start by choosing your coach, but not before. One way to help ensure that your change objective is achieved is by making a good decision on the most appropriate type of coach for your situation. Generally, there are four types of professional coaching:

### *2.3.1 Business Coaching (or Corporate Coaching) for large companies*

Business Coaching is intended for companies that are interested in coaching for specific assignments such as:

- HR or management support during the launch of a coaching activity;
- training managers to become a coach;
- the development of coaching workshops;
- consultancy for the health and welfare of employees;
- team coaching: putting together highly performing teams, managing difficult relationships within a team.

Business Coaching can provide solutions for specific, coaching requirements that fall within the overall goals, strategy and human capital of the company.

### *2.3.2 Coaching of small businesses*

Coaching of small companies is intended for companies with a limited number of employees (e.g. small-to-medium-sized enterprises, known as SME's, or startups) and also for managers of small company structures. This coaching will help them to strengthen their business strategy.

### *2.3.3 Staff Coaching (or Individual Coaching)*

This form of coaching is intended for personal, individual development,

both at work and in private life. Staff Coaching covers many areas of life in general, such as:

- relationships with others;
- finding a better work/life balance;
- well-being and health care;
- spirituality;
- education and learning;
- improvement of core talents;
- personal development and motivation.

#### *2.3.4 Career coaching*

Career Coaching is aimed at anyone who is faced with a delicate, professional situation, whether it is:

- addressing issues that hold you back professionally;
- decision-making on the future of your career;
- transitioning between two functions;
- assessing the current, employment situation.

With Career Counseling, you achieve the best results if you work with coaches who have a broad vision and breadth of human resources skills. In personal development, each person requires unique, situational attention and there is no fixed formula for success.

### **2.4 Your skills as a coach**

If you are appointed as a coach by a company, you must familiarize yourself with the Values and Objectives of that company. This is imperative so that you, when coaching, do not project or impose new Values on the employee or teams of that company. Then you have to creatively find a technique bring these company values to life in your coaching – which requires skill and persistence.

The accreditation process of the International Coach Federation (ICF) sets out eleven, core competencies that every person who wants to act as a coach must exhibit. The ICF sorts these competencies in four categories, as shown in the following chart:



- 1. Establishing the basis of the relationship with the customer**
  - 1) Respect ethical guidelines and professional standards.
  - 2) Understand the needs of the customer and offer a solution that meets these needs.
- 2. Strengthening the relationship with the customer**
  - 3) Build a relationship that is based on trust and respect.
  - 4) Communicate in an open, smooth and reassuring way.
- 3. Communicating with the customer**
  - 5) Pay special attention to both verbal and non-verbal communication cues and promote the personal expression of the customer.
  - 6) Develop powerful and pertinent questions.
  - 7) Communicate in both a direct and an indirect way.
- 4. Learning how to succeed successfully**
  - 8) Integrate and evaluate all information sources and make proposals to achieve the pre-determined objectives.
  - 9) Create continuous learning opportunities for the customer, so that he grows in the direction of the desired results.
  - 10) Plan and co-create objectives with the customer.
  - 11) Focus attention on what is important to the customer and allow him to take responsibility for his actions.

By demonstrating these eleven, core competencies, you, as a coach, have all the skills to realize the objectives of your client, whether it is a company or individual. Coaches, though, are not equally strong in each of the core competencies. All coaches know, however, that you can work on these individual competencies throughout your life and learn to strengthen and improve them.

## **2.5 Skills in practice**

Let me expand upon the previous theories - including those of the ICF - in the practice of being a Corporate Well-Being Coach. I start by explaining how you can connect as a coach, followed by a discussion about leading in terms of route, purpose and environment. Then I highlight the importance of the time-span, the dynamics of change and the pitfalls of the process. Finally, I briefly outline how you should behave as a coach after the process is completed.

### *2.5.1 Making individual, personal connections*

The term 'coach' is apropos in both corporate environments and sports. The term 'player,' however, is better-used in a sports context. For this reason, I will be using the term 'coachee,' for the remainder of this book, as it is more apt for this situation. Connecting with the coachee is a continuous act that should occur throughout the coaching process. On the one hand, balancing between ground-breaking exercises that your client can derive from his own comfort zone

and, on the other hand, leveraging the added-value of the path forward itself in order to achieve the pre-determined goal together. Making this essential connection is an absolute prerequisite when starting a project, particularly during the intake interview, which is the first interview after the coaching agreement has been made.

Before and during the intake interview, be open and warm with the coachee Listen to them with a sense of focus and sit diagonally to them, not across, as this is less confrontational. Bring a sense of empathy to the situation by asking many questions about the problem they want to overcome or improve. Gently determine the emotional drivers behind the problem at hand and gauge their magnitude. If you can successfully create an image in the mind of your coachee, regarding the emotional driver of the problem that is holding them back, it is easier, then, to create a vision of the desired emotion in the future. This future emotion becomes a trigger – and motivating force – to reach the goal. Let me explain this with an example:

A customer is nervous, anxious. His mind is weighed-down with too many thoughts and he is physically tired. You can help him by creating a counter-image in his brain of freedom-of-mind and a smooth, agile body. During exercises with the coachee, you can help him visualize this image and accentuate the desired emotion and the desired feeling. In this way, the image is figuratively burned in the coachee's retina during and after each session, giving his brain a clear picture of the target.

Coupled with your own profile of talents as a coach - which you can read about in section 2.7 - it is also important to use observation tools and techniques, like 1). listening to the specific word-choices of your client, but also *hearing what he does not say*, and 2). watch his behavior and observe his attitude during and after the conversation. If you possess enough empathic skills and abilities, you can coach the coachee yourself, and, in particular, 'feel' where his behavior affects you the most. This dynamic - through exercise and sufficient, personal, mental focus and clarity - is a very powerful connection that reveals a lot of underlying emotion during the intake interview.

In order to master this important skill, Carl Jung recommended taking a two-year introspection course, designed for psychotherapists. This is a period in which you only focus on yourself to recognize all your own personal fears, resistances, prejudices and aspirations in order to 'clean them up', as it were. According to Jung, your ability to start a career in psychoanalysis with an open mind begins with this training as a prerequisite. I am convinced that a good Corporate Well-Being Coach also needs this personal 'house-cleaning,' even if it is only to prevent you from projecting onto clients. A further explanation, as this concept is so important:

In projection, an unacceptable aspect is attributed to something or someone else. As with rationalization, projection onto a situation yields a new definition – or explanation – of that situation, as affected by the coach's own feelings and world-view. Someone

claims, for example, that he is always a model of kindness and trust and that the other person is hostile. When one cannot stand a certain person, though, one can project his own feelings of hatred onto this person and hate him sub-consciously. Yet, it is the other person who hates. In this way, a defense against fear and frustration can be attributed to someone else due to failure or guilt. With projection, one sees properties in others that he does not recognize in himself. Projection, then becomes a way to deal with unrecognized, aggressive feelings internally.

If, for example, you, the coach, had eating disorders during your youth, you will be aware of this when analyzing your client during the intake interview. It is far better for you to approach this interview with a blank sheet of paper, so to speak, free of judgement and bias, because you are much more likely to get the right information. The first contact should be an egoless, balancing act between both following the conversation and leading the conversation, with the aim to diagnose accurately and, then, pave the subsequent path properly for the benefit of your client.

### *2.5.2 Connecting to group processes*

Connecting to participants in a group session from the very start of the workshop is also quite important. The feeling that you sense in terms of mood and possible, individual resistance can be decisive for the success of a group coach. With groups, you will have to lead more than follow in order to bring the training to a positive result. Those who resist your coaching ideas will require you to open them with insights, so that their cynicism cannot bring down the energy in the room. Being generous with individual attention as well as gentle, yet firm, confrontation is appropriate in these circumstances.

### *2.5.3 Taking charge: route, goal and environment*

The goal and the process to achieve the goal are, of course, linked. Your coaching expertise to decide the most appropriate path forward for a group to achieve a specific goal is critical. For example, while at Herculean, I once recommended a “Back-Up Program” for a client company, which was a combination of yoga and body-core training for the back. I knew that the program should be six sessions with proper follow-up and individual attention on execution of the exercises in order for them to achieve better reflex-hygiene and posture.

If, however, the budget forces the program to fewer sessions, for example, you can propose either an alternative plan or choose a different, less-ambitious goal. In this example, altering the objective to simply ‘become acquainted with yoga’ or ‘learn correct training for a better posture and back,’ might be a better solution, all things considered. You can always continue the journey later in a private coaching context to achieve a better result for individuals with interest or desire to improve. Creating the right environment is completely in your control as a coach. Before you start an individual session or pursue a path, you have to check whether the goal can be achieved in the classroom or in the

environment where coaching takes place. Practices like meditation, mindfulness and other sessions for the improvement of the mind are always difficult to do during working hours because often there is not a quiet, uninterrupted place where people feel safe and secure. This idea also applies to anything and everything that might be deemed as 'outside of our comfort zone'. The simple fact that coaching and exercises might take place at work sometimes yields extra resistance in the participants and, at the very least, is a stressor which you have to take into account as the coach.

Staging a training room with candles that provide a soft fragrance, for example, and/or playing music while participants enter the room is a way to soften the work-related atmosphere that the room represents can gain more openness from the participants during the session. Also controlling the temperature correctly and setting the brightness levels in the room are important factors that can bring your workshop from a simple 'good' to 'perfect'.

Attention to these details is sometimes difficult, particularly when you are working with large companies that have centralized, temperature control. Too warm of a temperature in the training room brings more stress and less concentration among participants during mental exercises. For this type of session, it is better to have a slightly cooler temperature than normal in the training room.

If the environment or the classroom is not suitable for successfully completing your lesson or training, you must report this to your client and search for alternatives together. It is important that you do not make any compromises on these matters because if you 'fail to prepare, then prepare to fail'.

#### *2.5.4 The time span of the path forward*

Given the set of goals you have established with your individual client or company, it is a good idea to not only agree on budget, but also the timing of the coaching program. When implementing a comprehensive Corporate Well-Being program into a company, it is important that you plan the process well and take into account the dynamics of change among the group.

Corporate Well-Being programs, unlike business-oriented change programs within companies, bring lifestyle changes to the employees who participate. As a result, it is difficult to pinpoint exactly when changes will occur. Rather, you want to encourage a general feeling that the changes will happen in phases as you work together towards the pre-determined goal.

#### *2.5.5 The dynamics of change during the process*

An excellent model to which you can refer during the journey is Theory U, conceived by the German professor Prof. dr. C. Otto Scharmer. You can apply his theory to both groups and individuals. It links change to learning and focuses this learning on 'being present,' or visualizing the future. The model is taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (M.I.T.) in the Communications Department.

## **THEORY U IMAGE GOES HERE (See translation at the end of this document)**

In Theory U, Scharmer describes the process of co-creative learning within an organization. The basic tenet is that it is possible to co-create the future through a series of changes where people can, indeed, work together with an open mind, open heart and open will.

In the model, the group starts at point A, which can be described as a 'superficial' point within the work team. The team then descends through a series of stages to arrive at a more spiritual level, where co-creation becomes possible. This occurs when individuals and the group develop first an open mind, followed by an open heart and, finally, an open will. Once this occurs, the group arrives at point B in the model, the bottom of the U.

Each step in this process presents its own challenges, characterized as resistance to change, within teams. As a coach or HR manager, it is important to observe if this resistance is happening on the 'shop floor,' as the team might not descend to the next level before the resistance at the current level has been eliminated.

Having an open mind means that people can put aside their 'voice of judgement' (VOJ), because condemning situations or other people impedes human creativity and presence. Having an open heart means the ability to overcome the 'voice of cynicism' (VOC). In order to find your authentic self, it is important to dare to be open and vulnerable.

Possessing an open will means that you are willing to let go of who and what you are, as well as what you have, in order to be able to enter a more spiritual space to co-create. To achieve an open will, the fear threshold (VOF), which is the fear of rejection or the loss of security or status, must be overcome.

Only when people are collectively able to approach a situation with an open mind, an open heart and an open will are they able to realize meaningful change together.

Atlas Copco, a world leader in delivering industrial productivity solutions, and Brussels Airport Company applied this method to launch their New Way of Working (NWOW) project. The companies first established business-unit specific NWOW departments, led by volunteers. Then, information sessions and open debates about the pros and cons of Corporate Well-Being programs were held. After the natural resistance eventually dissipated, there was an almost automatic, natural attraction to implement these programs throughout the organization.

Sub-projects were identified and managed, consistent with the needs and wishes of staff members. One of the actual HR managers involved with this program will comment later in this book on the subject of the return on investment of Corporate Well-Being programs.

Scharmer describes, among other things, four ways that communication exchanges are linked to the open mind, the open heart and the open will.

‘Superficiality’ is the shallowest form of communicating. A culturally polite greeting, such as the opening sentence 'Hi, how are you?' is routinely answered with a 'Fine, thanks. How are you?' But, in truth, the exchange is a meaningless platitude. ‘Superficiality’ is saying what is expected, without open mind, heart or will.

‘Debate’ is a second way of communicating, a bit confrontational in tone, where two people share their opinions without being influenced by the other. Participants have an open mind and express their opinion.

‘Dialogue’ is another way communication happens, where a connection is sought between the participants in the conversation, demonstrating both open mind and open heart. The speakers refer to themselves as part of the situation and are willing to look beyond their personal thinking biases.

‘Being present’ is the fourth and most productive type of communication exchange, where personal walls come down and people connect with each other in such a way that previously experienced barriers are transcended, resulting in something of value being created. These are the conversations when everyone feels good afterwards, there is a sense of creativity in the air and the feeling that some authors call 'being in flow'. These energizing conversations happen because you bring an open mind, open heart and open will to the exchange.

The platitudes inherent during ‘superficiality’ (communication style 1) often means that employees collide with four different obstacles that prevent authentic behavior.

1. **Not recognizing what you see** – when perception and thought are not equivalent. Company blindness to not-so-positive product characteristics versus competition or declaring internal processes to be unsatisfactory are two examples of this.
2. **Not saying what you think** – when thinking and speaking are incongruent. When employees do not trust each other, they often don't dare say what they truly think. If this is the case, dialogue that lead to ‘being present’ and co-creating will never take place in the organization.
3. **Not doing what you say** – describes the disconnect between words and deeds. “Practice what you preach” and “walk the talk” are colloquialisms that capture this disconnect well.

4. **Not seeing yourself objectively** – describes a lack of capacity for self-reflection or the gap between action and self-judgement. Change is possible only if the manager and/or employee is able to put ego aside and look at their own actions with critical clarity.

You might have noticed that Theory U weaves a spiritual component into the discipline of change management. In order to create a learning organization, employees must be able to make changes jointly at the moment they need to do so. To facilitate the occurrence of ‘being present’ within an organization, employees must be prepared to communicate with each other with open mind, open heart and open will. Acting with authenticity (behavior) and creating the right context (culture) are two of the most important responsibilities of today’s 21<sup>st</sup>-century leaders, so that positive organizational change accelerates. By doing this, you foster continuous improvement within the organization and safeguard the organization's right to exist and compete in the future.

As a Corporate Well-Being Coach or supervisor, I invite you to try this dynamic model with your next change project. I also use this model as guideposts during counseling in my practice. It provides me practical signals as to when I can take the next step in guiding groups and individuals.

### *2.6 Pitfalls during your guidance*

Above, I have cited a number of resistances that you might experience as a coach or manager during the dynamics of change. In addition, there are a few, important idiosyncrasies that you definitely need to watch out for because they have an effect on coaching processes.

An expert on this is Professor Theo Compernelle. I had the pleasure to meet him in 2015, and had good conversations about his being a neuropsychiatrist. He is a pioneering Corporate Well-Being Coach, especially when it comes to the danger of multi-tasking and excessive smartphone use. He also wrote the voluminous book *Unravel Your Brain* that discussed these subjects. We talked about the main pitfalls in coaching processes during our enlightening conversation.

**Motivational bias** or confirmation bias. This is the tendency to select information that supports your conclusion and ignores information that goes against your prejudices or existing knowledge. This bias occurs when you only want confirmation of your convictions and you unconsciously ignore counter-arguments. This brain leap has both implications for you as a coach and for your coachee. For example, if you have only a limited knowledge of your discipline, there is the danger that you do not recommend the right tool in a process.

Or during a Corporate Well-Being information session, your audience can sub-consciously be limited by what they already know about the project. The lesser-known modules are not on their radar; the known gets their preference, even if this is not what they need.

Humans remember at least 65% of what their personal information (or beliefs) supports. It is, therefore, important to know the company completely, based on available information, insights and wisdom, so that you can not only design a great program, but also give sufficient details about the content of the less-known components, about which coachees might not accept.

**Availability bias** or the power of the easiest path. You easily see things that you recently became aware of through your environment or the media. It is important to be aware of this influence for the following reasons:

1. You are inclined to give priority to events that are *currently in the media*. For example, burn-out prevention programs are often in the news. When the media presents information showing dramatic growth of this symptom, more employees believe they, too, have burn-out. Consequently, there is more demand for programs to address burn-out. If a well-known, influential businessman, on the other hand, minimizes the disease through comments that appear in media, the demand and the budget for these sessions will decrease.
2. You can use the power of visual materials to make your coaching session more insightful, and, thus more impactful. Images that are shown in the right context can be very powerful to convey your message. People will remember your messages and theme better if you accentuate your story with powerful images. For example, in our workshops, we do not use PowerPoint with text anymore, but rather vivid images that create context and emotion, supporting your messages as a coach.

**Introspection bias** is a tendency often encountered in modules requiring physical exertion or involving concentration techniques. People often over-estimate the reliability of their own self-assessment, both physically and mentally. Before physical sessions requiring exertion, 75% of people say that they are in good shape; at the conclusion, they are embarrassed by their blushing cheeks and concede that they are no longer 18-years old.

As a coach, you, too, often over-estimate the reliability of others to judge themselves accurately. It is, therefore, important that you include objective, practical tests as a way to force the coachee to become self-aware, for example, of their level of stiffness after a physical module or their degree of relaxation or energy levels. This helps develop their ability to be introspective.



**Herd bias** is a well-known influence that can make it easier for a group of people to believe something or to change their point-of-view about something. Herd bias is also known as ‘group-think’ and is always a very strong cultural trait within companies. As the leader of a Corporate Well-Being program you can leverage this bias in a positive manner, for example, by inviting employees who are considered well-regarded and perceived as successful within the company. When you use herd bias effectively, you are more likely to succeed with your Corporate Well-Being program.

In *Unravel Your Brain*, by Theo Compernelle, other influential, sub-conscious shortcuts are discussed, but, in practice, the aforementioned ones are the most important that you as a coach or manager have to recognize, maneuver through or leverage to your best advantage.

### 2.6.1 Attitude after the process: the trusted advisor

When the coaching process is over, always try to circle back with your client to review your work, get honest feedback, and specific suggestions on how to do things differently or better. Eighty percent of the suppliers of a company – including you, as a supplier-coach – are inclined to think that their customers are satisfied with their performance. In reality, however, the actual figure is only an eight-percent satisfaction level (Allen, Reichheld, Hamilton & Markey, 2005).

Perception of the coach:



Reality:



It is, therefore, important to nurture your fans on the client-side, even if they do not immediately involve you in a new project.

In this way, you can become an inspiration of Corporate Well-Being projects and a trusted business advisor to your client company. Always try to measure the results and impact of your guidance (see also Part 3, Return on Investment), as objectively as you can.

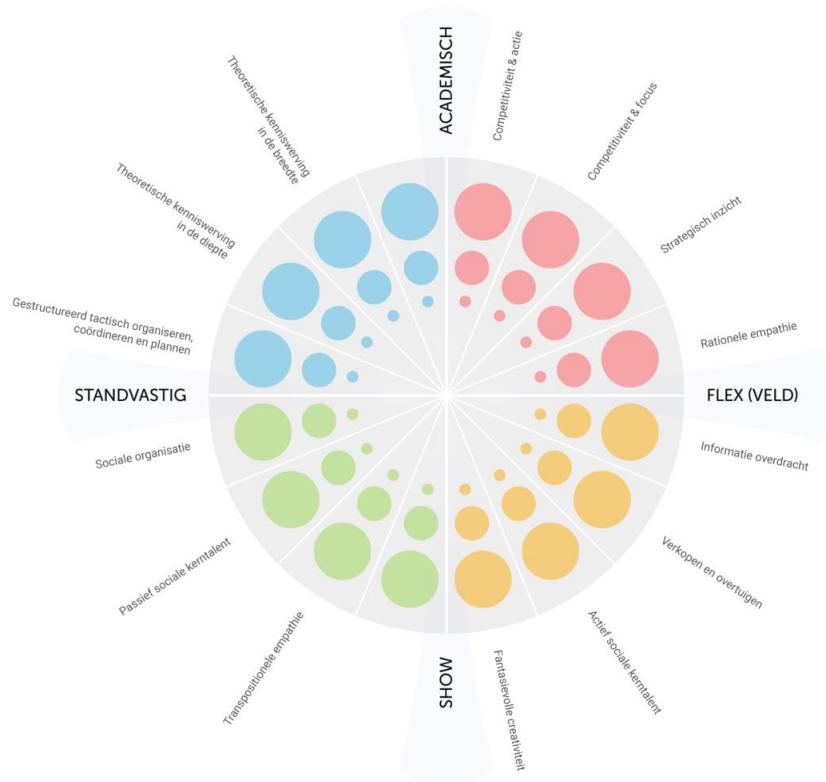
### *2.7 Your personal coach profile*

A while ago, KPMG, a large international consultancy firm, asked me, via Herculean, to co-lead a group project with another external coach for a thousand employees. A big job, indeed. The company wanted to integrate a holistic approach and the international expertise of Herculean with their internal, permanent, company coach who had the responsibility to implement traditional, change models and help leaders properly structure organizational goals.

Of course, I was happy with this assignment from a reputable company like KPMG. After several, preliminary discussions with the management, my partner coach and I were to shape the structure and content of the new programs and to divide the tasks. Both the other coach and I had a lot of experience in company and individual coaching, but it quickly became clear that our systems and our approaches were completely different. While the content of our individual modules was similar and both approaches led to the same goal, working out our style differences required a lot of personal energy. Through this experience, I felt that knowing your own personal, coaching approach is very important to your effectiveness. The pathway towards the goal can differ greatly, if it is led by two different coaches.

Because of this experience, I started thinking about the individuality and unique approaches of the different coaches that I have had or that I encountered during seminars and training courses. I have screened all the international stars on the circuit - including Tony Robbins, Richard Branson and Jim Loehr - as well as top, local coaches that I know who offer added-value to employees and companies. Each of them has his own style, just as you do, too. Your own personal, coaching style is formed by training, your past experiences and, often, trial and error. But if you are aware of the strengths and weaknesses of your own coach profile, then you are already one step-ahead of the other coaches who know themselves less well.

Based on my study and a thorough knowledge of the core-talents method about which you can read in chapter 5, Mental Well-Being, I developed a coach profile. This is a guideline for current or aspiring coaches to convey their messages in a natural way, based on their innate, core talents that form the potential of their coaching style. The model of this coach profile looks like this:



The coach profile consists of core talents that are identified by a core talents analysis (test). It shows your true nature and potential as a coach. By focusing on this, you will develop your own coaching style in a very natural way, without too many mistakes.

### 2.7.1 How does this model work?

As you can see in the diagram, the core talents of coaching are divided into four colors for clear reasons: green, red, blue and yellow. The green core talents are the human and social skills that you can use as a coach. The model distinguishes among three, green, core talents:

#### 1. Social organization

If you score strongly on this factor, you enjoy the organizing, planning and coordinating facets of being a coach, as well as bringing people together and taking the lead yourself. Your goal is to achieve something that many people enjoy. You have a sense of responsibility, are very social and like to take the lead as well as exhibit initiative. You are a social-active facilitator.

#### 2. The passive social

If you score strongly here, you like to be out among and in the midst of people, regardless if the group performs an activity during the coaching session or not. You like social interaction. You are not a loner and you enjoy being in groups.

### 3. Transpositional empathy

When you are born with this gift, you find it easy to understand and relate to the feelings, situation, mentality, ideas, culture, wishes, mindset, convictions and values of others (i.e. coachees), putting aside your own convictions. You work in an empowering way and find it difficult to say 'no,' which is also a pitfall. If your natural tendency is to exhibit this trait too much as a coach, you must properly screen your own energy and provide enough mental space for yourself, so that you do not fully engage in the energy of the other person. You want to please others and do the right things. You also request and accept advice readily.

The red core talents in the coach's profile are the 'harder' talents. There are four aspects, as follows:

#### 1. Competitiveness and action

You want to do better, go faster and be more efficient. You like competition and you want to compare yourself to others. You are energetic and active and have a great sense of achievement. As a coach, you need physical movement and space during the presentations and sessions. If you score strongly here, you have to set goals together with your group. You have a strong focus on achieving a (shared) goal. It is best to make your coaching sessions physically active and to ensure that there are sparks of energy during your interaction with people. Physically-oriented Well-Being programs work well with you as the coach.

#### 2. Competitiveness and focus

If you score strongly on this factor, you are often a naturally inspiring coach. You always start from your own strength and, in this way, you involve the group and lead them through the coaching process. You are persistent and want to reach your goal at all costs. This can cause stress for the coachees, but at the same time, it is a great source of power.

#### 3. Strategic insight

You like to anticipate everything before and during your sessions. You want to think-through different steps (IQ dependent) and you need impact, power and control. You dare to cut-through and you work in a calculated way. You like to determine the goal of long-term actions. That makes you a coach that has a good grasp of the overall picture. You have a good business sense,

strong economic and political insight and you can also be a bit manipulative. You value money and are in-tune with power structures and hierarchy, which makes you very useful for coaching in the political sphere, both in corporate environments and for candidates for public offices.

#### 4. Rational empathy

With a strong foundation in rational empathy, you can easily move yourself through different environments. You are a good coach with whom to discuss and determine future projects. Like no other, you can see the future resistance and conflicts of a not-yet-existing project and, thus, proactively maneuver through to a good outcome. You are a long-term thinker with a large capacity for creative free-wheeling, which is a step further than ‘thinking out of the box.’

If you have more of a rational coaching style, you score high on the following blue core talents:

##### 1. *Broad* theoretical knowledge-acquisition

You could be described as knowing ‘a little about a lot.’ As a coach with a strong talent for the proactive acquisition of broad (theoretical) knowledge, you are better-equipped use this gift. If you are a generalist type of coach, this form of theoretical knowledge acquisition is a good lever for you. You also have a broad knowledge and you are interested in many different things. You like to learn about many different subjects in advance. When coaching you will be more effective if you use many different situational stories or references, as you need a lot of mental variety with your style.

##### 2. *Deep* theoretical knowledge-acquisition

You could be described as knowing ‘a lot about a little.’ You proactively look for in-depth (theoretical) knowledge. You want to be an expert and specialist. You like to know everything about one particular subject and you want to go into great detail about the things that interest you. Your coaching style is strongly and deeply focused on specific knowledge and you have a keen eye for details. If this core talent is highly developed, you must always keep in touch with the group to determine if you are not going too far into the weeds and creating information overload, as this can lead to your coachees losing their concentration. If someone challenges your subject matter expertise, you become unstoppable, which usually results in a bad coaching session.

##### 3. Structured, tactical organization, coordination and planning

This core talent means that you have the ability to think in 3-D, maintaining a high-level view of situations at all times. You bring the coaching session to a successful conclusion, on-time. With this talent you are good at tactical thinking and you have a helicopter’s perspective. You

can set priorities perfectly and distinguish between key issues. You first think in matrix-form, and then descend to the executional details. You have a great sense of the abstract and the ability to synthesize. You work in a calculated, rational way. You can also coach people well to integrate the insights you bring in multiple ways. In other words, you like to offer procedures and methods that work while at work, but also are applicable in the daily life of the coachee

The last cluster of core talents, important to a potential coach, is contained in the four yellow basic skills. They contain the potential to become a highly outgoing coach (extra-version).

### 1. Information transfer

Having fun with people during the coaching process is as the Italians say a *conditio sine qua non*, or prerequisite, if this is your natural way.

If you have this talent in you, you simply tell others everything you know, as you are happy to help them move forward by conveying your knowledge. This is the core talent to have if you want to teach or speak in front of a group. Yet, I know coaches who score 'average' on this core talent, but still can have a good coaching session. This works because they pay close attention to the perception of the audience. They constantly ask their audience how they perceive things during the session in order to verify that the group is on the right path. In this way, they avoid their biggest pitfall, namely, assuming that their message is understood by the coachee as they, the coach, had intended.

If you have little or no knowledge about this core talent, then asking for feedback from your coachee is really appropriate. Even when you supervise a team as a manager, your awareness about this core talent is important because missing out on information transfer is a major cause of conflict at work.

With proper introspection and communication control, however, you can avoid most conflicts.

Comments like "I told you so," or "Why do not you listen to me?" or "How can you not understand this?" can become a thing of the past.

### 2. Sell and convince

If you have this talent, you love convincing people and making them believe in you. Somewhat exaggerated, you are a typical, guru type of coach who makes it easy for people to accept things, ideas or services from you. Having the faith and trust of the other person is very important to you. You sell your theories and you are only happy if people accept them.

### 3. The active social

You like to be actively involved with your group as a coach. Further, you like teamwork and you are very active, dynamic and energetic during your sessions.

However, you do not put yourself in front of or above the group, but rather sit among the participants to achieve a better result together. Your leadership ability and infectious dynamism are the main difference as compared to the socially passive factor of the green core talent I discussed above.

#### 4. Imaginative creativity

If you enjoy leading creative coaching sessions, then transcendental meditations, ground-breaking, consciousness-expanding activities and relaxation exercises, is perfect match for this core talent. You love to think out of the box. You like to shut yourself off from the world and you need a lot of mental space to be creatively imaginative. You are endowed with a feeling for non-tangible beauty and have a boundless fantasy-life. You see possibilities without limitation through utility, form, beauty or manufacturability. Paradigm-busting, free-wheeling sessions are really your thing.

Your pitfall, however, is that you are super-sensitive to tension, atmosphere and emotion, and you usually do not get along so well with practical-rational people and groups.

In addition to these four colors, you can also see two axes on the image of the model, which are the final dichotomies important for determining your coach profile:

1. On the vertical axis, 'Show and entertainment' is opposite 'Academic';
2. On the horizontal axis, 'Steady' stands in opposition to 'Fluid.'

1. The vertical axis (Show versus Academic) indicates which style is your most-natural to connect with an audience. If you tend to prefer the academic style, it is best to avoid the show element in your sessions because this does not happen naturally to you. Your attempt to entertain the audience will quickly dissipate the inspirational connection that you can build with coachees or employees in the form of an academic charisma and attraction.

If you score between 'half' and 'full' on the Show aspect, then I advise you to apply this in your coaching style. It will only benefit the focus of and connection with your group and improve the coaching session. It is a core talent that is usually pushed to the background in Belgium, due to cultural inappropriateness. But in most cultures, as in

The Netherlands and the United States, it is an absolute requirement to have a good presentation and receive praise from your audience.

2. The horizontal axis ('Steady' versus 'Fluid') indicates your natural coaching style that impacts the flow of sessions. Do you, as a coach, have a need to follow a 'fixed' schedule or can you work more freely and loosely? If you create space for your coachees you create an environment that will allow your group or individual coachee to take a step in the evolution process that you have mapped out. It is a coaching method that requires not only a lot of basic skills, but also a lot of experience to achieve a good result. But the impact of this generous, space-giving session will be stronger because you convey your message less rationally. You are going to affect the limbic system of the coachee, so to speak, so that the insight you give is intrinsically sensed by the brain, instead of just intellectually understood.

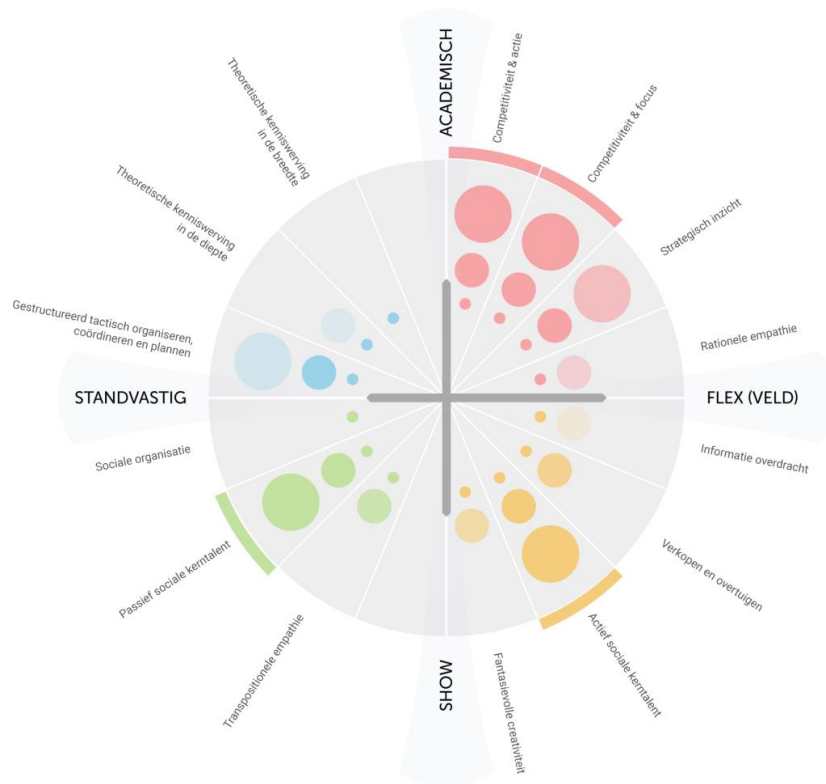
It requires a lot of faith in yourself as a coach and a lot of trust between the group and the coach to use this system. There is always a moment when using this method (and that can sometimes take a painfully long time) when it seems that you, the coach, have 'lost the group' in the minds of your coachees, an uncomfortable moment of didactic chaos where the session seems endless or the purpose, simply unattainable.

Even if you are gifted with this coaching style, I recommend starting with a more systematic approach where everything is clearly written down on a detailed, cheat sheet. If you have this in your pocket and you suddenly seize the opportunity to go off-script and step into the 'Fluid' space, you still have notes to which you can refer, if you have, indeed, lost your way during your session.

## 2.8 A practical example of a coach profile

To show you this model in practice, I asked Sabine Appelmans to take the core-talent analysis test because she is a well-known and revered coach. As a tennis coach, she has coached individual players and paved a successful path forward as Captain of Belgium's Fed Cup team. Besides being a Functional Trainer, she is also a health coach. She has been guiding people and companies to develop greater energy and physical fitness for years. Her completed test resulted in the following coach profile:





What immediately stands out in her profile is the strong presence of red core talents. In this hard-talent cluster, you see that two core talents are fully, maximally present: 'Competitiveness and action' and 'Competitiveness and focus'. As a coach, Sabine will, therefore, feel at her best when she is with people or groups who are like-minded. Setting goals together with an individual or group and then 'just going for it' would aptly describe her best approach as a coach. Making little-to-no compromise on this approach is probably best for her and by using her core talents during sessions, she will appear not only very authentic, but also find maximum satisfaction.

The strong, core talent 'Strategic insight' that also exists in this cluster adds an extra dimension to the previous combination. She is good at setting realistic, feasible, long-term goals for herself and her coachees. She can lead a one-off session, but she finds lengthy courses where a goal is set – and achieved – much more enjoyable. With longer programs, she also generates more energy herself. That is why she has already guided many companies, including BASF and ING, over a period of several months, with the clear goal of running the 20 kilometers of Brussels. Individuals who strive for more physical fitness and a healthy lifestyle over a longer term are in good hands with her. Another full-scoring core talent she has as a coach is situated in the green zone: 'The passive social'. Sabine feels good among the people. That is what she is known for and this is a perfect

expression of this basic, core talent. If you have less talent as a coach, then you are better at one-on-one sessions. But from her profile and practice, Sabine seems to be able to handle both. Her score on the core talent of Transpositional empathy shows she has the ability to adjust the competitiveness of her sessions to suit her less-competitive coachees.

Where is she less strong? As you can see in the profile, her core talent around social organization is limited. For an activity where people have to be brought together, it is better to ask someone else. This causes her too much trouble and brings not enough satisfaction.

In the yellow zone, you can see a core talent that is at full maximum: 'Active social'. When Sabine is among her coachees, she will pull people with her inherent dynamism towards the intended goal and create a great sense of energy during her sessions. She then pushes her coachees as the leader of the group. Within this yellow cluster of extra-version, you can see that the talent concerning 'Information transfer' is not or barely present. This, in itself, is not a problem, but she cannot assume that the message she brings to the people or the group always comes across as clear to them. A short, perception-check during or after the lesson is, therefore, necessary to prevent this problem.

Finally, in the blue zone of the circle, you see a strong core talent called structured, tactical thinking. Her strong ability to think tactically is evident during her sessions. As a result, she has a keen sense of time and always keeps an eye on things from above to make sure the group is on course, without losing herself in details or individual discussions. In the same blue zone, you see a half-full score on the core talent of theoretical, knowledge-acquisition in depth versus a small talent in breadth. This means that her knowledge-intake for new modules and insights is, therefore, more practical. Also, during her sessions, she is more effective when sharing practical experience, rather than theoretical arguments.

After analyzing her scores among the colored zones, more information can be found examining her horizontal and vertical axes. On the horizontal axis, you can see that Sabine has the following distribution:

Steady ----- o ----- Fluid

She has a tendency to create an inspiring environment for her coachees to gain insights. However, it is best for her to prepare a structured lesson plan to bring her sessions to a successful conclusion. So, she is not a flexible facilitator, but rather a structured coach.

You can find the following distribution on her vertical axis:

Academic ----- o ----- Show

Here Sabine scores more in the middle of the axis, indicating that she is capable of presenting both academic and entertaining content modules. Nevertheless, in view of the limited, theoretical knowledge-acquisition across the board, I advise her not to play the Academic while giving her lessons. Her strong, social (group) core talents ensure that she can toe-the-line and balance these two well, however.

When Sabine focuses on both her stronger and smaller core talents and avoids her natural pitfalls, every session can be terrific, giving great pleasure and satisfaction to her coachees as well as herself.

## THEORY U – TRANSLATED TEXT (EN)

### Down the LEFT half of the U (from top to bottom)

DOWNLOADING

patterns from the past

SUSPENDING

SEEING

with fresh eyes

RESTORING

SENSING

From the field of energy

LETTING GO

### Down the RIGHT half of the U (from top to bottom)

PERFORMING

Achieve results through practices, infrastructures

EMBODYING

PROTOTYPING

Co-creating strategic microcosm

ENACTING

CRYSTALLIZING

vision and intention

ALLOWING

### Down the middle of the U

ACCESS YOUR

Open mind

Open heart

Open will

### Across the bottom (from L to R)

CO-SENSING

Places and practices of connecting and seeing

BEING PRESENT

Connecting to Source

WHO AM I?

WHAT IS MY WORK?

CO-CREATING

Places and practices of stillness and being present

## **CORE TALENT ANALYSIS (TEST) – TRANSLATED TEXT (EN)**

(Clockwise from 12:00u)

### **STEADY**

Structured tactically – organization, coordination and planning

Theoretical knowledge – in depth

Theoretical knowledge – in breadth

### **ACADEMIC**

Competitive and active

Competitive and focused

Strategic insight

Rational empathy

### **FLUID**

Information overload

Selling and convincing

Active social core talent

Creative imagination

### **SHOW & ENTERTAINMENT**

Transpositional empathy

Passive social core talent

Social organization