

Threein's philosophy & methodology.

„Taoist inspired transpersonal coaching“

You will find many coaching models in the market. Personally, I think that is part of the beauty of coaching. I don't think there will ever be „the ultimate coaching model“ available, just as there is not „right way to personal growth“ nor a unified direction on our journey through life.

However, as a customer and client you want to know that the coach or the coaching school you choose knows what they are doing and has some quality control in place. In this article, I describe what is underpinning Threein's coaching philosophy and methodology.

The good news is that you don't need to worry about that too much. Research shows that regardless of the school a psychologist subscribes too, the success of the intervention is determined by the quality of the relationship the client and the the therapist are able to establish. The caveat here is that we are talking here about trained psychotherapists, people with a good foundational training - not self-proclaimed gurus. No research exists yet to prove the same for coaches, but it is reasonable to assume that the same mechanism is at play (DeHaan, 2004).

If we assume this to be true, then a) a coach should be well trained (verified through a professional body such as EMCC or ICF or a similar proof of quality training), and b) the success of the coaching depends on the relationship the coach and the client can establish. That depends on the skills of the coach to do so, and on individual factors such as chemistry, similar learning style and other, largely unconscious factors. Based on where you are in your life, a different model, approach and coach might be the right one for you.

With this article, I would like to make Threein's underpinning philosophy of coaching transparent.

How we think about coaching:

The word „coach“ originated from the name of a high-end carriage that was popular in England in the 17th century. A carriages' essential function is to bring people from A to B. This fundamental function is still relevant in coaching today: coaching should help you to come from A to B. Where A lays and where B lays (or, if actually after consideration, you change your mind and decide to go to C), is entirely up you. The coach is a vehicle that holds the space for you to travel your journey. Depending on the territory, the duration of the journey and the destination, you might need a different coach.

Coaching is about learning. Ideally, a coach not only helps you to go from A to B, but also builds awareness and competency on HOW you travel from A to B. So that next time you face a similar challenge, you might decide to do it on your own. Such reflection does not come easy for most people. Hence the coaching conversation is used as a vehicle of reflection and learning. Learning can be done in different ways, conversations being one of those. Helpful conversations invite inquiry, reflection and reorientation when you are stuck. In our action oriented world, this space for reflection and learning is often lacking. It is here that Threein provides values by offering an expanded and safe space for inquiry, reflection and learning.

Coaching has different roots in sports, business and psychology. All have made important and valid contributions. Whilst the two former ones often focus on performance, the latter focuses on personal growth. At Threein, we think they are part of the same coin. Performance increases if you are psychologically healthy. Wherever they come from, all coaching schools focus on facilitating growth and learning. This needs some understanding as to how people grow and develop. That is why we believe that Coaching needs to be underpinned by psychological theory.

Taking this together, we could say that we at Threein tend to see coaching as *a psychologically informed leaning conversation*.

Our edge is that we add a dimension to the above definition. We believe that coaching can go beyond the “*psychologically informed*” also be *spiritually informed*. In consequence, we work to include the *transpersonal*.

In the words of John Rowan, transpersonal means:

„The transpersonal is a level of consciousness where we admit that we are spiritual beings with a soul and a spirit. (...) it is usual to distinguish between the pre-personal, the personal and the transpersonal, and this seems to be clear enough. The personal is the ordinary everyday consciousness with which we are all familiar; the pre-personal is all that comes before that in the process of development, and is well described in developmental psychology generally, and the transpersonal that which genuinely goes beyond the personal in to the realm of the sacred, the numinous, the holy, the divine.“(Rowan, 2005, p.145).

At Threein, we aim to include the transpersonal level of consciousness in our coaching conversations. We do this because we resonate with Albert Einstein, who wrote: „No problem can be solved with the same level of consciousness that created it“.

What does this mean for our coaching?

We like to go deeper. We are particularly well equipped to deal with topics such as mid-life crisis, existential doubts and loss of meaning and purpose. These are all “transpersonal” topics, in the sense that they go beyond the personal life on this earth into our connection with something greater. Working through the questions they raise requires courage from coach and client alike. In particular, a coach is well advised to develop what Cindy Wigglesworth (2014) calls „Spiritual Intelligence“ and Howard Gardner calls „Existential Intelligence“. (quote...)

Depending on your view of the world, the term spiritual intelligence or existential intelligence might resonate more. We are not dogmatic about this. Rather, we see it as our mission to create a space where you where clients explore their challenges with spiritual and/or existential intelligence.

To fulfil this mission, our coaches follow a personal practice that expands their consciousness (and by extension, their SQ or Existential Intelligence) so that they can be good coaches and companions to their clients.

How do we see the world?

We all bring our specific lenses through which we see the world. I, Dominique, have come to call mine „taoist inspired transpersonal view“. This is my own term. It means that I subscribe to a transpersonal worldview and aim at developmental coaching conversations that include „the further reaches of human nature“ (Maslow).

When looking to develop and explore this „further reaches“, I have consciously and consistently been drawn towards the taoist view. I am practicing internal alchemy (neidan) to further my personal understanding of the transpersonal and of consciousness. This is my personal path and our clients might have a different one.

Our promise to you is that we respect your way of exploring this „further reaches.“ We are inviting exploration of your values, beliefs and spiritual practices, rather than imposing our own. We are explicit in adopting a vantage point that includes the spiritual and transpersonal into our coaching approach, because we believe that it needs to be included to realise full human potential.

This being said, taoist transpersonal is what has inspired threein. As such, I hope you will see some values reflected in the way we work and coach. I hope you will see: spontaneity, joyfulness, flow, constant inquiry, and awareness of the constant changes surrounding us. I hope you will find that we honor the yin just as much as the yang. That means that we will honour silence just as much as the spoken word, listening just as much as speaking, and draw on inner images, fantasies, values, dreams and other phenomena part of human life just as much as rational thought and tangible matter.

Threein - Individuation - Inspiration - Integration

This philosophy is mirrored in the methodology we are working with. Threein is a word creation that refers to the tree „In“. **Individuating**, **inspiring** and **integrating**. These three values guide my work.

Individuating

I believe that we make most of our lives if we walk on the path of life with the intention of individuating.

Here is what the originator of the concept of individuation, C.G. Jung writes about it:

„The aim of individuation is nothing less than to divest the self of the false wrappings of the persona on the one hand, and of the suggestive power of primordial images on the other“.

I believe that we are most satisfied if we have walked the path of individuation to the best of our abilities. Unfortunately, society does not necessarily support a path where individuation is the goal in itself. It is, at best, a by-product of a career. Personally, I believe that much career-ambition is driven by a need or wish for individuation - and a career is one of the few socially sanctioned paths of doing so. That is precisely where coaching can be of great help. Placed at the intersection of professional life and psychological growth, a well conducted coaching engagement can support individuation in the personal and professional realm. At Threein, we keep in mind that we are working with your full individuating potential and provide coaching that is more than career optimisation.

Inspiring

C.G. Jung, considered a pioneer of the school of transpersonal psychology, has dedicated his life to the journey of his personal individuation and has inspired many to do so. It is this inspiration that we need so much when we are engaged on the path of individuation. We need inspiration to understand where to go next. In our coaching methodology, inspiration is the breath of fresh air that comes from outside our personality and is the impetus we need to grow. We don't usually know where inspiration comes from and we can't control it. In fact, the more we control, the less we are inspired. We can only provide good conditions. Hence, in our coaching session, we use humour, play, joy and work with inner images and other playful interventions to introduce space for inspiration.

Integrating

When we are floating in the sea of inspiration, we can get lost. It's fine to get lost temporarily - and it is even more rewarding put your feet back on the ground, to integrate the newly found learnings and grow the seed of inspiration. When working on integration, we take time to explore your new thoughts and ideas, test it in your daily life so that you can develop a new way of being and working within this world.

A case example

In case this is all quite abstract for you, I will give you an example of a client I worked with. I share the story here anonymously but with the client's knowing and approval. This client, a woman in her early forties holds a leadership position in a multinational company. She is a sensitive and sensible personality, successful in her career. We engaged in a piece of work around her motivation at work and how she could find her place there, as she had felt out of place for some time. To me, this story is about **individuation**, about an individual inquiring into her place and her growth in this world. Some time into the coaching engagement, she had a spontaneous vision. An angel appeared, floating in the sky. She interpreted this vision to mean that she did not allow her transpersonal side to express itself in the world. This **inspiration** came suddenly - neither her or me invited it. However, we did prepare the ground by starting the session with a short mindfulness minute. In this same session, she decided to allow herself more time for contemplation in her daily routine and observe her leadership behaviour from the standpoint of spiritual Intelligence. That was a first step towards **integrating** her newly found wisdom. She started acknowledging her inner world more, drawing more on her innate wisdom. Doing so made her feel more at peace. She reported being calmer, more aware, and is better able to tolerate dilemmas. This resulted in diminishing conflicts and better cooperation at work. The result of her changed behaviour was noted and she was promoted as a result of it.

The example shows how transpersonal work (acknowledging and working with inner images in this example) and personal work (or career success), can support each other. We are convinced that acknowledging the inner vision, and giving it room to be explored in the coaching session, brought about a quicker and more fundamental shift in the client's mindset and behaviour than ignoring it. Yet ignoring is exactly what we do most of the time. I invite you to observe yourself - how often do you push away gut feeling, hunches, inner images and voices? Are you even aware you have them? Most of the time we are not. That might be better if we sit in the car and want to drive safely from A to B. However, when we want to make far-reaching decision about the directions of our life, or change behaviour patterns, we do well to aim for accessing the deeper levels our consciousness.

Conclusion

Meister Eckhart, famous German mystic stated: „What we seed in the field of contemplation, we reap in the harvest of action“. We believe this statement to be true, both for life and for coaching. With Threein, we

put this philosophy into action in our coaching processes. We consciously slow down the process of learning and growth to contemplate ways of knowing that are below the surface. By doing so, our interventions end up being quicker and more transformational.

After many coaching sessions with very diverse clients in terms of age, geography, cultural and social background and seniority level, I have evidence to say that coaching aiming at that deeper layer of human consciousness results in deeper, quicker and more joyful growth.

If you decide to engage with Threein, you will find that we are consistent in supporting you to grow towards the „farther reaches of human potential“.

References:

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