

DISSERTATION

EFFECTIVENESS OF NONDIRECTIVE COACHING

as assessed by coaches

(with a subtitle)

TEACHING SQUIRRELS TO BARK

**MSc. in Strategic Human Resource Management
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I wish to express here my thanks to Petr Parma, my lecturer and “guru” in coaching methodology, for bringing me into this beautiful garden of human interaction that allows me to help people without intervening into their freedoms.

I also owe much to Petr Kraus, an owner of the NEWTON company, not only that he sponsored this work, but much more - he is an unequalled example and pattern of managerial respectfulness, human relations and personal maturity to me as well as to many others.

Thank you - all of my respondents - for sharing with me your coaching experiences, namely Radvan Bahbouh as my kind and multi-professional supervisor.

An honour belongs to my wife Dana and children Eliška and Karolína who persistently continue in creating for me a safe, encouraging and satisfying place to return to from coaching and other endeavours.

And finally I want to thank God of my LORD Jesus Christ who just entrusted me with this exciting life - full of adventures and things to explore - and clearly showed me, that the purpose of my life is in enjoying all of His gifts and in applying all my skills and strengths for the benefit and growth of others.

SUMMARY

This work was inspired by a lack of consultancy effectiveness in our country in general, as assessed by the clients. There is a widespread feeling that consultants just do not deliver what is expected from them. In many projects consultants are not able to respect basic principles of dealing with people as with free and independent personalities who are well able to be experts on their own business. Practice as well as management literature show, that if people are treated in a directive way, they tend to refuse solutions given them from outside.

I felt that clients are worth of a more respectful form of help from consultants. That is why in this dissertation we investigate the effectiveness of one of the non-intervention consultancy methods – a nondirective **coaching**. Some comparisons with more directive approaches - such as mentoring, counselling and expert consulting - are also made, but the main aim of this work is to find conditions under which nondirective approach can be efficient and offer guidance how it should be offered to bring clients required benefits.

The research has been conducted on the experiences of a group of 24 coaches (listed in an Appendix No. 1) representing different nondirective schools and of their clients. The primary sources also include material from my own coaching sessions as activities of a new consultancy division of NEWTON Group and data collected during my two-year-long training in coaching as well.

We did not concentrate on comparing the differences among separate nondirective coaching schools but rather I tried to generalise those conditions for delivering effects that they all have in common. We also made some comparisons with directive approaches in theoretical part of the work and found that they radically differ, which has a strong influence on their impacts.

Due to the social features of our theme an inductive qualitative method was used as the main research tool, based on non-structured interviews namely with coaches and partially also with their clients. Inductive approach allowed us to study specific effects nondirective consultancy had on clients, as reported by coaches. Interviews with clients themselves, that followed afterwards, provided us with necessary independent feedback. But I did not have time to talk with many clients that would not be at the same time coaches as well. So we need to be aware of the fact, that their experience from coaching is different from laics and their evaluation of coaching effectiveness thus might be a bit tendentious.

To help me cope with enormous bunch of collected material, I used as my main research methodology the Grounded Theory that - thanks to its unique coding features - allowed me to distinguish important and not so important findings and present results in a systematic way. The research conducted like this by substance surely could not avoid certain level of subjectivity, but I believe the collected data can be treated as a representative sample of what is happening in the realm of nondirective coaching in the Czech Republic at this time.

The conclusions of this dissertation concern only nondirective coaching, so they cannot be generalised for all types of consultancy and are also limited by the spectrum of coaches and clients in the research sample. The coaching sessions usually concentrated on business themes in the areas of either growth of personal effectiveness, improving interpersonal and managerial competences or solving some professional problems. The most important limitation of this work is the fact that evaluation of coaching effectiveness was done

mainly by coaches themselves and only in a very low measure by other independent clients, except for coaches in their roles of coachees.

The main results of the research can be summed up like this: We were able to generate a theoretical model of coaching methodology, putting together what all the nondirective schools have in common. This model from an Appendix No. 2 shows not only the most important features of an efficient nondirective coaching, but at the same time also describes the way, how the research findings are presented in this dissertation, including numbering of chapters.

We saw that the most important conditions for achieving effectiveness of any coaching intervention are **real use of a nondirective approach** and **competence of a coach**. As further aspects influencing effectiveness have been found: existence of a specific requirement of a client company from coaching, positive attitude of the coachee, proper use of coaching methodology, establishing a trusting relationship between a coach and a client and agreement on the contract – the objectives that are to be achieved. But from all the interviews and observations a coach's personal maturity in using nondirective approach arose as a key and vital factor for achieving considerable outputs. So the main part of this work considers from all the angles **coaching competence** as the major prerequisite for effectiveness of coaching.

Concerning effectiveness itself we came to a conclusion, that it has to be measured mainly by coachees themselves to carry responsibility for achieving their targets. This measurement usually consists of comparing their needs and original requests with finally achieved results. After a good coaching session clients often spoke about surprisingly much bigger effects, than they originally expected – going deep into their personality structure, interpersonal communication and business achievements. They also shared that thanks to coaching they really achieved absolute majority of the professional goals they contracted.

We can see that coaches believe in what they do, have good experiences with effects of their work, even if they are in positions of coachees themselves. Based on these findings we finally came to a conclusion, that nondirective coaching is without a doubt powerful method for improving personal and company effectiveness, but in the Czech conditions it still needs be fully discovered and recognised.

For that to happen we need well-trained, professional and experienced coaches who know how to work with assignments and requests not only of the coachees themselves, but also of their supervisors. Their key knowledge is a nondirective approach itself. An absolute must for them is personal maturity, ability of self-reflection and enjoyment to work with people.

My work on this dissertation did not finish with these recommendations for coaches and companies, but there are also some real outputs already:

With several colleagues we initiated establishment of the Czech Association of Coaches as a professional body that will encourage quality of coaching in our country. In preparing its founding materials like vision, mission, definition of coaching and coaching competences I could already use some of the results of this work.

On top of that, inspired by the need to train and equip new nondirective consultants, with some representatives of several nondirective coaching schools we are just preparing a common and comprehensive course, aimed at proper training of managers and coaches in all the competences, that are described in this work. So this research report can serve also as a list of minimum professional requirements for the graduates.

The third real outcome of this dissertation is that I was invited to present the main results of this research at the conference on coaching that will take place in Prague in autumn. This will provide me with an opportunity to share the conditions for coaching effectiveness with wider public.

At the end I feel that this work brought what it could, when we take as a given limitation that our main sample were coaches themselves and their experiences with effectiveness of their own work. If I had more time I would deeper investigate the specific methodology of some of other coaching schools, except for systemic (e.g. Gestalt), and talk with more long-practicing professionals including some of the best coaches abroad.

But if I had another opportunity to work on a similar research project, I would especially like to shift my emphasis from interviews with coaches to the vital experiences of their clients. I would probably describe less coaching stories but I'd rather go much deeper into them. My aim would be providing complete case studies including feedback of long-term effects and results of coaching from the perspective of people also in a broader environment of the client.

So if we meet each other next time, we will be treating more stories from the other side of a bridge...

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The number of words used in this Dissertation is 51 237 words in the whole text and circa 10 000 in the appendixes.

1 BACKGROUND TO THE ISSUE

1.1 Role of an author

I perform the role of an external HR Consultant, Lecturer and Coach for a financial and management advisory company operating in EEC countries called NEWTON Group.

1.2 Organisation I work for

The main mission of NEWTON is to help investors of all kinds to increase the value of capital invested into Central and Eastern European companies by the means of financial expertise and change management.

The business of NEWTON group is concentrated in two main fields. NEWTON either realises for its clients the financial and project advisory in **Company Acquisitions and Investment** or provides the owners with complete **Executive Management** of the acquired companies.

1.2.1 New consultancy and coaching division of NEWTON

Not long ago NEWTON added to its activities a new business branch. It specialises on time-limited external consultancy (in contrary to the full executive management of the whole companies, which was the business of NEWTON before) and so offers its clients facilitated training and coaching programs and nondirective short-term advisory services in the realm of managing change processes in their organisations.

The specific feature of NEWTON new **Consultancy and Training** division lies in its strict orientation towards achieving client's business goals and needs. This is to be secured by the means of a unique approach called SOLUTIONS Focused® with subtitle "Coaching towards the objectives" [1], which allows NEWTON to deliver complete and independent solutions just to any entrepreneurial and managerial needs of its clients mainly by the use of nondirective coaching methods.

1.3 Uncertainties and challenges in front of our new business

1.3.1 Bad reputation of consultancy...

But consultancy in our country generally does not enjoy very good **reputation** due to bad companies' experiences from the past and not convincing enough **results** it was able to deliver. And the same is usually true with training programs – they all too often do not fulfil top management specific **expectations**, for they just do not seem to bring the company **real, measurable and longer-lasting progress**.

1.3.2 ... As a reason for utilisation of nondirective methods in NEWTON

NEWTON from the early stage of forming its new consultancy branch had in mind this general dissatisfaction with deliveries (or more often rather not deliveries) of consultancy in the Czech Republic.

So when designing our own advisory product we started to ask ourselves, whether intervention and expert approach of majority of consultants and too little involvement of the client inner resources in the consultancy projects, could not be part of the problem.

That is why we decided to try to adopt and utilise nondirective (or participative) consultancy tools like coaching and facilitation as much as possible with a hope, that they might be better able to ensure achieving the clients' needs and to bring them desired long-lasting effects.

1.3.3 This work should reveal whether this approach could really be part of an answer

Now the time has come to scientifically investigate, whether nondirective coaching as one of these methods really holds some advantages over more conventional approaches, like expert consulting, mentoring or executive project management on behalf of the client. In other words if this approach can really deliver expected results.

This dissertation is here to provide - if at all possible - an independent view at the up-to-now experiences of us, and also of other coaches and consultants working in a nondirective style, with this new way of treating people and problems. In some cases we could even be able to compare effectiveness of this method with other more traditional, directive and more authoritative consultancy tools, that our clients were more accustomed to in the past.

So before we start to offer our advisory services more extensively on the market, this work should help us find balanced answer to a basic question, whether our emphasis on nondirective coaching really has a potential to ensure achieving the customers' needs in a better way, than the more conventional methods.

Thanks to results of this investigation we should finally be able to get assurance, that we can enter the market without anxiety and offer there required value that will last.

1.4 Basic definitions

Before we start our narrative, we should briefly define some of the most important words and concepts we will use in this work.

1.4.1.1 Coaching

Coaching can be defined as a communication method thanks to which a coach supports a coachee in finding his or her own goals and ways to achieve them. In other words it is going a part of their way with people providing them with powerful tools for solving their problems.

Concerning its aims and effects I would also say that coaching is here to empower people to use to the full their own potential and make them more competent to deal with their objectives by themselves.

In literature and practice we can distinguish basically two coaching schools. A **directive** form of **coaching** (described for example in Whitmore [2]) resembles an approach of a sports coach, who is an expert in the field or in training methods and teaches others what he knows better than them – leads them the right way towards the goal. This approach of a more experienced colleague, who knows better, we call here “mentoring” and consider it a directive alternative to the type of coaching we will be specifically exploring in this work.

On the other hand **nondirective coaching** does not do anything without outspoken order or request from the client. It respects full responsibility and competence of partners and never intervenes into their freedom to choose what will be done and in what way. The International Coach Federation at its Internet page [4] defines coaching as a professional relationship with clients that honours them as experts in their own life and work.

This approach may take longer but on the other hand is expected to bring longer-lasting results, because the partners themselves work intensively with their own resources and take responsibility for their progress. The coach in such a case becomes an expert on communication and way of cooperation with the client rather than on the subject or problem itself, which allows both partners to complement each other and benefit from synergetic effects.

In a nondirective approach a solution usually comes out of the client, while the coach functions only as a catalyser – not as the one who gives advice or forces on the client his or her own way of thinking (this would be a sign of directive coaching).

1.4.1.2 Coding and Grounded Theory

The process of selecting important information from the bunch of amorphous data and further building upon it is called coding. In Grounded Theory method Strauss [3] explains, that it represents in its consequent steps assigning names to separate phenomena and deepening the information about each one of them (this process is called open coding), categorising them into clusters of interrelated themes according to their causal connections with each other (i.e. modelling in the stage of axial coding) and finally selecting the core story out of the data (making the theory in the phase of selective coding). The correct coding can be proven back afterwards by observing real life occurrences of the phenomenon again, which represents the process of grounding the theory.

1.4.1.3 Cognitive-behavioural therapy

Cognitive-behavioural approach is a psychological school that emphasizes first processing the new information in people’s minds (cognitive = of thinking) and then forming decisions that influence their behaviour. This method works with analysis of the problem, and then through intellectual feedback teaches people to behave in another (more appropriate or required) way. Its weakness may lie in only mechanical changes of interactions with people without necessary inner changes of attitudes of the participants.

1.4.1.4 Constructivism

Constructivism is a philosophical school represented e.g. by Bateson [5] or von Glassersfeld [6] claiming that a person constructs all his or her external or internal perceptions in his own brain and so we need to put “objectivity” and “truth” in interpersonal communication into parentheses and just count with as many viewpoints and “truths” as is the number of people involved. Reality is seen as a social construction dependent upon our consciousness. There are exactly so many realities how many people we take into account. A concept of truth is substituted by usefulness and viability.

Another consequence of this approach is that we need to assign to other people’s views the same value as to our own. Because we create our own pictures of others in our brain, we are also responsible for anything what we construct about them in ourselves – e.g. even for the way we see and interpret their behaviour. This philosophy allows us to choose freely our responses to the external stimuli and be proactive in all we do.

More concerning constructivist philosophy is available at the referenced Internet page [6].

1.4.1.5 Consultancy and counselling

We will understand the word consultancy as an expert approach, in which I give advise to my business clients how they should treat their problems in the best way. I offer them methods that I consider helpful for them and support them in applying and utilising these tools for their benefit.

Counselling is a form of personal consultancy, in which a solution or advise is expected to come from me as an expert. I give advice and people accept or do not accept my recipes, but I am the one who is expected to be active, while my clients remain in the role of patients.

1.4.1.6 Gestalt therapy

Gestalt means pattern/form and it is a type of psychological approach towards people, founded by Frederick Perls, that puts emphasis on realising and authentic expression of present feelings and psychological feedback among the members of the group. According to this school the psychological experiences should be understood in their wholeness and people’s problems can be solved by helping them achieve perception of their own world and openly express themselves in their contact with external environment (Polster [7]). The therapist expressly does not accept responsibility for his/her clients in this approach, but clearly leaves it with them. The method works among others also with completing unfinished matters and corresponding thought patterns.

1.4.1.7 Directive approach

Under the word “directive” we will understand such a treatment, in which a consultant or coach knows better than the client, what is the problem and what should be done. He or she then intervenes in a certain way to deal with the situation (this can consist of advice or any other form of recipe) and the client is usually passive subject of this intervention or plays the role of a patient, who is dependent upon the consultant and is expected to respond to his or her stimuli.

1.4.1.8 Mentoring

Mentoring means helping someone, who is less experienced or knowledgeable than myself, while I am trying to teach him or her all I personally know and can do. I am an

expert in the field and my disciple imitates me until he or she reaches the level of my mastery.

1.4.1.9 Narrative coaching

Narrative method is a form of nondirective coaching, in which a person reconstructs the meanings of certain life experiences by the use of language in such a way, that he or she starts to re-tell the story of his or her life or company with the help of a coach in a new way, finding unexpected viewpoints and solutions to - until now persistent and unsolvable - problems. This school is represented for example by the Institute for Systemic Experience [8] in the Czech Republic.

1.4.1.10 Nondirective approach

“Nondirective” means “driven by a client” here. I can use just any intervention, but first I need to know very well from the client, what is his or her aim and what they want from me.

In this approach I do not have an ambition to be an expert on clients or their problems. I realise that I can never fully understand or really become part of their inner organisation, either as persons or the whole company. So what can I do if I wish to help them somehow to achieve their aims more efficiently?

I can offer them an expertise and know-how in the process of treating other people in such a way, that they were enabled to find their own answers to their problems. This approach is characterised by an enormous respect for the persons of our clients and their own potential. I can help them utilise this potential by proper stimuli that are able to involve them in searching for their own strengths. As a coach I dispose with communication methods that are inviting people to get on the way of adventurous self-discoveries.

1.4.1.11 Phenomenon

The word “phenomenon” we will use here in the sense of repeated occurrence of an important factor or action.

1.4.1.12 Psychoanalysis

Psychoanalysis is a directive viewpoint based on Freud’s theories in which I search for the causes of people’s problems and keys to their solutions in the sub-conscious and non-conscious areas of their minds, formed by their personal history - especially by psychological experiences from their early childhood. The psychoanalysis works a lot with strategies aimed at reducing anxiety.

1.4.1.13 Rogers therapy

The Rogers therapy is also known as a person-centred approach (PCA). It is strongly nondirective and emphasizes respectful treatment of the coachee, who searches for his/her own ways forward with empathetic and trustful support of the therapist. This school uses interventions very rarely (in contrary to, for example, systemic therapy) and leaves everything on the clients, simply supporting their own independent development. The therapist heartily empathises with the clients and supports their open self-expressions (Vymětal, [9]). This approach optimistically believes in self-actualising motives and tendencies of each person.

The source of clients' problems is seen in negative self-assessment when they compare themselves with a desired state. The role of a therapist or coach is to release already existing opportunities inside the client in a positive and acceptant atmosphere of mutual trust and safety. Then the "healing" process can continue by itself.

The therapist often uses a technique of mirroring, in which he or she reflects the client's behaviour in a positive way, expressing also his or her own authentic emotions – thus enabling the client to experience a warm mutual encounter (this being a distinctive feature also of Rogers' so called encounter groups).

1.4.1.14 Systemic approach

According to the systemic (or social systems) view people cannot be directly instructed from outside, for they are autonomous, self-organised beings – systems by themselves. They independently select, which external stimuli they will respond to and how and which not.

Systemic approach works with philosophical phenomena like: cybernetics, homeostasis, stability and permanent change, level of distinguishing, change of contexts, reduction of complexity, usefulness and viability, offering and free selecting of alternatives.

According to this philosophy people cannot be taught, managed, educated or changed from outside, but these processes run inside them. External help needs to respect their freedom and that asks for completely different methods to treat people, than convenient. One of them is systemic coaching, consisting of techniques like circular questioning, externalisation of a problem or utilisation of a reflecting team (Von Schlippe [10]).

Systemic coaching is popularised and marketed in the Czech Republic especially by the Institute of Systemic Coaching, Institute of Systemic Studies and Extima agency [11].

2 FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH

Now let us formulate the basic focus of our research.

2.1 Picturesque consultancy practice in a hunt for client's money

In contrary to how Mr. Kubr recommends consultants in his books [12], [13] to be hired to help companies in almost any area of their business, we have already said that consultancy does not have best reputation in our country.

This viewpoint can well be based on a widespread feeling, that consultants neither carry responsibility, nor understand the key features of the client's business, but in spite of this they try to give advise and tell people what they should do. More detailed treatment of these negative aspects can be found in my critiques of consultancy (Bobek [14], [15]).

This directive approach from time to time surely brings results, especially if consultants are really professionals on specific parts of business and keep within these borders – e.g. in the area of financial audit or information technologies.

2.1.1 Lack of respect for issues connected with people involvement

But in many consultancy projects - especially if they touch people and consist for example of productivity increase, implementation of HR management system or bringing in any

other major change - consultants often in the short time span help, but then the company gradually falls back into previous, and sometimes even worse status. Why is this?

My hypothesis is that one of the reasons of not good enough long-term results of these projects, that deal with people, can be consultants not respecting basic principles of treating people as free and independent personalities, who are just well able to be experts on their own business.

It seems to me that if people are treated in a directive way by consultants, they tend to refuse solutions given them from outside and either revolt against consultants or gratefully give up their own responsibility and leave it all up to external experts. Then the consultants are to do the job by themselves, take all the responsibility and so internal people are not much involved. And if they participate at all, then it is without proper enthusiasm and drive. Other researchers considered this phenomenon as well, for example Mingers [16]. I personally treat it in more detail in my work on Managing Change for Sheffield Hallam University [17].

In these works it also has been found, that even if clients ask for external experts, they are often simply not able to make their recommendations work successfully in the long-term.

My conclusion from all these experiences of myself and also of others is, that our clients will probably need a bit more respectful form of help from the side of consultants.

2.2 Evolution of a dissertation theme

My original thought of a dissertation theme was to find out, what needs the companies generally have, which of them they prefer to be solved by the means of consultants, and what their experiences with different consultancy approaches are. But after a thorough thinking this theme was finally refused due to its too broad focus.

Then I considered concentration on comparing effects of directive consultancy methods described above, with nondirective ones like coaching and facilitation. But after I started to go a bit in this direction I soon realised, that I will not be able to gather objective enough and scientifically comparable information on both of these approaches, just because of the simple fact, that both of these methods were never used in the same company under the same conditions to solve exactly the same problem and so they are very difficult to compare.

2.3 The final focus

So finally I decided to limit my research only on the process of nondirective consultancy – namely coaching – and its effectiveness as assessed by coaches themselves and partially also by their clients.

2.3.1 Some of the original research questions

This topic seemed to be narrow enough to investigate. My hope was that this research could be able to bring some answers to questions like:

- Can the nondirective coaching bring expected effects to its clients?
- Is it able to avoid some of the weaknesses of directive consultancy mentioned above?
- What are the conditions for efficiency of nondirective coaching?

- What are its weaknesses?
- Where can it be used with benefit?
- And in which situations is it better to utilise another consultancy method?

So my research should simply throw light on effectiveness of a coaching process as a nondirective consultancy method.

The most important question to be answered in this dissertation thus is: *What are the conditions for effectiveness of a nondirective coaching (to bring clients required results)?*

And also: Can we deliver these effects in cooperation with the client in such a way that we succeed in *avoiding* some of the major mistakes and *shortcomings of a traditional consultancy and expert coaching*, so that this approach could form part of a remedy to frequent inefficiency of conventional consultancy tools?

And last but not least: What are the basic features of this approach after all? How does the process of nondirective coaching look like and in which aspects it differs from directive methods?

2.4 Aims and objectives of the research

Now let us summarise what I am going to search for in this work and why:

2.4.1 Purpose

I plan to find out by my research whether nondirective coaching brings required effects and if yes, where the mystery of successful delivery lies.

If in addition we can find basic distinctions from conventional directive consultancy and “coaching” and maybe even formulate some hypotheses, why nondirective methods are able to deliver what is expected even in the situations, where conventional ones are not, it would be another benefit of this work.

So the final purpose of this research is to explore experiences with effectiveness of nondirective coaching, and based on these findings to provide some recommendations for coaches, how to conduct this approach with even better benefits for the clients.

2.4.2 Why the theme is important

2.4.2.1 Importance for myself

My personal aim from this research is to discover my own epistemological bias as a coaching trainee and practicing nondirective coach about the method I use – I mean at least some of my prejudices, pre-understandings, fixed ideas and unhealthy preoccupations with “my ingenious consultancy and training approach.”

I also wish to compare my general view at nondirective consultancy and training - as something what might or might not bring value to others - with authentic data from other coaches and their clients as well.

2.4.2.2 Benefit for the NEWTON company and for coaching community

My company should benefit from the research by obtaining data on effectiveness of its most important consultancy tool. As a result NEWTON will finally be able to design such approach, that will be able to satisfy the clients needs even better than until now.

Other nondirective coaches can get information on differences and similarities of their work in comparison with others. On top of that I may even be able to form a model comprising most of the features the practitioners consider important for the effectiveness of their work.

Representatives of other consultancy schools can learn here more about the basic features of nondirective coaching, experiences it brings and results it can generate. I hope they might want to use at least some of these features in their own approaches to improve the efficiency of their work with people.

2.4.2.3 Benefits for clients and coachees

The clients themselves will be given opportunity to think about practical effects different consultancy and training approaches brought them. On top of that we might be able to help them during these discussions to realise, what was most beneficial for them, when working with coaches, and what seemed to them as less pleasant experiences.

Thanks to that in the future they will be better able to select consultants that would fit into their needs. On top of that by rethinking the personal effects of their previous experiences with coaching, they will be able to recall the most important achievements of themselves and recharge their own resources for further professional development.

2.4.2.4 Aims towards the University Board

And last but not least the objective of this work in respect to the Sheffield Hallam University itself is clear: it should prove my competency to carry out a sound research in an HR field and provide a balanced report of its findings.

2.5 Research limitations

The primary research was oriented only on the experiences of nondirective coaches and their clients. Majority of interviewed coaches, however, were representatives of the systemic school, because there are more of them at the market than practicing coaches of all the other schools. More detailed structure of my research sample is shown in an Appendix No. 1. The authors of expressions quoted in this dissertation are marked there by initials of their names.

On top of that half of them were just coaches under training with not more than two years of experience, because I attended systemic training course by myself and thus I was able to collect a lot of practical dissertation material during the very training sessions within that period, watching and participating in plenty of real coaching sessions there.

This talks about a danger of the research to be more influenced both by the systemic approach itself and also by the experiences of coaching trainees, where the validity of findings might be reduced by their not long enough practice and weaker maturity. But on the other hand they always had there with them Petr Parma as a lecturer, who added his remarks to their practical performance and provided guiding, so I hope no real nonsense, that would not correspond to reality, remained in the research materials.

I also interviewed coaches of several other nondirective schools, but did not take into account more directional coaching and consultancy approaches in this research.

Concerning the interviewed people I preferred talking mainly to coaches themselves – the group of their clients in the primary sample is limited again mainly to individuals who are coaches themselves. So coaches in this research present the assessment of their clients'

experiences with coaching according to what they have heard from them. Thus the original feedback from clients we often receive only mediated through the third party.

The investigation covered the period of approximately last two to eight years, because before that time coaching has not been used so extensively in the Czech Republic. Thanks to that it was easier to trace back the vivid experiences and connected documents. Also the witnesses' reports were not so distorted due to a too long time distance from the experience.

Sometimes the coaching sessions were limited to one or two meetings with the client and the process thus lasted only several weeks or even days, which might reduce the objectivity of assessments on effectiveness of the methods in question, because not much evidence can be found of long-lasting changes.

Sometimes the aim of the client has really been achieved, but we will hardly be able to distinguish the effect of coaching itself from other influences. We will also never know, whether the conventional approach would not bring the same, or even better results.

The area of research was limited to individuals and companies operating in the Czech Republic – the application field of a group of coaches under investigation. We concentrated mainly on business coaching experiences and not on individual psychotherapy – even if similar nondirective approaches are applied and bring good results there as well.

2.5.1 Summary of limitations

Based on these facts we can sum up objective and subjective limitations of our research:

2.5.1.1 Objective limitations

- Only nondirective coaching method investigated
- Prevalence of representatives of a systemic school in the sample
- Some of the coaching trainees (not mature professionals with a long experience) interviewed as well
- Only the limited amount of coaches in the sample – not more than two or three representatives of each of other nondirective schools
- Clients were only companies and individuals operating in the Czech Republic
- The span of only 2 to 8 years of experiences with the method
- Only business form of coaching assessed – not psychotherapeutic one
- Effects for clients evaluated mainly according to what they said to their coaches
- Due to a lack of time only few direct interviews held with clients, who would not be at the same time coaches as well

2.5.1.2 Subjective limitations

- Only the clients who freely decided to use coaching were interviewed, so they might lack objectivity in assessing its results - they might blame themselves and not coaches if major shortcomings were found
- Specifics of selected group of individual coaches – other personalities could have different approach and experiences
- The systemic coaches had majority in the sample - they are a slightly separate community and so they fairly influence each other and sometimes artificially distinguish themselves from representatives of other schools
- Not always long-enough length of the coaching session or series of sessions

- Sometimes the time span between the intervention and assessment of its effects was quite short (counted only in months or even weeks)
- Feedback from the clients was not always available, fully open or objective
- Biases caused by mutual interrelations of coaches and clients and the quality of their relations from the past (friendship or animosity) have to be taken into account
- Effectiveness of coaching for the clients sometimes assessed by coaches themselves
- All the coaches were in some other cases the clients of coaching as well, so their evaluation of method and its results can be biased by this fact
- Latter interventions can appear to clients more effective than the former ones
- Use of subjective interview methods and weaker availability of results measurable in another way, than by verbal assessments of participants
- Possible biases in the clients responses caused by answering to a NEWTON interviewer (as a client, supplier, employer or in some cases even competitor)
- The problem of the clients' and coaches' subjective assessment of the efficiency of methods in question

3 PRE-STUDIES OF A RESEARCH FIELD

When getting ready for the research described in a previous chapter, I had to do my pre-studies and look at numerous pieces of written material to get to know, what others have found out in this respect before me and to target the focus of my work even more precisely at THE THEME. In this chapter I submit the summary of materials I have gone through in a structure that already corresponds to the later findings of my research.

3.1 Basic differences between expert and nondirective approach

3.1.1 An expert (directive) consultancy approach

An expert approach to consultancy and training is called a directive one here because according to this view I am an expert on others and I claim right to intervene into their freedom without their outspoken order or requirement. I take responsibility for the process and results of consultancy and also for my interventions aiming at them.

From practice and literature (e.g. Kubr [12]) it is clear, that the most prevalent approach in consultancy and also in so called "coaching" has been an expert one until now.

The coaching itself started to be "in fashion" in Europe already some years ago, when this method was transferred to training and management area from the sports field (Whitmore [2]). But even in this trainer approach to "coaching" an expert treatment of the client still prevailed. This approach, even if called coaching as well, resembles more mentoring according to our definition. So in our work we will clearly distinguish these two.

3.1.2 Nondirective coaching approach

On the other hand a nondirective approach is based on belief, that the living systems are autonomous and cannot be directly influenced from outside. They can be only inspired and given stimuli, from which they freely choose those they will respond to or interact with. The responsibility for both the process and results in this approach thus remains with the client (Von Schlippe, [10]).

Only in the last thirteen or so years also the clear nondirective coaching started to appear at the management consultancy market as transferred here from Rogerian, [9], Gestalt [7] and Brief family therapy (Shazer [18]), or from the Constructivist philosophy [6] sources.

3.2 Theory and practice of directive approaches

When looking into literature we can study experiences with different ways of treating people in the companies. We will show here, how employees are dealt with in four basic situations and we will see, how much directive all of this management, training or consultancy behaviour of us leaders often is. Let us look at all of these situations now and develop basic understanding of the specific problem we shall focus our research at.

3.2.1 Management, communication and literature on change

3.2.1.1 Management

The very first situation where we see somebody treating other people in a certain way in the company setting is management. Plenty of books have been written explaining us what managing others is all about. They describe different styles of managing people, like authoritative or democratic style (e.g. Armstrong [19]), try to teach us, that we can concentrate on people, on targets or both (Leadership Grid [20]), or deal with importance of motivation. All of them finish up by saying, that we need to give people much more freedom and trust, than we usually do, especially by delegating more (Johnson and Blanchard [21]) or by installing greater amount of negotiation with people about their own goals (Kaplan [22]).

The problem is that these books do not give us the final and radical enough answer, how to form really responsible and proactive employees, functioning as real entrepreneurs and owners of the companies, and not only as a hired resource (LG)¹.

There was someone, however, who came with a very important idea concerning this problem already in 1961. According to McGregor's [23] theory "Y" there are managers who believe, that people in their substance are competent enough to manage and motivate themselves. But unfortunately classic management theory and practice in 40 years was not able to work out this idea into a really practical new way of management. So most management approaches until today, even if trying to give people as much freedom as possible, still treat them according to McGregor's theory "X". In this approach we deeply inside believe, that people are not competent enough and so are necessary to be stimulated and controlled from outside.

The problem is, that this approach towards people in many situations seems to be very inefficient. We lose a lot of time always inventing new techniques and systems that would be able to manage others better than before. The proof, that we have not found a final answer yet, is that more and more of these new techniques arise, thus telling us that the previous ones have not fully been able to solve the problem.

3.2.1.2 Communication

Communication among people can be seen as another part of management. Classic inspirational literature mainly offers - as a solution for more efficient human

¹ LG means quotation of one of the respondents from Appendix No. 1. From now on the two capital letters standing next to each other will always mean initials of some respondent from the primary sample.

communication – training in presentation skills, empathetic listening, developing emotional intelligence, body language, assertiveness or improvement of our abilities to solve conflicts.

However psychological and psychotherapeutic schools try to remind us of the fact, that communication has got very flexible, paradox and pragmatic features (Watzlawick [24]), so that we cannot really understand other people (Ludewig [25]). So we need to learn, how to freely express ourselves and at the same time to respect other people's views, and not try immediately to convert them to our own opinion or to heal them according to our thought and experience pattern (Peck [26]). Here we start to come closer to a nondirective alternative in communication approach towards other people.

3.2.1.3 Managing change

A special kind of management literature is included in books on change. To manage change is seen as a basic responsibility of managers - almost a reason for existence of manager as a profession (Tománek [27]). We talk about complex reengineering, change and turnover projects (Hammer [28]). Do at least these books contain an answer?

These sources I found quite practical, because they usually mention personal experiences of writers with managing change processes, even within themselves (Wille [29]). We read there that in the future we can expect changes to come even more frequently and chaotically, than today (Peters [30]).

But how to form and organise our corporations, that they would still be able to fulfil the needs of their customers and survive? Some answers are provided by Gibson's [31] compilation of several contemporary authors. They talk much about virtual customer-focused teams and their self-management as an answer, but usually do not provide really practical and proven recipes. Probably because they also only feel, that something is wrong with our present management paradigm, but they are not quite sure, whether proposed alternative approaches will be enough to cope with the pace of changes.

It is interesting that in all of this literature we can see, that no technical infrastructure or system can help us with managing change, but it is all about people (LG). And not only that, but it is also about treating them in a proper way. To say an example the success may depend on involving all of them in the process, for them not being any more a passive subject of change implemented by a management team, but real co-authors and participants in it (Kotter [32]).

The first practical example of a completely different approach towards people can be seen in Goldratt [33], [34]. In his works "Critical Chain" and "Goal" not only that the project teams try to independently work on solutions of the company problems, but what is even more important for me there is an attitude of an external consultant who does not offer the leader of the team answers, but instead he gives him such provocative questions for him to be able to find his own solutions.

And more of that - they function, because the team leader together with other team members are authors, so they are at the same time able to implement their inventions. Here we have the first practical example of a shift to a nondirective style of management – even if provided by an external consultant and not a supervising manager. But it was possible only because the top management created conditions for independent team solution.

The weakness of these books is that they are only a management fiction – textbooks trying to show important principles on the basis of a novel story. But at least we find here a direction towards the less directive management approach.

3.2.1.4 A nondirective alternative view at a change management

As an alternative statement on change I would like to use here an excerpt from my own study of corporate changes (Bobek [35]):

“Change is but a natural process happening all the time in all the living organisms. And exactly just as such organic phenomenon we need to treat it. For people as living systems naturally resist most of the attempts to be artificially managed, controlled, authoritatively advised, taught, educated and changed from outside. On the other hand they invite all inspirations and signals from external environment, that respect them as free – and all the time changing – subjects. That is why they prefer to choose freely those stimuli from external surroundings that seem (to them) best fitting to their own inner structure [16], stage of development and needs. And these options of theirs just naturally continue in changing them more and more in the direction they selected.

Implication is that any change, that is to really penetrate and become permanent, must totally and respectfully cooperate with people’s inner motives and cannot be forced on them in any way from outside.

Of importance thus become approaches of nondirective coaching, facilitation, leadership, motivating by inspiration and example, genuine respect of people’s views, opinions and needs, praise and encouragement, emphasizing individuals’ strengths and giving great space for people themselves to take responsibility for their own self-management.”

Later in chapter 3.3 we will continue in the same direction in explaining further the nondirective alternatives to present management theories.

3.2.2 Literature on training and lecturing

The next area where we meet with people in organisations is training and education.

The quality pedagogical and methodological literature on training and development is quite numerous. The basic textbook describing systematically the whole process of adult education is co-authored by Prokopenko [36]. It describes in detail how training should be organised, planned and delivered.

The Hammer’s CIPD textbook [37] offers as well a great amount of techniques for covering the whole learning cycle from identification of training needs, preparation of training itself, methods for its delivery and assessment of results. I described these processes also in my texts [38] and [39].

Even if all of these textbooks underline interactive form of lecturing I still believe, that this is not enough to change our schools and training grounds into centres of an active, real and practical personal growth.

Some of the solutions are provided by Belz [40], who concentrates on core competencies required by the business and the ways how they can be developed, or Belcourt [41], who turns our interest at connection of training to performance management. Finally Jarošová [42] just gives us guiding and practical exercises how we can train social and managerial skills.

But again, all of these studies do not overcome the limits of directive approach towards people, even if they include a lot of interaction activities trying to involve students in the learning process. However, the initiative for learning and responsibility for its results still lies on the lecturer. So I conclude that neither this literature provides relevant key to inefficiency of present-day education.

3.2.2.1 On the way from classic lecturing to nondirective alternatives

First examples of less directive training schools can be found in UK when “action learning” features began being implemented into on-the-job training in British companies. In this approach employees learn by themselves from their own practical experiences. In the Czech area this method is promoted e.g. by Ms. Šubrtová from Price Waterhouse Coopers (IŠ).

Another empowering method is facilitation popularised by Bee [43], which transfers responsibility for training and its results from teacher to the learner. Facilitator only helps the group with process of formulating targets and getting to them, but the main feature of the method is, that the resources of all the active participants are utilised and so their inner potential can be enlarged.

Another example of a revolutionary education approach can already be found in Czech Republic in some kindergartens and in the first grades of several experimental basic schools, where the Step-by-Step Open Society Foundation [44] successfully started to implement their educational methodological program called “To begin together.”

This approach is identified as “focused at the pupil, not at a teacher, neither at submitting of information itself.” It integrates previously independent school subjects into complex applications based on Kovalikova [45] works about integrated education, which utilises up-to-date discoveries about the way our brain functions. Children learn to communicate together, work in teams on specific projects, are active and take responsibility for learning something, what will be practical for them and connected with real life. This approach has its roots in constructivist [6] views at education.

From here only a small step remains to nondirective coaching approach towards adults, because it has got the same features and emphasises.

3.2.3 Literature on consultancy in general

Final area where we meet with people in organisations, are all forms of consulting when we try to help people by advising them, giving them solutions or system tools, that they should use to achieve their goals. The best literature sources concentrating on consultancy I found, were comprehensive books of Kubr [12], [13].

They provide excellent information about the whole process of consultancy and name a lot of practical hints on how to do the job well and how to select consultants. Their main weak point lies in the weakness of a consultancy method itself – people simply do not like being told what they should do, external solutions are not able to take into account all internal aspects and finally people do not feel responsibility for what they did not invent by themselves.

3.2.3.1 Critique of conventional consultancy and some nondirective alternatives

The results of my basic pre-studies in this area are also included in my own previously published critical paper “Why should we reject consultants,” [15] that I presented at the International Systemic Conference (transcription can be found at an Internet page of [11]). My main conclusion was, that what the consultant especially needs to know is how to work with inner resources of the client.

That is why in all of NEWTON Solutions consulting interventions we do not position ourselves to an expert/doctor role, but rather put an emphasis on self-organizing and self-management abilities of clients. Our consultants introduce themselves as experts on communication and utilising the human and company resources, but expertise on

themselves, their problems and their organization remains with people in a client company. In our mutual cooperation we just help them to get to the maximum of their own potential by giving them freedom to define their goals and select the ways towards them that suit their preferences. Then we just accompany them on their journey helping with its efficiency. The tool we use for doing it is a nondirective coaching and SOLUTIONS Focused® methodology [1] (Appendix No. 8).

3.2.4 Counselling and mentoring

We can see that also conventional consultants more and more try to employ less directive and less intervention methods, to draw people from the client company into processes and encourage them to create solutions together with the consultant. Here counselling and mentoring (sometimes also called “coaching” – even if in its more directive and expert form) come into place (Whitmore [2]).

In utilisation of counselling and mentoring the representatives of some psychotherapeutic schools use their method in the corporate setting as well and also call it “coaching”:

3.2.4.1 Cognitive-behavioural approach

Cognitive-behavioural approach is a psychological school that stresses at first processing the new information in people’s minds (cognitive = thinking) and then forming decisions that influence their behaviour. This method works with analysis of the problem, and then through intellectual feedback teaches people to behave in another (more appropriate or required) way. Its weakness may lie in only mechanical changes of interactions with people without necessary inner changes of attitudes of the participants.

The method is a directive one because a therapist works with causal paradigm and supposes that he or she knows, what the problem of the clients is, what is its cause and what will help them, and in this direction he/she leads the clients.

3.2.4.2 Psychoanalytical approach

Psychoanalysis is a directive viewpoint based on Freud’s theories in which a therapist searches for the reasons of people’s inner problems and keys to their solutions in the sub-conscious and non-conscious areas of their mind, formed by their personal history, especially by psychological experiences from the early childhood. The psychoanalysis works a lot with strategies aimed at reducing anxiety.

In some cases psychoanalysis can become a nondirective tool if only the analyst is able to leave the explanations and interpretations up to the clients and do not lead them anywhere specifically.

3.2.5 Objections against directive consultancy summed up

In respect to our theme we have found, that the most frequently mentioned general objections against consultants in literature and in practice are:

- Consultants often do not deliver
- Consultancy and training is never relevant to the real company needs, because consultants come from outside and leave soon
- Consultants frequently lack know-how to deal with real internal problems, so they can never deliver longstanding results
- External people are not able to fully involve the inner resources of the company

- Their ready-made solutions do not fit the company situation and do not solve its problems
- The effect of training and consulting is not seen or cannot really be measured

3.3 Theory for nondirective coaching

After we have explored some weaknesses of directive schools, we need to shortly look now at the theoretical roots of nondirective approaches.

We have already said, that nondirective coaching gives us a chance to function as experts on communication, but at the same time not to rob clients of their right to remain full experts on themselves and on any specific subject or need they are just solving. By the means of coaching we are able to help them clearly specify their goals and then keep the most efficient way towards them.

3.3.1 Systemic and constructivist sources

Some of the coaching schools have their base in constructivist philosophy [6] that assigns to people freedom to give meaning to all they just observe. This approach provides a good foundation for respecting others, which is one of the main prerequisites for an efficient nondirective coaching.

3.3.1.1 Family therapy

The first area, where professionals recognised, that we need to look at problems of others in a systems way were family therapists. They saw, that their clients were just very rarely able to accept and apply an advice from outside, but when a therapist gave them space to create their own solutions within their own system, it often led to miracles (de Shazer [18]). They soon stopped giving advice at all and only stimulated the system (a person or a whole family) with certain questions to enable it to find its own sources and achieve a new balanced state.

3.3.1.2 Systemic coaching

A systemic approach developed out of family therapy, constructivism and some other independent theories. Its history is well described in Von Schlippe [10] or Parma [46].

Some of the important thought patterns, that systemic approach encompasses, are circular causality and “autopoiesis,” the latter concept being brought about by Maturana and Varela when exploring living systems. As Mingers [16] explains, they came with a scientific discovery of self-organisation of all the living systems. According to this idea people as systems cannot be directly instructed from outside, for they are autonomous and self-organised beings. They independently select, which external stimuli they will respond to and in what way, and which not. Only on this basis the internal processes like learning, self-management, education, or change can begin.

For the development of systemic thinking the works of Paul Watzlawick were of enormous importance. He studied the laws of communication [24] and on this basis also interactions that can help in achieving changes of situations or inside people. Some of his findings are included in NEWTON methodology of a SOLUTIONS Focused® approach [47], especially work with paradoxical assignments (LG).

3.3.1.3 Narrative coaching

Narrative coaching (Strnad [8]) is a form of systemic therapy also based on Watzlawick's works, in which people reconstruct meanings of certain life experiences by the means of language - a narration. They start to re-tell the story of their life or company with a coach's help in such a way, that they find unexpected viewpoints and solutions there to until now persistent and unsolvable problems.

3.3.2 Other coaching approaches

3.3.2.1 Rogers approach

The Rogers therapy was probably the first fully nondirective approach in modern history for treating people's psychological problems (aside from the Socrates' way of using questions as a main tool for development of learning in his students).

The coaching coming out of Rogers' therapy is also known as a person-centred approach (PCA). It is strongly nondirective and emphasizes respectful treatment of the coachee, who searches for his/her own ways forward with empathetic and trustful support of a coach or therapist. This school very rarely uses interventions (in contrary to, for example, systemic therapy) and leaves everything on the client simply supporting his/her own independent development. The therapist heartily empathises with the client and supports his or her open self-expressions (Vymětal [9]). This approach optimistically believes in self-actualising motives and tendencies of each person.

The source of clients' problems is often seen in negative self-assessment, when they compare themselves with a desired state, in which they would like to be. The role of a therapist or coach is to release already existing opportunities inside the client in a positive acceptant atmosphere of a mutual trust and safety. Then the "healing" process can continue by itself.

The therapist often uses a technique of mirroring, in which he or she reflects behaviour of a client in a positive way, often expressing also his or her own authentic emotions – thus enabling the client to experience a warm mutual encounter (this being a distinctive feature also of Rogers' so called encounter groups).

3.3.2.2 Gestalt therapy

Gestalt therapy is a type of psychological approach towards people, founded by Frederick Perls, which puts emphasis on realising and authentic expression of present feelings and psychological feedback among the members of the group. According to this school Polster [7] claims, that the psychological experiences should be understood in their wholeness. The problems of people can be solved by the means of helping them to achieve perception of their own world and to openly express themselves in their contact with external world. A person accepts complete responsibility for himself/herself - the therapist in this approach expressly does not accept responsibility for his or her clients. The method also works with completing the un-finished matters or patterns.

One of the schools that came out of Gestaltism is a Neuro-linguistic programming (NLP). It has arisen as a synthesis of patterns recognised by its founders in the work of successful therapists like Fredric Perls (Gestalt therapy), Milton Ericsson (hypnotherapy) and Virginia Satir (family therapy) – mixed together with some ideas of Gregory Bateson [5] on the functions of human mind.

NLP tries to teach people, which mind or linguistic patterns lead to what results and encourages utilisation of those, that are efficient. By doing this the method tends to emphasize techniques and thus leans more and more towards directive approaches as just any method, that exchanged respect towards the client for the “knowledge how to do things right.”

3.3.3 The ICF definition of coaching

To summarize what all of these nondirective approaches have in common, we can use with benefit the International Coach Federation [4] definition of coaching that stands like this:

“Coaching honours the client as an expert in his/her life and work and believes, that every client is creative, resourceful, and whole. The coach's responsibility is to:

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

Professional coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life.

In each meeting, the client chooses the focus of conversation, while the coach listens and contributes observations and questions. This interaction creates clarity and moves the client into action. Coaching accelerates the client's progress by providing greater focus and awareness of choice. Coaching concentrates on where clients are now and what they are willing to do to get where they want to be in the future. Coach recognizes that results are a matter of the client's intentions, choices and actions, supported by the coach's efforts and application of the coaching process.”

From this definition it is clear, that probably the main distinctive feature of nondirective coaching from the more directive, intervention and expert forms of work, lies in strict working only with client's inner resources, really leaving responsibility with the client. The final paragraph of our definition even explains to us the basic process and ways that the coach usually uses to work with the client.

The coaching can be focused at one individual on a one-to-one basis or can also be performed in the form of a group session. At a group meeting coach works both with each individual answering to his or her specific needs, and also with the group as a whole in achieving their common goals. He/she thus provides them with opportunity to gain inspiration and support from each other and to produce synergy.

3.4 Final theoretical model of both of the approaches

After thorough treatment of basic theory we need to use some model of both of these basic approaches that will allow us to distinguish them in our research. And because I did not find any such model in the literature that would fully suit me, I invented the one of my own:

3.4.1 Basic comparison model

So my scheme of differences between directive and nondirective approaches, as taken from the study of literature and from practical experiences, is shown in an Appendix No. 3,

including the basic characteristics, sources, consequences, advantages and disadvantages of both of the methods.

3.4.1.1 Sources of directive thinking

The scheme has got two parts. In the first one I try to explain my conclusion, that there are basically two fundamental sources of directive thinking. Either I believe that everybody thinks the same as me and that is why I suppose my recipes will function for them as well. Or I understand that people are different, however I am persuaded, that they should submit to a proper standard – either being the same as me or at least being the way I believe it is correct. In this approach I decide on behalf of others, what is good for them.

We can recognise that this standpoint is often the cause of interpersonal conflicts and even international wars, when one civilisation wishes to force its culture and habits on the other. I believe that this thought pattern might also be found behind unsuccessful attempts of directive consultants to install proper systems in the client's company. Let us see whether our research could find some confirmations of this hypothesis.

3.4.1.2 Forms of directive behaviour and their nondirective alternatives

The second part of our scheme shows the resulting forms of directive behaviour in the area of education, lecturing, management, change management and consultancy.

To each example of a directive behaviour I tried to propose a nondirective alternative there. So where e.g. a directive parent uses orders and prohibitions, the nondirective one educates by his or her example and offers his or her children a space for their own decisions within the boundaries given by their age and maturity.

Another example is shown there concerning management: While the directive manager tells his or her people what they should do and how, the nondirective one leads them, but respects their goals and ways to achieve them. He uses questions more often than orders and negotiates with them much more out of respect to their needs and finally gets to a mutually acceptable agreement with them.

The summary of my model shows, that it is up to us to decide, which approach we will prefer. Whether the one, where we will think and decide on behalf of other people, what is good for them and what they should do (in this way behaving as if we were experts on them). In this attitude we will find ourselves always carrying the responsibility for others.

Or whether we will decide for the second alternative, which means to respect, that others are experts on themselves and we can only inspire them or offer them alternatives, but then we leave the responsibility to decide upon them, and finally we also fully respect their decisions.

This attitude is a basis for nondirective coaching that we will investigate further on. Even if this approach is somehow attractive for all of us, we can already feel that it is at the same time very difficult, because we all naturally tend towards the more directive behaviour. We were brought up like that, our school system is based on these foundations and most people around us still continue behaving in this way (LG).

That is why some directive forms of treating others will probably be found also in the work of mature coaches generally treating people strictly in a nondirective way. That is why we dealt with directive form of behaviour so much in this chapter as well, even if our research will be focused exclusively at nondirective methods.

3.4.2 Areas of utilisation of both of these approaches

From our model it is clear, that directive approaches will be more efficient wherever there is a danger from delay, in crisis situations, when we do not have time to wait until people take on their own responsibility or gain enough competence and in rigid organisation structures with directive management features, e.g. in the army.

The effects will be probably fast, but not long lasting – the managers or consultants will always be asked to continue in their controlling style and responsibility will remain in their hands.

On the contrary if we require involvement of people, where we need their creativity and team cooperation, when we wish to support their growth and wherever we feel we would like to delegate and must work with all of their inner potential, in all of these applications we will probably prefer nondirective approaches.

But we should be aware of the fact, that they require more time, because the growth of people's competence and potential will be slower, but on the other hand the effects have a chance to be long lasting. And responsibility will be gradually shifted from consultants to the people.

4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

In chapter 2.3 we have already talked about some of the research questions. After thorough study of literature we can now make them more concrete and describe the research process that will be able to answer them.

4.1 Questions to be examined

As we have investigated in the previous chapter everybody knows both from the literature and also from his or her own practice, how the directive behaviour functions. In our research we will concentrate only on one of the radical alternatives to this approach – a nondirective coaching and its effectiveness as assessed mainly by coaches themselves and partially also by their clients.

4.1.1 Research questions

In the research we will seek for the answers especially to the following general questions:

- How does a non-intervention coaching function in reality?
- What is important there?
- What conditions need to be fulfilled so that the method can really bring expected results?
- And what exactly are these results that the method is able to deliver?
- Were there any bad experiences with nondirective coaching and why?
- Are there any weaknesses of the method?
- What should be the primary application fields?
- And finally are there any important recommendations and conclusions for both the coaches and their clients?

In the course of the research we might also try to look at some of the more specific questions, which - if answered - could bring more understanding of details concerning effectiveness of nondirective coaching, like:

- Are there any differences among separate nondirective coaching schools?
- What is the distinctive feature according to which we can recognise, whether certain coaching is directive or not?
- What the nondirective coaches have in common and what is their individual folklore?
- On the basis of data collected from the research can we somehow compare the effectiveness of nondirective coaching with more directive approaches?
- Can we trace effects of directive interventions used during generally nondirective forms of coaching?
- And in which situations it would be better to utilise another consultancy method?

So in general our research should provide answer to the question of what the basic features of nondirective coaching really are and what effects it can finally bring.

4.1.2 Original draft of semi-structured interview

So based on these themes I originally prepared a semi-structured questionnaire to investigate the individual cases and the coaching process as a whole. The first detailed draft of my preparation for semi-structured interviews is shown in an Appendix No. 4.

I especially wanted to know how the coaches usually find out and fulfil the needs of their clients and what ways both parties use to measure the results. My final intention was to find conditions for successful and reasons for not successful consultancy.

But very quickly I realised, that each interview had its own flow and finally I completely resigned to keep any rigid format of questioning. At last I just let the person freely emphasize the important features as they seemed to him/her and I only tried to adjust to the story as it developed in the narrative of each partner. And in this stage I started to look for the method, that would help me systematically arrange the findings and that would at the same time tell me in each specific case what should be the next question to my partner.

In this process I later found a method of Grounded Theory to be of a great benefit for me, because it really helped me manage the flow of the next interview according to the results of the previous one. Thanks to this I could finally leave the original semi-structured interview format without a danger of losing focus in my research.

4.2 Anticipated findings - hunches

4.2.1 Hunches² concerning the nondirective approach

My hypothesis before the research was, that the nondirective approach would have better results everywhere, where it is required to make people more competent, creative and active, while in other situations an expert approach would be a faster one.

Here is the list of my original expectations concerning the nondirective approach:

- It will generally take longer, but the effects will also last longer.
- It will require active cooperation and understanding of a partner/client.

² An inductive method does not use preliminary hypotheses for its main findings, but formulates basic hunches or estimations what can be expected that will be found in the data. These hunches help the interviewer in the stage of collecting the primary material to focus at some areas that might be of interest and where new information could be found.

- The vital key for success of this method will be in competence and experience of a consultant/coach, who will have to be able to get rid of directive thinking and to respect the partner, but at the same time not to lose sight of the partner's goals.

Specifically on nondirective coaching my expectations were:

- Nondirective coaching will be considered to respect the specific needs and aims of the client better, than directive alternatives.
- It will be said to stimulate inner sources of the individual and company much more.
- Nondirective coaching will be said to require also some time that will be considered not efficient enough by the client.
- It will be believed to lack more specific approach and advice and some clients will require greater expertise of a coach, an experience in the field and ability to authoritatively manage bigger projects.
- Systemic approach will be found to offer more options to get to the targets of a supervisor or top management than other forms of nondirective coaching.

We will see in the research findings whether these expectations of mine really came true.

5 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In choosing relevant and justified research methodology I could draw from the rich theoretical sources of textbooks like Babbie [48], Fink [49], Pavlica [50] or Sharp [51].

5.1 Theoretical base

5.1.1 Understanding dominant paradigms – hermeneutics and postmodernism

Except for describing specific methodologies they encourage us before starting any research to realise, what kind of a paradigm (way of looking at things) our research methodology will be grounded on.

According to McAuley [52] there are basically two paradigms through which to look at a research – a hermeneutic (i.e. scientific = based on understanding and interpretation) and a postmodernist view (= believing in subjectivity of all the discourses, participation of observer and no specific truth in data). The first approach tends to inductive qualitative research, while the second one leans more towards the qualitative investigation, because figures are less eligible to distortion.

Even if personally being oriented in a postmodernist way I decided to look at my own research according to hermeneutic paradigm, otherwise I would not be able to carry out a sound qualitative research and make any conclusions. But I still realise that at the end of it all I will always have to put objectivity into parentheses, because most of the research will be based only on subjective personal expressions. I simply do not have time to check all the coaches' claims by independent measurable proofs. The only thing I can do is to compare individual experiences and statements with each other and on the foundation of similarities of important findings to make some – hopefully helpful and valid - generalisations.

My basic paradigm thus will be that the coaching effects can be evaluated on the basis of holding interviews with coaches talking about their observations and interpretations of assessments given to them by their clients at the end of the interviews. So stated in a

postmodernist language my research will have to be based on my interpretations of the coaches' interpretations of their observations of their clients' interpretations concerning the effects of coaching. This is the weakness of hermeneutic quantitative research performed by a postmodernist researcher. We will see to how valid conclusions we will be able to get with this view.

5.1.2 Epistemological and ontological implications of research

After explaining my dominant paradigm - chaotic, as it may seem - we are ready to consider also epistemological and ontological features of my research.

5.1.2.1 Epistemology – concepts of knowledge

According to Johnson [53] epistemology describes the way we construct reality and give meaning to events. In other words it talks about researcher's underlying assumptions about legitimate knowledge.

Being aware of epistemological features of research means to be cautious when making conclusions and always to ask how I know what I know. The same question is to be applied to respondents as well.

The only solution for epistemological concerns is to keep reflective attitude to my own and other people's pre-understandings, especially when using inductive approach, for it depends a lot on information people provide and the way I interpret it.

Epistemology plays its role also in the very writing of this dissertation because to prevent biases it requires all the interpretations to be accompanied by respective facts, case studies, authentic quotations and specific findings – and that with reference to the problem under study and at the same time in the light of theoretical background.

To sum it up epistemology points out to my own underlying assumptions about what I believe I heard, observed and found during my interviews with the sample group. Having in mind these thoughts might somewhat help to reduce the danger of subjectivity of our conclusions.

5.1.2.2 Ontology – concepts of human behaviour

On the other hand ontology covers the claims and beliefs about the nature of social reality – the way we see the world and people's behaviour.

In ontology we understand that basic assumptions lie deep within people's consciousness and represent common sense and organisational mind-set and that is why they are not easily amenable to change (Schein [54]).

It tells me that in my research I must be aware of ideological schemes people live in, because these may well twist and alter their descriptions of reality. Ontology also reminds me of my own philosophical assumptions regarding human behaviour. In our work it will be important for example for creating a concept of coaching maturity as dealt in 7.3.4.

5.1.3 My own epistemological and ontological view

Schein [54] recognises three basic combinations of ontological and epistemological views that people may hold – he calls them positivism, critical theory and interpretive social science.

I already said in 5.1.1 that in my personal belief I am close to postmodernism, in Schein's words to so called critical theory standpoint, which ontologically describes natural and

social realities as social constructs and epistemologically claims that truth is not based on evidence but is formed as a reflective and critical consensus of people's groups.

This is in absolute contrast with belief of positivists who consider universe as ordered, atomistic and observable and at knowledge they look as if it could be derived from sensory experience – that I consider a bit naive and simplifying view, even if it seems scientific.

If I decided to keep - if at all possible - hermeneutics approach in my research, I will probably be closest to Schein's interpretive social scientist view. It sees social reality as negotiated and interpreted and knowledge as derived from everyday concepts and meanings.

The above mentioned mixture of personal view and selected methodological approach will surely have an impact on the way my research will be conducted, for it is now clear that it will be done from the postmodernist (or Constructivist [6]) point of view, but according to the interpretive hermeneutic methodology. That might result in unwanted biases in some of my research findings and conclusions.

The one thing I can do about it is to be aware of it and second to find appropriate methodology that will lead me through and protect me from this danger as much as possible.

5.2 Choosing methodological approach

When considering the theme of my research it seemed clear that the most appropriate method to use would be inductive, rather than deductive approach.

According to Gill's model [55] an inductive method begins with pre-understanding (represented here by the research theme itself, as clarified in chapter 2), continues by observation of facts (in my pre-study of literature and later on in the very interviews with coaches), followed by formulation of hypotheses (my first hunches based on literature are covered in chapter 4.2). After collection of this material some theory might be formulated, that needs to be empirically generalised and finally proven back by observation of real facts, whether the theoretical generalisations correspond to the research findings.

Deductive approach on the other hand begins with an outspoken theory, out of which we generate some hypotheses that are to be proven by observation. After empirical generalisation of observations the original theory is proven or adjusted.

So I selected an induction method because of strong subjective features found in coaching (that invites to be researched rather by non-structured discussions than by statistic figures) and no relevant coaching effectiveness theory available that I could test and develop. In contrast we might want to induce such theory if at all it can be formulated from the real findings of our research.

5.2.1 Inductive approach

Inductive method will thus allow us to begin with real people's and companies' experiences with effectiveness of coaching and only then we can try to find some general implications and probably propose recommendations how it could become even more effective.

Of course there are strong limitations to this research approach, because it works rarely with anything else than subjective accounts of fallible people.

But with the right selection of interviewed people, targeted questions going to the core of the matter and a large enough research sample, this method can become more reliable and provide dependable results.

5.2.2 Qualitative research

Induction methodology works mainly with qualitative research tools (e.g. interviews in contrary to questionnaires, figures and statistics that are being widely used in quantitative methods), because they allow holistic coverage of all the important features. And I believe this approach, when applied selectively to at least 24 key sources of information, will allow my dissertation research to representatively map the situation in the area of coaching in the Czech Republic.

That would not be possible with deductive or quantitative methods, because first they would require thousands of questionnaires and a lot of data and second, in spite of all that, they would never be able to bring so detailed and representative results, as qualitative research can provide.

On top of that for the senior managers an interview is much more appropriate way of work, which can be useful for them as well and thus brings much better results than any questionnaire.

Qualitative research will allow us to map a broad spectrum of different perspectives of the key people. They will participate in the research actively – in fact they will almost carry out the research by themselves when answering my, or in some cases even their own questions.

The strength of qualitative methods lies in richness of material that can be gathered and enormous flexibility of interviews that can easily adapt in their direction to the priorities of the interviewed person and also to the latest or previous findings. If we would be able to focus the qualitative research at the key features of our field of study, it could become extremely justifiable, even if based only on soft and subjective data people give.

Limitations in objectivity of this method and not big enough broadness of resources can be moderated by utilising some quantitative statistics of the data available from the secondary research, study of literature and of Internet sources. These, together with qualitative comparisons and referencing, can prevent my work from becoming unrealistic, irrelevant or unreliable.

5.3 Grounded Theory

After a thorough study of literature on inductive qualitative methods I selected as the main method of my research the Grounded Theory [3]. It best suited my objective to give people as much freedom in their narratives as possible and at the same time offered me easily accessible ability to cope well with enormous amount of varied information gathered, because it uses precise methodology of systematic **sorting out** collected material and **binding** priority findings **together**.

This process of selecting important information from the bunch of amorphous data and further building upon it is called coding. Whenever I discovered this method I immediately stopped using original semi-structured interview pattern as shown in an Appendix No. 4 (in fact it was after the very first interview) and continued only in a non-structured research according to the Grounded Theory.

The rather detailed description of the method I used in my research is enclosed in an Appendix No. 5, because it seems to me, that the method is not so well known in the academic and managerial circles. Another reason for the comprehensiveness of this appendix is that when I will later present my research findings I will not have to come back to detailed explanations how I have gathered the facts.

The whole process how I did my research is shown in detail there step by step – i.e. collecting and organising the data, making theory out of it and verifying all the conclusions. So a kind reader, who is not accustomed with the method, is encouraged to look into the appendices part now. Here follows only a brief presentation of the method:

5.3.1 About the method

5.3.1.1 Observations and interviews

The method is based upon the series of **observing** the selected phenomenon and **interviewing** the participants. During the process of collecting the answers, identifying and describing the phenomena, the respondents also describe the course of action and interconnections of separate events, for example their causes and consequences, as they see them.

5.3.1.2 Three step coding

For proper investigation of the character and essence of any phenomenon Grounded Theory offers the series of three consequent steps, that allow us to find out what is important there, make a sound theory or model out of it and finally prove the model or consequences by further observing the real situations. These three methodical steps are called **open coding**, **axial coding** and **selective coding**. The format I used to work with data according to the Grounded Theory is briefly shown in an Appendix No. 6.

5.3.1.3 Questioning and comparing with other real life occurrences

In all three stages of work the method uses two basic interrelated procedures: specific **questions** deepening knowledge about each important finding and permanent **comparing** separate occurrences among each other and also with independent proofs.

5.3.2 Open coding

Open coding is the first step of our research process. Its aim is to give guidance on how to lead interviews in their first stages, what data to look at in them and how to sort the collected information out.

In the open coding phase we collect the data, assign names to the distinguished phenomena, put similar ones together (organising several phenomena under the same common category) and deepen the information about each category.

At the end of open coding phase we are able to describe each occurrence of a certain phenomenon in the form of concrete dimensions of the specified properties.³

³ The term “property” means here a certain characteristic of a phenomenon and a word “dimension” stands for exact quality of this characteristic. For example if a phenomenon would be some specific problem, then one of its properties can be e.g. its importance. The dimensions of this property will then range from low, through medium up to a high importance.

5.3.3 Axial coding

The second step in the Grounded Theory method is axial coding. After we have specified the individual categories we can rearrange them into the clusters of mutually adherent themes according to their relations to each other. The result is a causal paradigm model.

In this stage we search for differences between the categories on the level of dimensions and we deduce the first hypotheses on mutual interrelations of categories according to the variations in the phenomena.

First we identify the main category – the one we will relate other categories to. Afterwards other categories and subcategories are connected to the main one according to the causal paradigm model. So these subcategories fall into one of the following groups: **causal conditions** of the main category, its **context** (that means the properties and dimensions of the main category), a broader structural context of **intervening conditions** (influences from the wider environment), **action or interaction strategies** and finally **consequences** of these actions.

So axial coding will finally leave us with descriptions of causes and consequences of separate categories and also with the set of relations among their dimensions.

5.3.4 Selective coding

In the third stage of the Grounded Theory process we use selective coding to choose **the key story line** out of all the collected data and all the causal models we created. In other words we take what seems to us as the most important phenomenon, make it a **core category** and formulate **the theory** out of permanently occurring actions and other closely connected important factors.

The theory remains in the form of a causal paradigmatic model, which now corresponds only to the main category and forms so called analytical version of the story. We can say that the selective coding is systematic relating all the categories to the core category in the causal model.

Finally we prove the invented theory back by observing other real life occurrences of the same phenomenon. This process of checking the model in reality is called **grounding the theory**.

In this final stage of a process we take into account only the data that are important to the selected core category and investigated theory at the same time. That means that we selectively ask participants only about specific features that should prove or disprove separate parts of our theory. At the same time we are also able to complete some missing features and information to the causal model around the core category and thus to add density to the facts and value to the whole theory.

6 DATA COLLECTION AND INTERPRETATION

The decision for inductive approach based on qualitative research predestined to a great extent the methods that were used in an actual data collection and also later on in an interpretation stage. The exact way, how the data were searched for, organised and verified, was described in the previous chapter and in corresponding Appendices No. 5 and 6.

6.1 Data collection

As we already said the qualitative methods ask for interviews rather than just for non-personal data gathering.

6.1.1 Sourcing the data

So when sourcing information I had to take into account methods that would allow me to cope with methodology and at the same time with practicality. The Grounded Theory has proven itself to be a very good tool to decide which data to concentrate on and how.

6.1.1.1 Primary information sources

My primary information sources were:

- The first semi-structured interview held with one coach in the very beginning of my research (collecting the data listed in an Appendix No. 4) – then I denounced this method
- Further 11 non-structured individual interviews with coaches based on the Grounded Theory data collection method
- Minutes from the training program in systemic coaching covering the experiences from a time period of two years of a group of 13 participating coaches and Mr. Parma as a lecturer; the data sample included also direct observation of the numerous live coaching sessions held during the whole training program
- Notes from the focus meetings with other coaches, e.g. with a group of 14 coaches interviewed at the preparatory sessions for the foundation of the Czech Association of Coaches
- Experiences and minutes from my own coaching sessions and trainings in coaching
- Further information, reports and case studies gathered during the above mentioned individual interviews, training sessions and meetings with coaches

I quickly recognised that the non-structured interview according to the Grounded Theory was the most appropriate tool for gathering information, just because it allowed natural flow of discussion and often surprising developments of proofs and streams of information resulted.

That is why other options such as using questionnaires or direct observing of other coaching sessions - except for the above mentioned systemic training itself - was soon fully left out from this primary stage of my research.

6.1.1.2 Ways of gathering the valid information

During this first stage of data collection, I primarily asked coaches on their experience with effectiveness of their coaching and what were the key conditions leading to success or failure according to them. Their reflection formed the first group of information concerning coaching effectiveness.

When asked how exactly the coaches recognised the level of their success, they answered that it was usually based on feedback from their coachees always given to them at the end of each coaching session. The coaches frequently keep records of their coachings - the case studies describing in detail the main contents of any specific coaching event. They usually include also faithful records of original final expressions of their clients concerning the results, effects and their personal feelings from the coaching session, collected at its end.

So the second source of information concerning the coaching effectiveness were these assessments gathered by coaches from their clients. According to my experience these case studies are very accurate and dependable, because coaches are taught to reflect on the basis of literal quotations of what the coachees said and they are also accustomed to learn from their own coachings, so they keep quite detailed records of respective case studies. That is why we had an access to a great amount of authentic material, even if we could not always sit down and observe a live coaching session with a client.

6.1.1.3 Respondents to assess the coaching effectiveness from both the perspectives

As a final source of independent feedback I used questions about personal effects of coaching addressed to clients of these coaching sessions. But in this primary research phase my respondents were usually at the same time coaches as well.

It is because the coaching professionalism consists not only of providing coaching to others but also of regular undertaking coaching sessions as a client. That is an ethical precondition for real progress in coaching profession. So each coach has a lot of experience with effectiveness of sessions where he or she was a client of some other coach – and that is true not only in the training phase, but also as a normal part of his or her further professional life.

So when I contacted coaches concerning their experience with assessment of coaching as seen from the coach's perspective in the first part of the interview, it was then just logical to concentrate also on their experiences as coachees in the remaining time. And I must say they were very happy to share also their personal experiences, when they played the roles of clients being coached by other professionals. In this way I collected assessments of coaching from the client's (coachee) perspective as well.

So I gained two sets of information from each respondent, even if not always properly separated. Sometimes I did not recognise whether certain expression was done from the perspective of a coach or of a client. That is why I will also not use this differentiation in the text describing the research findings later on. At least I did not mention any substantial difference between the statements of coaches and coachees. So in reality I did not have only 24 coaches as respondents in my primary sample, but at least 24 coachees as well!

In contrary to the original plan, I finally did not have enough time to contact also a statistically important group of other clients of interviewed coaches, who would not be coaches by profession. I was able to collect some information from these independent sources as well, but the interviews with this group of respondents were not long and intensive enough, so that they could be counted as real primary data. Some of these sources are therefore included in the sample of secondary data.

6.1.1.4 Secondary information sources

A great help to my work was also provided by authentic secondary data. The secondary research was mainly based on written case studies, minutes from coaching meetings and trainings, company results and reports from other sources independent of coaches themselves.

These findings were afterwards compared with wider external materials from Internet databases, referenced literature and other research projects in the field of consultancy conducted by my predecessors in the past.

Some helpful case studies I also obtained from other colleagues – coaches, training agencies and other consultants.

So as secondary data to prove and develop my primary findings I utilised mainly:

- A diploma thesis of a colleague (Uldrichová [56]) quantitatively mapping the influence of systemic training program in coaching on participating managers. She gathered answers to a structured questionnaire from 51 respondents altogether – all of them being managers just undergoing the first or second year of training in systemic coaching
- Summary information presented at the conferences on coaching - available e.g. in [11]
- Other Internet databases with reports on effectiveness of coaching - for example Anderson [57]
- Web pages of different coaching providers encompassing information from their clients – summed and linked e.g. at an ICF page [4]
- Articles on coaching in Czech and worldwide magazines – for example Beranová [58]
- Books on different coaching and therapeutic methods – e.g. [2], [10], or Kratochvíl [59]
- A SOLUTIONS Focused® methodology on coaching [1] authored by NEWTON
- By-chance obtained secondary reports from other respondents – clients of coaching
- Internal project documentation from client companies and from the coaches themselves
- Other existing company materials on effects of training or consultancy

All of these were in the stage of data collection properly recorded and sorted out according to the coach and company in question, the source and a degree of data relevance and then left out without comments for further processing.

Some of the sources of secondary information gained from Internet including specific articles on coaching are listed in an Appendix No. 7.

6.1.2 Subjects of a primary research – the research sample

The list of main respondents in my primary sample is shown in an Appendix No. 1, including the table of basic statistics of this group. These are people who participated on a major scale in collecting primary information. The total amount of real respondents was a bit bigger, but people who provided less than two different pieces of new important information were not included in this chart.

6.1.2.1 Statistics of a primary sample

From the scheme it can be seen, that the core of my primary sample concluded of personal expressions from 24 people in total, including myself.

All of the primary respondents were coaches, but at the same time - as we already have said before, thanks to basic ethical requirements for coaches in training - they all had a thorough personal experience as coachees as well. So they were able to provide me with quality and well-balanced information from both sides of the process.

With all of them I met in one of the separate focus groups. On top of that I held a thorough, detailed and personal interviews with 12 respondents out of the total number. A letter “Y” standing for YES in the column marked “PI” represents this additional personal interview. When a person was interviewed only as a part of a group it is indicated by a letter “G” in the same column. Concerning those that I met only in a focus group session I do not have all statistical data available. The group responses were collected in the form of sharing

their personal experiences either during the discussion or as a part of training sessions in coaching.

The first twelve people in the list are participants of the second year of systemic training as indicated by a letter “T” in the column describing, whether the person is still in training or whether he or she practices also as a professional (“P”) at the same time - i.e. already earns money for providing coaching.

The great majority of representatives of a systemic school in the sample (17 altogether) in good proportions corresponds to the fact, that this school has trained absolutely the greatest number of coaches in the country – only a training group Extima itself [11] has around 700 graduates from the first, second or third year of their training in coaching. The coaching graduates of other schools (Rogerian, Gestalt and so on) count only in tens at the most according to my estimation.

As I said 12 of the systemics are just finishing second year of training, 7 systemics from the sample are already practitioners. Two respondents have received the basics of their coaching expertise from Rogerian based PCA training, 4 were equipped in Gestalt therapy, 2 call their coaching a psychologically oriented one, and one is a representative of a not more precisely described British coaching school.

I selected the group of my primary respondents also according to their professions. They are mainly owners and/or directors of separate organisations or they perform the roles of senior consultants or lecturers in the renowned companies. This is another way how I wanted to ensure quality, trustfulness and seriousness of provided information. The maturity of respondents is expressed also in their age that ranges from 28 to 49 years, thus covering the group of people who were already able to attain respected status in a society.

Concerning the background we have here people with full diversity of university education – from economics, sales and marketing through technically oriented education and natural sciences up to humanistic academic fields like pedagogy, HR, philosophy, psychology and even psychotherapy.

My respondents have gone through the standard official training courses in coaching provided by renowned agencies and education bodies consisting of at least 100 direct and personal practical training hours. This form of schooling of the most experienced one of them is estimated to reach approximately 2.500 training hours. The majority of respondents participated in around 250 hours of standard personal training in the role of trainees (not counting hours when the person was delivering training to others).

The first full experience with up-to-date coaching philosophy is 2 to 13 years old in the group.

If talking about the amount of practice in coaching or similar treatment of other people, the range begins at the minimum of 20-40 hours of coaching with clients in the group of not-regularly practicing students levelling up to around 15.000 hours of the most experienced one of us. Concerning 10 people we estimate their practice in coaching to be more than 750 hours personally spent with clients and two respondents have concluded around 500 hours of coaching-like sessions.

But especially in this criterion I must make it clear, that these are only very rough estimations, which were counted very approximately either by coaches themselves or the numbers were just estimated by me on the basis of available information. Also methodology for collecting these estimations was not defined exactly, so each coach

included in his/her number different kinds of experience. Concerning some respondents from the focus groups I do not have any idea about their practice.

So this column of the table cannot be taken as a scientifically proven base for comparing quality and experience of coaches among each other at all!!! I have these figures here only to distinguish levels, for I believe that information whether someone estimates his or her experience to 50, 500 or 5.000 hours spent with real clients can show us what amount of experience certain quoted expression generally represents. Nothing more.

According to the international professional standards of ICF [4] a person to be called a mature (master) coach he/she needs to have somewhere around 200 to 300 hours of intensive person-to-person training and/or 2.500 hours of proven practice (professional coach needs to exhibit proofs for 750 coaching hours, associated coach for more than 250 hours). So according to our rough estimation we would have 4 masters, 6 people at a so-called professional level and two associates in the sample.

My estimation is that not many other coaches on professional and master level could be found in the Czech Republic, which is given by coaching being just a relatively new method here. I would say that the number of coaches with more than 750 proven practical hours will not be more than ten other people in the country.

From all that has been said about experiences of coaches in my group it can be generalised, that at present I probably could not have more comprehensive sample. So the information and experience found in this group of coaches can with great validity be considered as representative enough sample on effectiveness of coaching in present conditions of the Czech Republic.

6.2 Data procession and interpretation

6.2.1 Data procession

After the data were finally collected a processing phase began. All information was sorted out according to its relevance to formulated focus of research as outlined in detail in a chapter describing Grounded Theory. The theme became more and more specified and focused with each interview as the consequence of previous research findings. The results of this phase of work will be systematically described in chapter 7.

6.2.2 Data interpretation

In an interpretation phase I always kept in mind all the limitations of methods that were used for collecting information, not to fall into trap of making unbalanced conclusions before proper treatment of data and their proofs.

To help in this process with certain reservations I was able to use for guidance, comparison and reference also selected materials from general literature and other secondary sources.

The theoretical and academic guidelines treated in chapter 3 allowed us to put findings from separate companies and respondents into a proper perspective.

6.2.3 Preventive and corrective actions against difficulties in the process

In carrying out such a complex research it is not surprising that also difficulties appeared, some of which – including appropriate corrective actions taken – are listed below.

During the interviews and further organisation of information I encountered among others especially these obstacles:

I was not always able to find enough data that would be considerably specific.

- *I often prepared some distinctive interview questions in advance according to the previous findings of the research.*

On the other hand I was sometimes overwhelmed by too much data.

- *I deliberately protected myself from information overload – it meant recording only the facts provided that seemed to be really important and relevant.*

The information given did not always go deep enough into the theme and its roots.

- *I waited until the specific theme resulted in a new and relevant piece of knowledge.*

I got only limited amount of figures and had to face lack of objective proofs.

- *I could not expect too much figures and objective measures – we were doing inductive qualitative research and companies or individuals simply rarely dispose with these measurable data concerning soft factors. One of the aims of this dissertation was to bring at least some measurable features into this area.*

I had to cope with much subjectivity – people of course provided me with their opinions including all possible biases. They sometimes tended to say things that were fashionable to say, which they thought were expected of them, or that were distorted by their professional blindness.

- *I tried to avoid biases by asking more people the same things. To prevent mockery I always tried to go from general sayings after real-life examples.*

I did not automatically get well-structured information and so it was sometimes difficult to compare it with data from other people and companies.

- *The treatment of this difficulty laid in more structured questions asked in the following interviews and in quality statistics information concerning respondents and cases.*

It was not always easy to gain representative proofs for the information given by researched subjects.

- *Selection of real decision makers in the companies was of great importance - but not only them – any information always needed to be checked by other direct participants in the projects/sessions or by written minutes from the meetings.*

There was also a danger of me twisting obtained information due to my own pre-understanding.

- *Prevention consisted of me being reflective at all times and writing down exactly only what has been said by the partner and not what I thought he or she should have been saying according to my opinion or wish.*

7 BASIC FEATURES OF AN EFFICIENT NONDIRECTIVE COACHING

Now we can eventually look in detail at the research itself carried out according to the Grounded Theory. In this chapter I will systematically describe my main findings and in the next one resulting conclusions.

Based on information from the interviews I selected as a core category the phenomenon of “utilisation of a **nondirective approach** in working with people.” That is why I spent so much time in chapter 3 describing differences between directive and nondirective approach as seen by literature, because the basic context of our core category is defined simply: whether a clear nondirective approach has really been used by a coach in a specific situation or not.⁴ We will see later that this property has been found to have a key impact on efficiency of coaching.

The second main contextual property of this core category was identified in a **competence of a coach**.⁵ The fact, whether the coach behaved himself or herself as knowledgeable, experienced and mature, was found to play the second most important role on the way towards coaching effectiveness. That is why to the subchapter 7.3 on coach’s competence we will assign predominant space in this work.

These two basic contextual properties – whether nondirective approach has really been used or not and whether the coach has shown appropriate competence - will be reflected throughout whole of this work. From these two perspectives we will always look at our theme of coaching effectiveness, for these conditions have been found crucial in achieving it.

In the following chapters of this dissertation I will describe major findings of my research. The schematic layout of structure, how the research results are presented in this written report, is included in an Appendix No. 2. The scheme at the same time shows the basic features and steps of an efficient nondirective coaching.

7.1 Needs of stakeholders as causal conditions

We already defined using a nondirective approach in coaching as our core phenomenon. So the needs and requirements of the clients and individual coachees and also motivations of a coach can be looked at as causal conditions to this main category. These factors can be described from the perspective of supply and demand.

⁴ Here we can see, that “using a nondirective approach” is one property of the core category. It has two dimensions – YES and NO – which means whether such an approach has been used or not. Nondirective attitude is at the same time the core category in itself, even if its utilisation also forms one of the basic properties of the same category.

⁵ The property “competence of a coach” is multidimensional (someone is more or less competent), but can be basically simplified into two expressions – COMPETENT and NOT COMPETENT. This property forms the second part of context of our main category (which is utilisation of a nondirective approach) in such a way that it helps to describe it more clearly.

7.1.1 What kind of needs can coaching satisfy?

Here we should answer the question, in which areas coaching is applicable. Can it be used for solving just any problem the company or person has? Or does it have any limitations?

We already said in 3.4.2 that coaching can be used with benefit everywhere, where we want people to be personally involved, but it takes time to get results. Wherever we need things to be done fast and without people's special initiative or creativity, directive management will probably achieve results faster, even if they might not be permanent.

In the research sample answers of my respondents slightly varied. Systemics would not put any limits to the utilisation of coaching and they talk about experiences, where coaching was able to bring results just in all possible situations and contexts. KH⁶ e.g. quotes that to every lock there is a key somewhere (but a coach might not always be able to find it). She believes that generally there is nothing what could not be taken as a coaching theme.

Non-systemics on the other hand (e.g. JH) do not accept requests for changing other person if he or she is not willing to. NG would not work with a coachee who does not feel well concerning the expectations of the company from coaching (a superior target). And IŠ distinguishes the tasks whether they are appropriate for coaching or not – all of them, that do not respect a person's free will to decide what exactly will be the output, she refuses to work on.

Coaches generally agreed that coaching could not lead people to achievements they have no inner potential for at all. Coaching stretches the potential, but does not overstep it. In NG's words: "Why to teach a squirrel to bark, when a dog is much better in doing it? So we will not work with people on something they are not gifted in. But if in the historic genes of that squirrel was a dog and she really wants to bark at least once, I do everything for her to give a bark," says NG.

RB, HV and IS emphasize that there are specific cases which should be solved by a specialist and not a coach – e.g. specific medical, psychotherapeutic or technical problems. Generally it was recommended that if a coach is professional in a given area, he/she can perform coaching there, but whenever he/she feels that the case could bring some dangers he or she might not be able to overcome, then these patients are to be sent to a specialist. By the way it was recognised, that if the specialist had some coaching abilities, he or she usually had better results with clients than pure experts.

Every coach should be doing what he/she is especially good at, says KH. She would not coach for example somebody with heavy psychotic problems and also would not work with a person on clearly unrealistic goals. But on the other hand she is willing to take responsibility even for hard measurable objectives of a company if only she is given right to work with everything that can influence results.

KH together with EJ also emphasize that coaching is efficient only if a person really wants to cooperate, so from this point of view it is applicable only in some cases. Where the person does not want to achieve something, the first role of a coach is to help him/her with willingness and motivation.

KH thinks that it would be waste of time and efforts to involve a coach when a person wants to get to only simple objectives that can be achieved by using other methods, e.g. by

⁶ We remind the reader once again here, that original personal quotations of interviewed respondents are indicated in the text by two-letter abbreviations of their initials as interpreted in the column marked "Ini" in an Appendix No. 1.

training or consultancy. According to her opinion coaching should remain reserved for more complicated targets where other tools have failed.

7.1.1.1 Individual examples of coaching themes

In the research sample coaching was generally used in situations that were connected with personal development, personality growth and with better utilisation of partner's strengths and potential. Further on also for overcoming life and professional obstacles, in finding new motivations or new ways of doing things, for improving personal effectiveness and relations to other people, when looking for new ways to solutions and finally in the need for achieving better results in many different areas of professional and personal life.

EJ and IŠ share that the majority of their contracts consisted of support in improving something for the clients, not in overcoming problems. RB agrees that the most frequent requirement of clients is for him to work with them on their personal development. NG often receives request that people want to learn something new they have not been able to do before.

LL has the best experiences with coaching in situations where mutual relations are important – e.g. as a teambuilding and planning activity at the beginning of new projects or as a tool for strategic top management meetings – because he found that coaching helps people to respect and understand each other and creates unity in diversity.

He saw that also strategic agreements of shareholders and top management are very well negotiated with the help of a coach. He has got several experiences where a business did not succeed due to lack of help from a coach in this stage.

He also uses coaching where he needs to initiate and put on fire key people. He personally does not consider coaching to be a good tool in a crisis situation, because people are disturbed by being asked stupid questions and by not being given decisive orders that they expect. But when there is more time, coaching can start people up in such a way that they then function without necessary external control for a very long time – some of such projects still ran even after a year from initial coaching.

7.1.2 Putting together the needs of a client company and of an individual coachee

When searching for the needs of a client company and then also of an individual coachee, we in NEWTON use basic approach shown in an Appendix No. 8, that helps us understand the process of implanting the partner's needs into the whole-company targets. The scheme describes the basic viewpoint of a SOLUTIONS Focused[®] methodology [1] and stresses the fact that coaching expertise lies among others in knowledge, how to find out and specify realistic clients' and coaches' objectives and how to combine them together.

The mastery of setting up SMART goals will be treated in greater detail later in chapter 7.5.2.5, when we will be talking about formulating the partner's objectives.

We can ask here what the coach can do if a manager wants something from his/her subordinates (coachees) what they are not ready or willing to do? The answer given by a systemic school [60] is that coach needs first to understand the exact request and target of a supervisor – negotiates it with him/her the same way as any request (this process is described in 7.5.2.1 and 4) - and with this assignment then enters the coaching process itself, even if not bringing it there as a goal for the coachee, but only as a stimulus (one of possible formulations of a theme). The coachee then has a right to specify his or her own objectives within the framework of a superior request.

We can see that according to the systemics the coach uses not only the supportive mode (7.5.3.2), but also controlling, influencing and leading one (7.5.3.1), that corresponds more to directive or intervention behaviour. It is clear that he or she needs to do it with enormous care not to lose an advantage of a nondirective approach as a whole.

The other schools represented e.g. by IŠ (British form of coaching), NG (Rogerian) or RB (psychological coaching) would be much less willing to accept the requests from superiors if they were contrary to the needs and requests of the coachee. They together with IS would just prefer to respect the needs of the coachee, while systemic school together with HV (Gestalt) teaches that the primary goal-setter is the client company and not the individual coached person.

If there is a difference in the needs of the company and of the person, RB and NG often invite both parties to a common meeting – the three-parties negotiation – where the contract is clarified.

IŠ sees a strong correlation between the needs of a company and of the coachees. She says that her clients have high level of internal benchmarks so that they know by themselves what is good and bad job, and that is why nobody needs to tell them what they should do. In her company coaching is a compulsory tool to increase personal effectiveness, but nobody gives coaches tasks what they should do with managers. It is completely up to them what they will work with a coach on.

7.1.3 Company needs

So the very first thing that a coach does is searching for the needs of a client company, usually represented by the owner, general or HR director or just a supervisor of a coachee. The coach investigates what are their priority objectives they want to achieve by the means of coaching or just by any means.

But EJ shares that the top managers of majority of Czech companies are usually not able to set really specific targets for their people, so she first asks them what final result the coaching should bring. Managers tend to talk immediately about process goals - how the people should get “there” without clear specification what the word “there” means. So they try to prescribe their people certain behaviour that they consider could lead to the goal, but very little think about specific formulations of the final targets. This is a potential source of conflict between the coach and supervisors, because managers do not like to be told that they are incompetent in formulating objectives for their people.

As an example of a typical situation managers may say: “Spent a day with that person (e.g. a lady Marketing Manager) at work and make her call our clients twice a week.” By saying that they did not specified measurable parameters of what they really want from a Marketing Manager as a final result at all, but already exactly described what a coach and the lady should do. This management approach will hardly ever lead to effectiveness. So one of the tasks of a coach in searching for the company goals is to show managers, how the objectives can be specified so that they are measurable, reflect the company priorities and at the same time give people freedom to find their own sub-goals and also the ways to achieve them.

LL ascribes to coaching approach an excellent ability to make agreements with the clients, because looking at their needs from all the perspectives makes their goals much easier to identify. The complexity is reduced and from an originally confused field of interests the clear expectations can be specified, including client’s priorities. Agreement with a client is then made on exact targets in words like: how much of what will be achieved, who and

when will recognise it and how it all will be measured. The only thing that has to be done afterwards is just to put this agreement with a client into the form of a written contract.

In this process it is also important, what previous experiences with the method or a specific coach the client company has, and how far it is acquainted with coaching as a management tool. If not much it is up to the coach to explain the method and offer its opportunities. An advantage is that even the needs of a client are negotiated in a coaching way, so the client has at least some experience with coaching already during the first meeting with a coach.

KH uses the method of chain objectives when she helps her clients achieve specific whole-company "hard" targets. That means that in a group of individual managers each one freely takes responsibility for specific part of a complex objective, so that the responsibility for its achievement is fully distributed among the limited number of people. IP adds that she is also willing to promise a client's company that the specific hard targets will be achieved by coaching, if only she gets more authority to influence all the corresponding aspects.

But usually she does not negotiate so specific objectives of coaching with the supervisor of a partner. Sometimes it gives her more freedom to move, in other occasions it causes slight bargaining after the contract is fulfilled whether it really brought what has been expected and whether it provided real value for money for the company in question.

IP emphasizes that the supervisor must want people that are sent to coaching to remain in the company and trust in them that they can grow. If the coaching should just test the person's ability to improve, otherwise he/she would be fired, she would not accept such an assignment.

When working with top management and owners of the companies PP talks about importance of joining them in their language and supporting the most powerful of them in their priorities. Otherwise the coaching work in the company would be very risky and difficult, according to him.

7.1.4 Needs of a partner

The needs, expectations and objectives of a coachee are the key features in the coaching process. To one of the most important specific skills of a good coach belongs knowledge, how to help coachee to recognise all of his or her important requests and select from them those, that have priority and should be specifically treated in the coaching session. This skill will be dealt with in chapters 7.5.2.3 and 4 in greater detail. Let us only say here, that such a goal should be fully realistic, appropriate, motivating and ambitious enough, so that it creates a person's full involvement.

IŠ shares that she tries to understand first what the person really wants and does not immediately start to search for solutions. The frequent experience is that if a person is helped in orientation in his or her problem and finds a right name for it, the solution is often achieved quite fast then.

IP feels that a job of a coach is to motivate and open opportunities for people to want something and to find ways how to do it. Finally she only oversees that they really do it. HV agrees that the most important role of a coach is to help people make decisions and materialise them.

RB adds that people in general do not tend to like changes, especially if they are to touch them personally, so the coach needs to be very sensitive and offer them cooperation on something what is really theirs first. Some deeper and more complex themes and superior targets can be focused at later.

7.1.5 Needs and motivations of a coach

The research shows that a good coach, who wants to have results, needs to be aware of his or her own requests, priorities and hidden agenda. These reflections and ability to deal with them somehow - e.g. to get rid of them, so that they do not influence the work in a negative way - belong to the key competences of a mature coaching professional.

The coach can offer his or her clients fulfilment of their needs, but at the same time must openly make clear, what are his or her own intentions and purposes. We will see later in 7.3 that openness, reflection and not self-ambition will be some of major coaching competences necessary for success. NG says that if she realises she is dealing at the moment with her own ideas or behaviour, she immediately interrupts the coaching session, because it would not be for the benefit of her client. IP adds that she understands coaching above all as a self-denying service – being there really for the client.

At the same time we must say that it is nothing wrong if a coach has his or her own opinion and targets, but all what happens in a coach's head should be shared with a coachee, so that the real partnership could result.

According to IP the coach must be to a certain extent an idealist – wanting to make the world a better place. To a question why she performs coaching she jokes, that it is because in this way she does not need to answer those difficult questions she gives to her clients. It is also an intellectual adventure for her – wondering whether she will really be able to help the client and also being there when an “aha” effect comes. A feeling that she can be of assistance to somebody is important motivation for her. And of course she also has a professional joy from herself when she is doing well. And last but not least coaching brings money so she can make her living out of it.

PP indicates that a coach must be clear about his/her individual goals, purposes and interests – all of them, even if not outspoken, influence the coaching interviews very much. We would be usually surprised how many of them we have, he says. We brought them from personal history and from all our interactions and hurts, that is why self-reflection is so important, because it helps us realise our own motives – not only what we do but also why, what is our purpose behind and how we think about it.

7.1.6 Agreement of a contract

After the basic needs of the client organisation are known, usually a contract is signed. Its text consists not only of the expression of services, conditions of cooperation, time frame and prices, but includes also detailed description of needs, specific targets, participants, project management tools, methods to be used and finally ways of measuring the parameters of success as well – in other words how the partners will recognise, that the target of coaching has really been fully achieved (LG).

7.1.6.1 Project management

VS promotes a specific type of coaching contract. He usually creates a change team together with the top management of a client company where all future changes are thought through and tested in an experimenting and playful mood. He stresses that what especially needs to be done is: proper initial theoretical explanation to the client about the process and contents of cooperation (showing the algorithm of work and meetings), clear distribution of responsibilities between both the parties and an outspoken agreement about the individual stages of cooperation – all of these he sees as key features for success of any coaching intervention that will follow.

Another aim of these steps is building trust with the client and creating a common space for any necessary changes on a safe ground. The whole process of cooperation with a client is then managed as a standard project, including necessary initial diagnostics, setting proper checking and reflecting points (separate gradual assessment criteria agreed at the very beginning) and establishing regular meetings of a project steering committee.

According to VS the most important result of this project setting is establishing new and proper contexts. In other words he creates a new terminated structure. What is happening inside it is responsibility of all the participants. A new world has been created in this way where everything is possible.

In his words all of his projects that were not successful, were so due to underestimating of these initial project phases. So the reasons for not efficient coaching could be especially bad adjustment of the original contract, client's weak understanding of a coaching process, too ambitious targets, not clear responsibilities of parties, them not playing the proper roles, etc.

So the main target of forming the project is to provide a safe framework for later treatment of uncertainty and complexity. The coaching can then keep its mystery without losing its efficiency. The work with uncertainty is in this way sold to the project as a tool and an opportunity to utilise.

7.2 Nondirective approach as the core category

We have already said that using nondirective approach in general treatment of people has arisen from our research as the main category. The context (reflected in the properties of the core category) of this phenomenon has been found to consist of two decisive factors (properties). The first one is whether in a specified situation a coach or consultant used or did not use nondirective approach (we can see that this property has two dimensions – YES and NO). The second property is the competence level of a coach, which will be treated in chapter 7.3.

Beranová [58] confirms that nondirective approaches prove themselves to be more successful from the longer perspective, but only if this approach has been clearly agreed upon from the very beginning between the parties. KH believes that nondirective coaching is more efficient just because it builds upon the inner sources of its clients and does not force anything on them. That is according to her exactly the reason for inefficiency of directive forms of work, which people often refuse or at least do not take as their own.

7.2.1 How to recognise nondirective behaviour

So first let us learn to distinguish nondirective approach from more directive ones, because according to the explanation of all the coaches in the sample the main key to efficiency of their work was usually traced back to using strictly non-intervention attitude towards their clients as much as possible.

NG looks at herself in her profession of a coach as an “inexpertness expert,” meaning that she is an expert on coaching but not on another person or his/her problems. A therapist is not a leading figure. She does not give clients answers to their questions but helps them to find their own inner strengths to live independent life, in which they can feel comfortable with themselves and work on their further development. The clients are enabled to continue walking in the directions they decide and take responsibility for it.

I am personally persuaded that difference between directive and nondirective behaviour lies mainly in an answer to the question, who is the one that really carries responsibility for result or solution. When it is a coachee, then the approach is nondirective. Whenever IP realises that it is her who works more than a coachee, it makes a clear signal for her that she is on a directive path. IS emphasizes that the main responsibility of partners is to want to cooperate – otherwise she does not continue in work because she cannot do anything on behalf of them against their will.

EJ thinks that the coach's main responsibility is to take care of an efficiency of process of cooperation, while the partners are responsible for what they take out of it. If they do not want a change, there is no chance to achieve it. This is probably the main difference from the directive methods, where a consultant often tries to motivate, persuade, command, lead or even manipulate clients to get them where he or she needs them. But this approach is seen as very inefficient here, for the clients rarely remain on this path just because it was not theirs.

JH even says that he does not even feel responsibility for the whole process, but only for his own part in it, because the result is always a consequence of cooperation. He, as a representative of a person centred approach (PCA), also confirms that he is not responsible for the clients, but only for treating them in a professional way – which also means not intervening into their freedom.

IP feels that she does not lead a person anywhere, but stimulates a different way of thinking in him/her – to be able to see other alternatives and possibilities. IS understands that coaching is accompanying clients on their ways, offering them different views, but never changing them according to our will.

HV tries to avoid an expert behaviour by offering to the clients only stimuli or proposals, but never orders or standards what they should do.

RB emphasizes an importance of orientation on the clients' sources of energy. He is persuaded that they should be given opportunity to feed themselves on what is good for them. He just helps them to build sensitivity to small changes that can later result in bigger ones.

To sum it up a directive consultant knows, while a non-directive coach is never sure what the person really wants and what will lead to his/her best benefit. That is why in nondirective attitude a coach respects the clients, always giving them plenty of space for choosing their own way forward. The coach never manages the session contents as such, but rather the process of nondirective cooperation.

7.2.2 Implications of using directive and nondirective approach

From the previous chapter it might seem that directive approach is totally forbidden in coaching. This would be a rather naive expectation. It must be said that both approaches appear in each coaching session. The only thing is how often they are utilised and how important role they play in the development of cooperation. VS understands coaching as being nothing than just a reflected selection between controlling and supporting interventions.

The coaching mastery then consists of utilisation of as much as possible non-intervention ways⁷. But to achieve the organisation's targets it is sometimes also necessary to intervene

⁷ Later called "support" according to 7.5.3.2.

in a more directive way⁸. To the coaching ethics belongs that if it finally has to be done, this directive intervention must be performed openly and still offer a lot of space for partners to select their own way, how to respond to it – even including denouncement.

IP says that in specific consulting projects she often works also in an expert and directive mode - providing clients with information, systems and methods so that they get to the target as fast as possible. On the other hand in trainings aimed at people gaining new skills and experience she gives them much more space and uses nondirective methods. So as she understands it, the practical needs will always require mixing both of the approaches together all the time.

7.2.2.1 Directive intervention, influencing and manipulation

To make it clear once more: In a directive form of work an expert pushes the partners, leads them somewhere, manages the flow of conversation according to his or her thinking patterns, controls, influences and does not give partners much freedom to move in their own direction and ways.

IŠ says that whenever she anticipates solution somehow, it is manipulation and not at all coaching. JH understands manipulation as hidden direction towards his own solution.

So if a directive behaviour is utilised during coaching, it must be clearly outspoken and open. And as soon as it is possible the coach should aim at shifting back into non-intervention supportive mode (7.5.3.2).

Sometimes clients want feedback what they are like and what they do right or wrong, but when really assessed, they often take it as something offending and try to protect themselves, explain their motives, etc. The result is inefficient conversation and no growth.

The experience of all the coaches in the sample with their clients was, that just any directive intervention has similar effects. The clients do not accept solution as their own and either refuse to cooperate, do not use their full potential or do not go into it full force.

With certain simplification it might be generally said that an American approach towards coaching tends more to include advice, while a British one in majority does not recognise it as part of coaching and requires to interrupt a coaching session and only after an advice has been given then the coach can return back to a coaching mode.

7.2.2.2 Using a non-intervention support

So we saw that nondirective or non-intervention support of a client is the main part of coaching. The most certain way how to avoid temptation to lead other person somewhere is the utilisation of questions instead of any other mode of conversation. But even here the instructive questions could be very manipulative, so a good coach uses mainly constructive ones – that means open questions that do not narrow the partner's options, but open new opportunities to choose from (PP).

NG says that what helps her is to realise that she is there for the clients. Her aim is not to change them. She only searches for their own objectives and then helps them to achieve them. In this way she addresses especially their potential – what is inside them. So for her coaching is simply searching for the new quality and addressing potentiality in people, who are then able to recognise their own strengths and opportunities to behave in new ways.

⁸ In 7.5.3.1 we will call this part of coaching approach “control.”

The nondirective person-centred approach allows the coach to work with inner potential of a partner – a coach is then taken as a friend, partner and supporter. Somewhere here probably lies the mystery, why nondirective approaches are so welcome and well accepted by the coachees and why they often bring much better results than directive ones.

A good comparison can offer EJ, who is a representative of a nondirective school in her company, while other colleagues of her provide an expert coaching and both approaches are marketed under the same label of “coaching.” The result is, that clients, if they are allowed to choose, prefer a nondirective method. They say: “From meetings with expert coaches we brought a long list of things we should do, but afterwards we did not realise many of them. However at nondirective coaching sessions we made two or three important discoveries, but at the same time we were also motivated to realise them because they were our own, so we did it and they really brought fruit.” But not to be mistaken EJ does not reject other kinds of work – she claims that directive forms of coaching and consultancy, which are used in her company, also bring good results.

LL mentions an interesting aspect that nondirective coaching gave him a completely new look at management – he realised that to be a good chief he does not have to be an expert in the work area of his subordinates and still can gain their respect. The questioning and leadership techniques represented in coaching methodology made him perfectly able to support his people and provide them with precious added value in a management area without necessary expertness. In other words it is absolutely enough for him to be an expert on management – or, to be more precise, on coaching techniques - to be a good manager.

7.3 Competence of a coach as the second part of context

In all the interviews the research indicated one more major condition influencing the effectiveness of coaching in an enormous way – a competence of a coach. So it forms the second part of context for our core phenomenon that is utilisation of nondirective coaching. This property covers the whole spectrum of features and in its dimensions ranges from absolute incompetence up to the level of a fully competent coach.

Whenever a coach behaved in a competent and mature way, in most of such cases coaching really brought required results. If his/her work lacked some of these features, the output was often not so persuasive. Sometimes no permanent benefits resulted and in some cases the consequences were even negative.

So based on specific positive and negative findings from the research we can make here a basic list of competences that any coach needs to master so that his or her work can aspire for effectiveness. I divided these competences into four main categories:

7.3.1 Knowledge and skills

The first of them is proper know-how - both in the area of coaching methodology and also concerning the basic philosophical preconditions for nondirective treatment of people. Part of this category are also practical skills, how to use coaching methodology.

7.3.1.1 Training in methodology

Training in coaching methodology is surely important. For example only obligatory written materials from the first two years of Parma’s training course in systemic coaching [60] consist of four textbooks with more than 400 pages.

But as PP puts it: The best thing to do after we have learned methodology is to forget it and just behave naturally. He calls for not keeping methodology in a rigid way, but leading the conversation just in such a direction “where the river flows.”

As a similar example of methodological maturity JH never uses a word “coaching” to describe what he is doing with the clients. He says he simply does what he considers beneficial and efficient for them and this would be his definition of coaching method.

Except for methodology a coach should also have basic knowledge from the areas of psychology, sociology, philosophy, history and other social sciences including literature to be able to understand people and lead a purpose-oriented conversation.

The minimum required contents of methodology will be specified in detail later in 7.5.

7.3.1.2 Practice in coaching skills

It is interesting that in the above mentioned training program in systemic coaching, out of 250 learning hours, that I have attended in the course during the last two years, more than two thirds was practice and only circa 33% theory⁹. An interesting sound into the skills and attitudes gained by managers in this course is included in the work of Uldrichová [56].

As we already said the ICF [4] requires 250 hours of practice for associate certified coaches, 750 for professional level and 2.500 documented hours of coaching clients for a master certified coach. It can be seen that to become a coach a person needs to learn theory a bit and practise a lot.

It is interesting that the new coaches almost every time think, that they are very respectful in their questioning, but the only questions they can produce are manipulative ones, that push their clients to a certain direction (JH). To get rid of this thinking pattern takes months or even years.

KH states that coaching expertise benefits most from practicing, it also grows by coach working on himself/herself and by learning from his or her own experiences and mistakes.

When coming back to specific skills required from coaches, one of them is **listening and understanding**. NG sometimes makes sure whether she understood well by summarising what the clients said. Systemics also stress the importance of listening and understanding, but never summarise – they rather ask people for another explanation, so that the expressions are theirs and not of a coach. NG agrees that a coach cannot interpret the client’s expressions but only faithfully restate them to show him/her understanding, personal interest and warmth.

Also a **target orientation, analytical, logical and systematic** thinking, ability to **ask questions**, clear **communication** and rhetoric are other required coaching skills, that should be trained in a course (NG).

But even after two years of training DP for example admits that a long journey still lies in front of him. He simply considers his skills not good enough yet for him to be able to manage all practical situations with his clients.

⁹ But I must say here, that PP does not like distinguishing between theory and practice at all, for he considers even the theory and philosophy very practical, because they are capable of changing human thinking and in this way a whole person including the resulting behaviour. And we will see soon these inner changes are for successful practice of a coach extremely important.

7.3.2 Personality and relations to others

The second basic competence required for coaching efficiency seems to be healthy and whole personality of a coach, who is able to relate to other people in an integrated and appealing way.

It has been found that a coach needs to demonstrate frank qualities of **sincerity, whole-heartedness, friendliness, trustworthiness and openness**. Only in this way he/she can build trusting and from both sides equal relationship and good rapport with the client, which is a basic prerequisite for effective cooperation (IŠ).

EJ shares that people are often overwhelmed by open and enjoyable atmosphere **without pressure** at the coaching session and they quickly pay back the **trust** that was invested into them by a coach.

IŠ emphasizes that the most important characteristic of a good coach is personal **interest** in a coachee. IP adds **sensitivity** towards other people, their needs and moods. She is aware that if she gets to the professional trans, if not careful enough, she would just be able to destroy people with her questions.

There were several reported examples in the research sample, where a coach behaved and communicated rigidly and artificially, or lacked some of other qualities mentioned here, which then made openness and willingness for cooperation of the client impossible and results of coaching due to that were none or even negative.

Some of the clients on the other hand talk about unprecedented atmosphere of unity and trust they experienced, feeling that maybe nobody ever treated them with such a **respect, care** and not pretended interest in themselves. In this aspect coaching resembles a therapy. If a sense of such **security** can be built, demonstrating that a coach's interest in the client is not pretended, then coaching can reach its best.

PP shares that if we get stuck in the middle of the conversation and feel that we are going nowhere, it might help to become personal. A coach can say: "What is it you would really want?" and at the same time for example lightly touch the partner's hand. Or in a calm voice use the partner's name: "Jane, what were the hopes and expectations you came today with?" There is nothing better than if a coach is able to show **sincere emotions** and not pretended personal care.

If a coach was able to be himself/herself and behaved in a **natural** and **relaxed** way, the flow of coaching was usually fluent and results very encouraging. The proper use of **humour** also played an important role in these situations.

We often found, that one of the most important conditions for the coach to behave in an **unselfish** way like this is his/her own **self-esteem, self-assurance** and **self-reliance**. Only someone who is OK with himself/herself can provide others with love. PP warns against using power (controlling others in many different ways – e.g. by manipulative questions, mentoring, etc.) as a tool for reducing the coach's inner anxiety.

According to IŠ and NG very important is humility and **humbleness**, because coaching is above all service – a ministry to other people and not a self-glorifying tool. A coach should always be able to resign on his/her own personal interests and fully **concentrate** on clients. NG tries to focus at their real needs as much as possible to prevent leading them to a dead end drive.

Charisma is the next characteristic of a good coach mentioned by respondents. It is well known that only people with real personality are respected, trusted and followed.

Just another competence I want to mention here is **difference**. People are sometimes attracted, stopped and made to completely change their behaviour, attitudes and even personality, if they are treated in another way than expected. So paradoxes play their part in coaching efficiency as well.

The next important feature of a successful coach is knowledge how to keep certain level of **mystery**. In other words coaching needs to be promising and interesting. People like mysteries and if everything is just technically clear and explained, the method may lose its appeal for somebody. And image, faith and expectation often play an important role in effective function of just any method, not only coaching.

And last but not least from these relational and personality parameters – the coach should **enjoy** coaching and be happy that he/she can do that and help people (IŠ).

7.3.3 Reflection

The third part of coaching competence has been found in reflection capability of a coach. It resembles the need of not thinking about himself/herself, but about the clients. IŠ says that the coach cannot be preoccupied with himself/herself and bother what the right question is he/she should ask next. The client should not perceive a coach, but only a natural flow of questions.

This competence is learned in coaching training courses by providing reflection to others and also by receiving it from them in return.

7.3.3.1 Reflection of stages and forms of work

A coach needs to have skills to reflect in each part of work, where he/she is and what is just happening. That concerns not only the stages of work according to coaching methodology (7.5.2), but also the forms of work mentioned in 7.5.3 (control or support).

VS emphasizes that according to his experience keeping the position of meta-observer is a key aspect of coaching efficiency. By that he means especially knowing, whether the coach is in the controlling or in the supporting mode and why.

7.3.3.2 Self-reflection

And one more thing - a coach also needs to be aware of himself/herself. Not only what he/she is doing, but also why, with what purposes (PP) and how he/she thinks about it. This self-reflection has been considered by some of the coaches as one of the main prerequisites for efficient coaching, because it reveals our inner world of motivations and does not allow them to influence in a negative way the session effectiveness.

EJ realises that during coaching she works much more with herself than with a client. Whenever she is able to look back at her own performance in a session and say: “These are the two things I did, that brought the client further, and here I messed it up,” these are the moments when she learns most and professionally grows. In this way she maintains ability to praise and at the same time blame herself.

Whenever a coach experienced not much efficient meeting he/she must be aware that the coachee is never to blame. The growth of consciousness of a coach and client alike is one of the characteristic features of coaching for PR.

7.3.3.3 The coach's own agenda

The experiences from research have shown that the coach also must be well aware of his or her own purposes, needs, motivations, patterns of thinking and attitudes towards the clients, otherwise he/she might get into real troubles when working with them, because he/she might unintentionally and manipulatively lead them somewhere where they did not want to go. The result is lack of effectiveness and not achieved clients' goals.

Very important for the coach is to be aware of his/her skills, abilities and limitations, not to involve into matters where he/she cannot succeed [58].

7.3.4 Maturity

Our fourth competence for coaching effectiveness is probably the most important one. The first two talked about knowledge, skills and coach's behaviour, the third and fourth are dealing with his/her way of thinking.

We wish to clearly express here that no coach can really be successful, if nondirective behaviour does not come out of his own philosophy, paradigm and world view. If it is only a learned technique of asking the right questions, it will never have such an impact, as when a coach really thinks in respectful way about others and also about himself/herself.

The question is whether these attributes can be learnt or if they are just a natural gift from birth and cannot really be acquired. This would lead to a complicated psychological discussion, so let us only say here that personality seems to be the specific combination of genes, education, personal surroundings, experiences and consequences and also of the free will decisions of a person in the course of life.

NG is afraid that if coaching does not become our life philosophy and personal attitude towards everything, it remains only a game that cannot bring required results and will not be fully satisfying for any party. A coach should be congruent in his/her role – being natural, open and balanced and not playing the role of a coach. She says: If I had in my head what it is that I as a coach have to do next in my methodology, it would be wrong. A good coach often does not know why he/she did this or that.

IŠ says that if people recognise “those coaching questions”, it is a problem. A mature coach should be afraid of using any templates.

VS sees work with uncertainty as one of the main abilities of a coach – he/she should be able to utilise it as a constructive tool for cooperation with the client. A coach is not be fixated at one method, but must be flexible where the journey will lead and what will be done next – taking the fact that he/she never knows it beforehand as an advantage.

As a tool for gaining maturity NG states, that a coach should be offered opportunities to gain internal experiences that change life values. She talks about self-recognising events and deep looks inside, that can be achieved for example by the means of psychotherapeutic-like sessions, where people share deep emotions of their hearts and exchange with each other an independent feedback on how they look and impress others. This, according to NG, can be a life changing experience for many. That is why she proposes for any training course in coaching to have a great percentage of self-exploring experiences, especially when talking about beginners in this area.

I recognised four basic thought patterns that decide, whether I am thinking in a nondirective way or not:

7.3.4.1 Concept of truth

The first one is my concept of truth. I either believe, as shown in an Appendix No. 3, that I am the owner of truth and I know it right and other people are to adjust to it, or I am willing to accept that the individual truths of others have the same value as mine. This approach is a base for tolerance and any sincere nondirective treatment of others. If I knew beforehand where they should get, then I would not really be able to support them – all I could do would be only more or less hidden manipulation.

IP shares a main breakthrough for her in this area. It was the moment when she was able to switch off in her mind assessment and evaluation of others – not comparing them, their behaviour and ways of thinking any more with “the only right and objective” standards. So she considers subjectivism to be one of the main attributes of a good coach.

According to NG the coach cannot evaluate and assess the clients even for himself/herself because it would soon be recognised in a coach’s work and it would destroy relationship with partners as a consequence. She emphasizes absolute acceptance of clients, no matter what they are like or what they do, as a must for coach’s thinking about people.

PP says that a mature coach does not need to hide behind objective truths in arguing about his/her opinion. He or she is able to stand firm behind his/her standpoint: “I think so and that is why it has a value.” This self-respect then creates respect also for others. Using personal “I” language helps to build this feature into our character.

7.3.4.2 Competence of others

The second important characteristic mind feature of a nondirective coach is whether he/she is really able to take others as competent adults, or sees in them only incompetent children that need to be educated, converted, healed, changed or decided on behalf of.

Most people in the Czech Republic are not even accustomed to respect themselves, so it is not surprising that they neither can see the same value in others. According to EJ a coach needs to be able to see the partner’s potential reaching high without limits, not a present reality. She recognizes that the key for her coaching successes lies in her unlimited belief and trust in people. She simply does not try to prove to them that they are impossible and they in return often say that nobody ever treated them in such a way like her.

NG believes in regeneration of strengths of her partners, in their possibilities for further growth and in their full competence, so she leaves a lot on them. She uses a metaphor that she as a coach offers the partners a helping hand, but do not pull them out of the mud, but only holds her hand firm, so that they can do that for themselves.

7.3.4.3 Respecting responsibility of others

The third nondirective thought pattern is leaving responsibility over others’ things on them and not taking it from them back upon us (NG). The maturity of a coach is that he/she does not need to push a person anywhere.

IŠ says that if she sees the solution on behalf of the person beforehand, then she knows that it is not at all coaching, but manipulation. To know how to suppress expert attitudes towards others in us is according to her the main competence of a coach. And it is often difficult even after years of coaching and supervision.

If this respect is real, it is able to persist also if others choose differently than us or have an opposite opinion. And that is true even if we feel, that they will hurt or prevent themselves

from going further by doing what they do. NG says that a coach must be ready for anything – the client has always right to do just all he/she wishes and a coach needs to accept that.

KH shares an experience that when she stopped trying to excel and show an intellectual dominance over a group of aggressive managers and realised that she needs to absolutely respect them including their resistance, the breakthrough came.

7.3.4.4 Thinking in alternatives

The last identified paradigmatic feature of a good coach seems to be thinking in alternatives. He/she never sees anything as given, not changeable or as having the only one dimension.

Thinking in complexity and in multidimensional alternatives helps a lot in searching for new ways of looking at clients and their problems, and also in inspiring them to find new solutions.

7.3.5 Experiences with coaching competences abroad

So we have described here the practical features that, according to experiences of coaches and their clients represented in the research sample, form a coaching competence that has a direct impact upon effectiveness.

Finally we can compare this list of ours with an official material of the ICF [4], that also puts together the requirements for coaches valid in the UK. These Coaching Core Competencies are enclosed together with an ICF Code of Ethics in an Appendix No. 9. They consist of coaching agreement with the client, establishing the relationship, effective communication and finally facilitating learning and ensuring that the client achieves his or her results.

There we can see that the ICF competences concentrate especially at the ethics and coaching skills needed in individual phases of work, while our coaches in three categories out of four talked more about the inner qualities of a person like self-reflection, personality and maturity of a coaching professional. So the ICF code will be better trained and tested, while our list will require longer training program, so that it can appeal to these deeper going inner changes.

That is why in our proposal of a coaching training program¹⁰ in an Appendix No. 10 the theory and methodology altogether take in average only 20% of the course, while practical exercises about 30%, and time focused at attaining specific intra-personal and deep interpersonal experiences ranges from 45% in the first grade to 20% in the last one. That is relatively much in comparison with other commercial courses that usually do not assign to these life changing experiences any separate time.

¹⁰ This program will be a common work of several nondirective coaches. At present the appendix consists only of about ¼ of the whole course – it covers part of methodology, something from required theory and several exercises as proposed by me. The experience part is not covered at all. All of these other features will be added by my colleagues, co-authors of the course, later.

7.4 External influences as causal conditions

Intervening conditions in the Grounded Theory describe the broader structural context of the main category – that means they take into account wider external conditions that could make utilisation of action strategies easier or more difficult.

In our case they answer the question upon what else a coaching effectiveness is dependent except for utilisation of nondirective behaviour and appropriate competence of a coach. An emphasis is laid on investigation what external conditions can influence successful use of coaching methodology (as our action strategy dealt with in chapter 7.5). These external features are described in a conditional matrix ranging from worldwide macro characteristics up to the closest possible influences.

7.4.1 Global philosophical level - humankind

What surely influences application of coaching and its effectiveness on the global level are widespread concepts of politics, culture, people's values, interpretation of history, philosophy and economy.

As we tried to show in 3.4.1 the whole organisation of human civilisation is historically based on directive forms of treating people¹¹.

That is why coaching and nondirective approaches are more difficult to be accepted by traditionally thinking institutions and people. The first ones who started to practically recognise that there is something wrong with our directive worldview were psychiatrists, psychotherapists and psychologists, who were expected to solve problems of their clients. They found out that, when traced back, the problems often seemed to be caused by directive behaviour of their environment. And nondirective treatment proved itself to be able to heal that [59].

The up-to-date philosophical approach of postmodernism has just been logical answer to these experiences. Gradually we realised that almost nothing what is based on directive causality ever functioned well – from educational system, through families, human relations, politics, state institutions, business organisations, medicine or science, up to global economy that is not able to finally do away with poverty (PP).

As a consequence of this realisation it can well happen that coaching as an alternative way of treating people can be very well accepted by progressively thinking people. They might feel that it could bring them practical hope and that with this tool they will be able to understand and deal with otherwise unsolvable paradoxes of a modern way of life.

7.4.2 Civilisation and national culture

All the problems mentioned above have all the western cultures in common. Some eastern civilisations understood complex substance of a human nature and communication better and generated more respectful relation-oriented philosophies, than our western materialism. The differences can be recognised at a national level as well.

Each nation differs from others also in the basic cultural aspects reflecting status, nature and expectations of a society and standard procedures that are valued there, as seen in works of Hofstede and Trompenaar (in Schneider [61] and Joynt [62]).

¹¹ A thorough probe into historical background of nondirective philosophy is included e.g. in the study texts of Parma [60].

According to my understanding of the Hofstede's model, the culture in the Czech Republic can be generally defined as preferring to avoid uncertainty by protecting itself against changes. A power distance is lower – managers are theoretically more willing to think about delegating responsibility, even if they are often not able to actually realise it. Czech society is less individualistic than in the West (people like their independence but tend to a mass, not really a team behaviour) and probably more masculine – emphasizing such values as competitiveness and target orientation, even if people are not always able to achieve them. But this last preference makes our society less sensitive towards values like relationship and feeling that “even a journey itself might be the goal.”

From this it can be seen that coaching approach will have to overcome some well established rigid barriers in the Czech Republic, because nondirective behaviour is generally much more welcome in culture with very low level of uncertainty avoidance and power distance, high individualism and with well balanced mixture of masculinity and femininity.

When applying Trompenaar's model I would say that Czech culture is more universalistic than particularistic (valuing rules over relationships) and specifically oriented at facts rather than diffusely focused at quality of relationships – both are in contrast to a culture that would welcome coaching. We already said that the Czechs are individualistic, further on they are neutral (not showing feelings), often outer-directed (they generally feel controlled by their environment) and achievement oriented (a person's status is considered to be derived from what he or she does and not from what they are).

All of these stand strongly against nondirective approach. But in this sound to a Czech nature we can also see an advantage and challenge: coaching has a lot to heal in Czech people, so it is desperately needed here.

7.4.3 Influences on a regional level

If there is something like regional nature and character (e.g. of Silesians, Southern Moravians or Wallachians), it can show up in the above mentioned respects some regions in the Czech Republic can have different backgrounds and so they might be more open towards coaching. But I do not have time to explore these differences here in more detail. The coaches have to test each case separately by themselves.

On a regional level it is also important what image coaching and consultancy have there. It often happens that a good or bad experience of one company or person quickly spreads the news in surrounding organisations as well.

So marketing, public relations, promotion and references play an important role whether coaching will be appealing enough to prospective people for them to try it for themselves.

7.4.4 Level of an organisation in question

IP states that a company in general should produce an atmosphere and conditions that encourage necessary changes.

Whenever a coach is already present in an organisation, much depends on the fact who brought him/her there, who recommends the method and in what relation the person is to the possible buyer or coachee.

Some of the features that can play an enormously important role in influencing the effectiveness of coaching on the company level are (lined up according to their power):

- Previous experiences with coaches and consultants

- Way of presentation of a method to people (why it is here and what it should bring – is it penalty or reward?)
- General approach of a company to coaching and/or towards people (support or pressure?)
- The kind and intensity of exercised control and/or support of supervisors over people or over the process of coaching
- Company culture, management style and quality of communication there
- Topical priorities and preferences of key figures in the company
- Well or not so well selected application area, where coaching is engaged
- Part of what project a coaching is and the quality of project management
- Present economic and other status of a company and its stage of development

Beranová [58] especially emphasizes that for coaching to be effective in an organisation, it must have absolute support of a top management who should also personally participate.

7.4.4.1 Reorganising the whole companies according to coaching principles

That was concerning utilisation of coaching to help people solve their problems within an organisation. But let us think here also about the possibility to completely change the company in such a way, that a coaching approach would become present in all of its activities including management, customer support and a company culture.

PP has been trying to implant these features into organisations for the last four or five years. KR, who originally also aimed at doing that in his own company, believes that people are not yet mature enough to behave in a nondirective way, even if they like the philosophy, just because in their surrounding nobody functions like that – the society and companies are built on different (directive) principles. The employees are not accustomed to take responsibility for their actions – they usually tend to wait for orders from others who could be to blame for their own failures afterwards.

So he says that coaching is good in stimulating people at the beginning of changes in organisations, but later – if used for complete reorganisation - it creates too big pressure on everybody to think and behave independently, so people after some time want to take a rest. That is why he considers the complete application of nondirective relationships within a company in present conditions as utopia. However he would continue offering coaching sessions even in the longer periods of time to enlightened individuals who are able to manage themselves and want to work on their further development.¹²

7.4.5 Group interaction

On the group level we can say that the same features apply as at an organisation and individual level, only specified depending on the constitution of a group of people in question.

Concerning the interaction it has been found by the research, that a very important feature is, who is the first to want something. Is it an employee, his or her supervisor or even a coach? The best results were seen whenever the coachee was the one, who initiated the meeting or at least brought to it his or her request. On the other hand if the only one who wants something is a supervisor or coach, it requires big mastery to deal with this situation and take the coachee in.

¹² More experiences from the area of so-called “resystemisation” - hopefully more encouraging - can be gained from PP [11].

What also cannot be underestimated is mutual understanding, empathy, personal affection and interpersonal chemistry between a partner and a coach, and also among the members of the group at a coaching session. If people do not like their coach, then he/she cannot do much towards achieving their goals. In such a case it is better to change a coach for a different one. If they do not go well with some of the members of the group it can be overcome, but it is better to address it even before the meeting starts during the coach's short individual interviews with each member – in the phase of making coalitions described in 7.5.2.2 (PP).

7.4.6 Individual features of a partner

Individual features of a person to be coached is the last external context of coaching. Let us generalise here the research discoveries in this area. Especially the following features on the coachee's side were found to influence final results of coaching process the most:

7.4.6.1 Prejudices and level of knowledge of the method

If someone has prejudices about the method or a specific coach, e.g. because of previous personal experiences with coaching or just after he or she has heard something wrong, it is quite difficult to overcome this barrier. Only professional and warm behaviour of a coach, charismatic personality and patient explanation can help in this case.

Experience says that if the partner is accustomed with the method, what it can and cannot do, knows its features, advantages and disadvantages, then he or she is much more open towards cooperation, knows what can be expected and comes well prepared – often already with a specific theme to solve. Such a person usually achieves results much easier and faster.

So one of the first duties of a coach at the beginning of the first session is to explain possibilities and basic features of the method, the process it will take and distribution of individual responsibilities between a coach and a partner.

7.4.6.2 Expectancy and preparation

What does the person expect from the process, a coach, an organisation, himself or herself? Answers to these questions can predestine greater or smaller effects of coaching. That is why the methodology advises a coach to work first with expectations and real personal objectives of the partner and not immediately those of the company or its top management.

The coach can also encourage coachees to prepare for the session by answering for themselves some basic questions beforehand: What is it I really need? What are my priorities? What has to happen there so that I was satisfied with the result and so that I considered the session a good investment of my time and efforts? And so on.

But PP would not recommend explaining coachees in detail what coaching is. Much better is showing them effects right away and letting them taste it for themselves. They should recognise first that they made progress and only then they can be explained, that it was coaching what helped them.

7.4.6.3 Openness, sincerity and willingness to cooperate

The coaching process helps a lot, if a coach is able to stimulate the partners' openness, sincerity and willingness to cooperate (IP). This can be done by showing them an example of the same approach.

If a partner does not want to cooperate even after an hour of interview, it is probably better to stop the session for that moment and maybe to arrange another meeting next time.

7.4.6.4 Personal biography, profession and the level of IQ and EQ

The efficiency of coaching can also be influenced by factors like education, practice, experience and personal history of a partner.

Scientists and technically oriented people generally have greater problems to fully participate at first, for they are accustomed to directive communication, but later they are usually enthusiastic. The same is true with practical people. On the other hand educated people are more dedicated to continuous professional growth, so they welcome coaching as another opportunity to learn new things.

A profession or performed function of a partner has also its value. A manager is more likely to work on his or her potential than an worker, but an operator whenever involved gets very fast to wonderful results as well. The technicians, administrative people and state officers tend to be more rigid, but after a patient approach they develop slowly but surely and the results have a good chance to stay longer.

Intellectuals are originally closer to coaching philosophy, but might stay only on the surface, because they know how to remain untouched, and have enough experience with only intellectual talk without real practical implications. So sometimes it is more difficult to make them do anything practical with their own conclusions.

Extraverts usually love the method, but sometimes might feel endangered that someone could discover their weaknesses, so they may try to hide their real feelings and can be less willing to go into deeper aspects of their personality.

People, who are used to openly communicate and relate to others, are the easiest ones to start with, but sometimes it might be more difficult to get further with them than is their security ground.

7.4.6.5 Present psychological status of a person

Of a huge importance is present psychological status of a person. The clients' preoccupation with problems, depressions and stresses can make them unable to get benefits from coaching.

Also if they just experience a time shortage, expect troubles in the near future, or have some important and difficult tasks beforehand, that are not possible to be dealt with at the session – this all has an extinguishing effect on a person's initiative and concentration.

Also a partner's psychological stability and momentous emotional status towards other people have their consequences in reduced efficiency of coaching.

All of these features must be taken into account by a good coach and dealt with in each session. Not only if some problem appears, but especially preventively.

For example by asking how the person feels (PP), explaining possibilities of the method (VS), establishing a rapport with the partner [60], being positive, open and warm towards the coachee, all of these strategies will help the coach to get with the client further.

That is why we emphasised so much personal and interpersonal maturity of a coach in chapter 7.3, because in ability of a coach to overcome obstacles in the area of all of these intervening conditions usually lies the key for success or failure of a whole coaching

process. Keeping methodology has been found to be only secondary aspect in comparison with this factor.

7.5 Coaching methodology as an action strategy

In this stage of a Grounded Theory investigation it is time to talk about action strategies. They serve either to adjust to the core category, to control, manage, perform it, or to respond to it.

In our case it means what action comes after we decide for and are able to utilise a nondirective coaching approach (which is our main category). The answer is that we apply some specific coaching steps – so our action strategy will consist of using certain coaching methodology.

In describing coaching methodologies that have been used by our respondents we will find that they slightly differed due to specifics in their approaches, but not dramatically.

Some schools (e.g. the British one) do not have so straight connection between requests of the company or corresponding stakeholders and individual theme of a coachee for they do not work with superior targets at all. Neither Rogerians use directive forms of coaching so they would not put such an emphasis on distinguishing between intervention and non-intervention part of work.

Even if I tried to put findings from all these schools together here, my final general model takes most of its features from the systemic methodology – both because it is well able to comprehend all the other approaches as well and also because I studied coaching in this school so I have detailed information only about that methodology.

Concerning the other schools I have not learned much about their methodological background during the interviews, because we were concentrated mainly on practical experiences of coaches and their clients. So I will use structure of systemic methodology, as taught by Parma [60], to serve here as a basic framework that will comprehend experiences of all the coaches from other schools as well.

7.5.1 Organisational features

7.5.1.1 Place

As regards organisation of coaching interviews they usually take place at a separate location, where participants are not bothered by telephones and visits. It is either in the regular office of a partner or a coach. The group coaching sessions are usually held in a hotel or training room outside of an organisation to support an informal atmosphere.

But coaching features can also be applied just in any conversation anywhere, e.g. during a lunch, a business meeting or when sitting with a friend who is talking about his or her personal troubles.

7.5.1.2 Length

One coaching session under research took in average from one and a half to two hours, the shortest interactions lasted 15 minutes, while the length of four hours was an extreme at the other end.

The number of successive sessions varied from only one up to eight or ten. During that time usually all of the originally agreed objectives were met. If there were more than 10

sessions, then it concerned a long-term development program that dealt with more than one area of application and took more than half a year. The average amount of sessions held by coaches in the research sample with one person ranged from three to four meetings.

Each case is different, but it can be generalised that coaching is method, that aims at having as little consecutive meetings as possible, not to make a person dependent upon the coach and rather stimulate his or her own resources – it is really a brief therapy [65]. The coaches even say that the most important changes often happen in-between the sessions.

When asked what is the shortest possible time to guarantee visible results, the coaches usually generalised their experience to be around three to six sessions.

7.5.1.3 Frequency, periodicity and intensity

The time span between separate sessions usually was not shorter than one week, two to four weeks being just the most common frequency. Sometimes the time to the next session prolonged to three or more months, but that was already reflected in decreased effectiveness.

To EJ proved well when a date of the next meeting is selected by the partner. Also other coaches often ask the partners to ring them up whenever they are ready to come – when they achieved what was required or agreed as home works.

7.5.2 Stages of work

The following points describe gradual steps of cooperation with a coachee in one or more sessions, as shown in the basic scheme of coaching in an Appendix No. 11.

7.5.2.1 Superior targets – requests from the company and/or other stakeholders

First a coach searches for expectations of the one who pays for the session or of any other stakeholder who is to benefit from coaching as well – it can be either a supervisor or manager of the coachee, or even the members of his/her family, etc.

Their expectations are negotiated by the coach according to the same procedures as the contract objectives below (7.5.2.5), before meeting the very coachee. Then at the beginning of the coaching session they play the role of an external request that is openly shared with a partner by the coach. The coach carries responsibility that everything what is happening during the coaching session is done within the superior expectations, that thus form one of the main contexts of the whole coaching encounter (PP).

NG tries to negotiate this task from above as broad as possible to leave plenty of space for the partner. If she does not feel well concerning the supervisor's targets she does not accept the contract.

MŠ emphasizes that to understand a superior company target is the most important part of coaching process and as such it must be very well negotiated by the coach for the coaching to bring the company real added value and for the coach to receive new orders there in the future. He believes that a bad clarification of the superior target and a weak ability of a coach to work with it is often to blame, when the results of the first coachings of trainees, just beginning their practice, are not so persuading and appealing.

But according to EJ's experience it is always difficult to gain specific targets from the company. The top managers usually formulate only general wishes, which cannot be taken as superior targets, and say: "You are an expert on people so you should know better, what

they are to attain and how.” In such a case she has to remind them that they should ask for specific returns for the money they are investing into coaching and into their people.

To push supervisors into responsibility for setting specific targets might be a very hard task. The top managers are usually surprised that they can ask for hard parameters and if they have time and are willing (what also does not happen very often – EJ estimates it to approximately half of the cases), she helps them to specify the goals in the form of description of the target behaviour of people to be coached. In this stage miracles happen because, as another side effect of negotiating their request with a coach, the top managers learn to use completely new and efficient management tool for working with their own people – setting measurable tasks even in behavioural area.

If this is not possible, then she at least collects their general expectations from the coaching process. EJ also has a good experience with negotiating the coaching target with a supervisor and a coachee altogether at the same time, because in this way they can unify their expectations how the results will be measured and what will be the outputs of different possible scenarios.

EJ adds one more interesting observation, that even the top managers as task-givers need to be controlled by a coach or/and the coachees, whether they really keep their promises concerning creation of proper conditions for coachees and whether they do all that was agreed from their side.

DP calls our attention to an important fact that the task from outside is always a foreign thing for the coachee. If a coach insists too much and leads the client towards it, he/she can probably persuade the partner to deal with it, but never to work on it full force and actually get to final results. The coaches often make their own targets and hypotheses what should be done and in this direction then lead people. The result is very inefficient work and not coaching. So the coach needs to be very sensitive when working with the superior target, neither to bind himself/herself nor the coachee by it.

PP confirms that the coach really should not be concentrated on details, but rather on the whole picture – what is really important for the company and what is expected final target. All the agreed specific features of a desired final status are then only examples, parts of this complete picture, and not the only possible expressions into which a coach needs to manipulate his/her partner.

7.5.2.2 Initial arrangements, building coalition and feedback from the previous session

At the beginning of a coaching session with the partner a trust and rapport needs to be built. The coach usually introduces himself/herself and the method, and mentions basic contexts for the work – e.g. roles of the participants, formulation of the superior target and basic arrangements of the meeting. EJ underlines importance of negotiating the rules of cooperation and strict keeping them afterwards, e.g. a security regime of information that will not be shared by a coach with anybody, not excluding the supervisors.

The responsibility of a coach for the process of cooperation and of a partner for the targets, contents and efficiency of work is usually mentioned afterwards. RB encourages clients to openly express, whenever they will not feel good or when it will seem to them that something better and more effective could be done at the moment. IP adds that a coach needs to remain just a normal and vulnerable person – admitting whenever he/she is lost, does not understand something or does have any idea how to continue.

DP has an experience with building a coalition with members of a coaching group, consisting of establishing warm personal relations with each one of them individually

before the meeting starts, for example by sharing the same joke or having together a common secret - something emotional and fleshy. These rituals he originally underestimated, but now puts an emphasis on them, because they proved to increase the effectiveness of the following work.

PP recommends taking a thorough care of a good setting of all the contexts at the very beginning of the session, because they simplify and help manage the whole process later. The better these frames are set, the less work the coach has afterwards. The contexts work on behalf of a coach then.

If the meeting follows a previous one, the coach usually asks what happened since the last time, what functioned so much that the client wants to continue in it, and what he/she comes to this session with. EJ confirms it by saying that she does not really control what the person did in the mean time, but says: "Last time you came to some conclusions here. What changed since then and what should we do today?" RB pinpoints that something always changed, so this question offers a positive way of beginning the conversation.

7.5.2.3 Possible themes

Then the coach starts to gather stimuli – the themes that are important for the partner and that could be dealt with at the session. The long list of all possible topics might arise. They can range from personal priorities up to the job objectives. Among the list there are probably also some of the external requests and superior targets mentioned above.

In this stage of a conversation it is important to let people speak and join them in their language, even if they talk about already solved things – it is their personal marketing and a coach cannot take it from them, says PP. The only necessary thing in this stage is for the coach to ask for permission to interrupt and to ask them from time to time specific questions to make the matter more structured. In this way a normal coaching interview can begin. Even at this moment a coach can hypothesise for himself/herself: "What is it, that this person really needs at all?"

People often come with objections and complaints against other people. These factors cannot be solved at a meeting, because the only ones who can be influenced here are those, who are present. So in such a case a coach helps the partner to transform these complaints into things, that can be done or influenced by the partner – his own goals or requests focused at himself/herself then arise.

If a partner does not come with any specific theme, there are many possibilities how to help him/her to find some, that would not be a result of directive external intervention, but would be finally generated by the partner himself/herself. A coach can ask him/her for example:

- What is important for you right now? What are you going after in this period of time/in life? What are you looking for? What do you want to achieve? What is it you need for it?
- Is there any area of personal development you wish to work on? Do you need any change/progress?
- What is it you are especially good at? What is going well in your life? Is there anything you can do to ensure, that it will continue the same way even in the future?
- If I asked important people in your life, what do you think they would want from you?

- Can I ask you to work with me now on this superior target? Or can I offer you my assistance now in working on your professional/personal growth?

RB says that at the first meeting people sometimes use protective mechanisms and a coach's role is to "kick them out of their comfort zone." Often the real work does not start to be efficient before the second meeting.

7.5.2.4 Specific coaching request

Finally both the participants have to agree on the specific request of the coachee, that will be dealt with just here and now at the session – probably selected from the previously mentioned themes, or maybe formulated as a consequence or combination of them.

MŠ adds that many stimuli, that at first seem as objectives, are only substitute requests and what the clients are really after is something different. The quality of a coach is in recognising that, because the output can be only so good, as well the contract will be formulated.

In the systemic view the responsibility of a coach, before he/she even starts to work on contract objectives with the client, is to ensure that the request is within the range of supervisor's expectations and that going after it can lead to achieving also the superior targets.

If not, the coach in this approach does not have a right to accept this request as a theme for further cooperation and needs to ask the client to specify a more appropriate one. But this happens very rarely because the experience says, that whatever the person decides to solve, he/she usually works on important inner changes that will finally also have an influence on the specific expectations of the supervisor, the company or another task giver.

PP emphasises that if in this stage the partners immediately start talking about the ways, how to achieve and realise the request, the work becomes very inefficient, because the request cannot be contracted. In other words the specific ways towards the goals cannot be agreed until the clear objectives are specified from general requests!

7.5.2.5 Contract objectives in all possible contexts

So whenever it is clearly confirmed by the partner, that this is really the thing he/she wishes to concentrate on now, the stage of clarifying the objectives comes. People are not accustomed to specify their goals much exactly. Whenever they have a general idea about something they want, they immediately start to search for ways how to achieve it. The result is that they begin to do something without much thinking and planning and go somewhere, but never know where exactly they finish. The result is that such goals are met very rarely and effectiveness in achieving our life objectives is usually quite low.

It was found, that if people are not allowed to start running immediately after their goals before they are clearly set and described (RB calls this process "operationalisation," i.e. making targets measurable), they only at this moment start to find out with the help of a coach what their objectives really are. He also adds, that these goals have to be filled with emotions for them (painting a vital mental picture in them), otherwise they will not be so appealing for the clients. They should be able to describe their targets with enjoyment and enthusiasm. If it is done this way, then it is quite regular that miracles happen in this stage.

It is a frequent experience that when people start to think from all the angles about their real objectives, they often find that they want something completely different than they originally thought. Their requests just show out to have been only substitutes of the real

values that were hidden behind them. So the main job of a coach in this stage is to help the partner to realise what are his or her real targets.

Looking at the request from the SMART point of view, which means that these goals must be specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic and terminated, helps in this process. But not only that, the main mystery of powerful changes happening in this stage of closer dealing with the objectives, is in looking at them from all the different angles. Like for example:

- What will it bring to me?
- Who and according to what will recognise that I finally got there?
- And who else, from completely different group of people or area of my life?
- What exactly will be different when I succeed in achieving my goals?
- In what other situations it will be demonstrated, that the change really happened?

EJ has a good experience with out-of-job contexts when working with managers. If a manager is solving some problem at work, she leads him to think about those aspects of the same matter, that apply also at home in his relations with his wife and children. Very often major revelations result for them from this process.

PP goes with each objective even further - up to the level of consequences: "What do you need it for?" "What will you do with that tool when you get it?" "What will you achieve by that?" These questions help to clarify, whether the goal is not only a substitute and the real targets are revealed.

IP strengthens the motivation of people by searching with them for the reasons, why these goals are so important for them and why they should be achieved. She often deliberately offers money as a measuring tool into the conversations in this stage, as another empowering impulse supporting clearer specification of goals.

One of the technical tools often to be used for specifying the contract objectives is a mental scale ranging from 0 to 10. It serves well in helping both parties to clarify, what point in time they are talking about right now. Whether about the time in history when the situation was the worst ("0"), the present status (e.g. somewhere around "4"), the desired result after the first coaching session (let us say "5"), a situation in the near history when the score will be "7", or whether they are referring already to the end of the whole mutual cooperation with the coach, when a person finally reaches his or her "10" (and can begin to solve another problem or just shift to a new scale).

PP uses scales because they help people to put their goals into a much more specific form. They also ensure that the aim is not too far away and support strategies to achieve lower, the closest possible, and realistic targets.

EJ shares her experience that many times it is necessary to force people to start talking about smaller goals and to make pledges, that they will really make them, and not to allow them to talk about the big targets. According to her people are confused by management courses, where they were taught that they should set ambitious visions and dreams, so they at first quote books and try to use only empty proclamations. But coaching is about achieving real progress, not about words or dreaming. So she leads them to plan things that will not leave them discouraged next time when they realise that they were not able to keep their own promises.

RB in this situation often asks questions like: "What would be the minimum realistic effect, when you will already consider our session successful?"

Sometimes EJ brings the supervisor's priorities to the session in such a way, that she asks the person: "What would your bosses and other interested parties especially like to see

different at you after the session, so that they considered it a major effect and therefore would encourage you to continue in our cooperation?" Then she advises the client to concentrate namely at these changes.

But as NG puts it, the owner of the contract always has to be the coachee himself/herself – neither a coach, nor the employer. This stage finishes whenever it is clear, what are the measurable aspects of a required final state.

7.5.2.6 Agreement on ways how to achieve the contract objectives

After the final objective of the partner is clearly set and well described from all the angles and in all contexts, the phase of defining the ways towards the goal comes at last.

To a great disappointment of our partners we still do not allow them to run for their goals neither in this stage, but first we want them to plan what, how and by whom will be done to realise their objectives.

Here comes the phase where also the further role of a coach and of other stakeholders need to be specified. The coachee can for example ask for information, for advice or any other support and it will not be considered a directive form of help, because it will be provided on demand.

According to RB and IS it is very wise to establish specific checking points to know, how well we are moving forward and also some signals, according to which we will recognise, that the objective has already been achieved and the cooperation can terminate.

7.5.2.7 Realising the contract

When the action plan is agreed, the job can finally be really done and the objectives achieved, just following the steps agreed in the previous point. But it must be said here, that if a stage 7.5.2.5 was done well and in a professional way, it often happens that the main part of the goal has been already achieved by specifying the targets. The coachee is then often able to finish the work by himself/herself very quickly, so sometimes it even does not come to the last two stages with a coach.

7.5.3 Forms of work

During the coaching interview a coach usually distinguishes between the two basic forms of work that we originally described as directive and nondirective. Here we will talk about them not in the sense of a whole approach, because we said that with completely directive attitude a coach cannot do much, but in a more subtle sense of a differentiating feature, who is in the lead.

The question to be asked here will be: Who gives the first impulse for what will be done now – whether it is a coach or a partner. We talk about these two forms or stages of work here as about the two sides of the same coin, where both are necessary for the success of the whole process. So we say that limiting ourselves to using only non-intervention supportive mode itself might not always ensure getting to the best results with clients.

Here PP emphasizes that a good coach never changes roles – a nondirective for directive one – but only moves within different intervention modes of work and deliberately uses the tools of either control or support according to the situation.

On the other hand to achieve an efficient cooperation with an employee in a management setting a manager should be decided from the very beginning, what is his/her purpose based on the superior target – whether to work mainly in a controlling or supporting mode.

When this is clear, a lot of problems disappear – he/she can either respectfully manage (control) or support the subordinate (MŠ).

7.5.3.1 Intervention controlling mode

If the first impulse for action comes from the coach, than this form of work is called control in coaching literature [60]. The coach is the one who leads and influences the conversation.

It is clear, that at the beginning every coaching is in the controlling mode, just because the coach has got the request – he/she wants to help the partner somehow. The competence of the coachees is usually low at first, because they do not know what will be done and how. So the responsibility for the contents of the session in this stage is in the hands of a coach. And he/she needs to get as fast as possible to the supporting mode, when the partner takes responsibility and utilises his/her competence. The way it can be done is through negotiation of a specific request according to 7.5.2.4 (Appendix No. 11).

But control never means manipulation – leading the clients to a place where I want to have them or forcing on them my own thinking patterns about things. That could lead to a very inefficient work and maybe even to a conflict with the partner. If controlling mode is utilised at all the control must always be open and outspoken.

EJ often uses controlling interventions during coaching, but they are always agreed upon beforehand. Many people expect at least at the end of a conversation an independent opinion from the coach and his/her duty is to provide them with it. It is another source of reflection for them and it keeps their relationship with a coach in balance. Sometimes even very instructive tools function very well in the coaching session, but they had to be prepared by a thorough non-intervention work with the person at its beginning.

7.5.3.2 Non-intervention supportive mode

If the ones who hold initiative and who decide the contents of the conversation are the clients, then we talk about support. The coach only helps them in getting to their results here.

Whenever the partners specify their request, the coaching conversation moves into the supportive mode, because the one who decided about the contents of cooperation is a coachee. In this way the responsibility for the result of the session was transferred to the partner. The coach then continues in using mainly constructive questions to stimulate the client's progress, but the initiative and competence is not taken any more from the partner.

In this mode HV gives clients only stimuli and offers, but the real work he leaves to them. Whenever he feels he returned to an expert attitude, he rushes to gain control of himself again.

IŠ shares that she gives her client the right to manage even the process of coaching, e.g. by telling them: “How would you like me to formulate the next question so that answering would help you as much as possible?”

7.5.3.3 Coaching as a combination of both of these modes

Only when the coach is competent enough in using both of these forms of work, knows how to move from one to the other and backwards, and is always able to reflect in which mode he or she operates, we can talk about coaching. The majority of time is then spent in a supportive mode.

7.5.4 “Mysterious” interventions that were found to bring best effects

Here we offer a short summary of the most efficient coaching tools, that the coaches reported to have had the most dramatic effects. All of them are interventional, but if appropriately used they can have very little directive content. Then due to their power they can be considered nondirective, if only a coach uses them in a playful mode and as an attempt for alternative view at things, without specifically aiming anywhere. If a coach targets at a specific assumed cause of the problem or at a well-planned corresponding output by using them, then the methods become directive and can have even destroying character for the conversation. That is why they always need to be used with exceptional cautiousness.

7.5.4.1 Questions instead of advice

The first enormously powerful tool is just the method of asking the clients constructive questions. The coach is not telling them, what they should do, but they search for their own answers. This is so revolutionary, that people at first do not understand this method at all and think, that it is nothing more than another form of investigation that will sooner or later be followed by a manipulative directive intervention. They tend to suspect that there surely are some hidden motives behind the questions.

But using questions comes out, among others, from the fact that free and open expressing of our thoughts and feelings can have a healing effect even by itself, as utilised by psychotherapy. On top of that they help clients to create their solutions based on their own thought patterns and inner personality structure.

7.5.4.2 Trust in other person’s strengths

When the clients realise, that questions are not used here as a manipulative or investigation tool, they respond with great surprise. And this realisation, that they are really looked at as the ones, who are capable of doing all the necessary steps to solve their problems and achieve their goals, is often enough to start for them the process leading to a rapid growth of their competence and autonomy.

So a friendly atmosphere, encouragement from the coach and his/her belief in the client, are other powerful factors that support coaching effectiveness. IP feels that one of her main tasks during the session is to empower clients by giving them feedback that the process of change has already started, because she realises that the most difficult is the beginning and people need encouragement especially in this stage.

7.5.4.3 Exact specifying of the goals

We have already talked about surprising effects of a simple in-depth investigation of all the aspects of a goal itself.

By thorough description of the targets the clients already construct their solution (VS) and thus make objectives already present, even if until now only in imagination.

RB calls this process “shaping” – it is a concept of not comparing us with others but only with our intentions and motives to promote growth according to our own measure.

7.5.4.4 Power of words, faith and decision

Another important finding is that the very power of words can make miracles (Shazer [63]). The partners have in person of a coach a witness of all that they say and that is binding. The clients often said that the very fact they expressed something from within

their soul had such an enormous effect on them, that they immediately felt something important has already happened and the matter has been moved forward, even during the conversation. RB remarks, that the more something is being said, the more it is true.

On the power of words and stories the whole branch of systemic coaching is based – a narrative school [8]. VS explains that he does not literally work with people when applying this approach, but rather with language contents – that means with objects in language and meta-communication. The whole problem system can be reconstructed and retold as an alternative story of hope and inner strength, where new ways towards solution begin to open. The work with language offers safe and manageable framework for dealing with complexity and uncertainty.

And something else often happened during the problem reconstruction, when coachees worked hard and went through the process of searching for their own goals and solutions, retelling their life stories in a new way: It has built in them a strong determination and faith in their own strengths, so that their decisions were found valuable and resulted in real changes afterwards.

7.5.4.5 Solutions - not a problem focus and starting new things rather than finishing old

A strong feature of many forms of coaching is a strict focus on positive aspects of life and not negative. A problem is seen as an opportunity, new development possibilities are often searched for within the problem state, and the whole focus of conversation is not analysing the problem and its causes, but rather direct constructing of the solution (Jackson [64]).

People usually suffered long enough under the problem, thought it over many times and already tried all possible solutions, and if they did not function after all, new analysis would probably neither bring better results. RB together with PP claim, that long talking about the problem conserves it and often deepens it even more. So to come closer to freedom the viewpoint must be completely changed. In this approach a problem can be seen already as an ingredient of final solution. People should not think how bad they are doing something but rather how closer to solution they got by what they already did.

NG also starts from the positive perspective with her clients – she usually does not work with them on overcoming something and stopping doing it, but rather tries to cooperate with clients on starting doing something new.

Neither EJ ever deliberately starts conversation about something what is wrong, but she tries to talk with her clients about all those things they would not change, because they are satisfied with them as they are. This helps them realise they already own parts of their solution and it tunes them into a constructive mood. The clients are surprised then, how easy it is to add one or two other little positive things to what they already do and they are immediately on their way towards their goals, without carrying that heavy burden of failure any more. Difficulties on the road towards change all of a sudden seem to them smaller and easier to overcome.

7.5.4.6 Searching for the inner sources and exceptions

Another example of a positive focus in problems and a method to move forward is searching for the inner sources and powers within a person. As RB paraphrases the key question: “How is it possible that you are (were) able?:”

- What is it that gives you strength even in such a difficult situation?
- How is it possible that you survived such a pressure?
- When it was the worst, what helped you to bear it and finally get out of it?

Similar method is searching for exceptions and investigating their conditions (RB). We try to catch clients when doing well – we wait for or return back in memories to the moment, when they did not have that problem or at least in a smaller measure:

- Was there a time, when it was at least slightly better than today?
- What was different then? Why do you think it was?
- What part of your final goal are you already capable of doing?

These viewpoints can help them reorganise their inner setting from aspects belonging to a problem to sources of strength for achieving solution. According to EJ, recognizing how many things from their final target they are already able to do, often surprises people and empowers them at the same time.

PP advises that if people find it difficult when asked to construct their future, they can easily get back to the trails when asked for the past – what was it then that functioned for them. Thanks to such recharging they can start to build their future again.

7.5.4.7 Reframing, work with complexity and context changes

Reframing is a systemic technique based on persuasion that just any behaviour makes sense under the specific set of conditions (frames, contexts). The same thing, which seems from the client's point of view as a problem, from a different perspective makes perfect sense and looks much more as the best possible strategy to overcome some other aspect of a problem. In other words even so called "problem" behaviour already represents a part of solution (LG).

A new viewpoint is often formed as well if we look at the same thing from a broader perspective or in opposite from a very close distance –according to PP we either increase the complexity of our view or reduce it (simplify the matter).

The changes of contexts have been found to act as a powerful tool in the coach's questioning. He/she can shift emphasis and often surprising conclusions result if a completely new viewpoint is found. LL considers ability to work with contexts as a main effect that coaching brought to his life – thanks to it he is able to get with the partner to the all-inclusive specification of goals much easier.

7.5.4.8 Psychological work with energy, positive planning, enjoying life

According to RB people sometimes invest much more energy not to miss the target than to achieve it. What often helps is to transfer the unpopular task into a free time setting and the job is much easier then. Similar example is to say to myself: "I do not have to do it", which all of a sudden makes me able to want to make it happen and to do anything with it with greater freedom and lightness.

We can also burden ourselves with expectations and demands that are too big. Then it is good to rearrange our plans (maybe even reduce them), so that notwithstanding what we do or not do, the result would always be satisfactory. We need to learn not to forbid ourselves to do different things, but rather to enjoy life. Generous rewarding ourselves for fulfilling even small parts of our goals is another powerful strategy of this kind. RB recalls here a question of certain father: "What interesting have you learned today?" who was in this way teaching his sons a life-long desire to investigate things and move forward, not backwards.

We can also loose energy due to so called unfinished frames [7], when we do not complete or do away with something and afterwards it bothers our mind like a poison. The simple

way of help is to finish and close these frames – at least in an abstract way in our own mind, if it is not possible to do it practically.

7.5.4.9 Imagination, a miracle question, transpersonal psychology

A classic miracle question of de Shazer's Brief Therapy Center [66] has brought a major improvement already in many coaching cases. It sounds somehow like:

- If a miracle happened with your problem while you slept, how would you recognize it? What would be different?
- And how can you be sure that this miracle has not happened yet?

An imagination and projection can well form just another source of change in person's viewpoint and in situational context. In their fantasy people can easily move across time to better status, when there is no problem and just describe what they see there. By doing that they already experience part of their goal and construct a new – until then not existing, but now at least partially experienced – reality.

But it must be said that the miracle question has to be asked in a moment that was well prepared, because at times it might be too difficult for people to answer it - all of a sudden it could be looked at as a too big step for them (EJ).

In relational targets it often helps when people who aim at gaining some specific behaviour are asked how they perceived the same behaviour if somebody else treated them like that. Then they can realise the influence of required behaviour on themselves. Something similar can be done also the other way round. By entering into another person's mind in their imagination it is all of a sudden clear to them, what they should do and how to influence others – they can see themselves from the point of view of their neighbours.

7.5.4.10 Paradoxical recipes, disturbing the system out of balance

If a person receives homework or an instruction that does not give him/her sense (sometimes it may even go exactly in the opposite direction, than where a required goal lies), it often stimulates such thinking patterns that are able to loose their mind from fixation on the problem and to help them to overcome it (LG).

Of the same kind are rituals that people create or a coach prescribes, that help to refocus their attention from the problem to a non-problematic simple behaviour.

If only the coach is able to question the clients' view, their thought system or behavioural patterns and move them out of balance, they are pushed to find new balance in a new, usually better state. So such disturbances can also help clients to form their new solutions.

LL believes that if people are running in the rigid rails, they need to be kicked out of them even before the coach can help them to set out on a new track.

7.5.4.11 Metaphors, analogies, jokes

Another form of paradoxical stimuli towards solution is the use of stories, tales or models (LG). They can be told by a coach or created together with partners and help the clients to see their situation from a new perspective. It allows them to gain a feeling that they hold their life story in their hands, are able to learn from "wise dwarfs," can ask for their assistance and that they can influence also their own story and finally get to the goal.

7.5.4.12 Small differences making a big difference

In the coaching conversation the situations often seem to be so difficult and hopeless, that a coach can be in temptation to loose direction and determination. A concentration on even a very slight change and building upon it can make a radical difference here. It can be for example until now unappreciated difference in the past (an exception) or just something found at the moment. In line with the recipe of de Shazer [65] a person is then just doing more of what functions and less of what does not function. He sums this principle in an expression: "Let the differences work on behalf of you!"

LL mentions that people are sometimes in lethargy just because they do not see other possibilities and do not fully realise their distance from "benchmarks" or best practices. In such a case a question: "What will you be doing differently tomorrow?" or "If you should do your personal best what would it be?" can revive them.

7.5.4.13 Power of observation and pretending; externalisation of the problem

To this category belongs an instruction to the client not to change anything, but only to observe his/her own behaviour or other people's responses. Part of the recipe can also be in an instruction to pretend, that the change already occurred and to observe what will happen (RB). Of the same kind is an order to omit some simple form of behaviour or on the other hand to try to do something new. These strategies have also been created by Steve de Shazer and Imsoo Kim Berg, the pioneers of a systemic practice in their Brief (Family) Therapy Center [65], [66].

One of the strategies to understand better all the contents of a problem and to make manipulation with it easier, is to make a problem visible and treat it as a material thing, that can be named and dealt with (e.g. be thrown to a dustbin) = this tactics is called externalisation (VS).

By doing that we can also better investigate the function of the problem – not its causes, but influences. It can be done in such a way that the problem is represented by a living person and we arrange an interview with him/her/it to see more clearly the effect of the problem on our life. The solutions and strategies to deal with the problem are not specifically searched for, but they arise from this questioning by themselves. By this example VS in his narrative therapy clearly shows us, that the problem usually already has an encoded solution in itself.

7.5.4.14 Regularity, home works and control

Another factor that has been found to be important for the real changes in clients' lives was the fact, that at the beginning of the next session the coach usually asks what happened since the last time. That motivates the clients to do something with their obligations and home works from the previous meeting.

RB e.g. often does not set a firm date of the next session and just tells the client to call only after he/she has done what has been agreed last time.

7.5.4.15 Synergetic cooperation with a coach

Also synergy plays its role in effectiveness of coaching. When two people create a team where one of them fully serves the other and applies all of his/her skills, knowledge and energy for the benefit of the other one, we do not finally have here only two cooperating people, but one extremely efficient unit.

7.5.4.16 Reflections of other participants, alternatives

The last but not least traced source of effective solutions were reflections of the other participants of coaching - either of a coach himself/herself or other colleagues in a group session.

Their alternatives, different views, respectful and encouraging remarks and even their wishful presence also made miracles. What a person was not able to hear from others for many years, he/she is all of a sudden able to realise, grasp and even act upon successfully.

Searching for the new and unusual alternatives how to look at a theme, or possibilities how to get to the solution, are just other helping tools for the person to move forward. For NG coaching means to permanently search for new opportunities to move forward.

JE appreciates capability of coaching setting to encourage new ways of looking at things and providing a choice of alternative strategies for client's actions.

7.6 Results and effects as consequences of an action strategy

Finally we need to put into proper place the descriptions of consequences or results of our action strategy. So at last we come to the key question: What this coaching effectiveness, we all the time talk about, really means? We tried to explain in this work how to achieve it, but have not explained yet what this word stands for and how it can be measured.

7.6.1 Ways of measuring the effects

If we are to talk about measuring the effects first, there are many ways how to look at it. The measurability of consultancy activities is always a big question, for it is usually difficult to find specific parameters of results and if they are finally defined, it is almost impossible to separate effects of consultancy from other internal and external influences (LG).

When considering measurement of effects itself, we usually ask:

- How exactly the effects were measured
- By whom and who else participated in it
- How often the measurement was done (frequency)
- What was the amount of effects
- What were their kinds and types
- And what was their impact in respect to range, level, intensity, length of duration and other resulting benefits

In 2001 I enquired into this problem a great deal in my assignment for CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development) on training effectiveness [67]. According to Hamblin assessment method [68] we can measure the people's performance basically at four outputs:

7.6.1.1 First subjective evaluation after the session

At first immediately after the session all the clients of coaching can tell us what they originally expected and what they finally achieved according to their opinion. This method was utilised by all of the coaches in the sample and many of them use it as their one and only measurement tool.

For RB the key and most important parameter of an efficient coaching is satisfaction of a coachee. But it must be said here that partners always take at least something from the session, so it is very rare that somebody would say at this moment that there was no benefit for him/her. NG also believes that the clients' feelings just after the session are one of the key assessment factors.

IŠ confirms that and says that her clients always leave with something they can utilise and with a feeling, that they have achieved the result they wanted (with only two separate exceptions in her professional career). That speaks of her good work with requests and realistic objectives of the clients for the session.

7.6.1.2 Level of learning

Secondly it can be assessed what the person have learnt, which is usually done by interviews or tests. During coaching in our reviewed cases this measurement was done only by subjective questions of a coach, what people have learnt.

IŠ reports that her clients often wish to meet her by themselves afterwards to be able to give her feedback, how coaching helped them and what they have learned. The change as a result of coaching is so strong for them that they feel the need to talk about it. This can be another proof of coaching effectiveness.

NG is a bit allergic on connecting the word "effectiveness" with coaching, because she believes that achieving the company results is not the main target here. According to her coaching is focused mainly at the person and his or her development.

Her experience is that at the beginning coaching can even look very inefficient (people first try to talk about what they have solved already in search for self-affirmation in their past successes), but in a longer term they reveal new qualities in themselves (it takes a lot of courage to admit new, until now undiscovered, challenges) and to deal with potentiality inside them (new opportunities and alternatives that are submitted to their free will).

So coaching can seem quite slow at the first glance, because to achieve real personal changes it often takes a long distance run. On the other hand the coaching experience can sometimes immediately have its self-realising value for clients in itself, and they do not want to acquire any other specific skills from it.

7.6.1.3 Changes in behaviour as seen by others

Thirdly changes in practical behaviour can be assessed as well after some time. They can be found out by asking the coachees, their colleagues (360° feedback), their supervisors or by assessment centres.

The first method is used by most of the coaches at the beginning of the next session with the client. The growth and improvement of subordinates' skills is addressed in most companies' assessment systems during the managerial interviews.

With each coachee and supervisor a regime is agreed beforehand, when they will meet and how they will evaluate the results. They either can do it together without a coach after some time from the sessions or just at the end of the project. As another assessment alternative the coach, after having the last individual sessions where he/she received feedback from coachees themselves, meets their supervisors and asks them for evaluation of the process and results from their point of view, and/or brings them general report from individual sessions on behalf of coachees, if agreed with them beforehand.

RB describes his coaching ethics, that he is never a source of information concerning the contents and results of any coaching session. Just any output to the supervisor goes always only from the coachee himself/herself as an assurance of a clinical regime of security. EJ on the other hand asks the coachees what they would wish her to answer if their supervisors asked her about the contents of the meeting with their people and about their progress.

KH's surprising experience is that supervisors often see greater effects than the coachees themselves. If the supervisors are interested in seeing changes, then they see them, she says. But if they wish to outsource the work with people to an external agency, then they usually do not grasp anything.

RB has a different experience that people around the coachee are not so sensitive to his or her changes (especially when they do not know, in what areas they are to expect them). It is probably given by another strategy of RB: He usually negotiates with the company top management a big freedom for him to work with people on their targets within a general framework (e.g. personal growth in general). So the top managers do not demand so exactly defined outputs from him and from their people after coaching. The clients thus have more freedom to work on their own goals.

IP counters that supervisors she works with are usually critical and see more things where the partner has not yet improved, than changes that already happened.

7.6.1.4 Whole-company measurable results

But the most important effect, that is searched for by the supervisors, coaches and their clients alike, are the measurable results for the company as a whole.

Here comes the problem mentioned above with difficulty to distinguish the consequences of different causal conditions. But on the other hand we can ask for numbers and other hard data here and find out without any doubt whether a change really occurred or not.

As examples of the whole-company goals typically set, followed and measured in our coaching interviews, we can mention:

- Fulfilment of the company business plan including the turnover and profit growth
- Achievement of the set values of a positive cash-flow
- Success of new projects, their added value and financial benefits
- Quality of achieved results as assessed by customers
- Number of established teams, participation level of individuals and assessment of the quality of their work
- Improvements in company culture as statistically evaluated on the basis of the internal and external reviews
- Recorded growth of knowledge, abilities and skills of employees – especially in the area of communication, managerial delegation and setting the measurable goals

But RB feels that to connect effects of coaching directly with economics is very difficult, if not impossible, just because there are many other co-influences there.

7.6.2 Forms of feedback in the sample and most frequently utilised measuring tools

IP believes that the main ones who should measure effects of coaching above all are coachees themselves, because it is another motivation tool for them. The final effectiveness can be measured simply according to her: how many of the impulses and discoveries,

important for them during the coaching interview, people utilised and materialised afterwards in real life. This percentage then shows coaching efficiency.

As an example of findings of other investigators we can mention the results of research concerning return on investment of executive coaching done by Metrix Global [69] for the consultancy company of Pyramid Resource Group. The interviewed clients of this company altogether assessed, that the investment into their coaching brought 529% return in specific financial results of their work within a given time. According to them these outputs were closely connected with effects of coaching.

From this external example of measuring coaching effectiveness we can see again, that even if the measurement parameters are given in money, numbers or percentages, it does not automatically make measuring objective. Even these results were also deduced only on the basis of people's subjective expressions and assessments.

So in the same way even in our research we could make the list of many specific effects achieved by the clients that they ascribed to be the direct consequence of coaching, but we will never know whether coaching was really the one and only cause. That is why we will mention here only four general outputs that were typically recognised by most of the coaches as respondents in my sample, when they talked about the effects of their work.

7.6.2.1 Fulfilled needs

As we already said first of all they just asked their clients, to what measure their needs and specific requests were fulfilled during the session.

IŠ e.g. does not assign a specific time for her coaching sessions – they finish only after the clients say, that their needs have been fulfilled, the matter is solved and they are satisfied.

7.6.2.2 Realised contract

The second check of coaching effectiveness that has been widely used in the sample was an answer to the question, whether the contract objectives in the definition according to 7.5.2.5-7 have really been achieved. For example NG concludes a specific contract with her clients usually after 2 or 3 sessions, and then after each following meeting and also at the end of the whole series she asks the clients for feedback, whether the contract targets have actually been realised.

To the theme of easily fulfilled contracts IŠ adds that if people come by themselves to what is beneficial and advantageous for them, then when they materialise their findings in practice, it is no surprise that it automatically functions well for them. They generally realise what would suit them, start doing things in a different way, they see that it begins to bring fruit and that is why they are fully satisfied with the results of coaching. And this is their measure of effectiveness!

MŠ on the other hand insists on comparison of these results also with the company targets at this point, for the company is the one who usually pays for coaching, so it should reap benefits from its results.

EJ replies that it never happened to her that the top management of the client would say, that they did not receive from coaching with their subordinates what they wanted.

Sometimes it happened that the client asked for a report from the coach what was done and what it brought, but usually to create this report, if required, should be the responsibility of coachees and not of a coach.

7.6.2.3 Impacts on surrounding environment

In the next measurement step the coach looked for reports from people in the clients' environment, especially those who the clients said would first recognise, that the change required by them has happened. The coach usually asks the clients to collect and bring this report by themselves, only very rarely searches for this feedback by himself/herself.

In IŠ's company the supervisors ask coachees, what were the results of their coaching, whether there were any benefits at all, how they see their performance and if something improved. If these would not be remarkable, the coaching would probably not continue any more there. But it does, which shows that it has its value for the company.

7.6.2.4 New coaching requests and references for coaches

And the final way, how the coaches in the sample measured their effectiveness, was simply the fact, whether they received payment for their services, attained good references and if they were given new orders from the client, from his/her organisation or other colleagues around. These were good indications for them that their work brought their clients appreciated benefits.

It can be said, that if the coaches are invited repeatedly and continue working for the same organisation for a longer period, it is the best reference for the effectiveness of their work.

For example KH offers her clients that they can continue to be coached if they wish, and the best indication whether it brought them something is, that they decide to invest their time and money into coaching again. RB also takes the fact that the client comes to participate at the next session as a confirmation of considerable effects achieved until now.

7.6.3 General examples of achieved results

The diversity of results from coaching in the sample was just so great, that we will neither be able to list all of the effects nor to organise them according to specific logic, because it is not the purpose of this work. So let us at least mention several general examples here.

For instance EJ just like NEWTON does not sell "coaching" as a method, but simply achieving the client's targets whatever they are. She says that often not only the originally specified objectives were achieved, but her coaching also had a number of side effects for her clients in other areas, e.g. in their personal growth, better self-management or improved communication.

We also talked with her about one of the side effects for managers – the growth of their skills to specify measurable targets. When they learned how to connect the final objectives, that they were after, with the specific behaviour that leads to them, a completely new area of management opportunities opened in front of them. They started to realise that from then on they can really influence people to move directly towards their goals. So now they are more sensitive what kind of behaviour leads to which ends.

As general result of his coachings RB sees especially the growth of personal productivity and a long-term satisfaction of the client. IŠ also confirms it as a main parameter, how also her clients usually measure the coaching effectiveness.

The actual results of researched coaching sessions ranged from obtaining specific skills (e.g. negotiation, managing people, etc.), through removing mistakes, limits and different troubles (like personal blockages, communication and psychical problems, overcoming life crises, etc.) up to stimulating further professional and personal growth.

IŠ does not accept orders to “repair” people – she just helps them to grow and feel good again, while EJ enjoys working with clients who really have a problem at work – e.g. a danger of being fired up – and their manager expects specific changes from them. She recalls that these assignments were usually successful.

KH also noted that except for the specific goals that were agreed in the coaching contract some side effects regularly appeared as well. For example people were able to better specify their goals, communicated in a clearer and more open way, knew how to deal with their problems and personalities and their self-confidence and independence grew.

The requests of IP’s clients often targeted at clarifying their priorities and strengthening motivation to do what they felt they should do.

DP testifies about growth in personal potential, initiative, creativity, proactivity, responsibility and competence of some of his subordinates as coachees. But according to his words it did not go so quickly as he would like. He concludes: “I must continue working on my professionalism as a coach and manager further more.”

NG reminds us we should never forget that even the journey can be the goal. In other words that coaching can have its value in itself without specific measurable outputs, simply by giving people opportunity to freely deal with things that are important for them.

What LG appreciates the most is gaining a new nondirective life philosophy thanks to his meeting with coaching.

MČ testifies about growth of his abilities to build relations with other people and to agree with them the parameters of their and his own objectives. He mentions that real usage of even the smallest inspirations from coaching in everyday life continues to move him forward. Even if not practicing very often he can see that changes that were brought in by nondirective approach just grow in him and begin to bring fruit.

7.6.3.1 Comparing the effects of group and individual coaching

In KH’s experience the effects come faster and intensity is bigger in individual coaching, where permanent results can be expected in average after five meetings. The group sessions on the other hand have bigger potential to utilise synergy and bring interpersonal improvements. But longer-standing outputs do not usually come sooner than within half a year here, provided that the group meets once a month. The group work is said to be more difficult, because it is easier for somebody to hide there, do not go deep enough or escape from intensive work. Some people are also not willing to open in the group.

RB prefers to work with individuals and considers mass coaching less successful – he uses group coaching only if people argue and cannot cope with each other.

LL has found that a group coaching usually brought respect to each other, mutual understanding and unity in diversity among the members, while an individual one helped people with their own priorities - even if they worked on improving relations as well there.

7.6.4 Conditions for coaching effectiveness

We have already mentioned the two key conditions for effectiveness: The coach must be competent and work in a nondirective way (even if using both modes – support and control). MŠ adds that each mode of work is good for different purposes and before the session it is important for the coach to select the right one that will prevail – control more often in management tasks and support in development ones.

NG confirms that an absolute prerequisite of an efficient session is a mutual trust and good relationship of a coach and a client, coach's openness and professionalism, his/her well-balanced attitude and natural behaviour showing acceptance of a client. The coach also needs to be aware and admit his/her own uncertainties and fears.

EJ agrees that openness, relaxed atmosphere and security are the key conditions for any good result. Her hypothesis is that if a person is OK, he/she achieves things never dreamed of, so the main task of a coach is to make the client enjoy the meeting and work on his/her own priorities to return back to an OK state. PŠ also tasted importance of good initial forming of all the coaching interview contexts, including the set of conditions and targets for cooperation.

BK talks about improvement in efficiency of his conversations after he shifted emphasis from keeping methodology to natural flow of conversation. PK considers a move from using coaching techniques to being a coach, living it and thinking in that way as a point where rapid growth of his personal coaching effectiveness started.

PK sees importance in not having it his way, in resigning on his own opinions and views, just giving priority to the needs and ways of thinking of his clients. If a problem or different opinions occur he has got best experiences with open confrontation. A coach needs to be able to resign on his own solutions and continually check, whether in any moment he does exactly what is the most beneficial thing for the client.

LL emphasizes a contract to be well agreed according to all the criterions of 7.5.2.5-7, especially that the targets need to be specifically described from all the possible viewpoints and contexts.

KH explains that the more precise the expectations of the company from coaching are, the better. But they are not to be presented as tasks to the coachees, but as requests in a higher context. She confirms that efficiency then grows a lot whenever there is a good and close cooperation with a supervisor - managers are involved, concentrate on changes of their subordinates and produce a gentle pressure leading to efficiency.

DP on the other hand calls for very sensitive use of superior targets because they tend to be considered directive and that is why when not used properly they can spoil the coaching effectiveness.

What paid off for PA was creating a comfort zone for his partners during all of the interviews.

KH remarks that efficiency of coaching increases with number of repeated sessions – usually after one or two of them some bigger changes start to occur. In the course of time people learn how to work with themselves better and the results continue to come. She even claims that if she worked with a client for a longer period of time, it always had very good results.

RB adds his experience that in 80% of cases at the second meeting a “gate opens,” whatever it means: People simply start to work very effectively on their priorities and a coach can enjoy only supporting the partner – then coaching begins to be really pleasant and beautiful experience for both parties.

IP checks the criterion of usefulness for the client during the whole interview. So the word effectiveness is supplemented by usefulness for her. The only thing the coach needs to do is to be on guard concerning all corresponding contexts. If the people are given freedom to move within these frameworks, the coaching brings fruit then.

PP says that if a coach does not disconnect from the partners (in language, purpose, request, objective, mood, etc.) he/she can lead them more directly towards their goals.

When I finished my research interview with IP she concluded: “I liked working with you – you gave me non-structured questions, listened to me, I enjoyed thinking and talking and came to important conclusions by myself – so our conversation was just a pattern of a good coaching session.” If the coach is able to create such an atmosphere, then he/she does not need to do much more and coaching brings effects automatically.

KH adds her final remark that because people are different it is important to give a coachee opportunity to select his or her own coach deliberately, for there is not one person who would be the right partner just for anybody.

7.6.5 The most frequent reasons for lower effectiveness

As we already indicated, if only smaller or no effects appeared, or even contra-effects, it always had one or both of the main reasons – either the coach was not competent enough in some or all of the criterions from chapter 7.3, or he/she did not consistently utilised a nondirective approach.

The coaches made a lot of mistakes, especially when they were just beginners in their training. According to MŠ's experiences the clients did not know how to utilise the coaching session with coaching trainees, were often disillusioned and coaching for them was rarely anything more than a loss of time. The most frequent reason was that the coaches' questions were artificial, only learned and did not consider what the client said before. A coach and a partner often did not understand each other and their monologs did not really meet.

So new coaches have a lot to learn concerning methodology, interpersonal skills and self-reliance. PA considers it important to leave schematics from his work and allow his clients to feel safe with him as a coach.

PŠ realizes that if he was at the same time an expert in the field that was dealt with, he had problems to really keep the supporting mode, do not intervene and mentor the partner. These attitudes enormously reduced the effectiveness of work for his partner. So he discourages anybody from using any forms of mentoring and expert interventions that were not outspokenly required by the client beforehand.

IP says that if she concentrates too much on how to avoid mistakes not to loose business, it reduces her coaching effectiveness a lot.

VS finds one of the reasons for some of his unsuccessful attempts to bring clients value in underestimating the initial project phases, especially bad adjustment of the original contract, client's weak understanding of coaching, too ambitious targets, not clear explanation and agreement of responsibilities and roles of participants, not enough emphasis on building mutual trust at the beginning and too strong ambition of a coach to be successful, reflected in his over-involvement.

NG assigns inefficiency of some of her sessions to underestimation of ways, how differently the contract can be understood by separate parties, too strong focus only at the goal and not at the person himself/herself (all relates to all – the process is not interrupted, even if partners leave the main target for a few moments) and a client's theme that was too close to her personality and her own needs.

EJ had worse experiences with projects where people were obliged to undergo a certain amount of coaching sessions. It seems that whenever coaching is compulsory, it rarely

brings effects, because people resist to really cooperate. They only want to do away with unpleasant duty. She also had a project where there was not clear enough agreement, how the coach should cooperate with people, which created problems later.

MŠ and PP recommend not to use allergy-initiating words like “coaching, vision, strategy, targets, according to what will you recognise,” and so on, because they sound schematic, make people angry and discourage them from cooperation.

BK considers the tools for increasing and keeping the power and influence over people to be strong obstacles for efficiency.

7.6.5.1 Non-permanent effects

In several cases it happened that some effects appeared, but did not last very long - were not permanent.

The first indication of a good progress usually was that the coachees said they were able to think the matter through, it was clearer for them after the session, or that they benefited from coaching by being able to better formulate certain things.

But after some time clients might have realised, that these moves forward were not the right keys to important breakthrough, or were not followed by real action that would lead to the final victory.

The other causes of these non-permanent effects (except for the two common ones mentioned above) have been found in not intensive enough cooperation with a coach or not regular arrangement of sessions.

EJ had an experience when she did not succeed in building strong enough security in a case, where a manager went so deep into his lacks and shortcomings, that afterwards he was afraid to continue and remained only on the surface.

LL describes the situation where a strong “oh yes” effect happened during the session, but afterwards the person did not behave according to it in the real work. What helped him, when he was in a similar situation, was a presence of another person in a coaching session, who really did her home works. That motivated him to do the same not to blame himself in front of her. It seems that people are sometimes less responsible towards themselves than towards others, so some external control will probably be necessary, even if people work well at the meetings.

One more reason for some of little effects he sees in a coach giving unasked advice and recipes. In other cases the results just did not come because the partner did not know how to continue, a coach did not keep the regular schedule of meetings or was not pushing enough (slightly but permanently) to provide acceptable pressure.

MŠ also knows cases even from his own experience as a coachee, when a person came to a new solution or development plan during the coaching session, but later on did not materialise it to utilise the benefits.

MŠ raises a question whether the problem of a not intensive enough follow up can be solved by stricter control from the side of supervisors or company, so that the contract is actually realised even in the practice, or whether the solution preliminarily lies in coachee himself/herself.

EJ estimates that in about 15% of cases her clients did not continue working on their findings from coaching sessions in between the meetings, were without special initiative

and simply waited for the opportunity to follow up. The decision to choose their attitude she leaves completely up to them.

MŠ's own experience from the first meetings with coaches (beginners), was a great amount of not substantial findings that he brought from the coaching sessions, because they were artificially forced out. But later on he started to work on his real priorities and the result was that since that time he followed them up even in between the sessions. And if not, he says that it is an indication, that the matter was probably not so important for him.

VS solves the problem of a weak follow up by recalibrating the cooperation with the client and by reframing the project contents. The client is also asked here to call, whenever he/she feels ready to come for the next session. Also the teamwork helps and a background of other coaches to be consulted with, if a difficult situation in this respect comes.

7.6.5.2 Cases where no really important effects resulted at all

Sometimes the results did not come at all. It was often given by not full understanding of the client what coaching is and can do, by weak personal math and rapport between the coach and the partner or by little cooperation and motivation from the side of the client.

LL says that he never saw any considerable self-development effects of coaching on people who were not gifted enough for their role. It seems that coaching is simply not able to make a management star from a really bad manager. He thinks that coaching can help people, who have potential and are only blocked somehow, but if there is nothing inside, neither coaching can change it. He mentioned that the radical shifts in paradigm he experienced did not happen to his clients. But he admits that it might be due to his not enough professionalism as a coach or because he did not work systematically enough on the matter with them.

LL also recalls an experience when after several coaching session people learned, how to avoid the consequences of coaching interview by playing games and not taking real responsibility for generated solutions. Usually it happened when a supervisor or coach pushed too much or added requirements, that the person was not willing to accept. The solution he sees in providing people with space to solve their own priorities. The coach should also learn how to work in a professional way with the superior targets and not to manipulate people anywhere.

IP talks about her first experiences with coaching when only about 10% of discoveries people made during the sessions were really utilised later. As a remedy she used all forms of empowering tools like feedback, encouragement, motivation, focus at inner strengths of a person (by reviewing the objectives that were achieved until now, and that it really is the coachee who was able to do that), assigning home works and measuring efficiency by the partner. She says: "If as a coach I am the one who measures effectiveness, it is all about me (and I can use it as a marketing tool to continue selling my work), but if the coachee does that, he takes real responsibility and manages the whole process for himself/herself."

KH shares an example of a person who had such a heavy personality problem, that she was not able to help him get rid of anxiety to go deeper and so he remained in a protection state. As another reason for no effects she mentions weaker understanding of the coaching process resulting in the partner's resistance against the method and a coach. But she encourages us that the percentage of successes grows with coach's experience.

7.6.5.3 Negative results of coaching

I must say that there were even the cases with totally negative results of coaching in the research sample, but they were very rare and not so damaging. No psychical or company collapse resulted – maybe only personal disillusion.

The most frequent reason for it was an interrogation performed by the coach, instead of respectful nondirective coaching, pushing and manipulating the partner somewhere he/she did not want to go (e.g. by overemphasizing the superior target or by leading the partner in the coach's thought patterns). Another reason for resistance was the fact that participation in coaching was not a client's free decision but a compulsory order from the supervisor. Also integrity and maturity of a coach again played an important role here.

LL says that coaching opens new horizons and by its usage he knows how to “catch” people, but at the same time he is able to force them into the corner, so that they begin to protect themselves or even become open enemies. They will either barricade themselves or start going for the goal, but the edge between these two absolutely opposing outcomes is very sharp and it is difficult to have sensitivity, what intervention will be still constructive and which one will make the person run away. People in our culture are very sensitive on manipulation and immediately try to get rid of it and escape, so what is felt as a manipulative request it usually creates resistance.

LL also mentions an experience with a top manager who left coaching session just because of a coach's behaviour (the coach in contrast to his proclamations vividly did not really respect the other person's opinion and behaved as if his own truths were dogmas and objective conclusions). The client was also discouraged by a lack of the coach's integrity. He did something different in private life, than what he preached in coaching sessions - he could not control himself against anger. So this manager made a conclusion that this person probably did not believe in what he said and so the coach has completely lost trustworthiness in his client's eyes.

8 CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

So after detailed treating of the effects of coaching we can now sum up the most important findings of this research.

8.1 General summary of research findings

The scheme of the whole dissertation report structure is shown in an Appendix No. 2.

8.1.1 What are the main factors leading to coaching effectiveness?

This chart at the same time shows the major conditions for coaching effectiveness as indicated by the research.

They consist of proper understanding of the needs of clients (7.1), utilisation of nondirective approach (7.2) by a competent coach (7.3), who can take into account also other external intervening conditions (7.4), is at the same time able to use a specific coaching methodology (7.5) and finally help the client to measure the effects of cooperation (7.6).

These basic interpretations represent the resulting theory, which was created with the help of a Grounded Theory method on the base of the research findings verified according to the authentic data.

8.1.1.1 Four possible contexts of the core category

So if we were to sum the resulting theory up it would sound: If a nondirective approach is mixed with a real competence of a coach, than the effects of coaching are just enormous. It can be used for solving or improving almost anything in organisations or individuals.

The second best approach when for some reason we do not have both these conditions fulfilled is a directive (intervention) approach of a competent coach, but it must be applied with cautiousness. Such an attitude can lead to very quick and quite big results, but does not develop personal potential of participants so much.

An incompetent coach with a directive approach resembles an average today's manager and as such it is our third choice when running for effectiveness.

The least effective of all these four possible attitudes (when applying all combinations of our two context features – nondirective/directive work and competent/incompetent coach) is an approach of an incompetent nondirective person. He or she just does not achieve anything, but at least does not spoil much as well.

8.1.1.2 Coaching competences as a key

So we already have seen that a key condition for effectiveness of nondirective coaching is competence of a coach to utilise a nondirective approach. The necessary coaching competences are described in detail in 7.3 and consist of appropriate knowledge and skills, healthy personality able to relate extremely well to other people, self-reflection capability and especially personal maturity reflected in the way of thinking, worldview and philosophy of a coach. We can compare them to a list of coaching competences published by a UK based International Coach Federation as included in an Appendix No. 9.

8.1.2 What are the typical effects of coaching?

When talking about effectiveness we must also say what it means. We have found that effectiveness is especially measured by the satisfaction of the coachee, fulfilment of his/her needs and objectives whatever they were, and by achievement of an agreed contract. From the point of view of a company that ordered and paid for coaching, the effectiveness is measured by achieving the superior targets that were agreed beforehand. Here the top management of a company often has problems, because they are not able to competently set the measurable goals. But also in this process a coach can help them.

Concerning the areas of utilisation and topics to be solved under the certain conditions (e.g. proper qualification of a coach), the coaching can be applied for realisation of just any need of a client without limits. In the research sample it was generally used in situations that were connected with personal development, personality growth and with better utilisation of a person's strengths and potential. Also for overcoming life and professional obstacles and problems, in finding new motivations or new ways of doing things, for improving personal effectiveness and relations to other people, when looking for new ways to solutions and finally in the need for achieving better results in many areas of professional and personal life.

8.1.3 How does a nondirective approach look like?

We have seen that coaching can basically have two styles – directive and nondirective.

The basic scheme of a nondirective coaching interaction shows an Appendix No. 11, where a coach at first searches for the targets of the client company (7.5.2.1), then establishes a rapport with the coachee (7.5.2.2), gathers from him/her proposals of possible themes for discussion (7.5.2.3), then they select together one request that will be solved at the moment (7.5.2.4) and specify measurable objectives to be achieved (7.5.2.5). Then they agree the way, how they will get to the desired state (7.5.2.6) and finally realise the contract (7.5.2.7).

At the end of the meeting and also at the beginning of the next one the coach takes feedback from the coachee how much he/she has been satisfied and what specific results were achieved (7.5.2.2). Also they give and get feedback from the supervisor or any other stakeholder, whether the coaching sessions brought required results also for the company as a whole or for the client's surrounding.

As one possible description of nondirective approach towards the client a kind reader can also look at a chart of SOLUTIONS Focused® approach in an Appendix No. 8. Some nondirective coaching schools (e.g. Rogerian or British school of coaching) omit from this scheme the superior target and work only with the client's requests.

8.1.4 What are the strengths and weaknesses of nondirective approach

The strengths and weaknesses of a nondirective approach have been talked through in 3.4. The main strength consists of its ability to develop the person's potential to the full and without limit, leaving the responsibility on himself/herself just stimulating all his or her inner strengths and energies.

The main weakness of this approach can be seen in the fact that it takes longer to get to the result and the length of preparation of competent coaches is counted in years, not talking about the fact that this method puts enormous demands on personality of a coach.

More aspects of nondirective behaviour in comparison with the directive alternatives are shown in an Appendix No. 3.

8.1.5 Comparison of research results with original hunches

At the end of this research we can say that all of our hunches from chapter 4.2.1 have been found completely true and form part of our resulting theoretical models, methodologies and recommendations.

They are: A nondirective approach really requires more time, but the effects usually last longer. Nondirective coaching consists of some additional hours that are firstly considered not efficient enough by the client – e.g. an enormous emphasis is laid on specific negotiation of goals. It also takes some time before the client realises that responsibility for finding solutions really remains upon him/her and so he/she needs to start intensive work. We also saw that the nondirective coaching requires active cooperation and understanding on the partner's side.

The vital key for success of this method is in competence and experience of a coach who should be able to get rid of directive thinking and to respect the partner, but at the same time not to lose sight of the partner's own goals. Nondirective coaching was found to better respect the specific needs and aims of the client than directive approaches, because it stimulates inner sources of the individual and company much more. It does not bring any

new external requirements to the cooperation – it only builds on what the clients want to do by themselves.

The nondirective coaching is sometimes reproached that it lacks ability to give clients more specific advice and expertise, but we saw that it can be done as well, especially in the systemic form of coaching. Some clients also require greater expertise of a coach, an experience in the specific professional field and ability to authoritatively manage bigger projects, which should not be a problem for coaches to offer, if contracted. So systemic approach was found to offer a bit more options to get to the goals of a supervisor or top management than other forms of nondirective coaching, just because it uses also controlling and not only supporting forms of work.

8.2 Research implications and resulting recommendations

When we should sum up the most important implications resulting from this research, we can do it in three steps: summarising once again the most important specific research results and their implications, formulating several recommendations for stakeholders (individual clients, coaches and companies, that consider utilisation of coaching) and finally proposing some application fields where coaching can bring best fruit.

8.2.1 Research results

In this research we were able to generate a theoretical model of coaching methodology, putting together what all the nondirective schools have in common (Appendix No. 2).

8.2.1.1 The main conditions of effectiveness

We saw that the most important conditions for achieving effectiveness of any coaching intervention are **real use of a nondirective approach** and a **competence of a coach**. As further aspects influencing effectiveness have been found: existence of a specific requirement of a client company from coaching (a superior target), a positive attitude of a coachee, proper use of coaching methodology, establishing a trusting relationship between a coach and a client and agreement on the contract – the specific objectives that are to be achieved.

But from all the interviews and observations a coach's personal maturity in using nondirective approach arose as a key and vital factor for achieving real effects. So in one of the main parts of this work we consider from all possible angles the **competence of a coach** as a key prerequisite for effectiveness of coaching.

8.2.1.2 Measuring effectiveness and really achieved effects

Concerning effectiveness itself we came to a conclusion that it is to be measured mainly by coachees themselves to carry responsibility for achieving their own targets. This measurement usually consists of comparing their own needs and original requests with finally achieved results. After a good coaching session clients often spoke about surprisingly much bigger effects than they originally expected – going deep into their personality structure, interpersonal communication and business achievements. They also shared that thanks to coaching they really achieved absolute majority of the professional goals they contracted with their coach.

We could see that coaches believe in what they do, have good experiences with effects of their work even if they were in a position of coachees themselves. Based on these findings I finally came to a conclusion, that nondirective coaching is without a doubt powerful

method for improving personal and company effectiveness, but in the Czech conditions it still needs to be discovered and finally fully recognised in its pure form.

8.2.2 Resulting implications

8.2.2.1 Recommendations for coaches

For that to happen we need well-trained, professional and experienced coaches who know how to work with assignments and requests not only of the coachees themselves, but also of the company as a whole. Their key required knowledge is a nondirective approach itself. An absolute must for them is personal maturity (7.3.4), an ability of self-reflection (7.3.3) and enjoyment to work with people (7.3.2). On top of that they need to be well trained in coaching methodology and spend much time practicing it (7.3.1). With this in mind we prepared the first draft of a training program in coaching (Appendix No. 10) that covers all required competences described in this work (including those from Appendix No. 9).

8.2.2.2 Recommendations for companies

Based on results of this research the companies are encouraged to begin to utilise coaching much more than until now, because it can bring them necessary creativity, initiative and involvement of their people.

The companies can select coaches according to the requirements described in this work. Coaching is especially recommended for the top managers to utilise it at work with their people, because progress in this area makes much bigger effects for the company. On top of that as we have seen, coaching methodology can help our managers to specify much better targets for their people.

Another benefit of coaching for managers is that they begin to realise, that a nondirective treatment has an enormous effect on them and so they start to treat their subordinates in a similar way. Then they may require more intensive training in coaching so that they can improve in utilising nondirective management skills. That is why the first grade of our training program in coaching is especially focused to fulfil all the needs of managers, so they can graduate after one year with all the necessary tools for their work.

8.2.2.3 Recommendations for individual clients

Nothing else is required from individual clients who think of applying coaching than willingness to cooperate, active and open approach and courage to open really important themes. They are recommended to participate in a whole series of at least 4 – 8 consequent coaching sessions to achieve real and long lasting outputs that would be of a real importance for them.

8.2.3 Application areas for nondirective approach

When talking about in what types of consultancy a nondirective approach can be applied with benefit, the answer will probably be - in all of them:

Coaching, facilitation and action learning have nondirective features in their substance.

I have noted utilisation of nondirective approaches also in consulting, advising and counselling – that is always when I respectfully call into cooperation all the resources of my clients and do not hold all the initiative by myself.

The same is true in business, management and sales – we in NEWTON often train managers how to negotiate goals, delegate, motivate and assess the work of others without

necessarily telling people how they did, but by giving them opportunity to bring appropriate proofs by themselves. We may realise that application of these principles of not selling our product but serving the customers - that means searching and asking for their real needs and satisfying them - always laid in the very core of just any business, only we did not always did it like that in practice.

A huge application field is in the area of teaching, training, mentoring, educating, instructing and lecturing. Interactive methods were always used here but to apply real coaching methodology in teaching makes it even more efficient and at the same time more amusing for the participants.

We have said that in the psychotherapeutic area and treatment of people's inner hurts a nondirective approach first celebrated successes. When help is required in all kinds of personal problems, in the area of personal and professional development and better use of one's potential, it is probably one of the best situations for application of nondirective coaching.

The same is true in its utilisation for improving our relationships, communication and sharing with others. A huge application area for coaching is solution of problems between family members, when we encourage efforts to establish more respectful relations with children, partners and friends and do not want to be annoying mentors any more, as proven by Uldrichová in her research [56].

Probably only in doing something on-behalf of others the application of nondirective approach is more limited - in all the places where people take care of others who are handicapped, elderly, too young or not competent. Here it is sometimes necessary and healthy to keep certain boundaries in leaving everything up to their own responsibility. But even in these situations if only we are able to respond to other people's real needs and requests or at least start to ask and search for them and in this way to show them respect, we might see that our service would be much more valued and estimated, than when we only did what we thought was right and good for others.

We can finish this chapter by a NG's dream: "Let us only think what could happen in our families, society and in the world, if only the leaders, teachers and parents..." And she leaves the sentence unfinished, but probably means something like: "...began to use nondirective approaches as much as they could." This dissertation was written just with this purpose in mind - to encourage such thinking and behaviour in our society.

8.3 First utilisation of the research outputs

Some of the implications of this research are not only theoretical proclamations that students are expected to write just at the end of their dissertation reports, but for me it already has several real consequences and applications. I can mention four such areas I already know about right now. I am sure some other may appear later.

8.3.1 Standards of coaching methodology and competence

We were able to formulate basic preconditions that are important for the quality delivery of coaching to the clients - especially when we defined features of nondirective approach, described coaching methodology and clarified conditions for a coach's competence and maturity.

All of these findings can be used for example as a base for formulation of required competences for the graduates of any training courses in nondirective coaching or even as

an attempt to create a draft of professional coaching standards that could be acceptable for all the nondirective training schools in the Czech Republic.

8.3.2 Training program for coaches

One of the practical results of this dissertation is that based on its findings we have prepared a proposal of the training program for managers and coaches that covers all the requirements for nondirective work mentioned in this report. The first proposal of a basic syllabus of its methodology is included in an Appendix No. 10. I wish to express here once again my special thanks to Petr Parma, who is my main lecturer in the coaching philosophy and methodology, because in my proposal of this training program I could utilise with benefit a basic methodological structure of my own learning and also experiences and wisdom gained at his courses.

The first official presentation of this complete training program, including all the contributions of other co-authors, is scheduled to the autumn conference on coaching organised by a ČNP training agency in Prague.

8.3.3 Establishing the Czech Association of Coaches (ČAKO)

During preparation of this assignment I could join as one of the founding members the Czech Association of Coaches that is just being established. It will form a base for providing information and references about individual coaches and their approaches. It will also be able to promote coaching in the public area and offer basic framework for further professional growth and gradual certification of coaches. It can especially play its role in cultivating the market by the means of increasing the quality of coaching thanks to encouraging the growth of coaching competences and ethics.

A kind reader can find the web page of this association at [70]. The findings from this research helped me in being able to participate at formulating the mission and purpose of this association and also in making the first draft of basic definition of coaching.

8.3.4 Presenting the dissertation findings at a conference on coaching

I hope this dissertation can be used by this association as a base for supporting the most important features of nondirective approach, promote coaching as a method in the Czech Republic and also start to cultivate understanding about the most important coaching competences.

As my contribution to this process I will also be able to present the major findings from this research at an autumn conference on coaching organised in Prague. Its pages can be found at [71].

8.4 Limitations of this research

As I already said this work of mine has its limits in prevalent number of systemic coaches in the sample, in gaining most of the information on effectiveness of coaching process from coaches themselves – not having enough time to check all the findings with their independent clients with no previous experience in coaching.

Also all of the evaluations were based on subjective expressions of the clients as remembered by the coaches and of coaches in the role of coachees. Also the longer-term assessment was done mainly by the same method – a coach asking his or her client at the

next meeting what happened in the mean time and what of the previous resolutions have materialised.

So all of my findings are based mainly on the interviews with subjective people just like in any other qualitative research. Only thanks to a greater amount of stories and also due to the consistent utilisation of the Grounded Theory we could generalise and make conclusions that could aspire for some value. But I count with the fact that I was surely not able to avoid inaccuracies in presentation and interpretation of some individual expressions that may occur here slightly twisted or not presented in appropriate original context. By this I apologize beforehand to all of my respondents.

So I thank you - those of my readers, who were at the same time also my respondents - that you will kindly let me know about all these cases, so that I can correct all the mistakes and inaccuracies in the next edition of this report. Please send your comments and possible additional remarks to this work to my mail address milan.bobek@newton.cz. Thanks once again for your cooperation.

8.5 Personal feelings and assessment of the research

I am personally happy that I could deal in this dissertation with my favourite theme and could successfully finish it after many days and nights of work. I feel sorry that it is so long, but I could not help to include some pieces of information, that might not be so beneficial for the dissertation itself but were important for me. I wanted to have all of my findings summarised at one place for my future reference, when preparing the coaching training programs or performing my own coaching interviews. On top of that I also wanted to sell my academic learning in the theoretical part.

I feel that this work just did what it could do. If I had more time I would investigate deeper the specific methodology of some of other coaching schools (e.g. Gestalt or those based more on psychotherapy) and talk with more long-practicing professionals (e.g. Vlado Hlavenka of Inventa group or Ivan Úlehla from ISZ) and also with some high standing coaches abroad that I received references to.

This research has been focused on interviewing mainly the coaches themselves, so If I had another opportunity to work on the next research project in this field, I would especially like to shift my emphasis from coaches to the vital experiences of their clients. I would probably trace less coaching cases but would be going much deeper into them – providing my readers with thorough case studies of several longer coaching stories and describing their results, effects and failures, including feedback from the people in a broader environment of the client.

IP also says that she would be much interested in tracing only one case but to the complete end – she is curious what are all those things that several consequent coaching sessions influence and bring into one's life and to his or her company.

8.5.1 My individual sharing about the coaching effects at the end

Let me mention one personal example at the end. When I was finishing this research I went through the detailed minutes from all of those circa 20 coaching sessions during the last two years where I participated in the role of a client and coachee. It was surprising for me to see how efficient they all were. In sometimes not more than 30 to 45 minutes I did so much work that it is unbelievable.

Another powerful finding was that after a time distance of one or two years I now can say, that a great majority (I estimate it around 80%) of my goals set up in those sessions really materialised and came true. And in those that did not I could easily trace back the reasons: I usually either did not concentrate on them afterwards because they were not so important for me any more or the term of their fulfilment has not come yet.

So to continue in researching similar client cases like this one in much greater detail would be an appealing theme of my next work on coaching if I would have the next opportunity.

The result of this following research would form another source of useful information that could then participate in improving quality of coaching in the Czech Republic even further. And if that will not be me, I am sure some other author will write about it. Just ring me up, sir or madam, I wish to talk to you about your findings...

THE LIST OF APPENDICES :

1. The sample of primary respondents to the research interviews
2. Basic features of an effective nondirective coaching – structure of the report on research findings
3. Comparison of directive and nondirective approaches
4. Original draft of a semi-structured interview
5. Grounded Theory course of action
6. Grounded Theory brief guide and chart
7. Utilised Internet information sources and the list of articles on coaching
8. The scheme of a SOLUTIONS Focused[®] methodology concentrated at the fulfilment of the clients' needs
9. ICF Coaching competences and the Code of ethics
10. Syllabus of the proposed training course in coaching – methodological part
11. The basic scheme of a coaching interaction

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