

Developmental Coaching, Integrated Mental Training and Positive Psychology

Lars-Eric Uneståhl, Ph.D.

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Background

Coaching and especially Developmental Coaching (DC) is based on the same philosophy and is using the same principles as Positive Psychology (PP) and Integrated Mental Training (IMT). Differences are more in methods of learning and development, where Coaching emphasizes “Action Learning and “Learning through feedback#”, Positive Psychology “Reflective Learning” and IMT “Unconscious Learning”.

Positive Psychology (PP)

PP looks at human beings as self-organizing, self-directed, adaptive entities and wants psychology to focus on two neglected areas

1. Develop normal people to increased Productivity and Well-being
2. Using development of resources for Problem prevention

Integrated Mental Training (IMT)

IMT is a systematic, long-term developmental training of mental skills, attitudes and processes. It is a cognitive and emotional training with emphasis on images more than thoughts and with focus on resource detection and development more than problem solving. IMT was developed by Uneståhl in the nineteen sixties based on research of:

- Alternative states of consciousness
- Relationship between body and mind.

The training programs were tested in cooperation with the various Swedish national and Olympic teams during the nineteen seventies, introduced into the Swedish school system in the late nineteen seventies as Life Skills Training. It was applied to the areas of health and work in the nineteen eighties and became popular among the general population as a method of personal development from the early nineteen nineties.

Knowledge and Lifecompetence

Because studies show no correlation between success in School or University and success in Life, Mental Training and Coaching became the most important methods to transform abstract knowledge into real competence in dealing with life.

Coaching and IMT are both future oriented, solution focused, action directed and experiential based. Coaching for Development is the integration we have made between IMT and coaching in the last decade.

Coaching for development versus Problem Coaching

These two approaches have different assumptions:

Problem coaching assumes the client has all the resources needed to solve the problem. Coaching for Development assumes the client often needs to develop new resources, skills, and behavior in order to reach the goal. Coaching for development is based on the same philosophy of change as is found in Mental Training and in Positive Psychology while most areas of society still follow the problem based or clinical model. In the problem coaching model, people want to change because of a problem or crisis. Coaching for development is based on the sport model, meaning that you can be satisfied with the present and still want - and be working and training- to reach a better situation.

So in the problem coaching model the direction of change is away from the problem, meaning that sometimes the result can be still worse (out of the frying pan into the

fire). The emotional basis for the change is mainly dissatisfaction and there can be a strong resistance to change as clients experience suggestions for change as criticism.

In problem coaching progress is followed by maintenance and problem solving is followed by inactivity. Coaching for development looks at life as a journey with continuous improvement.

In problem coaching suggested changes often evoke resistance as they are interpreted as blame, disbelief and that something is wrong. In Coaching for development, safety and security is not in the client's comfort zone, but in the change itself. It also gives the necessary stimulation and challenge important for high quality of life.

Proaction and Prevention as Problemsolving

Coaching is action oriented and has its basis in learning by doing. Tasking construct experiences, which through feedback provides adequate changes.

While the goal in problem coaching is to return to a "preproblem" situation, (mostly with the help of retroactive actions), Coaching for development uses proactive methods to create a situation which is not only better than the present but also better than the preproblem conditions. This includes "problem solving" but without having to work on the problems.

Our brain is more easily caught by problem thoughts and images. There are three reasons:

- A evolutionary survival mechanism
- The emotional components (emotions like fear catch our mind very easily)
- Problems are often more concrete than goals.

In order to change this perception, coaching for development works to decrease fear and other negative emotions and make goals clear and attractive. One part of that is to learn to think and talk in positive ways and to replace problem words with developmental ones.

Coaching for development and Psychocybernetics

In order to make even better progress Coaching for development combines the use of Mental Training tasks with goal programming. While Problem Coaching often stops when the clients' goals are clear and value based, Coaching for development translates the intellectual goals to images, after which the goals are integrated and programmed. This seems to start an automatic process. The client often reports being more creative, and that they get solutions in an effortless way without conscious problem solving. They reach goals without knowing what took them to the goals.

Summary

Coaching for development and Developmental Self-coaching will complement ordinary coaching methods in a number of ways. For example:

- Coaching for development works in the same way with clients with problems and clients looking for continuous improvement. Developmental goals often include automatic problem solving.
- Coaching for development uses Mental Training tasks as homework to detect and develop resources, needed to reach attractive goals.
- Coaching for development uses the imagination to program goals in order to start a cybernetic process as a complement to the action plan and the homework.