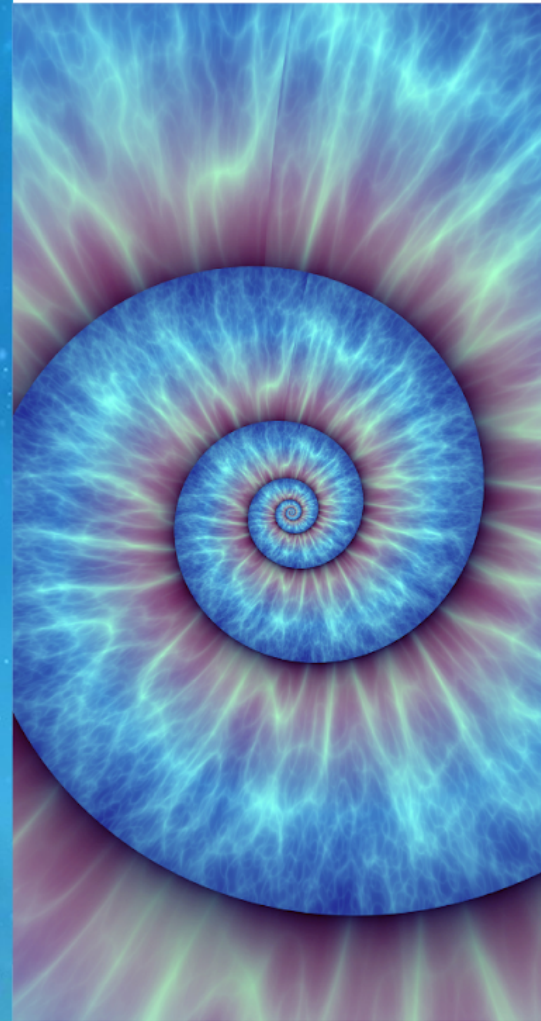


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TRANSPERSONAL COACHING PSYCHOLOGY JOURNAL

Exploring new frontiers in
professional coaching



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Introduction to the Inaugural Volume of the Transpersonal Coaching Psychology Journal

Lead Editor, Jevon Dängeli

As the Editor of the Transpersonal Coaching Psychology Journal (TCPJ) and developer of the Transpersonal Coaching Model, it is with enormous joy and gratitude that the TCPJ is hereby launched with this inaugural volume.

TCPJ is an open access peer-reviewed journal that publishes coaching case study projects conducted by graduates of the 1-year Transpersonal Coaching Psychology Certificate Programme at Alef Trust.

Transpersonal Coaching Psychology (TCP) can be described as the theory and practice of coaching that takes a holistic and integrative approach to support client growth and transformation.

The role of a transpersonal coach is to support the client to develop a more expansive and interconnected sense of self and, in so doing, help the client to access the necessary resources (physical, intellectual, emotional, social, psychological and spiritual) that may aid the attainment of their fullest potential and performance. This is achieved through tailored processes to help clients identify what provides them with a sense of meaning and purpose and, in turn, to assist the client to find ways of consciously expressing this – in their work, their personal life and within relationships.

The primary means of intervention on the part of the transpersonal coach involves holding a *liminal space* (open, receptive and emergent), walking the client through a transformative passage of questioning and expansion, while helping the client to reintegrate new, widened and resourceful perspectives into their lives.

The Transpersonal Coaching Handbook, now in its third edition (Dängeli et al., 2022) has become one of the primary resources used by students and graduates of the TCP professional certificate programme at Alef Trust. As the course leader, it is heart-warming to witness the growth and development of our students as they discover the riches of the TCP learning journey and the myriad ways in which they can be of value in the lives of others and in the world. This course has been evolving since 2004, when I first provided transpersonal coaching training. In 2017, we modified the training structure for online delivery according to the post-graduate course criteria at Middlesex University, who validated Alef Trust's programmes at the time. Since then, the TCP programme has continued to evolve as online

learning technologies have become more sophisticated and interactive, supporting our aspiration to take the distance out of distance learning. The current infrastructure enables each cohort to co-create a participatory space, forming a close community of *TCP explorers*, known by us as “TCPers”.

In the final module of their 1-year certificate programme, the TCPers undertake a 4-month coaching case study project in which they investigate the experience and outcomes of transpersonal coaching from both their own perspective and that of their clients, culminating in a written report. Six of those reports have been peer reviewed and are included in this volume, giving readers a good insight into how TCP works and its transformative potential.

I would like to acknowledge the tremendous effort required to get this journal off the ground. My heartfelt thanks go to the contributory authors of this inaugural volume, the Editorial Board members who have served as reviewers of these published reports, the Senior Editors (Hennie Geldenhuys and Julie De Vitto) for their shared vision and valuable inputs from the beginning of this project, and the TCPJ Production Manager (Jana Allmrodt), who has worked to ensure that the journal exemplifies the high quality to which we aspire in the professional field of Transpersonal Coaching Psychology. I would also like to thank Alef Trust’s Directors (Jessica Bockler and Les Lancaster) for supporting the ongoing development of TCP as part of the MSc course in Consciousness, Spirituality & Transpersonal Psychology accredited by Liverpool John Moores University, in addition to our 1-year TCP certificate programme. As we have seen since the programme began in 2018, TCP is a valuable and increasingly recognised applied branch within the growing field of Transpersonal Psychology. Last, but not least, I would like to thank the International Association of Coaches, Therapists & Mentors (IACTM) for granting the TCPJ their Stamp of Approval and for publishing the journal on their website.

Reference

Dängeli, J. (Ed.). (2022). *The Transpersonal Coaching Handbook*. (3rd ed.)
<https://jevonDängeli.com/product/transpersonal-coaching-handbook/>



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Introductions by the Senior Editors

Jules De Vitto

Without a doubt, we have all been impacted by global crises over the past few years, and as we continue to encounter the challenges of our collective shadow, the need for professional coaches to guide us through our inner and outer world continues to grow. I believe the perspectives offered through transpersonal coaching psychology are more critical than ever.

One of the fundamental pillars that transpersonal coaching is built upon is that although times of crisis can be difficult, it's our challenges, such as those we have encountered over the past few years, that hold the potential for us to grow, emerge and integrate completely new ways of being.

The transformation we experience through the alchemical process of transpersonal coaching has a profound and long-lasting ripple effect within ourselves, our relationships with others and the universe as a whole. It's my passion and joy as a transpersonal coach to have experienced the magic that occurs when entering into this alchemical space with clients and observing how one's challenges can be embraced with a completely new perspective, purpose and meaning.

I believe that as transpersonal coaches, we are pioneers in terms of offering - not just hope for a shift in the current paradigm - but providing an embodied path in which this change in perspective and a new way of being is possible in the world. The projects and articles shared within this journal highlight the various paths we can walk in our work as transpersonal coaches. This includes guiding those experiencing life transitions, coaching clients in later life and holding space for those seeking wholeness. This journal also shares the core elements of transpersonal coaching, highlighting the endless ways in which transformation can occur within our work as transpersonal coaches.

Jules De Vitto (MSc) is a certified transpersonal coach as well as an experienced educator. She is passionate about guiding Highly Sensitive People to navigate emotional overwhelm, step into their authentic power and align with their true purpose in life. Learn more or contact Jules at www.julesdevitto.com

Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys

Would you agree that there is something numinous and mystical about the concept of transpersonal psychology? Perhaps that is the way it should be. We, as human beings, and the world we find ourselves in, the wider universe, and cosmos, are mysteries. Is it the pursuit of science to solve that mystery, or to partake in the mystery? Is the quest for knowledge driven by answers and outcomes, or is it process driven? We might leave this question to the philosophers.

On reading the excellent submissions to this, the first volume of this ground-breaking journal, a thought occurred to me. Coaching, in the transpersonal sense, is a science. Yes, it is a service-driven science, and very much an applied technology of spirit, soul and mind. Yes, it deals with aspects of being that are beyond the reach of other modalities, as if we dare to go where no-one else wants to, or knows how to. Although it may not strive for ultimate or absolute answers, there is little that is random, messy or abstract about transpersonal coaching. It is a science that deals with what matters in real life, because surely “real life” is not real if it does not include the whole experience of being? Transpersonal coaching is about integrating the mystery with practical solutions that matter in those "real life" scenarios.

We owe it to ourselves as coaches and to the discipline of transpersonal coaching, to explore, experiment, collect and examine the evidence, and to reflect on the process within and between ourselves. We need to allow the discipline of coaching to evolve. This journal sets out to do exactly that. There is much to keep discovering, isn't there?

Dr. Hennie Geldenhuys is a medical doctor, clinical researcher, and a certified transpersonal coach and trainer. He has a passion for integrating his experience in clinical medicine with applied transpersonal perspectives to coaching, psychology and health. Learn more or contact Hennie at www.innerheal.co.za



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A space of reclamation, becoming whole

Mischa Varmuza

Abstract

This report explores the coaching space as a space of reclamation, a potential ground for returning to wholeness. The coaching journey of six clients is reflected upon from the view and experience of the coach through the process of holding space, facilitating Open Awareness (OA) and offering reflective guidance. The report introduces the themes of reclamation and wholeness and considers both the context of the coaching process and the background of the coach. The case studies are reviewed with reference to both techniques and the individual stories of the clients. Discussion includes methods of OA, observation of emotional themes and individual breakthroughs and consideration as to their process links with the journey of reclamation and a return to wholeness. The report closes with a reflection of the overall process and experience.

Keywords

wholeness, reclamation, open awareness, empowerment, transpersonal

Introduction

I am curious about the individual experience of wholeness, or lack thereof, and keep returning to the recognition of this as the foundation of our power. When speaking to wholeness, I refer to a feeling of connectedness to Self, to other beings, to the world and a larger unseen, but felt, energy of support. I suggest that wholeness is the experience of states such as contentment, peace, joy, care and hope over, for instance, lack, isolation, despair, hopelessness and doubt. My reference to power speaks to a stability that the experience of wholeness establishes and that, if there is a disconnect from wholeness, we may be disempowered from potential. I understand that the experience of wholeness is collective yet lived uniquely (Hart, 2012), and I have met individual expressions of this. Through the coaching space, I have endeavoured to explore techniques to assist each client in navigating what arises from the field. I have observed how, as described by Dängeli (2021), *will* reveals itself spontaneously and may also guide the soul's journey of *becoming* in a way that is beneficial for the individual, others and the whole (win-win-win). In this context *will* is the energy of intention and purpose that emerges and moves each of us forward whilst also being

a generative energy in the larger fabric of life. I refer to *becoming* as a process of returning to wholeness and I view reclamation as the meeting and accepting of our fragmented parts, abandoned places and rejected feelings, so that we can experience our innate wholeness.

My inquiry proposes that the coaching space directly facilitates this through Open Awareness (OA) and the co-creation of a non-judgemental space of listening, acceptance and reflective support.

Context

I coached six pro bono female clients who responded to an invitation I sent. Each session, 60-90 minutes in duration, was done via zoom. I led three clients through six sessions, two clients, four, and one client, two sessions. I acknowledge that each of these women has experienced me as their yoga teacher, which may have influenced our connection. Where a client has practised immersively with me, deeper trust may also have been established. I realise that my background in yoga and natural medicine and my seat as a white privileged cis-gender woman may influence my view and the unfolding of the sessions.

I hope to capture, within the limitations of this essay, the essence of my journey whilst demonstrating ways I have learnt to hold space and guide my clients. There was a wide exploration of the potential of the coaching space, yet I will focus on the 6-week process of Client 1, with reference to insights and experiences from other clients. For ethical consideration I refer to them as Client 1 through to 6, to protect their identity. All clients are aware that I may, anonymously, use content from our sessions in this essay. In addition to the professional agreement sent out prior, I proposed a set of personal agreements (Appendix A) to which they were invited to contribute (Appendix A). I felt this advocated for what Lasley et al. (2015) referred to as shared power and the co-creation of empowering relationships. At the end of the scheduled number of sessions, I asked each client to complete a feedback form.

Case Studies Review

Each session began with a moment of connection; the length was intuitive depending, for instance, if I felt they needed longer to settle. On occasion, it felt natural to prompt further inquiry, whereas other times, to lead sooner into OA. The method, length and language of OA depended on what had been shared thus far, however I chose to use the Jumi Breathing Tree (Dängeli, 2019) for the first and last session. Client 5 reflected that, 'it was amazing to feel the difference between the first and last session' which affirmed it as a helpful reference point. Sometimes I guided more intuitively, such as when I sensed a chaotic state and a need for simplicity and led Client 1 into body and breath, the spaces between the breath and into the space around from which she described an 'expansive' and 'lovely' state (Client 1, Session 2). Client 5 shared that the OA practices 'centred and grounded' her (Client 5, Feedback Form) whilst Client 2 described a connection to her 'intuitive soulful self', which helped her

'to stay present and less reactive' (Client 2, Feedback Form).

Client 1 expressed dominant needs around energy, belonging and connection and described her primary concern as 'heaviness' (Client 1, Session 1) which she went on to further identify as sadness connected to her childhood. I was reminded how, as suggested by Lasley et al. (2015), our feelings can really be the voice of our needs, both met or unmet, and I invited her to consider what might be beneath the sadness. I sensed an 'overall lack' and 'I wondered the ways she might be disconnected from wholeness or limited by an internal narrative of not-enoughness,' (Journal, Week 1). Through OA she touched a 'hope for something different' (Client 1, Session 1) and imagined herself thriving. Her words affirmed a longing towards being valued, something which has been considered by Wall (2018) as a dominant need.

In session 2, Client 1 shared an experience which demonstrated how the coaching container can expand into the spaces in between the sessions. She had dreamt of nature, alive with green shoots and emergent buds, which inspired 'aliveness' and 'hope' even within a challenging week (Appendix B). With consideration of the mental domain and using the Transpersonal Coaching Method (TCM) as a map, she tracked how she felt safe in survival mode and named an 'addiction to stress' (Client 1, Session 2). She identified a lack of support growing up and its impact on her self-worth and ability to self-care. She found insight in realising her life's work gives to children in all the ways she felt unmet (Appendix C), which was an interesting reflection of how a personal challenge can be transformed into a gift as well as the power of renewed perspective.

In weeks 3 and 4, traversing the emotional and interpersonal domains, issues around belonging and connection were explored. She described feelings of comparison, anger and resentment and named, as I had felt, a reflex to focus on lack and to isolate herself rather than be 'exposed' or 'judged' (Client 1, session 3). When she described tightness in her throat and chest and a freeze state in her body, I guided her into somatic awareness, to which she responded quickly. I invited her to a time she felt safe and connected (Appendix D). She discovered the freeze state was 'protecting her', yet also telling her 'she's not good enough' (Client 1, session 3). In session 4, we explored the conflict between her tendency to withdraw alongside her yearning to connect and, through OA, she met the image of a flower bud. I invited the flower to open, yet she responded that it was not ready, so I steered the visualisation around a gently closed bud, amongst nature, connected through the root system. We honoured every stage of growth, through seed, bud and full bloom, as remarkable and essential. She felt renewed 'trust and acceptance' (Client 1, Session 4) towards being in the bud phase, which demonstrated a step in the process of reclamation as she embraced and accepted herself exactly as she was. For me, it was a lesson of collaboration, of attuning to the client with each moment. Client 1 was understanding how emotions were caught in her body, feeding the 'heaviness', and committed to daily movement and being in nature, demonstrating the empowerment and possibility available through her own insight and strategy.

The client arrived emotionally overwhelmed in week 5, and I felt a moment of self-doubt to hold the space, yet reminded myself of the power of presence. Through OA I led her to connect with the unshakeable, unmoving ground of her awareness. Quite different to the flower bud, she saw dark earthy greens and felt stability, something she was not familiar with. We explored the potential of stability and she was able to access her 'warriorress' (Client 1, Session 5) and discover courage to speak with her anger. It was an 'important' (Client 1, week 5) meeting as the anger had never been given permission to be heard and hence reclaiming a part of her that had been rejected. The client described a 'resourceful, empowered' and 'grown up' place, 'somewhere that was hers' (Client 1, week 5). I shared that I saw her 'Queendom'. She was smiling and crying as she granted herself permission to reside in her Queendom (Appendix E). I reflected how, from being seen, 'healing pathways can emerge' (Simpson, 2016) and can, quite radically, support a return to wholeness. There were other occasions where I learnt the importance of giving space for an emotion or a part of the client to be seen and heard. In one example, working with the TCM, Client 2 met the identity of the little girl who was punished with hurtful words and felt unloved. I facilitated an exploration, similar to that which Lasley et al. (2015) described, in connecting with 'parts', and the client was able to speak with and learn what the little girl needed (Appendix F). It was an interesting practice and demonstration of inviting a collaborative vision between 'selves', bringing 'integration' (Berchik et al. 2016) as parts of the self are reclaimed, which I recognise as an essential step in the process of becoming whole.

The sixth session with Client 1 demonstrated some integration through an energy of acceptance within herself and her parents plus renewed commitment to movement, even through resistance. She saw how dominant the force of 'heaviness' had been and after a long time, felt 'lighter'. The experience of her Queendom supported 'freshness' and 'clarity', reinforced by another dream of giving birth and a powerful sense that she can 'influence' (Client 1, Session 6). She received clarity towards steps to support her overall desired outcome (Appendix G) and during our final Jumi Tree OA described an energy of 'creation and possibility' (Client 1, Session 6). Client 1 demonstrated clear insight from OA and I also recognised a demonstration of (her surrender to) will emerging to restore and move in a way that is win-win-win (Dängeli, 2021). It was an affirmation that, when we get out of our way, something propels us forward in a way that feels aligned to something greater and centres closer to our wholeness.

Client 5 shared a narrative with Client 1 around fundamental needs being unmet as a child and felt undeserving of receiving care which was reflected in intimate relationships. She described vulnerability and low self-worth alongside a feeling of being stuck or frozen, unable to commit in areas of life, such as work, for fear of failure. Through questioning she was able to identify how the weight of responsibility she experienced as a child presented as a need for freedom now. Through OA we inquired how freedom and commitment could sit together in the way 'yin and yang lovingly embrace each other in a circle of wholeness' (Hughes, 1994). Over following sessions, she felt 'expansive' and 'easeful' (Client 5, Session

2) in OA, recognising she was in a liminal phase essential for both the 'letting go' and 'updating the operating system' (Client 5, Session 2). This was an example of how acceptance supported the journey of reclamation and her growing awareness of the freedom and ease possible when, as described by Welwood (1982), we leave old structures behind.

Through sessions 2 and 3, Client 5 met narratives of not-enoughness and shame and I considered how, as spoken to by Wong (2019), our healing requires us to embrace the shame we carry. That in reclaiming our feelings and shadow parts we move closer to reclaiming our wholeness. Client 5 acknowledged her anger and met sadness in her throat and chest. Strong emotions were moved and I consciously deepened into my heart space and OA with the intention of pure and complete acceptance. I noted that it was through somatic awareness she was able to gather insight from the emotions (Appendix H). On another occasion, Client 4 felt strong anxiety in her chest and guided through her body she met her 'power' and could contain the anxiety until it reduced (Appendix I). Both of these moments reflected my view that when we follow the sensations in our body with curiosity, meeting them with awareness and acceptance, they can reduce and regulate. I was also reminded of how the body can resource and inform us if we listen and work with it.

Conclusion

I understand wholeness to be connected to our power and it was my wish to explore how the coaching space could support a return to wholeness. I referred to this process as the journey of reclamation and I have been fascinated to learn through the individual experience of each client. I observed how the facilitation of OA supported both a radical shift in perspective and the regulation of emotional or nervous system state. This in turn moved clients into more resourceful states and renewed their capacity to discover their own solutions. Furthermore, I witnessed how our emotions and inner experiences are essential gateways towards healing and integrating our fragmented parts. Clients demonstrated inspiring willingness and courage to explore more challenging feelings which in turn brought them greater acceptance of themselves, a sense of reclamation. OA demonstrated huge support throughout this process and in their capacity to observe how past experiences or outdated narratives were still informing their present. From this understanding the clients were able to start visioning new stories with clarity towards what was needed and in closer alignment with their deeper needs, core values and emerging self-worth. The transpersonal coaching space demonstrated to support each client in becoming inspired and empowered to stay curious, to find fresh perspectives and to keep integrating all of the parts towards wholeness.

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Appendix A

I agree: To create and hold sacred and brave space for one another; To show up with presence; To show up with an open mind; To show up with integrity; To show up with authenticity; To speak my Truth

Additional contribution from Client 3:

'To be honest and not be afraid and to take a risk' (Client 3, Session 1)

Coaching Agreements (November, 2021)

Appendix B

Over the first few sessions Client 1 mentioned, repeatedly, the time her family moved from the countryside to the city when she was a child. This appears to have been a painful and important time for her, one which she still carries. In her meeting with nature after her first week she was able to recognise that there is resistance for her which she connects to the pain of her childhood, despite longing to be in nature. I am curious to observe where or how else this childhood event may still be impacting or limiting her at this time.

Appendix C

There was a profound moment when Client 2 identified that she was taking care of children in all the ways that she had not been met as a child. When I asked her to share what she was giving she named: Containment, care, a safe space to be themselves, a welcome to the whole of each of them, acceptance, togetherness, freedom to speak to their emotions. In this she identified what she had lacked and what she needed.

Appendix D

As I guided the client to remember a time she felt safe, yet connected, she described a table with toast and tea and a view of the ocean. She expressed the simplicity and comfort of a home space with tea and toast, yet the view of the ocean allowed her to remember her expansive nature and the possibility that comes with an open view.

Appendix E

Discovering her Queendom was a profound moment for Client 1. It was moving to witness as she recognised and accepted this place within where she could reside. After I invited her to rest into her Queendom she continued to smile and cry as she described seeing creatures, deer, trees and a covering of snow. She could not believe she discovered her Queendom but it felt very good. I was deeply moved and reminded myself of what we have access to within us.

Appendix F

When Client 2 met the little girl within she realised how often trauma from verbal abuse during her childhood was being triggered. In a gentle and loving meeting she was able to hear, from that part of her, that the little girl needed to be held by her, that it is her job now to take care and that she was not responsible for her mother's pain. That she is loved, seen and heard. That it is ok to feel sensitive and vulnerable and that the little girl and her grown up self, can experience and move through things together.

Appendix G

I prioritise and take time for supportive practices like being in nature, meditating or singing. I take time to connect with myself and other people. I clear the physical, mental and emotional clutter to be able to show up wholeheartedly. I nourish myself and others. I create beauty and harmony. I listen and let myself be guided.

Needs and Values Form, Client 1

Client 1 had felt too exhausted with 'heaviness', to tend to self-care, to say yes to opportunities or to make important decisions. Through tending to the heaviness, bringing emotions into the light and taking small steps to meet her dominant needs she restored energy and clarity. She found courage to commit to ongoing studies in Transpersonal Therapy for children and to apply to an additional part time opportunity to work with Down's children. She felt inspired to sign up to a book club which she felt was a safe and an accessible place to

connect to community. During our final Jumi Tree practice she experienced Octopus arms growing from her shoulders, reaching out and a rainbow path unfolding before her. She described it as energy of 'creation and possibility', it felt 'good and expansive' (Session 6)

Appendix H

During session 3 Client 5 met some strong emotions, layers of anger which were masking sadness and grief. I led her into her body where she felt constriction in her throat and chest. Inquiring deeper she realised she is always waiting until her edge to ask for what she needs and she is afraid to ask for fear of abandonment. She never felt allowed to have needs or any expectations from others and often was scared for her basic needs and safety as a child. Her relationships have reinforced this belief, for instance her recent partner told her she should have no expectations from him. Her self-worth felt damaged. She longed to have permission to expect something from others, permission to be fully herself, to be vulnerable and weak. Giving space to these feelings in the session started to let her know it is ok to feel these things.

Appendix I

I am learning a lot about the power of grounding into the body as a mechanism to meet and transmute strong emotions and anxiety and to connect to one's power. Today I led Client 4 into her roots and her lower belly, she was able to meet her anxiety and it dissolved. She found that when she connected to her root, her womb and her yoni, she meets her power. She feels grounded, confident and finds inner strength. She felt like she 'doesn't have to prove anything or please anyone'. She shared an image of a well suggesting that she can give without being depleted.

What takes her away from that? Self doubt, lack of connection to self. She recognised that embodied practice and nature help and it is tendencies towards comparison that create feelings of not enoughness. A sense of lack, it is triggered by external comments but it's already there. What else might help to soothe this feeling? Feeling connected, the presence of others, the right people – practice, presence. How would she be able to move through the world if she moved from this place? It would give her confidence to put herself out there. How would it feel? Things would flow organically, naturally, joyful, easeful, abundantly, loving. She would be able to support others to be themselves, she would create connections and community.

Author Mischa Varmuza

Mischa Varmuza is a certified Transpersonal Coach and Yoga Teacher (E-RYT 500). She has trained and studied extensively in the yogic and priestess traditions, resonating particularly with Traditional Tantra. Since studying and practising Transpersonal Coaching she has been fascinated by the synergy and resonance with the Tantric View and is deeply inspired to be working with these tools and teachings individually and together. Mischa offers both group and individually tailored Transpersonal Coaching and Yoga Sadhana programs, immersions and retreats. Learn more or contact Mischa at www.mischavarmuza.com



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Discovering the core elements of transpersonal coaching psychology

Harriet Getley

Abstract

In this report the author documents her key findings from the experiential element of the Alef Trust's Certificate in Transpersonal Coaching Psychology. During her journey with pro bono clients she discovers where the theory plays out in real life to uncover several key aspects of the coaching process. Each of these is examined in turn to reveal how it facilitates clients to uncover more of who they truly are. From intention setting to the emergence of the next smallest step, the author deconstructs what happens in a coaching session to find the optimal conditions for lasting change or transformation to occur for clients.

Keywords

transpersonal psychology, coaching, transformation, open awareness, energy, oneness

Introduction

This report tracks my exploration of Dängeli's (2021) Transpersonal Coaching Model (TCM) as I coached pro bono clients over a three month period in the last module of the Alef Trust's Certificate in Transpersonal Coaching Psychology. It focusses on my key learnings and what the perceived benefits of these learnings are to clients, myself and the wider world. All sessions were confidential (only a client's initials appear here) and the client's permission was sought before sharing their case studies.

The TCM is rooted in transpersonal psychology and utilises Neuro-Linguistic Programming and Mindfulness based approaches to provide a holistic and integrative approach to coaching. The theoretical part of our course provided a basic scaffolding around which to hang the principles, mechanics and intellectual understanding of the TCM. During my experiential journey of pro bono coaching, I began to appreciate the art of transpersonal coaching lies in developing a dynamic presence to hold the invisible space around, within and throughout the supporting structure of the TCM. "This space in between is the energetic aspect of the

relationship with your client” (Dängeli, 2020, p.2). The multidimensional mode of being in the shared space Dängeli (2019) termed Open Awareness. It allows an experience of self that is not restricted to our conditioned or ego-driven mind. This transpersonal context is beyond the content of our thoughts, feelings, sensations, memories and experiences and exists unconstrained by time and boundaries of space: a quantum field consisting only of potential energy. Open Awareness grants both the coach and client access to this field and the coach’s generative listening and intuitive navigating facilitate new insights, creative expressions and profound shifts in perspective to arise in conscious awareness. “Consciousness wants to evolve. Being creative, it flows toward curiosity and discovery” (Chopra, 2022, p.41). In turn, our lives have an inherent drive to express more aliveness and embody more conscious awareness. “It’s a call from one’s own authentic self to begin to participate in the evolutionary process for the sake of the evolution of consciousness itself” (Cohen, 2003, cited in Schlitz et al., 2007, p.95). If this drive is ignored a sense of despair, anxiety and ultimately depression will develop (Eisenstein, 2022).

Core elements in transpersonal coaching:

The coach's intention

My intention for coaching has become a willingness to facilitate clients finding greater levels of understanding, transformation and healing in their lives. This same intention is written into the coaching agreement. It is behind my pre-session ritual to attune to unconditional love and acceptance, it is verbalised as an introduction to a coaching session and it sets the scene for Open Awareness. Clients who are unfamiliar with the TCM get a flavour early on in the session for its transpersonal nature. If I feel shy, underconfident or am seeking the client’s approval, I sometimes want to skip this intention setting. However, without it, sessions meander into more of a chat with some guided meditation rather than an intentional space from which to coach.

The client's map, needs and values

The next core element of the process is to elicit a client’s current map of reality, their needs and values and their vehicles (successful or otherwise) for getting these met. During this initial calibration clients report feeling heard and seen as the trust and rapport deepens. Most clients report the tone, pace, phrasing and timing of the TCM questions contribute to the participatory space. As coach, I am hunting amongst their narrative to illuminate where their mindset has limited what is possible for them. Dängeli (2019) refers to this limiting mindset as *tunnel awareness*: “a fixated, narrow mode of perception that results in thinking about an issue in a way that only results in perpetuating the problem” (p.9). A client’s desire to change and the extent of their awareness surrounding their issue affect the flow, focus and timing of client-centred transformative coaching. “She has fears and hopes that may look clear to you but for her to come out of a fog” (Moore, 2014, p.99). It is beneficial to address only what is uppermost in the client’s landscape of their life: one layer at a time. “Just as the earth has visible memories of geologic times, we too are structured in a deep way by events either in

the past or deep in our nature difficult to distinguish between essential and remembered” (Moore, 2014, p. 80).

I learned the value of respecting the order in which a client’s layers of resistance present and then fall away from JS3. Her husband had died when their three children were small and they had a business to run. In order to survive, she “hardened my heart into a black hole that swallowed up all the surrounding debris”. Now some thirty years later, she described herself as ‘numb to life, living with no joy ... this was no way to live’. In our initial sessions her desired outcome was to concentrate on ‘being present and expressing gratitude’. After three sessions she became aware that her chest felt heavy all the time and that it had “become normal” for her. According to Moore (2014), “People forget that their spirituality is affected by their emotions, family background and current relationships – the stuff of their souls” (p. 89). Through assessing only what was presenting uppermost and facilitating her next step to wholeness, the effects of her grief lessened. In session four she was excited to tell me she had practised Qi Gong every day for two weeks and had spent time looking at the stars. “I think my heart is thawing,” she reported. The next week she told me how she had cried and cried over the hideousness of this plastic Christmas tree she had bought. JS3 explained her mother had died suddenly one Christmas Eve and realised for herself in an emotional session that she had continued her pattern of ignoring her grief. In our final session she appeared on screen wearing a sweatshirt with the word ‘WILD’ embroidered in multi colours and said, “I feel fantastic – just loving life”. Peeling away the non-linear layers of unexpressed emotions to come home to herself, required me to be present and witness her story, while asking generative questions in the space of Open Awareness.

Open Awareness

Open Awareness facilitates calm and finds space around a client’s unconscious awareness. The Open Awareness processes that I guide are unscripted and intuitively tailored to what comes up in the current session. I aim to invite an expanded experience of self while remaining mindful not to lead the client or linger anywhere to suggest my attachment to a desired outcome. I take my inspiration from walking in nature, running with podcasts, reading spiritual texts, swimming in the river and anytime I adopt my spiritual eyesight (noticing the divine footprint in any living thing)¹. Moore, (2014) describes this phenomenon artfully: “You only have to use your spiritual imagination to establish a world alive and mysterious and home to a presence impossible to describe but also impossible to deny” (p.60).

Clients often return to our coaching conversations after Open Awareness with a “wow” or “thank you” and are quick to convey the amazement or surprise as to what came up for them. Several people report that they could not have predicted their insights with thinking alone. It’s as if the soul provides a shortcut to a perceived problem of the mind. The transformative

¹ See Appendix 2 for more detail on spiritual eyesight.

capacity of Open Awareness induces an alchemical process that often produces a result with an 'off-script' quality.

This was illustrated by my first coaching session with AJ. Her major struggle was not feeling good enough and lacking in self-confidence. In the silence that followed our Open Awareness I detected no discernable clues as to what she had experienced. So I asked if she could locate where she felt this lack of self confidence in her body. She said, "yes" and put her hand straight to the area covering her solar plexus. I then asked if anything had come up in Open Awareness that could help she said, "Oh yes! I felt so tall". "How could this 'tallness' help with the feeling of not being confident", I asked? She replied pretty much straight away, "My body posture would do it. I'll push my shoulders back and stand tall!" This illustrates the power of somatic intelligence and its ability to talk straight and communicate simply!

JS1 presented with anxiety and issues around eating. She told me that, after many years of therapy, she knew cognitively that when her baby had died thirty years previously, what had been missing amongst all the medical professionals at the time was a feminine energy. "A knowing – a sign or some expression that it was alright, that it wasn't my fault – a hug". During Open Awareness she had an image of a big fur coat being wrapped around her. When I asked what the coat meant to her and how it could help, she described it as soft, comforting and luxurious. "I think it's the compassion, love and healing that was missing all those years ago". This arrival of a sensual association to her healing opened her up "to allow love in through the back door of my closed heart". More of her journey later.

Trust the process

Often the opening of a client's awareness is enough for them to gain some new understanding from the taste of the transpersonal. If not, the toolkits from TCM and Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE) (Dängeli, 2018) are available to use. These sessions took me into new territories and my peer coaching helped me to build courage and confidence in using these powerful techniques. Direct experience of me being vulnerable, being guided and trusting that I would access my inner knowing led me to be a more humble, faithful and patient coach. As an example, a recent peer session delivered a silver fox spirit, who used my fear to guide us through an unfamiliar forest to a place even more beautiful than the sunny clearing we had left behind. Now, when I feel the fear, I am free to choose to trade being comfortable for the journey into the unknown clear in the faith that where I am heading will prove infinitely more rich for my soul. "The practice then, is not only to trust the unknowing, it's really to honour and appreciate and love that unknown, and to really embrace it as the life force that is the ultimate energy and ultimate source" (Franklin, 2003, cited in Schlitz et al., 2007, p.129).

Integration

The final core element is to integrate the new learning and for the client to choose their next smallest step. This enables a client to live their new awareness more consistently and choose in the future whether to move towards more fear and contraction or consciously take that step

towards what is ultimately an expression of more love for self, for others and the environment. Most of the time the client's next steps were easily accessed and self-motivated. Wilber (2008) terms these insights “psycho-active”: like seeds that ongoing practice will nurture and nourish.

In the session after the fur coat, JS1 reported her anxiety was much better and was now able to describe it as a churning: “like dirty water swirling in the drum of a washing machine”. When asked, “what would help?” she replied, “connecting to Presence and flushing it through”. From JS1’s new perspective, her debilitating fear and difficulty eating were really cries for the polar opposite: more connection to source. When I asked what would help JS1 choose “Presence” (her word) over anxiety in the future, she said “practising making it more pervasive – remembering to connect to it anywhere not just when I am anxious ...gardening ...meditating or at the end of yoga.”

Conclusion

The common theme reflected in my effectiveness as a coach resonates with my greatest learning during this course: being present brings resourcefulness and a trust in life that it is happening for me not to me. Coaching then becomes a place to practise life as the two merge: “life and practise are fundamentally a seamless whole” (Schlitz et al. 2007, p. 157). During pro bono sessions, I had the privilege to see clients stack and evolve spiritual practices over time, just as I continue to do. In this way, we learn how to increase our capacity to hold space for ourselves and others.

My Will² inspired vision going forward is to practise transpersonal coaching and live open-spirited, alive to the mystery and awe integral to this sacred life we are blessed to share on this planet. My hope is that through coaching and connecting with like-minded individuals more compassion, forgiveness and love will ripple out into the world replacing judgement, criticism, and anger. In this story our human race and our planet stand a better chance of thriving synergistically.

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Appendix 1 – Journal entry for spiritual eyesight

Pondering on what constitutes Open Awareness as opposed to a guided meditation:

It took me a while to realise Open Awareness is a tool to broaden a client's perspective and also, when applied, a mode of being. Clients would refer to the Open Awareness as “doing the guided meditation bit”. This led me to really think about what the differences were between the two. Open Awareness has to be about a broadening of perspectives. It is also by its very nature a dynamic, alert mode of being that is simultaneously inward oriented, outward oriented and environment or ecologically oriented.

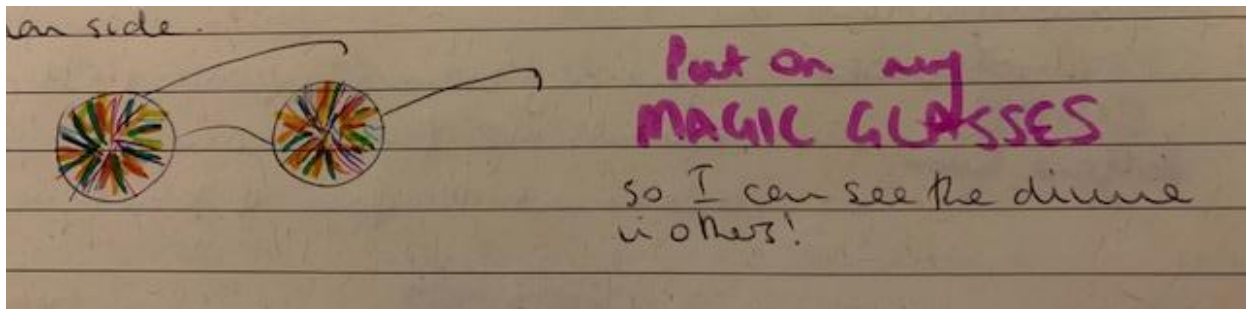
In terms of what this looks like in practise and the words I use:

At the moment:

1. I **contemplate** a metaphor (be it 7 spaces of self, sky, river, landscape, tree, art work, breath, bridge, etc etc ad infinitum) in the 3rd person **objectification**. I describe in detail, texture, sound, taste and smell etc.
2. Then I progress to **commune** with it in the 2nd person **subjective - feel** what is going on underneath this surface.
3. Then **meditate** as the thing itself (1st person) developing an awareness **to be** it. (“Exploring the Three Faces of Spirit”, Wilber et al., 2008 pg. 214-221).
4. Finally an **omni** perspective (4th person) or observing yourself **experiencing being it** completes the widening of perspectives.

Appendix 2 - Journal Entry for 'Spiritual Eyesight'

These glasses enable a mode of being that 'sees' the divine in everything – nature, people, events, experience. Like 3d glasses but the dimension they highlight is spiritual.



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Ageing with presence: a case study using transpersonal coaching with older clients

Christine Miskelly

Abstract

Later life can be seen as presenting its own unique challenges. These might be centred on a changing sense of identity, on dealing with various kinds of loss, or on finding a new sense of meaning and purpose. Transpersonal coaching may be considered ideal for enabling an individual to work through these various challenges. In the held space of presence the client can experience different perspectives and perhaps access a ‘knowing’ which is deeper than that produced by egoic thinking. This case study evaluates the use of Open Awareness (Dängeli, 2021) as a tool for assisting older clients in accessing their deeper knowing. The author relates her observations to her own experience of the ageing process.

Keywords

ageing, loss, open awareness, presence

Introduction

We live in the midst of a deep mystery. If we stop for just a moment to reflect on the fact of our own existence and the world in which we find ourselves, we soon realise that every moment is a miracle. We are alive and conscious in a world which is also alive and conscious. When we are present to this knowing we experience that aliveness and yet, for most of us, our habitual way of being is to be lost in a morass of thoughts. Tolle (1999) describes much of our thinking as being addictive. We do not seem to have the ability to stop it, are identified with it and derive our sense of self from the content and activity of the mind. We feel that the solution to our problems will be found through thinking, and although thinking certainly has its valuable place, we can be insensitive to or ignorant of other ways of knowing; the ways of presence. But in reading about presence we need to be careful as any words used are merely pointers. They are not the thing itself (Buckler, 2019). I have learned not to compare my own experience or sense of knowing with what I “think” might be being described by someone else.

Notions of presence and awareness have been at the heart of most spiritual and mystical traditions and are linked to a sense of the sacred: the recognition that there is a sacredness at

the heart of humanity and at the heart of the universe (Lancaster, 2004). As we become present we knowingly enter this space. Bockler (2021) explores at length the notion of 'Presencing with Soul'. Hence I might choose to say that in transpersonal coaching we are creating a sacred space. The client may or may not perceive it that way but it is now the intention I choose to hold when working with my clients. It embodies a curious sense of surrender. This may not have been my understanding at the start of this journey but it is my understanding now.

For me the last year has been, in many ways, an exploration and deepening understanding of this state of presence. When I began the Transpersonal Coaching course I was at a point of transition. I had retired some years ago, my husband had died and the pandemic was requiring us to 'lock down'. Hence, like many others, I found myself more or less confined to home and to being alone. I have never lived alone and it is not something I would have chosen but it has provided the opportunity to do some deep exploration and, perhaps, to come to a new relationship with myself and my world; our world. Experiencing the death of a beloved partner of over forty years is a life changing experience on many levels. Not only is there grief and the sense of loss but also a change in perceived identity. Who am I now? There is also the question of how I want to live my life, how do I give it new meaning and purpose? Although questions of identity, meaning and purpose arise across the generations, they can take on a new urgency in later life. The realisation that more years have passed than will lie ahead can sharpen the desire to live deeply and fully, to be of service and to savour all that life has to offer.

For many people ageing does equate with increasing losses. There can be loss of health, loss of physical abilities, loss of friends and there is a real question of how life can remain meaningful and even joyous in the face of decreasing abilities and increasing losses. Our society tends to view ageing in a negative light; a period of decline, something to be denied, fought against and feared. Death is the final failure. Society values being productive, being sociable, being young, and there can be an assumption that to grow old well means to remain young for as long as possible. Schlitz (2011) has argued that we need a new model of ageing which recognises human psychological and spiritual development as unfolding over a lifespan rather than ending with adulthood. Tornstam (2005) has studied many people in later life and found that there can be a shift in meta-perspective from a materialistic and rational worldview to one which is more cosmic and transcendent. This may be accompanied by a decreased interest in superfluous social interactions and material things and an increased desire for solitude. It is often accompanied by an increase in life satisfaction. He describes this as being the experience of gerotranscendence and sees it as a final stage in a natural progression towards maturation and wisdom.

Method

This coaching case study focused on older clients. I was curious to see whether their stories and concerns would mirror my own and to consider the extent to which transpersonal coaching might support them in their explorations. I worked with four women all aged over

sixty. All coaching sessions were via the Zoom platform with sessions generally lasting an hour. All women gave their permission for me to use the details of our sessions anonymously in the report, hence all names are fictitious. Prior to the sessions clients signed a consent form which included some information about the nature of transpersonal coaching.

This report focuses on the holding of space and the use of Open Awareness (OA) with these clients (Dängeli 2021). Open Awareness can be seen as an expanded state of consciousness. The client is gently lead through a process of bringing attention to the breath, the body and the space in and around the body. This can facilitate a shift from a narrow ‘tunnel awareness’ to a more open state where the client might notice subtle body sensations or images and experience a wider perspective on their issue. Holding space and being in OA are essentially about a quality of being, the quality of presence I described in my introduction. My aim was to be in this state with my clients. However, in practice it can be easy to slip into thinking, to lose focus, to start to worry about where the session is leading, to “think” about what to do next. That “not knowing” can lead me to feel vulnerable and inadequate. Yet “not knowing” is the key to curiosity and it is the curiosity which allows us to be present to something new unfolding (Lasley et al. 2015). It creates a liminal space of possibility. Over the weeks I have gradually come to trust the process but recognise that the ability to be in this state requires continued practice.

Results

I led my clients into OA in a variety of ways and they each responded differently. Mary was a divorced, seventy year old woman who had retired from teaching some years ago. She described living with a sense of loss. Although she did not want to return to teaching she missed the status it provided and the connection with the children. A committed Catholic, she gained joy from attending Mass and also from being with her grandchildren. She wanted to be able to accept that paid work was over and to be able to let go of her various roles. There was a desire to experience a greater sense of ease and to feel more fully alive.

It was clear that Mary was very much “in her head”, struggling to understand the reasons why she felt or acted as she did. Whilst there was a need for her to tell her story I also thought it would be helpful to take her into OA, to move her to a more expansive state. I did this in our second session. She afterwards said that she felt some resistance to it, preferring her catholic prayer and meditation. I felt the need to explain a little more that the purpose was to enable her to move out of the head and into a more expansive state. It was not a replacement for her existing practices but an addition or alternative. She was grateful for the explanation and by the end of the session was saying that she could see the value but it was something she felt she would need to practise. In fact, in her final evaluation she said: “The periods of OA were settling.....I would view Open Awareness as an integral part of a coaching session.” In fact the biggest shift with Mary came when I reframed some words she used. She had described “having to flee” a difficult situation. I asked her how it felt if instead she said “she chose to leave”. The shift into seeing that she had exercised choice was quite remarkable and empowering for her.

In contrast client two found the experience of OA enlightening. Also around seventy years old, Susan was an artist. She described how painting had always been her way of coping with whatever life threw at her. It would keep her on an even keel, feeling happy and fulfilled. However, this had changed since treatment for cancer some years ago. She described herself as feeling creatively blocked and seemed to be embodying a sense of tiredness and melancholy. I led her through an expansive Open Awareness exercise using the omni-perspective (Dängeli, 2018 p24). Afterwards she said she had a sense that something had happened even though she could not say what. Using the Transpersonal Coaching Model (Dängeli, 2021) I asked her about her sense of identity when painting, her values, mission and purpose. At the start of our second session she seemed brighter. She had been practising OA on a daily basis. We did a further practice together after which she concluded that she just needed “to get on with things”. She was designing Christmas cards but would ask herself “what’s the point?” However, we began to explore who the cards were for, to hold those people in mind and sense the gratitude they would experience for receiving a hand made card. As we chatted about these people her ideas began to flow and her mood lifted. I commented on the change and she agreed saying that the OA was making her feel calmer and more expanded. At the end of our final session she was feeling lighter and she said that her negative thoughts had been “re-set”. She felt coaching had helped her resolve her current issue and also given her a way to resolve future problems.

Some clients described metaphorical images arising in OA. Client three talked about the burdens she felt she was carrying. In OA she had an image of the cloakroom in which she kept all her coats. There were coats for every season but she realised that she did not take all the coats with her on every trip. She just takes the one she needs. Similarly she did not have to carry all her “what ifs” around with her. She also had an image of a tree. She described how trees lose their leaves in winter but we do not cut them down. The leaves and the fruit come later. She applied this to the business she was trying to build and the need for patience. She was quite emotional reflecting on these images.

Conclusion

In conclusion I would say that each of my older clients was experiencing issues related to this stage of life: coping with the demands of elderly parents, feeling alone, questioning purpose, looking to feel more alive. They had not come to coaching in any significant state of distress or with great expectations for what it might achieve but perhaps more with a degree of curiosity. What they seemed to value most was the opportunity to talk and be heard and briefly to be taken out of thinking into a wider space. They were all grateful.

For myself I feel privileged when someone trusts me enough to share their story, their fears and their hopes. I recognise the desire to enter ever more deeply into this mystery of presence and see that my purpose is to keep my own mirror polished so that it can serve as a faithful reflector for my clients. I look to find in myself the richness that ageing can offer and to use that in the service of others.

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Appendix

A selection of comments made by clients in a post- coaching survey.

To what extent did the coaching help you in resolving issues or envisioning new solutions or ways forward?

First of all it is a privilege to have someone's undivided attention and to know they are actively listening - I found the gentle questioning very freeing and it made it perfectly ok to think about me in terms of wants/needs. I think it would be fair to say I feel more courageous.... the issues that we discussed won't disappear but the suggestions about how to change/modify the thoughts and language of the situation were valuable. I was pleased to be offered links to spiritual and mystical individuals-they were refreshing to me and they seemed to be powerhouses of prayer.

I have been coached before but it was business coaching and was more focused towards building a business and some mindsets around that. This experience was different because it all came back to my centre, and focusing on what's within, rather than what's on the outside or going on around me.

This coaching experience helped me hugely. I went from overwhelm to being able to breathe through the emotions and become present. It reminded me that solutions are very much

accessible and even within me. Having a different perspective helped me process the transitions I was going through.

It helped me a lot. Both in resolving a current issue, and giving me a way to resolve future problems, which is most helpful.

Were the periods of Open Awareness helpful? In what way?

Yes, because, for me, they were settling. I appreciate that in 6 sessions it is difficult to establish as a regular routine but I would view Open Awareness as an integral part of a coaching session.

Very much so. They brought my attention from the overwhelm around me to find peace within. It helped calm my anxiety and I was able to have visions of different physical examples to help me understand and see myself through different eyes.

Very helpful, and something I continue to practise daily.

What did you value most about our sessions together?

The opportunities you offered for development (without mentioning the word ‘goals’!) and thought - I was very pleased that our conversations did not turn into an exchange of anecdotes - your responses and suggestions required some thinking on my part between sessions. I am not sure if follow-on work is intended but it was interesting for me.

Author Christine Miskelly

After gaining a BSc and MSc in Psychology Christine progressed to a career in teaching, initially with primary age children but later teaching Psychology to A-level. After retirement she studied Consciousness and Transpersonal Psychology with the Alef Trust and more recently Transpersonal Coaching. She is now building her coaching practice and delights in seeing the changes that can arise in clients. Learn more or contact Christine at <https://www.christinemiskelly.com/>



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Experiencing enlivenment: facilitating spirals of abundance by blending transpersonal coaching psychology and embodied meditation practice

Dan McTiernan

Abstract

Can the transformative power of transpersonal coaching psychology be enhanced and deepened when combined with a regular practice of embodied meditation? Do the core skills of interoception and presencing enhance the potency and efficacy of coaching sessions? A coaching client undertook a 10-week embodied meditation course in advance of seven sessions of transpersonal coaching to determine the beneficial impact it might have on lasting transformation when the boundaries between discrete coaching sessions and regular embodied spiritual practice are deliberately blended. The results were profoundly effective and make a strong case for the combination of both elements to maximise beneficial change for clients.

Keywords

transpersonal psychology coaching, embodiment, meditation, enlivenment

Introduction

My own route to “wholing and healing” (Plotkin, 2013) from burnout and a severe energy illness came through the synthesis of embodiment, psychological enquiry and emotional release work. My body kept “the score” (Kolk, 2014) for many years and was screaming at me to stop, recalibrate and return home. Finally, listening, the process of healing transformation began to unfold through a process of “enlivenment” (Meecham, n.d.).

Nowadays, I experience internal quietude, a regulated nervous system, a growing groundedness and self-compassion I would never have believed possible a few years ago. As Depth Psychologist, John Prendergast, suggests, “realising that we are essentially whole is a huge relief from the self-improvement project.” (Prendergast, 2019, p. 52). I’m called to facilitate this process in others feeling equally at the end of their ability to keep forcing their way through life disembodied and dysregulated.

I coached Client A, a forty-five-year-old woman, for 10.5 hours across seven sessions. Exceptionally, she was also my meditation student and had completed a group ten-week embodied meditation course and had a daily practice of interoception (sensing inner experience) and presencing (resting in the being of direct experience). My interest was to gauge whether the potency of transpersonal coaching can be enhanced and deepened in combination with an ongoing practice of “bodyfulness” (Aylward, 2021), the bringing online of our capacity to sense our experience directly in the body and independent from rational, top-down thinking.

Content to Context: letting go into deeper being after a lifetime of striving, doing and fixing.

My process as a coach involves facilitating an embodied shift from the dominance of the strategic mind and “tunnel awareness” (Dängeli, 2021) to a deep presence characterised by “relaxed groundedness”, “spaciousness”, “open-heartedness”, and “inner alignment” (Prendergast, 2015). The felt experience of this process is increased vitality and a shift from an unhealthy fixation on the content of life to resting more peacefully within the context.

Client A is a mother of four, married, a lifelong member of the Mormon Church, an amateur painter and has a busy life also running food businesses. The latest, a cafe, led to severe burnout and physical illness in the form of a TIA (mini-stroke). She subsequently sold it and experienced a period of reflection as to what was important, what she had a passion for, and how to avoid a repeated burnout.

Initially, we explored her difficult relationship with money and a core belief that she was not capable of earning. This involved her reliance on her husband to earn income and the feelings of low self-esteem and resentment she sometimes felt towards herself and her husband due to an old agreement that she would be the homemaker while he went out to work. She also felt parental and Church pressure to not be money-oriented and to be a stay-at-home mother. This felt at odds with her natural urge to start and run small businesses and was causing her distress.

It was clear that she was primarily focused on the external conditions and content of her life. She sought regular external approval and needed to be seen as productive and successful at home and work. The outer projection of a confident, ultra-calm woman was not her internal experience, often one of panic and self-doubt.

Working on the principles that, “all coaching interventions should lead to integration and wholeness.” (Dängeli, 2021, p. 31) and that: “wholing is the foundation for true healing.” (Plotkin, 2013, p. 60), we began an integration process of parts of Self. This was a guided, embodied experience of the body as alive, energetic, interconnected, communicating and coherent, followed by a guided encounter with parts of Self developed by Depth Psychologist Bill Plotkin and rooted in Jungian archetypes (the generative mature adult, the innocent/sage,

the wild indigenous one, the dark muse beloved, spirit and soul - or as he describes soul; “our unique ecological niche”). (Plotkin, 2013)

Client A found this to be a powerfully surprising process. Experiencing a deep yearning for the wild indigenous one’s ability to be free and to run, “not to run away but just to move and express my animal instincts to move”, she recalled a recurring dream in which she cannot run.

An archetypal resonance with her biblical namesake came strongly to her. This character was an iconoclast and noted for her rejection of the calcification and rigidity of convention in favour of “risk-taking, allowing for positive evolution”. She recognised that many of the projects she had started had been subconsciously motivated by this drive rather than an economic one and that “opening people’s eyes” was much more motivating to her.

This was a deeply meaningful shift away from external validation to an inner alignment. Client A recognised a significant shift from “content to context” (Dethmer, 2015). It was illuminating how quickly she was able to access a fuller Self than her strategic mind and how much insight this bigger “bandwidth” (Janni, 2022) afforded.

Getting used to, and trusting home base: contacting and resting as our deeper embodied Self.

In a subsequent session, we explored an issue with self-identifying as an artist. She felt like an artist inside, but she was fearful of sharing this publicly for fear of “disapproval or ridicule”. She said, “artists have to produce art in the world”, and she felt that she wasn’t. She rented a small artist studio space but had very little time to paint and felt external pressure - mostly from her husband - questioning the expense of the rent. She recognised this was tied into her core limiting belief about earning money.

In a state of embodied Open Awareness (Dängeli, 2021), she enquired into the felt experience of being an artist by saying internally, “I am an artist”, and noticing what arose. She immediately found a place deep in her pelvis that was still and grounded and felt like an artist. Simultaneously her mind started “freaking out”. Leaning into this seeming duality, she understood that both could be honoured but how deeply she felt like her true nature when connected to that sensation in her pelvis.

As an action step, she started to practise attuning to this felt sense regularly and journalled other areas in her life where she felt that same “artist energy”. This really accentuated the value of her meditation experience and her commitment to home practice, and it was clear to see the combination of coaching and embodied meditation amplifying transformation.

Over the two weeks, she continued to get used to and “trust” this deeper sense of Self and the results were profound. She wrote to me to describe the impact it had on two events she hosted:

I really believe that the coaching session made a measurable impact on how the event went...I was able to enjoy it and feel a greater connection to the process and the people around me. What has been more surprising to me though has been that this has continued and deepened throughout this week...we hosted a Thanksgiving party here on Thursday for our neighbour who is American and I have genuinely never felt as comfortable in my own skin when I have hosted anything! It took me so by surprise that that much feeling was even possible.

The integration of this “artist” Self with her “cooking” Self was freeing and connecting and crucially, felt “like her”. To rest deeply as her authentic Self and do her job from that state of consciousness was revelatory. The combination of coaching and personal practice made for a potent facilitator of transformation.

Radical acceptance: being enough, having enough and letting go of external seeking.

The shift from “narrative to experience” (Janni, 2022) is a process of “radical acceptance” (Brach, 2003). It’s an acceptance of direct experience and a willingness to let go of wishing life to be otherwise. The paradox is that rather than leading to restrictive outcomes this is ultimately freeing. Client A learned this in our meditation classes.

In a later session, the topic of self-worth and money resurfaced and we agreed to enquire into it together. The emphasis this time was on acceptance and I asked if she was able to accept the status quo of her as primarily home-maker and her husband as bread-winner (as had been their agreement when planning a family). This was a question for the body, not the mind and there was a visceral, whole body “no”. This could have felt like a dead end in the session, but as we both rested in OA, I intuitively shifted the question and asked if she was able to accept that she could not accept the status quo.

The response was instantaneous. She could accept that, even though she had feared facing that realisation in the past. This opened up a huge amount of energy release for her. She connected to her younger self whom she called “a little entrepreneur”. When asked if there was a willingness to allow this part of self into the present, there was a clear “yes”, coupled with a realisation that the external judgement she had felt and feared since she was a child was, “for them to worry about, not for you”. I asked if she had been carrying their expectation out of fear of rejection as a child? She had. I then asked if the older mature Her needed to carry that weight? And she immediately laughed and her body shuddered as she said no. “It was so easy to let that go even though it had felt so heavy for so long.”

As simple as that. A lifetime of burden transmuted to the lightness of a feather. She now felt “enough” without seeking external approval. The shift in her physicality and the energy I felt in my own body as she experienced it in hers, was clearly facilitated by our embodied meditation experience.

Relaxing into not knowing: Lostness to liminality.

Most soul-encounter practices induce liminal states of temporary ego dissolution that release us from the usual rules and norms of our personality and culture, opening the way to fresh observations and creative adventures. (Plotkin, 2010, p. 258)

In her penultimate session, she was now feeling very different than when we started. Much freer but also unsure of “what next”. She hadn’t taken on any project for the coming year and this had been commented on by her family. This scared her a little as she felt perhaps it meant a loss of something that had defined her persona in the past. I suggested we explore that fear and while it didn’t completely fade during the session, it did shift. She discovered an “OK-ness” with liminality and increased tolerance of not-knowing. This would have previously caused her major anxiety.

She was now embodying her inner “artist” and her archetypal biblical namesake. But most importantly, she was learning to rest as her deep Self, alive in her body and part of Life as a whole.

She wrote to me after our final session to say:

I am so thrilled to have been able to work with you in this way. The idea of transpersonal coaching was new to me but it has allowed me to feel more connected in all areas of my life. Some negative and debilitating thought and behaviour patterns that have repeated for years and had impacted my day to day life have simply dissolved. Decision making is easier as I am learning to confidently feel what is truly meaningful for me. I have been shocked by how powerfully answers have been felt during the embodied process and how impactful this clarity has been, bringing a calm and greater feelings of presence even into busy and stressful work situations. I have also felt more deeply connected to family and friends and more accepting of myself; this has been joyous.

The synthesis of transpersonal coaching and embodied meditation has been a huge success. By combining deep inner work during coaching sessions with ongoing daily embodiment practice, clients are able to create a flywheel effect that maintains transformative forward momentum, building month on month into flourishing “spirals of abundance” (Macnamara, 2012, p.170).

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Life transitions: gateways into being

Stephanie Rault

Abstract

In this report, the author outlines her experience of coaching two women at different stages of life - the ages of early thirties and late fifties. Both clients were experiencing transitions such as becoming a working mother, leaving a previous faith and looking for meaning in the next stages of life. The author analyses the impact of these transitions in women's lives and the unconscious material they bring to the surface; the effectiveness of the transpersonal coaching approach in working with what emerges in sessions; as well as the integration of insights, shifts and transformational experiences that the coaching can give rise to.

Keywords

life transitions, women's lives, transpersonal coaching, open awareness

Introduction

As I am writing this essay about transitions in women's lives, I am aware of my personal experience of going through such a passage. The last few years have been infused with characteristics often associated with transition: uncertainty, change, paralysis, re-evaluation, confusion, distress and loss (Wheaton, 1990).

Jung described this particular moment of life as a transitional phase where we are between who we used to be and who we are to become. He identified five main phases of mid-life: accommodation (development of personality: personae), separation (questioning of the personae), liminality (period of uncertainty), reintegration (adoption of new personae) and individuation (acceptance and integration of internal conflicts). This model has been of great support in my understanding of this transitional phase as an integral part of my life and an important one as such. It has the potential of moulding who I am to be in what Jung described as "the afternoon of human life" (Jung, 1931).

The last three months have morphed into a fascinating journey in coaching six women as they encountered change in their lives. It proved to be a humbling process as I witnessed the struggles but also the incredible perseverance and commitment these women displayed towards what they desired most in their lives. In this report, I analyse the journeys of two of these women.

Throughout the sessions, I noticed a phenomenon that I had previously encountered in my coaching career. The women I was supporting were dealing with issues I was currently or had previously experienced in my life. I questioned how much of my personal journey could potentially influence the coaching space. Leadership coach Kelly Lewis describes these resonances as “invitations to view the coaching relationship in that inner mirror and acquire the self-knowledge that will make us better coaches” (2013). Equipped with this distinction, I could perceive these similarities and take note of them for further investigation while still holding as neutral a space as possible for the coachees (clients).

For ethical reasons, the women are referred to as Coachees 1 and 2 to keep their identity confidential. With each of them, we did a total of seven sessions. I chose to use the first session as an introduction to explore presenting issues, introduce Transpersonal Coaching and lead coachees into an experience of Open Awareness (OA). The seventh session was used to weave all sessions together and receive feedback.

Session structure and methods

The sessions took place remotely via Zoom. It was a smooth process, and I did not feel it took anything away from face-to-face coaching. At times, I witnessed how the women could completely relax in the comfort and safety of their homes. On other occasions, I perceived that incoming communication on their computer screen was a distraction. I emphasised the importance of creating optimal conditions for them to fully benefit from the sessions. Each woman consented to the use of our sessions’ content in this paper.

The structure of the sessions followed a similar template. I chose to use OA at different moments to experiment and observe its effect when used at the opening of sessions or at a later stage. I also took into consideration the needs of the coachees. When I felt their need to be heard, I started by offering them a listening ear. In the introduction sessions, I invited each coachee to bring forth the presenting issues they wished to address.

Coachee 1 wished to address issues of trust and the need to be in control. She had just got a job after her maternity leave. She could not trust having been hired or her husband to be able to take care of her twin girls. Her words: “I am too controlling, bossy, too much”. She was struggling with a lack of confidence she said originated from growing up in an environment of religious sectarianism.

Coachee 2 was struggling with the issue of not knowing how to say no and wasn’t able to prioritise herself. She was scared of rejection; she feared people would not love her if she said no. Her words: “I feel guilty, not intelligent, easily manipulated and against myself”.

Both coachees felt more relaxed after the elicitation of OA, a “mindful mode of perception accompanied by a calm, receptive, and resourceful state” (Dängeli, 2019, p.16). Coachee 1 had difficulties connecting with her body. With her, I focused on anchoring OA somatically

for the first few sessions following Dängeli's observation that "most clients rarely need more than soma centred OA to shift their state and gain a new perspective" (2021, Forum 4).

In OA, Coachee 1, identified how she had "disowned her body" when she adopted the belief, taught in her previous faith, that it was a "fallen sin". She received an insight about parts of herself that needed her acknowledgement. I chose to work with parts as this approach flowed naturally in the OA space.

We started by observing the emotion associated with her lack of trust, exploring how she described it. In order to support the arising of a metaphor for her somatic experience, I guided her with questions such as: ...if you were to give it a colour? A texture? A name? She described a "muscly mermaid" whose role had been to protect her against abandonment.

In the next session, she entered the space with resentment towards her husband as she felt "she had to do everything". We called upon the part that "didn't want to do". This time a "barefoot tanned girl" appeared, who she identified as her younger self. The dynamic between both parts was a conflict that made her feel exhausted. When asked about the quality of interaction she wished for, she visualised a dialogue that ignited the potential of a partnership.

The integration of this new relationship between the parts seemed to give more freedom to Coachee 1 in the following sessions. She created the possibility of furthering her studies, which she previously thought was "not an option anymore". Moreover, she was able to identify and shift an unconscious pattern of "achieving in order to be loved" into the choice of "achieving for fun".

I used this technique again with Coachee 2, as she presented a noticeably harsh part. In his Internal Family System (IFS) model, Schwartz identifies this protective "doing" part as "The Manager". He explains how Managers work hard to stay in control of vulnerable feelings and repressed "Exile" parts (Schwartz, 2001). The model was helpful in understanding the dynamic between parts.

Working with parts connected coachees with their innate power to defuse internal conflicts and reclaim disowned parts. The integration of the insight was progressive as it entailed maintaining a new dynamic between the parts as they interacted. Coachees used anchors such as photographs, visualisations and journaling. They reported a gradual expansion of the experience of freedom in their lives.

As the sessions progressed, I observed the quality of the coaching space. I noticed that the more comfortable I became with the state of being, the less I felt the need to intervene. I allowed more time for the coachee to explore, experiencing the space holding us both and witnessing the emergence of material that may not have arisen without this "presence in the space-in-between" facilitated by the state of OA (Dängeli, 2019). At times, as we both

shared the space in silence, I felt it expand further into a depth of awareness that I was discovering alongside the coachee.

Coachee 2 came to her first session mentioning a violent father who had impacted her childhood. She observed and reported strong physical sensations in our somatic OA practice that we used as a starting point for our exploration. I applied the OA technique of *zooming in* on the sensation to observe its characteristics. Next, we expanded her awareness out, to release the focus and provide her with a more resourceful, *big picture*, view of the pattern. She discovered a “red sadness” in her back, which protected her against her father’s violence and enabled her to identify the positive intention behind his behaviour, including the constructive learning she gained from those experiences.

In Session 2, the contemplation of acceptance of her body and her thoughts, as opposed to the judgement she was used to, emerged. In Sessions 3 and 4, fear in her heart produced the metaphor of an ogre and a little girl. The fear was one of disappointing and angering her father. As I enquired about her next chosen step, she declared she wished to hold the child. Following this interaction, she felt stronger and more self-reliant.

Eisenstein describes this validation process of giving full attention to the part of ourselves who has been longing to heal as “holding the sacred”, with the potential for miracles to unfold (2018). In Session 4, she was able to calm the fear in her heart by resting a loving hand on her chest. She received hope in the image of a bridge that she could cross.

In Session 5, her negative perception of a habit of hiding in bed shifted when she realised it was a refuge, the only place where she didn’t have to think or do. It had been a retreat from her father’s violence as a child. We supported the anchoring of a healthy relationship with the time she spent in bed with a ritualised bedtime routine. In Session 6, a stronger somatic awareness had her feel her presence in the room: “I have a brain, I exist, I can create, I can affirm myself, I am free.”

I used the last encounter with each coachee as an opportunity to review the entire cycle of sessions in support of the integration process. The facilitation of the “Will to Live” meditation (<https://jevonDängeli.com/the-will-to-live-contemplative-meditation>) at the beginning of these sessions proved to be particularly powerful in shining light on the blind spots that maintain the perception of separation. The experience of inter-connection with the Whole, coined by Thich Nhat Hanh as the insight of inter-being, reveals, “to be is always to inter-be” (2017). The insight of inter-being, as cultivated in the Will to Live meditation, provided a mirror effect for the coachees that reflected back to them the obstacles to this experience in their lives. Dängeli describes that when the state of tunnel awareness - an unconscious focus on a problem - has become part of one’s personality trait, it can be difficult to identify (2019). One of the roles of the transpersonal coach is to help coachees to identify where and when they are in tunnel awareness and then to support them in embodying OA in that particular context.

Results

As I beheld the experiences of these women while also reflecting on my journey, a crystallisation of my understanding of life transitions started to emerge in the form of a pause, a bridge (as described above by Coachee 2), “a space in between stories that creates the emptiness into which a new story can arise” (Eisenstein, 2018). It was fascinating to witness the body language of coachees as they experienced these shifts from separation to union: a smile, a facial relaxation, a slight dropping of the shoulders, a deeper inhalation...

The observations that arose in this case study highlighted the following elements:

- Transitions happen at different stages of life
- Difficulties encountered seemed to stem from a perception of separation (from self, from others, from the environment)
- This perception of separation stems from unconscious material
- Open Awareness allows for the emergence and witnessing of these patterns, activating the client's inner healer

Consequently, we could look at life as a journey of healing towards the progressive dissolving of the narrative of separation. Each transition offers an opportunity to dive into the psyche and uncover the blind spots that maintain the illusion of the separate self. The liminal space held in Transpersonal Coaching provides a limitless container for everything that exists to arise and co-habit, inherently dissolving the perception of separation.

Conclusion

As I observed the unfolding of these women's journeys, I could not help but notice the reflection of my personal struggles and insights into theirs. We have the same desire to be freed from fear and control in our lives. The beautiful clue we were given on our journey together was that the “ingredient we are reaching for is not an accomplishment” (Eisenstein, 2021).

Revelling in the state of being a little longer each day, I intend to practise presence in the pause I am given as I progress across the threshold of this life transition and into the unknown.

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Reflections on somatic practices in coaching sessions

Sue Horsburgh

Abstract

This report utilises two case studies to reflect on the unique qualities of co-creation in the space of transpersonal coaching sessions. The inherent healing aspects of somatic practice are discussed, in relation to the integration of past (sometimes traumatic) experiences. The impact of emergent experiences and memories, for both client and coach, is also noted. The need for the coach to reflect and act upon information which arises from the co-created space is acknowledged. The transformative nature of these coaching situations appears to be dependent upon: awareness of the power of somatic practice, holding space, generative listening, reflection and willingness to allow whatever emerges to be acknowledged.

Keywords

somatic, open awareness, co-created space, integration, reflection, trauma

“The body keeps the score”

Bessel Van Der Kolk

“We can’t heal trauma in solitude”

David Trevelean

Introduction and rationale

This report is a reflexive account of my work with nine pro bono clients, all of whom have an established mindfulness practice, with eight of them responding to a notice I placed in the Mindfulness Association online newsletter asking for volunteers. I therefore feel fortunate that I have been working with people who are already committed to working with their own inner processes and are curious about exploring states such as Open Awareness and differing levels of consciousness. Whilst I will draw on my experiences with everyone to inform this report, I have chosen to focus on two people in particular, who have been, or are currently undertaking, study for the MSc Studies in Mindfulness.

It was as a result of my first coaching session with each of these clients that I decided on the focus for this report. As mindfulness teachers, we are taught to be very careful when leading

people in the Body Scan practice, as this can be challenging if people are holding trauma and it can potentially re-traumatise them or cause them to be anxious and disconnect from the practice (Treleaven, 2018; Germer, 2009; Levine, p. 2022). However, in both cases during Open Awareness, it seemed appropriate to lead the client into deeply feeling into their bodily experience, with significant results. This caused me to be curious about the nature of the shared space that is co-created during a coaching session and the potential for healing that seemed to arise naturally as a result of simply being in relationship with another (Siegel, 2018; Lamb, 2018, cited in Firman, 2018, Levine, 2022).

My reflections on these events have led me to believe that Transpersonal Coaching provides a unique opportunity for individuals to assimilate and integrate their experiences in a wholesome and safe manner, if both the coach and client are ready to courageously explore what needs to be shared and healed. I therefore intend to use these case studies to illustrate that whilst past challenges and failures of integration are held in the body, people can find their own healing when held in compassionate presence by another.

Siegel (2018) suggests that trauma prevents integration, which he views as being the basis of health and ultimate wellbeing. Whilst the events shared with me during these sessions may not both be extreme examples of trauma, they do certainly represent a failure of integration. My emphasis is therefore on the process which led to the integration of deeply held difficult experiences and how my clients came to acknowledge truths about their authentic selves as a result of shared soma-based practices of Open Awareness. As I reflect on their experience, I will also reflect on how I was impacted by what was shared with me.

Methodology and Ethical Considerations

To ensure confidentiality of those taking part I have changed all names, and for the purposes of this paper, they will be called Carol and Natalie. Following an informal introductory session, I provided each coachee with copies of the Needs and Values Elicitation Form (Dängeli, 2021) and the Coaching Agreement Form (Dängeli, 2021), which was returned prior to our first session. We agreed to work together for six sessions (with two coachees choosing to follow the Authentic Self Empowerment (ASE) Integrative Coaching Program (Dängeli, 2018) and the others preferring a free flowing format to our sessions.

Carol

During our first session we quickly established rapport and I had a strong sense of energetic connection. At first I suggested that we might do the ASE Past Re-Sourcing method (Dängeli, 2018) to re-visit the situation which was the cause of her distress, but it was clear from Carol's body language that this was uncomfortable for her. I then tentatively suggested that we might do a Soma Centred Open Awareness practice (Dängeli, 2019) paying attention to what the body still held and remembered about events at the time which caused her concern.

I felt some apprehension about this as it was our first session together, but I trusted that this thought had arisen from our co-created space and she was keen to do this. As I guided her through the practice, the sense of connection in the co-created space increased, which I took as an indication that this process was very active and appropriate. Afterwards Carol said she was amazed at how powerful it had been, how energised she felt and the number of insights she had relating to her situation. She was sure that something had “shifted” and was very clear about what her next steps would be.

Reflecting on this session I was amazed at what had been shared and experienced. Carol commented that my presence and the sense of being held made her feel safe enough to explore the issue that had been calling for her attention for so long. This reminded me that “We can’t heal trauma in solitude” (Treleaven, 2018, p 151) and that being fully present for someone can provide a safe space for healing and integration to happen. Also, as Gilbert & Choden (2013) believe: “affiliative relationships can help us to face things that threaten us” (p. 82) and the events of this coaching session seemed to highlight the significance of this. I was beginning to appreciate the potential power of the co-created space and how important it was for me as a coach to trust in what unfolded and that the client would only do the work they needed to do, according to how safe they felt in my holding presence.

A few weeks later, Carol shared with me how important it had been for her that she had agency over how the session progressed. When I had first suggested a practice that felt too challenging and something else was considered instead, this was really appreciated, as this differed from her previous experience of therapy relating to her issue. Because she felt in control this enabled her to trust me and the process we shared. Grof (2000) comments on this significant difference when he explores the meaning of the Greek word *therapeutes*: “... the person assisting in the healing process, not as an active agent whose task is to ‘fix the client’” (p 182). In our co-created, transpersonal space, my role was just to be there. Carol could do whatever she felt she needed without my interference, but with my support.

As my experience of coaching sessions with pro-bono clients increased, I came to appreciate even more the uniqueness of the transpersonal aspect and the emphasis that was given to sharing open awareness during sessions. Because transpersonal psychology emphasises the importance of interconnection, I was reminded many times of the link between unconditional presence and healing (Welwood, 2002) and moved by the courage shown as clients shared their wounded places with me. Gilbert (2005) explains how important it is to notice emotions in the body, as this leads us to an appreciation of the wounding that has occurred to the soothing (parasympathetic) nervous system. The importance of a soothing leading voice tone also helps to calm anxiety and promote an environment where the client is more open to receiving non-verbal cues from the coach. Gallese (1996) established the presence of ‘Mirror Neurons’ in the brain which “provide our capacity to simulate other people’s subjective experiences” (McCrown, Reibel & Micozzi, 2010) and I believe that all these aspects combine and are magnified during the shared, co-created coaching space, particularly when Open Awareness is present.

Natalie

During my first session with Natalie I felt overwhelmed as she shared the circumstances of her life with me. I remember thinking, “I don’t know where to start with all this,” and felt panic arising within me. I took a deep breath and checked in with my peripheral vision (Dängeli, 2011) to open my field of awareness and told myself to trust the coaching process. Just as I regained some equilibrium and felt present in the session again, Natalie began to talk in more detail about her relationship with her partner. I became aware of being triggered by what she was sharing; in many ways it felt as if I were looking into a mirror that reflected my younger self. I had a strong impulse to comment on her relationship and knew that I would have to do something to address this response as it significantly affected my ability to be present, objective, and supportive.

As the session progressed, we established that the most current concern was Natalie’s anxiety about producing an essay for her course. She seriously doubted her academic ability, and this coupled with her constant “busy-ness” meant that she didn’t have time to work on this properly. As she had been sharing how she felt her anxiety about this in her body, it seemed appropriate to use Soma Centred Open Awareness (Dängeli, 2019) to explore this further. Reflecting on her experience, Natalie reported intense sensations throughout the body; tightness in the chest, discomfort in the throat, heart palpitations and an overwhelming sense of her legs wanting to move and “run- away.” She tearfully recalled events at school and other occasions when she had felt shamed and inadequate: all part of her “imposter syndrome” as she called it. Subsequently, Natalie also reflected that by over stretching herself and being constantly busy, she was preventing herself from truly being present in her own life and she wanted that to change. This process of acknowledging her emotional reality was a core concern originally identified when she completed her Needs and Values Elicitation Form (Dängeli, 2021) prior to commencing coaching.

Being triggered and the experience of re-visiting my younger self

As I realised that I had been triggered by events shared during my session with Natalie, I brought this to supervision and shared my experience during a peer coaching session, which helped me to integrate what needed to be addressed. The next time that happened in a session with Natalie I acknowledged that her sharing had touched me and asked for a moment to compose myself. In response she thanked me for doing so and commented that it gave her “a glimmer of hope, that someone understands.” I feel this also deepened our rapport and mutual respect.

Reflecting on this afterwards, I was reminded of the importance of staying “within your window of tolerance” (Treleaven, 2018). At times when I have felt that I may be out of my depth in a session, I remember that people will only share what they feel comfortable in sharing, because they trust me to be able to continue to hold the space for them. As Treleaven explains, “Our level of emotional and physical activation sends messages about what material

is safe for people to bring up and explore, and in turn what content is more likely to be disavowed” (p. 110).

In a similar manner, I have also realised that in a coaching relationship we are walking along a similar path with our client, so it is understandable that similar people are attracted to my way of working as a coach. Vandepol (2019) regards this as being characteristic of what he terms “Deep Coaching,” stating, “a Deep Coach’s role is to create a space in which a person can attune to what is available and emerging within themselves” (p. 181).

When I began my sessions with pro bono clients, I did not appreciate the difference between Transactional and Transformational coaching, but because of what clients were prepared to bring to the co-created space, I was effectively required to work in a deeply transformative way. Vandepol (2019) describes transactional coaching “ as an exchange (or transaction) between a coach and a coachee to achieve clearly defined goals, whereas transformational coaching ”is focused on enabling self-actualization” (p 18). I believe that the power of somatic practice also contributed to this transformational, co-created space which was essential in facilitating integration, both for myself and others.

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I have an interest in many aspects of spiritual practice as I am a Mindfulness Teacher, Reiki Master/Teacher, Transpersonal Coach and Mindfulness Mentor. Having worked in Higher Education for many years as a support tutor for students with SpLDs, this also enables me to teach and coach individuals with neuro- diverse learning styles. I have been drawn into this type of work because of my own practice as I have benefited significantly from working with a coach. Learn more or contact Sue at <https://suehorsburgh.co.uk/>



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