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A theory of the coaching process based on the lived experience of coached executives in South Africa

Submitted for the requirements of a PhD

Natalie Cunningham

Wits Business School

DECLARATION

I, Natalie Cunningham, declare that the entire body of work contained in this thesis is my own, original work, that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by University of The Witwatersrand will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any other qualification.

N Cunningham 30 January 2017

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ABSTRACT

Coaching is a young, growing professional practice with its origins in many older established fields of knowledge. There is considerable research into what coaches think about their work and the theories and methods underlining these approaches. However, there is a great deal less research on how the executives or coaching clients experienced the coaching. This research answered the questions from the coached executive perspective by first wanting to know (1) what the lived experience of the coaching executive was; and (2) based on that lived experience, what theory about the coaching process would emerge. This emerged theory would be grounded in evidence from the coachee.

A total of 17 clients were involved in the research. While the research had a strong phenomenological underpinning, the method used was that of constructivist grounded theory.

There were five key findings with theoretical propositions behind each of the findings. The findings are: (1) Coaching is a response to an unmet need in an individual who lives in a volatile, ever changing world with great complexity. Coaching provided a wellness model that is collaborative, client driven, and adaptable. A primary need in people is to have a sense of well-being and personal meaning in this world. (2) Even though the coaching is a response to a need, the coaching client still needs to be ready to be coached. A client readiness theory with integrated components was developed based on the clients' lived experience. The interrelationships based on the client's perceptions were a new contribution. (3) There are several processes in coaching but the key focus of the processes is that they are active and present. The processes also understand the relationship between the 'being' and 'knowing' of the coach and the 'doing' of the coach. The doing covers the active processes but it is the way in which the coach does these processes (the being) that influences their efficacy. (4) The coach needs to be authentic, credible and present. (5) Brain integration leads to deeper self-awareness, well-being and personal meaning. This theory of brain integration is based in Interpersonal Neurobiology, and the nine domains of integration assist in providing an overarching framework in which to position the outcomes of coaching.

The contribution was broad in that it looked at all aspects of the coaching process: the coach, the coachee, the process, the outcomes and the context and provided an integrated framework.

Key words

Executive coaching, Coaching theory, brain integration, client readiness, coaching framework

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LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

ABCCCP – Africa Board for Coaching, Consulting & Coaching Psychology

ACC – Anterior Cingulate Cortex

AI – Appreciative Inquiry

COMENSA – Coaches and Mentors of South Africa

DMN – Default Mode Network

EMCC – European Mentoring and Coaching Council

FACES – Flexible, Adaptive, Coherent, Energised and Stable

ICF – International Coach Federation

IPNB – Interpersonal Neurobiology

HRD – Human Resource Development

NEA – Negative Emotional Attractors

NLP – NeuroLinguistic Programme

OD – Organisational Development

PEA – Positive Emotional Attractors

PNS – Parasympathetic Nervous System

RVPFC – Right Ventral Prefrontal Cortex

SNS – Sympathetic Nervous System

VUCA – Volatility, Uncertainty, Change, Ambiguity

WABC – Worldwide Association of Business Coaches

CHAPTER ONE – INTRODUCTION

This chapter outlines the purpose of the study. It then describes the context within which the research takes place. It describes the field of business and executive coaching and the current status of coaching research. It describes the physical context within which this research took place. It further shares some assumptions underpinning the research and then outlines the remaining chapters. The prime purpose of the chapter is to orientate the reader to this specific research - *A theory of the coaching process based on the lived experience of coached executives in South Africa.*

1.1 Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this research is to understand how coaching is experienced by executives and, based on that understanding, evolve theory about the coaching process.

Coaching by nature is located in a multi-disciplinary field and consequently draws on a multitude of constructs and concepts from various disciplines. It draws its influence from diverse fields such as psychology (De Haan and Duckworth, 2013, Passmore, 2009, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007, Grant et al., 2010), organisational development (Hamlin et al., 2009), leadership development (Kahn, 2011, Stout-Rostron, 2014), learning and education (Cunningham, 2014) and management (Kahn, 2011).

It appears that authors and researchers tend to describe the contribution of the discipline or field to coaching based on their own training and background. Therefore, researchers who tend to have a psychological background will often cite the psychological foundations of coaching (Grant, 2006), whereas those with a stronger business background will focus on the contextual aspects such as organisational development (Stout-Rostron, 2009). Authors do tend to acknowledge the multi-disciplinary nature but the emphasis varies in terms of dominant orientation.

It would therefore be helpful to have theory that is grounded in the coaching experience. This could facilitate separating coaching from other developmental practices such as therapy, management consulting and human resource management. Some argue that there is very little differentiation. A qualitative study that examined different conceptualisations and definitions of "coaching", "Organisational Development" (OD), and "Human Resource Development" (HRD) found all three fields of practice were very comparable especially in relation to intended purpose and processes (Hamlin et al., 2009).

The purpose of the study is to examine the experience of being coached and based on that study, develop the theory. This theory would be grounded in evidence.

After the study it would be useful to see if this is similar to existing theories or unique to coaching. To begin with it is considered important to suspend preconceived notions during theory building and follow the assumption that the theory will be discovered from the data (Glaser, 1978). Therefore, it was originally considered appropriate for the researcher to initially ignore related literature and existing theory to minimise the chances of contamination of the data with existing or biased concepts. McGhee, Marland and Atkinson (2007) believe that a researcher who is close to the field could already be theoretically sensitised and acquainted with pre-knowledge of literature and theories but that this should not prevent a grounded theory study. Detailed reflexivity would then be needed to monitor biases (Egan, 2002, McGhee et al., 2007). I recognised I had pre-knowledge and used memos to manage this potential bias but I did not actively read further literature until I had completed the analysis. This will be discussed in more detail in chapter two – the methodological chapter.

1.2 Context of the Study

The context within which the research takes places consists of several components. Firstly, the very nature of the field, profession or discipline of business and executive coaching needs to be understood as its place and evolution in the business world is important. Secondly, the context needs to be understood in terms of the empirical

research that has been conducted in the field of business and executive coaching. Thirdly, the context needs to be explored in terms of the physical location of the research. Each of these contextual components will be examined as a separate entity, although the reality is that they are enmeshed and interrelated.

1.2.1 Nature of the field of business and executive coaching

Debate exists as to whether business and executive coaching is a discipline, a field of study or a profession. Coaching is described as "a young discipline of professional practice with its roots in several more established fields of knowledge" (Drake et al., 2008). The established fields of knowledge are as listed in section 1.1 above – psychology, adult learning theory, management, education and sociology to name but a few examples. The use of the word "discipline" appears to be a more accurate term than "profession". Although coaching is often defined as an emerging profession, I would challenge that terminology based on the thinking by several current theorists, who are also practitioners (Cox et al., 2014, Drake et al., 2008, Drake, 2008). Lane, Stelter and Stout-Rostron (2010, p. 361) write "that it seems to be challenging and unhelpful to attempt a degree of conformance in the coaching field where coaching is established as a traditional profession, since:

- *Coaching is not based on societal mandate or a monopoly for professional practice.*
- *Coaching is not subject to governmental accreditation or a professional license. (Differing professional bodies offer accreditation. The International Coach Federation is the largest global coaching accreditation body but not the exclusive accreditation body.) http://coachfederation.org/credential/?navItemNumber=502*
- *Coaching has no quality assurance. Coaching has only voluntarily accepted standards of ethics. Coaching has no specific career paths, professional trajectories and passages.*
- *Coaching has no association with formalized rights and duties for their members.*
- *Coaching does not guarantee financial independence for the single professional (employment, scale of fees) (Lane, Stelter & Stout-Rostron, 2010 in Cox et al,*

2014). This section focuses on the context of the field of business and executive coaching. A key component of the field is the place in which coaching is taking place and this is in the business world. In 2014 Coaches and Mentor of South Africa (COMENSA) developed a competency framework for coaches. The framework had a competency standard called Context Management. They described the coach as needing to be able to:

- *Work with diversity and adapt behaviour in response to unfolding contextual and cultural differences*
- *Work with issues such as prejudice, bias and stereotyping within unfolding cultural contexts*
- *Demonstrate an understanding of and show empathy for past, current and future cultural contexts*
- *Adapt coaching style to suit a continuously changing environment (internal and external)*
- *Evaluate the purpose of the context to ensure congruency to the specific context*

As such it is necessary for the coach to be able to evaluate the business environment and context. One of the difficulties for coaching is the world has changed and organisations and leaders assert that we live in a "VUCA world". The acronym originates from the initial letter in each of the words Volatility, Uncertainty, Complexity, and Ambiguity (VUCA) (Bennett and Lemoine, 2014). Each term is described by Bennett and Lemoine (2014) in order to identify the distinctions within the VUCA framework of each of the terms, as opposed to a collective term.

- ***Volatility****: Relatively unstable change; information is available and the situation is understandable, but change is frequent and sometimes unpredictable.*
- ***Uncertainty:*** *A lack of knowledge as to whether an event will have meaningful ramifications; cause and effect are understood, but it is unknown if an event will create significant change.*

- ***Complexity****: Many interconnected parts forming an elaborate network of information and procedures; often multiform and convoluted, but not necessarily involving change.*
- ***Ambiguity:*** *A lack of knowledge as to 'the basic rules of the game'; cause and effect are not understood and there is no precedent for making predictions as to what to expect.*

Reinhard Stelter, while not referring directly to VUCA but rather to globality and hypercomplexity of society – similar concepts that overlap with VUCA – wrote a paper in which he argued strongly that coaching is a response to societal change (2009). He reviewed some social researchers' work on societal changes and summarised how society has transformed and the impact it has had on all of its members but specifically how it has changed how we generate knowledge, and construct self and identity. He promotes the need for reflective space in which individuals within society reflect on their lives and through this reflection find meaning (Stelter, 2009). In the literature review chapter, which follows the findings, this point of view is debated and the solution-goal orientation and performance-based approach are contrasted (Grant et al., 2009), but as an introduction let it suffice to say, there is a school of thought that sees coaching as a response to societal need. This serves to confirm the uncertain, ambiguous, complex context in which coaching is taking place and being defined. While a theory developed in evidence may not reduce the uncertainty and complexity, it can perhaps assist in providing a framework in which to operate in this space.

Over and above the business world being a VUCA world, there is also volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity in the field of coaching. Briefly the concept of ambiguity is discussed below. In terms of professions, which are about the "rules of the games", the world of coaching is in an ambiguous space and has emerged in a post-professional context. Drake (2008, p. 16) argues "that while coaching has much to gain by developing a more solid footing, there is little to gain by trying to retroactively fit earlier paradigms and that coaching's future may be better served by transcending historic squabbles in order to address the unique opportunities of the

current times." Historically, a profession needed to have some distinct characteristics such as those listed above as well as barriers to entry, agreement on qualifications and agreement on a code of ethics. Perhaps, he suggests, the times in which we live call for a new understanding of what it means to be a professional and to participate in a profession.

Others argue that professionalism and profession are two separate aspects of being a profession and we can aim for professionalism without aiming to be a profession (Lane et al., 2010). Since coaching began as a broad field encompassing people who came from a wide variety of backgrounds and paths, it may never be possible to have an all-inclusive profession of coaching. It is unknown what coaching will develop into and the space it will hold in society and the business world. Coaching may be come to be seen as a movement, as an activist process, that may impact and shape practices such as leadership and management development, and team and individual development (Drake, 2008, Stelter and Law 2010). The coaching field is emergent in a new world and that trying to emulate past rules and define itself as a profession in a confusing, changing world does not appear to be working. The reason for this statement is discussed further as we look at the confusion and contradictions as professional bodies of coaching try to define their spaces. It is in this context that the research was completed.

In her book on leadership coaching, Stout-Rostron (2014, pp. 211–212) asks the question: where will coaching be in 2020 and what is the future of coaching? She states that she believes the challenge is to achieve "one universally accepted definition of coaching and the alignment of required coaching competencies with coach education curricula worldwide." She argues that currently no such consensus exists. There are numerous professional bodies worldwide. In Australia alone there were 26 professional bodies in 2011 and, while the professional bodies united on a project to develop a common set of standards for coaching, a common united professional body did not emerge from this project (Stout-Rostron, 2014, Bresser, 2009). In South Africa there are two main coaching bodies: Coach and Mentors South Africa (COMENSA) and Africa Board for Coaching, Consulting

& Coaching Psychology (ABCCCP), which in addition to operating in South Africa operates in many African countries. Some global coaching bodies are the International Coachi Federation (ICF), Worldwide Association of Business Coaches (WABC) and European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Almost every related profession has tried to stake out its own coaching territory, with definitions, rules and practices based on its own particular perspectives and interests. There is an ever-increasing dialogue between organisations representing coaching and mentoring, stimulated in Europe by the EMCC, and this is beginning to break down some of these artificial barriers. However, in all my readings of definitions about the professional bodies there are still many different professional bodies and no one agreed definition of coaching (Grant and Hartley, 2013, Passmore, 2015, Stout-Rostron, 2014).

Examples of some of the differences are summarised below. This summary is not an attempt to discuss the merits of each body, or to converge the commonalities, but serves to illustrate the differing positioning, which leads to coaching being seen as somewhat fragmented. This is merely one example to contextualise the field of coaching. Two international bodies are looked at in the example – the WABC and ICF.

The WABC focuses exclusively on business coaching and sees business coaching as a completely separate emerging profession to other forms of coaching (Stout-Rostron, 2014). In contrast, ICF has a broad all-encompassing definition of coaching. ICF defines coaching as professional coaching and the definition on its website states that

> “coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential, which is particularly important in today’s uncertain and complex environment. Coaches honor the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole. Standing on this foundation, the coach's responsibility is to:

- *Discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve*
- *Encourage client self-discovery*
- *Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies*
- *Hold the client responsible and accountable.*

This process helps clients dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while improving their leadership skills and unlocking their potential" (International Coach Federation, 2016).

The broad definition allows people to operate as wellness coaches, parent coaches, career coaches as well as encompassing business coaches. Individuals can therefore register with ICF and be a life coach or business coach as long as they adhere to the definition and set of standards. The example above shows how in the last five years the coaching industry still has strong differences in defining coaching. The key difference in the above example is whether business coaching is seen as a sub set of coaching and coaching as all-encompassing with many different types or whether business coaching is seen as a stand-alone type of coaching, with other types being seen as different.

There are attempts to collaborate with some of the professional bodies. In Australia the 26 bodies united for a project to develop a set of core competencies know as Standards 2011. A Global Coaching & Mentoring Alliance (GCMA) was formed in late 2012, comprising the Association for Coaching (AC), the EMCC, and ICF, and their last meeting in November 2015 led to confirmation that they are in the process of agreeing on a Global Code of Ethics for coaching. They would like other professional bodies to look at this. While some collaborative attempts are happening, the field of coaching in 2016 is still not a united field with one definition of coaching and one universally agreed set of competencies.

The ICF and the WABC were established in 1995 and 1997 respectively. Both organisations are approximately 20 years old, and the fundamental differences still exist as to what coaching is. The elusive universal agreement with regard to coaching remains uncertain, and it is within this context that many professional

bodies have dedicated themselves to research-led models: the Coaching Psychology Unit at the University of Sydney, the WABC in North America, the EMCC in Europe, and the Institute of Coaching at Harvard (Stout-Rostron, 2014).

1.2.2 Context of research

There have been studies that look at coaching trends or patterns but in terms of focusing on analysing coaching research fewer studies have been conducted. When reviewing many meta-analyses of coaching research (Grant and Cavanagh, 2007, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007, Grant, 2013)Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014, p. 446) suggest that the manner in which research is developing could be anticipated for an emerging field, and refer to Grant's study (2010), in which he looked at how Human Resource Management research developed. They comment that "there is almost no research that focuses on the coaching interaction as a learning intervention with the power to generate powerful changes in thinking". They argue that coaching research in addition to outcomes and methodologies further needs to focus specifically on what the two people are actually doing together. There is very little research that informs a deeper understanding of the coaching interface. In the study by De Haan et al. (2010) of critical moments in coaching, the findings got close to exploration of the dynamic between the coach and client, but it is suggested the research stops short of exploring moments in detail (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014). In De Haan et al.'s study of critical moments, their analysis found that critical moments were not seen by clients as a key aspect of good coaching. The researchers concluded that when critical moments did occur, they tended to lead to an increase in insight. The contributing factors to this insight were highlighted but can be interrogated in more depth. The study I am doing will interrogate the client's experience but, in the tradition of grounded theory, I attempted to suspend the findings of De Haan and other theorists and see what emerged. In chapter four I refer to this study and contrast my findings with the findings of the study (De Haan et al., 2010).

It is suggested that large quantitative studies engage in open conversations with the smaller exploratory, qualitative studies that allow factors and concepts to emerge

from practice (Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007, Feldman and Lankau, 2005). My study is focused on lived experience in practice and is small and qualitative in nature and hopes to add to the research conversations about coaching.

Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson's (2001) *Comprehensive Review* is considered a seminal piece of research into the state of coaching. One indication of their seminal status is the number of citations – this study had been cited 377 times by 7 May 2016. In the field of coaching research, this is significant, with well-recognised academics and researchers being cited between 100 and 150 times (Grant – 145), (Passmore – 84), (Fillery-Travis – 125) and (Ely, Boyce et al. – 139). All these authors and researchers are the current main contributors to coaching research and they also all cite Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson. This study was done in 2001 – a mere 15 years ago. At that time they discussed the scarcity of coaching research and mentioned that coaching research was beginning to be published. They quoted seven coaching studies published in psychological journals. They further shared that studies were weak in methodological approaches and claims could not always be validated by data (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001).

Several studies into the state of coaching research or the efficacy of coaching were conducted between 2004 and 2011 (Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, Grant, 2013, Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001, Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, Stern and Stout-Rostron, 2013, Bush, 2004, Gyllensten and Palmer, 2005, Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014). In reading the research in this period, I noticed case study and surveys were most popular choices of methodology. There was also a need to prove that coaching was a valid approach and many outcome studies were completed. The research was primarily demonstrating what was happening in the field during this period.

In 2005 there were less than 20 academic papers researching coaching with systematic quantitative or qualitative methods (Feldman and Lankau, 2005). In contrast by May 2009 425 articles, PhDs and empirical studies had been published. There were 32 PhDs worldwide on coaching completed since 2005, so the empirical

research is growing but there is a continued need for further research (Grant, 2009). Of the 518 scholarly articles and dissertations published in the next five years (Grant, 2010), only 186 were empirical studies. The need for empirical research is what was identified as a key coaching research driver in 2011. This study aimed to support the increase in empirical data-driven studies.

The research was often specific to particular coaching methods and models or alternatively context specific. Examples of these types of context-specific studies include looking at coaching expatriate managers (Abbott et al., 2006), an analysis of coaching teachers (Becker et al., 2013) or coaching in the health sector (Hayes, 2009). In relation to research on coaching methodologies and models, it is useful to understand what is meant by a coaching methodology. McLean (2012) describes a coaching methodology as scaffolding that supports the coaches' work. It encompasses many methods and theories including models. She lists some of the models as change models including dealing with resistance and immunity to change. She adds systems models and lists several systems methods. In her chapter on models Stout-Rostron (2009) lists ontological approaches, four quadrant models including Kolb's learning model and ends the chapter focusing on Otto Scharmer's the U-process. Both McLean and Stout-Rostron share a selection of models and approaches, but neither claim to have a comprehensive list of models. The method- and model-specific studies completed in the last five years include studies such as using gestalt approaches in coaching (Wright, 2012) or using cognitive behavioural therapy in coaching (Good et al., 2013), among other studies. The focus is on analysing the method in relation to coaching.

There was an important study done in 2013 where Stern and Stout-Rostron (2013) reviewed all peer reviewed coaching research topics published from 2008 to June 2012. They found several gaps in research areas and listed these as:

- *Development of a common definition of coaching*
- *Continued research into specialty areas of coaching; for example, wellness coaching, team coaching*
- *Organisational and societal aspects of coaching*

- *Longitudinal studies of outcome and impact of coaching*
- *Continued research to answer the question: who is being coached, by whom, and with what processes, practices and results? (Stern and Stout-Rostron, 2013, Stout-Rostron, 2014).*

Fillery-Travis and Cox (2014) added to the list, recommending further research in the areas of coaching outcomes and the coaching context and the models. She felt that more specifically understanding the nature of the interaction between coach and coachee needed considerable more research.

I would argue that one can move to a common definition of coaching only by basing it on the experiences of people being coached. To really understand what is happening in the coaching relationship and space will aid the field in defining itself based on evidence. This research, based on lived experience and using grounded theory, will make a contribution to the field of coaching. The contribution is the development of an integrated theory from a novel approach using constructivist grounded theory.

1.2.3 Physical location of the study

South Africa is one of the largest providers of coaching in the world. According to a study conducted on global trends in the use of coaching in the workplace in 2010, South Africa was the fifth-largest respondent (Rule and Rock, 2011). Another study by Frank Bresser Consulting (Bresser, 2009) ranked South Africa as the seventh-largest provider of coaching services in the world in 2008–2009. The same study estimated that there were 40 000 coaches worldwide and that had gone up from 30 000 in 2006. South Africa's professional body of coaches –COMENSA has seen an increase in its membership up from a few hundred members five years ago to over 1200 members in 2016 (COMENSA, 2016). This PhD study has been done in South Africa. According to the COMENSA National Research Survey: Positioning Coaching in South Africa 2011, 84% of organisations surveyed reported using coaching. At that point most coaching programmes had been implemented only within the last two years (COMENSA, 2016). This correlates with findings from a Masters research

study of the top 100 companies within South Africa, which reported that 88% of the respondents used coaching in their organisations, with 12% not using coaching in their organisations (Attlee, 2013). We can surmise, based on the increase in the number of registered coaches, that coaching remains a key aspect of the business world in South Africa in 2016. Registration is not required in order to practise as a coach but increasingly organisations are requesting some form of professional registration.

The three contextual issues – nature of the field, limited research and exact nature of the current extent of coaching in South Africa – are all clouded with ambiguity and uncertainty. The research must therefore be seen in this context of many unknown variables.

1.3 The Problem Statement

The main problem is that very little coaching theory exists that has been developed based on research of the coaching experience from the perspective of those coached (as described in the coaching research context in section 1.2.2). Theories used to educate coaches draw on a range of psychological and adult learning theories but research-based theory development specific to the field of coaching is limited (Passmore, 2015, Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011, Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014). In Tim Theeboom, Bianca Beersma and Annelies E.M. van Vianen's (2014) meta-analysis of coaching, it states that most practitioners are not trained in research methods (Theeboom et al., 2014). Yet historically most of the research has emanated from practitioners. This is confirmed in Grant's (2010) annotated bibliography, which suggests that considerable methodological rigour did not exist in studies published at that time and that the studies predominantly did not demonstrate a clear theoretical foundation (Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007). Consequently, the evidence-base for coaching can best be described as disparate, largely non-theoretical and primarily composed of "one-off" findings. Coaching has some way to go before it could be accurately described as a

mature field of study (cf Stout-Rostron, 2014, Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, Theeboom et al., 2014).

The study aims to contribute to the field as it begins to mature. The debates become more difficult, if not impossible to have if, in the first instance, the field cannot be clearly defined and has a range of theoretical frameworks underpinning it. Some of the theoretical frameworks have been listed above but all these frameworks had their origins elsewhere; e.g. cognitive behavioural coaching, gestalt coaching, narrative coaching are all rooted in psychology (Rock and Page, 2009). Change management theories account for some of their systemic approaches in coaching; e.g. Kurt Lewin's force field analysis. The range of theoretical possibilities are debated more extensively in chapter four, bearing in mind the need to attempt to suspend theoretical biases prior to analysing the study as described in chapter two. Universities are beginning to offer a Master's degree in Coaching. They are currently drawing on psychological theories, but if the field is to differentiate itself from psychology, it needs to have a clear theoretical underpinning with regard to coaching.

The research questions will therefore be:

1. *What is the lived experience of coached executives?*
2. *Based on the lived experience, what theory about the coaching process emerges from the evidence?*

1.4 Significance of the Study

Companies in 2009 were reported to be investing approximately US$1.5 billion in coaching and there were estimated to be in region of 40 000 professional coaches globally (Bresser, 2009). Grant (2013) quotes a range of global studies, which shows the percentage of companies using executive coaching was 64% of companies (in Australia) to 93% of American-based companies (USA). South Africa therefore appears to be following trends in which the majority of companies are using coaching. As economic times become tougher, it appears the importance of

coaching rises. Coaching appears to be used primarily to develop resilience, effective communication and leadership (Grant & Harley, 2013, Masten, 2001). A comprehensive study of coaching *spend* has not been completed since 2009 but various authors suggest that the coaching spend has increased since 2009, to approximately US$2 billion in 2012 (Attlee, 2013, Grant, 2013, Passmore, 2015, Fillery-Travis and Cox, 2014, Theeboom et al., 2014).

With this large investment, it is important to know how and why coaching works. Coaches have a vested interest in answering this question in the affirmative as it protects their income and validates their working life. This study instead of focusing on coaches' perceptions asks the recipients of coaching how they experienced the coaching. By analysing the value or the lack of value based on the executives' perceptions, this study will provide a valuable answer to the users of coaching services. However, it will also importantly assist in developing the theoretical base for ensuring this value.

The study is further intended to provide guidance to education providers of executive coaching training. It will also assist in the debate of professionalism or not of the field of executive coaching. It will aid purchasers of executive coaching services to be able set standards for delivery purposes from coaches.

1.5 Delimitations of the Study

Only executives working in South Africa who had received coaching were interviewed and included in the study.

The executives who participated were individuals in senior management or executive positions within organisations across South Africa.

The focus of the study was on the executive's own perception of his/her coaching experience.

A longitudinal approach was not adopted.

1.6 Definition of Terms

Business or Executive Coach – This refers to an external coach contracted by an organisation or an individual within an organisation to deliver coaching services. The terms “business coach” and/or “executive coach” will be used interchangeably for the purpose of this study. Business or executive coaches work with managers and senior executives to improve their performance. They also help the coachee / executive / manager to manage work life stresses in the midst of a highly competitive and challenging work environment (Stout-Rostron, 2009).

Client – This refers to the organisation or company that has employed the coach.

Coaching has many different definitions, which are explored in the literature review, but for the purposes of understanding what is meant by coaching, this definition is chosen. Coaching is generally seen as a thinking partnership between equals where the coach encourages the manager to create their own solutions, and develop awareness of conscious and unconscious behaviour (Stout-Rostron, 2012, p. 4).

Executive / **coachee** – This refers to the end user who receives the coaching services from the executive coach. These terms may be used interchangeably, depending on the reference cited I prefer the term “executive”.

1.7 Assumptions

It was assumed that a qualitative exploratory approach would allow for a deeper understanding of the phenomenon of the lived experience of coached executives and for the consequent theory development.

The executive who has been coached is better able to answer the question about the experience of coaching as it is based on their lived experience not observation or interpretation of their experience by coaches or others.

The coached executive will have the insight and reflective skills to comment on the process of coaching.

It was assumed the coaches would be honest and open throughout the process as they volunteered to be interviewed.

Any biases experienced by applying constructivist grounded theory methodology were noted through journaling and memos reflecting my responses to data.

1.8 Chapter Outline

- ***Chapter one*** *provides an introduction, context, purpose and significance of the study in addition to providing the delimitations, assumptions and definitions relevant to the research.*
- ***Chapter two*** *covers the research methodology and the motivations for why constructivist grounded theory was chosen. It also explores the paradigm in which the research is located. Details of sampling, data collection procedures, the data used in the study and the process of analysis are also discussed.*
- ***Chapter three*** *details the findings obtained from the data analysis process and describes key trends and patterns. This chapter lays the foundation for the next chapter, which takes the evidence and data analysis and moves into the theory development.*
- ***Chapter four*** *develops the theory based on the previous chapter's analysis. It analyses, integrates and links current literature with the findings. Recommendations for further research are also tabled in this chapter.*
- ***Chapter five*** *shares the experience of the researcher. This is in keeping with the chosen methodology of constructivist grounded theory, in which the researcher is an integral part of the study.*
- ***References*** *are listed at the end of the final chapter, followed by appendices which include permissions and interview guidelines.,*

CHAPTER TWO – RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction and Overview of the Chapter

Figure 2.1 below depicts the structure of this chapter. A description of the figure and how to interpret it follows after the figure.

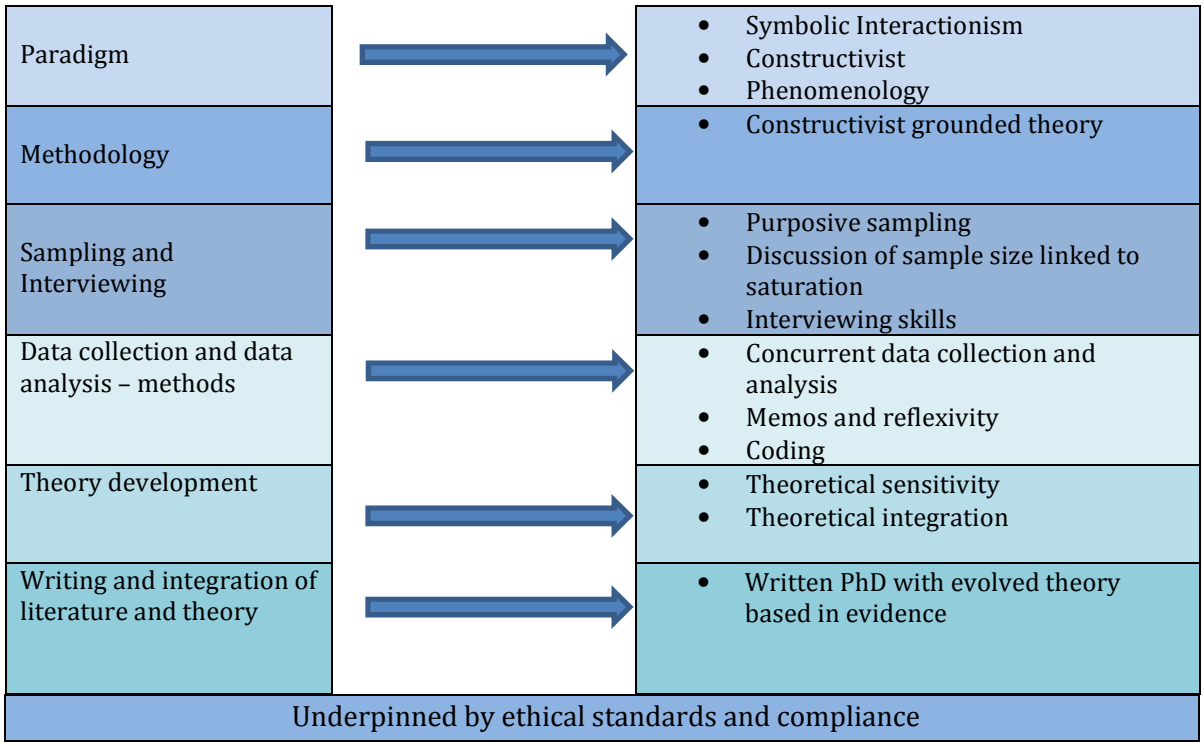


Figure 2.1: *Overview of chapter two*

The column on the left describes the broad focus area of a section in the chapter. The column on the right describes what is discussed under the section. To illustrate this under the section on paradigm, the concept of symbolic interactionism, constructivism and phenomenology are discussed. The chapter first positions the philosophical underpinnings (the paradigms) that informed the selection of the methodology. It then explains the rationale for the use of constructivist grounded theory and follows up by describing the sampling process, including the reason for the size of the sample and how theoretical sampling was used. Fundamental to constructivist grounded theory is concurrent data collection and data analysis.

Coding and concurrent analysis, memos and reflexivity are described as they occurred (Charmaz, 2014, Birks et al., 2008, Egan, 2002, McGhee et al., 2007, Charmaz, 2014). The emergence of theory is described in terms of process that took place, not the actual theory that was developed. The developed theory is discussed in chapter four; this chapter merely describes how it evolved and the processes that were followed.

2.2 Paradigm and Philosophical Underpinning of Research Design

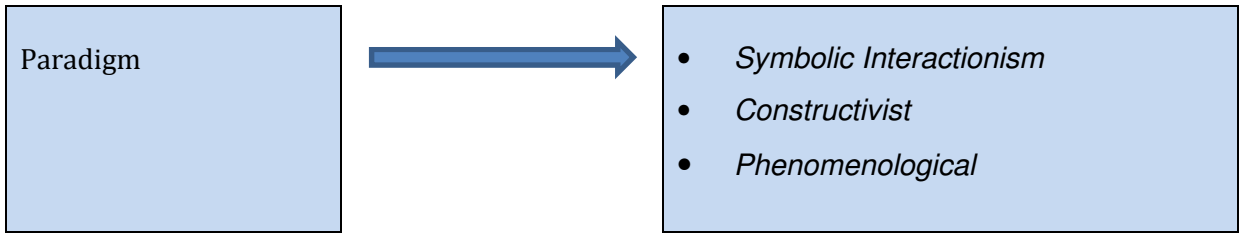


Figure 2.2: *Paradigm and research design*

Methodology flows from the philosophical orientation of the researcher. Guba and Lincoln in Denzin and Lincoln (2000, p. 105) state that "questions of method are secondary to questions of paradigm". They define a paradigm as a "basic belief system or worldview that guides the researcher not only in choice of method but in ontological and epistemologically fundamental ways". The ontological question would focus on the perceptions of reality, while the epistemological questions would focus on the nature of the relationship between the researcher and the participant and the reader of the research and the methodological question would focus on how this information can be found.

I will begin by exploring the ontological question of how I perceive reality and subsequently how this would have influenced my research approach and my selection of methodology. My philosophical orientation has been influenced strongly by the work I do and the area I am researching, namely business coaching. I have been coaching for close to 20 years and in my experience I have found people see their world from different perspectives and that their experiences influence the

language that they use to describe their world and this in turn influences their world. An example , an adult who was bullied as a child might have the the word “bully” in his vocabulary and when in the corporate world power politics are at play, he might revert to describing the manager as a “corporate bully”. In contrast, someone who has not had this experience might describe the manager as narcissistic based on their training in psychology and react differently. The same experience gets labelled differently and evokes a different behaviour. There are, therefore, multiple realities and perceptions.

A philosophical orientation that supports my experience is that of symbolic interactionism. Charmaz (2014, p. 9) describes how:

> “[p]ragmatism informed symbolic interactionism, a theoretical perspective that assumes society, reality and self are constructed through interaction and thus rely on language and communication. The perspective assumes that interaction is inherently dynamic and interpretive and addresses how people create, enact and change meanings and actions. Symbolic interaction assumes that people can and do think about their lives and actions rather than respond mechanically to stimuli.”

The very approach of coaching is congruent with this philosophy as it is believed that by talking and thinking about one’s life, one is able to construct and give meaning. The original concepts underpinning symbolic interactionism developed by seminal author Herbert Blumer, over the period 1969 to 1981, are summarised by Denzin, N. (2004). Symbolic Interactionism in Jenner, Flick, von Kardoff and Steinke (Eds) *A qualitative companion to research* (pp. 81–88) London: Sage. In the summary it states that “meanings are modified through an interpretive process which involves self-reflective individuals symbolically interacting with one another.’’

Coaching is a space for self-reflection and allowing oneself to view a situation in a certain way or to challenge one’s views about a situation. Coaching becomes part of the interpretive space or process. The paradigm of symbolic interactionism is therefore an appropriate tradition or theoretical perspective to underpin this research

due to the content of the research but furthermore due to the methodology of constructivist grounded theory, which will be described shortly. Subjective meanings emerge from experience and they subsequently change as experience changes. In constructivist grounded theory, the emergence of concepts based on evidence and the simultaneous process of data collection and data analysis is supportive of the changing meaning based on experience.

One of the key ways in which symbolic interactionism plays out in research is that if reality is constructed through interaction, the interaction of the researcher will therefore have an impact on and be part of the research process. This in turn impacts on the epistemological question of the nature of the relationship between researcher and participants and users of the research process. Knowledge is not given but constructed. This constructivist approach dismisses an authoritative expert, value-free voice of the researcher. It then leads to the need for the researcher to develop a strong reflexivity that lets them reflect on their biases and assumptions (Charmaz, 2014, McGhee et al., 2007). Reflexivity is an awareness of the manner in which the researcher as a distinct unique individual with a particular background, culture and social role has an impact on the research process. The very way in which the interviews were conducted was grounded in the belief that I as the interviewer needed to be aware of my biases so I could hear the participant's views clearly. More on reflexivity and the debate between bracketing (separating own view) and bringing own view into the fore is discussed later in this chapter.

There was a strong division in the 1990s between constructivist and social construction, with social constructionism researchers tending to dismiss their subjectivity in the social constructions they identified. This separation has receded in the last decade but for purposes of clarity the original term "constructivist" is used. Constructivists tend to acknowledge knowing and learning as being rooted in social interaction.

Lincoln and Guba in Denzin and Lincoln (2000) summarise constructivism as: the ontology is relativism where realities are specifically constructed; the epistemology is transactional and subjective as opposed to objective; and the methodology is

dialectical and hermeneutic (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). This is congruent with my view on business coaching and the research of business coaching. I have discussed the belief that there are multiple realities and the very interaction between coach and client and researcher and participant will result in the reality being jointly constructed and emerging. I will now discuss the link to phenomenology.

My research focuses on the lived experience of coached executives. "Phenomenology" is an all-encompassing term used to describe both a philosophical movement and an array of research approaches. I will first discuss it as a philosophical movement and when discussing methodology I will contrast grounded theory and phenomenology and share the methodological choices made. The philosophy, however, does influence my research design and paradigm.

Phenomenology is about developing a deep understanding of lived experiences by surfacing assumptions and beliefs about the ways of being and knowing (Sokolowski, 2000). Reality is understood through the embodied experience of a phenomenon. By examining the individual's experiences, subjective meaning surfaces and is then richly described. There is an acknowledgement of the role of subjectivity and that reality is constructed and that the values of the researcher will influence the way findings are generated and interpreted (Finlay, 2008b, Ajjawi and Higgs, 2007, Starks and Trinidad, 2007). The strong interpretative, descriptive orientation is very characteristic of phenomenology and the role of reflexivity and the debate around bracketing will be addressed shortly. It is important to understand the phenomenon from the perspective of the people involved. In my research I am aiming to develop coaching process theory based on the lived experience of the coached executives. It is important that the perspective of the individual being coached is explored. The largest percentage of coaching research looks at coaching from the coach perspective or the organisational perspective not from the coachee or executive's perspective (Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, Grant, 2009, Feldman and Lankau, 2005, Grant, 2010, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007, Bennett, 2006).

It is perhaps helpful to recognise that a number of qualitative approaches to research have borrowed and built upon phenomenological philosophy and techniques (Wertz, 2005). Finlay (2012, p. 9) states that

> "a genuinely psychological qualitative method implicitly uses the descriptive psychological reflection so characteristic of the phenomenological approach. In such cases, it is perhaps best to view research which does not fully embrace the phenomenological project's commitment to description, and the researcher having an open phenomenological attitude (if not actually applying specific reductions), as phenomenologically inspired or phenomenologically orientated."

It will be seen when discussing methodology choice that I made, that while the study is grounded in a phenomenological orientation (being open to seeing the world in a fresh naïve way), it does not meet the requirements of a full-on phenomenological method. This is primarily due to two issues – the method of analysis is not a phenomenological reductionist method (as prescribed by the more traditional phenomenologists (Giorgi, 1997, Finlay, 2008b) and phenomenology is not used for the purposes of theory development.

Briefly phenomenology and grounded theory will be contrasted. I am looking at the lived experience of coached executives and exploring lived experiences is rooted in a phenomenological approach. Phenomenologists ask questions about lived experience (Starks and Trinidad, 2007, Finlay, 2008b, Finlay, 2012). Grounded theory relates to phenomenology in that it has an objective of understanding a phenomenon (Egan, 2002, Corbin and Strauss, 1990); however, it aims to rather generate theory from the evidence based in the field – from the situation as it is (McGhee et al., 2007). Phenomenology and grounded theory therefore have some commonalities. If the purpose of a study is purely to understand the lived experience, it would be a phenomenological study but if it is to use understanding to develop theory, it would be a grounded theory study based in appreciation or orientation of phenomenology. The end product of phenomenology would be a thematic

description of structures of lived experience as opposed to a written theory which would be the end product of grounded theory (Starks and Trinidad, 2007).

2.3 Selection of Methodology – Constructivist Grounded Theory

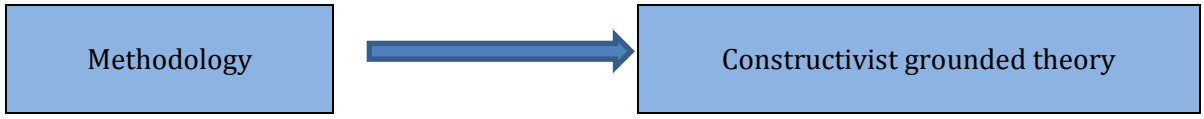


Figure 2.3: *Methodology and constructivist grounded theory*

I needed to select a methodology that would address the topic "Developing coaching process theory based on the lived experience of coached executives". A key driver for the research was the need to develop coaching theory based in evidence. As coaching is a multi-disciplinary field, it draws on theories from the other fields such as education, management and psychology. There is very little empirical coaching theory development and much of the theory is an adaptation of an existing theory that is then applied to the realm of coaching (Grant and Cavanagh, 2004, Grant, 2010, Passmore and Gibbes, 2007, Fillery-Travis and Lane, 2006). There is a scholarly need for a strong theoretical foundation in coaching. This foundation should support practitioners. Four interrelated areas are suggested for the focus of coaching research: the design of coaching interventions, individual characteristics of the coach and the coachee, and the relationship between the coach and the coachee (Theeboom, 2014). These four areas in fact together combine to form the coaching process and it is this coaching process and the subsequent theory development that is the aim of the study. I wanted to understand *how* coaching worked based on the lived experiences of the coached executives.

From an anecdotal level it seems as though more people are beginning to do as Theeboom suggests and identify theoretical fields on which coaching could draw. Some areas are adult learning theories, psychology, emotional intelligence and personality theory (Theeboom, 2014). An example of this theory development approach would be taking Carl Rogers' theory of unconditional positive self-regard and applying it to the coaching approach and perhaps evaluating its efficacy. The

integration of a theory into the coaching approach was and is primarily driven by a coach or an academic with a strong background in that field. Hence, we have two dominant areas emerging in underpinning coaching theoretical research – a strong psychological orientation with researchers whose background was originally psychology versus a more business orientation background driven by researchers based at business schools.

Coaching education sits in psychology departments in some universities (University of Johannesburg, University of Pretoria in South Africa) and in business schools in other universities (University of the Witwatersrand, University of Cape Town and University of Stellenbosch in South Africa). In developing a curriculum for coaching education in 2006, it was found that coaching education in Australia is largely based in psychology departments and in the USA primarily based in business schools. The United Kingdom tended to have a mixture.

It is interesting to note where the early influencers of coaching had their own theoretical origins. Vikki Brock used a grounded theory study to identify the roots and origins of coaching as her PhD research area in 2008. She labelled the original generation as the "transmitter generation". She describes them and their role as follows:

> "The transmitter generation is composed of those influencers who took the originators' theories and models and adapted them to the emerging discipline of coaching. The earliest literature reference to these influencers was in the 1980s. Of the 17 transmitter-generation influencers on coaching, 8 (41.2%) were from business, 4 (23.5%) were from psychology, 3 (17.6%) were from sports, and 2 (11.8%) from philosophy" (Brock, 2008, Mills et al., 2006).

This structural foundation influences the lens of research orientation. An example is shared, demonstrating that the physical location of coach training – be it a department of psychology or a business school – would impact the perceptions of the coach. So if a person is trained with a psychological lens and coaching is seen as deeply rooted in psychological theories, they may not even reflect on the

contextual aspects of strategy and business as their lens does not look at those components. It is therefore important to develop theory based on the empirical evidence and not on previously held theoretical frameworks or orientations unless supported by the evidence.

It is for this reason that grounded theory was the chosen methodology for this study. The aim of the research is to provide a deeper understanding of executives' experience of coaching and based on that develop theory. Grounded theory is a methodology that is grounded in gathering data and analysing it in a systematic manner (Bowen, 2008).

It is useful to understand the history of grounded theory, even if only superficially. Initially, I as a novice grounded theorist was overwhelmed by seemingly contradictory statements. By understanding the history from 1967 to 2014, I was able to understand where the methodological differences were rooted and whether they were rooted in a paradigm or underpinning philosophy or in the application of methods.

When grounded theory was first described, the pervasive methodological assumptions of the time were largely grounded in positivism (Mills et al., 2006, Birks and Mills, 2011). The initial contribution to qualitative research was important in that it defied the assumption that qualitative research was unsystematic. The result was a more empirical structured approach to develop theory (Birks and Mills, 2011). This original purpose of grounded theory still resonates with the stated purpose of my research, to develop coaching theory based on a structured empirical approach.

In the 1990s there was a change in worldviews with a strong move towards an underlying assumption that our social reality is constructed as we interact with one another and no objective reality exists. Charmaz (2014) believes that constructivist grounded theory evolved in response to a postmodern world where social reality is multiple, processual and constructed. The researcher's position is therefore an inherent part of the reality of the research. There is no neutral observer or absolute truth or objective data but rather a subjective interaction with the data. The key

difference between grounded theory and constructivist grounded theory is that in the original philosophy theory was discovered from the data with the researcher being a scientific observer. In constructivist grounded theory the researcher is a part of the world they study, part of the data collection process and the analysis. The theories are constructed through “our past and present involvements and interactions with people, perspectives and research problems” (Charmaz, 2014: 17).

The historical evolution from Strauss and Corbin to Charmaz’ s position of calling the theory constructivist grounded theory is documented and it is recognised that Charmaz is the seminal author in constructivist grounded theory (Mills et al., 2006, Thornberg, 2012, McCann and Clark, 2003, Birks and Mills, 2011). Grounded theory has evolved since it was first described in 1967. Charmaz is quoted extensively as she is the original researcher who evolved grounded theory into constructivist grounded theory. I found a number of articles about constructivist grounded theory during my review of the literature. Without question, every author/researcher relied on the work of Charmaz, either in developing their reasoning for adopting a constructivist approach to their own studies or in exploring a constructivist principle; e.g. reflexivity or theory development (Charmaz, 2014, Mills et al., 2006, Egan, 2002). Where appropriate throughout this research the other authors are quoted but in describing the details of the theoretical approach, the author that all constructivist grounded theory studies refer to is Kathy Charmaz and so in describing the constructivist grounded theory approach, Charmaz’ s work will be quoted extensively as there are few alternative sources.

Studies that have used constructivist grounded theory come predominantly from the disciplines of education, psychology, sociology and nursing and medicine. A few of these studies were reviewed, to understand the application of constructivist grounded theory, but they did not add additional value in terms of description of the method (Cooper et al., 2012, Ghezeljeh and Emami, 2009, Martin and Barnard, 2013, Charmaz, 2011, Bryant, 2003). The purpose of this research was not to conduct a review of all constructivist grounded theory studies, but to assess whether

meaningful contributions about constructivist grounded theory methodologically had been made by other researchers and authors.

This methodology is congruent with the philosophy of coaching being a co-creation and a reflection on reality and as such constructivist grounded theory was the methodology of choice. I therefore see myself as a part of the world in which I am studying and my interactions with the research problem are active and therefore journaling or writing memos or notes is a critical component of the research. This research component is discussed in detail in section 2.6, on reflexivity and theoretical sensitivity.

As such, qualitative research is flexible (Denzin and Lincoln, 2000). Qualitative research suggests that truth and reality are always plural and will to some extent include individual and subjective viewpoints about perceived truth and reality. The researcher is inextricably part of the research and needs to discuss this and make their voice very evident (Mantzoukas, 2004).

The methodology chosen should not be presumptuous, but should allow for the emerging empirical evidence to surface. The belief is that given an emerging field of coaching and that its meaning would be socially constructed, and inductive and in depth, it is important to choose a research design that is congruent with the researcher's beliefs about the nature of reality (Mills et al., 2006).

Having contextualised the paradigm, namely symbolic interactionism, constructivism and a phenomenological attitude and looking at the desired research goal of development of theory, it became evident the most logical and appropriate method would be constructivist grounded theory. The remainder of this chapter describes the methods employed in implementing the research. One of the distinguishing features of constructivist grounded theory is that data collection and data analysis are happening simultaneously (Birks and Mills, 2011, Charmaz, 2014). The researcher collects data initially with a purposive sample. The data from these initial encounters is coded before more data is collected or generated and the process of analysis repeated. Theoretical sampling follows the initial purposive sampling process. This

process is described below in comprehensive detail. It is this concept that differentiates grounded theory from other types of research design that require the researcher either initially to collect and subsequently analyse the data or to construct a theoretical proposition and then collect data to test their hypothesis (Egan, 2002, Creswell, 2013).

The writing of this methodological chapter therefore focuses on data collection and analysis happening concurrently but for purposes of understanding each component they are described separately.

2.4 Sampling and Interviewing

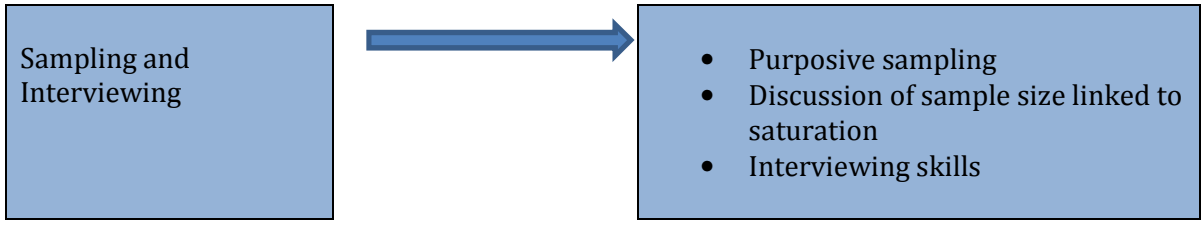


Figure 2.4: *Sampling and interviewing*

2.4.1 Purposive sampling and actual sample size

The initial sample was selected purposively. This is theoretically consistent with interpretive qualitative research. After the initial sample was selected, I moved to theoretical sampling, which is discussed in considerable detail below. Guest, Bunce and Johnson (2006)p61 state that "Purposive sampling allows for participants to be selected according to predetermined criteria relevant to a particular research objective." The selection requires coached executives to be interviewed. The sample was drawn from opportunities and referrals as a result of my own contacts. My knowledge of which companies were offering coaching was based on a) my years in the industry, b) supervising Masters students and c) my membership of a professional coaching body – Coaching and Mentoring South Africa (COMENSA, 2016).

Companies that offered coaching were approached through an email and asked if they would be able to provide details of executives that had been coached within their organisations. These executives were approached directly to see if they were willing to be part of the study. The Human Resources Directors were primarily the point of contact and in some instances the Learning and Development Managers or Talent Managers. The research question was about lived experience of the coached executives so the important criterion was coached executives who had experienced coaching regardless of who the coach was and regardless of industry.

Eleven companies agreed to the research but only seven companies were able to commit to the research process due to various constraints such as year-end and executives not being available for interviews.

Eleven people were interviewed across seven different companies / organisations. The organisations represented were:

- *Financial services sector – two organisations – one person in one organisation, three people in another organisation*
- *Manufacturing – one person*
- *Pharmaceutical research company – three people*
- *Government – one person*
- *Legal company – two people*

This was the initial sample of 11 people. The additional analysis of coaching students did not evaluate the industries they came from as the reason for selection was that they were coaching students. The students were studying a two-year part-time post-graduate diploma that required four days of intensive coaching practice and six months of a supervised client coaching internship.

Ten coaches had coached the executives. One coach had coached two people. Only two coaches were male.

The coached executives consisted of five males and six females. Only one executive was black; the rest were white.

I therefore began with 11 participants. Mason's study of PhDs found that people chose numbers ending in 5s or 10s, although there was no significance in having 10 rather than 9 or 11 participants (Mason, 2010).

2.4.2 Commentary and reflection on sample size and links to saturation

Historically, initially qualitative researchers anticipated criticism from quantitative colleagues and cautiously chose larger sample sizes, but, as qualitative approaches have matured, sample sizes have in fact decreased in size. But, what is an appropriate sample size?

The literature review found very little empirical data on the reasoning for or against small sample sizes. I will share briefly my conclusion but begin by referencing a study that has not been duplicated in the last ten years and showed some significant findings. Guest et al (2006) found only seven sources that provided guidelines for actual sample sizes. Five of the sources do not provide evidence and reasoning for their sample size recommendations. They vary from six participants in Morse (1994, p. 225) to 20 – 35 participants in Kuzel (1992, p. 41) (Creswell, 1998). Grounded theorists have taken contradictory positions on sample sizes, with some grounded theorists emphasising saturating concepts (Bowen, 2008) and others focusing on comparing many incidents (Glaser and Strauss, 1998). It is also argued that a very small sample can produce a study of lasting significance and the factors that impact on this would be the quality of the interviews and the depth of the analysis (Charmaz, 2014). In my readings I found that the things that impacted sample size included:

- *Saturation (Bowen, 2008, Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Thomson, 2011, Glaser and Holton, 2004, Mason, 2010)*
- *Focused research question – not too broad a topic (Egan, 2002, Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Thomson, 2011)*
- *Grounded theory methodology – concurrent data analysis and data collection (Kwortnik Jr, 2003, Charmaz, 2014 Glaser and Holton, 2004)*
- *Appropriately selected individuals / participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Bryant, 2003, Glaser, 1978, Glaser and Holton, 2004)*

- *Expertise from the researcher – this refers to their knowledge of the field they are researching (Glaser and Holton, 2004)*
- *Multiple interviews with same participants (Morse et al., 2002, Bowen, 2008)*
- *Skill of interviewer (Charmaz, 2014)*
- *Theoretical sampling (Bowen, 2008; B G Glaser & Holton, 2004; Mason, 2010; Strauss & Corbin, 1998; Thomson, 2011)*

These items are discussed in more detail below.

Qualitative samples must be large enough to ensure that most or all of the perceptions that might be important are uncovered, but at the same time if the sample is too large data becomes repetitive and, eventually, superfluous. If a researcher remains faithful to the principles of qualitative research, sample size in the majority of qualitative studies should generally follow the concept of saturation (Mason, 2010, Bowen, 2008, Charmaz, 2014).

2.4.2.1 Saturation

Ultimately, qualitative samples should be drawn up to reflect the purpose and aims of the study. While there are other factors that affect sample size in qualitative studies, researchers generally use saturation as a guiding principle during their data collection (Mason, 2010). Experience or expertise of the researcher is considered to be a key component in reducing size of sample and for reaching saturation (Goulding 2005, Lee et al., 2002). Theoretical saturation occurs in data collection when there is no new or relevant data (Strauss and Corbin, 1998). The researcher interviews participants until the data they are gathering from the interviews becomes repetitive; i.e. no new data emerges (Thomson, 2011, Lee et al., 2005, Coyne, 1997, Douglas, 2003).

In my initial 11 interviews, my first interview generated 56 codes. As analysis and data gathering were happening simultaneously I was able to be aware of new codes captured. There were no new codes after eight interviews. Participant 8 was an experienced trained coach as well as an executive. Her contribution added 24 new codes. I then went back to each transcript and saw if her insights could be coded on

to those transcripts and did comparisons. In fact, each time a new code was added the previous transcript/s were reread and recoded to see if the new codes could be applied to that transcript and if the coding process had possibly missed allocating a code. Details of the analysis process are described in depth in the next section. This is shared here as it relates to saturation. Table 2.1 captures the first round of coding.

Table 2.1: *Number of codes per transcript*

Transcript Number	NEW Codes Allocated	Cumulative Codes
1	56	
2	9	65
3	1	66
4	12	79
5	6	86
6	10	96
7	5	101
8	24	125
9	0	125
10	0	125
11	0	125

Saturation is often claimed in any number of qualitative research reports without any overt description of what it means or how it was achieved (Bowen, 2008, Morse et al., 2002, Thomson, 2011). Strauss and Corbin (1998) suggest that saturation is a "matter of degree". They suggest that the longer researchers examine, familiarise themselves with and analyse their data, the more potential they will find for "the new to emerge" (p. 136). Instead, they conclude that saturation should be more concerned with reaching the point where it becomes "counter-productive" and "the

new" that is discovered does not necessarily add anything to the overall story, model, theory or framework (p. 136). They admit that sometimes the problem of developing a conclusion to their work is not necessarily a lack of data but an excess of it. As the analysis begins to take shape it is important for the researcher to become more disciplined and be focused on analysing the data that is relevant to the research question and problem, as well as to the emerging theory.

2.4.2.2 Narrow-focus research topic

A broader research scope requires considerably more data and consequently requires more data collection, which means more interviews. By narrowing the focus of the research question at the beginning by doing pilot interviews and using the insights gained, I was able to also narrow the focus and thereby reduce the number of interviews (cf. Strauss & Corbin, 1998). I was therefore not measuring the return on investment, whether coaches were skilled, whether the companies perceived coaching to work, but was very mindful that I had to focus on the experience of the executive and then use that data to develop the theory of the coaching process (as it had been experienced) – no more, no less.

2.4.2.3 Concurrent data analysis and data collection

Ongoing decisions about the direction of data collection are dependent on the emergence of categories and grounded theory. The founders of grounded theory research emphasised that data selection is a flexible and dialectic process (Egan, 2002). Therefore, sampling is also aimed at the same end result of iterative analysis and might necessitate interviewing participants who are more versed in the phenomena, in this way providing higher quality data (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

I used the process of iterative analysis, which is a process in which I as researcher was moving back and forth through the data in order to find, compare, and verify the patterns, concepts, categories, properties and dimensions of the phenomena (Kwortnik Jr, 2003). My ensuing interviews were then focused on filling out those patterns, categories and dimensions to the point of saturation. An example of this is that in an early interview a participant spoke about the importance of being able to

travel to a coaching session as it gave them the time to shift from work mode to reflective mode. Some coaching sessions are held at a client's office. I was now able to explore the concept of venue and time in getting to venue for future interviewees. Timing concepts emerged as a key factor but if this dual analysis with interviews happening simultaneously to data collection had not been taking place, my interviews would not have been able to be adapted.

2.4.2.4 Selection of appropriate candidates

The flexibility of theoretical sampling allows the researcher to follow directions indicated by the data; hence, a reduction in sample size is possible by choosing appropriate participants (Strauss and Corbin, 1998).

By using theoretical sampling and targeting the most knowledgeable participants, the quality of the data is strengthened. "There is an inverse relationship between the amount of usable data obtained from each participant and the number of participants" (Morse, 2000, p. 4). In other words, the greater the amount of usable data a researcher is able to gather from a single participant, the fewer participants will be required (Morse, 2000). All the data I gathered was usable because all interviewees had experienced coaching and were able to reflect upon it.

2.4.2.5 Expertise in research area

Expertise in the research area helped to facilitate a smaller sample size as well as achieve usable results (Jette et al., 2003). However, this is a fine line to manage because if the researcher positions themselves as an expert, this could hamper the openness from the participants as they may be wary of being judged and not disclose information that may let the participants be seen in a less favourable light by the interviewer. These factors are often not given sufficient coverage in the preparation and positioning of the interview (Mason, 2010, Charmaz, 2014, Thomson, 2011, Morse et al., 2002).

2.4.2.6 Multiple interviews

Using multiple interviews with the same participant to gather more in-depth data leads to a smaller sample size (Lee, Woo, & Mackenzie, 2002). I did not use this technique as many of the other criteria, eg having a narrowly focused research question, interviewing skill and subject-matter expertise on the part of the researcher, achieving coding saturation, and doing multiple rounds of analysis, had been met for the selection of the sample size.

2.4.2.7 The skill of the interviewer in relation to sample size

Furthermore, research is conducted by researchers with various levels of skill and experience. The skill of the interviewer most decisively will impact on the quality of data collected (Morse et al., 2002) and subsequently there will be an effect in achieving saturation (Guest et al., 2006). This is a consequence of the quality of the interaction between the interviewer and the participant. Mason (2010) argues that possibly 10 interviews conducted by an experienced interviewer will elicit richer data than 50 interviews by an inexperienced or novice interviewer. He shares the study by Guest (2006) published as a journal article entitled "*How Many Interviews Are Enough? An Experiment with Data Saturation and Variability*" as one of his supporting arguments. Guest (in Guest et al., 2006) shares how in their study, after they had analysed 60 interviews with female sex workers from two West African countries, their thematic codebook was relatively complete and constant after only 12 interviews. He adds that if they had been interested only in high-level, overarching themes, it was evident from their experiment that a sample of six interviews would probably have provided sufficient useful analyses. Charmaz (2014, p. 108) states that "[a] small sample can produce an in-depth interview study of lasting significance, but it depends on the initial and emergent research questions and how the researcher conducted the study and the analysis". She references a study by Speedling in 1981 which has had lasting significance, and had only eight people in the sample. Speedling, however, observed the patients in hospital over several months and interviewed family members as well. She therefore suggests that

the iterative process of concurrent analysis in grounded theory aids ongoing reflection on sample size.

Any of these factors along the qualitative journey can affect how and when saturation is reached and when researchers feel they have enough data (Mason, 2010).

Because of the relevance of interview skill in determining sample size I am going to demonstrate the skill of the interviewer from an extract from one interview.

Prior to sharing an extract I would like to highlight some of the skills of interviewing and asking questions.

Initially, it was decided that the most appropriate data collection method was interviews. Owing to the confidential nature of coaching, observation would not be possible.

Constructivist grounded theory requires “rich” data. The participants in the research need to be able to speak freely, tell their stories and to reflectively develop their ideas. Charmaz (2014) has developed the terminology “Intensive Interviews”. These intensive interviews allow for the ebb and flow of dialogue. They are often described as “conversations with purpose”. The research aimed to develop theory based on the lived experience of coached executives and as such it was useful to truly understand what their lived experience was about from their perspective. The interview therefore facilitated an exploration of various topics, which would allow the research objective to be met through analysis.

A loose interview schedule was prepared but the interview process was guided by engaging deeply with the participant and their issues (Appendix E). A critical skill in this interview process was listening (Seidman, 2013, Charmaz, 2014, Smith et al., 2009). Unless the interviewer listens attentively and probes in order to learn more about the participant’s life world, the data will be too thin for analysis. Seidman (2013) lists three types of listening. The interviewer must first listen to what the participant is saying – the substance or content. The interviewer must then listen for the “inner voice” versus the “outer voice”. Are they being authentic and real or

projecting what they feel is expected of them? The third listening skill is being aware of process as well as substance. This would focus on how much has been covered, non-verbal cues, the context and being aware of where to go to next. These observations were noted in memos written immediately after the interview.

The interviewer and interviewee are both active participants within the research process. The interview is a living dialogue and while the initial focus is the questions asked by the interviewer, there is a view that the interview will in part be led by the participant's concerns and conversation topic areas will be followed up as long as they are relevant to the research question. This will lead to emergence of concepts as opposed to "led" concepts and constructs.

The participants selected all had first-hand experience of the experience of being coached. The aim of the interview was to understand their perspectives, what they give meaning to and to learn from the participating executive.

In constructive grounded theory the way in which the interviewer interviews is critically important. Setting context and being flexible with open-ended non-judgemental questions is a key success factor to the analysis that follows. The interview guide is attached (Appendix E).

The very process of developing the interview guide required explicit thinking about what the interview is expected to cover. I was familiar with the guide and the continua I was exploring. I was able to move across the topics based on the responses of the participants. I covered the same areas with all participants but not necessarily in the same order. I piloted the interview schedule with two interviews which were not included in my analysis but assisted in developing the phrasing and preparing the wording for sensitive areas and complex concepts.

One of the key insights I gained from conducting the pilot interviews was that I had assumptions about where the data would go and my initial questions were too leading. An example would be: "Would you describe your coach as directive or non-directive?" This led to an either/or answer, with the participant choosing one of the options. Instead, in the final interviews, I would explore the concepts of direction /

non-direction by asking things like: “Describe the process of sharing information with your coach – what helped you share?” This would lead to information surfacing such as: “The coach would ask or challenge assumptions in a direct but non-judgemental way.” This allowed for a more complex answer to emerge and factors such as non-judgemental attitude to be linked to the concept of directness.

This theoretical understanding of interviewing skills was underpinned by my training initially as a social worker, combined with many years’ experience as a coach utilising questions and exploratory skills in the nature of my work. An extract of an interview is presented and described below (p. 1, paragraphs 17 to 25). The areas in italics are not part of the transcript but reflection on the use of the skills of the interviewer. My interviewer role and questions are in bold.

You use that word a couple of times – ‘challenge’ – is that an important part of that relationship, that she listened, was open and sharing, but also challenging? (*I as the interviewer am listening and have heard a word repeated a few times; I then probe the word.)*

Ja I think for me personally I think so: I think to be involved with someone who wouldn’t challenge your thinking or your thought process or whatever it might be, I think you would lose out. I think it is important that I found someone who would not necessarily push back but force you to look at things through a different lens or have a different insight or something.

Can you think, when she was challenging you and making you look at things through a different lens, what she did or how she did it, that didn’t make you feel judged? *(I as the interviewer link the ‘challenging’ to something that was stated as very important by the executive – the non-judgement. I am making links in the moment and aiming to understand those links or test out the links and assumptions.)*

So what was happening in that process, that made you say ‘hang on A…., wait a minute, what about this?’ You know if you had to try and explain it to somebody who had never been coached before, what was she doing in that challenging role, without judgement? *(I am aiming to get specific behavioural descriptions but also creating a climate of safety in suggesting telling someone who had never been coached before. The theme of fear of judgement had come through strongly in the interview and if the executive began to feel his answers might be judged, he might withdraw.)*

Um, just offering alternatives you know? It was never a thing of saying ‘well you should do X or Y….’ It wasn’t coming to any particular conclusions, but rather encouraging me to get there. At the time I did actually make recommendations to a couple of friends of mine who I knew were going through some challenges of their own from a work perspective, because it

is really worthwhile having a conversation, because I think it is an understanding of where you have been, where you're at, where you're trying to go to, and understanding the challenges of family and balance and life, and all that sort of stuff that we face at this time of our lives. And I think she got that, from her own relative position I could see that she would probably have some similar questions.

That brings to me a little bit about what you discussed, without going into the details, but the kind of themes of what you discussed. You spoke a little bit now about the work/life balance, the transition you were going through in terms of role, the leadership role: what were the kinds of themes and issues that you looked at in terms of coaching conversations?

I think she got a good understanding of where I come from as a person, so in terms of my role models now and I guess to understand how I made decisions, because I think that makes a big influence in terms of how you make decisions and how you carry things forward. What is important to you? So it was largely in terms of unpacking that sort of stuff and then getting to some of the detail around where you are at career-wise, family, and those kind of things.

You used the word 'thinking', that she challenged your thinking, how you look at things through a different lens and in a different way? Would you say that is one of the biggest benefits, the challenging of your thinking? (*I come back to the words he used earlier in the interview as I still feel I do not know what he means by challenging and I test out the benefit as earlier in the interview he stated it was a benefit. I have listened and am verifying what he said. I have not introduced a new benefit but am asking about his words and checking out and probing the words of challenging. A novice interviewer may struggle to do this in the moment.)*

I think so, ja. I think if you start off that the purpose of it is personal growth and personal development, you are not going to get into that personal development space if you are not being challenged, without being prodded and pushed but at least exploring. She was very encouraging in terms of reading certain articles, magazines or books, that sort of stuff that would encourage certain ways of thinking, or alternative ways of thinking – and having read that stuff I got a benefit from it.

So I think it was almost sort of multi-faceted in a way; it was kind of listening, understanding, offering of a different way but at the same time trying to add to what was the top almost in terms of what was forming or informing my decision making at the time. (*My intensive interviewing has led to a new concept that challenging is about challenging possibly underlying assumptions, values or patterns that inform decisions.)*

I am therefore supportive of Charmaz (2014) and Mason (2010), who believe that a skilled interviewer can generate qualitative data from a small sample whereas an inexperienced interviewer would require a larger sample. The primary concern is the detailed account of individual experience. The issue is quality, not quantity given the

complexity of most human phenomena. While Smith used Interpretive Phenomenological Analysis as a methodology, his comments about interviews apply as I recognised earlier that a phenomenological attitude underpins this research as I also saw that interviews are largely conducted in the same way in phenomenology and grounded research. More interviews and higher numbers are not necessarily indicative of "better" work or deeper and more accurate research. Successful analysis requires time, reflection and dialogue and larger datasets tend to inhibit all of these things (Smith et al., 2009).

2.4.2.8 Theoretical sampling

To recap:

Theoretical sampling is the process of data collection for generating theory in which the analyst jointly collects, codes and analyses the data and decides what data to collect next and where to find them, in order to develop the theory as it emerges. The process of data collection is controlled by the emerging theory. Beyond the decisions concerning initial collection of data, further collection cannot be planned in advance of the emerging theory. Only as the researcher discovers codes and tries to saturate them by theoretical sampling in comparison groups do the successive requirements for data collection emerge—both (1) what categories and their properties to be sampled further and (2) where to collect the data. By identifying emerging gaps in the theory, the analyst will be guided as to next sources of data collection and interview style. In this way, the analyst can continually adjust the control of data collection to ensure the data's relevance to the emerging theory (Glaser and Holton, 2004).

After analysing 11 interviews, I realised that certain concepts needed further clarification and felt that the participants needed to have more insight into the terminology describing coaching and defining what this meant for them. Six students who were studying coaching (mature adults who had previously been employed in a non-coaching role) had completed an assignment as part of their training. The assignment asked the participants to reflect on their coaching experience

immediately after the coaching and to record their reflections. Most of the interviews had been conducted after several sessions of coaching and sometimes a lapse in time had taken place. This would give immediacy to the reflections and would expand or confirm patterns from the analysis. Students had done this assignment independent of the research. I asked for permission to use these reflective assignments. Six students granted permission for their assignments to be analysed. In chapter three the patterns that were explored further are detailed.

2.5 Concurrent Data Collection and Data Analysis

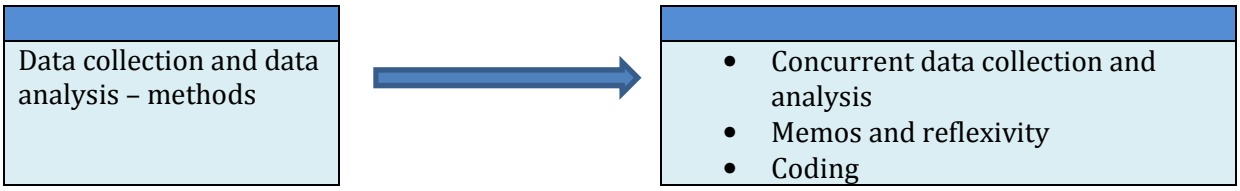


Figure 2.5: *Concurrent data collection and data analysis*

Grounded theory involves a constant comparison method of coding and analysing data (Starks and Trinidad, 2007, Birks and Mills, 2011, Bryant, 2003). The process of coding in grounded theory studies has undergone stages of being quite elaborate (Corbin and Strauss, 1990), to in more recent times becoming much more straightforward (Charmaz, 2014, Saldaña, 2015). The concurrent coding and data collection is described earlier (see section 2.4.2.3) and is merely restated here as a reminder that coding is not happening after all data gathering is complete.

2.6 Memo Writing and Reflexivity

All interviews were transcribed and the analysis began with my reading each transcript and writing memos, which captured my reaction to or insights into each transcript.

Memo writing is an intermediate step between data collection and writing drafts of paper (Charmaz, 2014). Memos capture thoughts, capture comparisons, crystallise

questions and make the work concrete and manageable. Part of the purpose of memos is to develop awareness of the researcher's prejudices and to be open to data that opposes the researcher's biases (McGhee et al., 2007).

Some qualitative researchers stress the need to make yourself as researcher as neutral as possible and to bracket the data (Giorgi, 1997, Tufford and Newman, 2012, Creswell, 2013). Bracketing is where researchers attempt to "bracket" or put aside their past knowledge, beliefs and theories about the phenomenon so as to understand the phenomenon in its appearing. "Novice researchers often misunderstand this process of bracketing as an initial first step where subjective bias is acknowledged as part of the project to establish the rigor and validity of the research." In fact, bracketing involves a process whereby "one simply refrains from positing altogether; one looks at the data with the attitude of relative openness" (Giorgi, 1994, p. 212). In bracketing it is suggested at least three particular areas of assumptions need to be put to one side: (1) theories and scientific knowledge; (2) claims from participants about truth or falsity; and (3) personal experiences and insights of the researcher which could cloud descriptions of the phenomenon itself (Ashworth, 1996).

It is suggested that the researcher be explicit about the process of bracketing or, if following a more Heideggerian position and choosing to reject the concept of reduction and bracketing, be transparent about their position. There is a fundamental philosophical tension between those who believe that looking beyond preconceptions is possible and desirable, and those who reject the notion that humans even have the capacity to bracket out preconceptions (Tufford and Newman, 2012).

Researchers with a hermeneutic orientation deny the possibility or desirability of bracketing researchers' own experiences. They believe that researchers' subjectivity should, therefore, be brought to the fore, and that researcher self-reflection constitutes an important step of the research process (Tufford and Newman, 2012, Finlay, 2012, Halling et al., 2006, Groenewald, 2004, Creswell and Clark, 2011). I would see myself as based in a more hermeneutic orientation and believe

awareness of preconceptions is possible, but to bracket them out totally is impossible. It is important to reflect continually on assumptions and thoughts that I as researcher have. I therefore bring them to the surface and draw them to the fore through my memos.

Constructivist grounded theory believes that we can be circumspect about our preconceptions but that continued reflexivity teaches us to challenge our assumptions. As a researcher, I therefore need to be deeply aware of my own biases and document them. I see myself as adopting the position described by Finlay (2008a, p. 3) in which the researcher "engages a dialectic movement between bracketing pre-understandings and exploiting them reflexively as a source of insight" (Finlay, 2008b, Finlay, 2008a).

Memos can be actively used to raise focused codes to conceptual categories.

An example is the memo I wrote after reading interview 6, which reads:

> *"Coaching is not a continuum, it is circular. An example is after action comes reflection and before reflection comes action. This person talks about deep levels of integration and how they were able to bring all of themselves into the coaching conversation. It seems that the magic in coaching lies in the transcendence and by this I mean the climbing beyond, the rising above."* – (Memo written by me after reading transcript 6)

Constructivist grounded theory is concerned with emerging patterns. I would therefore write memos capturing patterns as I saw them surface.

> *"Coaching does not seem to have an impact on behaviour change as reported by coached executives but rather seems to lead to better quality thinking. The executives talk about: 'I saw things through different eyes…It challenged my assumptions…It changed the way I viewed the world.*
>
> *Challenging seems to be an important behaviour / action that is required from the coach. The supportive place / action is almost a taken for granted but*

challenge is what seems to move the behaviour." (Memo 29 October 2014 – captured after highlighting all transcripts)

2.7 Coding

A pictorial representation of the stages in coding is presented below in Figure 2.6. The stages are circular as they may be repeated if new theory emerges and needs to be coded. Each of these aspects is discussed following the diagram. The diagram serves to highlight that these are separate but often repeated activities.

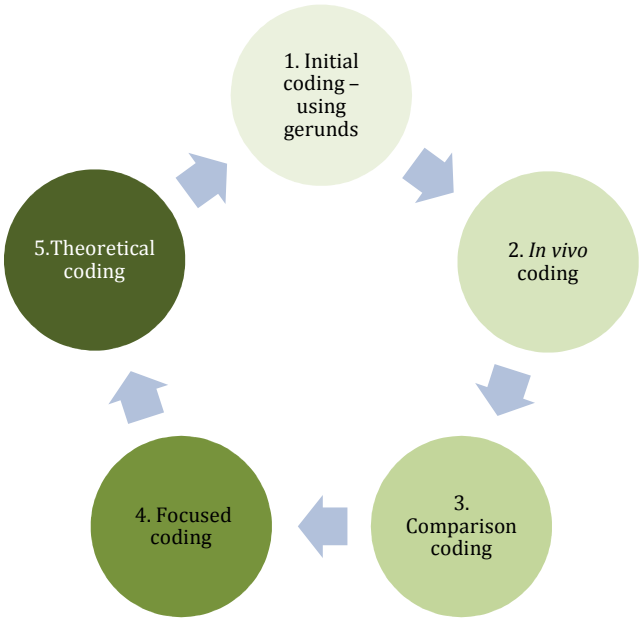


Figure 2.6: *Stages of coding*

I coded each transcript. Coding is the naming of segments of data that simultaneously summarises and accounts for each piece of data. With constructivist grounded theory "you move beyond concrete statements in the data to making analytical sense of stories, statements and observations. This process involves taking the data apart and then gleaning from the fragments and thus the analysis process begins" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 111).

During coding I had to remain open to what codes emerged. Grounded theorists create codes based on what they see in the data as opposed to having preconceived

codes that they allocate to data. The aim as codes are defined is to try to understand the participants' views and actions from their perspectives. It is a space of ambiguity and reliving and reviewing codes. New analytical questions emerge.

I coded using gerunds. A gerund is a word ending in "ing" that is made from a verb and used like a noun. Most qualitative coding is on topics or themes. When coding with gerunds, one is looking and focusing on actions rather than themes and topics. This is initially strange but it curbs our tendency to make conceptual leaps before the necessary analytical work is done. An example of coding for topics and themes is contrasted with grounded theory coding with gerunds. In Table 2.2, general themes are coded, but, in Table 2.3, coding takes place with gerunds. This allows the researcher to stay closer to the data and to begin the analysis from the participants' perspective. This line-by-line coding is a heuristic device to bring the researcher into the data. As can be seen from the example below, we see with the gerund focusing on "Thinking my world revolves around work" to "Thinking it is ok to sit and do nothing" to "Being at my best when I get time out". This highlights a shift in thinking, which leads to an insight. This is more descriptive of the process than of a theme. The line-by-line grounded theory coding with gerunds tends to go deeper into a studied phenomenon and explicate it (Charmaz, 2014). This is particularly useful when studying processes to construct theory and it enables the researcher to make implicit connections.

Table 2.2: *Example of thematic or topic coding*

Example of Themes / Topics	**Narrative to Be Coded**
Need control – driver for getting coaching	Simply because the key issue was it kind of drilled in my head that I need control. Really before that time, I wouldn't say I am a workaholic as such, but I kind of panic, I am a person who panics when things are not running; my colleague says I no longer need to do that now after the coaching, to be honest. Relax – but when things are not done, timelines and the pressure and a whole lot of

Example of Themes / Topics	Narrative to Be Coded
Work–life integration / balance	other things, I am kind of just wanting things done and everything and everything. And to an extent that I was neglecting my family, just thinking my life revolves around work and everything, always being in the best shape at work and doing that, and neglecting myself as well – just going to the gym, or just sitting at home and doing nothing. You know one thing I loved about coaching, it taught me something I was thinking the other day, that 'don't do something, do nothing' – that it is not wrong to sit and do nothing, and kind of just sit and do nothing. And I enjoyed doing nothing and I have seen that when I sometimes get time out, when I come back I am at my best.

Table 2.3: *Example of coding with gerunds*

Example of Gerunds	Narrative Data to Be Coded
Thinking drilled into my head Panicking Wanting everything done Neglecting my family Thinking my life revolves around work	Simply because the key issue was it kind of drilled in my head that I need control. Really before that time, I wouldn't say I am a workaholic as such, but I kind of panic, I am a person who panics when things are not running; my colleague says I no longer need to do that now after the coaching, to be honest. Relax – but when things are not done, timelines and the pressure and a whole lot of other things, I am kind of just wanting things done and everything and everything. And to an extent that I was neglecting my family, just thinking my life revolves around work and everything, always being in the best shape at work and doing that, and neglecting myself as well – just going to the gym, or just sitting at home and doing nothing.

Example of Gerunds	Narrative Data to Be Coded
Thinking it is ok to sit and do nothing Being at my best when I get time out	You know one thing I loved about coaching, it taught me something I was thinking the other day, that 'don't do something, do nothing' – that it is not wrong to sit and do nothing, and kind of just sit and do nothing. And I enjoyed doing nothing and I have seen that when I sometimes get time out, when I come back I am at my best.

Initial codes are provisional, comparative and grounded in data. Codes are provisional as they may be worded differently as clarity emerges.

Identifying *in vivo* codes was also part of the process. These are participants' special terms that capture meaning. Unpacking these terms helps us to understand implicit meanings and assumptions. Examples of some special terms or metaphors captured *in vivo* are listed below. Chapter three, which covers analysis, will illustrate more *in vivo* codes.

- *"My biggest insight was I was reminded about the system one engages with, I had blinkers on, stood in many potholes." (Executive 3)*
- *"you become tunnel-visioned, you don't see the side of the trees (wood for the trees)" (Executive 6)*
- *"And it does allow you to just take a deep breath…they plant the seeds of doing" (Executive 7)*

While coding, I wrote memos that reflected on the codes themselves. The following are examples of memos I wrote when coding:

1. Understanding comes out as an important area and I am struggling to code it. I have it down as coach behaviour, a coach quality as well as the value of coaching. Under the value of coaching – I have it down as understanding context but the context varies and context and the person interaction is really what matters – it is <u>understanding me in my context</u> for the person being coached

which I think appears to be real value. (Memo entitled: The Role of Understanding)

2. I think that the types of questions are really important. They need to be questions that shift a person's level of thinking – probing, deep, insightful, and challenging. I think I need to go back where ever I have referred to questions and see how to define the type of questions. (Memo entitled: The Role of Questions)
3. When coding this thought hit me that this is the essence of coaching… if this is not present coaching does not take place but I thought perhaps I am jumping into them or assumption so retitled my code from essence of coaching to Coach behaviour but I think it is more than coach behaviour. I think it is the underlying assumption or value that underpins coaching – linked direct quote:

   For me, I think the magic is you think the work stops after the eight sessions but the magic for me is if you make that transcending shift I think it is sometimes even beyond the pivotal decision you are looking at; if you make that transcending shift, again it is all about that self-awareness thing and it gives you another layer of self-awareness which you can then work with continually. (Memo entitled: Is this the Essence of Coaching?)

I then coded incident with incident. An example is selection of coaches – one incident would be compared with another. I would look at the context of each incident and code it as well as coding content. Each incident would be compared to each incident so that patterns emerge from the data. It is vitally important when comparing to use constant comparative methods. I used ATLAS.ti, which is a qualitative software. The terminology used by the software when a set of data is compared – one person to the next based on codes – is “a family”.

Below is an extract from ATLAS.ti. This is a family of coding on “experience of selection of coach by each executive”. Using ATLAS.ti made the comparison easier as the technology allowed for the incidents to be compared to one another at push of button.

I was therefore able to see uses of words were slightly different – resonating, relating, connecting, feeling safe, clicking – and could move to the next level of coding, which was focused coding.

Table 2.4: *Extract from ATLAS.ti of constant comparison per incident of persons 1, 2, 3, 5, 7*

[*NB: Please note that italics were codes put in by myself as researcher.*]

P 1: WM40 – 1:2 [I think I realised quite quick...] (6:6) (Super)
Codes: [Coach Selection : Resonance – Family: Selection of coaches]
No memos

I think I realised quite quickly the importance of choosing a correct person, trying to find someone that would resonate with you: ***Choosing, finding resonance***

P 2: WM30GV – 2:11 [Did you choose your coach or h..] (29:33) (Super)
Codes: [Coach Selection: Resonance – Family: Selection of coaches]
No memos

He was given to me. We went to have coffee somewhere and I was told to have a chat to him and if I felt comfortable then fine – if not, go and find somebody else. ***Given to me*****,**

Okay. And were there any characteristics about your coach that you think made it easier or harder to work with him? He was very down to earth, a more outdoorsy person – which was great, I can relate to that. I am not sure what else in terms of…We connected, it was fine, I don't understand, there are some people who you meet for the first time but there is a barrier, and others you meet and you can just chat for the whole day. ***Relating to him, connecting***

P 3: Interview 3 HJ -WF30SM PR.docx – 3:8 [I had an initial meeting with ..] (10:10) (Super)
Codes: [Coach Selection : Resonance – Family: Selection of coaches]
No memos

I had an initial meeting with coach matching and there was a series of questions and it was more of a conversation; I think the person wanted to get a sense of who I was, and what the right fit should be, and then we had an initial meeting with the coach, to see if I was comfortable; and I could see that the coach could add value and so fortunately I was very comfortable with the coach that they selected. Because obviously I had to make a decision**.**

I think probably someone with strong values, and she is a Christian, it is difficult to put my finger on it but you know I also like have a sense of things, and I was just comfortable. Because I can be quite chatty but I am an introvert so I am comfortable if I know you, but otherwise I am not the kind of person who will make conversation. I am not a typical networker, at these work functions, go and introduce yourself… But I felt comfortable with her, and comfortable to share
It's difficult to say, it is like the same as knowing I was comfortable with her in the first place. I can't pinpoint any one particular thing. And you know she has a very calm demeanour and stuff. ***feeling comfortable***

P 5: Interview 5 -BF WM50D PR.docx – 5:14 [I think what works is firstly ..] (17:17) (Super)
Codes: [Coach Selection : Resonance – Family: Selection of coaches] [space – safe]
No memos

I think what works is firstly that the rapport of feeling comfortable and feeling safe.- ***Feeling comfortable and feeling safe***

P 7: Interview 7 BB WF40SM PR.docx – 7:3 [Anyway so I was very lucky tha..] (5:5) (Super)
Codes: [Coach Selection : Resonance – Family: Selection of coaches]
No memos

Anyway so I was very lucky that my coach and I clicked straight away and we spent the first one or two sessions exploring my role here and the role of the team and what we were expecting out of it, and what D wanted out of it was some coaching goals, which he signed off a bit later in the process. ***Clicking with my coach***
Oh. I think for me it was the connection; it was definitely somebody that I could talk to. Ja, no, it is the connection. And there was some common ground. I think that was probably the thing that tripped the switch. – ***Connecting***
I think I realised quite quickly the importance of choosing a correct person, trying to find someone that would resonate with you: ***Resonating***

Focused coding is using the earlier coding and making decisions about which of these initial codes make the most sense for categorising data. It is a very interactive process and you draw on your memos in making your categories. (Strauss and Corbin, 1998) suggest axial coding but there are several studies (Kendall, 1999, Urquhart, 2000, Urquhart et al., 2010) that found it complicated. I found the initial coding comparative, *in vivo* codes followed by the focused coaching to be of sufficient rigour and chose not to use axial coding. Axial coding is also suggested for researchers who like pre-set structures and frameworks. However, if the researcher is able to tolerate ambiguity, axial coding may not be required (Charmaz, 2014).

Grounded theory coding surpasses shifting, sorting and synthesising data as is the usual process of qualitative coding. Instead, grounded theory coding begins to unify ideas analytically because the possible theoretical meanings of data and codes are top of mind.

Categories are assigned to different events and involve some degree of conceptualisation. Categories are not regarded as representations of the data but

instead as being “indicated” by the data (Dey, 2003; Glaser and Strauss, 1998). Categories must also be “sensitizing” – providing a “meaningful picture” that “helps the reader to see and hear vividly” from the perspective of study participants (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, pp. 37–38, as cited in Glaser & Strauss, 1998). Various categories and their properties have a tendency to merge through constant comparisons. This merging tendency compels the analyst to make associated theoretical judgements during these comparisons (Egan, 2002).

The final stage is theoretical coding, occasionally referred to as “conceptual coding” (Saldaña, 2015). A theoretical code is umbrella like in that it covers all the codes and categories and links with a central category that has the greatest explanatory relevance. However, it must be rooted in data. Theoretical codes aid your analysis to become more coherent and comprehensible (Charmaz, 2014). Theoretical codes need to be used to sharpen the analysis not to be forced on the analysis.

2.8 Theory Development

The first step towards theory development began with the coding process as the line-by-line, gerund coding allowed me to remain very close to data. I was able to break the data up into parts and define actions. I could check out tacit assumptions and extract implicit actions and meanings. I compared data with data. This process led to developing theoretical categories. This provided an early corrective for assumptions or preconceptions that I may have had (Bowen, 2008).

Grounded theory methods are referred to as “inductive” in that they are a process of building theory up from the data itself (Birks and Mills, 2011). Theories answer “How?” and sometimes “Why?” questions whereas most qualitative research is concerned with “What questions?” The “How” and “Why?” questions centre predominantly the construction of meaning (Charmaz, 2014). It is important that the theory development be seen in context of paradigm and it is not positivist with a desire to explain and predict. Rather, it has an assumption that truth is provisional; it joins facts and values, defines multiple perspectives and assumes a fluid reality.

Unexpected ideas emerge as a result of the initial and focused coding. Decisions are made but they are tentative and can be modified. The process of developing theory includes the need to develop theoretical sensitivity. This sensitivity is gained by looking at the data from different perspectives, by making comparisons, by having no predetermined end. Tools can help but it is suggested that theoretical playfulness, openness and whimsy and wonder be part of the process. The use of the gerunds in coding leads to analysing actions, which in turn assists in seeing sequences and making connections. Connections in turn lead to understanding processes and relationships.

An example was described earlier in this chapter, which showed coding with gerunds of a woman who had two thoughts and then came to an insight that she needs quiet to function more effectively (see Table 2.4). It was by this gerund coding that I was able to see the shift between thought 1 and thought 2 and recognise that something changed between thought 1 and thought 2. I could ask her and others more questions about what makes the shift. This begins the process of theory development. I can now, based on evidence across many incidents, see the concept of challenging emerge as an important process in coaching. I keep this concept and play with it, explore it – is the coach challenging values, thoughts, beliefs, emotions? Is the challenging direct and harsh? Is the challenging at all times? As I explore the evidence I note that the challenging needs to be non-judgemental; I further note that the challenging is primarily about assumptions and reality and that most challenging is leading to finding alternative perspectives. I am evolving a theory about the role of challenging based on the coding and analysis process.

2.8.1 Trustworthiness

I have provided an audit trail (cf. Lincoln and Guba, 1985; Padgett, 1998) from the data transcriptions to the emergent theory so that the findings would be able to be checked in terms of the thinking. ATLAS.ti has all the coded transcripts, all the categories, all the comparative incidents. This demonstrates the rigour of the analysis and coding. It allows research to be seen as dependable and confirmable.

Validity and reliability are strategies to ensure rigour in quantitative and qualitative enquiry. Functioning in a qualitative, interpretivist paradigm, validity and reliability are requirements to ensure rigour, but are not necessarily terms that can be applied exactly and faithfully to qualitative research in the same sense as they are applied in quantitative research. They are nonetheless concepts that are pertinent to both paradigms (Morse et al., 2002). Validity is therefore the accuracy of the research representing social phenomena being studied, not only the actual raw data, but also the inferences drawn from the data (Creswell and Miller, 2000). The researcher's memos disclose inferences, biases and prejudices.

Reliability in constructivist grounded theory is replaced with the criterion of theoretical plausibility. Accuracy is sought but grounded theorists are attend more to whether interview statements are theoretically plausible than to whether the participants have constructed them with unassailable accuracy. The aim is to identify patterns; broad and deep coverage of emerging categories (not people) will strengthen the theoretical plausibility of analysis (Charmaz, 2014, p. 91).

2.9 Ethical Practice

This study adhered to the University of the Witwatersrand Ethical Policy and Guidelines. Informed consent was obtained for participation in data collection, but also for use in data analysis (example of verbatim comments / extracts in the published paper). Anonymity was offered. The letter provided to participants is attached in Appendix C. In the interview process, the protection of identity was stated upfront and individuals had the freedom to choose to participate or withdraw from the study. During the data analysis all the transcripts were modified to anonymise the identity of the executive as well as the coach. The coach was referred to as Coach 1 and the Executive as Executive 1. In the analysis and writing up the same principle was adhered to and the coach and executive were anonymised in writing up the research. Ethical guidelines were adhered to in every stage of the research process. The document was checked for plagiarism through Turnitin

software on submission, as is standard practice at Wits University, and was found to be without concern.

This chapter began by exploring the paradigm underpinning the research and discussed symbolic interactionism, phenomenology and constructivism and shared that these philosophical orientations matched my worldview as a researcher and a coach. I believe people create meaning based on their experiences and that multiple realities can emerge by jointly reflecting on an experience. The study has a phenomenological orientation as it focuses on the lived experience of the coached executives. It is however a constructivist grounded theory study as the purpose is to develop theory based on these lived experiences.

Sampling size and interviewing skills were discussed with particular reference to how they may impact on saturation. Other factors that contributed to sample size were a focused research question, the very concurrent data analysis and data collection that typifies grounded theory approach and appropriately selected participants. The expertise of the researcher/ interviewer could aid the way in which the participants share data. Theoretical sampling highlighted the potential gaps in knowledge which influenced extending the sample size. The sample drew on students studying coaching as they would provide the reflective aspect of immediacy. The students kept a journal and recorded their coaching experience soon after the coaching session whereas some of executives were reflecting on an experience that had taken place several months previously.

This chapter further discussed the role of memo writing and that I believed I was subjective and needed to self-reflect and be circumspect about my biases and continually challenge my own assumptions.

The coding process was described in detailed. The use of coding with gerunds rather than coding with themes was illustrated with an example demonstrating the depth of data that emerged from coding with gerunds. The concurrent coding and data analysis was iterative. The relationship between coding and the emerging theory

development was discussed. The trustworthiness and theoretical plausibility were defined. The chapter concluded by describing the ethical practices followed.

CHAPTER THREE – ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

3.1 The Relationship between Timing of Analysis and Literature Review

As discussed in chapter two, the original developers of grounded theory, Glaser and Strauss stressed the importance of researchers paying attention to their "theoretical sensitivity," or the relevance of categories as they emerged from data comparisons. Theoretical sensitivity can encompass rejecting concentrating on a sole theoretical view prior to the concepts being generated by the evidence alone (Heath and Cowley, 2004, Babchuk, 1996).

Initially, I felt on reading about bracketing and contamination of data analysis that an appropriate approach was to ignore related literature and existing theory to reduce the chances of contamination of the data. This does not mean that "existing theories be ignored altogether but rather that they be set aside with the possibility for future application as the analysis progresses" (Egan, 2002, p. 278). Glaser (1992) was strongly opposed to doing a literature review before the research as he felt it would contaminate the research. Strauss, in his later writing with Corbin, disagreed with this position and advocated reviewing the literature early in the study as it stimulated questions, provided a secondary source of data and possibly aided theoretical sensitivity (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, Corbin and Strauss, 1990). McGhee (McGhee, Marland & Atkinson, 2007, p. 336) summarises the arguments in a table, reproduced as Table 3.1.

McGhee argues that, "the researcher has no control over what they already know when entering the research field, but can exercise control over what is added to that knowledge base" (McGhee et al., 2007, p. 309). He believes that an experienced practitioner / researcher is already theoretically sensitised to the research area and has broad knowledge of the associated literature. He believes, therefore, that additional specific reading in this area would influence how the emergent data is approached, interpreted and reported on.

Table 3.1: *Arguments about timing of literature review (McGhee et al., 2007)*

Arguments for a literature review before developing research categories:	***Arguments against a literature review before developing research categories:***
To provide justification for the study.	To be strictly in keeping with a post positivist ontology.
To meet the requirements of local Research Ethics Committees.	To prevent the research being constrained, contaminated or inhibited.
To avoid conceptual and methodological pitfalls.	To prevent recognised or unrecognised assumptions.
To discover the extent of previous knowledge and therefore assess whether grounded theory is an appropriate method.	To prevent generating a focus from the literature rather than from the emerging data.
To be "open minded" but not "empty headed."	To promote "telling it as it is" rather than "telling it as they see it."

I had a strong foundation in theoretical knowledge in coaching, having held an academic position in which I developed a curriculum for a Master's degree in coaching. I could not undo this learning. Furthermore, my hermeneutic orientation supports the belief that we cannot totally suspend or bracket our learning, but that we carry the bias within ourselves and it is in fact an integral part of the interpretation of the emergent data. I therefore chose to limit new influences more consciously and do the analysis first, then concentrate on developing a theoretical framework and comparing it with and contrasting it to existing theories.

This is in contrast to the views of constructivist grounded theorists (Thornberg, 2012, Charmaz, 2014), who believe that the literature review can be done first if one's stance is critical, reflective and grounded in reflexivity. With the existing knowledge I did have, I aimed to be critical and reflective. I therefore believe I used a hybrid model and was neither extreme in ignoring literature, nor adamant that a fully comprehensive literature study had to be completed prior to the analysis taking place.

The analysis in this chapter must therefore be seen in this context of straddling some theory but it is in chapter four that the discussion about the data and whether it is contrasted to, integrated with, opposed to, or supportive of existing theories takes

place. There is a form of literature review throughout the paper and considerable l review of literature appears in chapter three as the analysis occurred. I would suggest that methodologically that as much as grounded theory talks about concurrent collection and analysis; in part there is also concurrent analysis and literature review. Chapter three would be primarily drawing on my existing knowledge, but the analysis would encourage further reading and this is reflected in chapter four.

3.2 Framework in which to Do the Analysis

Initially the analysis was responsive to the questions as they emerged. All items had been previously coded as described in chapter two, from initial coding, to comparison coding, to focused coding. Figure 3.1 below reminds us of the process.

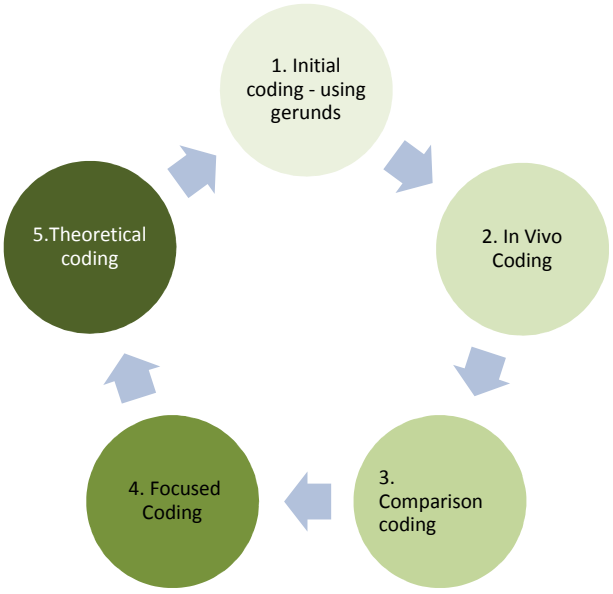


Figure 3.1: *Aspects of coding*

All key themes were coded; in total there were 125 codes. An area that had initially been responsive to a question or exploration of challenges in coaching was labelled as “challenges of coaching”. Each time someone mentioned a challenge or difficulty in the coaching it was coded. Twenty-three codes were identified relating to this theme. These are captured in ATLAS.ti for auditing trail purposes. Focused coding is

using the earlier coding (125 codes) and making decisions about which of these initial codes make the most sense for categorising data (23 codes) and even taking these 23 codes and identifying further patterns or possible associations. As described in chapter two, it is a very interactive and iterative process and I drew on my memos in making my categories. Initially my category was “challenges faced in coaching”. There was some duplication; for example, “not a coffee session” and “not a friendship” were merged. This then resulted in 18 codes. I initially had them coded as themes but changed the codes to gerunds to make them more explicit. In focused coding of the data, I found that the areas related to timing, willingness, expectations and context emerged consistently from one person to another. In qualitative research frequencies are rarely important, as one occurrence of the data is potentially as useful as many in understanding the process behind a topic. This is because qualitative research is concerned with meaning and not with making generalised hypothesis statements (Mason, 2010). Charmaz (2014, p. 145) states “sometimes students believe the same code must reappear time and time again to be a focused code and subsequently a possible category”. She goes on to write “Not at all – if the code is telling. Use it. A code can give you a flash of insight. It is exhilarating. Allow these moments of exhilaration to occur.”

I had a moment of insight when I realised that as I had reread and done the comparative coding of the 18 codes, I had noted to myself and written a memo that it is so important for the client to be ready for coaching. So, while the frequencies of those four areas are not the determining factor of importance, frequencies can give an indication of a possible pattern. Charmaz describes focused coding as a significant step in beginning to organise one’s data and managing the emerging analysis (Charmaz, 2014). I wrote that “these aspects of willingness, clarity of expectations, the role of timing and the importance of context could possibly impact client readiness for coaching” (Memo 14 August 2015).

The initial round of codes for the area “challenges in coaching” is listed below, as extracted from the ATLAS.ti programme.

ATLAS.ti – Family – Challenges of coaching – Initial coding

Codes (18): [challenge - insufficient challenging] [challenge - not enough structure/ themes] [Challenge - organisation versus individual] [Challenge - time constraints] [challenge - too much influence - power] [Challenge - too much pressure] [coachee expectations] [coaching not beneficial] [coding - coaching not a coffee session with a friend] [confidentiality challenge] [consequences of not engaging in process] [friendship versus coach] [holding coachee accountable] [importance of coachee engagement in tasks and process] [resistance] [Role of venue in effectiveness] [Timing correct] [Willingness of coachee to be coached]
Quotation(s): 44

It was at this point that the framework emerged. I realised that some of the coding related to the executive, some to the coach, some to the process. I read the coding and I identified the components and represented them as circles on a piece of paper. I then reread the codes and asked how the components interrelated and based on the data, the framework evolved. An example of this is how important context was for all the executives so I circled context around the other components. The interaction between both the coach and coachee/ executive were leading to a dynamic process so I had the coach and coachee inputting into the process. The outcome was a result of this so I developed a sequential focus of an arrow leading to the outcome. Rereading the data analysis to see if I had missed anything I realised executives referred to the purpose of coaching as being overarching. Examples include " coaching was helping me through a transition a new promotion" " coaching was to develop my leadership skills". The purpose of coaching influenced the context and likewise the context influenced the purpose. The walls between the two had to be permeable.

Having coded and recoded all the data I needed some way in which to write up the initial analysis. I decided to do a representation (see Figure 3.2) of the components without projecting any theoretical framework on to these components. The components of coaching that I identified were:

- *The coach*
- *The client / coachee / executive*
- *The context (the business world in which it took place)*
- *The coaching process*

- *An outcome with perceived benefits and challenges*
- *A purpose for coaching*

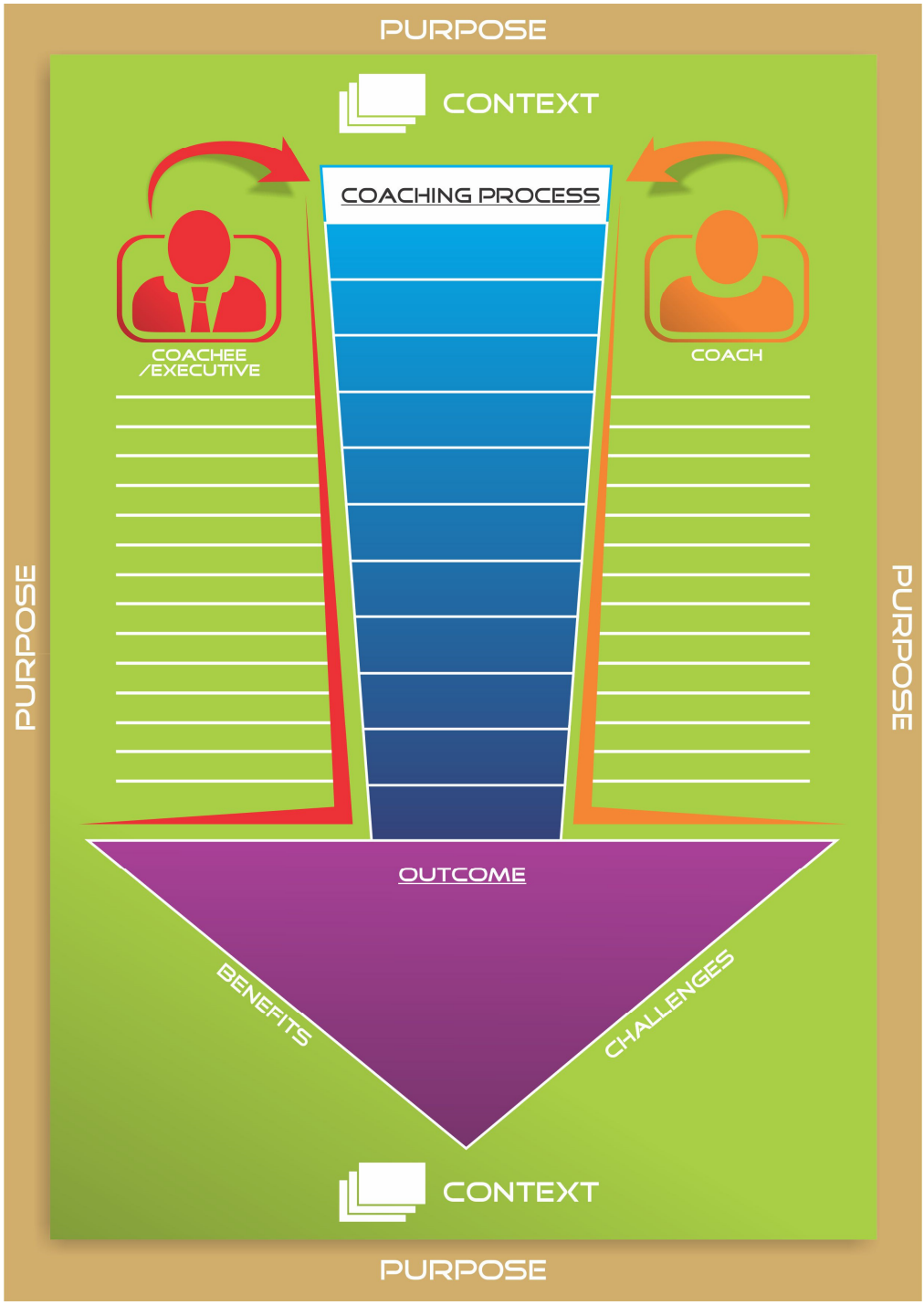


Figure 3.2: *Framework that guided the analysis*

Figure 3.2 aims to demonstrate the interrelationship between the components; the coach, the coachee, and the context (the green-shaded background area) contribute to the coaching process. The coaching process in turn would lead to an outcome. This outcome would also be based within a context and driving this outcome would be the purpose. The graphic aims not to be biased and would allow any theory or evidence to be superimposed on the framework; e.g. if the coach had a narrative approach, this could be the input, but equally if the coach had a cognitive behavioural approach, this could be the input. The analysis is thus done in relation to this framework.

I took the challenges and began to evaluate them under the framework. Thus, if a challenge related to the coach, it was analysed under “coach”; if it related to process, it was analysed under “process”.

I began an even deeper focused coding process and began with “willingness” as the first code to drill down into and this is when I shifted from coding by themes to gerunds. This analysis relates to the first aspect of the framework – the coachee/ executive, represented by .

3.3 Analysis of the Coachee or Executive 

3.3.1 Being Willing

In this stage of comparative coding, it was found that codes could be clustered together and reframed. The first new cluster to emerge was the cluster entitled “willingness”. The title “being willing” encompassed many components – all extracted from the interviews and evidence. It included not being forced – having a choice, being open and allowing the coach into your space – vulnerability, a personal sense of readiness and wanting to go on the journey. Note that the words “having”, “being”, “allowing” and “wanting” are gerunds and give a stronger sense of what is encompassed by the phrase “willingness to be coached”.

Executive 1 stated that *"what helped the coaching was that you could choose it. It wasn't forced on you."* Executive 5 supported this by saying, *"You cannot force people to coaching."* Executive 7 said that *"I suppose you have got to want to build the behaviour as opposed to listening and then just forget about it*." This broadens the concept from a passive acceptance and it not being forced to a more proactive commitment from the executive.

Executive 2 continued to extend the willingness concept by looking proactively at their role and stated: *"You have to be open to allowing someone to come into your space."* This was supported by Executive 7 who said, *"[The] fact that you could be vulnerable enough is empowering*." Executive 6 also spoke about the personal sense of readiness and felt that *"if you weren't ready and not self- aware, I think they (coaches) would battle to shift you."* Executive 7 said that *"if you are not prepared to go through that road, if you are not prepared to push through and understand that it is going to be uncomfortable at time and you are not prepared for the journey you might not like it [coaching]*." Executive 7 widens the concept of willingness to begin coaching to willingness throughout the coaching process.

Executive 6 shared how the choice and vulnerability are empowering, which is possibly more of a consequence of being willing than the willingness itself.

Executive 9 shared the possible downside of willingness: *"So of course there is always the caveat that it's only as good as how much you are prepared to put in or your willingness to change and so of course that takes away some of the responsibility of the coach, because its 'oh ok, you didn't learn anything? It's not my fault.' All the responsibility seems to be at point of person being coached to do something with information. It might be fair or not but yes, that is correct that was my experience."*

A further question to be answered is: what is the link between willingness, responsibility and accountability?

3.3.2 Time-related issues

In analysing the codes related to challenges of the coaching process and consequent enablers, a pattern was found that many of the challenges or enablers related to time. There were different components of time: from finding the time, to the timing being the right time, to the gaps and duration of coaching. Each aspect of time is discussed below.

i) **Finding the time** for a coaching session appeared to be a challenge for many people. Executive 5 said that *"just finding the time to go to it was the main thing. An hour's session is two hours because you have to make a plan to get there and get back…so it becomes a time constraint."* Executive 1 spoke about how challenging it was to find an appropriate time in the diary. Executive 12 shared the story of how one of her colleagues changed coaches as the first coach he had chosen was so busy he could not find appropriate time slots but the second coach understood his time constraints and met him at 7.00am in the mornings, which helped him get the coaching into his diary. Rigidity in terms of timing might also be an issue for an executive and Executive 12 preferred a fluid arrangement in terms of setting up coaching as needed rather than prescribed set sessions. The flexibility of diary management appears to be important.

ii) Sometimes it was more about **was it the right time** to have coaching? Executive 2 talked about timing: *"I found it very difficult in that period of time to try and take action. It just was not the right time … There was so much pressure inside the organisation, my mind wasn't allowing anything else to change."*

Conversely, others believed the timing was at the right time. Executive 3 *stated, "I think it came just at the right time, it was just what I needed to give me the jumpstart again."* Others supported this by stating coaching happened as they got a promotion or as they were reflecting on their career goals and the timing was important. Executive 12 said, "*I really think you get the best out of coaching when you have an issue, when there is something you really want to focus on."* While the comment

about having an issue does not directly relate to timing, it appears to be a variable in the construct “right time for coaching”.

Transitions seem to be a key ‘right time’ for coaching. A transition could be a new job role, a promotion or a new project. Executive 6 said she had used *“coaching consciously or unconsciously at a transitional phase of my career”.*

iii) The other aspect of time that came through was that **having the sessions over a period of time** was helpful but simultaneously it was sometimes difficult to do any “homework” between sessions. Executive 4 stated, *“I never did any of the exercises, I was useless with that. I would try for a week or whatever and it is just too time consuming, or we are just too busy or whatever.”* Executive 3 said, *“Because the process was continuing, because it was over a period of time it almost took a different shape in that it now supported me in my new environment, where I also had very different challenges again, so that was quite beneficial.”*

The components of time are summarised in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: *Components of time*

Components of Time in the Coaching Process
Finding the time in diary for session
The right time for coaching – not too much stress / pressure but yet a need for coaching must be present
Managing the time over the coaching process to do the reflective thinking and occasionally a task / activities between sessions

3.3.3 Clarity of expectation

Some people spoke about a challenge or a potential challenge being a person's expectation about what is involved in coaching. If the coaching did not match expectations, it would lead to as they termed it "expectation frustration". Executive 8 said, *"It was a personal frustration actually…for the first few sessions I kept thinking 'So when is coaching going to start?' So maybe like a preconceived idea of coaching…so perhaps if I had that better understanding from the start."*

Some people had never been exposed to coaching and this led them to think it might be more like training. Executive 10 explained, *"I am expecting that you will have answers for me. But you don't have answers for me – because that is the intention of coaching not to give people answers, but for them to find answers themselves – then maybe the coachee might be kind of disappointed."* Executive 12 added, *"A lot of people just want to know the answer, and so there is an expectation gap, there is a potential for an expectation gap where you are both not on the same page, because I think there are a lot of executives who are @ 'Shit, I don't know, my team is just exploding, just give me the right answer'."*

3.3.4 Importance of context to coachee

The context driving the coaching and in which setting the coaching is taking place seems to be important to the coachee.

"*I liked that the context of my coaching was individual basis. I was new to the organisation, but I think if I had been here longer that my experience would have been different, or her approach to my coaching would have been slightly different"* (Executive 9).

Executive 12 talked about her second coaching experience as: *"been around this transition in my life and in my career."*

Executive 6 said that *"she [the coach] understood all the complexities and the ripple effects in decisions and actions."*

The importance of context surfaces later as a theme in the value of coaching but is introduced here as an important variable. More discussion will be given to this aspect later.

3.4 Coach Attributes 

In analysing the coach versus the coaching process it is difficult to truly separate the process from the person. If the coach listens with empathy is that a process (a series of actions or steps to achieve a result) or is the fact that the coach needs to be empathic a precursor to the process? I had to draw the line somewhere and if I felt it was a demonstrable series of steps or actions that the coach would be required to **do**, then it would fall into the “process” category and “and be analysed as part of this category which will be discussed in the next section. This section focuses more on who the coach has to **be** as opposed to what they have to **do**.

The ‘be’ and ‘do’ framework is part of a concept originally developed in The United States Army as part of its Leadership model, which was known as the “Be, Know, Do model of Leadership”. In Campbell and Dardis (2004) they discuss the concept that “leader development” was synonymous with "whole person" development. It was argued that because individuals “influence others by their character, by their competence, and by their actions effective leader development must focus on the type of person an individual is (‘Be’), the kinds of competencies he has (‘Know’), and kinds of decisions he makes (‘Do’).”

While we are discussing coaches here, not leaders, it appears that influencing others by one’s character or by an attribute is an important part of influence and decision making. A study by (Fiske et al., 2007) demonstrates an example of an attribute that impacts on judgement and behavioural reactions. At this point, I will not be consolidating the theoretical views of the role of character or attributes but have used the two studies to illustrate the justification of focusing on the characteristics and attributes of the coach as separate from the behaviours and processes. In the following chapter, I explore the theories that emerged from these and other studies.

The attributes that emerged about the coach were that she was authentic, real and genuine. She also was very present.

The coach is represented by this icon .

3.4.1 Authenticity of coach

Executive 3 used the word "real" to describe his coach and combined it with the word "open". He stated: *"Her openness: She shared a bit about herself, her background, her family, challenges with her sister because at the time her baby was just over a year, and looking for schools for example, because her sister is in the area. So it made her real: sometimes you struggle when you have too many professional…you know I always make the analogy where you have these facilitators and they sometimes have it altogether, you know?"*

Executive 11 used the word "*real"* but extended it to the idea that realness gives validity to the process. Executive 11 had been on coach training and had an insight as a coachee who had experienced coaching but also a certain ability to look at the coaching process with some distance and review it as a process. She stated: *"Certainly I would say that my coach is very real, she doesn't bombard me with her stories about herself, which is just as it should be, but you know from just occasional things that she will say, that she has kind of been there, done that. So it is just that validity that you get. You also know that she is really passionate about what she does, so you get an authenticity from her through that and you get that here is somebody who is really engaged in what she is doing."*

The authenticity and presence were closely related, as described by Executive 9, who said of his coach that *"he was a very genuine person, that is the other thing – genuine and sincere – if I have to I would attach these kind of labels but they do not really describe the full story but obviously there quite a bit of trust built up early on."* It is interesting that both these executives comment on the trust in relation to the genuineness and realness of the coach.

Executive 6 spoke about how the coach's sharing her personal opinions made it very real for him and that he got a sense of the coach's vulnerability. *"She took away that feeling of being a guru and moved to 'you are the person with the ability and power to make the change or whatever, I am the facilitator'."*

3.4.2 Presence

"There is something around the physical space, her whole way of being, her style is very empathic, it is gentle, but that enables her to ask the difficult questions in an entirely appropriate and supportive way" (Executive 10). Executive 7 confirms this statement by saying, *"You could just see from the way she conducts herself and her approach, the way she listens and picks up. It's quite hard to describe it, but you either have a connection with someone or you don't."*

Presence is defined as "a state of awareness, in the moment, characterised by the felt experience of timelessness, connectedness and a larger truth" (Silsbee, 2008). Cuddy (2015, p. 25) confirms that "it is a state of being attuned and able to express true thoughts, feeling, values and potential. Presence is not about managing an impression; it's about true, powerful, honest connection that we create intensely with ourselves." So, while there are some behavioural components that demonstrate presence, it is more a state of being than the actual behaviour.

One participant mentioned honesty but in looking at the definition of presence, we note that honesty is there in the aspect of expressing true thoughts. I have thus integrated it into the component of presence but have separated out the quote to highlight the aspect of honesty.

"I think honesty was a dimension…so I mean how brutal she was with me. I mean telling me that I am ignoring my family…so honesty in terms of feedback and the pattern she was seeing in the things I was saying" (Executive 10).

3.4.3 Credibility

The executives, with the exception of one person, tended not to recall the coaches' qualifications but rather felt they had a sense of competency and experience.

Executive 1 described it as *"I think she was very open and engaging. Age-profile wise she was probably a few years older than I am but also importantly for me from a coaching perspective she had enough credibility in terms of what she had done and where she had done it, that I didn't feel like I was being coached by somebody who had just read the manual but by someone who had done the hard work; she had international experience, worked with international executives – which all for me added to credibility."*

Executive 9 stated: *"I think what helped was that individual's experience in the corporate world for instance, and understanding the kind of day to day challenges that managers or executives face, and how to deal with that. So that experience was definitely helpful."*

Executive 11 was the only executive who recalled a specific qualification and had looked for it. She was an HR Director who had studied coaching and stated: "*I remember it being very important to me that I got a coach who was really at the top of his/her game. So I didn't want an amateur, and the other part – and my coach will hate me for this – but her clinical psychology background was really important to me because I am pretty self-aware, I am very self-aware, and I know quite a lot about how people operate, so I actually wanted to learn from her around how I really was operating! So that clinical psychology background was really important to me. I also wanted somebody who was older, I wanted somebody who had been round the block, I wanted somebody who had the wisdom of age, and I would still want that; I found that enormously beneficial. So and then I wanted somebody who would completely get me, the fact that I am a drama queen and the fact that I didn't want somebody who would make me feel constrained, that I couldn't be who I was – goes back to the safe space – who you know, I couldn't just let it all hang out, and I wanted somebody who I could laugh with as well, that humour, so I needed that to*

resonate with that person. And that goes to chemistry doesn't it, that chemistry, and what has been lovely over the years and I really am enjoying that depth of relationship now." She still stressed the importance of the experience component and referred to the chemistry that links to presence and resonance, which is discussed now.

3.5 Key Components of the Coaching Process

The components of the process are described in detail below. An overview of the components is provided here before the detail of each one is explored. Something that was valuable was how the coach made the coachee think differently and this was explored quite comprehensively. Several behaviours were found to lead to people thinking differently. These behaviours are listed and include questioning, challenging, prodding and giving feedback, among others. It was important to the executive that these behaviours were carried out in a non-judgemental manner. The conversation needed to be a collaborative, contingent, resonant conversation. It also needed to be all encompassing and personalised to the individual. This was done in a safe space.

3.5.1 Making you think differently

"Making you think differently" is both an outcome of the coaching and a process of coaching. At this point, I am sharing the process aspects of thinking differently. In the outcome section of the analysis, which is presented in section 4 of this chapter, I describe the types of outcomes that the executives got from thinking differently but at this point I am focusing on the process that the coach used to reach the point where the executives thought differently. There is an overlap but the emphasis in this section is on the process / action / steps / behaviour of shifting a person to thinking differently.

As defined by the Cambridge English Dictionary online (2016), a process is a series of actions or steps taken in order to achieve a particular end.

In terms of process, it appears that one of the things that the coach was doing was offering a different lens to the executive, which allowed them to see things differently. Executive 1 spoke about how they (the coach) forced them to look at things through a different lens or have a different insight. Executive 2 said, *"The big positive for me was the whole concept of making you think differently about things."* Executive 3 said of coaching, "*It challenges you, it helps you think through, opens up your mind, you look at things differently*." Executive 5 stated, "*Coaching has been massively helpful and I have grown in leaps and bounds as a manager, I think in terms of how I manage people and how I just see things. It makes me look at things from a different perspective."* Executive 7 said, *"I think the lasting part of it (coaching) for me is that I now think a little bit differently."* Executive 9 said, *"I think it was a matter of a different perspective."*

Executives used a lot of analogies or phrases about seeing things differently. Statements included: "*I had blinkers on", "hit a light bulb", "been an eye opener"*.

One of the components of thinking differently was developing the ability to discern patterns and ways of being across different scenarios. The coaching thus focused not only on the presenting challenge but also on developing behaviours and insights that could apply to many different scenarios. Executive 5 stated this: *"And I think that's it, and I think what I have really got out of coaching is that there are a couple of things you need to do and you can be quite a brilliant manager, and there are only a few golden rules that make you really a brilliant manager. So although all of the scenarios you go through are very different they all boil down to very similar things that you should be doing – listening, thinking, planning, considering – so whatever – but that is very basic, it is basic: being trustworthy, you know when you say something make sure you do it. And so ja, I think that is why I say it is only a few things but all the scenarios that come up are very different, so you sort of think jeepers, there are so many different things to think about, but there is actually not, because it all boils down to very simple basics, but the triggers can be different: so you know everybody is probably different, that makes somebody see red or whatever it is, so that is actually quite an important part, is actually being able to in a*

challenging situation, recognize that this is a challenging situation and to actually physically and mentally bring yourself into a place that is safe and conducive to a much more better outcome."

In terms of how they got to think differently (the process), many different behaviours and processes were described. The behaviours are summarised below. Key behaviours include questioning, encouraging, exploring, sharing, giving feedback, listening and challenging.

Examples of questioning: Executive 4 said: *"Very often individuals when they are caught up in a situation, you become tunnel visioned, you don't see the wood for the trees and it's also a nice platform because they are questioning you and just generally talking about things you come to the solution yourself – just because someone asks you a question in a different way in order for you to think about it differently." "Coaching forced me to look inwards,"* said Executive 7. Executive 11 said, *"I just think her questions have really been so profound. Now whether that is because she has known me better, whether she has matured, whether it is because I am more receptive, I don't know, but the thing that strikes me when I look back at it, is there have been some profound questions that I have just gone 'God, absolutely! You are so spot on with that!' So there has been a shift from who we are."* Executives 1 and 2 commented that the questions were open-ended questions. Executive 3 described the questions as simple questions.

Examples of encouraging: Executive 1 suggested that encouraging was done by *"just offering alternatives you know. It was never a thing of saying well you should do X or Y…it wasn't coming to any particular conclusions but rather encouraging me to get there…"* Encouragement was confirmed by Executive 2, who said: *"the coach asked a whole lot of questions that made me think differently about them but* ***encouraging me****."*

Example of exploring: Executive 1 said, *"We were exploring different kind of things."*

Examples of challenging: Executive 1 stated, *"You are not going to get into that personal development space if you are not challenged, without being prodded but at least exploring."*

Executive 9 also spoke about the value of challenging – *"I think it was a matter of a different perspective, in a way I am stuck in a rut of going to meetings all the time and then having to work overtime afterwards to get through all my work. But then she would challenge me by saying 'do you have to go to all of these?' So it was actually a good sound board to challenge me on my behaviour, instead of accepting what I am saying…But I think it worked where I got challenged on certain things to change my perspective a little bit and then following that up with valuable examples that she had."*

Executive 7 shared that the coach asked many questions. She responded to these questions with: *"I would say 'I really like that question!' [laughs] 'Can I answer you next year?' It was quite a good balance, she wasn't afraid to challenge me which was quite nice and I think quite important because she did not let me avoid the question even if it meant coming back to it."*

Example of coach sharing examples and giving feedback: Executive 9 reported, *"She would pick on certain key issues and then discuss it and give feedback. She gave good examples, maybe in her previous experience, and then she would follow up by sending some article, maybe Harvard Business Review or that kind of short communication on a specific topic."*

Executive 4 shared how her coach gave her a strengths-based leadership book to read. She commented, *"I found it extremely valuable – even career wise very valuable and very interesting."*

Example of listening: Executive 5 explained, *"I think even at that stage she would listen and then suggest for me maybe how I could look at things in a different way…I think initially the most important thing was that she listened a lot."* Executive 1 said, *"So I think it was almost sort of multi-faceted in a way; it was kind of listening, understanding, offering of a different way but at the same time trying to add what*

was the top almost in terms of what was forming or informing my decision making at the time."

Coach behaviours associated with "getting me to think differently" – extrapolated from executives' comments

All the behaviours described were as a result of exploring what led to the executive thinking differently as described at the beginning of section 3.5.1.

Executive 7 summarises almost all the behaviours, *"The first thing I would say is that it is a support mechanism, and guidance from a neutral person, who can take a step back and say to you objectively 'what do you think about…, why, what do you think about this behaviour? Do you realise why you do this or…' Or, if something is not working there is somebody there who can offer you some alternatives or some guidance without prescribing the answer. And can give you the tools to make decisions yourself, or to change the way that you do things, I suppose. It is not somebody who is going to come and solve your problems for you but is going to enable you to work through them and it quite a luxury to have somebody come and sit with you for 60 or 90 minutes or whatever it is, and if you want to spend the whole time talking about yourself, you actually can – which is quite bizarre when you think about it."*

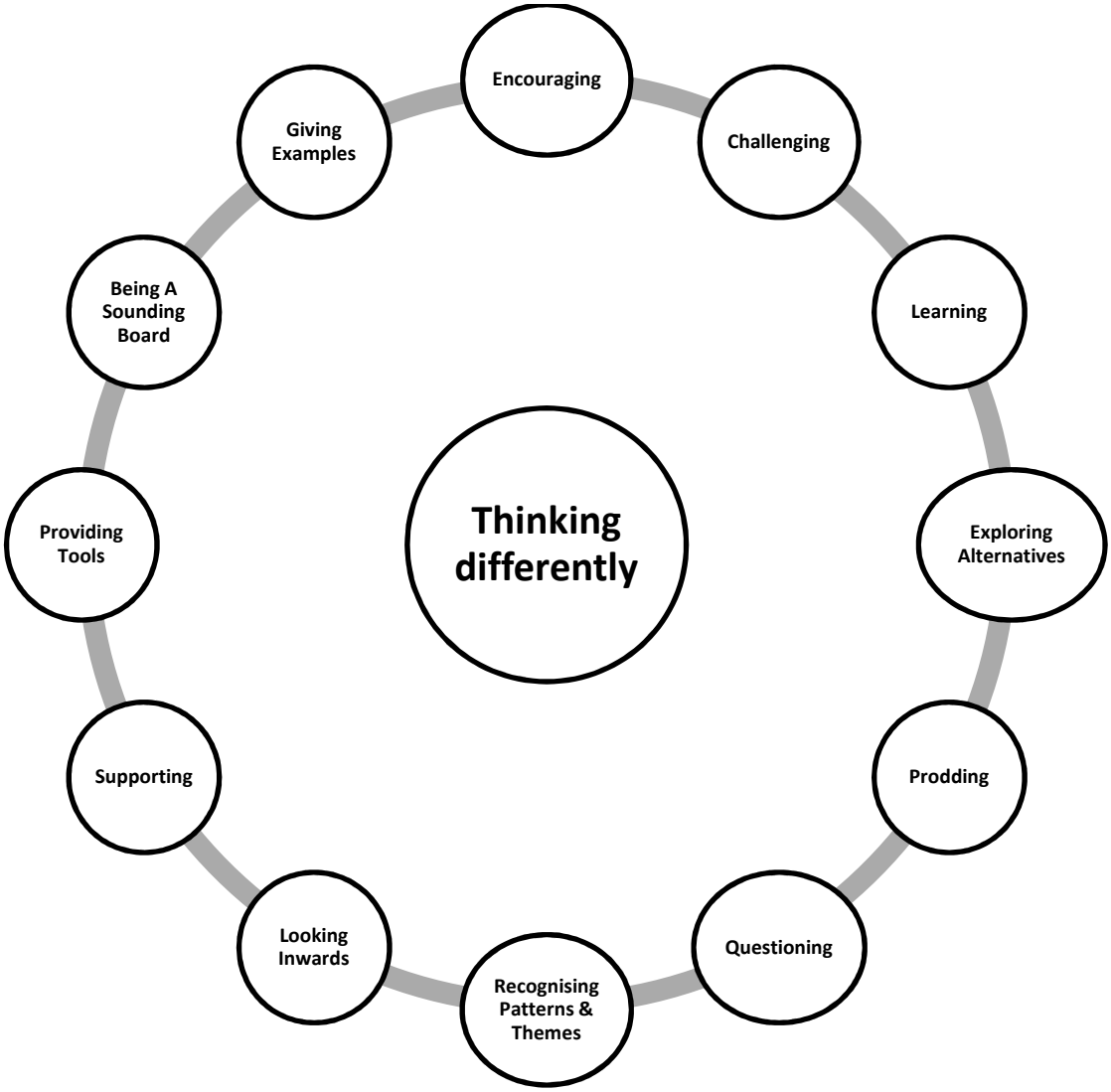


Figure 3.3: The *author's identification of coach behaviour leading to coachees' thinking differently*

3.5.2 No judgement from coach

It seems that getting people to think differently had to happen within a context and an important context was that while the coach could challenge it was not done in a judgemental manner.

Executive 1 spoke about the biggest thing for him being that there was no judgement and as such he could give a complete honest account of his life as he did not feel judged. There was a level of objectivity from the coach. Executive 5 spoke about not

feeling threatened. Executive 7 stated, *"I think the overall thing is that she listens without bias or without judgement. So when I say she is neutral she is not coming in with prejudices or judgements before you have opened your mouth – which is quite refreshing…I never felt like I was being judged or examined and I think that this is important in a coaching relationship."* Executive 10 spoke about in the coaching space there being no right or wrong answers and because of that space *"you can just be yourself".*

3.5.3 A collaborative, contingent, resonant conversation

The executives commented on the trust they had with their coach. This was beyond the fact that there was no judgement. A component over and above the characteristics of authenticity and honesty and presence (discussed in section 3 of this chapter) was the nature of the conversation and subsequently the nature of the relationship.

Executive 9 suggested, "*The magic could be in the process of sharing some wisdoms and some life experience to someone who needs that approach. So in a way it's a partnership to achieve a specific goal, as opposed to just a plain here is a teacher conveying information and there is a pupil learning information. It is much more personalized, and I think therein lies an element of support and sharing. That is the magic of it."* Executive 2 stated that *"coaching is different because there is not the hierarchy that you would have with a subordinate or boss type thing or a wife or daughter type thing. It is different."*

Daniel Siegel, who developed the concept "Interpersonal Neurobiology" (IPNB), describes a type of conversation that will allow mutual resonance and flow of energy and information. He calls these conversations collaborative, contingent conversations (Siegel, 1999). Rock and Page (2009, p. 423) discuss the components of this type of conversation and describe collaborative as

> "both parties make contributions to the ongoing interaction. There is no one with a gavel to call on the next person to speak. Second there is no script or

agenda, which must be followed. What each person says is dependent on and responsive to what the other person has just said, and vice versa."

Rock and Page suggest that it might be that the collaboration and contingency are part of what accounts for the positive outcome of coaching. This research appears to support their thinking.

The nature of the conversation and the relationship was hard to capture by the executives and frequently they said things like: *"I could just feel it," "it's hard to describe but I just knew," "it's intangible".*

I would suggest that a possible word or phrase to capture this would be "resonance" or "a resonant relationship" or alternatively "an attuned relationship". McKee et al. (2008) write about a resonant relationship in leadership and describe the components of such a relationship as mindfulness, hope and compassion. While this research focuses on a coach's behaviour rather than a leader's behaviour, it is highly probable that behaviours or characteristics of a leader that lead them to influence people would be similar behaviours or characteristics to those of a coach that lead them to influence their clients. These behaviours and characteristics are thus listed here. The first behavioural element is mindfulness, or living in a state of full, conscious awareness of our whole self, other people, and the context in which we live and work. In effect, mindfulness means being awake, aware and constantly attending to ourselves and to the world around us. The second element, the quality of hope, enables us to believe our vision of the future is attainable, and to move toward our goals while inspiring others to reach for their dreams as well. When we experience the third critical element – the trait of compassion, we understand people's wants and needs and feel motivated to act on our concern (McKee et al., 2008).

Reuel Khoza, in his book "Attuned Leadership: African Humanism as a Compass", describes "attuned" as connection, compassion, integrity, humility and reasonableness. He further believes there are sub sections such as self-attuned or

emotional intelligence, attuned to the needs and aspirations of others, ethically attuned, and attuned to history and to destiny (Khoza, 2012).

These definitions are inserted as we attempt to understand the concept of resonance or attunement. In the theory development section in chapter four, I will explore these concepts in a more integrated manner. At this point, I am merely identifying possible concepts but I will discuss the interrelationships between the concepts in the next chapter. An analogy would be that seeds (concepts) for a garden are identified here and the garden layouts (interrelationships between the different plants) are discussed in the next chapter.

3.5.4 Personalised to individual's needs – the Goldilocks principle

It was important that the coach adapt to the individual on a variety of spectrums. The Goldilocks principle is derived from a children's story "The Three Bears" in which a little girl named Goldilocks finds a house owned by three bears. Each bear has its own preference of food and beds. After testing all three examples of both items, Goldilocks determines that one of them is always too much in one extreme (too hot or too large), one is too much in the opposite extreme (too cold or too small), and one is "just right". The Goldilocks principle is applied across many disciplines (Oxford Reference online, 2016).

As in the story of Goldilocks, where the porridge must not be too hot, nor too cold but just right, the personalised aspects of coaching that run across a continuum include:

- *Pace – not moving too fast nor too slow*
- *Structure – not too structured but not totally unstructured*
- *Support to challenge*
- *Reflection-to-action continuum*

Examples of coaching being personalised to the individual's needs include this statement from Executive 4: *"I don't know how the theory works but to me it's just*

logical to align the approach to the subject's personality, to derive the maximum benefit."

What is interesting is that it is not about choosing a position on the spectrum but about being able to move across the spectrum with discernment.

Executive 6 said, *"If someone sat slap bang in the middle on neutral the whole time I think that would lose effect. It is about being able to move. I have had people who stayed in neutral; they were neither supportive nor directive. And sometimes she could be very supportive, very directive*."

Executive 5 said, *"Most of the session was normally on reflection, but always at the end of the session we ended up with some action – 'what are we going to do'."*

3.5.5 An all-encompassing integrated conversation

The executives felt that the coaching conversation allowed for full integration of the individual as a person. Daniel Siegel, in his definition of well-being in a person, describes the nine domains that need to be integrated in order for a person to experience well-being. The integration of these domains leading to well-being are across an empathetic relationship, a coherent mind and integrated brain (Siegel, 2006). The details are discussed in chapter four but perhaps it is this very space for all areas to be spoken about that facilitates this brain integration. Under the theory development section of chapter four this is explored further.

Executive 6 said, *"There are a lot of adjectives to describe that (coaching) conversation – being goal directed, reflective, without agenda…without ulterior agenda. So it is purely single oriented you know, just work on that not to influence, not to persuade. It was quite an unlimiting conversation – you are not only limited to only a factual conversation, you are not limited to only an emotional conversation…nothing is compartmentalised."*

Executive 1 explained, *"It was a conversation that I found I wasn't having anywhere else, conversations that you can't have at work, conversations that you probably*

aren't having at home with your spouse, and that you are probably not having with friends – you know almost that it's got a seriousness to it, but a level of complexity that there are very few people that you are able to share that sort of information and thoughts with."

Executive 5 stated that *"a coach is someone who you can talk to how you come across in the world and how you interact with people that you get with nobody else. You don't get that with your wife, you don't get that with your kids, you don't get that with your mom or dad because these people are all in relationships; you don't go and talk to them about these kind of things as intimately; you know you don't go to your wife and say 'how do you find it when I say this to you?' People may do that, and I think if you get advanced having been through your coaching you could do that! And you could open up your relationships a lot. But I don't think people do it naturally."*

Executive 6 spoke about how the coach worked with complexity and layers. She said, *"Decisions are often complex and have such a big impact, and ja, she helped identify with me all the layers of the decision – you as a person, as a whole, you as a person and your goal, in your career, recommendations, relationships – whatever. Everything had to make sense for me to take that decision, at an emotional level. It was like all different levels."*

Executive 7 spoke about how nice it was to have 1.5 hours or whatever it is to talk about only what she wanted to talk about. The end of the coaching had left a gap in her life and she considered it quite a luxury.

At the end of the next section a pictorial representation of how key components of the coaching process lead to behavioural outcomes is given in Figure 3.3.

3.5.6 Creation of a safe space

Only one executive made reference to the safe physical space. This was the last executive interviewed. She was also the executive who had trained as a coach and was thus more attuned to the coaching process from a theoretical perspective, as well as her own experience of coaching. There are two components to a safe space.

The one component is the physical space but the other is the psychological space. I would suggest that some of the components of the process identified, such as the no-judgement, the authenticity, the all-encompassing conversation and the collaborative conversation, contribute to the creation of this safe space. It is noted here but the interrelationship will be elaborated on in the next chapter as the theory evolves.

Executive 11 said, *"I think the other thing is – and this sounds ridiculous – but the fact that I have to go to her, and I go to her offices and her space has something to do with it, and you know we always agonise because these guys are really busy and they say 'can't the coach come here?' and I know how environment changes conversations, and there have been times where I have said 'oh for god's sake, I have to drive to E (my coach)' and she is absolutely unwavering on that – 'coaching happens in my space.' And because you are apart from the organization you feel very held in her world and not your world, so I do think there is something around the physical space, and just you know, her whole way of being, her style is very empathetic, it is gentle, but that enables her to ask the difficult questions and in an entirely appropriate and supportive way. So it is a combination of things I think……I didn't want somebody who would make me feel constrained, that I couldn't be who I was – goes back to the safe space – who you know, I couldn't just let it all hang out, and I wanted somebody who I could laugh with as well, that humour, so I needed that to resonate with that person."*

An outcome of all the above processes is that trust of the coach was present. The executives would mention the processes described above and conclude with and 'I trusted her'.

Executive 6 said, *"I absolutely trusted her…The trust element was huge for me."*

Executive 5 said, *"I think the key thing was really being able to trust her."*

3.6 Outcome of Coaching

As mentioned under the process section immediately above, getting the executive to think differently was a key process which involved challenging assumptions, asking probing questions in a non-judgemental way and having collaborative, contingent, all-inclusive resonant conversations. However, thinking differently was also a benefit or an outcome. I will now explore how this thinking differently was experienced by the executives and the benefits or perceived outcome they experienced.

3.6.1 Awareness, understanding and meaning making leading to viewing the world differently

Many executives used the words "it gave me an understanding" and then proceeded to explain what they now understood. Some felt that understanding where you have been, where you are at and where you want to go was useful in leading to different thinking. Executive 6 said, *"If I went into a coaching relationship again, it would give me another layer of understanding about myself and the way I interact with the world. It will influence me. It is very difficult to polarise that part of you."* Stelter develops the concept "third-generation coaching" and he contrasts it to first-generation coaching, where the goal was to help the coachee reach a specific objective, and to second-generation coaching, where the coach would make the assumption that the client would know the solutions and answers to their challenges. He describes third-generation coaching as being a collaborative journey where the coach and coachee generate meaning together in the conversation. This would result in (1) a strengthening sense of coherence in the coachee's self-identity; and (2) integrating past, present and future into a whole (Stelter, 2014, Stelter, 2009).

The reflection and renewed understanding for the client/would be about (1) his/her own experiences in relation to a specific context; and (2) specific relationships, coordinated actions with others and the processes of negotiation in a specific social situation. Meaning is essential because people assign specific meanings to their experiences, their actions in life or work and their interactions. What is important in relation to this point of understanding is that things will begin to appear meaningful

when people understand and, furthermore, when they make sense of their way of thinking, feeling and acting (Stelter, 2007).

There is a range of factors that influence people's view of themselves and these include their belief systems, their emotions, memories, life experiences, knowledge, attitudes and the context within which they exist. On the basis of these factors people will create a script / story or narrative and this will become their current sense of reality. Through the coaching conversation, this sense of reality may be challenged and a new integrated sense of coherence and identity may emerge. This coaching conversation needs to meet the criteria described above:

- *A coachee / executive who is ready for coaching, demonstrated by his willingness, time availability and commitment with clear expectations and a purpose for the coaching (section 3.3)*
- *A coach who is authentic, honest and has presence (section 3.4)*
- *A process that encompasses making the coachee think differently without judgement from the coach by having a collaborative, contingent, resonant conversation which is personalised to the individual's needs and is all encompassing of the different components of their lives and aims for integration (section 3.5)*

The understanding and meaning was often about self in relation to others or the context.

Many executives described part of the meaning-making process but Executive 11 (who had also been trained as a coach and had coaching vocabulary) said, *"When I have gone in to see her, just feeling totally confused and my brain full of mush, just in terms of thousands of things I am worrying about or thinking about and then just having really powerful experiences through her ability to ask, to translate my thoughts and to help me process what I am experiencing. So the end result has been huge clarity and huge support and huge confidence actually…So to have somebody for whom my world made sense and she can affirm my way of being, has been really, really helpful."*

Executive 6 said, *"She helped identify with me all the layers of the decision – you as a person as a whole, you as a person and your goal, in your career, recommendations, relationships – whatever. Everything had to make sense for me to take that decision, at an emotional level. It was like all different layers."*

Executive 1 said, *"It is really worthwhile having a conversation because I think it is an understanding of where you have been, where you are at, where you are trying to go to and understanding the challenges of family and balance and life…I think it (coaching) would be an intervention to assist on improving your understanding of who you are, understanding the role that you are in and imparting that into the organisation."* Executive 2 also spoke about how it helped in the team: *"I suppose the reflection of where I was as an individual and the changes that I needed to make and what I could derive out of it – not just me, but the organisation and my team, and implementation if that makes sense."*

Executive 2 stated that *"It helped me more in emotional intelligence as opposed to anything else; I think that is where I was lacking the most. So that gave me understanding of that role and how it affects the people you live with and that."*

Executive 6 also commented on understanding self in relationship to context and said, *"So if I went into a coaching relationship again, it would give me another layer of understanding about myself and the way I interact with the world."*

Executive 3 said, *"I think it is valuable…It helps you think through, opens up your mind, you look at things differently…it is a nice platform, they [coaches] are questioning you and just generally talking about things, you come to the solution yourself – just because you think differently or somebody asks you a question in a different way in order for you to think about it differently. So in a sense you don't feel like you are being told what to do – you are not being told what to do. But it helps you get to the decision yourself."*

Executive 5 said, *"My coach is brilliant; she really gets to the bottom of things, really why I do certain things or why I react in a certain way and makes me look at them from different perspectives. And a lot of what I find every time you know you go to a*

session and you kind of hit a light bulb moment ad you go like 'wow' you know, it's like so logical. I have gone through a process whereby I have looked at serious things, there may be another way or thought about it differently but I am where I want to be and it is that conscious decision through thinking."

The consciousness of decision making definitely contributes to the enhanced understanding. Executive 6 expands on what Executive 5 says above and stated, "*I think it [coaching] is around focus, mindfulness, you as an individual have to have enough knowledge to see it but that kind of mindfulness around pausing enough to really analyse things."*

Executive 1 said, "*I think it [coaching] would be an intervention to assist on improving your <u>understanding</u> the role that you are in and imparting your thinking into the organisation."* This expanded the insight from self-reflection to sharing within the context.

Daniel Siegel, an Interpersonal neurobiologist, looked at the IPNB approach to psychotherapy in the development of well-being (see sections 3.5.3 and 3.5.5 above). While coaching is not psychotherapy, coaching is concerned with the well-being of an individual. Siegel explores the mind components that need to be integrated for well-being. He comments on the role of attention as a process by which energy and information are channelled through the mind. Enhancing awareness of the present moment is sometimes called "mindful awareness". "Mindfulness is defined as paying attention, in the present moment without grasping on to judgement" (Siegel, 2006, p. 251). In the following chapter, I discuss how the further research about mindfulness is showing a strong correlation to neuroplasticity – the capacity of the brain to change and learn (Doidge, 2007, Boyatzis, 2014, Boyatzis et al., 2015, Boyatzis, 2013, Jack et al., 2013, Eisenberger et al., 2003). Suffice it to say, at this point, that enhanced self-awareness and increased consciousness appear to be an important aspect of the perceived benefit / outcome of coaching.

This cluster of awareness, understanding and meaning making were the first responses the executives gave when they were asked about what they did or did not get out of coaching. They would later go on to list other benefits but, in terms of order of outcome, it would appear that this cluster was necessary for the other benefits to take place. An example of this would be Executive 5, who said once he became self-aware he realised everything related to self-awareness, whether it was handling the team or managing conflict. This is in alignment with the theory of Emotional Intelligence described by Chernis and Goleman (2001). According to their theory, there are four clusters – Self-Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness and Social Skills, with competencies described under each cluster. The assumption is that one begins with cluster one: self-awareness and then cluster two: social awareness follows. Once these are in place, one is able to develop the other competencies. It would appear from what people were saying in this research, that the coaching helped with the self and social awareness, which laid the foundation for the next set of outcomes.

Table 3.3: *A framework of emotional competencies (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001)*

	Self: **Personal Competence**	**Other:** **Social Competence**
Recognition	**Self-Awareness** ☑ Emotional self-awareness ☑ Accurate self-awareness ☑ Self-confidence	**Social Awareness** ☑ Empathy ☑ Service orientation ☑ Organisational awareness
Regulation	**Self-Management** ☑ Self-control ☑ Trustworthiness ☑ Conscientiousness ☑ Adaptability ☑ Achievement drive ☑ Initiative	**Relationship Management** ☑ Developing others ☑ Influence ☑ Communication ☑ Conflict management ☑ Leadership ☑ Change catalyst ☑ Building bonds ☑ Teamwork & collaboration

3.6.2 Personal growth

This relates to the components that impact on self. These would be the quadrants on the left side of the framework. Some of these correspond with what is described under the components of self-awareness (emotional self- awareness, accurate self-assessment and self-confidence) and self-management (which includes self-control, initiative, trustworthiness and conscientiousness, adaptability and achievement drive) in Cherniss and Goleman's (2001) Emotional Intelligence framework.

Executive 1 said they found the personal growth was useful – *"there was seriousness to it but a level of complexity that there are very few people that you are able to share that sort of information and thoughts with."*

It is interesting that sometimes the stated objective or the desired benefit of coaching is worded one way but the real benefit or outcome is something else. This happened to Executive 3, who wanted to focus on operational exposure and becoming more strategic. Through the process the executive realised that she actually was strategic. This was demonstrated by her achievements to date but she had not recognised it. She commented, *"I didn't see it like that, so that is where a little more of the*

reflection came in. So to a large degree, I was selling myself short. And I was having a huge impact within the organisation, and it's an amazing thing! [laughs]" The reflection boosted self-esteem. Executive 3 went on to say, *"Coaching spun me around and I saw the strengths I have and I now capitalise on that. This is now where strengths and leadership comes in."*

Stress management is not specifically listed in the Emotional Intelligence framework but adaptability, which is a competency on the framework, is often associated with resilience. Individuals who have a greater number of traits related to resilience are better able to adapt to a disruptive event as opposed to individuals who possess fewer of these characteristics, who will not adapt as successfully (White et al., 2008, Masten, 2001). It thus makes sense that working on developing a support system, adaptability or coping with stressors would be a personal development component. Stress management could thus be part of the Emotional Intelligence framework or it could be something separate. I have highlighted it here but also listed it as a separate outcome as I explore the interrelationships.

Executive 1 found that coaching also *"helped you to understand the* ***challenges of family and balance*** *and life and all that sort of stuff that we face at this time of our lives".* He added that *"life is so output oriented, that the time to reflect is so limited that it felt this opportunity was about you and your own development."* He shared how his marriage, two children and work pressures kept him busy and that it was very difficult to find a time to isolate for himself and his **own growth.**

3.6.3 Relationship management

This relates to outcomes that correspond to the quadrant on social awareness or the quadrant on relationship management in Goleman's (Chernis and Goleman) Emotional Intelligence framework as listed below. The first two components – self-awareness and self- management – have been discussed above. The emphasis now moves from self to others.

Table 3.4: *Social awareness and relationship management quadrants (Cherniss and Goleman, 2001)- extracted from the right side of the Emotional Intelligence framework*

Social Awareness
- Empathy
- Service orientation
- Organisational awareness (this can incorporate networking)
Relationship Management
- Developing others
- Influence
- Communication
- Conflict management
- Leadership
- Change catalyst
- Building bonds
- Teamwork & collaboration

Executive 1 spoke about how much of the coaching was about relationships. He spoke about how *"quite a lot of time was spent with her (the coach) understanding the business and the people involved and the personalities…I think it was what I needed in terms of building up those relationships with individuals. I now understand more of the dynamics in terms of what happens in a relationship and how people react to you…and if you are more open with people; they will open up more to you."*

Executive 2 echoed the same sentiments about learning about others, saying: *"You know we all come from different backgrounds and pasts and stuff like that and we all sometimes walk around with these blinkers on. I think it is great that somebody*

comes along and removes them…and says 'is this the only way, the best way or is there another way?' There are different ways of approaching things."

Executive 5 also confirmed the benefit of enhanced interpersonal relationships, stating: *"It is simple things and it is about a very, very in-depth look at how you work relationships with people who work for you and who are around you and people who you love and appreciate and people with who you struggle. So you know how to react in different circumstances."* Executive 5 concluded, *"Whew! I think I have said most of it but to summarise I think coaching has enabled me to become a better manager, leader and person and I recommend it to everybody. That's it."*

Executive 2 shared, "*It gave me an understanding of the role and how it affects the people you live with and that…. And I think that is where I needed it, in terms of building up those relationships with individuals*."

By improving relationships, the executives often saw this as an improvement in leadership or management skills as shown by the above statement by Executive 5.

3.6.4 Reduction in isolation and loneliness

Executive 1 said that as a leader you "*get more isolated and have more responsibility. Coaching is good because you can share and be challenged outside of your immediate circle."* This isolation reduction could be valuable just in itself or perhaps it is the other perspective that it helps facilitate. This was not explored further in the interview.

Executive 11 also spoke about the loneliness of being an executive and how coaching reduced loneliness by the supportive process of the coach, saying: *"Ja, you know it is interesting and I would imagine that that develops as your relationship with your coach develops because certainly from my own perspective, because of my initial drive of this is a lonely place to be, I need some support, I find balance with when you need that challenge, that you have to have the relationship to be able to read it, because I get plenty of challenge here, and some days I go to my coach*

because I just want a safe space to go 'bloody bastards' or whatever it is you know?!"

3.6.5 A sense of empowerment

Executive 6 spoke about feeling empowered. She shared how as the coach was there but did not make the decision, this left her, the executive, feeling empowered. She described it by saying: *"It is scary and creates a certain amount of vulnerability, but it makes you understand your level of power. The fact that you have a choice, your own choice for decision making, is an empowering feeling. I suppose certain things like engaging with leaders – it was sometimes a session of challenge, sometimes a session of feedback, sometimes it wasn't what you wanted to hear, sometimes it was. So the fact that sometimes you could be vulnerable enough within a situation we do our best and to move out is a very empowered feeling. I engaged it, I did something with it, I was responsible for it and it was an empowering feeling."* She added: *"The most important thing was taking back the power, and making decisions for myself in terms of what it was I really wanted to get out in terms of my perspective, career perspective, world perspective, relationship perspective."*

Possibly aligned to empowerment is a sense of courage and the self-belief to act. Executive 12 stated: *"The result in the second phase of coaching has been…it has kind of helped me hugely craft my purpose – and that is an ongoing conversation – because as I said I have a 1000 things going on in my head that I want to do, and I have no time to think or plan. So it is the one time when I go 'right, let's just stop a bit'. So the result of it is I actually feel that my experience with the coach has made me brave, it has made me believe – and there are obviously other contributing factors – but that is one of the significant ones, that you know you can do something, because you know that you have actually got something to offer because she has helped you process what you have got to offer. So the result is action, and then the emotional being and that is confidence and bravery."*

3.6.6 Stress management

Executive 4 stated, "I am a perfectionist and amongst other things that led to tremendous high stress levels to such an extent that it affects my heart. So that led to coaching to find ways to deal with stress management."

Executive 3 found coaching helped her manage stress. She stated that she was a perfectionist and that this led to high stress levels. Coaching helped her find ways to deal with her need for perfectionism and subsequently she was able to better manage the stress.

3.6.7 Sustainability of outcomes

Executive 6 talked about sustainability and said, *"For me I think the magic is you think the work stops after the eight sessions but the magic for me is if you make that transcending shift I think sometimes it is even beyond the pivotal decision you are looking at, if you make that transcending shift, again it is all about that self-awareness and it gives you another layer of self-awareness which you can then work with continually."*

Executive 10 said, *"Coaching is still with me, it is something I will cherish for the rest of my life."*

The phrase "Transcending shift" is one of these *in vivo* codes which for me captures what is happening in coaching. So while people comment that they are better managers or leaders, this is possibly the overriding benefit that leads to the enhanced leadership.

The coaching process begins with understanding. Understanding encompasses many factors – understanding preferences, understanding context, understanding emotions, values, history and multiple other considerations. Once understanding is present, it moves to making meaning, which is personalising the understanding to one's own identity and own life choices. This leads to a person thinking differently and only after that behaving and then acting differently. This can be displayed in

many different ways – some of which are illustrated in the diagram shown in Figure 3.3; e.g. managing stress, managing time and enhanced interpersonal relationships, but this is not an all-inclusive list of behaviours.

Executive 8 summarised the difference between behaviour and thinking by saying: *"it was just like an opportunity to press the pause button on the operational side of the business and look more towards nurturing 'what do I think' – because I had sort of stopped thinking and was more acting."*

Executive 6 confirmed the importance of meaning making or as she put it, *"Everything had to make sense for me."* This is reflected in the diagram – in order to shift from the process of understanding to the process of thinking differently, meaning making had to take place. She stated, *"So you are in transition, either you are trying to shift yourself through change, or you are trying to make a decision. And yeah, those decisions are often so complex and have such big impact, and nothing to reverse. And ja, she helped identify with me all the layers of the decision – you as a person as a whole, you as a person and your goal, in your career, recommendations, relationships – whatever. Everything had to make sense for me to take that decision, at an emotional level. It was like all different layers."*

I would suggest that many companies send people for coaching to get the changed behaviours but changed behaviours will be sustainable and lasting when the process described above is followed in detail. Behavioural change happens after step 1, 2 and 3 as reflected in Figure 3.4.

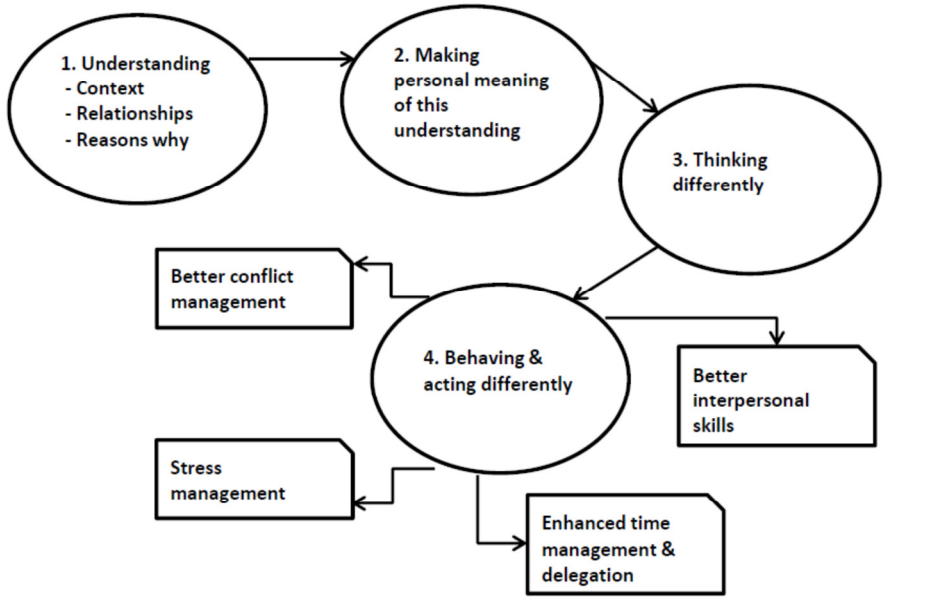


Figure 3.4: *Diagrammatic overview of flow of process that leads to outcomes in coaching as developed in this study*

3.7 Context of Coaching

Context is "background, environment, framework, setting, or situation surrounding an event or occurrence" according to Business Dictionary online (2016).

The context of coaching is made up of two different parts. The first may be the physical setting, the environment in which the person is located, and the other is the emotional or psychological background or situation surrounding the reason for coaching. A person may be a senior manager in a bank who is sent for coaching because the bank has identified him as a high potential individual earmarked for promotion. The bank is the physical environment and context but the psychological aspect of context is the need to help the executive through a transition. Coaching in this context is seen as being supportive but in another context the executive could be sent to coaching as he is not performing and coaching would then be seen as remedial and developmental. This is the psychological context.

Executive 6 felt very strongly about the importance of the coach understanding the context and working within that context. She was from a Human Resources background originally and had moved into a strategic role, so by role looked at things holistically. She stated that the *"coach has got to come in, and understand the world the person operates in; we don't operate in isolation from the system around you. Those are my fundamentals…And that worked for me because even when we are deciding what actions to take or things to change or do etc., even if we spoke about like the danger of doing something – if it went wrong what are the certain things that could happen – she understood all the complexities, and the ripple effects in decisions and actions, and she reminded me to identify the potential effects."*

Executive 6 went on to say, *"My biggest insight was I was reminded about the system one engages with, I had blinkers on."*

Most executive and business coaching is contracted and paid for by the corporation or organisation in which the person to be coached is employed. This adds a level of complexity in that the corporation is expecting some return on investment and the individual executive is focusing on their personal needs or objectives being met. If these are compatible, there is no issue but if there is a difference of objectives then the context challenges become more complex.

3.8 Purpose of Coaching



Purpose is the reason why something exists or why somebody does what they do. So why would people do coaching? In looking at the quotes with the eye of understanding purpose as the executives saw it, we see coaching had several reasons why it was used. Executives were asked what they would tell someone about coaching and many of these quotes are used below to extract the perceived purpose. Other quotes, where appropriate, are also used. Occasionally they may already have been presented but not in the context of the purpose of coaching.

A summary of what the executives saw as the potential purpose of coaching follows and then quotes that support the summary are provided. Executives saw the coaching purpose as being to provide:

- *A support mechanism*
- *Guidance process*
- *Decision-making process*
- *Skills development*
- *Goal-setting process*
- *A place of self-awareness and structure*
- *Growth*
- *A way of doing things differently*
- *A way of managing stress*
- *Reflection process*
- *Making sense*

"*The first thing I would say is that it is a support mechanism, and guidance from a neutral person, who can take a step back and say to you objectively 'what do you think about…, why, what do you think about this behaviour? Do you realize why you do this or…?' Or if something is not working there is somebody there who can offer you some alternatives or some guidance without prescribing the answer. And can give you the tools to make decisions yourself, or to change the way that you do things I suppose. It is not somebody who is going to come and solve your problems for you but is going to enable you to work through them,*" was the view of Executive 7.

Executive 5 defined coaching as *"coaching is exactly what the coach does in an individual or team sport session: it is actually taking someone with skills and then helping them to improve these skills through practising good behaviour, good form, good whatever it might be. So it is actually someone you can trust, and a person who can take your good points and strengthen them, and help you to limit or get rid of your bad traits. [laughs] It is firstly a person who helps you to recognise your*

strengths and weaknesses, and they assist you in strengthening your strengths and diminishing your weaknesses and lets you see why – and helps you stand back and look at yourself from the outside."

Executive 6 said, *"I went in there [coaching] with a specific question that I need to ask, and it was around the decision making process and there were certain aspects that I wanted to improve upon, or work on, or there was a relationship dynamic. So every time I came out with a desired outcome, or a shift. And the third thing for me was probably one of the most important thing was that the coach understood my context…I would say it is a process of goal setting and goal achieving through a relationship that creates space of both structure and self-awareness, where your coach will hold the space but the work is done by the individual."*

However, Executive 3 saw the outcome as: "*focusing on how can I grow, how can I do things differently".*

"Let me just think about this properly: to give me the required output, and the associated personal growth almost, to successfully deal with stress in the work environment, and obviously that would permeate through to other areas as well…My perception is that it's – and I actually told her that – is that it's almost like corporate psychology in a bit more practical way, without any diagnosis! [laughter]" said Executive 4.

"I would say that coaching is where you have somebody helping you to kind of visit yourself but the person accompanies you as you move towards your desired state…I would describe coaching as process that would help you on a life journey as you reflect back on certain things and then they can assist you to evaluate what makes sense and what doesn't make sense in life; they are just there holding your hand but you do everything yourself. And they support you but sometimes they also challenging you and pushing you a little but so that you don't feel too comfortable," said Executive 9.

Prior to the analysis I wrote in a memo, while coding, that the way I would describe coaching was: "Coaching is honestly challenging thinking in an objective non-

judgmental way, understanding the level of complexity in order to encourage a different insight for the purpose of personal growth" (Memo, 15 August 2015). Enhancing decision making, setting goals, managing stress, doing things differently, developing skills and making sense may be considered components of personal growth. It would thus appear that personal growth is possibly why coaching exists. This would fit the positive psychology framework that believes there is no need for a problem or deficit mind set but the development and growth and focus on potential are an end in themselves (Theeboom et al., 2014, Fredrickson and Losada, 2005, Seligman and Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). In the next chapter I will look at the evolution of the theory based on the evidence that has surfaced from the experiences of coached executives and coached students and how the theory relates to positive psychology.

3.9 Summary of the Findings

The findings were broken down into the different components:

1. Coachee / Executive
2. Coach
3. Coaching process
4. Coaching outcomes
5. Context
6. Coaching purpose

In relation to the executive or coachee, it was found that they needed to be ready for the coaching. Client readiness was influenced by willingness of the individual client to be coached, by timing (the right time, the correct frequency) and by clarity of expectation. The context in which the coaching was taking place would influence their readiness.

Coach attributes that positively influenced the coaching process were the authenticity of the coach, the presence of the coach and the coach's honesty as well as the coach's credibility.

The components of the coaching process were making the client think differently, through a variety of techniques such as questioning, probing, exploring and challenging but without judgement from the coach. The nature of the conversation was collaborative, contingent, personalised and all encompassing, and integrated while being personalised to the individual's needs. The creation of a safe space was also an important process.

The outcomes and benefits of the coaching process were:

- *Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making leading to viewing the world differently*
- *Personal growth*
- *More effective relationship management*
- *Reduction in isolation and loneliness*
- *A sense of empowerment*
- *Stress management*

The outcomes were considered to be sustainable. The context and purpose of coaching were considered important variables that could influence the coaching.

3.10 Additional Analysis Based on the Student Sample

As described in chapter two, page 41, after analysing 11 interviews, I felt that executives tend not by nature to use coaching terminology in their reflections and that possibly analysing the coaching experience from people who are more familiar with coaching terminology might add a depth or dimension that was missing from the first set of interviews. Six students who were studying coaching (mature adults who had previously been employed in a non-coaching role) had completed an assignment as part of their training. The assignment asked the participants to reflect on their coaching experience immediately after the coaching and to record their reflections. Most of the original interviews had been conducted after several sessions of coaching and sometimes a lapse in time had taken place since the coaching.

Using the students' reflections would give immediacy to the reflections that had not been present with the original data set.

Many of the concepts that had emerged in the interview process were confirmed in the students' reflections. These concepts are briefly noted, but primarily I was looking to see if there was anything that could be added to the existing knowledge or evidence from the first data set. I was also aware of anything that might have contradicted the initial data set. The students did add much about the possible reasons behind actions. An example would be the order of things such as, "I trusted her because she shared information about herself." So while the first interviews would bring up trust or a safe space, this data set would help me to understand what contributed to the safe space. Below I share the additional insights under the same framework as that used for the original analysis – coachee, coach, coaching process, coaching outcomes and coaching purpose. I have inserted the icons linked to the framework in order for the reader to be aware of what component of the framework the current section focuses on. There were three areas of the framework that the student's added a contribution. These were the areas of 1) coachee/executive, 2) process and 3) outcome. There was no additional information about coach, context and purpose. The additional contributions are analysed per section.

3.10.1 Information relating to the coachee / executive – 

There were 3 aspects that were added here. The first was the role of anxiety and vulnerability in the first session. The second aspect was how this link of vulnerability and anxiety contributed to willingness and readiness of coachee to engage in coaching. The third aspect related to time related issue – the time to process or concentrate needs to be the right time. Each of these factors will be discussed briefly.**a) Anxiety and vulnerability of coachee in first session**

A contribution from the students' reflections and assignments that never emerged in the executives' statements is the sense of anxiety and vulnerability in the first

coaching session. It can be questioned whether the anxiety was heightened by the fact that these were coaching students. It is difficult to assess this, as once the nervousness is overcome through the supportive attitude of the coach it appears to recede and possibly executives may not even recall the extent of the anxiety.

It does appear that this anxiety is linked to uncertainty of the process, uncertainty of the unknown and as such it could be part of the expectation process. Students wrote "I wasn't sure" or "I did not know".

"I experienced feelings of anxiety and nervousness because I wasn't sure how deeply he would question or probe in the first session and this for me held the possibility of being emotion provoking which in turn held the possibility of my not feeling emotionally safe. So to begin with I felt somewhat tense and guarded. This session was also my first experience with a male coach so apart from feeling nervous, and unsure of my choice of coach, I was also looking forward to what I trusted would be a positive experience and my being exposed to a different style and approach to coaching." (Coaching Student Three)

"At the start of my first coaching session I felt flustered because I was late for our session." (Coaching Student Three)

"I did some research on her to establish what her field of expertise is and how this could benefit my development. Although I became more comfortable after reading her personal profile and blog on xxxxxx I still became anxious on the morning of our first meeting. This was attributed to not knowing how the conversation was going to be structured and what to expect from her." (Coaching Student Four)

"I wanted to create that 'right' first impression, being socially aware." (Coaching Student Two)

"Insecurities of 'I wonder what does he think of me, does he think I have lost my career plot?' and pride, 'why am I defining myself by letting him even know I am studying this course? Maybe I should have chosen someone who does not know me' started to build up within me...At the beginning of the session I was not focussed on

what exactly I needed to express with the coach, nor was I aware of what is expected of me, or what to expect from the coach and the session. All I knew was that it needs to be done, and was motivated and excited to do it for both learning purposes and experimental purposes and I have never been in a formalised coaching relationship before nor with a professional coach. I could not think of anything though I was aware in my head of the objectives, however because of being anxious of the unknown and not being on the-know which made me absolutely powerless and out of control, consumed my whole thought process." (Coaching Student One)

"I felt cautious and apprehensive leading up to the initial coaching session." (Coaching Student Six)

Conversely Student Five said, *"I can honestly say from the outset I was very relaxed and looking forward to the session. I felt enthusiastic, interested, relaxed, in good humour and although I had been having a difficult few days' work wise, this was certainly a highlight of the day for me.*" (Coaching Student Five)

b) Link between vulnerability and willingness and client readiness

"I knew, and had accepted, before meeting with my selected coach, that if I wanted to glean the maximum benefit from these coaching sessions I needed to take the emotional risk and allow myself to consciously step out of my conservative, introverted cocoon-like (and often inflexible) private internal emotional head and heart spaces and allow myself to become more openly authentic and conversational, less guarded and more vulnerable in the context of expressing and detailing my inner most thoughts and feelings as well as the pressing issues impacting on my life with my coach. This conscious choice represented a massive internal shift and commitment from myself to the coaching process which I don't believe my coach was aware of coming into the coaching space. I had made this shift before entering into the initial coach session to enable me to maximise the benefit of being the subject of a coaching process. This internal commitment and motivation however came with a short term price, namely that it created a significant level of anxiety and

anticipation for me building up to the session while simultaneously making me feel both awkward and nervous during the session." (Coaching Student Six)

The value of this statement is that possibly one cannot be willing unless one is vulnerable. The opposite characteristics to vulnerability are impenetrability or highly guarded or even possibly highly defensive. This therefore suggests that to be vulnerable, one needs to be open. Brené Brown, the seminal researcher on the concept of vulnerability, defines vulnerability as "uncertainty, risk and emotional exposure" (Brown, 2012). She goes on to write that "vulnerability is the birthplace of love, belonging, joy, courage, empathy, accountability and authenticity. If we want greater clarity in our purpose, vulnerability is the path." This relates to the anxiety linked to the uncertainty that student coaches shared as being part of the first session. It does, however, appear to be that possibly in the coaching space vulnerability and willingness are inextricably linked.

Coaching Student One captured this tension between anxiety and desire to grow, the uncertainty and the resultant vulnerability. She stated, *"At the beginning of the session I was not focussed on what exactly I needed to express with the coach, nor was I aware of what is expected of me, or what to expect from the coach and the session. All I knew was that it needs to be done, and was motivated and excited to do it for both learning purposes and experimental purposes and as I had never been in a formalised coaching relationship before nor with a professional coach. I could not think of anything though I was aware in my head of the objectives, however because of being anxious of the unknown and not being on the-know which made me absolutely powerless and out of control, it consumed my whole thought process."*

Coaching Student Six shared how his willingness led to the creation of the effective workspace or coaching space. Without the coachee's willingness to be coached, the coaching may be ineffective (Champathes, 2006, Whitmore, 2007, Whitmore, 2010). Coaching Student One commented about "the willingness" almost as a prerequisite to readiness of the coachee. Coaching Student Two talked about how willingness will increase accountability. Coaching Student Four only talked about increasing the time period for the coaching to begin to add value and that if not initially willing the

coaching process could just take longer. Coaching Student Five commented on how if the client had not chosen coaching but the company had, it could impact on the rapport and goal setting. In the theoretical chapter, chapter four, the interrelationship and order between these components will be extrapolated.

"My willingness to grow and a genuine interest in the coaching process made for an effective workspace for both the coach and myself to explore what was needed." (Coaching Student Six)

"My expectations had a positive impact as I was a willing participant in a trusting coaching relationship with a coach that is credible, in terms of my – the client's preferences…What I appreciated from the coach was that he sorted out my feelings first and did not enforce the agreed process or expectations, and when I was ready they engaged in the process" (Coaching Student One)

"I would take accountability for the process on my own self-development and commit to learning and bringing about positive change in my life." (Coaching Student Two)

"Because I am a result driven individual I have contracted with colleagues and family to expect a change in behaviour specially working on ensuring that my selflessness is not being taken for granted. However, if I was a coaching client who wasn't willing to openly communicate, set goals and take responsibility to work towards a desired outcome it may take longer to build a good coach client relationship." (Coaching Student Four)

"Within the framework of coaching, whereby we can assume the individual isn't requiring therapy and is therefore in a healthy state of mind, I feel the critical component is the willingness to be coached. Within the field of business coaching, it is often the case that the decision for coaching sits with an organisation rather than the individual, and if the individual is not buying into the process, it will be very difficult for rapport building and goal setting." (Coaching Student Five)

c) Processing time and time to concentrate

A factor that impacted timing was the time needed to process information and the ability to concentrate. Timing was considered part of the client readiness experience from the first data set. Coaching Student Two added how if you are not in the right frame of mind, you might not benefit from coaching.

"I felt that I was not ready and was not in the right frame of mind when I got to my coaching session. I had a gruelling and stressful day at the office, resulting in me staying longer than planned before setting out for my session. Despite leaving the office 'later' I had sufficient time to get to my appointment. But this being my first session, my concentration was on finding my coach's practice and not getting lost. As a result, I had no time to process the day's events by the time I got to the practice." (Coaching Student Two)

From the initial interviews, coach attributes that positively influenced the coaching process were the authenticity of the coach, the presence of the coach and the coach's honesty and credibility.

Coaching Student One describes the relationship as honest because the coach was authentic and non-judgmental. To be explored further is: "does authenticity and non-judgement lead to trust or is there more to trust?"

"The relationship has developed trust and honesty, as the client had not felt judged nor found the coach not authentic to himself, the client felt that she can talk about anything with the coach without having to wonder what he thinks." (Coaching Student One)

3.10.2 Key components of the coaching process

From the initial interview, the components of the coaching process identified were making the client think differently, through a variety of techniques such as questioning, probing, exploring and challenging but without judgement from the coach. The nature of the conversation was collaborative, contingent, personalised

and all-encompassing and integrated while being personalised to the individual's needs. The coaching students added the importance of acknowledgement from the coach and expand on the nature of the space and the role of homework. They also added insights into order of processes. These are all discussed in the sections below. Students occasionally in their reflections quoted theory. This has been left in when it directly relates to what the student coach is saying. Please note these are in quoted in italics and are not reflections or theory from myself – the researcher.

a) Importance of acknowledgement from coach

Acknowledgement from the coach was identified by the students as an important process. This might be a case of students having vocabulary about the importance of recognition and appreciation. “Appreciative Inquiry (AI) has been referred to as mindset, an approach, a methodology and a philosophy to facilitate positive, sustainable change” (Cunningham, 2014, p. 161). Appreciative Inquiry is underpinned by six principles, one of which is the principle of positive affect. This principle states that positive affect leads to positive action. This is located within the paradigm of positive psychology and supports the premise that positive emotions expand awareness (broaden) and build lasting impactful personal resources (build). This is known as the “broaden and build theory” and shows how the role of positivity contributes to human flourishing. In fact, the theory demonstrates not only that positive emotions are present when human flourishing is happening but that positive emotions actually promote the development and maintenance of flourishing (Fredrickson and Losada, 2005, Cooperrider and Whitney, 2001). In the theory development chapter, chapter four, the role of positive psychology will be looked at, but at this point affirmation and appreciation are recognised as contributing factors to a sense of being appreciated and positive affect.

“The coach appreciated my honesty, openness and level of self-awareness, which the appreciation added to a more positive relationship.” (Coaching Student One)

"The space created is one of mutual respect and understanding. Apart from me seeing the value of the coaching sessions for myself, A (my coach) acknowledged too that I'm gaining insight." (Coaching Student Two)

"I was aware of her constant sincere acknowledgement which energised and made me feel excited at the end of the session, because I was conscious of my learning's and had an action plan…She once again reinforced and affirmed my achievements which left me feeling good about my accomplishments and believing that I could do more…Reinforcing change is observed as important when coaching." (Coaching Student Four) *"He used positive reinforcement and complimented me on my writing and communications skills with specific reference to becoming a coach, which obviously made me feel enthusiastic about the process I was embarking on."* (Coaching Student Five)

b) Contributing behaviours to collaborative, contingent, all-inclusive personalised conversation

The contributing factors, stated as gerunds (which let us know the action), can be summarised as:

- *Questioning incisively*
- *Listening deeply*
- *Partnering in process*
- *Setting the scene for equity*
- *Reframing from negative to positive*
- *Contracting and clarifying expectations*

Coaching Student Two shared how the right questions made the conversation collaborative and contingent as the coach was tapping into the thought process of the individual. This statement highlights that listening skills are important to having contingent conversation, as the right questions cannot be asked unless coaches have listened deeply. Coaching Student One also spoke about how the incisive questions focused on her strengths and how the coach reframed her thinking. The

reflective process in turn contributes to the contingent nature and definitely adds to the collaborative nature of the conversation, as demonstrated by Coaching Student Five, who commented on his own excitement as being part of the process. Coaching Student One shared how the introduction of the coach set the scene for a collaborative relationship based in equity. The nature of the equity appeared to be that the coachee was in charge of the goals – they were the coachee's goals.

"The words 'all the answers lie within me' from the illustration above, resonates with my own coaching experience with my coach. My coach's questions were asked, they were referred back to me and I found that I had the capacity to answer them. The key was in asking the 'right' questions and tapping into the thought process of the individual." (Coaching Student Two)

"I noticed as he reverted back to previous comments, that he was picking up on the significant underlying issues as well as holding a mirror to me. I recall that this gave me a feeling of excitement, in the sense that I was part of a process that was making some progression in terms of awareness and therefore growth." (Coaching Student Five)

Coaching Student Two said, "Together we created the plan," which stressed the collaborative nature of the coaching relationship.

Coaching Student Five said, "*In my personal experience, both the coach and I demonstrated a significant level of collaborative engagement and discussion around the future of the sessions as well as outlining both party's expectations almost immediately."*

Coaching Student One explained, *"The coach during the session when introducing one another informed the client that he does not know it all nor does it all, that he himself is at work on himself, this reassured to me the environment of equality as thinking partners and developing peers."*

Coaching Student One went on to give another example of the collaborative equal nature and shared a quote in her assignment: *"Because the objective exercise gave me an opportunity to reflect, I was open and prepared to resolve matters whichever*

way the conversation may go. I also believe in equality where I am valued and has a part to play, i.e. am not a passive participant. Fielden of centre for Diversity and Work psychology defines this as the power-sharing in controlling the relationship."

Coaching Student One spoke about the all-encompassing conversation but was the first and only person to talk about feeling guilty afterwards, although initially she felt energised after the conversation. *"This made me realise that I had so much stuff inside me that I never got to voice out. What I observed about myself was that I like to speak about myself as when I speak about myself I feel energised and can talk forever but afterwards I feel uncomfortable and guilty as if I have done too much or shared what I should not have shared or I speak too much about myself."* (Coaching Student One)

"An example of this when setting goals I would say what I don't want to see, and the coach assisted to reframe these objectives into the positive objectives by redirecting me to what I need to see." (Coaching Student One)

"By incisive questioning the coach was able to help me think about it and getting to the resolution point, though fed to my overused strength." (Coach Student One)

"At the end of the session I felt as though a platform had been established upon which I could embark further along the coaching journey process with a coach who I sensed I could work with and that our reciprocal 'rules of engagement' and coaching requirements were both clear and acceptable to both of us." (Coaching Student Six)

Coaching Student Six goes on to say, *"The initial coaching session played out to an introductory and high level exploratory space whereby we got to know each other a bit and where the contractual ground rules of the coaching relationship were negotiated between us. To this end we clearly set out our mutual expectations, objectives and requirements with a view of enabling each of us to determine if we could work with each as coach and coachee."*

c) The nature of the space

The students referred to the “safe space” and while this may in part be location, as originally discussed by Executive 11 and Coaching Student Five, it appeared to be more of a psychological safe space. While being respected and understood appear to be contributing factors to this safe space, it appears that it is more than the sum of the parts.

“The space created is one of mutual respect and understanding. My coach has created a safe environment for me to be true and reflect on the person that I am and the vision I have created for myself” (Coaching Student Two). This student added that her coach created a harmonious and protective environment for her.

Coaching Student Three summarised the process factors and also stressed “holding the space”. *“Throughout my two sessions my coach focused on building rapport by increasing positivity, encouraging self-confidence, affirming, holding the space, building trust, active listening, summarising and responding to my input”* (Coaching Student Three). However, if the space was not correct – this too had an impact. *“I noticed that once or twice I became aware of our surroundings (which was in a public space with people sitting nearby) and that the subject matter was of a significant personal nature. This reminded me of the importance of location and privacy.”* (Coaching Student Five)

d) Role of ‘homework’

Some of the students commented on the ‘homework’ tasks between sessions and how this at times had a negative impact and at other times had a positive impact. The value of in between work thus had a mixed response. Student Six also quotes some supportive theory.

“I felt as though I had let myself down because I had attempted a few of the exercises and was not able to complete the work in the allocated time. I felt emotionally blocked and needed more time to process my feelings and thoughts

around the homework requirements before formulating and reducing my answers into writing. My coach was very respectful, understanding and accommodating to my needs and simply requested that I commit to do the homework at my own pace in a way that is beneficial to me and the coaching process. My sentiments are endorsed by Bluckert (2006) who comments that 'a crucial aspect of coaching from the client's perspective is to feel respected, understood and acknowledged' (p86)." (Coaching Student Six)

He goes on to say*, "I was a bit overwhelmed at the volume of the self-discovery and self-awareness 'homework' which I had been asked to complete by the beginning of the next session."*

"As a close out of our first coaching session I received a consolidated summary of our conversation and agreed focus areas from my coach via email. I was very impressed with her pro-activeness and accuracy of the content. Included in the summary, she provided me with a link to a blog on selflessness I also took ownership of diarising and setting up my second coaching session and venue as agreed in our previous session." (Coaching Student Four)

"These feelings were re-iterated by myself as I had left the session with tasks and was eager to meet with my coach in the next coaching session to discuss them." (Coaching Student Two)

The outcomes and benefits of the coaching process were conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making, leading to viewing the world differently, as well as a reduction in a sense of isolation and a sense of empowerment and an enhanced ability to manage stress.

3.10.3 Key components of the outcome



The outcomes and benefits of the coaching process were conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making, leading to viewing the world differently, as well as a reduction in a sense of isolation and a sense of empowerment and an enhanced ability to manage stress.

a) The role of awareness / mindfulness in developing behavioural changes as an outcome

While increasing awareness is part of the coaching process, it is also an outcome of the process and it is discussed below as to how it relates to outcome. The students' contribution to research confirms that mindfulness or awareness contributes to the outwardly demonstrated behaviours which are reflected in Figure 3.3. Student One talked about managing her thoughts while the executives spoke more about thinking differently. It is, however, a process that has an impact on the way individuals deal with their thought process.

Coaching Student Two supports this order of the insights in that they became aware of their thoughts and then feelings and then ultimately behaviour. Coaching Student Three supports the fact that coaching increased awareness and in his assignment quotes Stout-Rostron. Sometimes the awareness shift seems to be a move to focus on positives or strengths, which is consistent with the trends in positive psychology. Many coaches may have been trained in positive psychology skills (Cunningham, 2014, Biswas-Diener, 2009, Kauffman and Linley, 2007).

"The areas of value so far impacted her [the client's] self-esteem and confidence, relationships with people around her, her communication skills as she is now more mindful of the words, and her overall interpersonal skills. Being able to hold two differing views, as Aristotle quotes, 'It is the mark of an educated mind to be able to entertain a thought without accepting it'. Also self-observed by me is the ability to manage my thoughts." (Coaching Student One)

"The sessions have been invaluable to date. I have become more aware of my conscious thoughts, feelings and ultimately my behaviour. In this short period of time, I have worked on issues that I have perhaps plagued me in my past. One of those key issues is detachment and how I was being in relation to myself." (Coaching Student Two)

"I felt that my coach was able to heighten my awareness of the impact selflessness had on me…I'm also mindful that the coaching conversation is about integration of

reflection and thinking with action and experience (Stout-Rostron, 2006)." (Coaching Student Three)

"I have started to reframe my thoughts but using the questioning technique from being judgemental or leading into thought provoking questions, i.e. instead of focussing on negative statements and what is not there into positive and appreciation of what is present. I normally do not approach strangers but now I feel more confident to go up to a stranger or respond to a person of seniority without having to worry about what they think…Apart from me seeing the value of the coaching sessions for myself, My coach acknowledged too that I'm gaining insight." (Coaching Student One)

"I find myself already considering the thoughts that the coach has left me with post sessions. One key thought raised was that of the way we value our own attributes versus another's. It's often the case that we hold our innate skills to be of less worth than those of the skills we deem difficult and see in others. It was pointed out that 'swimming in the sea is simple for a turtle but not so for a tortoise' (personal communication from my coach, March 3, 2015), in other words, what comes naturally to is often overlooked as to be of value. This point struck a chord with me and I feel has merit not only with me but sure many others. This alone has given me something of value to consider for both my personal growth as a client and going forward as a coach." (Coaching Student Five)

b) Confidence increases over time by reinforcement

"The client's confidence is more and more reinforced in the session through the small successes achieved, which makes her feel more worthy to handle situations outside the coaching room" (Coaching Student One). This aligns to the sense of empowerment that was discussed with the first data set but this suggests that the reinforcement of successes in coaching contributes to this increase in confidence.

The context and purpose of coaching were considered important variables that could influence the coaching.

I believe Student One used a phrase that captured the essence of coaching succinctly and described coaching as a *"journey of awareness and resolution".*

This concludes the analysis of the student coaches' coaching experience. This analysis added a dimension about the order of and contribution to existing concepts from the first data set. The most significant addition is that understanding and awareness are the first steps to any other outcome. The analysis also introduced the concepts of vulnerability, anxiety, safe space and acknowledgement from coach as important variables in the coaching process. It further added to the understanding of time and the role of homework.

In concluding this chapter on analysis I would like to end by sharing a quote from one of the executives, which I think summarises much of the debate around coaching, and it is about the language of coaching.

She (Executive 11) stated, "*I just want to add one more thing, is you know one of my frustrations in organizations is language, so people talk here around – and the whole world talks about a coach, a coach's manager, we all run coaches, coach as manager – and I don't think that actually helps external coaching, and it is a relatively minor thing but I think it is very pervasive. So I think language, I think the external coaching relationship needs a whole defining language around it so as not to confuse people, because then that goes to my expectation/frustration. So people here talk about coach, mentor, manager, kind of interchangeably, and one of my frustrations is how people struggle with 'yes I am talking to you about a coaching style as a manager, I am not saying you are a coach'. And for people who are quite inexperienced or naïve about it, I think it just confuses sometimes."*

The prime purpose of this chapter was to analyse the data. A framework was developed upon which to analyse the data. This was represented graphically. It contained the concepts of coach, context, coachee, purpose, coaching process and outcome. In the next chapter the "skeleton" of the framework is populated with the findings and this is discussed in relation to best practice coaching practices (as currently described).

CHAPTER FOUR – THEORY DEVELOPMENT AND LITERATURE REVIEW

4.1 Introduction

This chapter begins by looking at theoretical contribution and what theory is. It subsequently relates the understanding of the concepts “theoretical contribution” and “theory” to this research. The chapter then moves on to an overview of the analysis and begins to discuss the evolving theory. Theoretical contributions include the specific development of a client readiness model; a process model – coaching with gerunds; a contextual framework that locates the above two models and is integrative in nature; and confirming coach attributes.

There is considerable research into the different components of the framework that were presented in chapter three. In terms of the research, it remains much as De Haan writes in 2010: “All these helpful frameworks, categories and taxonomies, and many more, give us insight into how professional coaches (may) think about their work. However, even if we know a great deal about what coaches do and how coaches conceptualise, what do these models actually tell us about how **clients** of coaching experience and view the coaching work?” (De Haan et al., 2010, p. 3).

In terms of the framework, models and theories tend to underpin the process and take a particular component; e.g. describing the questioning process and suggesting (Whitmore, 2010) methods to enhance questioning (Grant and O'Connor, 2010, Ludema et al., 2001); taking meaning making and analysing components of meaning making (Stelter, 2007); and describing ways of approaching the conversation (Whitmore, 2007). This is very specific and is often only a small piece of a much larger process.

There is also considerable research into the outcomes of coaching (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001, Feldman and Lankau, 2005, Grant, 2013, Theeboom et al.,

2014, Fillery-Travis and Lane, 2006, De Haan and Duckworth, 2013, Sonesh et al., 2015).

What appears to be missing or is less common from the theoretical frameworks and the research is the integrated aspects of coaching and research based on the client's perspectives (which is the theory that emerges from my study). There are exceptions to this less researched area, with client-based research being conducted by a few researchers (Day et al., 2008, De Haan et al., 2010, de Haan et al., 2011, Bush, 2004, Passmore, 2010, Dagley, 2010). Dagley (2010) researched the practices and attributes of exceptional executive coaches but he focused primarily on the purchasers of the coaching not the end users.

Often outcomes are specified in "outcomes based" research but what methodology or processes contributed to those outcomes are not stated in that research or are stated with a proviso that further research should be conducted into the area. An example is the meta study by Tim Theeboom, where the research demonstrated that performance/skills, well-being, coping, work attitudes, and goal-directed self-regulation all improve with a coaching intervention (Theeboom et al., 2014). The research does not measure what contributed to each of these outcomes. At the opposite end of the spectrum, a methodology is detailed and described but the contribution that this makes to the outcome is often limited. An example would be any methodological study that explains the researcher's process without linking it to evidence-based research for outcomes. It is possible that the desired outcome might be achieved from a particular method but the research does not demonstrate that link. Examples might include how mindfulness made a difference in studies and could be used by coaches or how gestalt approaches worked in therapy and could be adapted to coaching (Gillie and Shackleton, 2009, Passmore and Marianetti, 2007).

This chapter will table research as it relates to each of the components of the framework: the coachee, the coach, the process, the outcome, the context and the purpose. The prime aim of this chapter, however, is to develop an integrated theory and this will be the outcome of the chapter. These theories are presented throughout

the chapter but a starting position for the research is stated upfront. A key base contribution to the research is that this research is from the client's perspective. Research which has been based on the client's perspective will be referred to but this research makes up a small percentage of the research base of coaching research. Passmore conducted a grounded study of the coachee's experience in 2010. Mary Wayne Bush was one of the first researchers to do her PHD on the client's experience of coaching. This was completed in 2004. Eric De Haan has conducted a few studies on the client / coachee's lived experience. These authors are leading academics in their respective countries: Passmore – UK, De Haan – Netherlands, and Bush – USA. Some other studies are referenced in this chapter but these studies potentially have more impact because of the gravitas of the authors (Bush, 2004, Passmore, 2010, Day et al., 2008, De Haan et al., 2010, de Haan et al., 2011). "While the majority of these studies have gathered views from coaches, relatively few papers have given a voice to the coachee's experiences" (Passmore, 2010).

Papers prior to 2010, according to Passmore (2010), were mainly single case studies as opposed to consolidations from a range of coachee experiences. Since 2010, the handful of studies from the client's experiences includes those of Elston and Boniwell (2011), Augustijnen et al. (2011), Gray et al. (2014), Roche and Hefferon (2013), Linder-Pelz and Lawley (2015). Research of lived experiences of clients in the coaching world is a limited area of research.

4.2 Theory Development and Theoretical Contribution

Objectivist grounded theorists define theory as "a series of concepts integrated by a core concept" (Martin, 2006, p. 126). A key difference between this view and that of constructivist grounded theory is that objectivists focus on data as real and dismiss the processes through which the data was collected, analysed and written. The theory developed under a constructivist grounded theory paradigm describes how meaning is generated and sustained and looks at the social context in which the participants are situated, while the objectivist removes reference to context, to the

researcher and to the relationship between the researcher and the participants (Lawrence, 2006, Charmaz, 2014).

In keeping with this constructivist underpinning described in chapter two, as well as the symbolic interactionist perspective explained in chapter two, my research is very contextually bounded. It views interpretation and action as reciprocal processes that impact on one another. This perspective leads to a dynamic understanding of events (Charmaz, 2014). The framework is placed within a context. After the overview of the analysis and findings (section 4.3), the first component that is developed as part of the theoretical framework is the context.

Strauss and Corbin define theory as “a set of well-developed concepts related through statements which together constitute an integrated framework that can be used to explain phenomena” (Strauss and Corbin, 1998, p. 15). This resonates with the theory that has evolved in this research. One aspect of theory that I developed is client readiness for coaching. Client readiness has been identified as a key component of coaching (but the variables within client readiness have not been explored from the client perspective). The contribution of this research compared to the existing theory will be explained in the section on client readiness (section 4.5). It has several well-developed concepts such as willingness, clarity of expectation, timing, driver of anxiety and vulnerability (see section 4.5). These concepts integrate and form a particular relationship and order, which contribute to the phenomenon of client readiness in coaching. This phenomenon of client readiness will inform other processes within coaching and thus the integration continues. This highlights how the contribution develops and how well-related concepts cluster to form an integrated framework and in so doing theory is developed. At the end of the chapter is a summary of the existing theories across the model and the contribution these theories made to each aspect of the framework.

Ultimately theory is the development of perspective and the creation of a mental model of the phenomenon to be understood. Theory development encourages the advancement of knowledge and aims to move the field’s thinking forward, providing

new connections and discussing the practical implementations of these connections (Corley and Gioia, 2011).

Theoretical contribution is often evaluated on two criteria – the originality of the contribution and the usefulness of the contribution. Originality may be small and incremental or it may be revelatory. In terms of usefulness, it may be practically useful of scientifically useful. This is represented in Figure 4.1.

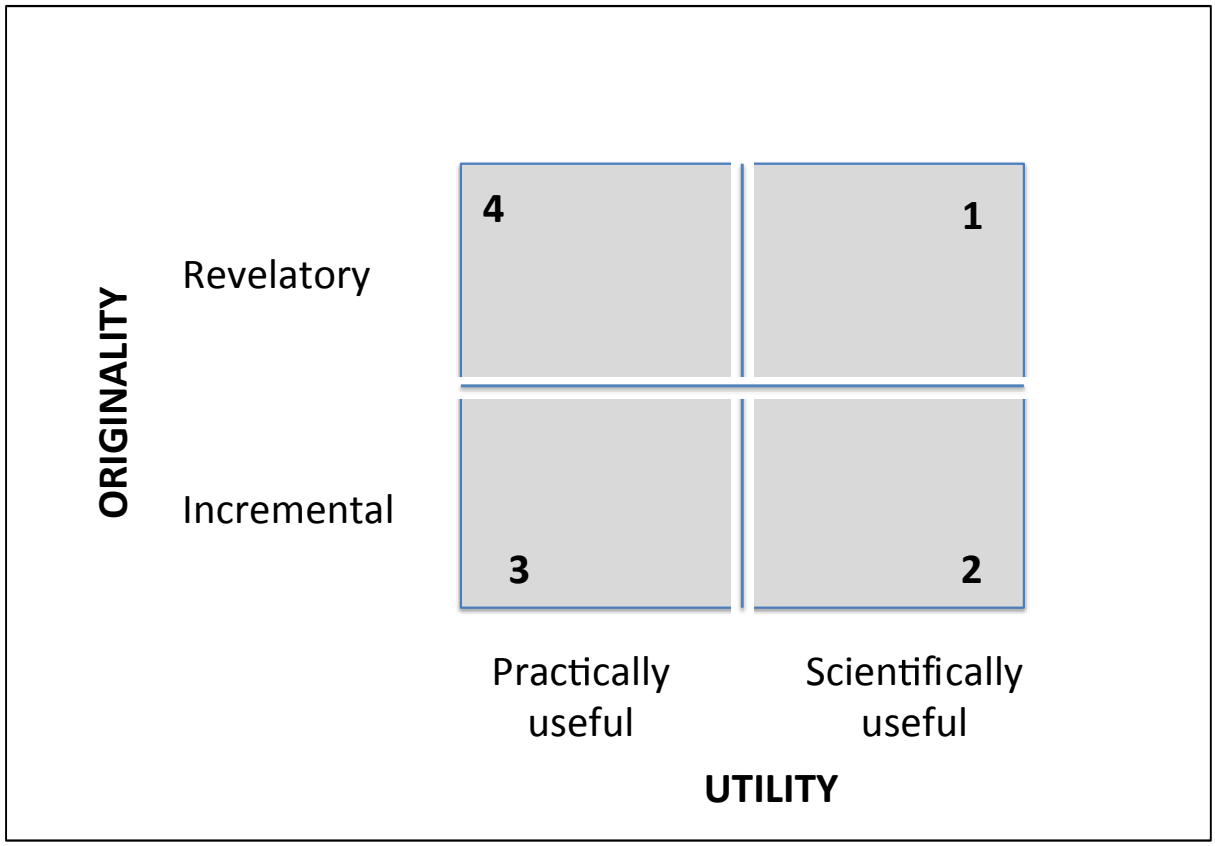


Figure 4.1: *Theoretical contribution criteria* (Corley and Gioia, 2011,pg 15).

In reference to the theoretical contribution criteria shown in Figure 4.1, I would suggest my research sits just above the border between incremental and revelatory. While the concepts have been discussed individually before, the revelatory component is the integration of concepts that previously sat alone. It shifts towards revelatory as the relationships had not been defined from a coaching client perspective but the shift is based on known best practices hence not sitting firmly in the revelatory block. My research is practically useful as coaches can apply the

theory in the way in which they work with coaching clients. However it is also conceptually useful (scientifically useful) as concepts and the relationships have been defined. An example of such a scientific usefulness is the model of willingness of the client which shows the interrelationship between many models.

Corley & Gioia (2011) believe that theoretical contributions in management and organisation studies have not done an adequate job of anticipating the important conceptual, as well as practical, needs of society – in particular the needs of business and social organisations. I would add that in relation to business and executive coaching research the same assessment could be applied. The society and context within which coaching takes place are not always reflected in the research, with a few key authors highlighting the context as an important variable (Brock, 2008, Drake, 2008, Stelter, 2014, Lane et al., 2010, Stout-Rostron, 2014, Dagley, 2010). When context is looked at, it is often limited to the coaching world context – e.g. professionalisation of the coaching field but not extended to the users of the coaching services: business professionals and managers.

While most theoretical contributions can be seen to be addressing a problem that has emerged in the past, very few look to a future orientation that could assist in keeping theories vibrant and relevant in a constantly changing landscape. The theory that develops in this chapter aims to meet the following criteria:

- *To address coaching challenges from both a practical level and from a conceptual level*
- *To suggest answers to existing problems and anticipate that time will show it to have some relevance moving forward*
- *To place the theory within a context; namely, that of society*

4.2.1 Theory that evolved from this research

The theory that evolved, which is based on the client's lived experience (coachee), will be discussed in detail in this chapter. There were five key findings with detailed

descriptions and theoretical propositions behind each of the findings. The findings that will be presented are:

1. Coaching is a response to an unmet need in an individual in a volatile, ever changing world with great complexity. Coaching provided a wellness model that is collaborative, client driven, and adaptable. A primary need in an individual is to have a sense of well-being (which includes a sense of self and identity) and personal meaning in this world.

2. Even though the coaching is a response to a need for well-being and personal meaning making, the coaching client still needs to be ready. There are many components to readiness and a theoretical proposition (client readiness theory) was developed based on the client's lived experience. The concept of readiness and willingness has been documented many times but the interrelationships based on the client's perceptions were a new contribution.

3. There are several processes that assist in reaching coaching outcomes, but a key aspect of achieving the coaching outcomes is the focus on the processes being active and understanding the relationship between the "being" and "knowing" of the coach and the "doing" of the coach. The doing covers the active processes but it is the way in which the coach "does" these processes (the being) that influences their efficacy.

4. The coach needs to be authentic, credible and present (theoretical proposition).

5. Brain integration leads to deeper self-awareness, well-being and personal meaning. This theory of brain integration is based in IPNB and the nine domains of integration assist in providing an overarching framework in which to position the outcomes of coaching.

The theory provides a framework of the coaching process but it still allows coaches to impose their models on the framework. This could be compared to the field of psychology. There is a framework that defines what a psychologist is and what a psychologist does, but some psychologists use a Jungian model, while others use a

Freudian orientation and others Narrative therapy. The coaching theory framework that has emerged from my research allows for various models to be used. A further area of research would be to research the contribution the model makes to the different aspects of the framework. An example of one of the processes that is considered valuable from the coaching client's perspective is "challenging assumptions of coachee" – this could be done through a narrative technique, through a NeuroLinguistic Programme (NLP) technique, or through a gestalt technique. The coaching framework thus provides the why and what of coaching but the how (the model) can be chosen by the coach.

4.3 Overview of Analysis and Findings

In chapter three, a framework was used to analyse the data. The framework is reproduced below but now populated with an overview of the findings from the analysis. Therefore this chapter takes each of the concepts discussed in the previous chapter and populates them under the different components

The findings were broken down into the different components:

1. Context - discussed in section 4.4
2. Coaching purpose - discussed in section 4.4
3. Coachee / Executive - discussed in section 4.5
4. Coaching process- discussed in section 4.6
5. Coach - discussed in section 4.7
6. Coaching outcomes - discussed in section 4.8

The integrated populated framework is then presented in demonstrated in Figure 4.2 which is a high level summary of all the key findings. This draws on everything discussed in previous sections.

An overview of the findings in each section is summarised below to provide a roadmap for the reader. This highlights and summarises what will be discussed in each of the section.

The first two aspects of the framework are "The context" and "purpose of coaching". These were considered important variables that could influence the coaching. The reasons (the why for embarking upon coaching) were seen by the coachees as providing the following for them:

- A support mechanism
- Guidance process
- Decision-making process
- Skills development
- Goal-setting process
- A place of self-awareness and structure
- Growth
- A way of doing things differently
- A way of managing stress
- Reflection process
- Making sense

In relation to the executive or coachee, it was found that they needed to be ready for the coaching. Client readiness was influenced by the willingness of the individual client to be coached, by timing (the right time, the correct frequency) and by clarity of expectation. The context in which the coaching was taking place would influence the clients' readiness. They also needed some element of anxiety or vulnerability in order to want to change.

The components of the coaching process were making the client think differently, through a variety of techniques such as questioning, probing, exploring and challenging but without judgement from the coach. The nature of the conversation was collaborative, contingent, personalised and all-encompassing and integrated while being personalised to the individual's needs. The creation of a safe space was also an important process. Being acknowledged and having some 'homework'

enabled the coachee to reach the outcomes. Too much homework or too many tasks, however, were detrimental. The processes listed below led to the establishment of a safe space and the personalised, integrated, collaborative contingent conversation.

- Questioning incisively
- Listening deeply
- Partnering in process
- Setting the scene for equity
- Reframing from negative to positive
- Contracting and clarifying expectations

Coach attributes that positively influenced the coaching process were the authenticity of the coach, the presence of the coach and the coach honesty as well as the coach's credibility.

The outcomes and benefits of the coaching process were:

- Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making, leading to viewing the world differently and subsequently feeling and behaving differently
- Personal growth
- More effective relationship management
- Reduction in isolation and loneliness
- A sense of empowerment
- Stress management

The outcomes were considered to be sustainable.

This overview of the analysis is captured in Figure 4.2. This framework will be the basis that guides the theory development. Please note that the figure captures the high-level aspects of the framework and these are drilled down later per section. An example would be "thinking differently" is a step in the process. This step has many smaller processes within it, such as challenging, probing and identifying patterns. It is not possible to capture the steps within each process of the framework graphically. These are examined in the detailed discussion of each aspect of the framework: coach, process, coachee, context, purpose and outcomes.

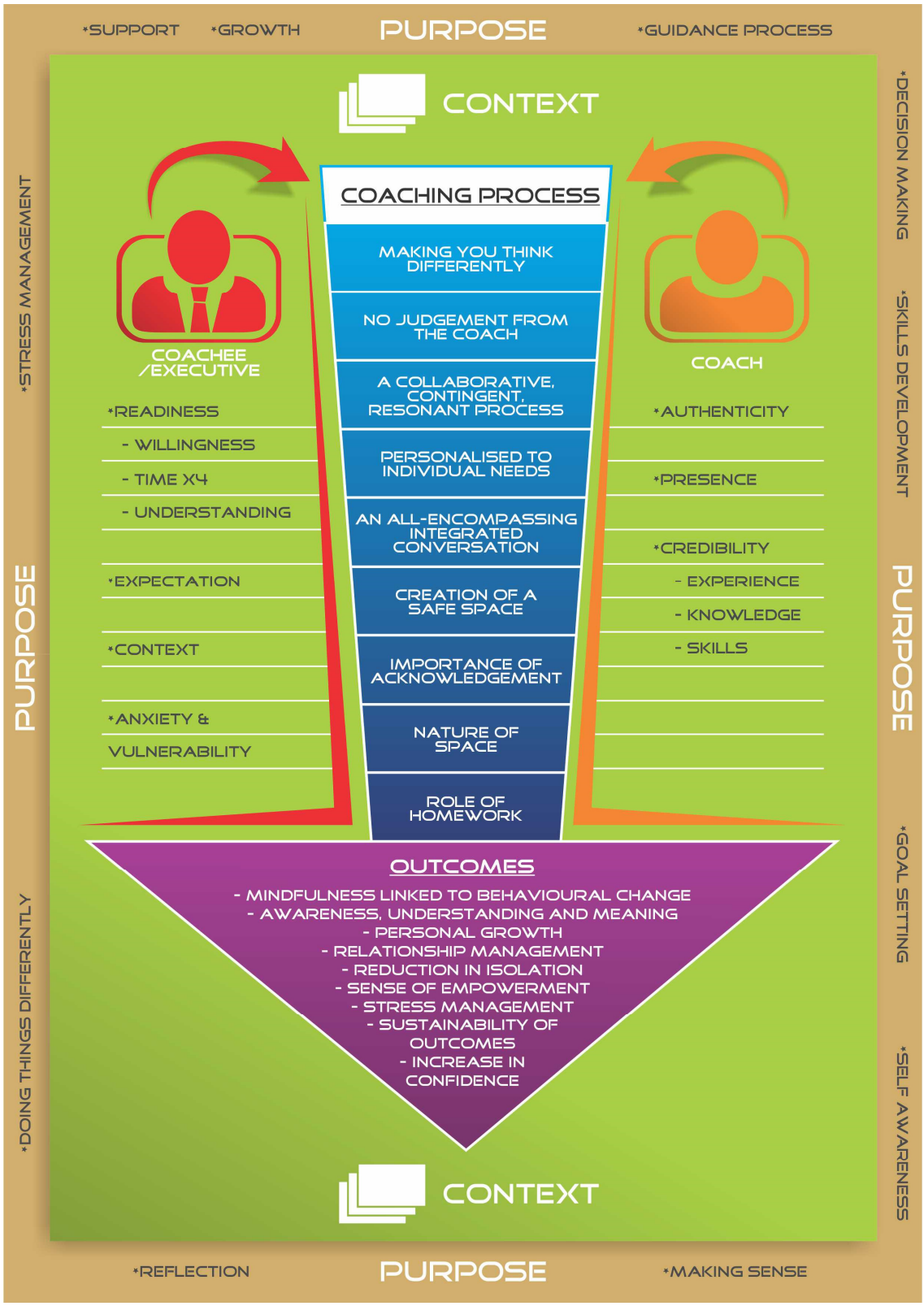


Figure 4.2: *Overview of the framework of the initial analysis*

4.4 Context, Purpose and Paradigm of Coaching

Coaching takes place within a context and has arisen within a moment in time. This context in which coaching evolved is described as “coaching came into being in order to meet needs of people in an unpredictable world of complexity, rapid change and shifting interaction.”(Brock, 2008)

Brock (2008) in her PhD explored the historical roots of coaching. She summarised her observations about the emergence of coaching and concluded that there were five major insights: 1) coaching arose from several sources simultaneously and independently; 2) coaching has a very broad intellectual framework that draws on many disciplines (not limited to but including adult education, learning and development, psychology, sports, philosophy, management theory and natural sciences); 3) modern patterns and practices of coaching are dynamic and contextual; 4) coaching came into being in order to meet needs of people in an unpredictable world of complexity, rapid change and shifting interaction; and 5) coaching operates from a value of inclusion and respect for diversity in an integral open social network framework (Brock, 2008).

Brock suggests that the future of coaching is that it will move into becoming a social movement that responds to relationships and becomes woven into the fabric of society. It will become the way people interact with one another. She sees coaching as a social phenomenon and multi-disciplinary field (Brock, 2008). She states:

> “Coaching came into existence to fill an unmet need in an interactive, fluid world of rapid change and complexity. The unmet need was a wellness model and an integral postmodern perspective. At the time that coaching emerged, traditional disciplines, such as psychology, were just beginning to shift from the scientific medical illness model, as the world became more complex and ambiguous. While movements such as humanistic psychology were evidence of that shift, it was still practiced within the limitations of clinical practice. Coaching emerged and added complementary practices from other fields.” (Brock, 2008, p. vii).

It is useful to contextualise what Brock (2008) refers to when she discusses a postmodern perspective. Table 4.1 describes the shifts that are happening in the world from the modern period (1890–1950) to the postmodern period (1950–present).

Table 4.1: *Summary of shifts from modern to postmodern period (Nevis,1997, as adapted by Brock,2008)*

Modern	**Postmodern**
Scientific (logical, rational, objective, analytical)	Humanistic (human bonding, networking, subjective, community, collaborative)
Industrial and manufacturing society	Service and information society
Mass urban society	Mobile society (pluralist and cosmopolitan societies, migration)
Progress mentality (achieve progress through economic and technical growth and sacrifice in isolation from environmental and other contexts)	Social responsibility (resistance to making sacrifices in name of progress, part of a larger whole, environmental)
Social fabric reliable (religion, family, school, and government trusted institutions for social values & acceptable behaviour)	Social fabric crumbling (traditional institutions no longer working to convey social values and acceptable behaviour)
Religion (organized and directing)	Spirituality (collective global consciousness, values, flow)
Conformist (humans are interchangeable economic units and dissociated parts)	Individualism and human potential (think for self, holistic perspective, develop all of self, personal values, authenticity)
Corporate security (retirement, job for life)	Personal responsibility (customized learning, ethics, manage careers and ability to perform, personal branding)
Linear progression (right and wrong)	Complexity (choice, options, diverse norms, demands)
Nationalistic (closed, homogenized, hierarchical, structured)	Globalization (global, multicultural, matrixed and complex, diversity; for example, multinational economies and global economic arrangements)
Mechanization	Technology (provide information access and keeps us

Modern	Postmodern
	separate, and yet provides for social networking)
Rate of change predictable (orderly, natural laws)	Rate of change increasing (uncertainty, ambiguity, confusion, paradox; increasing disruptiveness and uncertainty in daily living, accelerated life cycles, learn fast, be nimble and agile)
Separation (clear boundaries, distinctions; for example, social separation of work and family life)	Reintegration (boundaries and distinctions collapsing; for example, work and family life reintegrated through virtual work and telecommuting)
Competitive (struggle for existence, work ethic)	Strive and drive culture (materialistic, consumerism, success, image, status, growth)
Pursuit of economic wealth	Pursuit of meaning, happiness, and purpose (people living longer in economic comfort)
Stability	Pressure (for performance, satisfaction, need to keep growing, changing, and/or improving)
Information controlled	Information availability (information accessibility and manipulation by all, mass media and telecommunications)
Physical and social connection	Virtual and media connection (social connection and community more expensive, Internet and media substitute for social connection)
Bureaucracy	Grass roots (ordinary people involvement in decisions; participatory culture, digital convergence)
Hierarchical, authority, command, control	Collaboration, participation and influence

One of the key aspects of how the world has changed is the need for integrated solutions to challenges. In the 1950's a single track could work in resolving problems. Now with greater accessibility to knowledge and information; solutions are required to be collaborative and often include a mingling or overlapping of roles and skills. This leads to a blurring of boundaries and to more complexity in adapting to the demands of the world. An example to illustrate this is the role of marketing. Previously before heightened social media usage, a company could develop a long term marketing strategy and run TV and print advertisements and inform the

customer of the benefits of the product. This would largely be a tell / sell and push strategy. Now with social media if the customer has a bad experience they can tweet or share their experience on Facebook and thousands can engage and discuss the product/ experience. The company has to be responsive and adapt based on customer engagement. This requires different skills from telling and selling. The person needs to be able to listen, collaborate, consult, handle conflict and be adaptable.

Historically, the view of the world was that it was made up of machine-like entities that could be taken apart and analysed by components. Most systems, however, cannot be understood by this silo or linear process and this resulted in what complexity theorists call “non-linear, complex adaptive systems”. Key characteristics of these complex adaptive systems is that they are emergent and that the system flows through interaction between individuals not from a centralised control. The concept “emergence” encompasses the notion that the components’ interactions are greater than and different from the sum of the parts and this leads to a degree of unpredictability. What is of particular relevance in understanding complexity is the feedback loops and the adaptability and evolving nature of the system (Cunningham, 2014).

This means that the emergent order in turn influences the behaviour of the parts. An example would be the company “Uber”, which defines itself as an online network transportation company. Uber upset the traditional taxi system by linking smartphone technology to the taxi industry. Users were more empowered and could call and select and track their taxis through the use of cell phones. Since the first evolution of its business model, the company has had several spin offs by adding an upmarket car offering and adding vans and it now has a delivery service linked to Ubers. Private companies (unrelated to Uber) are working in association with them offering promotions to people who use Uber, such as free sushi for the first 50 trips on a particular day. The constant feedback loop keeps adapting the original system and it is not far-fetched, futurists believe, to have the delivery service linked to driverless cars or deliveries from drones.

Complex adaptive systems fluctuate between three states: *statis* at one end, *chaos* at the other end of the continuum and the in-between state of *edge of chaos*. Edge of chaos is where creativity and innovation, new ideas and unexpected actions and direction occur. This has consequences for people, their energy levels, their emotions and their tolerance of ambiguity and uncertainty, and it is at this juncture that coaching responds and becomes relevant (Brock, 2008, Drake, 2008, Cunningham, 2014). Coaching responds by providing a space for reflection and subsequent meaning making for the individuals as they experience this draining of emotional energy and the constant changing world of uncertainty and ambiguity. This allows the individual to process the impact of the "complex adaptive system" and work out personal adaptive strategies.

Brock's comprehensive review of influences on coaching suggested that socioeconomic influences interacted in such a way as to generate an environment that was ready for coaching, and then coaching emerged in different places simultaneously. The practice of coaching is influenced by cultural factors. The multiple birthplaces of coaching, each within a different culture, is a dilemma in the attempt to create one global profession (Brock, 2008). Drake (2008, p. 17) writes: "One of the difficulties for coaching arises from the fact that it has emerged in a post professional context but without the explicit foundational components of other disciplines." Drake (2008) believes that coaching may evolve to be seen as a network, not as a profession or field as traditionally defined. In fact, he speculates that coaching could come to be seen as a movement that shapes life's transitions and leadership (Drake, 2008). Brock states that the definition, ideal, goals and purpose of a discipline are shaped by the context in which the discipline evolves (Brock, 2008). She predicts that coaching will become a worldview by 2025 but, in order for it to do so, it needs to maintain an open network that allows for innovation and new ideas and agility. This requires coaches to be willing to promote inclusion and to be collaborative in their interaction with others, encouraging inclusion and avoiding exclusion from a professionalism perspective.

Stelter shares how Kenneth Gergen, a social psychologist, highlighted that the postmodern self is overwhelmed by endless choices and becomes disorientated in knowing what to do and how to behave (Stelter, 2014). The space of coaching offers individuals an opportunity to reflect and have a dialogue that can facilitate their seeing themselves in a new light. This contributes to developing a sense of self efficacy and allows for a space to choose an action based on the insights gained. This is supportive of one of the principles of complexity theory, in which conversations are seen as the vehicle for challenging viewpoints (Cunningham, 2014). Stout-Rostron (2014, p. 69) states: "The coaching conversation provides a thinking environment where business professionals are able to develop self-awareness and a depth of understanding of themselves and others – embedding newly acquired skills, competences and attitudes which subsequently impact the actions they take, and visibly demonstrate new behaviours."

Having laid down the theoretical foundation of coaching as a response to complexity within today's world, how does this interact with the evidence and data of my research? Executive 1 and Executive 11 spoke about the "loneliness", Executive 5 spoke about the "struggles". Executives 6 and 11 spoke about "taking back power", about the conversation helping them find themselves and helping them craft their purpose. Executive 6 spoke about "trying to shift yourself through change".

From this selection (above) of statements as well as others captured in chapter three, it is seen that the environment or context (our VUCA world and its realities) is driving the need for coaching (loneliness, change, transitions, struggles). Furthermore we (me and you – the reader) see that the journey is about finding self and the statement from Executive 9 summarises it so aptly –***"coaching is when you visit yourself and you have someone accompany you."***

Other phrases from the analysis chapter (chapter three) were that "it made me think differently" (Executive 2), "forced me to look inwards" (Executive 4), was an "unlimiting conversation, a different type of conversation that you could not have with others" (Executive 77). *"It was quite an* ***unlimiting conversation*** *– you are not only limited to only a factual conversation, you are not limited to only an emotional*

*conversation…**nothing is compartmentalised**"* (Executive 6). *"It **was a conversation that I found I wasn't having anywhere else**, conversations that you can't have at work, conversations that you probably aren't having at home with your spouse, and that you are probably not having with friends – you know almost that it's got a seriousness to it, but a level of complexity that there are very few people that you are able to share that sort of information and thoughts with"* (Executive 1).

Executive 5 stated that *"**a coach is someone who you can talk to how you come across in the world and how you interact with people that you get with nobody else**. You don't get that with your wife, you don't get that with your kids, you don't get that with your mom or dad."* Executive 6 spoke about **how the coach worked with complexity and layers**. She said, *"decisions are often complex and have such a big impact, and ja, **she helped identify with me all the layers of the decision** – you as a person, as a whole, you as a person and your goal, in your career, recommendations, relationships – whatever. **Everything had to make sense for** me to take that decision, at an emotional level. It was like all different levels."*

The executives' responses reveal the complexity of the coaching process and the layered multi-dimensional responses to the coaching process are noted. There is no simple one-dimensional response. The response is about meaning making and working with identity. There is very little reference to end goals being met. One of the student coaches spoke about meeting goals but for the most part people did not reflect on this and spoke much more about the nature of the conversation. The executives spoke about coaching being a guiding process, a place of self-awareness and personal growth, a thinking space, a decision-making space, a supportive space, a reflective process and a sense-making process, and at times a space of skills development and goal setting. They did mention the reduction of stress that resulted from coaching though.

This section is entitled "Context, Purpose and Paradigm of Coaching" and I would like to conclude the section by suggesting that the data shows that coaching takes place in response to needs that are a result of living in the society and world that we currently live in. Having a space and time to reflect on who they are in this world

helps give meaning to individuals and allows them to contemplate their identity. This supportive space allows for reflection and new thinking to emerge in the person. On the basis of the data, I therefore see the purpose of coaching as a response to the demands of an individual's world that provides a supportive space in which to reflect so that the individual may make meaning of their lives and themselves and as consequence think differently, act differently and make decisions that will help manage the stress in their lives. In support of this, I endorse the thinking of Reinhard Stelter and this sentiment:

> "A coaching agenda that focuses exclusively on goals and quick solutions will fail to meet the needs of postmodern, late modern and hypercomplex societies, where the challenges and demands on the individuals are changing very rapidly. I encourage the reader to focus less on specific goals and instead invite their coaching partner to linger on thoughts and feelings and to make time for reflection. In our time, we have lost the idea of simply having time. Coaching has to be a dialogue from where we reinvent the concept of just lingering, of having time to be on a journey with another person. It is a journey into the unknown, where neither the coach nor the coaching partner clearly knows the destination or the route. It is a journey of discovery into relatively unknown territory, where both parties are travel companions, and neither knows anything for sure about the road ahead." (Stelter, 2016, p. 23).

4.5 Client Readiness

While a need drives the individual to coaching, the need in itself is not sufficient; the individual needs to be ready to engage in the coaching. The distinct contribution from the executives and coaching students was the concept of client readiness and willingness. While this is often described by coaches as an important concept, the components of client readiness are described in more depth below.

Stelter (2007, p. 195) describes readiness "as an orientation that makes the individual ready to verbalise some of the experiences of the moment". Brock (2008) links readiness to Prochaska's theory of change. Mary Beth O'Neill in her book

“Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart” relates readiness more to the coach’s behaviour of warmth and acceptance, which facilitate readiness in the coachee (O'Neill, 2000). The relational dimension could contribute 30% to the outcomes, based specifically on a previous study in psychotherapy by Lambert (1992, in de Haan et al., 2010), in which he showed that “hope and expectation account for 15%; specific, relational factors for 30%; factors external to the therapy for 40%; and specific, technique- or approach-related factors for only 15% of the effectiveness” (de Haan, 2008, p. 133). Greif (2007) describes client readiness for change as a predictor for success. She refers to a study conducted in Germany by Maethner in 2005 (not available in English), where the researchers used a questionnaire and, with the technique of exploratory regression, analysed the predictor of effective coaching outcomes. The study found client motivation – an aspect of readiness – combined with clear goals as the best predictor of success. Passmore and Theeboom (2015), based on a review of coaching psychology research, discuss poor timing and impatience with the executive’s readiness levels as contributing factors as to why coaching does not work. Ely et al. (2010) share how studies show that using mindfulness may reduce anxiety and increase the readiness of the client and cite studies by Boyatzis where the links to Neuroscience and readiness are implied. Stelter in a 2016 written reflection on the relationship of the coach and coachee, who he refers to as “fellow human companions”, describes how “willingness and readiness are the cornerstone of coaching and how readiness and willingness also needs to be kept alive during the session, and that, the client’s positive perception of the working alliance is of central importance” (Stelter, 2016, p. 20). While all these articles stress the importance of client readiness, client readiness is not clearly defined. Components come through such as lower levels of anxiety, a goal focus, a good relationship with the coach but it is unclear which comes first or which has more importance for the client. The model described below is based on what the clients described as more important.

I have captured this client readiness framework in a diagram below – Figure 4.3: *The path to client readiness*. When exploring this diagram, I demonstrate what emerged from the data set and evidence. I analyse the different components and the

relationships between them and how they inform client readiness. While each of the client readiness components has been documented previously, the relationship between them is a construct that I have developed on the basis of the analysis of the data.

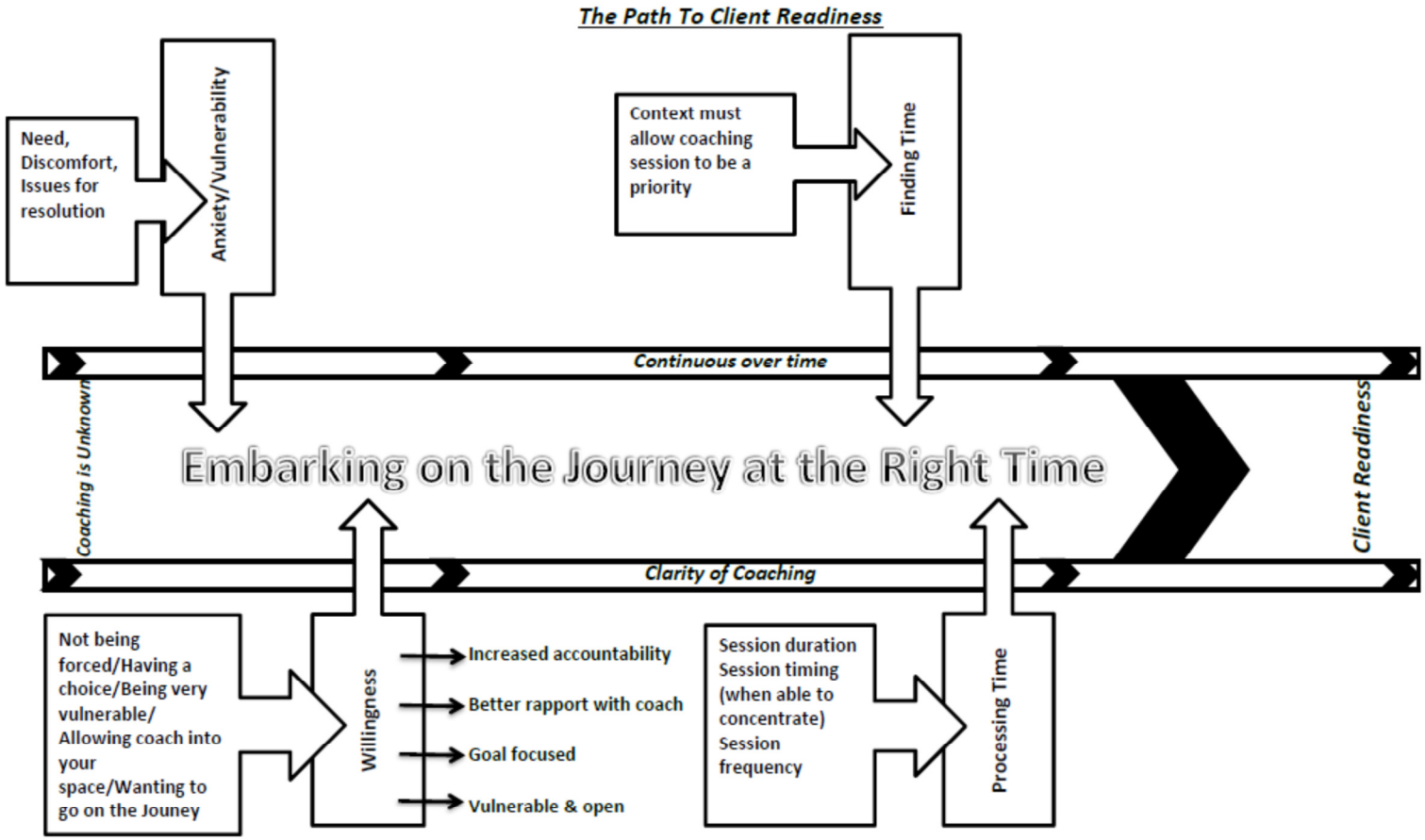


Figure 4.3: *The path to client readiness*

It is important that the coaching journey commences at the right time (the central arrow). If people are overwhelmed with workload and pressure, the coaching impact is reduced. This has implications for companies who roll out coaching to large numbers of people regardless of the individual circumstances of each person. An organisation might benefit from knowing this and perhaps introduce coaching over a period of time. A possible suggestion would be that all executives identified for coaching would be told that they need to embark on the coaching process and begin within the next six months. They could prioritise whether they would start immediately or whether they would deal with other pressures and start at any suitable time within the six-month period. This would be congruent with adult learning theory, which states "The five assumptions underlying andragogy describe the adult learner as someone who (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors" (Merriam, 2001, p.5).

I have made an assumption here that regardless of the outcome – be it stress management, enhanced interpersonal relationships or another outcome – the client / coachee will need to learn. The paradigm of learning has shifted and one of the shifts is from classroom to coaching. In a Leadership Development Survey conducted by Stout-Rostron, Cunningham and Crous in 2013, it was found that 60% of organisations were using coaching for leadership development (Stout Rostron et al., 2013). While leadership development is only one aspect of learning in an organisation, it is often where future trends in learning begin. If we reflect on the components of learning listed below, we see alignment with the coaching process and the findings of this research.

- *Learning requires that we change the way we think*
- *Learning needs us to understand the systemic interconnectedness of things*
- *Learning requires us to be more aware of our assumptions, our choices, our beliefs*

- *Learning requires letting go of disempowering ways of working and embracing new choices and behaviours (Craig, 2014).*

Thus, one of the first theoretical principles that underpin client readiness is the principle of learning and specifically self-directed adult learning.

There are four components feeding into the client readiness experience; I will begin by exploring the first two components in the diagram. The one component is entitled "anxiety and vulnerability", the other component is "willingness". There are factors that influence each of these components. In terms of anxiety and vulnerability, in order for the coachee to begin to discuss their concerns, the issues they want to work on, they will need to open up. Part of the opening of oneself is linked to a belief about whether learning is fixed or whether one can continue to grow. If one accepts one's vulnerability and that one can grow, it has been found that this increases one's willingness to take healthy risks. A fixed mindset creates beliefs focused on judgement. A growth mindset creates beliefs focused on change. The vulnerability and mindset therefore feed into the willingness (Dweck, 2006).

Not being forced and wanting to go on the journey were two key aspects of willingness. Forcing people into a coaching process when it is something that they do not want was perceived by the executives to be a factor that would inhibit willingness. While willingness is feeding into the client readiness process, some direct results of willingness were shared. These were that by being willing and open the rapport with the coach was easier to develop and the client took a sense of accountability and was focused on the goal they wanted to work on and, in turn, became even more vulnerable and open.

The next two components that impact on the client readiness experience (refer to Figure 4.3) are time-related components. The first component is finding the time for the coaching session. This appears to be influenced more by the context than by the individual client, with comments by the executives such as: "It was hard to find the time in my diary." If the context does not value the coaching process, it might result in diary time becoming a real constraint. I recall a personal experience where I was

coaching a director and often the CEO would ask the director to come through for a meeting with him (the CEO) that would conflict with the coaching session. The CEO would make a comment that coaching could be shifted easily. It was not seen as a priority by the CEO. This type of context could impact on people making coaching a less important priority. But, assuming that the coaching time can be found, there are three “time” factors that further impact the readiness – these are the duration of the session, the timing of the session and the frequency of the session. Each of these time factors seemed to have the Goldilocks influence – they needed to be just right – not too much, not too little. If the session was too long, clients reported that it impacted on the ability to concentrate. However, if sessions were too short, there would be insufficient time to explore the issues. Sessions needed to be held frequently enough to keep the golden thread running from one to another, but not so frequent that there was no time to implement the learnings between sessions. The timing of the session was also important; some clients shared how their session was at the end of a demanding work day and this impacted on their ability to concentrate and be present.

All these factors – willingness, vulnerability and the timing components – fed into the client readiness journey. There are two assumptions that underpin this journey – the assumption that the coaching journey continues over time and the assumption that the clarity of coaching emerges over time (see Figure 4.3). These impacts on client readiness are emergent and evolving; so client readiness is a dynamic concept and not a state that is achieved once. An example might be that a client may begin a coaching process very open, willing and ready but as they explore the issue, they may find personal defences and that the issue is difficult to resolve and they may fluctuate between a willingness to continue to deal with issue and a desire to give up the process.

4.6 The Coaching Process – Using Gerunds and Present Focus

In developing the theory about the process, I recognised again how difficult it is to separate the coach's being from the coach's doing and knowing. The model of being, knowing and doing was described in the previous chapter. Some areas that initially had been defined as a process were shifted back to falling under the category of the coach's being. Initially "not judging" was seen as a process but further clarity from the student coaches highlighted that this was more the way the coach was in her very being as opposed to what she did and thus I shifted this non-judgemental attitude to the analysis of coach rather than part of the analysis of process.

I had found in the analysis process using gerunds to code had added a clarity to my coding that had not been there when I initially coded using themes. I played (part of theory building is playing, experimenting) with the concept; if using gerunds had been so useful in providing clarity in coding, could they not be equally useful in analysing the coaching process. I aimed to take each process and focus it on to the present tense. Using gerunds keeps researchers grounded on their present activity and gives a sense of action. By focusing on the words and actions of clients, coaches, as researchers did, will uphold the "fluidity of their client's experiences" and it will nurture in coaches a desire to start analysis from their perspective. Charmaz goes on to state that despite the benefits of coding in gerunds, she believes most people do not use them "as our English language favours thinking in structures, topics and themes rather than thinking in actions and processes" (Charmaz, 2014, p. 124). Charmaz writes about coding with gerunds; I would like to extend this concept from coding with gerunds to coaching with gerunds.

The processes that the coach needed to follow were:

a. Listening deeply
b. Questioning incisively
c. Partnering in the process
d. Setting the scene for equitable relationship

e. Reframing the negative to the positive

f. Contracting and clarifying expectations

g. Continuing reinforcement

h. Personalising the conversation

i. Creating a safe space

j. Acknowledging and appreciating the client

k. Challenging existing paradigms

l. Encouraging and supporting the client

m. Giving feedback

n. Exploring, looking at alternatives

o. Prodding

p. Recognising patterns and themes and sharing them

q. Looking inwards

r. Providing tools

s. Giving examples

These led to the coach understanding the client. With the client in the space of feeling understood, the client began to make meaning or together with the coach co-create meaning and subsequently began to think differently. Once they thought differently, they began to act and behave differently. This co-creation and active role of both the coach and the coachee / client is consistent with what Stelter (2014) calls "third-generation coaching". He sees the coach and the coachee as having a "narrative collaborative partnership". He writes:

> "unlike first-generation coaching, where the goal is to help the coachee achieve a specific objective, and unlike second-generation coaching, where the coach assumes that the coachee implicitly knows the solution to particular challenges; third-generation coaching has a less goal-oriented agenda but a

> more profound and sustainable focus on values and identity work. Coach and coachee create something together: They generate meaning together in the conversation, where both parties are on a journey, and where new stories gradually take shape. Third-generation coaching integrates the experiential and subjective-existential dimension with the relational and discursive." (Stelter, 2014, p. 34).

An important concept is that by feeling understood, the client is able to think differently. This aligns with research and a finding in the field of neuroscience. A neuroscience principle is that emotion precedes thinking (Boyatzis, 2013). Once positive emotions are aroused, and the related neural activations and hormonal arousals and activations take place, the result is that the individual is cognitively more open. This would contribute to the enhanced thinking but it has also been found that the individual is more open and accurate in their perceptions of other people (Fredrickson and Branigan, 2005).

> "Emotion is rooted in the amygdala which is part of the limbic system…The primary purpose of the amygdala is to scan all information and determine the level of safety. If a threat is perceived, the amygdala is in a state of anxiety and cannot focus on anything except the immediate situation. The prefrontal cortex part of the brain is the front part of the brain, sitting directly behind the eyes. Our prefrontal cortex allows us to engage in 'thinking' about our thinking" and seems to have evolved in order to solve difficult problems. An example of where we use our prefrontal cortex would be when we are playing chess, as it is used for any problem-solving process. Our brains are thus a hybrid, combining the reptilian, instinct-driven motivational tendencies with higher-level superior analytic and cognitive tendencies. In terms of the levels of sophistication of the areas of the brain, we can rank them according to the response time or speed to which they react to stimuli. The limbic system and amygdala will react most quickly; we will start running before we even know why we are running. Sensory input and motor input are also fast. Conscious

connections and connections requiring reflections are slower. This means that we feel first, think second ”(Cunningham, 2014, p. 149-150).

The implication of this is that the coachee / client needs to feel understood in order to move to thinking about their actions. The processes can thus be divided into those which will facilitate the feeling of being understood and those which will aid the cognitive analytical process of uncovering thinking or “thinking about your thinking”. Some processes fall into both categories. This is demonstrated in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: *Processes that support feeling understood versus processes that support cognitive and behavioural changes*

Processes that support ‘feeling understood”	**Processes that support “cognitive and behavioural” changes**
Listening deeply	Listening deeply
Giving feedback	Giving feedback
Contracting and clarifying expectations	Contracting and clarifying expectations
Setting the scene for equitable relationship	Questioning incisively
Reframing the negative to the positive	Challenging existing paradigms
Continuing reinforcement	Giving examples
Personalising the conversation	Exploring, looking at alternatives
Creating a safe space	Recognising patterns and themes and sharing them
Encouraging and supporting the client	Providing tools

It is interesting to note that the processes associated with enabling the person to feel understood and the cognitive processes are fairly equally balanced. Although the key outcome that the participants described was that they “think differently” and that is a cognitive process, the coaching students suggested that in order for us to think differently, we first need to feel understood. This aligns with Carl Rogers’s humanistic approach (1961), which stresses the importance of support,

encouragement and feeling understood. Coaching research that supports these behaviours is fairly extensive (de Haan et al., 2011, Brock, 2008, Bush, 2004, Hall et al., 1999, Whitmore, 2007).

Again, this is congruent with the neuroscience principles. Boyatzis (2015) has led many studies in researching and trying to understand what happens in the relationship between our cognition, emotions and leadership and our brain. He discusses implications of the arousal of the Parasympathetic Nervous System (PNS) and the Sympathetic Nervous System (SNS). For the purposes of this research, it is the findings of the studies that are relevant to understanding the brain in interaction with the environment (Boyatzis et al., 2015).

When the PNS is triggered, it results in feelings of hopefulness and well-being. The activation of the SNS results in limiting quality thinking. The brain closes the non-essential neural paths, which inhibits the creation of new neurons. Arousal of the SNS results in reducing the brain's capacity to learn. People are less open, creative and flexible when the SNS is activated. The Positive and Negative Emotional Attractors (The PEA and NEA) are two attractors that represent two key drivers. These are the need to survive and the need to thrive. The SNS is triggered more easily as it is our survival mechanism. The PEAs will trigger the arousal of the PNS, while the NEAs will arouse the SNS. There is a growing body of evidence that shows that "PEA experiences activate a distinct neural network called the default mode network (DMN), while NEA experiences suppress the DMN. The DMN is a neural network that primarily includes simultaneous activation of the prefrontal cortex among others" (Boyatzis 2015, p. 5). This is significant because this is where our "thinking about thinking" happens. The PEA is characterised by a learning orientation, position emotions and resonance (in tune with one another), whereas the NEA is characterised by negative affect, a prevention focus and relationships of dissonance (out of sync or distant) (Boyatzis, 2013, Jack et al., 2013, Boyatzis et al., 2015).

This research confirms that the PEA and PSN act as a positive force in influencing our thoughts and subsequent behaviour. The research is ongoing as to the

complexity of the PEA triggers but focusing on hope, strengths, a future orientation, vision all appear to be components of the PEA. Positive affect is part of this arousal state of the PSN, so feeling understood, appreciated and valued would be contributing to stimulation of the PEA/PSN and would set a solid foundation upon which to reflect and grow.

The process was described by the coachees as a conversation that was described as collaborative, contingent resonant all-encompassing and personalised to the individual. In chapter three, this was explored fairly extensively and the phrases used to describe this conversation capture the very value that the executives / coachees described.

Some examples of how the relationships occurred are captured in Figure 4.4 below. This diagram is a modified version of the process diagram in chapter three. The separation of processes as supportive and cognitive and the link to Neuroscience theory add a dimension that was not present in the initial analysis. This framework of process is similar to findings by De Haan's study on what determines helpfulness for clients of coaching (de Haan et al., 2011). In De Haan study it was concluded that specific behaviours, techniques and models were not identified by clients as particularly helpful but the nature of the relationship (or as described in my research "the nature of the conversation") was deemed as helpful, with the supportive processes being valued such as listening, understanding and encouragement. This is why supportive processes are seen as foundational to the whole coaching process (see Figure 4.4) because if the client values them then they are important processes.

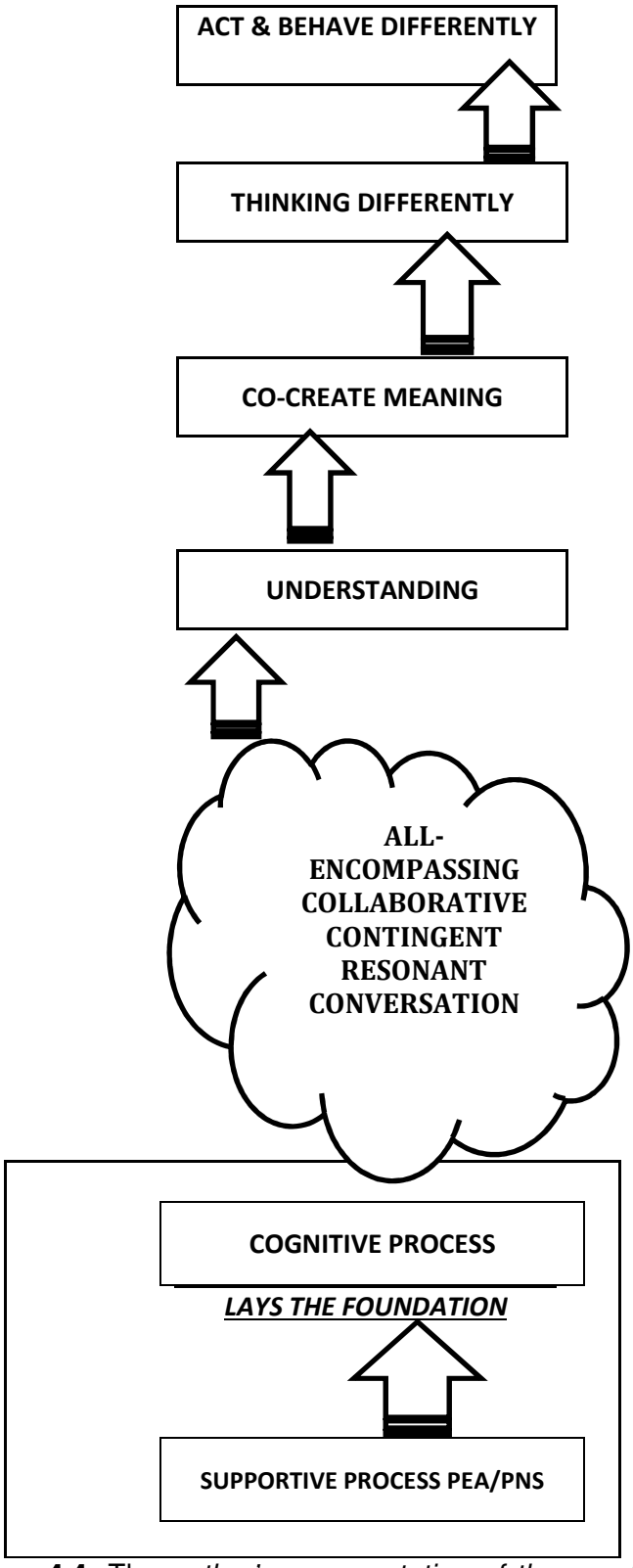


Figure 4.4: The *author's representation of the coaching process based on evidence from this study*

Passmore's grounded theory study of the coachee's experience found that there were 12 behaviours which contributed favourably towards their coaching experience: maintaining confidentiality, containing emotions, using a mixture of challenge and support, stimulating problem solving, setting take-away tasks for the coachee, being collaborative, using self as a tool, encouraging the development of alternative perspectives, using effective communications skills such as questioning, listening & reflecting, staying focused during the session, being empathetic plus their use of helpful tools and techniques (Passmore, 2010). The mixture of support and challenge, using self as a tool, encouraging alternative perspectives, empathy, being collaborative and communication skills overlap with this research. Staying focused and stimulating problem solving did not surface as factors in this research. Take-away tasks had a mixed response, with some executives finding them valuable and others not – this was consistent with Passmore's grounded study on the coachee.

The examples that follow are demonstrations of the relationships and the order in which the flow occurs. Coaching Student Two shared how the right questions made the conversation collaborative and contingent as the coach was tapping into the thought process of the individual. This comment highlights that listening skills are important to having contingent conversation, as the right questions cannot be asked unless coaches have listened deeply. Coaching Student One also spoke about how the incisive questions focused on her strengths and how the coach reframed her thinking. The reflective process in turn contributes to the contingent nature and definitely adds to the collaborative nature of the conversation, as demonstrated by Coaching Student Five, who comments on his own excitement as being part of the process. Coaching Student One shared how the introduction of the coach set the scene for a collaborative relationship based in equity.

An area for further research would be to see which of the emotional and cognitive processes contribute specifically to the all-encompassing, personalised contingent conversation and to the creation of the safe space.

4.7 Implications for Coach – Credibility, Authenticity and Presence

The findings of the analysis were that the coach needed to be a coach who is authentic, honest and has presence (section 3.4). The credibility of the coach was also discussed as being important. If we contextualise these characteristics into the being, doing and knowing model, we would classify all the processes in this section as what the coach needs to "do." Credibility would encompass what the coach needs to "know" and presence, authenticity and non-judgement would be how the coach needs to "be."

It is my belief that if this "being and knowing" does not co-exist with the "doing" then the doing will not be as successful in meeting the objectives.

Passmore (2010) found that these coach attributes were important to clients. They are listed below and I then comment on how they relate to this study.

Coach experience – this resonated with this study and the executives reflected on the experience of the coach which gave them credibility.

Coach is affirming – this would be classified as a process behaviour in my model as it is something the coach does.

Coach is non-judgemental – this was confirmed in this study and considered important.

Coach is trustworthy – this was mentioned but more as a consequence of the coach's being non-judgemental; thus, executives said they could trust their coach because they were authentic and non-judgemental. I would view trustworthiness a consequence of the other components of being, based on what the executives said.

Coach is independent – this was mentioned but not frequently and not with much intensity. The word that was used more frequently was that the coach was "non-judgemental" and this non-judgemental component again leads to a distancing and objectivity. The executive valued the non-judgemental aspect. In October 2015, I wrote in a memo based on the executives' views that I would define coaching as

“Honestly challenging thinking in an objective non-judgemental way, understanding the complexity of the person and the contest in order to encourage a different insight for the purpose of personal growth”. The theory underpinning authenticity and presence was discussed comprehensively in chapter three. This study found no new aspects of resonance and presence but confirmed the importance of these characteristics.

Dagley (2010) found that the credibility of the coach was most important to the purchasers of coaching services but in this study this surfaced only after probing in the interviews and then it was less about qualifications and more about experience. The resonance and presence were always mentioned first by the coachee and then experience was mentioned as possibly part of the resonance.

4.8 Outcome of Coaching – Integration

Given the paradigm and purpose discussed above, as well as the variety of processes used and that a simple one-end focus of coaching would not be a realistic, appropriate response to a multi-dimensional complex world, there is a need to look at the outcome of coaching as needing to capture an integrated outcome that is all encompassing – greater than the sum of its parts. The outcomes of the coaching process as captured by the data were:

1. Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making leading to viewing the world differently
2. Personal growth
3. More effective relationship management
4. Reduction in isolation and loneliness
5. A sense of empowerment
6. Stress management
7. The role of awareness / mindfulness in developing behavioural changes as an outcome
8. Increase in confidence over time due to reinforcement

In seeking an integrated holistic framework to capture the components (and more, bearing in mind the sum of the components is greater than the whole) of the stated outcomes, I was drawn to IPNB. Daniel Siegel wrote a paper in 2006 that focused on how IPNB could be used in psychotherapy (Siegel, 2006). I would like to suggest that this approach could be extended to coaching. Siegel states that IPNB is an attempt to integrate different disciplines to understand the "larger whole" of human experience and development. IPNB seeks to create an understanding of the connections between the brain, the mind and our interpersonal relationships. The aim of this interdisciplinary approach is to alleviate suffering and move towards well-being. The integrative, inter-disciplinary, developmental focus is congruent with the paradigm of coaching being a responsive movement to the challenges of a postmodern society, which require integrated solutions.

Siegel (2006, p. 248) states that the IPNB definition of well-being is one that could be used by a wide range of professionals concerned with human development and I would suggest coaches could fall into this category of human development specialists. An IPNB view of well-being states that "the mind achieves self-organisation by balancing the two opposing forces of differentiation and linkage. When separated areas of the brain are allowed to specialize in their function and then to become linked together, the system is said to be integrated" (Siegel, 2006). Siegel uses the analogy of a river flowing where one of the banks is rigidity and the other bank is chaos and the coherent flow is the flow of well-being. He believes the rigidity or chaos would be symptoms of psychiatric diagnoses. He sees the correlations of well-being being three points on a triangle – an empathetic relationship, a coherent mind and an integrated brain.

Other authors have begun to look at the broader role of neuroscience and its link to coaching and/or other disciplines such as organisational development (Egan et al., 2016, Boyatzis, 2014, Jack et al., 2013). I will briefly describe the importance of brain, mind and relationship and how they relate to each other as well as to well-being and will then proceed to comment on how IPNB relates to coaching outcomes.

In order to develop our minds, neurons when active have the potential to stimulate the growth of new connections with one another. These synaptic connections between neurons are shaped by our genes as well as our experiences.

The outcomes of coaching as defined by the executives / coachees are:

> Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making leading to viewing the world differently; personal growth; more effective relationship management; reduction in isolation and loneliness; a sense of empowerment; stress management; the role of awareness / mindfulness in developing behavioural changes as an outcome; and an increase in confidence over time due to reinforcement

We see that we need the brain, mind and relationships to process these outcomes. We experience each of these outcomes through an internal process either where the mind is regulating the subjective experience or where relationships combined with the mind regulate the experience. An example might be a person is turned down for a promotion; they have a physiological response which triggers the flow of energy in the body. It has been found that neural machinery, namely the anterior cingulate cortex (ACC) and the right ventral prefrontal cortex (RVPFC), activated in the experience of rejection is the same part of the brain where physical pain is located (Eisenberger et al., 2003, Eisenberger et al., 2006). We thus have a neural (BRAIN) response. This physiological response is processed through meaning making (MIND) and then, through the interrelationship component (RELATIONSHIP) with the coach, is processed further. These three areas of the triangle, highlighted in capitals above, are thus integral to the coaching experience. In fact, whether the coach is consciously aware of this process or not, it is occurring. If we think of the individual who did not get a promotion, he will immediately feel the physiological response in the ACC and RVPFC (BRAIN). Through the coaching relationship (RELATIONSHIP) in this space of safety and trust, he begins to make meaning of what has happened using his cognitive processes (MIND). It makes sense for coaches to understand what is helping the person make sense of his experience. We cannot achieve the outcomes of coaching without this brain (mechanism), mind (regulates) and

relationship (shares) interaction taking place. Table 4.3 below summarises the triangle and defines each of the components.

Table 4.3: *Adapted summary of Siegel's triangle of well-being (Egan et al., 2016, p. 43)*

Mind (Regulates)	**Brain (Mechanism)**	**Relationships (Shares)**
The mind is defined as an embodied and relational process that regulates the flow of energy and information. It includes at least three fundamental aspects: (1) personal subjective experience; (2) awareness; and (3) a regulatory function that is an emergent, self-organizing process of the extended nervous system and relationships.	The mind is created within a neurophysiological process (brain) and relational experiences. These neurophysiological processes are distributed throughout the nervous system extending throughout the entire body, and shape the flow of energy and information, as well as communication patterns that occur within relationships.	As human beings our primary and most important context are the relationships that we experience. The structure and function of the brain are shaped by experiences, particularly by Interpersonal Relationships.

Daniel Siegel describes nine domains of the brain that need to be integrated for individuals to begin to experience a sense of well-being. These are listed below as well as the outcome of these integrative processes. It is not the purpose of this research to describe the IPNB research in depth as the complexity of IPNB research is vast, extensive and complex. Suffice it to say that these findings are credible and well researched and they will be used in context in terms of how the theory that evolved from my study might be applied to IPNB. It is also not necessary for a coach to know in which part of the brain the integration takes place; although it would be useful and helpful, it is not imperative to have this detailed knowledge. In terms of this research, I am concerned with the outcomes of the integration processes and how they may relate to the coaching outcomes described by the data. The nine outcomes of integration are:

1. The ability to harness the power of awareness to create choice and change. (Integration of Consciousness)
2. The ability to value both logic and emotions. (Bilateral Integration)
3. The ability to process strong emotional data without “flipping our lid” and reacting. – reflective awareness. (Vertical Integration)
4. The ability to become active authors of our own life stories. The Hippocampus works with different parts of our brain to create a master picture, helping us make sense of our past experiences. (Memory Integration)
5. The creation of a coherent narrative – the observing function of self allows us to link our past, present and anticipated future into a coherent whole in order to increase understanding and promote new neural pathways. (Narrative Integration)
6. The ability to move beyond past patterns by accepting and integrating different aspects of ourselves. (State Integration)
7. Increased wellbeing, resilience, and learning through emotionally resonant, open, and attuned relationships with others. (Interpersonal Integration)
8. The capacity to live with the transient nature of life and find comfort in the face of uncertainty. (Temporal Integration)
9. The ability to find happiness and wisdom by understanding that we are part of a larger whole. (Transpirational Integration)

To recap, the outcomes are:

> Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making leading to viewing the world differently; personal growth; more effective relationship management; reduction in isolation and loneliness; a sense of empowerment; stress management; the role of awareness / mindfulness in developing behavioural changes as an outcome; and an increase in confidence over time due to reinforcement

Table 4.4 provides a summary description of each state of integration.

Siegel (2006) has developed the acronym “FACES” – Flexible, Adaptive, Coherent, Energised and Stable – to describe an integrated state of functioning which leads to well-being. I have made an assumption that if a person is aware, thinking differently and making meaning, experiencing personal growth and managing relationships and stress then they are in a state of well-being. I have then explored this assumption by checking whether each of the clusters of outcomes would align with one of the domains of integration as described by Siegel (2006).

Table 4.4: *Siegel’s nine domains of integration (Siegel, 2015) as summarised by Egan, Chesley, & Lahl (2016, p. 44-45)*

States of Integration	**Description**	**Intended Outcomes**
Integration of Consciousness	The experience of knowing and the awareness of the known. The ability to differentiate what can be known from the five senses, thoughts, feelings, memories, sense of connection to others, bodily sensations, and the ability to know when we are knowing. This is the skill to stabilize attention.	The ability to harness the power of awareness to create choice and change.
Bilateral Integration	Using both the left and right modes of processing, the two sides of the brain work collaboratively with each other. The left mode focuses on logical, literal, and linguistic processes. The right mode is holistic and non-verbal, processing input from the subcortical, limbic system, and brainstem, as well as bodily signals, autobiographical data, and body map.	The ability to value both logic and emotions.
Vertical Integration	Cultivating awareness of input from the body, the brainstem, and the limbic regions combined with vertically higher cortical regions to support reflective awareness.	The ability to process strong emotional data without “flipping our lid” and reacting.

States of Integration	Description	Intended Outcomes
Memory Integration	Attending to elements of implicit memory that are outside of our current awareness to allow previously disconnected representations to become part of a coherent whole. The Hippocampus works with different parts of our brain to create a master picture, helping us make sense of our past experiences.	The ability to become active authors of our own life stories.
Narrative Integration	The observing function of “self” allows us to link our past, present, and anticipated future into a coherent whole. We make sense of our lives through stories that weave the left hemisphere’s narrator function with the autobiographical memory storage of the right hemisphere’s function.	The creation of a coherent narrative to increase understanding and promote new neural pathways.
State Integration	Recognizing, honoring, and nurturing the various aspects or “states” of mind that we inhabit. Some of these states are temporary moods, while others are more persistent; for example, parent, professional, dancer.	The ability to move beyond past patterns by accepting and integrating different aspects of ourselves.
Interpersonal Integration	Understanding how we can become part of a healthy “we” while retaining our own identity and essence.	Increased wellbeing, resilience, and learning through emotionally resonant, open, and attuned relationships with others.

States of Integration	Description	Intended Outcomes
Temporal Integration	As humans we have the ability to do mental time travel which carries existential baggage that leads to: longing for certainty, longing for permanence, and longing for immortality. Temporal integration occurs when we face these issues without distraction or denial and accept that they are part of being human.	The capacity to live with the transient nature of life and find comfort in the face of uncertainty.
Transpirational Integration	An awareness of an expanded sense of self to include an interconnected whole without losing a sense of personal identity.	The ability to find happiness and wisdom by understanding that we are part of a larger whole.

Considering the outcomes arising from the data analysis, it seems clear that these outcomes cannot occur without integration of the domains. The outcomes are: conscious awareness, understanding and meaning-making leading to viewing the world differently, personal growth, more effective relationship management, reduction in isolation and loneliness, a sense of empowerment ,and stress management;

Table 4.5: *Coaching outcomes aligned to domains of integration outcomes as developed by the author for this study*

COACHING OUTCOMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS COMPARED TO THE DOMAIN INTEGRATION OUTCOMES	OUTCOMES FROM DOMAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2015)
The very first outcome was described as conscious awareness, which correlates well with the domain of consciousness. Another outcome was stated as “The role of awareness /	The ability to harness the power of awareness to create choice and change.

COACHING OUTCOMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS COMPARED TO THE DOMAIN INTEGRATION OUTCOMES	OUTCOMES FROM DOMAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2015)
mindfulness in developing behavioural change" – this relates well to the aspect of creating choice and change as described as a domain outcome.	(Consciousness)
A person is unable to make sense unless a person can integrate both their emotional component and the logical aspect of the event in their lives. The executives spoke about: "I was able to be all of me." This correlates well with the term "bilateral integration".	The ability to value both logic and emotions. (Bilateral Integration)
Vertical integration describes an awareness of input from the body combined with more supportive reflective awareness. An example would be a person feeling emotional and then processing those emotions until they made meaning for them. Often the coaching students or executives say, "I am feeling X" and by the end of the session they'd say, "I think I will do Y." Two examples from data are stated here: "Everything had to make sense for me to take that decision, at an emotional level. It was like all different layers," and "These feelings were re-iterated by myself as I had left the session with tasks and was eager to meet with my coach in the next coaching session to discuss them." This vertical integration is a fundamental part of the coaching process, based on the descriptions by the executives.	The ability to process strong emotional data without "flipping our lid" and reacting. (Vertical Integration)
Siegel describes memory integration as the hippocampus working to create a master picture, helping us make sense of our past experiences (Egan et al., 2016). He describes memory integration as moving into a form of knowing that involves both deep thoughts and deep sensations of the reality of the past (Siegel, 2006). The data showed that meaning making is a crucial part of the coaching process and, as such, individuals would have to have memory integration to make meaning.	The ability to become active authors of our own life stories. (Memory Integration)

COACHING OUTCOMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS COMPARED TO THE DOMAIN INTEGRATION OUTCOMES	OUTCOMES FROM DOMAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2015)
"With narrative reflection, one can choose with consciousness to detect and then possibly change old maladaptive patterns" (Siegel, 2006). Data analysis outcomes include personal growth, increase in confidence and a sense of personal empowerment. An individual would be unable to experience these outcomes if they could not form new neural pathways and develop a new narrative. This neural generation is a fundamental precursor to changes in any thinking.	The creation of a coherent narrative to increase understanding and promote new neural pathways. (Narrative Integration)
State integration refers to the drives to satisfy different needs such as the needs for familiarity connection and mastery and the opposite needs such as novelty and exploration. We can only find resolution and subsequent meaning when we understand our needs and accept who we are and integrate the different needs within ourselves. The outcomes again of personal empowerment, personal growth and increase in confidence are related to this state integration domain.	The ability to move beyond past patterns by accepting and integrating different aspects of ourselves. (State Integration)
There is direct correlation here between stress management, more effective relationship management and reduction in loneliness and the interpersonal domain of integration.	Increased wellbeing, resilience, learning through emotionally resonant, open, and attuned relationships with others. (Interpersonal Integration)
The temporal domain of integration links to the organisational role of time and transient lives and helps people consider the deep question of purpose (Siegel, 2006). Helping make meaning is linked to purpose.	The capacity to live with the transient nature of life and find comfort in the face of uncertainty. (Temporal Integration)
Siegel (2006, p. 261) states that "As individuals move forward in achieving new levels of integration across the eight domains, clinical	The ability to find happiness and wisdom by understanding

COACHING OUTCOMES FROM DATA ANALYSIS COMPARED TO THE DOMAIN INTEGRATION OUTCOMES	OUTCOMES FROM DOMAIN INTEGRATION (SIEGEL, 2015)
experience reveals that people begin to feel a different sense of connection to both themselves and the world beyond their previously skin defined sense of self. One feeling that many articulated is a sense they are connected to a larger whole, beyond their immediate lives, than their previous sense of isolation." This was not as clearly articulated by the participants but possibly this statement captures something of that essence. In this statement, Executive 6 talks about sustainability and says: "For me I think the magic is you think the works stops after the eight sessions but the magic for me is if you make that transcending shift I think sometimes it is even beyond the pivotal decision you are looking at, if you make that transcending shift, again it is all about that self-awareness and it gives you another layer of self-awareness which you can then work with continually." The other outcome that relates to this domain of integration was the outcome of reduced sense of loneliness. Executive 10 said, "Coaching is still with me, it is something I will cherish for the rest of my life."	that we are part of a larger whole. (Transpirational Integration)

Daniel Siegel writes: "When we examine the deep layers of our neural selves we come to glimpse not only the roots of our mental and social lives but the essential reality of our selves as part of an integrated whole across the span of life" (Siegel, 2006, p. 258). Using the new integrated field of IPBN as a framework is an attempt to combine science with coaching. The use of this framework does not inhibit the application of different models by coaches. If the desire is increased awareness and consciousness – domain one of integration – people could use storytelling to heighten awareness, they could use somatic techniques to increase awareness, mindfulness techniques, cognitive-based techniques – the choice remains theirs. This is not prescriptive – the outcome is prescriptive because increased awareness

will lead to a form of neural integration taking place, which will lead to well-being. The framework is thus outcome focused and not model focused.

All nine domains of integration relate to the outcomes of coaching. As far as I am aware this is the first coaching study that links coaching outcomes as described by the client / coachee to domains of integration. In making these links and correlations, I have not tested this against actual changes taking place within the brain. A further research area would ideally be to test through the use of an fMRI what is happening when coaching takes place. This study uses the domains and then links them to what individuals say happened to them in terms of outcomes. The limitation is that the outcomes are self-reported outcomes.

While I have not been able to find research on the link between coaching and the nine domains of integration, there has been research on the link between neuroscience and psychotherapy. The concept of neuroplasticity and how neurons alter their structure is described by Norman Doidge (2007), who reviews several leading neurologists or neuroscientists and creates a book of stories based on the work of these researchers. He quotes the work of Kandel, who was the pioneer, to demonstrate that as we learn, our individual neurons alter their structure and strengthen the synaptic connections between them. He describes the process of the genes altering as they learn by writing that these genes are “expressed” or “turned on”. Doidge describes this process in great detail, stating:

> “Each cell in our body contains all our genes, but not all those genes are ‘turned on’ or expressed. When a gene is turned on, it makes a new protein that alters the structure and function of the cell. This is called the transcription function because when the gene is turned on, information about how to make these proteins is ‘transcribed’ or read from the individual gene. This transcription function is influenced by what we do and think”. Most people assume that our genes shape us – our behaviour and our brain anatomy. Kandel's work shows that when we learn our minds also affect which genes in our neurons are transcribed. Kandel argues that when psychotherapy changes people, ‘it presumably does so through learning, by producing

> changes in gene expression that alter the strength of synaptic connections, and structural changes that alter the anatomical pattern of interconnections between nerve cells of the brain.' Psychotherapy works by going deep into the brain and its neurons and changing their structure by turning on the right genes. Psychiatrist D. Susan Vaughan has argued that the talking cure works by "talking to neurons" and that an effective psychotherapist or psychoanalyst is a "microsurgeon of the mind" who helps patients make needed alterations in neuronal networks. (Doidge, 2007, pp. 220-221).

Recent brain scans done before and after psychotherapy have shown that the brain plastically reorganises itself. I would suggest that coaching would result in similar changes. A further field of research would be to compare the firing of the neurons in both a coaching conversation and a psychotherapy conversation and see if the firing is similar or if the nature of the relationship between coach and client; and between psychotherapist and client would change the firing and the consequent learning.

4.9 Integrated Theoretical Framework

As mentioned at the beginning of the chapter, the findings of this research centred on five areas. They are:

1. Coaching takes place within a context. The context is a world with complex demands which lead to stress. Coaching is a response to have a sense of well-being and personal meaning in the world (see section 4.4).
2. The client needs to be ready and several factors contribute to this continual journey of readiness, including anxiety, willingness, timing and clarity of expectations (see section 4.5).
3. The coaching process needs to be active and draw on cognitive and emotional processes, which together contribute to achieving coaching outcomes (see section 4.6).
4. The coach needs to be non-judgemental, authentic, have presence and be credible (see section 4.7).

5. The outcomes of coaching align with Daniel Siegel's model of brain integration (see section 4.8).

Figure 4.5 shows the fully integrated framework that I developed incorporating Siegel's nine domains. I have attempted to combine some of the concepts from the first framework and use the icons such as the icon for coach/ coachee. I will begin describing the diagram from the outside and work to the inside. At the top of the diagram it demonstrates with the two arrows what an individual is experiencing. On the left, it shows the individual experiencing a need for well-being and on the right, it shows the challenges that this world is placing on individuals. This leads to the need for coaching, which is a response to these needs and challenges of the individual in this world.

On the left side of the square it shows that while coaching is a need, the individual client **coachee** needs to be ready (this is a summary of the client readiness framework that was developed). On the right of the square, the **coach-** the other player in the coaching relationship needs to be resonant, credible and authentic (this was a finding from this study). The **processes** which are at the bottom on the square then provide input into the relationship. There were many processes and this summary integrated diagram does not list each of the processes but just defines the processes were emotional and cognitive (See Table 4.2 for breakdown of processes). All of these inputs – coachee, coach and processes lead to the individual coachee making meaning of their lives and integrating their understanding which lead to behavioural change (See Figure 3.4). This integration of meaning making processes aligns with Daniel Siegel's brain / mind integration.(See Table 4.5) The outcomes that coaching achieves are because of this brain integration taking place.



Figure 4.5: *A diagram representing the Brain Integrated Coaching theoretical framework developed by the author*

The question that needs to be answered is how would this model be used? Bearing in mind that theoretical contribution needs to have scientific and practical utility. The scientific benefit is the conceptual development of the model. Practical utility would be different. How would the coach use this model in practice? The key aspect of this model would be for the coach to understand the integrated nature of the framework and to consider each aspect of the framework when coaching. Questions the coach could ask when reflecting on an upcoming coaching session would be:

a. *Where is my client on the coach readiness model? What is impacting them in terms of readiness?*
b. *Am I able to be truly present and authentic in the way I show for coaching?*
c. *Do I support my own development as a coach by professional supervision so that I am able to be authentic and not inappropriately vulnerable or distant?*
d. *Am I considering context in the way I am coaching?*
e. *Do I understand this specific purpose for coaching?*
f. *Am I using all the skills and knowledge I have to increase understanding and help facilitate meaning making?*
g. *Do I recognise that a sense of well-being comes from brain integration? Do I realise that by focusing on the outcomes of well-being, I will increase brain integration and subsequently coaching impact will be more sustainable?*

These questions are very practical in nature and serve as possible triggers or links to the theoretical framework.

CHAPTER FIVE – REFLECTIONS ON MY ROLE AS A RESEARCHER

Many coaches have a supervisor that they go and see to reflect on their own coaching. In the theory on supervision, the concept of reflection is an integral part of many definitions of supervision (Passmore and McGoldrick, 2009, Bachkirova et al., 2011, Hawkins et al., 2012). Some definitions will extend the reflection process to learning and will describe aspects of coaching on which to reflect, such as Hawkins seven-eyed model. The essence, though, is that the coach must reflect on themselves as a coach.

Reflection is thus a key component of the work that I do and comes naturally to me after 25 years of practice. I attend supervision sessions on a monthly basis; however, the reflection that I do is of me as a practitioner. The reflection I present here tables my reflection of myself as a researcher. The journey as a researcher was quite different. The one thing that struck me as I was writing chapter four is that my journey mirrored much of what I was writing about. As I wrote about complexity and a postmodern world that demands integration, collaboration and innovation, I found myself surrounded by theories and models that varied from IPNB, to emotional intelligence to attachment theory, to narrative processes. I longed for the simplicity of finding one answer that would address all the challenges but this was not possible.

I had to understand first what each theory offered, how each component might interrelate, where they might overlap and what question they were answering. In reading many views of each theory, I began to personalise it and make meaning for me. I then slowly started to think differently. Initially, I almost hero-worshipped some leading theorists. I then discovered my opinion and I was able to say, “Theorist A says this x, which makes sense but he appears not to have looked at y. He has depth of focus but not the breadth.” This was a fairly cognitive process but the real significant shift came when I realised that this research could add value to some of the work of my so called gurus. I moved from looking up to them to seeing them as colleagues – granted experienced, knowledgeable colleagues but nevertheless

peers. I saw myself as having something of value to add, something that could be critiqued, just as I had critiqued their work, but something that could be used. I felt a sense of pride; this was immediately followed by a sense of anxiety – how would they evaluate it? It made me more determined to make it comprehensive and to clarify my thinking, and I realised I was now behaving differently. I was concerned with the rigour of the research and was thinking as a researcher. This mirrors the journey of behaving differently that the coachees that I interviewed explained (see Figure 5.1 below). I then began to think of myself as a researcher and my identity had shifted from being a student to being a junior researcher in the field. I behaved as a researcher. I began to talk more actively about my findings to peers and colleagues. People began to approach me to share my findings at small gatherings of professional coaches. While I realised my research was not complete, I was able to have confidence in what I had done and I shared the preliminary findings.

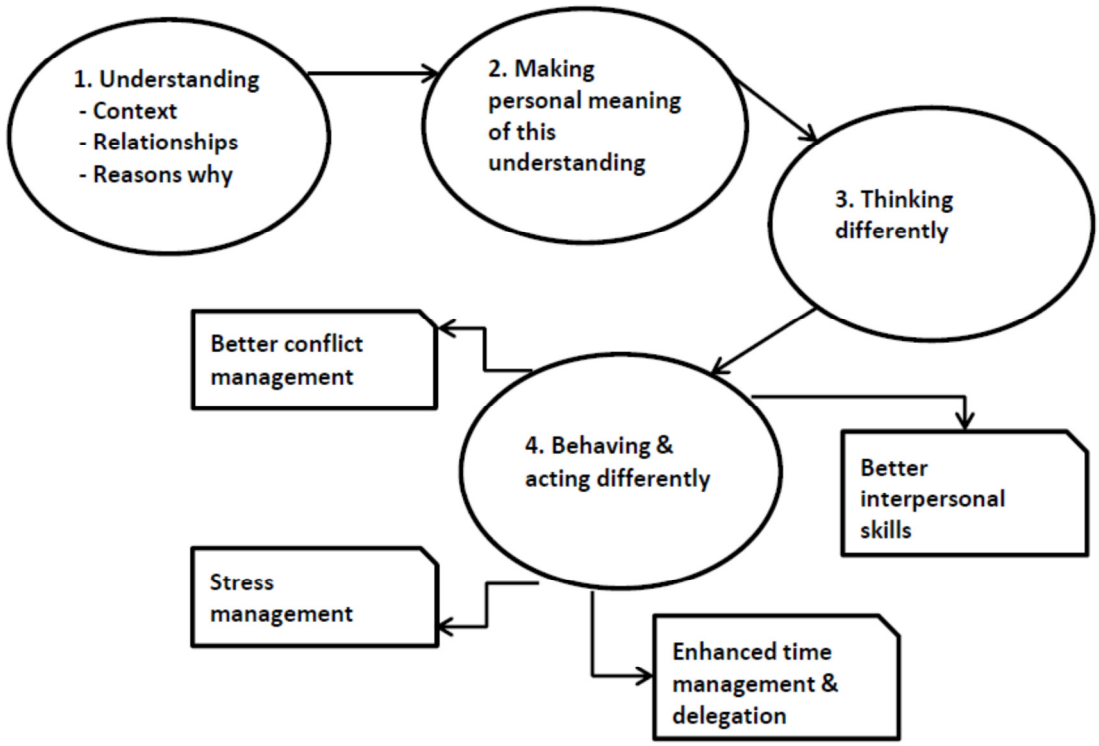


Figure 5.1: *The process leading to thinking differently as developed in this study*

In the research analysis, I developed a framework, which explored the coach, the coachee, the context, the process and the outcomes. In my research reflections, I kept reflecting on how the context would impact coaching and yet, as I wrote, my own context was influencing me. I was a part-time researcher who continued to practise coaching and I was able to reflect on the research analysis and findings as I coached. This in turn would impact on my analysis. I felt myself straddling the world of academia and rigour and the practitioner world of utility, wondering whether this research would be accepted by both these worlds. I realised that the research needed to be relevant to both worlds – academia and business coaching. This tension would fluctuate, as at times I would become absorbed by theoretical constructs and not focus on their application. At other times, I would want to rush into the application. I believe straddling these two worlds helped mould my research and build the theory.

Furthermore, the tension between practitioner and researcher confirmed my constructivist stance. I did not see how I would have been able to let go and bracket my experiences. I realised that I am embedded in the philosophy that learning takes place within a social life. I recognised the importance of my own reflexivity about my interpretations and was aware of the importance of the memos which I had begun writing as I began the doctoral journey. This allowed me to run a critical eye over my own assumptions. The research found that coaching led to coachees questioning their assumptions and viewing the world through different eyes. Again, I was paralleling the findings in my research journey – questioning my assumptions, seeing coaching through new eyes. I loved the resonance of my experience with the findings.

The journey further reflected the research findings in many ways but perhaps the most significant is that the very writing of this piece of research is a meaning-making process for me. It has fundamentally altered the way in which I see coaching in the world. The most recent article that I cited in the research was a March 2016 article by Stelter, which describes the coach as a fellow human companion (2016).

Recognising that my humanity and vulnerability can truly play a part in transforming another's life has changed the way I practise coaching.

I end this research with an excitement and a hope for coaching to become more impactful in our society. I cannot separate what I know, what I do and who I am. This research has increased my knowledge, enhanced my thinking and changed my behaviour as a coach but it is ultimately my deeply held belief that coaching is a transformational tool (a bias I had to monitor for continually) and my delight that the research confirmed the value of coaching leaves me elated and hopeful. I have a new-found passion and respect for research. It was a hard journey but the rigour and discipline of building theory has been an invigorating process. The pain and frustration of struggling with time and with many concepts were outweighed by the moment of aha and insight. I am grateful that I used constructivist grounded theory and, in conclusion, quote Charmaz (2014, p. 241), who writes, "The constructivist approach fosters renewal and revitalisation of grounded theory and leads us to situated knowledge while simultaneously moving grounded theory further into interpretative social science."

CHAPTER SIX–CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Theoretical contributions underpinning the Integrated Model

As described in the previous chapters, this research contributed findings within five major areas. Table 6.1 below summarises the areas, the findings (from this research) and then underlying and contributing theories (from other disciplines).

Table 6.1: *Theoretical contributions and the findings of this study*

1. Context, Purpose and Paradigm of Coaching	
Contribution of this study	**Relevant existing theories**
The coaching definition that emerged on the basis of the experience of the executives is that coaching is a response to demands on an individual and that coaching provides a supportive space to reflect, make meaning, think differently and make decisions that will help the individual manage their stress in their lives.	Complexity Theory Postmodernism Symbolic Interactionism Constructivism Social Construction
2. Client (Coachee Readiness)	
Contribution of this study	**Relevant existing theories**
A combination of willingness and anxiety / vulnerability combined with finding the time and having sufficient processing time lead to embarking on the coaching journey at the right time. Client readiness is a continuous process influenced by clarity of expectations that emerge and change over time. The model of client readiness was a result of this study.	Learning Theory Neuroscience – specifically reduction of anxiety to prevent trigger of SNS Change Theory
3. Coaching Process	
Contribution of this study	**Relevant existing theories**
The coaching process is a collaborative, contingent, all-encompassing conversation which is personalised and makes an individual think through a combination of active emotional and cognitive processes and is a conversation which you have nowhere else. The processes lead to a creation of a safe space. Use of gerunds – active, present process	Third-generation coaching Humanistic approach Cognitive theories Emotional Intelligence
4. Coach	
Contribution of this study	**Relevant existing theories**
The coach needs to be non-judgemental,	Presence-based research

1. Context, Purpose and Paradigm of Coaching	
credible, authentic and have presence.	Mindfulness Authenticity / Resonance research
5. Coaching Outcomes	
Contribution of this study	**Relevant existing theories**
Conscious awareness, understanding and meaning making, leading to viewing the world differently Personal growth Improved relationships Stress management Reduction in isolation and loneliness A sense of empowerment The role of awareness / mindfulness in developing behavioural changes as an outcome An increase in confidence over time due to reinforcement All these outcomes can be related to the nine domains of integration that take place between mind, brain and relationships researched Interpersonal Neurobiology.	Interpersonal Neurobiology Emotional Intelligence Social Identity Existentialism

6.2 Recommendations for Further Research

A small sample of 17 individuals contributed to this research and, while there was a great deal of consistency across most of the variables ('homework task' being an exception as it was experienced differently). It would be recommended that future research using a similar methodology and underpinned by the same paradigm explore these components of the framework – namely 1) the context in which coaching takes place, 2) the purpose driving and underpinning coaching, 3) the coachee and their readiness for coaching, 4) the coaching process, 5) the coach and 6) the coaching outcomes.

Another set of studies that could be completed would be to look at a variety of models and how these models might work within this framework. The coaching processes were separated into two categories: emotional and cognitive. An example could be the concept of emotive and cognitive behaviours and processes to achieve trust and set the scene. A study could explore which methodologies would use which

techniques in the emotive area and which would use cognitive techniques and how these methods would contribute to effectiveness in coaching.

Findings such as the importance of authenticity, non-judgement and credibility in the coach have implications for coach development, coach training and coach supervision. Are coaches able to move into an equitable, contingent, collaborative conversation easily and what does this mean for their identity as coaches? If they cannot own the process and it is co-created by the client and themselves, what can they claim as their coaching identity? If models are not as useful as originally thought, what do they bring with them – experience, themselves, presence? A study into the identity of coaches would be valuable, given what the client sees and needs from them.

Research such as this can be relevant for coaching practice, for the training of coaches and for their continuous professional development. It is important that similar investigations take place so that we develop more statistically significant results regarding helpfulness of coaching interventions. My results do seem to indicate that coaches may shift their focus from specific behaviours or interventions towards the quality of the unfolding relationship with their clients. Similarly, the results of my study show that coaching education and supervision could be less focused on specific behaviours and more on the establishment of a helpful relationship or working alliance. More generally, it seems important to educate and supervise coaches more from the perspective of the coaching client and from what clients tend to experience as truly helpful than strictly according to established routines and “coaching models” in the profession.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A – LETTER TO COMPANIES

Natalie Cunningham

PhD student 825220/5

Wits Business School

University of Witwatersrand

2 St David's Place

Parktown

Date

Dear….

Research Study

I am completing my PhD through the University of Witwatersrand (Business School). My research study is aimed at developing "A theory of the coaching process based on the lived experiences of coached executives". Much theory about coaching has been developed by academics and coaches and whilst this plays a valuable role, it is very important that research be based on what is "actually" happening in the real world. As such I will need to interview coached executives to understand what really happens for the executive in the coaching process. My process is to interview several coached executives across several different companies and organisations. Different coaches using different methodologies can have coached these coached executives.

I need your help. I am looking for coached executives to interview. I would appreciate it if you could provide me with a list of coached executives who meet the following criteria:

1. The person is within the senior management level within the organization.
2. The person would have been coached within the last year.
3. The person would have had a minimum number of six coaching sessions within this period. They could have commenced their coaching before July last year

and could still be in the process of completing their coaching, as long as they have had a minimum of six sessions within the last year.

The process would be once a list of names had been provided, the names would be entered into a random generator and between 1 and 2 executives would be selected. This random selection is to avoid any bias e.g. “only high performers been selected”.

The individuals selected would receive a letter explaining the process and would be required to sign a consent form (see attached letter). Their rights to choose to take part in the research would be voluntary and they could withdraw at any stage.

The interviews would be approximately 60 to 90 minutes in duration. The interviews would focus on their experience when coached. The interview will remain confidential and anonymous and the results analysed, collated and reported on in a final research report.

I would be most grateful if you could assist in this research. I am available to meet with you at your convenience should you have any questions or prepared to answer them via email or over the phone.

Many Thanks

Natalie Cunningham

082 2818922

nataliew@icon.co.za

APPENDIX B – RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS' INFORMATION DOCUMENT

	Issue	Description
1	Name of researcher Contact details	Natalie Cunningham 082 2818922 nataliew@icon.co.za
2	Title of research project	"A Theory of The Coaching Process based on the lived experiences of Coached Executives."
3	Purpose of study	The purpose of this study is to understand what really happens in the coaching process from the coached executive perspective – what makes it valuable, what was not of value, what insights were gained, both personal and business related, what works, what does not work. It is to gain an in-depth understanding and insight into the lived coaching experience. Through this understanding it is hoped that coaching theory can be further advanced and this theory could lead to coaching becoming more professional underpinned by empirical research.
4	Description of study	Data will be gathered through one-on-one interviews
5	Duration of the research	10 months
6	What is involved and how long will it take?	**Interview participants:** Contributors will be asked to take part in a one-to-one interview. You will be asked if you are prepared to have this interview voice recorded, and you may decline if you so wish. The time required for the interview is approximately 60 -90 minutes.

	Issue	Description
7	Why you have been asked to participate?	You have been asked to take part in this research due to your being an Executive who was coached in the last year. Organisations/ companies who ran coached programmes were approached and asked to provide a list of executives who were coached and this list was inputted into a random generator and coached executives at each company randomly selected.
8	What will happen to the information which will be given for the study?	The information will be held securely and confidentially while the research is being collated. All notes will be kept under lock and key. Following the completion of the research all material collected will be shredded and destroyed.
9	What will be done with the results of the study?	The results of the questionnaire and interviews will be reported in the findings section of the research work. It will not be possible to identify any particular individual respondent. As this will be done anonymously. The study will be published as a PhD Research report at the Wits University.
10	What are the possible disadvantages?	There are no costs to you associated with this research. No negative consequences are expected to result from taking part in this research. In fact, it is hoped that you will gain insights that may be useful to you.
11	In what way will the study be beneficial and to whom?	It is hoped that a theory based on “real lived experiences of coaching” will be developed. This theory will be published and distributed and we hope will impact teaching and training of business coaches. The focus is very much on executives within business environment so it is intended that both individuals and the business environment will

	Issue	Description
		ultimately benefit.
12	Who has reviewed this study to ensure that it complies with all the requirements and ethical standards of the university?	The Human Research Ethics Committee (HREC Non-Medical) at the University of Witwatersrand have approved this research proposal and granted permission for the research to commence.
13	Can permission be withdrawn having previously been granted?	Yes, all contributors shall retain the right to have their contributions withdrawn at any time prior to the submission of the document. In addition the contributor has the right to refuse to answer any question asked during the interview or ask to end the interview at any time.
14	Can you refuse to answer any question?	Yes. The contributor has the right to refuse to answer any question on either the questionnaire or any part of the interview.

APPENDIX C – LETTER OF CONSENT

I, person_____ agree voluntarily to take part in the research project being conducted by Natalie Cunningham as requirement for her PhD at the University of Witwatersrand. I have read the Research Participants Information Document and I understand the contents thereof. Any questions I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction.

I understand that the information I will supply is confidential and that it will be annonymised and will only be used in the findings of the research. I understand that I will not be individually identifiable in any way nor will the company in which I work be identified in any way.

I understand that I do not have to answer all the questions that have been put to me. The information that I will provide will be held securely until the research has been completed (published) after which it will be destroyed.

The information that I will provide will not be used for any other purpose. I understand that I am entitled to ask for a debriefing session or a copy of the research at the end of the project.

I have been informed that I may withdraw from this study at any time and that any information which I have supplied will not be used for this research and any records held relating to my contribution will be destroyed.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

APPENDIX D – DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION REQUIRED FOR NATALIE CUNNINGHAM PHD STUDY

Date of Interview: _____

Your Name: _____

Position/ Title/ Role in Company: _____

Period in this role: _____

Date of Birth: _____

Gender: _____

Company: _____

Coach name: _____

Period Coached (from when to when): _____

Number of sessions: _____

Duration of sessions: _____

APPENDIX E – QUESTIONS TO GUIDE THE INTERVIEW

Tell me about your coaching experience – what worked / what did not work?

What was the reason for coaching? How was coaching positioned? Why did you embark upon coaching?

Did you select your coach?

Aspects about coaching that may have impacted the process that could be explored?

The coach? The qualifications/ experience of the coach? Demographics of coach?

Coach model / methods?

Skills of coach?

The context in which coaching was taking place? Part of Leadership Development, Developmental, Remedial, Transition, Talent Management

The relationship or relational space

Safety? Trust?

The issues worked on? What was discussed?

Results of coaching

Action orientation versus reflection

Certainty versus ambiguity – liminal – wallowing space

What was the biggest benefit?

What was the biggest frustration of the coaching relationship?

Anything you would have liked to have seen more of, less of, different?

Would you recommend coaching to others… share your reason?

How would you describe coaching to someone who had never experienced it?

What is the magic of coaching?

What is the horror of coaching?

For you, in summary, what made the coaching process valuable or not valuable?