
Chapter 5

Project Findings

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This chapter presents the project findings from the four levels of analysis with a full discussion and interpretation. The first level of analysis was using the Ethnograph; the second level was an investigation of all of the client hard-copy transcripts, i.e. six clients and at least three two-hour coaching sessions. The third level of analysis was reading each file for broader client themes; the fourth level of analysis was an overall reading of each client transcript looking for the broader structural coaching intervention themes.

5.1 Client transcript analyses (second, third and fourth levels of analysis)

The first and second levels of analysis were so comprehensive that the third and fourth readings were examined with the intention of scanning for themes and anything missed in the first readings. Primarily, the third reading was to uncover client themes that emerged with the coach's interventions; the fourth reading identified the overall structural issues which helped to build the model.

In the second hard-copy analysis, the specific overall themes to emerge were:

Anxiety, assumptions, awareness, believe, change, choice, communicate, conflict, conscious, consequences, confrontation, defensive, encourage, fear, motivation, responsibility, self confident, self esteem, possibility, unconscious, visualise, worry.

5.1.1 Third hard-copy analysis

It is very clear from reading all of the transcripts that each client speaks their own 'language' relevant to their background, experience and expertise. However, similar themes emerged from all of the texts with each of the clients.

I discovered some differences between 'explain' and 'explore' in the third reading: 'explain' was when client and coach were giving details of a particular story, 'explore' was when the coach asked more in-depth questions to help the client 'dig deeper' for learning and insight.

In reading through all of the transcripts for a third reading, I began to look for broad, overall themes that were emerging relevant to each client. The themes which began to emerge were:

assumptions, anxiety, awareness, self-reliance, self-belief, self-confidence, self-responsibility, clarity, choice, commitment, freedom, goal, goal setting, motivation, decision, commitment, change, performance and relationship.

5.1.2 Fourth hard-copy analysis

In the fourth reading of the texts, it became clear that the coach was working through input / throughput / output with each client, and that the development of the relationship was a foundation stone in each conversation. Also, similar themes were discernible in the fourth reading by looking at the overall broader themes rather than concentrating on the detail of content and context. I looked for the language as it revolved around the relationship, experiential learning and existential issues. In the fourth hard-copy analysis the core themes to emerge were the themes of the coaching model:

learning, reflection, relationship, responsibility, goals, change, freedom, meaning, choice, anxiety, being, becoming, and doing.

What was clear from each of the levels of analysis was that the questions and interventions on the part of the coach teased out the client themes, and the coach's interventions contributed to building rapport and relationship with the client.

5.1.3 The final conversation

Having completed four levels of investigation (which meant that each manuscript was read at least four times) I emailed the client Word files to each client and sent them a list of six questions to answer. Although one client initially responded by email, I spoke with each client and recorded their conversations in order to look at their responses to my specific questions about the texts. These questions were the final conversation and component of the research project:

1. What are your thoughts or reflections on reading the transcripts?
2. Where did you see a change, a shift, an insight or an 'a-ha!' moment?
3. What do you think brought about changes in thinking, or feeling or in behaviour for you, and how do you think that impacted on subsequent performance in the workplace or at home?
4. What made the difference to you?
5. Tell me how that made you feel?
6. What would you pick as the crucial moment when you saw something that helped you to stay with that experience in the coaching conversation?

5.1.4 Clients' final reflections

During my analysis of the coaching conversations, two themes emerged as the most dominant. The first theme was 'going back,' in which I would intervene to take the client back to a thought, perception, insight or goal which had occurred previously in the conversation. The second theme to emerge was that of the relationship, and being conscious of trying to create a 'safe' space for the client to think, talk, explore and feel in order to gain insight into changes that were needed. One other comment, common in my final conversation with my clients, was the usefulness of talking in combination with 'exercises' or different types of coaching interventions such as 'circle of excellence,' or 'best year yet', or the 'thinking environment' sessions.

The transcripts for the final client conversations are available on request. I list the key comments for each client:

C1:

The coaching did help and helped me to get a better grip and control over my circumstances; I feel I've distanced myself from it, and grown through it – and it's gone; well, it helped me to look at it from outside of myself.

C2:

Interesting to see my personal movement and growth and new insights (that happened in the sessions) and where I haven't moved; seeing a more integral approach in my thinking. You kept pulling me back to our shared concern; I found clarity. It was to do with how you tracked our original goal or intention. It was quite challenging and affirming. Safety in the room – it worked quite well. I wasn't in isolation; In order to extract, you reflected back, asked questions, boiled things down and kept me on track. You allowed me two steps forward, then coming back on track, I took more clarity into the world; one piece: the safety that must have been there – kept us on track – I went with that; I welcomed it; it created safety.

C3:

I re-read and made notes. Referring, what did I do with it and what did I learn? Critical that one – consistency and confirmation of my challenges I faced. Changed in terms of how I do things. I approach things very differently – that is a shift – probably very subtle. I'm succeeding! Levels of confidence and reward are there. Everything is better around me: the ability to verbalise my frustrations and challenges to someone who is trained to observe – to see from a different perspective but remain non-judgemental. A voice in a safe place within a professional environment; to help me to achieve my goals and challenges I face and difficulties I face on a regular basis. It was a safe, knowledgeable place. To get understanding and empathy; it's easier to talk to someone else. The wonder is that talking is helpful – it's not

tangible. It's felt and seen and experienced through achieving the goals I achieve and growing the business. To stay focused on a particular challenge and focus on the possible. You always bring me back to that focal point. It was incredibly valuable. Every time I solved it with you, I never worried about it again. The time and money I invested with you – value.

C5:

Moving from excelling to doubt to deciding not to do it. The contrast between ... made me realise things about myself. What makes me play well. Believe I can achieve anything when I'm confident. When I made a conscious effort based on your suggestions. I always struggled with 'who I am' when I played. I'm 'me' in the zone: introverted, focused; vs. the extravert 'me' outside. I've accepted that that's *who* I am. It all helped. Got my ducks in a row; every session with you. I'm such an emotional person. When I come to you – it becomes clearer. The talking and the exercises in combination made the difference.

C6:

You know coaches always ask questions. You also gave me some thoughts and experience that I found quite useful. I became more empowered and positive. Nobody was going to save me. Probably and it's a funny thing to say; it comes down to the relationship. First of all to have that space to talk to somebody about anything that is quite safe. It's the relationship that we had that worked for me as well. It's about that space in the relationship. The coach needs to live what they say. I felt safe; it was a place to unload; and then doing it. One thing you said: there's nobody there who's going to do that for me. Another thing you said; and I still use it actually. 'Everybody's acting,' you said to me. Then when I realised that other people are acting it made it easier.

C14:

Where are we now – these two are really helpful. I have a tendency not to believe in myself; I thought I'm not so bad; I do have insight in management and organisations. I think I've matured; I'm less emotional. I was emotional in my communication because I so badly wanted to change. I have definitely matured in my communication and am less emotional when dealing with issues that are critical; in my personal life I've become more settled and more content. It helped me tackle my business life better. I can see – it's very valuable. We should reflect more. We should reflect back on our daily lives. I've got a better handle on things. How I feel. I feel more in control. You picked me up on something I've said and you bring me back. There's a thread that runs through the transcripts.

5.1.5 Project findings

5.1.5.1 The research questions

This project was to analyse the coaching intervention in terms of: (a) breakthrough shifts in thinking, behaviour and performance; (b) creating transformational change; and (c) how the coaching intervention helps to build the relationship between client and coach. The four questions I was hoping to answer were:

1. How does the coaching intervention in the client's narrative help the client to make breakthrough shifts in thinking, feeling and behaviour – and consequently in performance?
2. What is it in the coaching intervention that creates sustained transformational change for the client, helping the client to make breakthrough shifts in thinking, feeling, language and behaviour – and therefore in performance?
3. What is it about the coaching intervention that makes the client think or behave in a certain way that helps to make a shift: a paradigm shift, a thinking shift, or a perception shift?
4. How do the coach's interventions help to build the relationship which then leads to shifts in thinking, feeling, and behaviour – and, ultimately, in performance?

5.1.6 Findings from each level of analysis

Client themes and coaching interventions were similar in the first analysis for most of the files; it was in the subsequent readings of all the coaching transcripts that the differences and unique context for each client emerged. What was interesting was how with each client, the coaching model began to emerge with all of the client files by the end of the third and fourth analyses.

One of my insights at the end of the second level of analysis was that the client themes relate to content; and the coaching interventions relate to the structure of the conversation.

In the final conversation, after the clients had read their own transcripts, several of them expressed great ambivalence about reading their own text. They were quite surprised at the difference in reading the text from actually experiencing the session. One comment was that the 'relationship' was missing; in other words, reading the text on its own did not recreate the experience of being in the session with the coach.

5.1.7 Client themes

The project findings have been the development of typical client themes that emerged as a result of the conversation between coach and client, and a code of intervention themes which the executive coach can use as a guide. These are presented in the annexure on Evidence. What

seems clear is that with each analysis new themes emerge for the client. This would indicate that there could be an infinite number of themes to be presented by the client. This means the coach must be flexible: in terms of the model the coach develops and works with and to be open to the ‘unexpected’ at all times.

5.1.8 Coaching interventions

Although as a researcher, I initially set out to develop a specific ‘template’ of questions or a question framework, I discovered that if the coach is to be flexible and spontaneous — being present to the issues of the client at all times — it is more useful to have a coaching model and a series of themes which are addressed through the use of questions relevant to the client’s context. The code book addresses this by listing the coaching intervention themes, as well as the themes that have emerged from the clients’ texts. Although specific questions have shown up as useful it is important that the coach never to be prescriptive in their use. In this way the coach will *help to build the relationship, help to create transformational change for the client, help the client to make shifts in thinking, feeling and behaviour, and ultimately in performance.*

What is shown to be transformative and to create the greatest change in the coaching conversation is the identification and transformation of limiting assumptions into empowering assumptions through the use of question frameworks.

Change happens when the client transforms limiting assumptions into empowering ones – and then commits him/herself to action as a result. The coach’s job is to understand this process and to help the client create empowering assumptions, and thus a new attitude or mindset – which could be the beginning of a new paradigm or worldview. This can take place at any stage of the coaching process.

However, there needs to be a high degree of trust between the coach and the client, and the relationship needs to be strong – it is in the safety and confidential nature of the coach/client relationship where the client will feel free to be challenged by his or her limiting thoughts, feelings or behaviour.

5.1.9 The coaching model

Another development has been a series of questions within the central framework of the model (input / throughput / output) that help the client to achieve their desired objectives (and that help the client to identify and replace limiting paradigms). What has emerged very clearly is that to help the client with transformational change, it is a combination of (1) coaching interventions that highlight the client’s key concerns and issues, and (2) working flexibly within a coaching model that encompasses three over-arching parameters, i.e. the relationship,

experiential learning and existential concerns. This is explained in more detail in Chapter 6: Project Conclusions and Recommendations.

5.1.10 The relationship

One of the key findings of the project has been a reminder of the importance of working flexibly within a coaching model that addresses not just the linear, surface level objectives of the client, but also one that helps coach and client to develop the relationship in such a way that the deeper issues of *being*, *doing*, and *becoming* emerge (for both coach and client).

These are addressed through: reflection and awareness, assumption of responsibility, setting goals and taking action, personal growth and change. Three levels of the coaching conversation are developed through the listening and questioning skills of the coach: the relationship, experiential learning and existential concerns.

5.1.11 Bracketing assumptions

I have undertaken to be critical of the phenomenological method employed in this thesis by discussing it in the first three chapters. Secondly I have developed a critique with each client in this chapter where I have selected one client transcript for each client, read and analysed those six transcripts, and included comments on:

- Impartiality and Bracketing Assumptions.
- Maintaining Impartiality.
- Showing Partiality.
- To Conclude.

The phenomenon that emerges from the transcripts parallels the journey of the researcher. For example, in Chapter 3 where I have included a reasoned rationale for my choice of action research with a phenomenological approach, there are inherent problems for the researcher when analysing the transcripts (i.e. analysing the conversations that occurred between coach and client). The question is whether it is actually possible for both coach practitioner (when in conversation with the client) and for the researcher (when analysing the transcripts) to bracket all assumptions.

It is apparent from the text (examples given in the section ‘impartiality and bracketing assumptions’ for each client transcript) that the coach practitioner made huge efforts to bracket assumptions; but what is not in the text is what the coach practitioner was actually ‘thinking’. In other words, the coach practitioner may not demonstrate any type of judgement or assessment, thus maintaining a neutral, impartial stance. That is the job of the coach, to appear

to be and to remain impartial. However, the inner voice of the coach is not present in the text; it is therefore not possible for the researcher when reading the transcripts to say with any certainty whether all assumptions or biases were absent. The question therefore remains, ‘is it possible to bracket all assumptions?’ And if it is true that all human behaviour is based on assumptions, this then conflicts with the very nature of Spinelli’s first two rules in his organising model which are based on this phenomenological model. I list below where I have made changes.

Phenomenology is in effect a descriptive discipline. As a researcher I have tried to describe the client themes and coaching interventions that have emerged repeatedly in the transcripts. However, I also had to decide what to do with these emerging phenomena – i.e. interpret them or organise them into a structure.

Phenomenological enquiry is continually oriented back to the beginning, to experience as it is lived. From this position I have listed and defined the themes and phrases that have emerged from the process of research, and gone back to the ‘experience as it is lived,’ i.e. the coaching conversation. At that point I have acknowledged the emerging phenomena and identified a developing coaching model.

However, in bracketing meaning, the question is asked: *how is this topic actually experienced?* In this instance, how is meaning experienced by the researcher in analysing the data. In each coach/client text analysis below I give examples of where it was possible, and where it was difficult for the researcher to be impartial (i.e. to bracket assumptions) when reading the client transcripts.

In the next section I detail what was found from the analysis of each of the levels of analysis in terms of client themes and coaching interventions. The final conclusions and recommendations of the research project are in Chapter 6.

5.2 Client transcript analysis: Client 1 (C1)

I started the analysis process with C1 because she is one of the most interesting clients I have worked with. She is a well-known journalist with a national newspaper group in South Africa, and is bi-lingual Afrikaans and English. I will not give too much of her personal history as it would identify her. C1 worked with me regularly for two years. I have chosen the transcripts from 2nd August 2003, 30th October 2003, 16th March 2004 and 10th May 2004 to analyse as they dealt with her key presenting problem.

Her key issues were a very difficult and aggressive boss whose main aim seemed to C1 to be to belittle and humiliate her with the aim of pushing her off the desk where she was senior news editor. For the first year of our work together she was anxious, highly stressed, near a nervous breakdown, and working seven days a week with no time for any personal life. She was highly regarded in her field, but seemed to bring an array of personal problems that emerged in the workplace perhaps as a result of her history as much as the way she managed interpersonal relations. Her flat was broken into at one stage of the coaching process which nearly set us back permanently; but with counselling and coaching she was able to manage what was a very traumatic event.

We quickly ascertained that the primary goals for our work together were to: help her manage the relationship and the conflict with her boss and her team; to handle aggressive and abusive treatment from her boss; to rebuild her self-esteem and her self-confidence; to make a decision whether to leave the newspaper where she was currently working; to rebuild her health and balance in her life (which seemed, to her, impossible in her circumstances); and to make a decision about the direction of her career.

We succeeded in small steps. Often she would begin to handle conflict and communication more successfully then regress in her ability to handle difficulties. It was a slow process and we needed time to build trust in our relationship. C1 was not sure at first what it meant to be in a coaching relationship, and it was very important to be flexible and spontaneous, letting her come and go as she needed. As she travelled extensively with her work, we would sometimes meet once a week, at other times every two months, dependent on her erratic schedule. One of C1's key existential issues was that she felt she had no choice, i.e. no room to manoeuvre, and no room to negotiate her position within the newspaper organisation itself; she also felt she had no one to turn to for support.

What emerged at the end of the coaching period was exciting to see, as she and I had both been challenged by her circumstances. Gradually, due to the coaching process, her self-belief returned. She began to recognise for herself how highly she was regarded nation-wide for her journalism; she could explicitly acknowledge her own skills and talents; she began to handle relationships within the team and with her boss with greater assertiveness; her anxiety became more manageable; she began to think through decisions more carefully and with less emotion that inhibited clear thinking; and she began to recognise the patterns of thought and action that led to some of her conflicts with others.

5.2.1 First data analysis (C1)

The first analysis of the four two-hour coaching sessions with C1 was using the Ethnograph. My research assistant, R2 (Researcher 2) and I set up 1) a file for each conversation where we coded all of the coach's interventions; 2) we set up a client file and coded the client's text for themes; and 3) we printed out a mark-up file which collated all of the coded texts and gave us the line numbers where the text could be found. This was done with each and every client coaching session. We used the Ethnograph to interpret and take into its software system each of the Word files for the transcribed coaching conversations.

5.2.1.1 Client themes (first analysis C1)

These are the client themes that emerged from the first analysis of each of the above four coaching sessions with C1:

ability, achieving goals, advice, anger, anxiety, bullied, busy, change, chat, collapse, communicate, confident, conflict, develop, disempower, empower, excited, explain, fears, forward (turned a corner), goal, ill, impact, insight, I know, I will, I'm sure, integrity, manipulate, money, neurotic, no more, normal, possibility, process, proud, relax, repress, self-recognition, sleep, stood up, stress, strong, suggestion, victim, working, tired, will, worry, yes.

5.2.1.2 Coach's interventions (first analysis C1)

These are the coaching intervention themes that emerged from the first analysis of each of the above four coaching sessions with C1. At this point there was no delineation of the 'type' of questions or interventions that the coach was using:

analogy, anxiety, being, chat, conflict, control, communicate (check in), disempower, explain, empower, fulfilment, going back, insight, learning, question, reflection, responsibility, stress, summarise, technique.

5.2.2 Second data analysis (C1)

The second reading of the texts was enlightening. Perhaps it was a result of having read through all of the texts on the computer screen so that the key themes and content were familiar; perhaps it was a matter of developing skill in analysing the texts. Whichever it was, a larger, more detailed list of coaching interventions and client themes emerged with the second analysis, which was made from the hard copy rather than using the Ethnograph and analysing on-screen copy.

I read each coaching session, and wrote down the client themes and coaching interventions as I read; I constantly compared my notes to the code book created by the first Ethnograph

analysis. As a result of the second reading of each text I created a new list of client themes and new coaching interventions for C1. This happened with each of the six clients. There was more distinction between the different types of coaching interventions in the second analysis. On reflection, many coaching interventions seemed to be context-driven (for example, ‘so what happened, have you tried to contact him’ (line 150, 2 August 2003?). Another reflection is that it takes going through the material a second time to actually ‘see’ what is there. From this second analysis there also emerged a broad range of types of context-related questions and a detailed list of types of questions asked by the coach.

5.2.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C1)

action goal, ambiguity, angry, anxiety, being, blaming, change, confidence, coaching helps, decision, determination, disempowerment, humour, negative insight, knowing, problem, realisation, resistance, resistance to change, responsibility, scared, self confidence, self-doubt, strength, the story, story of disempowerment, taking action, transition, unsure, will, worry.

5.2.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C1)

action and goals, acknowledgement, ambiguity, anomaly, anything else, asking for limiting assumption, back to you, being, being and purpose, being tough, challenge, change, chat (informed chat), checking, clarify, concern, confidence, confidence builder, confirmation, confirmation/being, confirming action/outcomes, confirming feelings, confusion, creating safety, dealing with limiting assumption, difference, do differently (looking for change/to summarise), empathise, encourage, empowering action, EQ/emotional intelligence/emotion, fees, freedom, fulfilment (similar to purpose), future pacing, hang on/stick with that, humour, leader, leadership, let's look at this, limiting assumption, limiting behaviour, issue/menu, journey, letting go, managing stress, meaning, power, negative insight, metaphor, observation, overcoming limiting assumptions, open up the conversation, probing for action, probing commitment, purpose, pushing for action, query, questioning action, question re anxiety, question for commitment, question re commitment to action (leading client to say in their own words), question re career, question for confirmation, question to dig deeper, question for information, question for insight, question to build on insight, question to challenge, question to clarify, question to guide insight, question to help with decision and action, question to probe, question to reframe, question to understand, recognition, recommendation, recommended reading, reframe, relationship building, repeat challenge, repeat question, rephrase, resistance, restate as question, self-confident, self-doubt, tough, sharing, shift, statement to clarify, strength, suggestion, talk to me, tell me the story, teach, think, tough observation, transition, triggers, turning around limiting assumptions,

understand, unsure, what changed for you, what's different now, why, will, women, wondering.

5.2.3 Different types of questions to emerge (C1)

for action, to ascertain, to ask for limiting assumptions, to build confidence, re career, to challenge, to change, to clarify, to confirm, to confirm goals, for a decision, to dig deeper, direct questions, to empower, to encourage growth, for information, to guide insight, to help with decision and action, to lead to insight, to probe, to probe commitment, to push for action, to query, to question commitment, to reframe, to reframe and repeat to confirm, to restate, to summarise, to think, to understand.

5.2.4 Findings and reflections (C1)

What I noticed in this first level of analysis is that the coach's interventions were sometimes listed similarly to client themes; for example, stress or anxiety. In going back for the second analysis I discovered that they were usually questions concerning the client's stress or anxiety. What was emerging was a clear list of coaching interventions (i.e. types of question or intervention), and as a result I could ascertain how those interventions helped the client to discuss the various issues that emerged. There was a building of trust and relationship with each subsequent client session. The client began to feel comfortable to be honest with herself and the coach about things working and not working.

5.2.5 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C1)

In a final reading, I selected the transcript of C1's session on 2nd August 2003 to investigate any difficulties the researcher may have had in bracketing assumptions and maintaining impartiality when reading and analysing the text. The text articulated only the dialogue between coach and client; not the thoughts of the coach.

5.2.5.1 Maintaining impartiality (C1)

When reading the transcripts, I noticed the coach often used the technique of 'question reframe' as a way of creating perspective on a situation.

Coach (lines 85-88)

So what you are saying is that you are becoming comfortable because he may be leaving so inside of you there is less agitation about him (*question reframe*).

Client (lines 90-91)

Yes, less stress about how he could put me down.

A similar technique to 'going back' is 'stick with that,' where the coach asks the client to stay with a point. These two techniques kept the researcher in the 'meta' perspective. In other words, if the coach was in 'meta perspective' the researcher found it easy to be so.

Coach (lines 278-280)

Hang on a minute, stick with that – so Parliament has boring – so say X goes....

The coach keeps the 'meta' perspective with the client by asking questions that invite reflection on something the client has learned.

Coach (lines 459-471)

You seem much more relaxed but obviously you've had time off. But this business of 'he can't break me down' – you seem much more grounded to me. You seem much more 'you', you know, just kind of 'in your power' somehow. Does that make sense....So how are you going to hang on to that? Are you going to keep that without hanging on?

Client (lines 488-491)

At the moment I feel detached from it but you know I haven't really encountered him so much so I don't know. Maybe I.....

Another reframe used by the coach is "I wonder" which is a lead into thinking big picture. It is also an invitation to the client to reflect and learn from a difficult event or situation. Secondly the suggestion of 'being detached' implies that it is possible in the future. This is a kind of future pacing.

Coach (lines 480-486)

I just wonder, just in terms of how you feel because I think this is quite important – you know you can be bullied by somebody and it can get to you. Or you can be bullied by somebody and you can be detached from it. So I am just wondering...

Client (lines 488-491)

At the moment I feel detached from it but you know I haven't really encountered him so much so I don't know. Maybe I.....

The researcher observed that the coach seemed to maintain impartiality in the long tale told by the client, which could have been 'interpreted' by the researcher as a victim tale (an assumption) – instead the coach asked a question about what could have been done differently, and secondly to 'wonder' and to future pace (think about how to handle this in the future):

Coach (lines 712-717)

Can you tell me what you could have done differently? You know when you think that you went to see him and you didn't like him in the beginning; I mean is there anything you could have done differently?

Coach (lines 734-743)

I am just wondering – I think this is important C1 because these kinds of things, they do happen a lot, and I am just wondering in terms of what you could have done differently, just think for the future, what can we learn from this because you didn't like him from the beginning. So I am just wondering if this happens again, rather than going ahead with it...

Sometimes the client mentioned the 'victim' mindset, which meant that the assumption did not arise with the reader. The coach made each point explicit thus rendering it a fact, a feeling – something tangible, rather than an assumption:

Client (lines 1031-1033):

You know, it was that kind of thing and the thing of feeling of being made out to be a victim.

Coach (lines 1035-1040):

So this 'fight' kind of blocked that whole victim thing out and the anger thing and the powerlessness thing? So when you went on holiday, did you sleep when you were on holiday?

It was interesting how the coach brought in a 'meta' perspective with her interventions, which could include recognition of the client's suffering:

Coach (lines 867-868):

And that is interesting too that you were able to contain it and manage it. That's a key component of emotional intelligence by the way. There are two factors in emotional intelligence: one is managing yourself and the other is managing the relationship between you and the other person. So the fact that you managed yourself which enabled you to manage that relationship is stunning because those people are extremely maddening.

The technique of 'going back' and using a 'question to clarify' and a 'question to create a meta perspective' are all used consistently in this text, and are aligned with a sense of neutrality and looking at the bigger picture.

Coach (lines 1367-1370):

So going back to you, how does that affect you? Because it sounds like you're trying to understand it in order to figure out how you feel (*going back*);

Coach (lines 1473-1475):

But back to you. So this being afraid at night is this....;

Coach (lines 1534-1544):

So today, it is really interesting because it seems like you have shifted from when we first started talking, you have really made a shift from X was the key issue and handling that and dealing with that and now it seems like it's almost I mean it's obviously an issue, you've seen him, but it's almost like it was circling you and it's not like that anymore. So how come? What's changed? (*question to create a 'meta' perspective*);

Coach (lines 1418-1425):

Tell me, in terms of what you want to write – just thinking about whether you stay or whether you go with Y or – and I think this is quite interesting – I think this is a key issue today and is this something you would want to explore or is it not? (*clarifying*);

Coach (lines 1859-1868)

They have a very loyal, fiercely loyal readership. So going back to what I said what's kind of different and you were saying what's different in terms of how you moved on. It seems like you have also moved on, you are developing yourself professionally, being able to do things, you're developing your leadership; you're developing.

Client (lines 1870-1878)

Not consciously until now, but I think, and it's probably how it may have passed me by, I wasn't in the – to realise that what is extreme, particularly the thing with...the negative things and it was in a sense negative, brought out when I had consciously went in to grapple with it was a leadership ...

5.2.5.2 Showing partiality (C1)

The inability to 'bracket assumptions' can lead the researcher into a position of partiality rather than neutrality, it seems to happen if the researcher is pulled into the 'content of the story'; this momentarily stops the reader from remaining a neutral observer. The client's story in this manuscript is complex, and once or twice the reader thought, hmmm, this seems 'never-ending' – and there ends the ability to bracket assumptions.

However, in reading this text, the researcher noted the length of the client's narratives by looking through the entire transcript, and kept reminding herself of the need for impartiality as she noted what emerged from the text. Sometimes it was difficult not to be confused or magnetised by the content; it was lengthy and seemed to often be about unfairness or injustice; that meant the researcher had to constantly pull back from becoming too absorbed in the content of the narrative thus risking the loss of a third party perspective.

Client (lines 552 – 628)

And meanwhile I did one or two times have to say ‘don’t treat me like I’m some floozy, dumb floozy.’... So now I have to go back to the manager ... Then I went back to the manager so they cancelled it and ... No ... yet. So what I also have to do today is properly speak to my ... Two thousand out of my own pocket ... They wouldn’t acknowledge the fact ... out in front of their client as though I’m some sort of a ... actually I couldn’t sleep for two nights because just the anger afterwards ... I was obviously spent and just shocked that people can be so aggressive ... If they don’t sort it out, I will ...

Another difficulty for the researcher to maintain an impartial, non-judgemental reading of the text was when the client appears to feel very sorry for herself.

Client (880-882)

I didn’t think that anybody would try to rip me off in such a way, blatantly, to my face, before.

However, when the researcher realised that it was more anger on the part of the client, the researcher retreated to a place of neutrality. The client seemed to be facing the reality of a situation and getting angry; that is an interpretation based on the client’s language. It was more difficult to bracket assumptions in this instance.

Client (lines 854-865):

I was quite proud of myself in the way that I stood up to them being quite cool...and just insisting. I didn’t quite get away with everything but I think as I walked away from it and by the time I spoke to you, I was starting to realise how angry, how, you know, the emotions came up afterwards.

Another observation on the part of the researcher was the ‘opinion’ or ‘judgment’ that the coach was sometimes inappropriate; but the tone of ‘humour’ was not in the two-dimensional text; it would have come out of the tone of voice. If said in a humorous tone it may have been appropriate (the comment the researcher wrote next to the text was ‘really coach!’). The point is that the researcher lost impartiality in both of these instances:

Coach (lines 1241-1243)

This is one of the key reasons why I would never marry an American!

Coach (lines 1317-1323)

I mean the women who lunch; white types. I don't mean that all white women don't work but what I mean is that I'd just come from a culture where women worked because they have to work. It is very unusual to stay home with small babies. Women work because they can't not.

5.2.6 To conclude (C1)

What seemed to encourage impartiality for the researcher was observing that: the coach continued to ask probing and challenging questions, sometimes reframing or summarising. The researcher was constantly aware of her third party perspective and needed to stay a neutral observer. What seemed to encourage the emergence of assumptions or interpretation when the researcher read the text was when the researcher became too engrossed in the content of the narrative.

What has emerged from this exercise in observing where the researcher may lose a neutral stance, the ability to stay impartial or to bracket assumptions – was that each time there was an instance that the researcher could be pulled into the content of the story (which was quite gripping at times); or if the researcher was thinking this client feels sorry for herself – each time those thoughts occurred, the researcher went back to reread the text to re-establish a mindset of observation.

5.3 Client transcript analysis: Client 5 (C5)

Client 5 (C5) is a client that I have been working with for over three years. He is an international professional golfer who travels the world playing in tournaments. C5's mother attended one of my business seminars a number of years ago; she approached me at the end of the session to ask how I could help her son deal with the distractions of the crowd at tournaments. I suggested several techniques and explained them to her in detail; she relayed them to C5 by telephone. C5 was playing in the American PGA tour at the time. What I suggested was successful, and from that time C5 came to coaching sessions with me whenever he was in South Africa. We usually worked together twice a month when he was on tour in Africa; in between sessions we spoke by telephone. He was very keen to be part of this project.

C5's key issues during our entire coaching relationship were: how to manage his internal mental activity; to still the negative voices in his head when on tour; to manage his mental anxiety; and to develop mental rigour on and off the golf course. Our goals in working together were to help C5 manage the difficulties he faced as a result of each tour, and to help him develop a mindset that would serve him well during each game in order for him to play successfully at international level. A secondary goal was to find another sponsor; his American

sponsor pulled out at the end of my first year of working with C5 because he moved back to South Africa.

Most of our work was spent identifying and replacing limiting assumptions. At one point I sent him to a therapist; he returned after several sessions saying that he gained more help from our work together. My question was always whether I let him off too easily; I thought there were deeper issues blocking his ultimate success. However, during our work together his ranking moved up 31 places internationally.

C5's presenting problem was that he played brilliantly when practicing; on tour and needing to 'make the cut' (score low enough to go into the next tournament or the championship) he lost confidence in himself and let his 'inner voice' influence him negatively. This 'inner voice' increased his lack of confidence, and ensured that he was playing emotionally rather than objectively and coolly. Our goal in working together was to help him manage his inner voice, to learn to meditate and relax prior to a tournament, and to manage his emotions successfully so that they did not influence him on the course.

He made the decision to get married in the middle of our work together, and his wife did not totally support his golfing career. This introduced an entirely new set of emotional obstacles for C5 as he travelled extensively on tour. One year we devoted most of our sessions to managing his turbulent emotions and finally to helping him with the decision of whether to give up his great passion: his golf career.

Regarding his sports career, C5 learned how to manage himself and his emotions on the course. He learned visualisation techniques to help him when he did not play well during a tournament (which helped him turn around unsuccessful shots); he learned relaxation techniques to use on and off the course. In the final year of our work together, the stress he was under from travelling and pressure from his wife to give up golf took their toll on his career.

Our final sessions together were to help him make a positive decision to leave golf as a career; in other words, to leave out of choice. We developed a plan of action to help him pursue a new career in the sporting world; this was to enable him to support his family and still be involved in sport. Throughout our work together his issues were very existential: he was constantly looking at golf as the primary source of meaning and purpose in his life. To give up golf was anathema to him. His decision to end his career in golf was a major turning point in his life.

5.3.1 First data analysis (C5)

The first analysis was of three selected coaching sessions with C5 using the Ethnograph. The two-hour sessions were on 10th October, 2003, 21st June 2004, and 4th March 2005. These were the only sessions to transcribe successfully. My research assistant, R2 and I 1) set up a file for each conversation where we coded all of the coach's interventions; 2) created a client file which coded the client's text for themes; and 3) printed out a mark-up file which collated all of the coded texts and gave us the line numbers where the texts could be found. This was done with all three sessions. We used the Ethnograph to interpret and take into its software system each of the Word files for the transcribed coaching conversations.

Having learned from the analysis of C1's files, instead of writing up the client themes and coaching interventions in one continuous list, I began to create a new code book for each session. I also marked up the hard copy texts more carefully, writing client themes to the right of the copy, and coaching interventions to the right of the copy but circled for ease of identification. I first read the mark-up files to see which codes emerged in the first analysis conducted with the Ethnograph; then I read the client file looking primarily for client themes; and finally read the coach's file coding new types of coaching interventions. I continued to do this for the subsequent four clients, building up the code book as the reading continued. I made selective decisions about which interventions to include; they reoccurred throughout the other texts and often I was only beginning to identify them.

5.3.1.1 Problems encountered (C5)

The key problem to emerge was timing. I had spent too long writing up lengthy methodology and literature review chapters and subsequently had to plan how to spend an adequate number of days of analysis for each client. Unexpectedly, my laptop computer broke down in the middle of writing up the draft thesis; but it was replaced and not too much data was lost. Although the Ethnograph files were not transferable, as I had hard copies, this was not a problem.

5.3.1.2 Client themes (first analysis C5)

These are the themes that emerged from the first Ethnograph analysis of each of the three coaching sessions with C5:

ability, adapt, analogy, anger, anxiety, awareness, background, challenge, challenges, change, chat, commitment, communicate, confident, control, decision, disempower, empower, explain, failure, fears, feelings, frustrated, fulfilment, goal, impact, insight, integrity, learning, make sense, money, motivation, need, opportunity, possibility, relationship, responsibility, self esteem, stress, success, technique, understand, worry, yes.

5.3.1.3 Coach's interventions (first analysis C5)

The first analysis for each of C5's files was very different. The mark-up file for transcript one was two pages; the mark-up codes for transcript two was eleven pages; the mark-up file for the third transcript was eleven pages. I also gained more insight into the types of client themes and types of coaching interventions used in the second analysis.

ability, analogy, challenge, challenges, chat; decision, disempower, empower, explain, feelings, goal, going back, guide, guide option, health, important, insight, interest, money, opportunity, possibility, question, reflection, repetition, summarise, technique, understand, yes.

5.3.2 Second data analysis (C5)

What I attempted to do in the second analysis was to read the transcripts as if I had not read any other client transcripts, bracketing assumptions of what themes and interventions might appear, and being open to the text itself. I noticed more detail in the second reading of C5's text than I had in any other previous readings; and I began to write out the questions as they emerged according to type of question. I was more open to the different types of interventions that were presenting themselves, and more able to describe them linguistically. In the third session with C5, the existential issues of choice, freedom, and decision recurred again and again.

Something that I have noticed with the analysis of both C1's and C5's files, is that even when I think I have assiduously written down the code words to the right of the text, and copied them into the code book, I still had to go through the text once again to ensure that I had written down each client theme and every coaching intervention and entered it into the new emerging code book.

5.3.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C5)

Advice; analyse; advising; aspirational goal; background (the story); building an idea; change and meaning; chat (building rapport and relationship); choice; coaching helps; commitment with resistance; concern; confidence; counselling; decision/decisive; defensive; dejected; demotivated; depressed; disappointment; doubt; dreaming; dreaming (giving up the dream); empowering assumption; existential angst; existential decision; excuse; feeling disempowered; disempowering paradigm (my 5th hole is my nemesis hole); freedom; growing; guilty; humour; idea; key insight (I mustn't fight this anymore); lack of freedom; lack of self belief; learning; limiting assumptions; low self-esteem; making a decision; master/mastery; mental power; mental problem; negative language for a positive thought (there is no doubt in my mind that I can't be a champion); nervous; no confidence; no decision; observation; options; paradox: confidence and edgy; passionate; positive; possible goal; pressure; real insight;

realisation; recommendation; reflection; resentful; resistant; resources; revelation; self-management; self observation; self-realisation; self-value; self-worth; sensitive; story; strong; suggestion; tense; thinking; unsure; vision; visualising.

5.3.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C5)

ABC; acknowledge to empower; acknowledgement; advice re communication; anchoring; anything else; apology; aspirational goal; being tough; browbeating; challenge (make a decision); change (what is the change for you; is there a change in how you feel?); chat (to build the relationship); choice (existential); circle of excellence (technique); comparing (for learning); concern; confirmation (context related); confirmation of ideas; confirming possible goal; confirming rationale for a goal; contracting; idea; encouraging; feeling (need to see how often feelings come up); goal (how would you define your goal; what is your goal?); goal strategy; future goals; insightful observation; insightful statement; just say (advice re communication); let's work with this; letting go; looking for insight; NLP; limiting assumptions; listen to me; mental management, possibility; reflection for insight; reflecting back; recognition; relationship (can interrupt the conversation); restatement; resources; summarise (let me just look at); statement to summarise; probing goals; recommendation; sabotage (holding you back); summarise and confirmation; summarise and repetition (technique); statement to confirm; sounds like; strategy; statement to summarise; suggestion; summarise and reflect (let me just look at); tough challenge; turning around limiting assumptions; value; vision, visualising.

5.3.2.3 Different types of questions to emerge (C5)

for action; asking for limiting assumption; for change, to challenge quietly; re client content; to confirm understanding; digging deeper, information, need, what's holding you back, decision, existential issues, existential decision; re goal; how would you define your goal; I'm wondering; information (to strengthen the case); for insight; insightful question; key criteria; to lead to insight; re letting go; re limiting behaviour; re menu; re money; re need; re our work together; re outcomes; overturning limiting assumptions; probing; re survival; what's holding you back; what's stopping you; survival; to understand; what happened; what changed; what gained; what is your goal; what learned.

5.3.3 Findings and reflections (C5)

One of the learnings for the coach in C5's second transcript (21 June 2004), was to refrain from telling the client what to do. The reading showed that it helped the client more if the coach intervened in such a way that C5 thought through his own ideas (for example, lines 581-595: 'you're thinking of two ideas you could do – one you could run golf clinics in the

townships or you can run golf clinics for the kids of the Pick 'n Pay employees; but it's probably better to do it in the townships'. As it happened the client was writing proposals but was not really committed to either idea. Another finding was that in the second analysis much greater depth and detail of coaching interventions were discovered: different types of confirmation, goal setting, summarising, reflection, questions and techniques being used (for example, circle of excellence).

In all the transcripts for all the clients I looked at the text for coaching interventions and client themes but not necessarily from a content point of view. In other words, the content of the story was not important to deconstruct the text. What was important was the context within which we were working; i.e. what were the bigger existential issues the client was trying to resolve. These often included the development of trust in the relationship between coach and client, as well as the client reporting back in subsequent sessions what learning had been achieved from, and since, the last session; the client was consciously learning from experience. These reflections happened in the 'input' or beginning of the coaching session when the client presented current pressing issues; reflected on what he had achieved since we had last met; and suggested and discussed the menu of topics we would work on that day.

5.3.4 The relationship (C5)

In the second and third readings I began to discern how the relationship was developing and how it could withstand quite tough interventions from the coach. For example, in C5's second transcript (21 June 2004) the strength of the relationship could withstand the coach being tough and challenging, pushing the client for insight and recognition of how he was holding himself back; the text showed what an arduous process it was, but the relationship was strong enough for the client and coach to continue (for example, lines 258-263: 'I'm a bit cross with you because I just won't accept that you've tried, because you know what, you haven't'; lines 314-317: 'well you know what, you don't have to be sorry; you just have to do something about it'; lines 1642-44: 'so why don't you work on this?').

5.3.5 Existential issues (C5)

In C5's transcripts there was a definite building up of existential issues around choice, freedom and decision. They recurred again and again until the end of the contracted coaching period when C5 made his final decision to change careers and give up the dream of a lifetime, i.e. becoming a top class international golfer (line 1297-1299: "I want to be that, you know what I mean?") Also, in thinking back on Client C1 I realised that quite a few of the existential issues such as choice, freedom, angst, anxiety, being (for example, who am I?) were in the texts but I had not identified them (until the third reading). What I discovered after completing the second

analysis of C5's transcripts was that I was much more open to the existential and experiential learning issues for the next four clients.

5.3.6 General conclusions (C5)

At the end of each second analysis for each client's transcripts, I would add new client themes and new coaching interventions to the code book (see Chapter 4). I began to discover that what seemed to be specific questions or phrases often fell within a precise category; for example, goal setting, assumption questions, summarising, acknowledgement, reflection, existential issues (for example, choice, freedom, and change).

5.3.7 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C5)

I found it interesting as researcher to read through C5's 22nd October 2003 session. As I gathered up my notes, there was no point in this manuscript where I as researcher lost the ability to not just be a third party neutral observer; whatever my own assumptions and biases could have been they did not emerge. One reason for this may be that only fifty percent of the manuscript was available; the tape had been corrupted. There were only fourteen pages of transcript, where normally there are up to 50 pages. However, bearing that in mind when reading transcripts for C1 and C14, the point of keeping or losing impartiality happened within reading the first few pages. It may be something about this particular client (C5) – that remains to be seen in reading the next three clients (C2, C3, and C6).

5.3.7.1 Maintaining impartiality (C5)

What I noticed as a researcher is that no particular depth of negative emotion emerged in reading the text – mostly it seemed to be the exuberance and enthusiasm of the client that emerged. However, does noticing positive or negative emotion mean that I am making an assumption?

Client (lines 11-12)

Well it's all going to be brilliant so I mean...

Client (lines 105-114)

Ja, it also gives me a huge incentive to really, really play well – not that I haven't got any incentive before – but um, I can't wait. I mean they have still got to build it. It's a plot and plan so that's why I was thinking about should one move a door 'here' and I was thinking about making a cupboard 'there' and that's the sort of thing I was thinking about.

Client (lines 140-142; 154-158):

Ja, no it has. I mean I'm so confident now it's actually ridiculous. My mind is; it's in the best place it's ever been in my life. I can't tell you the change and the meaning of my golf in the last few months. It's frightening.

It seems as if it is simple for myself as the researcher to be impartial when I can visualise the story that is being told; visual thinking is my dominant mode of thinking; that is a possible way that I maintain third party, neutral perspective (when coaching and when researching). The client tells his story primarily in kinaesthetic mode but with a visual sense; I see what is being described visually in my mind's eye; I don't pick up the kinaesthetic – I 'see' the description of tension. I 'see' the story as an observer, as I read the text of the client telling the story. However, I 'see' from a third party neutral perspective – just 'seeing' what is being described but without making positive or negative assumptions or any judgement about what the client is saying.

Client (lines 296-322):

Ja, I'm so excited and that's why I said to you, I don't need much time because I think it is going very well but the one part of my game which is what I want to talk to you about, is my chipping. Um, that has been a problem mentally for me and I've found out why. For instance I spoke to you last week, my technique has been flawed. So because I've had a bad technique I was hitting bad shots. But then it became, in my head, so I had no confidence to hit it, so I've got no confidence and a bad technique is not a good combination. The reason being that I've grown up with a certain technique which I had; well a lot of people do it. But I sort of made my own master at it and I'd become very, very good at chipping. I mean my friend...a friend of mine said to me, he says he thinks I've got one of the best shortcuts he's ever seen which is chipping the shortcut and you know I did. I did. I had an unbelievable shortcut but it's; I had mastered a bad technique. But now it's coming out.

Another example of the story told in visual and kinaesthetic mode:

Client (lines 350-380):

So the second round I went in there knowing that I had to play really well and I did. I mean the very first hole was a par 5 and I hit a good shot next to the pin but just missed for an eagle so I made my birdie. So I've already got a birdie. The next hole is a par and I hit the best tee shot I've hit in my life onto the middle of the green and knocked in a putt for an eagle. I already was 3 under par for two holes I could cruise almost from then – because I think the cap was 2 under – so I was 2 under at that stage then. Then I did my whole thing around and I got to the last four or five holes and I started hitting a few iffy shots – for whatever reason – I put a bit of pressure on myself and then I had three holes left and I was 4 under par. The cut was 2 under

but I didn't know it was going to be 2 under but I figured it was probably going to be...if I hit the ball where I should have, I should have a par 5 and I could easily birdie it. And the 16th hole was the hardest hole on the course – a par 3 but it was very tough – and I hit my shot just short of the green and I had to chip. So I was getting really intense and nervous and I almost started shaking and then my hands start feeling like jelly when I have to chip. That's how I was feeling. It was a terrible feeling. But I just calmed myself. I did my breaths, I just relaxed and I just thought 'I know what to do'.

The questions the coach asks keeps the perspective of observation – the coach asks about change, and she uses kinaesthetic language:

Coach (lines 330-332):

And what is the change for you physically as well? I mean is there a change in how you feel?

In the coach's text, the coach summarises and reframes which makes it easy for the researcher to remain a neutral observer:

Coach (lines 505-513):

So, a couple of things. First of all interesting, first of all you said one of the things that we talked about before, the last time you came to me, you lacked discipline and that was something you really needed. And what you're telling me now is you have incredible discipline. That is what is really helping.

Coach (lines 517-522):

That's what's really helping because you didn't before. You would go out and practice and do your thing but you just kind of sailed through things. You didn't discipline yourself.

Coach (lines 559-565):

Now we need, "I can't wait to chip!" Ok, let's look at some of these things you've got here...

5.3.7.2 Showing partiality (C5)

I wonder if because coaches normally help their clients to develop self-confidence, positive thinking and a 'can-do' attitude, it was easy because it was already there for this client. The only room for impartiality may have been scepticism of the exuberance of this client; but that thinking has only happened on reflection; it did not happen when reading the text. The researcher is now grasping at straws looking for a lack of bracketing assumptions.

When reading the text, the researcher is already one step removed from the conversation. The researcher is in the position already of outsider or third party observer. Therefore the

phenomenological point of view is made more explicit. In this particular transcript, the researcher did not notice losing impartiality, or making any particular assumptions as she read. She also observed that the coach did not seem to lose impartiality at any point in this particular transcript.

5.3.8 To conclude (C5)

This researcher finds it easiest to stay a neutral, third-party observer, not making any assumptions – if she can picture what is being said, i.e. visualise the story in her mind's eye. This seems to separate her from any emotions or triggers that might make her partial to what the client or coach is saying in the text. Also, just the fact that the researcher is 'reading' the text of a dialogue between coach and client separates her as observer – so assumptions are not so easily triggered.

It could be different for coach and client who are 'in' the conversation; it is easier to dive into the content of the story if you are physically there 'in' the conversation. The researcher, as third party observer, also does not hear the audible tone of voices in the conversation; she can only guess from the words that she reads. However, because she has herself worked with each of the clients, she could make some assumptions about the tone of the text – perhaps this is where her assumptions emerge.

Most of the time a trained professional, in rereading a text, will probably be able to remember and recreate in their mind the context and content of the conversation; i.e. where a person's facial expression or body language gave away more than was being said. A good coach is always on the lookout for such telltale signs at the time, and if the distance of time is not too great should be able to remember such details and sub-text.

A wider point is the potential of the coach (as subject) to be their own researcher (i.e. observer). The value for the coach in this process is to continually learn from the process of coaching – and particularly with regards to her ability to maintain impartiality.

5.3.9 A developing model and transcript analysis (C5)

I have included this transcript analysis at the end of the section on C5 as a 'micro view' or process report critically inspecting the processes of the coach-client interaction (Bor and Watts, 2006: 136). The reason for this is that the processes that are used in the coaching conversation "determine the shape and quality of the encounter" (Bor and Watts, 2006: 135). The following is a written analysis of the coach's method and techniques; it is based on an actual recorded transcription for client C5 on 22nd October 2003. As a researcher, I analyse how the model develops throughout the transcript. One of the key reasons for this analysis is to identify the

processes of this particular coaching conversation – and to demonstrate how the model emerges (or comes into existence) and develops. The ability to “examine, analyse and alter” (Bor and Watts, 2006: 136) the coach’s practice in this research project is fundamental to my own coaching practice; it is imperative not just to be aware of the processes that occur in a coach/client conversation, but also to be aware of the techniques and model that frame the conversation (Bor and Watts, 2006: 136).

Out of the total number of transcripts used in this project, the processes which define the emerging model are coming into view; they are now becoming apparent: i.e. the *relationship* between coach and client is shown in the *input / throughput / output* framework of the coach/client conversation. Within the conversation, what also come into view are the experiential learning processes: reflection, responsibility, goal setting and learning (resulting in personal growth and change) which are aligned to the emerging existential concerns of freedom, meaning, choice and anxiety. By analysing both content and process in this session, I, as researcher, have attempted to explore the evolution of the existential executive coaching model.

In this analysis I refer to the structure of the conversation (*input, throughput, output*); the development of the four experiential learning *phases* of the model (*reflection* aligned to *freedom*; taking *responsibility* aligned to *meaning*; *goal setting* and action aligned to *choice*; learning and personal growth leading to *change* and aligned to *anxiety*).

5.3.9.1 Transcript analysis (C5)

In this section I will analyse one C5 coach/client transcript from the point of view of the developing model. The C5 transcript, dated 21 June 2004, included everything but the beginning of the session, and showed a cycling (or even spiralling) effect of the four *phases* of the conversation (*reflection; responsibility assumption; reconfirming aspirational goals and goals for the session; personal growth and learning; these were linked to the existential themes of freedom, meaning, choice and anxiety*). In the transcript, the use of input/throughput/output was clear in the conversation and showed the strength of the relationship between coach and client. In this transcript analysis, I have separated the *analysis* (i.e. researcher’s comments, explanations and analysis) from the *content* (i.e. coach/client dialogue) to clarify the difference; the words in italics refer to the framework of the emerging model.

5.3.9.2 Transcript dated 21 June 2004 (C5)

Input

There were 11 marked up pages of Ethnograph code which were useful to read as an introduction to themes prior to rereading the entire transcript. The *input* part of the session was a review of the goals set in the last session with the coach. This part of the conversation lasted about half of the session as C5 arrived with frustration, several conflicting goals and the need to realign his *purpose* in wanting to be a top international golfer. The *input* section contains a great deal of back and forth dialogue between client and coach, as the client cycles through his *anxieties* and *existential* issues about identity and being; the coach works through the review of what he should have achieved to date, lets him cycle through many *limiting assumptions* which C5 wants to get off his chest; the coach reconfirms the *key purpose* for the client and eventually they move into *throughput*, to work on one of the client's key limiting assumptions.

Throughput

The coach is very tough with the client; C5 has committed himself to writing proposals to obtain sponsorship but has not begun the process. The challenges brought up by the coach show the strength of the *relationship*; the coach is clearly sharing her anger with C5. In *throughput*, coach and client work on the current key limiting assumption; this becomes the real goal of the session. The coach uses Circle of Excellence (an NLP technique), to strengthen the client's self-belief and self-confidence. In *throughput* the coach and client continually cycle through *reflections* on his current existence; *responsibility* he has or has not taken (which relates to who he is trying to become); possible *goals and action* which relate to choices; and the *anxiety* he feels in having to *change*, i.e. to do things differently (for example, the need to obtain money through sponsorship and other means, when he simply wants to play golf – and the *anxiety* which encircles that need).

Output

In terms of his '*existence*' and the freedom C5 has to maintain in order to play golf – one of C5's key *limiting assumptions* is that he is not black, in a South Africa where that is currently a requirement for a golfer to obtain sponsorship. Much of C5's *anxiety* and frustration is about the impossible situation this places him in. Many of his assumptions are about whether he really can 'make the cut,' and how he continually sabotages his efforts. This is where coach and client conclude their work together. In terms of '*output*,' several *actions* result from the conversation; these are written down, and coach and client realign *purpose and meaning*; real *choices*; and his *learning* which can result in positive *change*.

5.3.9.3 Input

The first part of the tape is missing; so the reader enters the *input* part of the conversation where the client is describing his new diet strategy. This client is voluble, talkative and emotional. Throughout the over two-hour long conversation, the coach lets the client move from one topic to another, but she often brings him back to what he was discussing when he goes off track. In *input* C5 begins to chat about diet; what's current in the world of golf; who's in/who's out.

Content

The coach asks, "So, tell me what's going on, where you are and how much time with Sunny today," (lines 91-94). C5's reply is "Just till we get done and we're happy," (lines 96-97).

Analysis

This indicates to the coach that there are many issues to be resolved; she has worked for many years with C5 and knows him well.

Content

C5 begins *reflecting* on his frustration; he continually mentions his *existential anxiety* about his goal to be a top golfer, "definitely frustrated. Ja, a lot of... and goal being wasted in my life," (lines 103-109) because he sabotaged a recent tournament in Swaziland worrying about his marriage.

Analysis

Some of C5's *existential* issues are whether he really is *free* to play golf; both coach and client have discussed many times his wife's lack of support for his golf career:

Content

"I was more worried about my marriage than I was worried about my golf or anything else. And I really just wanted to get back and just try and sort things out because I was so cross with her really" (lines 126-131).

Analysis

C5's language indicates the depth of his *anxiety* and stress: sensitive, headache, stress, couldn't concentrate, was worried (lines 119-125). The conversation moves on to talk about the impending purchase of a new house and his worries about money. The coach and client chat about his *responsibilities*, talk about the *goals* he should set, and the *anxiety* that all of this causes him. This cycling through the four *phases* of the model: reflection, responsibility, goals and change (which reflects learning and personal growth) happens throughout the entire

conversation. The *input / throughput / output* contain this continuous cycling through the four *phases*.

Analysis

The client's issues or topics for the session emerge (or become apparent) as the coach challenges the client for his *lack of commitment to goals* set in a previous session.

Content

The client discusses his frustration in the recent tournaments he has entered in Africa and Europe recently: "So obviously I'm very frustrated about the fact I've got no money because I've got this opportunity to play in Europe but I can't play... So I went over not playing my best and ja, the weather conditions in Spain were miserable and freezing... but I played... but basically I lost a lot of money. I mean all my savings that I had for golf for the year was spent over those two weeks and I lost them all" (lines 167-185).

Analysis

For C5, having lost all of his money has disempowered him, and impacts him at the core of his very *purpose* and meaning in life, playing golf. It is what he has lived for.

Content

The coach moves on to talk about money which is at the root of his *anxiety*, asking C5: "Did you ever follow up my suggestion of the proposals for golf clinics in the Townships?" (lines 196-198). C5's reply: "I haven't worked as hard as what I should because I do have a lazy streak in me when it comes to things like that, but I do think it is the right way forward," (lines 201-206).

Analysis

The coach begins to challenge C5 strongly:

Content

"You told me that before; so when is the proposal going to be finished? It doesn't take that long to write a proposal," (lines 222-225).

Analysis

C5 moves into a blaming anguish; he is demotivated and dejected:

Content

“I mean the thing is I have had so many no’s from so many people that it’s so hard to go and ask for more because I know it’s going to be another no ... it knocks you every time you get a no,” (244-254).

Analysis

The coach continues to challenge the client about not performing, and makes it clear she understands the difficulty:

Content

“See I’m a bit cross with you because I just won’t accept this that ‘you’ve tried and...’ because you know what, you haven’t (lines 260-263). You know what you haven’t tried.... you have to keep going ... the other thing is you have to target the right people... I have spent a lot of time helping you, without any, you know, reimbursement. I haven’t worried about that. But what pisses me off is if I do something and then you don’t follow it up ... I think you need me to say this. To make something happen you can’t sit around. I know it’s horrible ... what really annoys me is that you couldn’t even be bothered to get ... I’ve never been cross with you ... you don’t have to be sorry ... you just have to do something about it ... and you would be able to get sponsorship if you went in with a Black Empowerment idea,” (lines 265-268; 279-283; 287-293; 297-300; 305-310). The client asks, “But what am I asking for?” (lines 348) and the coach reiterates what has previously been discussed between them” ... that was in the email that I sent to you. The email that I sent to you is that you’re looking for a sponsorship to set up a golf clinic and also sponsorship for yourself ... but that was an idea,” (lines 350-355; 359-360).

Analysis

Client and coach review the idea that the client is completely resistant to, but the coach won’t let the client off the hook.

Content

“So you would be able to get sponsorship if you went in with a Black Empowerment idea. That way you would get sponsorship. Otherwise you are not going to get it; you have got to be realistic. This is South Africa” (lines 375-380).

Analysis

The client is feeling very sorry for himself but the coach doesn’t let him slide away from taking personal *responsibility* to play golf at top level, his core *purpose* in life up to now. She, however, double checks that this still is what he wishes to pursue:

Content

“So if that’s not an idea you want to go with, you have got to think of another one... but just sitting around thinking ‘I don’t have any money’ isn’t going to get you any” (lines 457-464). They discuss his current work for his wife’s business, which is also not the answer. The coach spells it out: “your biggest problem is you don’t have a sponsor or you don’t have money in the bank. Golf is the most expensive sport in the world” (lines 507-512). “You only need sponsorship for a year or two to kind of get you ... out of this kind of financial quicksand,” (coach, lines 681-688). “Doldrums” replies the client (lines 690). “The only way for me to get money is through playing golf well. If I can play golf well then...” (lines 704-707). The coach replies: “But it doesn’t help when you go to Swaziland and you don’t play” (lines 709-710).

5.3.9.4 Throughput*Analysis*

It is now clear that, as the coach and client review again what C5 could do to obtain sponsorship they are beginning to move informally towards the *throughput* part of the session where the real work is done. Although they have not listed the items for discussion, it is implied between them from previous work that the agenda will be writing proposals to obtain sponsorship – and working with C5’s self-belief and self-confidence about continuing with his dream of being a top golfer. Already in the *input* phase C5 has listed many *limiting assumptions* which may be holding the client back.

In dealing with C5’s existential anxiety (am I good enough; not having money; not able to support my wife; feeling disempowered; feeling dejected; lost motivation; in the doldrums) – the coach shook him up more. And they go on to explore some of his limiting assumptions about obtaining sponsorship money:

Content

“If you’re not black they won’t give it to you” (lines 751-754).

Analysis

The core of C5’s frustration is that he is not black, and therefore it is difficult to obtain sponsorship as a South African.

Content

“If you’re not black they won’t give it to you... but I should actually go with doing golf clinics for his people” (lines 762-765). The coach suggests: “You must go with the idea that you will do golf clinics and that you would be empowering black kids. You really have got to bring that in because...” (lines 767-771).

Analysis

The coach lets C5 elicit and wallow in his many *limiting assumptions*; they will eventually choose the most relevant to work on in *throughput*:

Content

“But I haven’t done this because; everything came so easy to me from ... basically it’s always come easy for me up until the last couple of years; I doubt I’m any kids’ hero; They have all got sponsors out of their backside; all of them and they abuse it and they cheat and they; If you want it done properly, do it yourself; my brain is not being used and ... I haven’t used my brain in a very long time; I suppose money is a good motivation and to carry on playing golf” (lines 791-796; 856; 867-868; 872-873; 921-930; 958-959).

Analysis

C5 is cycling and recycling through all of his existential concerns, from no freedom to play golf because he is white; to lack of meaning in his golf anymore; to inability to perform well when he does play; to the inability to do it differently in order to gain sponsorship. He feels really sorry for himself; and the coach lets him articulate all of his frustrations and anger before she begins to move him towards thinking about a way forward.

The *relationship* can clearly take the challenges thrown up by the coach to the client; they are working in the area of *reflection* on what *freedom* he has; the *meaning* and purpose of his life and what *responsibility* he must commit himself to; what *choices* he has and what he needs to *learn* in this conversation with the coach to go forward and to *change*. He is fearful he is not going to obtain sponsorship; he feels dejected and sorry for himself; he feels guilty about not supporting his wife; and he fears losing his dream to be a top golfer. The coach needs to reconfirm that this is still his vision before they identify the core issue that they need to work on in this session.

Content

C5 agrees, “I will write a proposal to a company – and then send it to you and you ... ” (lines 1152-1153) but he brings in something else he has been up to, looking for jobs: “I have also been looking at getting a job; I have been offered two jobs sort of recently ... ” (lines 1172-1174).

Analysis

His *limiting assumptions* resurface:

Content

“I can’t have a full-time job, not if I’m trying to concentrate on golf, because the moment I lose my focus on where I’m going...” (lines 1177-1180).

Analysis

When C5 loses focus, he loses *meaning and purpose*. This discussion is linked to meaning rather than setting a goal for the session.

Content

“I would rather be a player for golf courses. That’s it. I am not interested in anything else” (lines 1247-1250).

Analysis

And then his guilt resurfaces:

Content

“I feel guilty because my wife is bringing in all the money and I’m not” (lines 1277-1279).

Analysis

So far in *throughput* the coach and client have discussed sponsorship, job possibilities and aspirational goals. They begin to focus on the specifics of the job possibilities as a way to earn money and a monthly income. They also discuss the relationships in his life that have perhaps contributed to some of his limiting behaviours:

Content

“maybe ... because my dad didn’t become what he really wanted to become, I feel that I don’t really want to be better than him because it will hurt him; he never did medicine and he never became a doctor which he really wanted to do” (lines 1567-1571; 1582-1587). And “possibly I don’t want to hurt his feelings and become a really, really top player because my frustrations at the moment are I’m so very good at golf and I’m not achieving and something is holding me back which is my ... *something is holding me back* and I’m not achieving and I sabotage myself when I play (lines 1589-1598). The coach suggests, “Going to Swaziland is a very good example of that. It gave you an excuse to sabotage. Having problems with your wife gave you the excuse to sabotage yourself and that’s.... what’s holding you back because you’re self-sabotaged and you do it in all sorts of different ways” (lines 1600-1611). The client and coach discuss this at some length, “I am very conscious of the fact that I am sabotaging myself” (lines 1664-1666). C5 reiterates his aspirational goal, “But my whole goal is I don’t ever want to play just good golf. I want to play ... the best! And if I stay at this level then I stop golf ... I want to be top in the world” (lines 1781-1794).

5.3.9.5 *Experiential learning phases aligned to existential concerns*

Analysis

The client has reconfirmed his *goal*. The coach and client have continually *reflected*; dealt with some of the client's existential *anxieties* around what freedom he has and doesn't have (*phase one* is reflection and awareness; aligned to the existential concern of freedom and existence). Also, coach and client have reconfirmed the client's meaning and *purpose* in life which is to play golf professionally (*phase two* is responsibility and commitment aligned to meaning and purpose); and have reconfirmed his aspirational goal, to play top golf (*step three* is setting goals, aligned to choice). Client and coach have also elicited many limiting assumptions. They discuss which of his goals is important to work on, and which limiting assumption is the key to help the client move towards his goal.

Content

"I want to have a game good enough to win a major ... I want to have the ability that my golf would hold up under major pressure ... under pressure I actually perform very well which makes me believe why I can be a star" (lines 1818-1827; 1844-1849). The coach asks, "Is it perfection that's holding you back? Is it that you're aiming for perfection?" (lines 1856-1858). C5 replies: "I think it could be because... I am so scared I get tense that I'm not going to do it right ... when I think of what bad is going to happen, instead of the good result ...you know my inner voice is such a... I'm not myself when I play golf ... I mustn't fight this anymore; I must just be that person. I must be the introverted guy on the golf course, keep myself focused on what I'm trying to do and I can be myself afterwards; I absolutely hate losing ... I can't handle losing; you can't control a golf game like you could control a running race" (lines 1860-1876; 1877-1885; 1930-1941; 1956-1960; 1989-1992). The coach asks: "Is golf the right game for you?" (lines 2009-2010). The client confirms: "Oh ja. Oh ja. There is no question of that. But I just have to find a way to view it differently; you have trained my technique with... and putting it up into my mind, I can't see myself ever missing. So I think with me I am often waiting to screw up. I'm just waiting for a screw up. I lose sight of where I'm going. I get too tense. There is too much negative noise in my head. I struggle to throw out the junk that is going on in my head and I hate losing and I am extremely passionate but I'm used to being second best ... You can't control golf..." (lines 2012-2015; 2058-2070). The coach reminds the client, "But you can control you," (lines 2075). They discuss perfection in more detail, "and maybe my way of winning in golf is the perfection part ... I don't like missing a shot ... and I want to have an excuse" (lines 2192-2201; 225-2226).

Analysis

There is some self reflection and insight here.

Content

“I think I have everything to be a champion; when I’ve got no more excuses, I really, really play well” (lines 2306-2307; 2321-2322).

5.3.9.6 Limiting assumptions*Analysis*

They begin to work on the limiting assumption that may be holding the client back:

Content

“Where does that voice come from; how long have you had that voice? When did that voice start? You didn’t have it as a runner; so when did that voice start?” (line 2344).

Analysis

Coach and client begin to work with all of the messages that are in the voice that is holding the client back:

Content

“And now I’m used to not winning. I haven’t won a golf tournament since 1998; you need to be used to winning” (lines 2501-2503; 2509). The coach asks: “how would you know you were winning?” (lines 2513-2517). “I’m not used to winning ... my self belief is that I can’t win” (lines 2648-2652). Coach and client decide to work with an exercise called Circle of Excellence which builds the resources the client can access when he needs self-belief, “what are the resources that have helped you to have self-belief?; self belief is linked into things ... you’ve got it but you’re not accessing it” (lines 2662-2669; 2676-2680). Client and coach identify three resources which the client has when he has strong self belief: 1) wanting it; 2) believing that I can do it; and 3) be how I feel when I feel it (lines 2839-2845). They work through the circle of excellence exercise. On completion the client says, “Good. I’m going to win!” (line 3154). The client has *reflected* and identified his freedom in existence (phase one); taken *responsibility* for himself and identified *meaning* and *purpose* (phase two); and created a *goal* aligned to choice (phase three is *action* and *choice*).

5.3.9.7 Output*Analysis*

Client and coach move into the *output* phase of the conversation which is here aligned to gaining the learning which will lead to personal growth and change (*phase four* is change, linked to anxiety):

Content

“What is going to be your vision for the next couple months for yourself, and your strategy, and goals?” (lines 3156-3256). The client and coach create an action plan of vision, strategy and goals, and the client reflects on what he has learned that will lead to change: “I got a realisation that I actually need to start working at things for myself as far as the world ... to give me money. I know that but I needed to be reminded. I think second of all I realised that it was now – that I must not fight who I am. I mustn’t try and be the guy who I think I am when I play golf. I think I have been confused. I am that way when I play golf. I do keep to myself and I try to be focused and that’s the way I do it ... and it works. And then the other thing is I must give myself belief, my goals, my confidence, all in the right line” (lines 3268-3280). “One of the other things ... I have only given myself so much time to do this, like the next two years. It’s a year and a half now. So I think some of my frustration is the ultimatum” (lines 3292-3298). The client and coach conclude the session by reviewing the action plan: “Vision: spend more time relaxing and meditating; Strategy: thinking positive thoughts, self belief, looking and feeling confident, picturing myself in the moment, being myself, accepting myself, playing well enough to put myself in a position to win, be proactive to get a sponsor, check out ... cue school, use my anchor (lines 3411-3422).

Analysis

They conclude having completed the conversation working within a framework of *input, throughput, output* – aligned throughout with the four experiential learning phases of *reflection, taking responsibility, setting goals, learning and insight for personal growth and change; aligned to the existential concerns of freedom, meaning, choice and anxiety*. The client concludes, “We did a lot today” (lines 3424).

5.4 Client transcript analysis: Client 14 (C14)

Client 14 (C14) is a client that I have known for a number of years. We began to work together with sporadic coaching sessions when she could manage them; our sessions tended to be few and far between, perhaps two to three hour sessions on a six-monthly basis. When I began the research project I suggested that she become a pro-bono client as she is black, female, and considered to be previously disadvantaged. She complemented the wide range of clients within my research sample. C14 is the Chairperson of a Non-Governmental Organisation (NGO) which raises money to provide funding to train grass roots women in the setting up of their own businesses. C14 worked in the struggle against apartheid; she has excellent political and business credentials: she is on the board for a number of black economic empowerment companies, a former “black” South African university, and various trade organisations linked to provincial government.

C14's key issues during our contracted coaching relationship over the last eighteen months have been how to balance the various roles she plays, and specifically how to manage conflict, communication, and difficult staff within the NGO for which she is the Chairperson. This NGO has been the subject of most of our coaching sessions as it has been a difficult position for her. It is not a paying position, yet she spends most of her waking hours sorting out the problems presented to her by the NGO staff.

Much of our work has been spent affirming her competence as a leader and manager. She has gained in confidence as a result of our sessions, resolving many people management issues. Her limiting assumptions revolved around her lack of belief in her ability to 'be' the Chairperson. During our work together, she created a new BEE (black economic empowerment) company with three women partners in the mining sector — this says a lot about her ability to manage in a traditionally male-dominated profession. Her ability to handle challenge and balance her varied roles has improved. She has greater confidence and self-belief.

5.4.1 First data analysis (C14)

The first analysis was of two selected coaching sessions with C14 using the Ethnograph. The two three-hour sessions were on 9th July, 2004 and 15th November 2004. As C14 is so softly-spoken, only two of our four three-hour sessions were successfully transcribed. These two sessions highlighted all of the key concerns and issues we have been working on throughout our sessions.

5.4.1.1 Client themes (first analysis C14)

These are the themes that emerged from the first Ethnograph analysis of each of C14's sessions:

ability, awareness, background, challenge, challenges, change, chat, closure, communicate, communication, compassion, confident, conflict, decision, empower, explain, failure, goal, impact, important, insight, learning, money, opportunity, possibility, process, responsibility, technique, understand, worry.

5.4.1.2 Coach's interventions (first analysis C14)

The first analysis of the coaching interventions for each of C14's files was limited compared to the second analysis. The first analysis identified:

ability, awareness, background, challenge, challenges, chat, commitment, communicate, conflict, decision, empower, explain, failure, feelings, goal, going back, great, honesty,

impact, important, insight, interest, learning, money, need, opportunity, possibility, question, reflection, respect, responsibility, stress, summarise, technique, understand, worry.

There is a difference between ‘worry’ and ‘concern’ vs. ‘anxiety’; ‘worry’ and ‘concern’ are about tangible things, ‘anxiety’ is existential and more to do with ‘being’. ‘Insight’ can be about others or about the client themselves. One observation in the first transcript was the misnomer ‘technique’ which was in our first code book. It seemed irrelevant to the client’s dialogue and often simply referred to a suggestion or specific type of question.

5.4.2 Second data analysis (C14)

What I attempted to do in the second analysis was to read the transcripts as if I had not read any other client transcripts, bracketing assumptions around the types of interventions that I should look for. I deliberately did not look back at the code book as it has developed with C1 and C5, but read C14’s hard-copy manuscripts line by line with marker pen and pencil to write up the codes as they emerged.

5.4.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C14)

anxiety; appreciate; blaming; coaching helps; complain; complexity; concern; emotion; goal setting; guidance; health; manage; planning; role/strategy; self-realisation; story; value.

5.4.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C14)

There was not much chat in C14’s sessions: primarily dialogue around problems and issues C14 was dealing with. In my analysis of C14’s transcripts I listed more examples of how the question was asked and wrote this next to the coaching intervention theme:

accessibility; alliances; accountability; advice; affirmation; anxiety; being; being tough; building relationships; challenge (let’s talk about this); choices; clarifying; confidentiality; concern; confirmation; confrontation; financial (similar to money); going back (can I just ask you before...); guide; humour; probing; recognition; reputation; suggested action; summarise and planning; responsibility; suggestion; summarise action (so you’re going to); summarise facts / feelings / thoughts / suggestions; summarise to acknowledge and recognise; summarise for commitment; summarise by restating in different words the client’s thoughts; timing (when is that going to happen); test; training; visibility; vision; women are emotional; women (challenges/being).

5.4.3 Different types of questions to emerge (C14)

for action; anger; anything else; to challenge (what I want to know is); to check; to clarify; confirming action; to dig deeper; re going back (can I ask you just before we move on); for

information; re learning (so what is the learning for you in terms of what you are going to do differently; what did you get out of today); to probe; to question 'what'; to rephrase; to summarise; to summarise thinking; re timing (when is that going to happen; when are you going to do that); to understand; what (for action); what (what happened/tell me the story); why (understanding); wondering (I wonder); worry (what is it you're worried about).

5.4.4 Code book additions (C14)

New client themes that were added to the code book:

appreciate; blaming; complain; complexity; emotion; guidance; health; manage; planning; role/strategy.

New coaching interventions added to the code book:

to challenge (what I want to know is); to check; to confirm action; re going back (can I ask you just before we move on); re learning (so what is the learning for you in terms of what you are going to do differently; what did you get out of today); re timing (when is that going to happen; when are you going to do that); why (understanding); worry (what is it you're worried about).

5.4.5 Reflections and findings (C14)

The sessions with C14 were often three hours as she wanted to get as much as possible out of our *pro bono* sessions together. What I discovered was that in the first hour to one and-a-half hours it was very important for C14 to off-load her feelings, thoughts and ideas as well as the various issues that she wanted guidance on. Usually, we went in a circular direction as all issues seemed to end up with the NGO that she was having difficulty managing. Her presenting issue was her lack of belief in her own ability, skill and competence to manage the difficult problems she encountered as Chair of a major NGO (i.e. fraud, theft, dishonesty, emotional distress, seemingly unmanageable staff, an executive board that did not understand the importance of rigorously managing a budget that was the result of the NGO's huge fundraising activities).

5.4.6 The relationship (C14)

When we worked together, it was often in a café or hotel foyer – sometimes in my office. However, her working base was several hours distance from mine so we often worked in public places. Our relationship developed with the coaching sessions. But the difficulties of recording in public places meant that three out of our six taped sessions were almost impossible to transcribe. The sessions that were audible were each two to three-hours long and created substantial text for effective analysis.

You can actually ‘hear’ how the relationship develops as you read the interactions between client and coach. Complete trust and confidentiality emerge from the ‘tone’ of the text. Interestingly with this client, the coach’s interventions are more those of confirmation or checking for understanding, challenging the client for tasks not accomplished, but creating a safe thinking environment for the client to think. The sessions seemed to be more of a conversation with intermediate challenges from the coach every so often. The coach was a real ‘thinking partner’ in the sense of listening, probing and challenging.

5.4.7 Existential issues (C14)

C14’s existential issues revolved around the anxiety she had about being Chair of a well-known national NGO, and her lack of self-belief. Although she had previously been managing director for two commercial companies, her naiveté towards her business partner meant that she had lost her previous business. This loss had seriously damaged her self-belief.

In C14’s sessions we dealt with the detail of how to handle difficult people and difficult situations; but the underlying current was how C14 managed herself in relation to others. For example, in lines 140-146 9th July, 2004: “I reckon that if I get this thing with X sorted out, that it’s not going to solve, not solve, solve is not right here, but it’s going to make my doing things in other areas of my life easier because I think this is where the problem ...”.

Although her external concerns dominated the conversation, when analysing the text what emerged in the sub-text was her lack of self belief, i.e. whether she had the skills and competencies that she needed. She often referred to the difficulties women faced, and counted herself among them (for example, lines 130-134 on 9th July, 2004: “As women – and this is not an excuse for women – they are nice by nature and emotional. We want to be nice. We don’t want to be hard and horrible.”

5.4.8 Learnings (C14)

It was difficult analysing the texts for C14 as so many themes emerged in the first analysis. However, one insight was that R1 and I discovered more generic themes in this first analysis. I began to identify the types of coaching interventions in the second analysis. For example, ‘question’ appeared as a type of intervention, whereas in the Ethnograph analysis no specific types of questions were identified. Also, similar themes appeared for both client and coach (for example, money, goals, challenges, summarise, action, learning) but they weren’t made ‘specific’ in the first analysis. The learning is how crucial it is to analyse the text several times in a phenomenological investigation.

5.4.9 General conclusions (C14)

C14 was a leader in her community, a leader in the business world, and well known amongst the black community in South Africa. She had spearheaded various activities in the Black Management Forum (the leading national chamber of commerce with membership from top black executives and black business leaders in the country) and she is well known in black women's economic and political communities. Most of our sessions were spent delving deeply into the detail of the problems she was attempting to resolve. She began to gain perspective as she grew in confidence and self-belief and realised the scope of her experience, expertise and competence.

In each of the transcripts the client spoke non-stop for nearly one-and-one-half hours just to clarify her own thinking, with few interventions from the coach. The coach asked questions to clarify understanding or for information. In the second part of the session the coach began to bring together all the client's thoughts into coherent action points summarising feelings, thoughts, actions and behaviours. I noticed from the coach's language that she wrote down the client's actions throughout the entirety of each session, summarising and clarifying them at the end.

The coaching interventions were often simply affirming or confirming C14's ideas; but the coach was tough and challenging on issues where C14 resisted playing a stronger management role (for example, coach lines 539 to 541: "So what is the learning for you in terms of what you are going to do differently?" And client lines 547 to 552, 9th July 2004: "The other lesson that I learnt about this whole thing is that while it's easy to say that X is a maverick, we've not given her the guidance that she should have".)

Our relationship had begun with me training her in leadership and management skills, and had subsequently developed into a coaching relationship. C14 has become more aware of the depth of her emotional competence, has grown in self-confidence and has positioned herself strongly once again in the black business community.

5.4.10 The researcher (C14)

As a researcher I gained observation abilities as I tackled C14's transcripts. With the third client analysis I noticed more sub-text and the glaring differences between the first and second analysis. A final observation is that not one client or transcript was the same.

5.4.11 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C14)

I selected the transcript of C14's session on 9th July 2004 to investigate any difficulties the researcher may have had in bracketing assumptions and maintaining impartiality when reading

and analysing the text. It was never clear what the coach may have been thinking, as the text only articulated the dialogue between coach and client.

5.4.11.1 Maintaining impartiality (C14)

When reading the transcripts, I noticed the number of times that the technique, 'going back' was used, and also how references the coach made to the client's worry or anxiety led into some kind of reflection or learning. Maintaining impartiality was demonstrated in the text on the part of the coach, who consistently used 'going back' as a technique to keep the client on track, or to gain a deeper understanding of the situation. This helped my ability as a researcher to maintain a neutral perspective over the dialogue between client and coach – because the coach was seemingly showing impartiality.

Client (lines 391-392)

Yes. I want to share something with you that concerns me.

Coach (lines 394-395)

Can I just ask you before you do, you haven't told me about ... so we can kind of ... And come back to it, but I want to know what Y's response is to all this (*going back*);

And:

Client (lines 906-907)

Exactly! It could have been a lot worse.

Coach (lines 909-917)

Ok, just twice a week is no big deal. Ok, so what you're worried about in terms of the talk that you're going to have with her is the length of the time or the talk? What is it that you're worried about? Going back to that question? About the talk you're going to have with her. You are quite happy with what you will say to her?

The researcher noticed that the coach often used the technique of asking the client, "What is it you're worried about?" to deal with anxiety, worry and concern. This often gave the coach the chance to help the client to reflect – thus bringing in learning and keeping impartiality. It occurred to me that it may be easier for the researcher to maintain impartiality if the coach does not get lost in the story herself.

Coach (lines 910-917)

... Ok, so what you're worried about in terms of that talk you're going to have with her is the length of the time or the talk? What is it that you're worried about?

Client (965-971):

I reckon that if I get this thing with Y sorted out, that it's not going to solve, not solve, solve is not right here, but it's going to make my doing things in other areas of my life easier because I think this is where the problem ...

Coach (lines 977):

It's like stuckness.

Client (983-992):

And I also think that the way I tackle it – and you can help me on this – the way I tackle it with the kind of maturity or emotion or whatever, will probably assist me in other things that I do. I think this whole thing with Y is a check for me. It's a check for my leadership skills ...

Another technique the researcher noted that the coach employed was that of summarising: a story, action points, or thinking – as a way to build a bigger picture and prevent both coach and client from falling into the story and losing perspective:

Coach (lines 1111-1128)

Yeah, so you want to talk to her about the recognition of her that is not just financial, but the financial is the way you can recognise the professionalism and you know, just the credence of her work. The second thing is that you as the Chair need to manage, you need to steer the organisation and in order to steer the organisation you need to steer the communication. And what you're trying to do is to improve the communication. Call it the communication framework within the organisation and she is a key piece. Yeah? And so in order to do that, you need to have good communication with her so hence you have your weekly meetings. Yeah? Also seeing her twice a week in the office because that also cements the alliance with the trustees so this then brings you, Y and the trustees together so that it's like you are working together.

Client (1138; 1170-1172)

Yes ... ok I just want to put something down here – also the visibility of the staff ...

5.4.11.2 Showing partiality (C14)

Where the researcher had to double check whether she was even aware of her assumptions was in reading the text, she often noticed the circular direction the client worked within; i.e. going off the point or even taking a circuitous route to get to a point (this could have been annoying). The only other aspect of the transcripts where it did sometimes prove difficult to stay impartial was when the coach appeared to lose impartiality; or seemingly took sides with

the client when other difficult colleagues were being discussed. The temptation for the researcher was to 'jump' into the story rather than keeping a 'meta' or big picture perspective.

Because the coach seemed to generally demonstrate a 'big picture' unbiased perspective it was easier for the researcher to do so. However, the researcher could have grown impatient with the coach's comments when she was showing empathy or agreement with the client; or if it appeared that the coach wanted to help the client so much that she suggested the solution to her. For example:

Client (line 636)

Exactly! Who has it?

Coach (line 638)

But that's outrageous. But that was one of the things that you were working on doing was everybody's job description.

And:

Client (line 108-112)

As women – and this is not an excuse for women – they are by nature emotional. We want to be nice, I think. Be nice. We don't want to be hard and horrible.

Coach (lines 114-117)

Women make friends and they build alliances and women don't really like confrontation. That's really the key thing.

The coach coming up with the solution did seem to go against the grain of how a coach should operate; it raised questions in the mind of the researcher; i.e. why was the coach not asking questions, or summarising the client's thoughts here. Is it not the case that coaches don't give their opinion? It raised several assumptions at this moment and the researcher made a note to check if it happened regularly throughout the transcript. It did not.

Coach (lines 1010-1036)

You're right. I think this is a – I don't know if it's a test, but I think what it is, it's an opportunity for you to really learn something new. So I think one of the things that you can think about in terms of having a box of tissues there so that you can hand them to her – people burst into tears all the time in my office. I keep boxes of tissues. And the key thing is not to be drawn into that and say I don't mean to be a cold fish but what I mean is, you know, here are the tissues, let her get herself back together and then you proceed with the talk because I think

what it is, is Y has a deep sense of inadequacy. I think she has a deep sense of inadequacy. It doesn't come across with her kind of external personality but I think a lot of what she does, one of her drivers is to prove that she can do it. So when you think about what drives Y, I think that's one of the drivers. I don't know who she needs to prove it to – her mother, her father I don't know.

It could have been difficult for the researcher not to become impatient when reading the client text as she continued to cycle missing what seemed to be cues from the coach to move on:

Client (lines 1172-1182)

- Also visibility to staff and the communication with the staff because what is happening is that because she's not there, the staff don't know what's happening. They have an S...S.... breakfast and Y starts screaming at them because why are they not there; why are they not RSVP-ing; why are people phoning her? But she's forgetting that the phone number, the email that's coming through on all their letters is Y's.

Or if the client doesn't come up with an easily assessable and achievable goal, it can be hard to maintain patience and impartiality as the researcher. When the coach seems to challenge the client and there is a hint of impatience, it can affect the researcher; unless she notes that the coach catches herself:

Coach (lines 1792-1796)

But you could easily get somebody who is retired, a retired accountant or a retired bookkeeper. I think you need more of an accountant. And Z. Who is she?

5.4.12 To conclude (C14)

What seemed to encourage impartiality was:

The coach using the technique of questions, 'going back', and 'summarising' – it helped to keep the researcher out of the story; asking questions to help the client to reflect, learn and come up with a new perspective; if the researcher could see that the coach did not get lost in the story herself.

What seemed to create conditions for impartiality was:

If and when the researcher noticed that she had become annoyed with the client's tenacious hold on a story, being unwilling to let it go, and continuing to circle; the possibility of the researcher losing perspective by becoming too involved in the client's story; if the coach lost impartiality, there was an almost unnoticeable tendency for the researcher to side with the coach. Usually, it was noted and let go of.

5.5 Client transcript analysis: Client 3 (C3)

Client 3 (C3) is the CEO of an events organisation based in Johannesburg, South Africa. She was introduced to me by another of my executive clients (C8) who was originally to take part in the research project. However, in the end I decided to use only clients who did not know each other, and who would not recognise a colleague or peer when reading the final conclusions of the project. This was to protect confidentiality; in this case important as both clients are competitors in the marketplace.

I had three coaching sessions with this client prior to including her in the research project. Being very entrepreneurial she was head of several companies; part of our work together was to help her with the decision of whether to let go of one company to a partner.

C3's key issues during our contracted coaching relationship over the last two years have focused on how to build a team, lead and develop that team, and manage relationships in both her professional and personal life. A main focus each year has been to use the Best Year Yet process to identify her vision, strategy and goals for that year. We met regularly to review and reset goals. Each of our sessions together concentrated on any issues that have arisen for her professionally in terms of managing her business and managing people, and on how to set and manage goals that would create balance in her life, and help her to maintain the lifestyle that she desired.

Half of each session was devoted to personal issues and choices, and the other half of the session on business issues. The reason for this was that her first business partner was also her life partner. She faced several very anguishing decisions when separating herself from this partner professionally and personally. Her existential issues revolved around anxiety of being, choice, freedom, and meaning/purpose of her life.

5.5.1 First data analysis (C3)

The first analysis was of five selected coaching sessions with C3 using the Ethnograph. The two-hour sessions took place on 16 July, 2003, 13 November 2003, 28 January 2004, March 2004, and 21 October 2004. I selected these five as they were the best transcribed sessions, although two of the sessions were only 50 per cent transcribed due to lack of sound quality (i.e. March 2004 and 21 October 2004).

5.5.1.1 Client themes (first analysis C3)

These are the themes that emerged from the first Ethnograph analysis of each of C3's sessions. The first code book of themes and client interventions are mentioned in Chapter 4; the final code book is in Chapter 4 and the Evidence chapter. I discovered long passages of text that

were not well coded in this first analysis. One reason for this is that one session (16 July 2003) was an evaluation of the client's Insights report and required much dialogue on the part of client and coach; the first code book did not pick up the new themes. This intensified the work in the second analysis. Themes to emerge in the first analysis were:

ability, adapt, amazing, anger, anxiety, awareness, awesome, background, brilliant, busy, challenge, challenges, change, choice, communication, compassion, conflict, disempower, empower, enjoy, exactly, excited, failure, fascinating, feelings, goal, great, grow, health, impact, insight, interest, I get it, I will, important, learning, make sense, money, need, opportunity, possibility, question, relax, relationship, repetition, responsibility, stress, success, technique, tired, true, understand, very, worry, yes.

5.5.1.2 Coach's interventions (first analysis C3)

The first analysis identified:

ability, analogy, anxiety, awareness, background, change, chat, challenge, challenges, communication, compassion, conflict, connect, empower, explain, feelings, goal, going back, grow, health, impact, insight, interest, learning, money, need, opportunity, possibility, question, reflection, repetition, relationship, relax, repetition, responsibility, stress, summarise, technique, understand.

5.5.2 Second data analysis (C3)

What I attempted to do in the second analysis was to read all five manuscripts as if I had not read any other client transcripts, bracketing assumptions around the types of themes and interventions that I should look for. I deliberately did not look back at the code book or any of the findings from the previous three clients (C1, C5, and C14). However, it must be said that I was beginning to be aware of overall issues and themes that were emerging from all the texts. I tried to bracket those assumptions, describe what I identified in each text, and treated this client as if I was approaching the texts for the first time in the project. I was attempting to approach the phenomena as if I had never read any previous client texts.

5.5.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C3)

achievement, achieving, admission, aha/insight, angry, arrogant, balance, BEE (black economic empowerment), blaming, bored, business-driven, choice, closing the deal, coaching helps, coaching works, complete, confirmation, connection, consolidate, contingency plans, delegation, difficult, disappointment, emotion, emotional, employ, fascinating, finish, felt strongly, finish, focus, free spirit, frustrating, goal setting, humour, improvisation, lifestyle, motivated by change/freedom, present, professional, resistance (I don't want to change), prices (fees), realisation, rebel, reflection (that's the thing we need to address), resentment,

resistance, self belief, self-recognition, sleep, standing my ground, story, striving, trust, value, worry.

5.5.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C3)

Particularly noticeable in these interventions: that they are a combination of specific interventions as well as a naming of the themes that emerged from the coach's conversation with the client:

active, action, advice, affirming client, approach, archetypes, attitude, balance, bark order, being tough, belief systems, classic, colours, complete, confidentiality (whatever happens here will stay here), conscious, conscious wheel position, creatives, communicator, decisions, deliver, democratic, differently, directive, dynamic, energy, experience success, experiment, extravert, extravert thinking, face/world, financial success, first impressions, flexibility, focusing, gut feel, happiest, high red, humour, ideas, inspiration, inspire, inspiring, interact, introvert, intuitive, irrational, Jungian, just being, learning, learning plan (vision, strategy, outcomes), less conscious, let me show you how, limiting assumptions, listening, management, managing, motivate, motivator, make decision, measure, natural self, observation, pacing and matching, passionate, perceive, perfection, persona, preference, process information, profile, pure, query (checking), question what, rapport, reality, reframe, reframe for insight, restatement and query, sales, self discipline, sensing, snapshot in time, sounds like, striving, stronger, suggestion (think about this), suggest action, summarise action, system, team building, technique (third position thinking), think, thinking, turning around limiting assumptions, unconscious persona, values, vision, wheel, women, wondering (I just wondered; I wonder).

5.5.3 Different types of questions to emerge

to challenge (what are you doing; can you actually; but what else; so what you're telling me is; can we talk about how you do that; what are you going to do to manage this so that it doesn't happen again),
 challenging decisions (tell me about that),
 checking (so what you have said to me),
 to clarify,
 closed question,
 did you find that useful?
 for information,
 digging deeper (anything else),
 going back (I want to talk to you about; just tell me more about; let's look at this again; let's go back to; hang on/wait a minute; so you were talking about goals),

how will you (+ verb),
probing (digger deeper about client or someone else),
probing (so you + verb),
probing (what else),
probing (and the reason for this is),
probing for client to reflect (is it because of),
query (so the other thing to think about is),
question for client to reflect (which you didn't know about),
question (pushing),
rephrase (so what you are telling me is),
rephrase (so in other words),
restatement to confirm,
should you (+ verb),
so the key thing is,
so what you are telling me,
so what can you (+ verb),
suggestion (do you want to think about),
suggestion with reflection (it's one thing to and another thing to),
suggestion (let's look at the little picture),
suggestion (what you might want to think about is),
suggestion (why don't you write that down),
suggestion (you need to pay attention to this),
tell me more,
timing [when are you (+ verb)],
to understand,
we need to think about,
what can you (get other people to do for you),
what could you do differently,
what do you need to ask,
what do you think, what do we need (+ verb),
what do you think is going to happen,
what does this mean to you,
what are the emotions, what are you feeling,
what have you learned from this,
what is it you are doing (digging deeper),
what is it that I can help you with,
what might you like to think about,
what would be the difference (probing), what is the bigger picture,

when do you think you will (+ verb), when is it that you (+ verb), when is it you need to (+ verb),
 when will you (+ verb),
 who are the people, who delegate to, who is (+ verb),
 why (for information),
 why are you (+ verb),
 why do you + verb,

5.5.4 New client themes that were added to the code book

achievement, achieving, admission, aha/insight, angry, arrogant, balance, BEE (black economic empowerment), bored, business-driven, closing the deal, complete, confirmation, connection, consolidate, contingency plans, delegation, difficult, emotional, employ, finish, felt strongly, finish, focus, free spirit, improvisation, lifestyle, motivated by change/freedom, professional, resistance (I don't want to change), prices (fees), rebel, resentment, sleep, standing my ground, striving, trust.

5.5.5 New coaching interventions added to the code book

I have not been adding 'themed topics' to the code book (such as motivator, inspiring, profile, democratic) as they are often replicas of the coaching client themes, but rather adding specific interventions that had some type of question, statement or technique associated with it that would draw out the client's thinking, reflecting or insightful observations:

affirming client, confidentiality (whatever happens here will stay here), empowering assumptions, ideas, learning, learning plan (vision, strategy, outcomes), let me show you how (demonstration), listening, make decision, pacing and matching, perceive, perception, query (checking), and question 'what'.

5.5.6 New question interventions added to final code book

to challenge (what are you doing; can you actually; but what else; so what you're telling me is; can we talk about how you do that; what are you going to do to manage this so that it doesn't happen again),
 challenging decisions (tell me about that),
 checking (so what you have said to me),
 closed question,
 did you find that useful,
 digging deeper (anything else),

going back (I want to talk to you about; just tell me more about; let's look at this again; let's go back to; hang on/wait a minute; so you were talking about goals),
probing (digger deeper about client or someone else),
probing (so you + verb),
probing (what else),
probing (and the reason for this is),
probing for client to reflect (is it because of),
query (so the other thing to think about is),
question for client to reflect (which you didn't know about),
question (pushing),
rephrase (so what you are telling me is),
rephrase (so in other words),
restatement to confirm,
should you (+ verb),
so the key thing is,
so what you are telling me,
so what can you (+ verb),
suggestion (do you want to think about),
suggestion with reflection (it's one thing to and another thing to),
suggestion (let's look at the little picture),
suggestion (what you might want to think about is),
suggestion (why don't you write that down),
suggestion (you need to pay attention to this),
tell me more,
timing [when are you (+ verb)],
to understand,
we need to think about,
what can you (get other people to do for you),
what could you do differently,
what do you need to ask,
what do you think, what do we need (+ verb),
what do you think is going to happen,
what does this mean to you,
what are the emotions, what are you feeling,
what have you learned from this,
what is it you are doing (digging deeper),
what is it that I can help you with,
what might you like to think about,

what would be the difference (probing), what is the bigger picture,
 when do you think you will (+ verb), when is it that you (+ verb), when is it you need to (+ verb),
 when will you (+ verb),
 who are the people, who delegate to, who is (+ verb),
 why (for information),
 why are you (+ verb),
 why do you + verb.

5.5.7 Findings and reflections (C3)

Because one of the sessions with C3 was helping her to interpret and understand her Insights profile (16 July 2003), quite a few new words emerged which were used by the coach. For example: motivating director, motivator, colours, introvert, extravert, sensing, unconscious persona and wheel.

C3 had undergone a lot of turmoil in her personal and professional life, and her health had been severely affected. So as we moved into the later sessions, we began to look at not just building up the business but how to achieve balance between work and personal life. She had endured quite a few losses, personally and professionally in terms of relationships, but had gained in emotional wisdom and was moving into a new phase of emotional independence. She had given over one business to a partner who was both a personal and professional partner, and C3 subsequently ended both the personal and professional relationship.

C3 was in a place of anxiety and existential choice for quite a period of time. She was uncertain whether to give up her businesses altogether and move into something completely new. The deterioration of her health and ending up in hospital was a wake up call for her. During one session when she was quite ill I was very concerned about continuing the session; she insisted that we continue.

In terms of building the relationship, the success of our work together was due to the amount of trust we had built in our work together (for example, lines 965-985, 16th July 2003: “I’ve focused and consolidated and done something to achieve what I am achieving because I know that I’ve [...] and I attribute it to working with you”). It was for this reason that I could intervene sometimes quite strongly; C3 would take up the challenge to reflect and try to gain insight (for example, lines 2130-2132, 16th July 2003: “maintain contact, which is what I’m trying to change” and lines 1928-1944, 13th November 2003: “I think it’s my own confidence, my own belief in me; I’m taking the emotion out of it”).

As coach I am not yet convinced that we have made explicit some of the limiting assumptions that she is working from. For example, in our future sessions I would hope to pick up the theme of obsession. That is, however, my interpretation and my learning is that the coach can only work with the client where the client wishes to work. This is the precise reason why the coach and the researcher both need to bracket their assumptions, but the coach must remain open to making observations to the client.

My observation in identifying the client themes and coaching interventions from this particular client is how my skills in observation and analysis of the texts have improved. I am much more skilful in identifying the types of intervention. It is clear to me in phenomenological investigation that it is crucial to go back through the text at least three times: with each analysis greater detail is noted.

Here are some observations as I read through the texts in the second analysis:

‘Technique’ was identified in the first analysis code book and related to making a suggestion or guiding the client. Rather than writing up the code book of new words, I asterisked what appeared to be new themes or interventions and double checked when I wrote up the results. This meant that the analysis was more fluid and uninterrupted. Every client and every context is completely different; yet every time I read a new text there emerged new client themes and new coaching interventions.

On the other hand, there are ‘types of questions’ and ‘types of interventions’ which reoccurred time and again (for example, action, suggestion, rephrase, summarise, what). These I listed in great detail with the second analysis of C3’s texts and carried this through with C6 and C2. All new codes were added to the code book. I began to write up my reflections and observations on the left facing page as I went through the second analysis, to be picked up later. One thing I have learned from this research project is that when I notice or observe something, it is crucial to write it down in that moment, otherwise it is lost.

Another thing I have learned was to write up all the themes and interventions in alphabetical order as I began to type up the analysis. Although time consuming, it meant that I could much more easily ascertain whether a theme was new.

The process has become:

- Read the texts
- Write up the codes on the right side of the page (for second analysis)
- Write up observations on the left-facing page as I analyse the text
- Asterisk new codes

- Write up client themes and interventions from this analysis
- Alphabetise codes as I type them up from each client text analysis
- Write up any conclusions on the client and the analysis process
- List new codes by comparing to code book so far

5.5.8 Further reflections

Here is a good example of the coach challenging the client, but bracketing her own assumptions. The challenge is made by the coach restating the client's statement: "So what you are telling me is that you've got somebody who isn't skilled in the way you'd like or doesn't even have the [...]; so my question is why would you keep her?" (lines 2245-2254, 13 November 2003). In one of the sessions in March 2004, the entire conversation was not well recorded, and the text that was missing referred to overturning limiting assumptions; my handwritten notes refer.

When I wrote up these five texts for C3, first I noted the client themes in all five texts; I then added the coaching interventions, listing them alphabetically. Finally, I added new themes to the code book. One interesting comment from C3 in reading through her own texts was that the depth of the coaching relationship and intervention was reduced to a two-dimensional level.

5.5.9 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C3)

For C3 I selected the transcript of 13th November 2003 to analyse for the researcher's partiality and impartiality when describing the data as it emerged. Each client's transcript is unique and different in this regard. The client's story was complex and she moved fluently between personal and business issues.

5.5.9.1 *Maintaining impartiality (C3)*

Something I noticed as researcher in reading the text was that it was not difficult to stay neutral. What proved difficult to the reader was keeping up with the different strands of the story and how and where they inter-connected. What was clear in the reading was that the coach did not appear to have difficulty in following the thread of the client's conversation or in asking a question that would help the client to reflect, focus and ultimately to elicit relevant action points. The researcher noted that the coach asked many clarifying and probing questions before summarising or reframing what the client had articulated.

Coach (lines 594-596; 602):

Did he tell you this? Did he tell you that you were going to turn a profit of a million rand?

Client (lines 59-600):

No. He said I would probably look at making two business class tickets a year.

Coach (lines 602-603):

But you never made anything?

Client (lines 604-605)

Certainly not ... income; No, I made nothing.

Coach (lines 607-608):

Before you went into business with him?

Client (lines 610-611):

He's my accountant. He still is my accountant.

Coach (lines 613-614):

Did you look at any figures? Did you just take his word for it?

Client (lines 616-617):

I just took his word.

Coach (lines 618-619):

You just took his word for it?

Client (lines 620-621):

But the warning signs that... if I did that ... what am I doing from the accounting point of view?

What is interesting about this exchange is the question it brings up for the researcher. The researcher noted that the coach was asking questions almost like a detective sniffing out the evidence. Now, is this an instance of not bracketing assumptions, by the researcher surmising that it is detective-like? What comes out in the text again and again is that the researcher makes an observation, but is this observation an assumption in itself?

For example, the observation on the part of the reader is that the client moves fluently but without structure between work and personal life: is this an observation or an assumption? It appears to me as researcher to be an observation.

Client (lines 847-853):

Like from a business point of view, my staff – my one major issue which I need to get your advice on – because I need to make a decision – tomorrow is D-Day with X. I have been fretting about thoughts about Y which is interesting.

Coach (lines 855-856):

About whether or not ...?

Client (lines 857-860):

Although I am in such a state of need and support and love and I know that I'm very low at the moment.

Coach (lines 861-864)

It would not be a good idea to end any kind of personal relationship when you are not well.

A third presenting issue arises which seems to naturally link business and personal:

Client (lines 943-945):

He just told me – do you know how much he put in? He was told to put in R80,000. I was horrified.

Coach (lines 947):

So he's lost R80,000 ...

Client (lines 963-964):

I trusted him. And I know very well – you don't trust anybody.

Coach (lines 966-967):

No. There's a bigger lesson than that. ...

Client (lines 981-989):

Now the house I bought on the ... with this other lady – and I own 50 per cent of it – I have a letter from the bank that she has to sign that gives me authority to have the account for the new house linked to my business account so I can make payments. I have a letter from her giving me the authority to do that.

Coach (lines 991-992):

Is this something you want? You want to link the two?

The researcher notes that the coach consistently goes back to the most recent presenting issue; there are several presenting issues but the coach seems to track where the client is in her thinking. It is harder for the reader; but the reader is very much outside the story, and perhaps the only assumptions that the researcher is making is about the complexity of the client's story. The coach often uses the technique of 'going back' to ensure that they are still on track.

Coach (lines 1163-1166):

So the accountant thing, I think we have kind of ... but what else? I want to look at X's thing but what else? Is there anything else?

Client (lines 1168):

Pressing?

Coach (lines 1170):

Yeah.

The researcher noted that the coach approached several of the presenting issues with a question which gave a larger perspective, a 'meta' position. In noting this, the researcher stayed in 'meta' position herself. The question which arises is: does this mean the researcher is aligning herself with the coach, and what would happen if the coach did not stay in meta position?

Coach (lines 2104-2114):

What if you didn't have any emotions involved in it? How could you think about it? Let's pretend she works for me. What if she worked for me and you're the HR director. You don't have any emotional stake in this because she doesn't work for you – she works for me and you have seen the behaviour, you have taken her through the appraisal, what would your advice be to me?

5.5.9.2 Showing partiality (C3)

What proved to be a question throughout the text was that the researcher often 'observed' and at the same time had a 'question'. For example, the researcher noted that the client seemed to move from one thing to another at random. Is that however an assumption? Is it not important to just be aware when making an observation vs. an assumption; or is every observation a value judgement? I do not think this thesis can answer that question.

Coach (lines 1211-1221):

So what is it that I can help you with? Thinking about how you can talk to him?

Client (lines 1216-1233):

X. has been disappointing me tremendously because I had a huge ... he met me again. He walked into my life again at a very critical time and ... I have met you and I know that my turnaround, my good fortune from a business point of view ... but it hit a very nasty area which I'd like to tell you about, which is called arrogance [*his*].

The researcher wrote down next to the text when she noticed a particularly good intervention by the coach; for example, a good question. Is this then an interpretation or partiality – noting that it is a good intervention? Is this not putting a positive spin on the intervention? If so, the researcher is partial or just making an observation.

Client (lines 1692-1695):

Ja, I'm sure there are but I don't use them ... if they don't have a big budget he said "You know what? I want upmarket events".

Coach (lines 1697-1699):

Is this an upmarket event? What is the definition of an upmarket event?

Client (lines 1701-1702):

You know that's a good question, isn't it.

Client (lines 1880):

I cancelled it three times.

Coach (lines 1882):

Why don't you go for yourself?

Client (lines 1891):

That's not a bad idea.

'Saying no' or just the emergence of the word 'no' came up as a question by one of the readers of this thesis in its first reading. The question was, why in the first code book does 'yes' show up as a category, but 'no' does not show up? I thought about this, as it had been asked – is this because the researcher thinks she is such a good coach that nothing negative emerges from the texts? In analysing this, it does not seem to be a prejudice against the word 'no' here. However, I specifically looked for the word 'no' in the transcripts as I reread them when looking for indications of 'bracketing' or 'not bracketing' assumptions. It is only with C3 that I noticed the word 'no' seemed to be in her vocabulary quite often. Some examples are below, but I note that it does not seem to arise from a conscious assumption on the part of the

researcher. Perhaps it did not arise with the first Ethnograph analysis and therefore was overlooked. 'Yes' and 'No' seem to be simply parts of the story's commentary rather than linked to positive or negative thinking. Also, a particularly South African saying is yes/no at the same time: 'Ja No'.

Client (lines 598-600):

No. He said I would probably look at making two business class tickets a year.

Client (lines 604-605):

Certainly not. Income. No, I made nothing.

Coach (lines 966-967):

No. There's a bigger lesson than that.

Client (lines 1503-1504):

No. I haven't had the opportunity to meet him.

Client (lines 1523-1524):

No. To quote on this job and I got another guy to do ... a guy I work with.

Client (lines 1608-1609):

I didn't tell them too much but thank you, yes, I work with a very good creative team.

Client (lines 1675-1676):

No. No. I am not in the right frame of mind to do it. I am so disappointed about him I must tell you because you know what, S? I really would like to work with him.

Coach (lines 2212-2213):

Can you run a business working with people that you feel sorry for?

Client (lines 2215):

No.

Client (lines 2338-2339):

No. It makes sense to me. I am happy with that.

Coach (lines 2461):

Shall we look at her thing (*her Insights profile*)?

Client (lines 2463):

Ja.

Coach (lines 2465-2466):

Are you not tired?

Client (lines 2468):

No. I'm actually fine.

5.5.10 To conclude (C3)

The researcher noted when the coach seemed to ask particularly relevant questions, and seemed to handle the fluency and rapid movement between business and personal events with more skill than the researcher could in reading the text. The key question that has arisen from this reading is: if the researcher makes an observation, is that observation based on an assumption or a value judgement? I think this may be the subject for further research.

5.6 Client transcript analysis: Client 6 (C6)

Client 6 (C6) is a training consultant and business woman who has trained to become a professional coach working primarily with professional women. Part of our work together was to help her manage her studies and her working relationships inside her current employment. She specifically wanted to make a decision whether she should go into a business partnership or strike out on her own, creating her own business. One of my key reasons for including her in this sample is because about a third of my work is developing women, from professional, corporate, entrepreneurial, government and grassroots communities.

One of the issues that emerged from our work together was the need for C6 to develop self-discipline and be committed to the decisions she made. She was newly married and had a supportive husband; this helped with her more existential issues such as choice and purpose. Her resistance to fully committing herself to whatever decisions she made interfered with the achievement of her goals.

She became more disciplined as our sessions together progressed. We worked together for about a year. Her presenting issues were primarily belief in her own abilities, confidence in herself, and identifying and overturning limiting assumptions that stopped her from achieving her desired goals.

Her sense of humour and fun leapt off the page when reading the transcripts; I was surprised at how relaxed the coach appeared to be. What I finally ascertained was the depth of ease both client and coach enjoyed together, and that this did not prevent the coach from challenging the client in the appropriate moments. As seen in the previous client transcripts, the relationship was a core factor in the depth of honesty shown by the client, and the willingness to explore what was holding her back from achieving her desired aims.

All of the sessions were devoted to professional issues; personal issues played a secondary role. However, as the relationship grew the client spoke more about personal issues that were affecting her professionally. Each session was devoted to a specific professional concern, whether making the decision to find a new job, how to complete her student activities, whether to take up a partnership in another business, and finally how to set up in business on her own. Issues about women and whether she would become a professional coach primarily for women clients was a key decision.

Her existential issues were focused on ‘who’ she was; ‘how’ she could become more of who she wanted to be; and how her career would help her to ‘become’ the person she wanted to be.

5.6.1 First data analysis (C6)

The first analysis was from three coaching sessions with C6 using the Ethnograph. The two-hour sessions took place on 26th January 2004, 17th March 2004, and 12th May 2004. These were the best transcribed of all our sessions together.

5.6.1.1 Client themes (first analysis C6)

These are the themes that emerged from the first Ethnograph analysis of each of C6’s sessions:

ability, adapt, amazing, awareness, bad, challenge, challenges, change, choice, closure, communicate, compassion, confident, conflict, connect, control, develop, disempower, empower, enjoy, excited, experience, failure, feelings, forward, fulfilment, goal, great, grow, I’m sure, impact, important, insight, integrity, interest, learning, money, motivation, openness, opportunity, possibility, question, relationship, responsibility, self-esteem, technique, understand, values, worry.

5.6.1.2 Coach’s interventions (first analysis C6)

The first analysis identified:

ability, analogy, awareness, brilliant (great idea), challenge, challenges, change, chat, choice, commitment, communicate, develop, disempower, empower, enjoy, excited, explain, forward, fulfilment, goal, going back, grow, guide option, impact, important, insight,

integrity, interest, learning, money, motivation, opportunity, possibility, question, reflection, relationship, responsibility, self-esteem, summarise, technique, understand, values, watching.

5.6.2 Second data analysis (C6)

Something I noticed in the second analysis of C6's transcripts was the number of pages in the first analysis that were not coded. This made the work in the second analysis much more painstaking. In the second analysis, I attempted to read the manuscripts as if I had not read any other client transcripts, bracketing assumptions about content, context and structure. I deliberately did not look back at the code book or any of the findings from the previous four clients (C1, C5, C14 and C3). Each client was unique in every way and had to be approached accordingly.

'Experience' emerged as a key theme in the second analysis: either the need for practical experience, or understanding what practical experience she actually had. 'Struggling' also emerged as a strong theme for this client; whether struggling to make a decision or to make choices. A final theme was the difference between men and women in the work place; how to deal with differences in communication between men and women; and how to present and stay self-confident when conflicts arose. Each of these themes had an impact on how C6 saw herself in relation to the world and others – which brought in relationship, experiential learning and existential concerns.

5.6.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C6)

advice, anxiety, ask for advice, assumptions, balance, being (who I am), big issue, boundaries; building relationships, business women, career transition, coaching works, collaborative, comfort zone, concern, confidence building, conflict, confusion, creativity, decision, difficult, differences, diversity, dreaming, driven, emotions, energy, fascinating, freedom, fun, glass ceiling, guidance, humour, I'm very clear, interactive, issues, knowing, learning from experience, life experiences, limiting assumptions (I often think I'm not good enough), male vs. female, measured change, mentor, mindfulness, natural development, nervous, opinion, options, position, powerful women, practical experience, preference, self-confidence, shifting perspective, outputs, self-affirmation, self-realisation, self-recognition, self-reflection, self-understanding, stepping stone, strong, struggling, success, supervision, support, survival, system, think, transition, unsure, women.

5.6.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C6)

My observation is that, similar to my second analysis of C3's transcripts, the coaching interventions are a combination of specific types of interventions complemented by a number of themes similar to the client themes. One of the key differences is the amount of 'guiding'

that the coach did in this session. It was not teaching, more guiding the client in terms of her studies and her thinking (specifically in the light of making a decision of which job or profession to pursue, and whether to set up a new business). My analysis of ‘teaching’ when coaching is that it is actually helping the client to learn a new skill; ‘guiding’ is more akin to asking the right questions to guide the client towards a new way of approaching a task or an issue. New coaching interventions:

accountability; acting as if; advice; affirming client; aha (insight); analogy; apology; appreciation; asking a question back; assertive communication; assumption; being tough (what are you going to do about this); bored, building relationships; challenge (can I just challenge your thinking about; my question is whether you have to; can I just; how will you; how do you; what is stopping you from); checking; concerns; confirm action; cultural; cultural competence; curiosity; develop you; do differently; diversity; energy; ethics; explain and guide; explore; flexibility; giving information; goal setting; going back (so the last thing; to the menu; let's see what we've got so far); growth; guidance; guide (so you can do); guiding; gut feeling; humour; intention; learning comes from reflection; learning environment; learning plan (summing up); limiting assumption; menu (what do you want to talk about today); metaphor; observation; options; probing (have you; what else); purpose; pushing (I just think); query (for information and understanding); question (anything else; how does that apply to you; what for information); question direction (do you want to); question (re action; tell me; to clarify; to understand; what do you mean); question re limiting assumption (what would hold you back; what is holding you back; what do differently; how do it differently); what are; what's changed; what's changed as a result; what's different); recommended action; recommended reading; reflecting on learning; reframe and restate; rephrase to confirm; repetition; review and summarise; rephrase and reframe; respect; shift; strategy; suggested options; suggestion (you might just want to think about; why don't we look at); summarise (what did we do); summarise action and reflections (what have you gained from today); summarise client's thoughts; taking responsibility; teaching reflection; think; third position thinking; training; turning around limiting assumption; vision; wonder (I'm wondering).

5.6.3 New client themes that were added to the code book (C6)

With this client there were quite a few new client themes to be added to the code book; however there were less new question interventions to add:

anxiety, being (who I am), big issue, boundaries; building relationships, business women, career transition, comfort zone, confidence building, conflict, confusion, creativity, differences, diversity, driven, energy, fun, glass ceiling, I'm very clear, interactive, knowing, learning from experience, life experiences, male vs. female, measured change, mentor,

mindfulness, natural development, opinion, position, powerful women, practical experience, preference, shifting perspective, outputs, self-affirmation, self-reflection, self-understanding, stepping stone, struggling, supervision, support, survival, system, transition, women.

5.6.4 New coaching interventions added to the code book (C6)

accountability; acting as if; analogy; asking a question back; assumption; explain and guide; explore; giving information; goal setting; going back (so the last thing; to the menu; let's see what we've got so far); guide (so you can do); guiding; question (direction: do you want to); repetition; review and summarise; rephrase and reframe; suggestion (you might just want to think about; why don't we look at); summarise (what did we do); summarise action and reflections (what have you gained from today); tell me; third position thinking; turning around limiting assumptions (what would hold you back; what is holding you back; what do differently; how do it differently); what are; what changed; what's changed as a result; what's different).

5.6.5 New question interventions added to final code book (C6)

asking a question back; direction: do you want to; summarise action and reflections (what have you gained from today); suggestion (why don't we look at).

The code book of question interventions is quite comprehensive; with this client there was not much to add.

5.6.6 Findings and reflections (C6)

Here are some of my observations as I read through C6's texts for the second analysis:

One of the differences that I experienced in reading through C6's manuscripts was the disjointedness from one session to the next. What emerged from the phenomena when reading was the lack of continuity between sessions. This may be a result of the client being younger and less experienced than the first four clients; it may be because this client had coaching sessions only when she had a particular issue or project to work through. What emerged from the texts was the difficulty in helping C6 in a 'fluid' or continuous manner. In fact, the coach challenged the client on several occasions about deadlines and more rigorous commitment to her own decisions (for example, lines 71-77, 26th January 2004: "The hardest thing I find to get out of you is when you're going to do something. I'm telling you this now. This is my biggest frustration." And lines 629-630 in the same text: "So how are you going to decide?").

Another interesting phenomenon was new client themes from this second analysis, although I added less to the coaching and question interventions compared to the previous clients. This could be as a result of C6 being fifth in line in terms of investigating her texts for new interventions.

One of the things I noticed is that this client took a few sessions to become more self-reflective. Her attention was constantly focused on the ‘busyness’ of her life and the difficulties that presented to her. The coach gave quite a lot of guidance in this session, and engaged with the client on the level of observation and suggestion. This is different to teaching, as teaching is actually helping the client to learn something that the coach has access to (for example, a skill or technique; helping the client to design a brochure and think through the practicalities of setting up a business) and the client does not. Part of the reason for guidance with C6 was that she was still a relatively young professional and was moving into a new career, and she was experiencing some anxiety about it. For example, lines 594-596, 26th January 2004: “But women in business – now, that’s a whole other thing and that could become your niche”.

C6 mentioned the word ‘experience’ in many contexts; for example, life experience, practical experience, learning from experience. However, the coach tried to help her reflect more on her experience in order to learn from it. For example, lines 945-950, 17th March 2004: “The learning doesn’t come from the doing. The learning comes from reflection on the doing – it’s not the doing. It’s the reflection”.

What is emerging from the analysis of each different set of client texts is that the themes clients might choose to work through is infinite; the themes are dependent on client background, experience, culture, language, gender, content and context of the sessions, and their needs and motivations. What also emerges is that the types of question interventions are similar, with small differences in how questions are asked.

The conclusions I am beginning to formulate, with one client’s transcripts left to analyse, is that there seem to be ‘types’ of questions and interventions with many different ways of using them to intervene in the client’s conversation. Also, the relationship is emerging as the primary factor in the coach/client conversation, with existential issues emerging above the surface as the relationship between coach and client develops. This implies the need for safety and a large degree of flexibility on the part of the coach.

5.6.7 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C6)

For this analysis, I selected the transcript of 12th May 2004. This transcript read quite differently from those of C1, C3, C5, and C6 which I had investigated first in the light of the phenomenological approach.

5.6.7.1 Maintaining impartiality (C6)

As researcher when reading this text, I sometimes asked the question – ‘what is this really all about; is it about how she structures her career?’ When I reached the end of the text, reading the coach’s summary I realised that the beginning of the coach/client conversation was missing, and yes it was about the development of her career.

Client (lines 227-242):

That I wouldn’t want to be put into a position where I coach a team and ... OK let me explain this; the last company that I worked for they made me team leader after like three months working in the company. I had no idea of half the things that were involved but they wanted me to learn. This I can do, but I need more support and guidance than they were able to give me. So there must be some kind of a support mechanism that I go in to coach. Like you the consultant and you just go and do this. You must remember that I come from Cape Town as well and it feels different here in a lot of ways.

Something else that was different in reading this client text was that as a researcher I recognised an observation as just that; not as a potential assumption. For example, when the coach asked a good question, it was simply an observation borne out by the text.

Coach (lines 278-281):

Well you are learning how to be more assertive. Actually is one of your concerns the ability to be assertive enough?

Client (lines 283-285):

Sometimes I think I’m not challenging enough where I sit so maybe that’s it.

Coach (lines 287-288):

And so I’ll put here a concern maybe?

Client (lines 290-294):

For leaders especially because I think sometimes I need to be challenged and I tend to work out another way to get it and maybe sometimes I just ... challenged.

To keep the ‘meta’ perspective and stay on track, the coach often used the technique of ‘summarising’. There was a moment in this text where the coach was mentoring; i.e. offering to introduce the client to her network of contacts, but not necessarily explaining that that was more a mentoring activity.

Coach (lines 1055-1065):

... first then the women. OK, let’s see what we’ve got so far because I’m not sure if we’ve got enough or if it’s a place to start. So one of the things we’ve talked about is how to find a job and how to target women. We talked about talking to XY and XZ and I can introduce you to the two people that will be very useful for you to meet and you can try and set up a meeting.

Another observation was the recognition of different ways of overturning limiting assumptions. In this text the assumption was not identified as a limiting assumption, and it was approached using the analogy of martial arts. The researcher found that she was tracking the thinking of the coach trying to understand where she was headed. Not all of the text is included below as coach, and client, look at how to ‘act as if’. I will come back to this piece of text when I look at limiting assumptions and how the model takes shape in the coach/client conversation.

Coach (lines 1120-1121):

So what do you do in conflict resolution?

Client (lines 1123):

With my voice?

Coach (lines 1125-1129):

No, any voice. In conflict resolution, what do you do? When somebody says something at you and you want to dilute the aggression, what do you do?

Client (lines 1131):

I normally reflect it back.

Coach (lines 1133):

OK, you can reflect it back.

Client (lines 1135-1136):

I make sure I understand what they are saying.

Coach (lines 1138-1141):

You acknowledge it. So you have your voice that says ‘why should anyone want me?’ Can you think of something that’s really aggressive? ... It’s like if you think of a martial art. What

you do is you take the energy and you go with it. OK? The voice in your head is like that. You just say ‘Oh thank you! That’s a very interesting thought. I will just pause that for a minute and I’ll go away and wonder about it, but thank you for that. I will acknowledge it.’ And that’s all you do. You don’t argue with it and you let it go. Acknowledge it and let it go. You say ‘I’ll come back to that’. You let it go but you don’t bother to come back to it.

5.6.7.2 Showing partiality (C6)

A question that arose as I read the transcript was, ‘can the researcher divorce herself from who the client is’: i.e. the coach knows the client well having worked with her over a period of a few years. Does this not make the researcher already biased when approaching the coach/client text? What my final conclusion is that at first, the researcher senses what the client is getting at; but because the text is so two-dimensional it misses the three-dimensional face-to-face context. Reading the text is thus divorced from ‘who’ either coach or client is. However, it remains an interesting question and perhaps needs future investigation in the light of ‘bracketing assumptions’.

A second observation which meant that I as researcher did not bracket assumptions, but let them in – was in thinking as I read the client’s text, ‘come on, get real; life isn’t like that; it’s your job to develop yourself.’ This is the point where I wonder if the researcher didn’t step right back into the coach’s shoes, thus losing perspective.

Client (lines 794-800):

I would ask because yes, I mean I’m just kind of developing as a coach – because I don’t believe and maybe...I don’t believe that I can right now go up there and do the best coaching job that I could do without some kind of input from other people around me.

Coach (lines 801-804):

OK, now I’m going to challenge you on something. It isn’t their job to develop you as a coach.

Client (lines 806-807):

I knew you were going to say that! I knew!

Coach (lines 809-814):

It’s your job to develop you as a coach. So that will be one of the courses that you will do. You will be developing you as a coach. What they will offer is the chance for you to practice ...

Client (lines 823; 829-830; 844-845):

You set it up for yourself; so you are not going to have a mentor or anything like that? I was just hoping someone else would ... for awhile.

It was interesting to read how the coach broke apart the limiting assumption into workable parts; this provoked interest from the researcher who was curious about where the conversation would end. However, as researcher I did wonder if the coach was not giving answers to the client. Would it not be better done by questioning? This is certainly not bracketing assumptions.

Client (lines 1277-1280):

I obviously did it very well. What are the things you need to say while you're 'acting as if'?

Coach (lines 1282-1301):

OK, so one of the things, more seriously, one of the things you were saying was, 'what's going to hold me back?' and one of the things you said was going to hold you back is that you get nervous, you keep quiet and one of the things that I want you to think about is important: what are the things you need to say while you're 'acting as if,' that you want to convey to the X's and Y's of this world? What kind of things do you need to say – this is actually very important. I am an Assistant Coach, I work primarily with women in business (very driven, often powerful women). I am completing my Masters through ... Ok. So that's the ... so what are you going to say?

Client (lines 1303...):

I am going to say ...

5.6.8 To conclude (C6)

What was different in reading this transcript was that I read more for broad themes in the text rather than picking up lots of specific instances in the dialogue. One of the queries that arose for me as the researcher, was: did I resonate more readily with this client because I also do a lot of work in the development of women as executives and leaders (i.e. could I have been thinking, great this is right up my alley)? On reaching the end of the transcript I realised that it did not matter whether she had selected to work with men or women; it was an interesting point but did not mean that I lost impartiality when reading the content of the transcript.

5.7 Client transcript analysis: Client 2 (C2)

Client 2 (C2) is a professional coach working with executive leaders to help them develop leadership competencies and balance in their professional and personal lives. Some of the key issues when working with clients are leadership skills, personal mastery, complexity and stress. The first analysis was completed using transcripts from four coaching sessions: 25th July 2003, 20th January 2004, 10th March 2004, and 6th May 2004. These were two-hour

sessions and were the best of six recorded coaching sessions. I deliberately selected this professional coach as he faced and overcame many obstacles in moving out of one business and setting up a new one.

Part of the work that we did together was related to his own sense of 'being': who he was; who he wanted to become; and how he could overcome the enemy within (i.e. the critical inner voice that put up obstacles to his development). C2 is on his way to becoming a leading professional in his field and it was interesting to work with him in his early stages of development. As a trainer of coaches it was appropriate to include C2 in this sample, particularly as I am involved in the development of coaches academically and professionally. C2 works in the corporate and academic world. His expertise spans a number of different professional fields including psychological, medical and commercial. The work we did together encompassed helping him with his studies as a professional coach, setting up a new business and identifying and transforming his limiting paradigms into empowering ones.

5.7.1 First data analysis (C2)

5.7.1.1 Client themes (first analysis C2)

I did not think the first analysis of C2's texts picked up the client themes well; perhaps it was not well coded, or there was not adequate discovery of codes in this first analysis. It made the subsequent analyses that much more time consuming because each time a text was read again, new client themes and new coaching interventions were identified. One possibility is that, in two of the sessions, client and coach were working on client documents, so time was taken up with the evaluation and restructuring of those. However, as the client confirmed, some of the more subtle learnings emerged as a result.

These are the themes that emerged from the first Ethnograph analysis of each of C2's sessions:

ability, awareness, background, brilliant, challenge, challenges, change, choice, communicate, empower, engage (with the world), exactly, explain, goal, good point, get it, grow, health, honesty, impact, insight, make sense, money, perfect, possibility, question, reflection, resistance, resolve, summarise, technique, thank you, understand, worry, yes.

5.7.1.2 Coach's interventions (first analysis C2)

What I attempted with the first analysis of C2's transcripts was to approach them as if I had not previously analysed the transcripts of five previous clients. In fact, what was immediately apparent was the very different context and content of these transcripts. The key coaching intervention themes were:

ability, awareness, background, being (how are you being), challenge, challenges, chat, communicate, empower, explain, goal, going back, good point, grow, guide option, insight, integrity, interest, learning, possibility, question, reflection, repetition, summarise, technique, understand, worry.

5.7.2 Second data analysis (C2)

Here are some of my observations when analysing C2's texts for the second time.

5.7.2.1 New client themes (second analysis C2)

This client is intuitive and very aware of his limiting assumptions and limiting paradigms. Also, he was willing to work with issues where change could take place. Some of his limiting assumptions were to do with a conscious denial of his talents, strengths and intellectual capabilities. Client themes to emerge in the second analysis were:

action (in the world); amazing; angst; asking for advice; assumption; attention; being; bracket (each moment is the bracket); bracketed; busy; coaching helps; constructive/critical (paradox); critical voice; debate; denial; desired goal; dialogue; emotional intelligence; engaging; ethics; feeling; get clear; inner dialogue/inner voice; insight (I need to change); journey; languaging; leaders; leadership; mastery of being; mindfulness; not possible; noticing; personal mastery; positive; projection; resistance; self-management; significance; states of being; struggling; teach; unsure; way of being; writing.

5.7.2.2 New coaching interventions (second analysis C2)

In this session the researcher primarily used: *suggestion, challenge, rephrase* and *summarise, confirming* and *affirming the client, closed questions* and suggested interventions such as Nancy Kline's thinking skills. The process emerging with each of C2's transcripts is *input* (what is on the menu and prioritising issues); *throughput* (the conversation, development of the relationship, questions, and a structured thinking process); *output* (summarising, what the client gained, learning plan, and action plan). The coach was quite tough at times with C2 in terms of interventions (for example, one observation, lines 1848 to 1854, transcript 6th May 2004, "there are some things at some point you need to get!") New coaching interventions in the second analysis were:

analogy, affirming client; aims; analogy; anything else; being (how are you being); being tough; big picture; brow beating; challenge and suggestion; clarify goal (rephrase); competency; comparison; consciousness; confusion (I'm confused); consequences; ethical understanding; existential world; giving permission; goal setting; going back (hang on a minute; let's just go back a minute; we're going off track); guidance/guiding; leadership; insightful observation; learning (what was the key learning; what was the key thing for you);

limiting assumptions; making it explicit; menu (what would you like to work on today; what was it you thought you needed help with; why are you here); observation; output (tell me; what did you get out of today); options; perception; permission; possibilities; problem; rationale; reflect and summarise; rephrase (I think you want to say); rephrase and reflect back; rephrase and suggest; relationship; resistance; so; self-appraisal; self-reflection; suggestion (I think you could have; so I would have thought; think for a minute; you could; what I would; why don't we); stuck/safe; summarise and reflect back; think; think out loud; thinking (what's happening for you that made you ask that); transference; uncertainty, values/beliefs; wondering (I'm just wondering; I'm wondering why).

5.7.3 Coaching intervention questions

ask (tell me); assumption (what might you be assuming; what might you be assuming that is stopping you from); clarify (what do you mean); challenge (but what's your learning); closed questions (are you; can I ask you what happens; can I stop you; can we just; do you want to; is this; is that from; is that important; is there ever an answer; so it's not just) concern; confirming (so you are saying; so what you're telling me is); how can I help you the most with this; how come; learning (so what is your learning about); what [what; what are; what is it that's different; what do you think; what do you think it would be helpful to do; what if it didn't happen; what would you like to work on today (menu)]; when (when you do you).

In these sessions with C2 there were many closed questions either confirming or clarifying his thinking. This was the first time I had noticed this particular technique; using closed questions with this client appeared to be subtle and less interfering with C2's thinking, feeling and exploration. For example, in the text from 25th July 2003, lines 163-167; 191-193; and 267-269: "Is this your learning throughout; so what you're telling me is [...]"; and "so what is your learning about bringing in [...]". One of the things I noticed in this analysis is the difference between advice and suggestion.

Advice is when the coach is actually suggesting or recommending a particular thought, idea or action. A suggestion is the coach putting forward an idea for debate and dialogue.

5.7.4 New client themes that were added to the code book (C2)

With this client there were only a few new client themes to be added to the code book:

angst; asking for advice; attention; bracket (each moment is the bracket); bracketed; busy; constructive/critical (paradox); critical voice; debate; denial; desired goal; dialogue; emotional intelligence; engaging; ethics; get clear; inner dialogue/inner voice; journey;

linguaging; leaders; leadership; not possible; noticing; personal mastery; projection; significance; states of being; teach; way of being; writing.

5.7.5 New question interventions added to final code book (C2)

The code book of question interventions is quite comprehensive; however variations on themes were added, such as questions for assumptions, what, when, confirming, how and closed questions:

assumption (what might you be assuming; what might you be assuming that is stopping you from); closed questions (are you; can I ask you what happens; can I stop you; can we just; do you want to; is this; is that from; is that important; is there ever an answer; so it's not just); confirming (so you are saying; so what you're telling me is); how can I help you the most with this; how come; reflect and summarise; rephrase (I think you want to say); rephrase and reflect back; rephrase and suggest; what [what; what are; what is it that's different; what do you think; what do you think it would be helpful to do; what if it didn't happen; what would you like to work on today (menu)]; when (when you do you).

5.7.6 Findings and reflections (C2)

Here are some of my observations on reading through C2's texts for the second analysis:

My observation is that similar to my second analysis of C3's transcripts, the coaching interventions are a combination of specific types of interventions complemented by a number of themes (similar to client themes). Not unlike C6 there was some 'guiding' by the coach related to the projects C2 was working on. The difference between C2 and C6 was the amount of debate, dialogue, resistance and agreement that took place in C2's texts.

5.7.7 The relationship

There were many insights and learnings on the part of both coach and client; they both grew as a result of the relationship. The relationship was able to take the coach's 'being tough' and challenging on several occasions. A new coaching intervention used in one of C2's sessions was the six-stage model for Nancy Kline's thinking skills. Although used towards the end of the session, it really helped the client open up to assumptions that were blocking him.

5.7.8 Existential issues (C2)

The existential issues that emerged from these texts were about: angst; being; who am I; personal mastery; and significance. They emerged out of the dialogue of more superficial or

tangible issues. The client acknowledged how some of the deeper issues emerged when speaking about safer subjects.

5.7.9 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C2)

I selected C2's transcript of 6th May 2004. This was an interesting coach/client transcript to work through; the client often seemed to 'resist' or 'fight' what the coach reflected, surmised or summarised as a way to find his own way, or his own perspective.

5.7.9.1 Maintaining impartiality (C2)

It was fairly straight forward to maintain a third party, neutral perspective to this transcript as it required reading several times to ensure I had grasped the breadth and depth of the points under discussion. My observation about the client's text was that he consistently found himself in the third party position, but as a critical, very partial observer to himself. This transcript offered perspectives within perspectives.

Client (lines 377-383):

Correct. If I could move some of the angst around the writing and engaging and what to do and how to do, etc. – the judgement is that I should be able to do that and why I can't, is just another voice that comes in, I would engage that.

And still staying with the judgemental observer from the client, often in reading the transcript, I noticed the use of a question or intervention on the part of the coach to dig deeper into an issue.

Coach (lines 975-976):

Tell me what is it that is safe about staying stuck?

Client (lines 980-990):

To engage in the world in the way the world ... the rules, the limitations, the laws that govern. I've had a refusal to engage with ... I want to do ... I trust something else is going on then they don't go together and this results in confusion. So what I do is I deny the working with the way things actually are and that denial doesn't serve me. Does that make sense?

The coach throughout the text offered an alternative perspective to that of the client; these differing perspectives worked to keep the reader outside of the text and impartial.

Coach (lines 1684- 1716):

Right. But you know what? I'm going to share something with you and it's hard to bear. Every single writer has got to edit and edit and edit and edit. You don't get it right first time. You

don't just get it by writing it. It doesn't happen that way. Any writer who says I just write my book and I get it published is speaking b.s.! Because it's kind of like practice; it's like a coaching practice ... So maybe this is the piece for you ... understanding that you will struggle with the writing and that's OK. That's your journey.

Client (lines 1720):

That is a piece.

I also noticed in reading the text how the coach would consistently ask the client where are they now, what has been learned, how has this helped. It seemed to be an interesting technique to give both client and coach perspective on the coaching process.

Coach (lines 2973):

How has it helped?

Client (lines 2978-2987):

Well it has helped in showing how I need to put in earlier my learning and then close it, so it's almost like in my explanation of what is going on, in other words what's happened on the day, right in the beginning I put a little note in of some influence it has on me and then I close with my reflections and learnings in more detail.

Coach (lines 2991-3002):

Yeah. 'Some influence on me and then my reflections'. Oh. Good. And when you have done it I am very happy to edit it for you ... So the learning is really to bring your learning in earlier. The influence on your work, your practice, or whatever, and then bring in your reflection. So did we cover what you wanted to cover?

Client (lines 3007):

Yeah, we did.

Coach (lines 3011-3012):

We also picked up on a few other things.

Client (lines 3016-3018):

We did. We picked up on a deeper process behind what's going on.

5.7.9.2 Showing partiality (C2)

The researcher may have been showing partiality in reading this text because it was an insightful text to read in the light of coaching issues and concerns. The researcher found

herself grappling with some of the comments made by the client, really trying to work out the client's pattern of thinking. The coach made valuable insights at many points, and seemed able to handle the resistance of the client, helping the client through a number of limiting assumptions that were holding back progress on his project at hand.

The researcher was interested in the conversation that arose about 'bracketing' in the light of this particular analysis; however, as researcher I was not impartial as I found myself agreeing or in alignment with what was emerging.

Client (lines 169-174):

... don't handle it or avoid it, is just bracketed. You have put it where it needs to be and somehow you are able to stay with what you are doing and not let it come into that space.

Coach (lines 178-242):

That's very interesting. Because I think some people cannot bracket. I am thinking of key things ... I think you've said something very interesting in terms of the mind and how the mind works and how – ... And it's a discipline and it's a mind ability. It's an ability to use different intelligences of the mind – visual, auditory, kinaesthetic ...

I think you're right about bracketing as well as structure and I think there's a combination of how you use your thinking ... It's a skill.

Client (lines 258-259; 268-270):

Like now, each moment is new. Each moment is the bracket. ... And then you climb into those and they hold you...

The client made an interesting distinction about bracketing in his summing up of how he works with a client. This gave another perspective on 'bracketing'.

Client (lines 420-425):

It doesn't enter my mind. I am so present with my client, I'm so in their world working with what needs to happen, where are we, what's happening, what is this client showing me right now?

Coach (lines 429-430)

Can you not use that skill to write?

5.7.10 To conclude (C2)

One of my observations as reader / researcher was that there was so much detail, it kept me outside the text; it kept me in the neutral position. Secondly, the client's text was descriptive of his own 'judgemental outside-ness' to his process that it also kept the reader outside but reading with curiosity. Finally, the coach often offered another perspective for the client to think about, and that also kept the reader able to stay present, neutral and outside the text. However, because I as researcher am particularly interested in 'bracketing assumptions', I found the dialogue between coach and client illuminating – thus bringing in my own partiality.

5.8 Client transcript analysis: Client 15 (C15)

C15 was the client for whom I did not transcribe any of the sessions. My analysis is based on my session and post-session notes with C15. Due to the learning plan, the telephone conversations, and face-to-face sessions with C15, I have enough data to pick up key client themes, a number of coach's interventions, and to make an overall assessment. What the analysis of this client has brought home to me is that the 'raw' data of the transcripts (for C1, C2, C3, C5, C6 and C14) is what gave me, as a researcher, the material from which I could develop my coaching model and analyse in great detail the coach/client conversation. The sessions I chose to analyse were from 1st December 2004, 11th April 2005, 14th May 2005, 8th June 2005 and 5th July 2005. With this client, I needed more sessions as I did not have verbatim transcripts. C15 has written a testimonial to our work together which is available upon request.

5.8.1 Data analysis (C15)

5.8.1.1 Client themes (C15)

In reading the session and post-session notes for C15 I was able to create a list of themes that emerged from each of our sessions. The majority of the themes are similar to those already in the code book:

acknowledge, acknowledging, action, anxiety, ask questions, assumptions, attitude, becoming, behaviour, being black, big picture, capability, caretaking, change, chat, clarify, coaching works, communication, conflict, confront, control, defensive, delegation, develop, difficulties, disability, doing, emotions, encourage, energy, expectations, financial management, goals, grieving, holistic view, ideas, implications, improve, intimidation, irritation, leadership, learning, listening, little picture, managing people, managing relationships, motivation, negotiation, observations, organisation, overwhelmed, possibilities, power, preconceived, problem, recognise, reflection, refocus, relationship, resigning, responsibilities, responsibility, roles, sales, strategy, stressed, support, sustain, systems, team leader, vision.

5.8.1.2 Coach's interventions (C15)

It was almost impossible to make a list of the coach's interventions from my session notes as I more assiduously wrote down the client's thoughts and reflections. Transcripts are an absolute necessity for this type of research:

where are you, what are you feeling, can you, so what else, how do you feel, what will you do, what can you do, what are you thinking, when will you do it, how will you go about it, how will you, when do you think, what are you thinking, how can you make it possible, what is stopping you, what is holding you back, what if you could?

5.8.2 Findings and reflections (C15)

For an action-based phenomenological research project, it is essential to have the raw data transcripts available in order to analyse the themes of the data. In working from hand-written notes, it is too easy to put a bias or interpretation on what has been said.

However, this has been a useful exercise to not only see the value of the notes made during and post-session, but to understand the depth of exploration that can be done from verbatim transcripts.

5.8.3 Impartiality and bracketing assumptions (C15)

Because I did not have a series of coach/client transcripts to read and review for this client, only my own notes and reflections, I could not perform the same analytical exercise on impartiality/partiality as with the previous six clients.

5.9 Following the emergence of a phenomenon

This section includes an analysis of how a phenomenon emerges from the client transcript to Ethnograph category, to code, to contribute to the final model. The transcript used is 10th May 2004 for Client 1 (C1).

As a researcher, I have tackled this question from two perspectives, from both *client* and the *coach* perspective. The client phenomenon that I have chosen to follow throughout the 10th May 2004 manuscript for Client 1 (C1) is that of '*feelings*', and in particular the theme of '*articulating and understanding emotions*'. The coach's interventions that are explored are those of '*reflection*,' '*reflect and summarise*' and '*reframing*'.

5.9.1 Analysing the texts

In Chapter 4, Project Activity, I explained how I analysed the texts for each of the six clients. The following is taken from 4.11, 4.12, and 4.13:

“I performed the first level of analysis using the Ethnograph which enabled me to number each line, to name the types of interventions, and to create a code book of words, phrases, patterns and themes as they emerged from first to final analysis.⁵⁰ The themes reflected two specific things: the coach’s interventions and the themes that arose from the clients’ text.

“The code book grew with each subsequent reading (second, third and fourth) of the coaching session transcript. The code book eventually became two specific lists: client themes and types of coaching interventions (including themes which were similar to the client’s themes). To conclude the project, I had a final interview with each client; I asked each client to read all of their own transcripts. The final interview was to hear their reflections on the coach/client conversations, to determine the authenticity of the sessions, and to hear their learnings from the process overall.”

5.9.2 First level of analysis: client themes and coaching interventions

I performed the first level of analysis using the Ethnograph which enabled me to number each line, to name the types of interventions, and to create a code of words, patterns and themes as they emerged from first to final analysis. The layout of the Ethnograph transcript allowed me to review the code that was emerging with each analysis and to look at it in the light of my evolving coaching model. To begin with we created an Ethnograph file for each client coaching session; then we conducted the first stage of analysis using the computer programme. As we began to read through each line a series of words, patterns and themes began to emerge. We created a ‘book’ of client code words or themes which emerged common to all of the coach/client transcripts, plus a list of the common coaching interventions as they became apparent.

Examples of the client themes are listed at the end of Chapter 4: Project Activity in Section 4.20 (the first analysis did not separate the client themes and the coaching interventions; for example, *challenge, change, chat, do/change, do differently, emotions, empower, explain, feelings, goal, going back, good point, guide, insight, listening, question, reflection, reflect and summarise, reframe, summarise*).

“As my second researcher (R2) and I began to read through (on-screen) the first coaching sessions for all of the client conversations, a series of words, patterns and themes began to emerge.⁵¹ The questions and interventions on the part of the coach teased out these client

themes. We created a first ‘book’ of code words or themes that emerged from the clients’ texts.”

Out of this first reading for most of the clients including C1, ‘*feelings*’ emerged as one of the client themes. I defined ‘*feelings*’ similarly to Longman’s Dictionary of the English language: “*an emotional state or reaction, and susceptibility to impression or sensibility.*” I defined ‘*emotions*’ as: *the client’s expression or articulation of feelings whether positive or negative, including Longman’s Dictionary of the English language, i.e. “a strong feeling (for example, anger, fear or joy) usually involving physiological changes.*”

5.9.3 Coaching interventions (as described in the code book)

I defined the coaching interventions of *reflection*, *reflect and summarise*, and *reframing* as a result of the first level of analysis for all of the client transcripts including C1. These techniques were noted in the first, second, third and fourth readings of the transcript.

Reflection:

This is a very important technique. The coach asks questions in such a way that the client can think, feel or probe more deeply into an issue or a topic. Often clients do not know how to reflect, and it is a skill that the coach acquires in action. It indicates a high level of listening ability in order to reflect back, reframe, rephrase or simply summarise what the client is saying in the form of a *statement* or a *question*. Often the coach thinks of different ways to help clients to reflect, from journaling to how the review is done at the beginning and end of each coaching session. Throughout the session the coach reflects back to the client to help with insight or to clarify an issue or to show understanding and interest.

Reflect and summarise:

This indicates a high level of listening ability in order to reflect back, reframe, rephrase and to follow that with a simple summary of what the client is saying in the form of a statement or a question.

Reframe:

This is a specific neuro-linguistic technique to help the client see, view, think, or feel about an issue differently. The coach restates what the client has said, but frames it in different language and with a different perspective. The purpose is to evoke the client’s creative thinking and feeling processes, and is often used to help identify and replace disempowering assumptions, paradigms or worldviews. Often reframing is used to separate fact from emotion and to offer up another interpretation of a situation.

5.9.4 Second level of analysis

In the second and third hard-copy analyses, specific coaching interventions came into view repeatedly; in the fourth hard-copy analysis the dominant client themes to emerge were those of the coaching model. The questions and interventions on the part of the coach teased out these client themes.

The second hard-copy analysis of *coaching interventions* is in Section 4.20.2. Examples of the coaching interventions to be noticed in the second hard-copy analysis are:

acknowledgement, back to you, checking, clarify, confirmation, create safety, do differently, empathise, empowering action, encourage, EQ or emotional intelligence, existential issues, fees, hang on/stick with that, humour, meaning, menu, negative insight, power, relationship building, recommend, sharing, shift, suggestion, teach, technique, tell me more, think, values, will, wondering.

The second hard-copy analysis of *client themes* is listed in Chapter 4: Project Findings, Section 4.20.3. In this *second* manual analysis of the clients' Ethnograph files, the total list of specific client themes to emerge in all of the coach/client transcripts were:

ambiguity, action, anxiety, assumptions, awareness, background, believe, change, choice, communicate conflict, conscious, consequences, confrontation, decision, defensive, empower, encourage, enjoy, existential angst, existential decision, fear, freedom, humour, issue, leadership, meaning, motivation, possibility, power, realised, responsibility, resistance, self confidence, self doubt, self esteem, self recognition, stood up to, stress, strong, thanks, tired, worry, unconscious, understand, unsure, victim, visualise, working.

Many of these reflect several themes aligned to 'feelings' that emerged for C1 in the second analysis of the following transcript; for example, *anxiety, defensive, existential angst, existential decision, fear, humour, resistance, self confidence, self doubt, self esteem, self recognition, stress, tired, worry, unsure, victim.*

5.9.5 Third level of analysis

In the third hard-copy analysis, I read the transcripts for the common themes which came up repeatedly. I termed these the 'dominant themes':

awareness, self-reliance, self-belief, self-confidence, self-responsibility, clarity, choice, freedom, motivation, decision, commitment, change and performance.

5.9.6 Fourth level of analysis

In the *fourth* and final hard-copy analysis the themes to stand out, throughout the four levels of the analysis, were the themes which created the final coaching model. These themes stood out as the central framework for the coaching conversation; in each transcript there was a cycling or spiralling of reflection and developing awareness; taking responsibility for what worked and what didn't work; setting goals and taking action based on reflection and responsibility; and learning throughout the conversation which led to the ability to grow and change.

These became more apparent with the third and fourth level reading of C1's 10th May 2004 transcript. In this particular transcript on first reading, it appeared that the coach and client began the conversation with reflection on the client's personal growth and change that she had experienced within herself over the last few weeks. Although the references were to personal growth and change, both client and coach reflected on what that learning and personal growth represented for the client. The final *phases* of the model which reflected experiential learning and existential concerns were beginning to emerge in the transcript with the final reading. These were:

Reflection and awareness, Responsibility, Setting Goals, Personal growth and change – aligned to freedom, meaning, choice and anxiety.

5.9.7 Client C1 – phenomenon to emerge from 10th May 2004 transcript

C1, throughout the coaching sessions (since August 2003), had suffered a lack of self esteem, failing self confidence, anxiety and nervousness. In this session, C1 begins to articulate her emotions, and to discuss how she has reflected, gained insight, and grown personally and professionally. The feelings and emotions which C1 begins to articulate and learn from in this transcript are *anger, depression, lack of confidence, victim-hood/powerlessness, being afraid and negativity*. She acknowledged that this was due to her work in the coaching sessions. C1 has begun to learn how to reflect on her emotions; in the process she has grown in emotional intelligence, confidence and belief in herself.

As a researcher, I observed that the coach used the techniques of '*reflection*,' '*reflection and summary*' and '*reframing*' to reflect on C1's personal growth and development – on C1 '*becoming*' someone who responds rather than reacts; and how she has developed her ability to handle both conflict and the difficult situations she faces daily. Another important phenomenon to emerge from the text, for the first time, was the client's new found ability to reflect on her experience and translate that into meaningful learning.

5.9.8 Input / throughput / output and the four stages of the coaching model

Summarised below are a few key *coach* interventions which reflect back and reframe what the client is saying about her own personal growth. What subsequently follows is an exploration of the coaching conversation (input / throughput / output), which cycles through the four stages of the coaching model (*personal growth and learning leading to change; reflection and awareness; taking responsibility; setting action steps*). These four stages are aligned to the existential concerns of anxiety, freedom/existence, meaning/purpose, and choice; they have been formed within the spiralling layers of building the relationship, experiential learning, and understanding the client's existential concerns.

The input / throughput / output framework makes clear the structure of the coaching conversation – and allows the coach and client to build and strengthen their relationship. This framework is the actual structure of the conversation; from this framework emerge the four spiralling stages of experiential learning (reflection, responsibility, goals, change) and aligned existential concerns (freedom, meaning, choice, anxiety).

From the first reading of the transcript, the framework of input / throughput / output emerged. But it took subsequent readings to determine if it was specifically followed. In this transcript there was a blurring between input and throughput; this was because the client needed to go back and re-engage with her earlier experiences.

5.9.9 Coach interventions to reflect and reframe

Coach (lines 52-56):

You are learning. You are growing. You are starting to work on how you react and I think it's about being rather than reacting, it's responding, and there's a difference.

Coach (lines 62-68):

That's a key component of emotional intelligence by the way. There are two factors in emotional intelligence – one is managing yourself and the other is managing the relationship between the other person.

Coach (lines 83-85):

Because it sounds like you're trying to understand it in order to figure out how you feel.

Coach (lines 121-124):

So the key thing is striving to be very grounded and being who you are ... I would think of it as being like a tree ...

5.9.10 Working inside the model

If we examine the transcript from the beginning, looking at the client's comments on her emotional personal growth and development, it becomes clear that the coach is working through the four stages of the model (*understanding personal growth and change, reflection, taking responsibility, and taking action*).⁵²

The conversation takes shape with *input* where the client discusses the *anxiety, nervousness* and difficult situations she has experienced recently (handling her boss; getting new keys made for her car which had been stolen in the break-in and burglary in her flat; her recent trip to the Eastern Cape on a political investigative trip into a current, hot political issue). The conversation moves into *throughput* when coach and client agree to focus on her key issue (whether she stays or goes in her current job (from lines 1418): *CI: Yes. Look, it is part of my reality all the time so I think we need ... it would be a good thing to just look at the dynamics*. In *output* coach and client agree what has been gained from the conversation, and agree next steps.

In this instance, as researcher I look at the text for the '*feelings*' and '*emotions*' articulated by the client throughout the conversation. I particularly look for the coach's use of '*reflection*,' '*reflect and summarise*' and '*reframing*' which help the client articulate her growth in emotional intelligence, her ability to take decisions, as well as the expansion of her *self confidence*. There are essentially two phenomena, that of coach and client: the client's theme is '*feelings*,' particularly '*articulating and getting in touch with emotions*'; the coach's interventions which help the client to '*articulate and get in touch with her emotions*' are '*reflection*,' '*reflect and summarise*,' and '*reframing*'.

5.9.11 Ethnograph

The coaching interventions '*reflection*,' '*reflect and summarise*,' and '*reframing*' entered the code book from the first level of analysis. These techniques were used to help the client to '*articulate her feelings and emotions*' as a way to *enhance personal growth and learning leading to change; reflection and awareness; taking responsibility; taking action*.

From the first computer Ethnograph analysis '*emotion*' and '*feelings*' were expressed as client themes in the transcripts and entered the code book. The following analysis examines the key emotions (i.e. phenomena) that emerged from this client/coach conversation. In the code book I recorded the different feelings or emotions as they emerged, such as '*anxiety*' and '*anger*'. This was reinforced throughout all the client transcripts.

5.9.12 Examining the transcript

For this transcript analysis I am looking at the specific coach interventions of ‘reflection,’ ‘reflect and summarise,’ and ‘reframing’ and how these interventions elicit the client’s feelings, particularly her ability to ‘*articulate her feelings and emotions*’.

Client (lines 5-11):

I had the biggest fright of my life. The thing was that I was calm but I will quickly go through it because I need to tell you how appalling this was (*input*).

The client’s personal growth becomes more visible:

CI (lines 16-18; 79-83):

Then I started making a conscious effort of talking to him and then he seemed to be quite normal ... I have become more comfortable because I think he is leaving anyway.

Coach reflects and reframes (lines 85-88):

So what you are saying is that you are becoming comfortable because he may be leaving so inside of you there is less agitation about him.

CI (lines 90-91):

Yes, less stress about how he could put me down.

The coach reflects how the client is ‘feeling’ on several occasions to encourage the client’s reflection and articulation of feelings, whether negative or constructive.

Coach (lines 121-123; 136-137):

So for me the interesting thing to know about you is, so you’re feeling better ... so you are feeling better because you have had a break?

CI’s confidence shines through in this transcript which it has never done before. Her new feelings of ‘emotional’ empowerment are clear throughout this conversation. Also, she was barely able to make a decision before; her ability to make decisions on her own behalf is clear in her statements.

C1 (lines 178-182):

... and I think he should have seen that I am exceptionally competent, it just threw up the ability to make decisions and leadership and think fast and so on and I think if they didn't see it ...

C1 (lines 235-239; 273-276; 286-289; 354-355):

It didn't go the way I thought but, you know, I'm not stuck ... I am a bit tired with Parliament, it's become boring and it's not what it was ... perhaps it would be worthwhile for me to stay in terms of career advancement, but it may also mean that I have to go up to Pretoria which I wouldn't want ... I hope to negotiate what comes out of it.

The coach reflects on why another editor may want her and reframes the point:

Coach (lines 357-360; 368; 377-379):

Tell me why X. would want you? Why is she keen and why is Y. keen? Just tell me why X. would want you? ... So she likes your work and? ... And I wonder if also she knows that people trust you so they will work with you.

The client reflects on her ability, but it is clear that she knows she can do the job, even if she knows that she requires support in the new position.

C1 (lines 407-409):

Look, I mean if you set up a bureau like that there is going to be a lot of expectation. I can't do it alone. They will have to give me someone that is there, that reads balance sheets.

The coach is trying to help the client reflect on where she is emotionally right now versus their last few meetings together. The coach reflects on and reframes the client's personal growth; this is the stage of reflection in the model:

Coach (lines 420-427; 447-453; 459-460):

Can I ask you something, C1, you are in a very different ... you seem very different from when we first started working together. Tell me what's different? I see it, but I want to know what you see or what you feel ... It also seems you are standing ... You seem much more relaxed but obviously you've had time off. But this business of 'he can't break me down' – you seem much more grounded to me. You seem much more 'you,' you know, just kind of 'in your power' somehow.

CI (lines 430-434):

Well I think the whole thing is that I have become ... both emotionally and ... I think I have gone through the crisis part of it, not that there was ... but the crisis with X.

The coach goes on to ask the client how she can maintain this 'state of being' – particularly as the client has found it hard to deal with being bullied constantly by her boss.

Coach (lines 493-500):

How can you stay detached? What can you do 'up here' – because that is where it is, it's 'up here', it's all 'up here' – can you ... I don't know if detach is the right word. I wonder how can you stay OK about being you?

The coach uses an analogy as a form of reflection to explain (lines 516-526):

There is always somebody. In every job, there is always a bully; there is always a difficult person. So the key thing is striving to be very grounded and being who you are but not being – I would think of it as being like a tree – very rooted and very grounded but able to blow with the wind so you don't break.

CI (lines 528):

I feel a lot more like that now.

The coach confirms and recognises the change in the client (lines 530-534):

You are learning. You are growing. You are starting to work on how you react and I think it's being rather than reacting; it's responding and there's a difference.

The coach asks CI to reflect about a very recent fight with the car dealer in trying to get new keys made for her car after the burglary. One of the things the client recognises is how much better she now handles her emotions in the moment.

CI (lines 609- 612):

Anyway the manager basically took his side but um, ja, and then it was just this mad fight, I was very calm but I was completely right.

But this was a very emotional situation – which caused sleepless nights and much anxiety. The client is now able to articulate what she did well; and how she has grown and is empowered to deal with her own personal emotions and issues more confidently.

CI (lines 665-671):

... actually I couldn't sleep for two nights because just the *anger* afterward – I don't think I have been so angry but when I spoke to you it was just after and I was obviously spent and just shocked that people can be so aggressive, non-accountable, nasty, unprofessional. So as a consequence I will go to the Consumer Council.

The client is more able to express her emotions. The coach asks her to reflect on what, if anything, she could have done differently.

CI (lines 702-710):

It just makes me angry the way business operates in this country In fact this could happen elsewhere but it is complete non-accountability. Everywhere you go, you just get up to these very powerful people who think they are running this country in the way ...

Coach (lines 734-743):

I am just wondering in terms of what you could have done differently; just think for the future, what can we learn from this because you didn't like him from the beginning. So I am just wondering if this happens again, rather than going ahead with it.

At first the client denies there is anything she could have done differently, then reflects a bit more on it, and realises what she has done well – particularly managing her emotions in the middle of a difficult situation. And she recognised her anger afterwards; getting in touch with her emotions had been difficult previously.

CI (lines 792-796; 854-856):

The only thing I could have done was to blatantly refuse to pay anything but they wouldn't have given me my keys ... I was quite proud of myself in the way that I stood up to them being quite cool ... and just insisting. I didn't quite get away with everything but I think as I walked away from it and by the time I spoke to you, I was starting to realise how angry, how, you know, the *emotions* came up afterwards.

The coach acknowledges her by reflecting and summarising (lines 875-878):

So the fact that you managed yourself which enabled you to manage that relationship is stunning ...

CI Possible action comes out of the reflection as the client suggests what steps she can take to retrieve her keys (lines 911-914):

I will try ... ZZ.

The client moves on to talk about the depression (expressing her feelings) that set in after this particular incident.

C1 (lines 980; 989-993; 997-1003; 1008-1018):

It made me *depressed* ... You know, what I actually think it brought out – it also coincided with my last appointment – I went from there to one appointment and then to ... I think I was depressed but I wasn't actually dealing with it. You were right but when I was sitting there an enormous amount of anger came up ... I thought for two nights I slept badly because I was lying awake being so angry about it – I think it was that it opened that part that I was repressing ... I think it was just recognising that I'm actually quite scared.

Coach reflects back (lines 1020):

... in your flat.

The client talks a bit about how the anger which emerged allowed her to deal with the fear she had experienced since the burglary in her flat; she also touches on one of her key limiting assumptions, that of being a victim:

C1 (lines 1022-1033):

Or that I'm actually scared of the dark because of that. I think it was all repressed ... it was that kind of thing and the thing of feeling of being made out to be a *victim*.

Coach reflects and summarises (lines 1035-1040):

So this 'fight' kind of blocked that whole victim thing out and the anger thing and the powerlessness thing? So when you went on holiday did you sleep ...?

C1 (lines 1155-1164):

But ja, it was just suddenly realising 'I'm safe'. You know, somebody came into my home. People rip you off in daylight, broad daylight. But I think it was a whole lot of emotions coming out at the same time and it's fine now. It probably will come out again but ...

The coach and client move their conversation back to the work place. Having explored some of the deeper emotions that the client has recently experienced, the client is free to discuss her options in working with a very aggressive, bullying boss.

C1 (lines 1222-1233):

I think it also coincides with X. who is being continually ... the chauvinism and the sexism in this country. I think, I mean I understand it academically in the sense that it's a transition, it's a historically chauvinistic country ... but I am getting increasingly angry with it.

Coach reflects and summarises (lines 1335-1237):

You have experienced it at work; you have experienced it trying to get your car serviced.

The client moves into a more intellectual and philosophical perspective as a result of her own difficulties in handling the chauvinism she experiences regularly.

C1 (lines 1239; 1245-1255; 1268-1272; 1296-1305):

And personal relationships ... You know what? I think this is not – maybe this is why men are not coping in this country – because this is not historically, deeply historically, a chauvinistic country. Women were basically in charge before. I just ... anthropologically; I mean I have been increasingly thinking there was a lot of ambiguity about whether it was paternalistic or maternalistic ... and there is a lot of evidence that a number of tribes in southern Africa were maternalistic ... why do men rape like that? Why do they rape babies? I can't just be angry, you know, I need to understand it. In my view it is that men are supposed to be in charge but they are not really. We haven't dealt with that historic part of transfer of power.

The coach asks a question by reflecting and reframing to move the client's thinking and feeling back to herself. The coach touches on another limiting assumption that has emerged in all of the previous conversations with C1, that of powerlessness, particularly for women dominated by powerful men:

Coach (lines 1345-1347; 1367-1370):

Your conflict with X. is power and men not wanting women to have the power ... so going back, how does that affect you? Because it sounds like you're trying to understand it in order to figure out how you feel.

C1 (lines 1372-1375; 1385-1390; 1399-1411):

I know how I feel. I feel angry. I also feel incredibly strong. I know I'm stronger than most of the men I work with ... I really feel ... that young black women who come into ... it should be couched inside the newspapers to keep their power, not to feel ashamed of it ... We (*white women*) probably have more of a network ... historically it is a white thing ... I have a number of friends who have left journalism because of that. Strong women; but (*they*) left it very early on because they were obviously messed around for various reasons. If you are messed around you just walk out. And one of the things that I really value is they know that ... saying that C1 is the only one that has carried on with it.

Moving into throughput, the coach begins to explore what will be the key issue they will explore during this session.

Coach (lines 1418-1425):

... just thinking about whether you stay or whether you go with Y. or – and I think ... this is a key issue today and is this something you would want to explore or is it not?

Still focusing on the feelings side of things, the client acknowledges her current dilemma.

CI (lines 1427-1430):

Yes. Look it is part of my reality all the time so I think we need ... it would be a good thing to just look at the dynamics.

The coach goes back to check that the emotions on which the client has been reflecting have provided insight, and that they can move on. The client cycles and recycles through issues; as researcher my reflection is that perhaps the coach's reframing ensures that these emotions don't re-emerge untapped.

Coach (lines 1474):

But back to you ... So this being afraid at night, is this ...

CI (lines 1477):

It is not the normal thing. I am actually very unscared. I go anywhere. I have always been like that but I've always slept badly as well. But it was just a sudden ... swept by the powerlessness and the invasion and the being wide awake and ... but I think it is just emotions that came out. I think it's normal to feel *scared* if somebody comes into your house ...

The coach moves into throughput by bringing the conversation back to how the client has changed; she uses the techniques of reflection and reframing. She is asking the client to reflect on what is different now, which will open up the conversation to move into the client's current options.

Coach (lines 1534-1544):

It seems like you have shifted from when we first started talking, you have really made a shift from X. ... was the key issue and handling that and dealing with that and now it seems like it's almost, I mean it's obviously an issue, you've seen him, but it's almost like it was circling you and it's not like that anymore. So how come? What's changed?

CI (lines 1546-1552):

Look there was the Z. thing that we had ... group session but I am quite proud of myself about how I handled it and it was quite clear to me and to everybody else that I am the stronger ... What else has changed is the issue of the options that I'm thrashing through. I suppose I do

feel a lot stronger as a result of handling these things. I remember you did tell me about the ... and I think I can be that.

Coach reflects and reframes (lines 1570-1572):

So what has changed is that you now recognise ... what are those strengths?

C1 (lines 1574-1575; 1582-1583; 1587-1590; 1597-1601):

I have an ability to make decisions ... it's more emotional insights ... I don't think I was born with a lot of emotional intelligence ... has more leadership qualities than even I ... I have always been scared of it ... It's always been the leadership ... I have been hiding from it all my life. I have the courage and I had the ability to make decisions at a very young age.

The client goes on to explore the part of her that she may have been hiding even from herself, her qualities of leadership. Her thinking has been limited by her inability to think of herself as someone with much emotional intelligence or leadership qualities:

C1 (lines 1606-1612; 1617-1618):

What I'm saying is ... but also not randomly but taking it through. But I suppose being a woman, being in this field, brought up in a very strange time, from a dissident family – I don't know, I think there's an aspect of me which I may be hiding ... I'm not 100 per cent sure whether I want ... to be (*a leader*).

Coach reframes to give information (lines 1623-1631):

But there are ways of leading. You don't have to be 'the leader' to lead. You can just be leading in your field. You can be leading in your work, be leading your team, you can be a leading journalist in your field. There are ways of leading – you don't have to be a leader. There are a lot of different types of leading.

C1 (lines 1633-1637; 1639-1643; 1648-1651; 1655- 1662):

I think that leading I have done. I have opened new fields but I think what I have been scared of before – because that is why I bring in the ... I could speak up and the dynamic has just been that I then became the spokesperson ... quite organically ... in terms of ... it was somebody had to make decisions ... Well I think people were sitting there looking and ... said C1.

The coach asks the client to reflect on what happens emotionally when she is put into a leadership role.

Coach (lines 1669-1672):

What happens to you when somebody asks you that? Does your heart do a flip or do you just freeze up?

C1 (lines 1674-1686):

You see that has happened before when I was younger. I became paralysed because I have been *afraid* of what will – even though I would have the courage and I would do it – I would be afraid of the criticism or the being put down in the end. But I think maybe there is an important corner that's been turned in that I know they're going to put you down anyway and I can stand up ... with ... it meant that I would have to manage a whole *lot* of people and tell them what to do but mainly to contract with them in the sense that they could come to a democratic decision.

Coach reframes to ask her question (lines 1724-1726):

... but how did you make them think that they made the decision?

C1 (lines 1728-1732):

I basically let everybody have their say, got them to say how they felt about it and said OK we focus now – what about this? Everybody more or less accepted the compromise.

Coach reflects, reframes and summarises (lines 1734-1740):

In other words, you brought all the threads together that had been discussed and presented it in a kind of summary and you made a link or a transition in some way that took you in a direction that you wanted to take them.

C1 (lines 1742-1744):

I made everybody do their ... and they were ... which I was amazed and it was wonderful.

Coach reflects and summarises (lines 1757-1763):

So what you did as a leader is important because we are talking about leading and I have said what happens to you when you are leading – so what you did is that you listened which means you must have asked questions. I am just looking for your strategy.

C1 (lines 1765-1768):

I did ask questions. I made suggestions and then let everybody come up with their issues, argue about it then force them to make a decision.

The coach asks more questions to elicit learning about leadership competence and the client's ability to articulate her emotions around her actions; this relates to her personal growth and

learning, having successfully tackled her anxiety in this particular situation of leading a group within the newspaper to make a democratic decision about a specific issue.

Coach reflects, summarises and reframes (lines 1859-1868):

So going back to what I said what's kind of different and you were saying what's different in terms of how you moved on, it seems like you have also moved on, you are developing yourself professionally, being able to do things, you're developing your leadership, you're developing ...

CI (lines 1870-1878):

Not consciously until now, but I think, and it's probably how it may have passed me by, I wasn't in the ... to realise that what is extreme, particularly the thing with ... the *negative* things and it was in a sense negative, brought out when I had consciously gone in to grapple with it was a leadership ...

Coach (lines 1880-1882):

I think that is really exciting. Something really positive has come out of the conflict.

CI (lines 1884-1884):

I am not 100 per cent sure whether that is the way I want to go.

The coach continues to elicit how the client feels; in other words helping her to articulate her emotions and feelings, first about her gaining in confidence, the ability to take a leadership role in a highly conflict-ridden environment, and finally acknowledging that the anxiety and neurotic behaviour caused by the burglary was situation-specific.

Coach reflects and reframes (lines 1887-1890):

It doesn't matter. The fact that it has happened is the learning and it's a development for you. I think it is very exciting. I'm so proud of you.

CI (lines 1893-1895; 1909-1910):

Well it's thanks to you. I must say I didn't have too many expectations of this but I'm starting to feel that it is working for me ... We'll try again but I suppose I am a lot more confident now that I can ...

Coach (lines 1943-1944):

I was going to ask you about that – are you OK?

CI (lines 1946-1949):

I think I'm OK. I'll never know 100 per cent but I'm not angry with myself that I became neurotic. I think that was the normal response.

The coach moves into output and looks for commitment to action from the client based on their conversation. From the client she elicits commitment and a different sense of confidence.

Coach (lines 2026-2033):

So, what I want to know is, what kind of things are you going to be doing differently?

CI (lines 2035-2042):

One thing which I haven't actually done ... I still need to join the gym, and I am going to not work so hard and I'm going to go to the gym three times a week ... and I do need to see this acupuncturist ... So I am not going to overwork me, myself.

Coach (lines 2061-2063):

And in what sense – about whether you stay or whether you go to ...

CI (lines 2065-2068; 2072-2074; 2080-2085; 2089-2091; 2113-2122):

It would be for the whole group ... it would then house the investigative ... They must appoint more people. I am worried about getting out of the mainstream with next year's elections but then at the same time I'm not 100 per cent sure whether I want to run round the country listening to ... speeches ... so maybe doing something different is not so bad ... as long as whatever happens is that I have an exit strategy ... I am not going to be sidelined and want some commitment that if it doesn't work, I go back to the political team ...

The coach reflects and summarises:

Coach (lines 2124-2130; 2140-2145; 2176-2179):

So ... you are going to join the gym ... at the end of August you are going to see the acupuncturist ... you are not going to overwork ... when X. comes back from his holiday, how are you going to try to get him to make a decision ... so then our next thing to do will be to have an exit strategy if that comes up.

CI (lines 2194-2195):

You know what? I am actually quite sure that I can handle it.

5.9.13 Working and developing the conversation inside the model

The personal growth and development of the client is clear in her newly found ability to articulate her feelings; to reflect back on her emotions from previous scenarios; her new skill in reflecting on and learning from her own self-management, particularly how she manages her emotions. Despite the difficult situations and conflict she has had to deal with, from a very emotive work environment, to a difficult, aggressive boss, to a burglary that triggered many emotional reactions, to her newly found confidence and belief in herself – this session was primarily spent dealing with the phenomenon of ‘articulating emotions’ and learning from them.

The stages of the conversation followed the input / throughput / output dynamic between coach and client. Input was the client’s explaining the difficulties at the car dealer in trying to have new keys and a new alarm organised for her car due to the burglary. This led to the exploration of her emotional boundaries in throughput; and finally in output the client and coach together articulated what actions the client would take with her new found sense of confidence and self-belief.

5.9.14 Reflection, taking responsibility, setting goals and action, change

It became apparent that the coach and the client were continuously cycling through the four stages of experiential learning (reflection; taking responsibility; setting goals; learning and growth leading to change) as the conversation moved through input / throughput / output.

As an overview, in *reflection* (aligned with ‘freedom and existence’), the client explained the traumatic experiences she had had recently, and what that meant for her in terms of self awareness. The client and coach reflected on the client’s emotional turmoil and how she had managed herself differently to previous occasions (input). In *taking responsibility* which is aligned to ‘meaning and purpose’ – the client acknowledged and took responsibility for her own emotions in the past few weeks due to both the burglary and the difficult situation at work (throughput). In *setting goals and taking action* (aligned to ‘choice’) C1 explored options she had, and began to look at action steps she could take (throughput). The coach reflected these back, reframed the action steps and summed up. In *learning and growth leading to change*, the client has discovered a new ability to articulate and reflect back her feelings and emotions. C1 concluded that she now could “handle it” and would action the next steps as agreed with the coach (output).

Reflection and freedom

The client began the conversation by *reflecting* on her own personal growth and learning – despite, and as a result of, the anxiety that she had experienced. The client reflected on her

ability, and despite her emotional difficulties, she makes it clear that she realises she can do the job.

Taking responsibility and meaning

For the client her meaning and purpose is tied up with her work; therefore the situation of conflict, personally and professionally, has been a cause of anxiety and neurosis which she has been trying to manage. She is now able to take responsibility for her own emotions. Previously the thought of moving into a new job was never a possibility. She now feels able to take responsibility for which ever job she is in; her meaning and purpose has moved from being simply in this job to the broader context of the journalistic work she does in politics and government.

Setting Goals and Choice

C1's choices and options are clearer to her, and she is able to think less like a 'victim' and more like someone who can take her own decisions because she chooses to. She demonstrates in this session how she has learned to reflect on her own thinking, feelings and behaviour; the meaning and purpose of her life is no longer undermined by not being happy in this particular job; she now understands that she actually can make a choice – she can move to another paper, or she can stay and lead the department in this newspaper.

Personal growth and learning leading to change

Her personal growth and learning becomes apparent at the beginning and end of the coaching conversation. The client began the conversation by reflecting on her own personal growth and learning – despite, and as a result of, the anxiety that she had experienced. Throughout the conversation, client and coach discussed what was different, particularly the client's personal growth, her newfound ability to manage and a new perspective on the options available to her. Several limiting assumptions that the coach and client explored previously re-emerge in this conversation (victim, powerlessness, lack of emotional intelligence, inability to lead). The coach's interventions help the client to take responsibility and to think of constructive options for action and change.