



Master of Professional Practice

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Professional Practitioner Thesis

Integrating positive psychology coaching approach with embodiment: an  
integrative coaching model

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07.2019

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### **Abstract**

This practitioner thesis depicts my journey of Master of Professional Practice of exploring the way to coach more effectively and profoundly. Specifically speaking, depicting my practice from a positive psychology coach to a coach informed by a more integrated approach. In this thesis, I will describe a model of positive psychology coaching, then the gaps I discovered and then introduce an integrated model which integrate positive psychology with embodied coaching. I also describe motivations, context, the potential impact of this change and end with a suggested new framework of professional practice and future discussion.

Key words: coaching, positive psychology, positive psychology coaching, coaching psychology, embodiment, somatic coaching, coaching approach

## Chapter One: Introduction

In this practitioner thesis, I describe the development of a project of coaching development and my professional framework of practice as an evidence-based integrated-approach coach. In this first chapter, I first state my argument which has three aspects:

### 1. The articulation of the framework of practice

I am an evidence-based integrated-approach coach who assists people to close the gap between who they are capable of becoming and their current self, by cultivating capabilities to become their ideal self in order to reach their full-potential and through making transformational changes by evidence-based interventions and tools which are mainly drawn from positive psychology and embodiment.

In my learning agreement, I used to describe my professional framework of Practice as a “positive psychology coach” inspired by my inspirational professional practice statement -a coach that is a change maker and thinker of personal well-being, leadership development and organizational behavior connecting Asian and Western philosophy”. However, in the process of practice, I kept reflecting and exploring whether there is a bigger structure of coaching that could help coach to serve their clients more effectively and profoundly.

An integrated approach coach which is evidence-based, as I describe my profession now is coherent with a positive psychology coach yet, and I would argue more than that. What I mean with ‘more’ here is that the integrated approach is not limited to just positive psychology principles but digs deeper in many ways. In simple words, a positive psychology coach is a coach who applies interventions or principles from positive psychology to their coaching so as to help their clients to achieve their goals, while an integrated approach coaching integrates other principles from different disciplines into their coaching practice. I will explain this further in the following chapters.

### 2. The change in my practice associated with developing and adopting that framework

In becoming an evidence-based integrated coach, I have changed my practice by taking an integrated approach. This integrated approach is mainly expressed in three ways:

- It integrates different methods or principles from disciplines like positive psychology, neuroscience, neurobiology, physiology etc.
- It emphasizes not only in conceptual self-awareness, but also embodied self-awareness, (what some people might think of as mind and body).

- It makes the integrated coach as a life exemplar who lives with virtues and moves theories into practice. By being an exemplar, I mean, the coach embodies certain virtues and values as a coach and utilizes their experience to inform real practices.

### 3. The impact of that change program

I want to summarize the impact from some different aspects, including the impact on me (personal and professional) and also the potential impact for the coaching profession.

First, this professional framework practice has enabled me to becoming a better coach and human being in many ways; I am transforming my own journey.

- I am more aware of who I am and who I want to become, including my values, strengths and needs, by enhancing the self-awareness, I am more able to overcome my limitations and habitual ways of responding.
- I live out virtues better by becoming more self-aware of my strengths, being more optimistic, creating my masterpieces days, intentionally building habits to optimize my life, being the author and hero of my life.
- Intentionally utilize embodied intelligence and practice which increasingly help me become more resilient under stressful situations.

Secondly, this evidence-based integrated approach also applies different tools and wisdom to my coaching practice, so that I am able to serve my clients more effectively and profoundly. Cases will be discussed in the relevant parts of this report.

Last but not least, in my opinion, the evidence-based integrated approach coaching might be a good combination for positive psychology coaching and other approaches which focus on conceptional self-awareness. In Parmer and Whybrow's latest book <the Handbook of Coaching Psychology> in 2019, they also mention that "There is a maturity and confidence in the field that is reflected in the growth of coaching, its depth and its breadth in particular, moving coaching from a primarily 1:1 focus to a much more integrated and systems focus." (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). To be a good coach, diversity and integration is necessary.

In this thesis, I start by laying out the flow of the practitioner thesis: first describing my motivations for this work, the context and the methodology. Particular focus is placed on the process that links my change project and my learning journey. The undertaking of a change project is described which illustrates and informs the articulation of my professional framework of practice.

To summarize, I have introduced the development of coaching practice, and the tightly interwoven development of my professional framework of practice as an integrated-approach coach. I have introduced the flow of the thesis that leads to the conclusion that a more integrated approach might be a good supplement for positive psychology coaching. More details will be depicted later in the thesis.

## Chapter Two: Motivation

In this chapter, I describe what motivated me to undertake this project of change. This is informed by my reflection on my personal background and experiences as an investment banker, an entrepreneur and a positive psychology coach. It is written in the present but informed by my writings at the start of this journey. It describes my learning journey and concludes with a review of the coaching profession and its development and initial and aspirational professional framework of practice.

To illustrate my motivation, I start with reflecting on my journey from twelve years ago and then use some challenges that I think we are facing in our modern life to complement my motivations to this practice in general.

After five years (2007-2012) working as an investment banker who kind of achieved financial goals and with a decent job title, I still felt something was missing in my life. A question came to me at that time: “what makes a life worth living?” Also, I had a strong feeling that most of the companies had lost some most important part in the big picture which is how to lead people and facilitate change. With that reflection, I create a boutique hotel business in China (2012-2017). As an executive officer of the business, I had a good practice doing operation and management. However, I got stuck on how to motivate people effectively and how to develop and be creative as a leader.

As my reflection and learning journey goes, I have a dream of helping people to find their intrinsic motivation and purpose, unleash their potential and help them have a fulfilling life. I have a dream of helping leaders to be more authentic, using their impact to play a transformational role in the life of others. I have a wonderful picture of how our world would be if every organization could build an environment that supports individual flourishing and developing. The two fields of positive psychology and coaching drew my attention and got me excited. Positive psychology coaching is an emergent field that is yet to build a strong community of practice and Body of Knowledge. However, it brings together the established fields of positive psychology and coaching. (Wang, 2018). Gradually, I become a coach who utilized evidence-based tools, measurements and interventions from positive psychology to help my clients to achieve goals.

Along the way, I reflected on my own practice in positive psychology coaching, I have experienced a lot of obstacles but also gained much understanding. First, the best way to express the wisdom is by embracing it, moving theories and tools into my own life, so that I can master them and they help me to become a better coach. Secondly, similar to our brain, our body (includes organs) also has lots of information and intelligence which is very helpful for clients to be aware of and utilize,

building new neuro-networks. Gradually, I started practicing coaching by using a more integrated approach.

Whilst I describe my own journey you might still wonder why this approach might be important to anyone else.

To explain why it is important and so attracted me, here are some challenges I think we have in our modern society and the needs of an evidence-based integrated coaching approach to offer some insights and solutions to them.

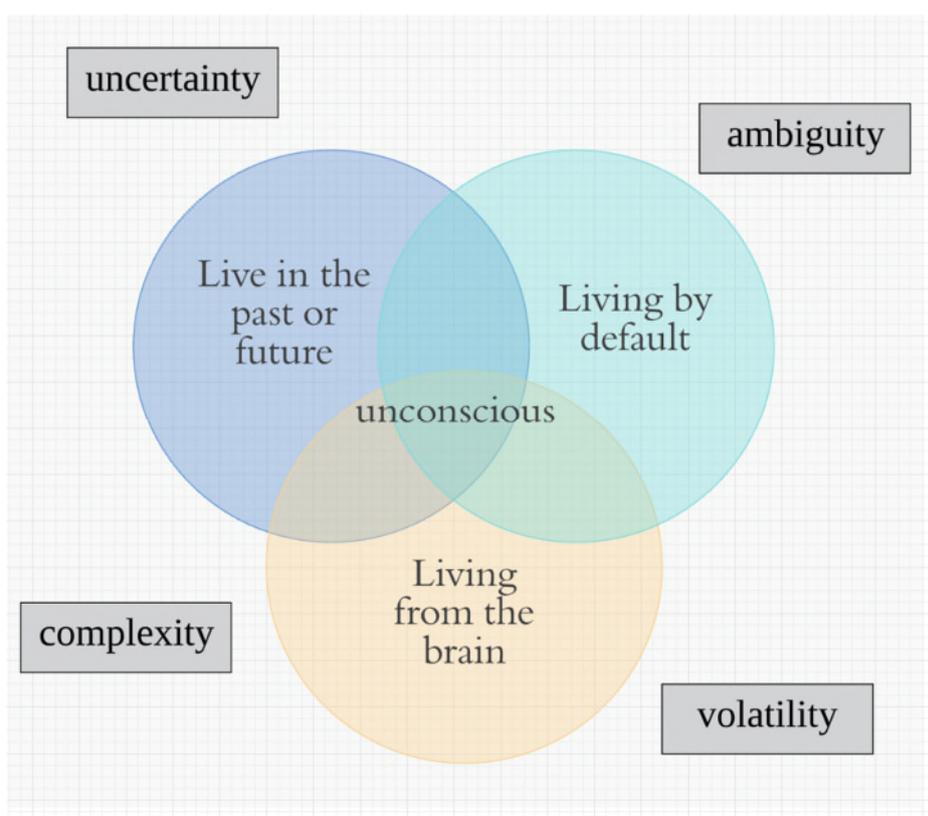


Figure 1 the context

- Challenge 1: As Figure 1 illustrates, most of us are living in an unconscious way: living from the brain, living in the past or future and living by default. I will further explain it in following paragraphs. Volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) form the external environment. (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014). The three circles inside the VUCA (informed by Julia Stewart's work (2007)) summarized the internal environment.

Living from the brain is a common default in the West ever since the Age of Enlightenment, 300 or so years ago. (Stewart, MCT2.1-2-Expanding Awareness, 2008-2011) As fantastic an organ as the brain is, it cannot do the job of living well all by itself. People are commonly in the habit of viewing

life almost exclusively via their brain almost exclusively and are missing a multitude of cues from their emotions and body.

Living in the past or future is a byproduct of living from the brain. People tend to live more in the past and future than in the now. On average, an American adult is not present 46.9% of the time because their mind is wondering. People's minds wandered frequently, regardless of what they are doing. (Killingsworth & Gilbert, 2010)

Living by default means living in the way that we have been conditioned by life, parents, teachers, siblings, friends, media, advertising, etc.

What Shabi and Whybrow (2018) mentioned in their article has resonates with the 'unconsciousness lifestyle': "...how people see the world shapes peoples' capacity for action." Below are two important points they made about this structure of interpretation :

- ◆ our interpretations are mostly not conscious; we have grown up with narratives that have shaped us all our lives, even before we were aware of ourselves or the world; (this resonates with the idea of living by default)
- ◆ our interpretations are not based on solely linguistic narratives; we are also shaped by emotional and somatic narratives." (resonate with the idea of living from the brain)

A social context which is increasingly full of uncertainty, ambiguity, complexity and volatility no doubt brings more difficulties for people to enhance awareness.

- Challenge 2: Negativity bias and body response under pressure

Negativity bias means we are very good at learning from negative events. As Rich Hanson put it: "The error detection system is responsible for what neuroscientists call the brain's 'negativity bias', the tendency to focus on what's wrong, instead of what's right." (Hanson, 2013) This is how we evolve. I think it is actually very vital for every human-being, but in our modern context, it might be over-triggered by the many scenarios which people could interpreted or perceive as threat, such as a mail, words or attitude of a manager, being stuck in a traffic, having to undertake public speaking etc. As evolution unfolded, the human body evolved different ways in cooperating with threat, known as fight, flight or freeze response.

- Challenge 3: being not very aware of one's values, strength in one's life

Instead of asking "what are you longing for", "what do you care most", or "what is most important to you", we are more likely to ask "what is the problem", or "what can't you do". One of the aspects

of leadership is problem solving, which is very important, but maybe going into the problem-solving mode is not always the best choice we have.

By demonstrating the challenges, for me, the needs of a more integrated approach of coaching are emerging. I am also very passionate about this approach and believe it has huge potential to be explored.

Here are some potential opportunities which an integrated approach could bring.

- This approach enables the coach to utilize interventions from positive psychology to help the client be more aware of their values and strengths; it also could draw wisdom from ancient philosophy into coaching. Also, integrated coaches are aware of their values and living with virtues, making every day a day to develop their own practice that allows them to serve others better.
- An integrated approach emphasizes integration, from the body-mind integration to, conceptual and embodied integration, to different approaches' integration. This enables coaching to reconnect with wholeness, being alive, and empowers clients to have a more rich and authentic life.

In this chapter, I have discussed my motivations for this work. I have explored the background to this work, personally, professionally and commonly. An opportunity has been identified to develop a more integrated approach to coaching and embody that in a model of coaching practice that can will benefit people in the coaching community. In doing so, this will establish the role of an evidence-based integrated approach coaching, which I will articulate in a professional framework of practice.

## Chapter Three: Literature and Practice Context

In the previous chapter, I described my experience of working as a positive psychology coach. This led to a realization that more integration was needed in coaching methodologies. In this chapter, I explore this from a theoretical and wider practice context. I explore the questions of “why do we need a more integrated approach” and “why do we need to embody that in an integrated approach coaching model and examine these in a wider school of thought.” The intention is to demonstrate awareness of prior knowledge and practice, to provide a firm foundation for a model of integrated approach of coaching.

In this chapter, I will talk about the big picture of this practice, the related scientific topic, theories and concepts, and how does this profession fit into my personal and professional journey.

### 1. Which giant am I standing on the shoulders of?

In the 1920s, the father of sports psychology in United States, Coleman R. Griffith wrote his groundbreaking book, <the Psychology of Coaching: A Study of Coaching Methods from the Point of View of Psychology> (Griffith, 1926). He is the person who first brought the psychology of coaching to the attention of the world, while in essence psychologists had been practicing coaching for decades. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). During the last decade, coaching has flourished and till now, while we are standing in a VUCA world (Bennett & Lemoine, 2014) of increasing complexity in the global landscape, with future uncertainty and greater ambiguity, (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018), coaching is still flourishing. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018) As the environment is rapidly changing and there are needs of adaption and development, “there is a maturity and confidence in the field that is reflected in the growth of coaching, its depth and its breadth in particular, moving coaching from a primarily one on one focus to a much more integrated and systems focus.” (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). This perspective resonates with my thoughts and reflections.

Coaching is also informed by the positive psychology movement. Grant (2007) suggests that influences on the emergence of coaching psychology as we know it today include: humanistic psychology (Maslow, 1968), the 1960s human potential movement (HPM) and more latterly, the positive psychology movement (Martin & Csikszentmihalyi, Positive Psychology: An introduction., 2000)

### 2. What big questions are left?

I think there are still some questions worthy to be explored even though the proposal to integrate models in psychotherapy and in coaching psychology is not new. However, like Palmer and

Whybrow (2018) mentioned, the attention to what works, with whom, and in what context is an ongoing quest for coaching. And this is a quest I reflect most about.

And the model I built in this thesis has also followed those reflections as I found sometimes a particular kind of method cannot serve one client to make a change (including myself as a client in a trial-coaching practice) in some people's life while it might be very helpful for others. So, questions like "when to use what kind of tools for whom? Will the embodied approach work for this client? What can I do differently in this particular situation?" has made me wonder all the time.

There are also other kinds of questions we need to be aware of. People who practice coaching always have diverse underpinnings to their work and integrate a range of psychological approaches into their practice. From surveys done by Palmer and Whybrow continually from 2003, coaching psychologists and coaches reported more than 38 different psychological approaches used in their practice. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2017) . According to the papers I could find, there are integrative Cognitive-Behavior Coaching (ICBC) Model, which integrates positive psychology and the Solution-Focus approach with CBC. (Gisele, Stephen, & Antonio, 2017) There is also Cognitive-Behavior integrated with Solution Focus coaching (CB-SFC), and also, Passmore's Integrative Coaching (IC) Model where coaches focus on the coach-coachee relationship and work with their coaches at multiple levels, but there are still so many spaces and possible ways could be explored and validated by studies. Questions like: "how to integrate different approaches and what kind of combination is effective? How?" always have attracted me.

"The need for coaching and the skills for coaches and coaching psychologists is certainly not diminishing, but it is changing." (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018)

To summarize, there is a need for and trend to integrating different approaches but still there is still lots of space to explore the possibility and effectiveness in combination. Hence the commencement of my model in practice coaching. The model in this thesis is an experiment of integration and combination. My aim in building this model is to form a structure which best resonates with me and which might have potential to help other practitioners.

In the following paragraphs, I will describe related concepts and literatures that have informed my coaching practice and which paved the way for my coaching model. My purpose for the following chapters is to introduce some related evidence-based content in order to connect to my model and other content later in this thesis. At the same time, it is always interesting to consider what other theories haven't been included here.

### 3. Related sciences

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. (ICF) Coaching is an activity that aims at assisting clients to make transformational change, and to become the best version of themselves they can be, as well as enhancing well-being and performance both in personal life and work context. Facilitating change is a vital process in coaching.

In the following chapters, I will introduce some related areas of science which informs my coaching model and practice. The purpose for this chapter is to introduce them so that I will have a chance to explain how they are related to my practice later.

## **Positive psychology**

The field of Positive Psychology was formally launched by Martin Seligman in 1998. (Seligman M. , 1999) Positive psychology has been defined as “the science and practice of improving wellbeing, and leading to optimal human functioning.” (Gable & Haidt, 2005) The definition is coherent with the aim of coaching which is to improve well-being in a general way. Positive Psychology is an umbrella term. (Linley & Joseph, 2004). The field encompasses many different topics, including positive emotions, mindfulness, strengths, resilience, hope, flourishing and psychological development. etc. Furthermore, “the field is founded on the belief that people want to lead meaningful and fulfilling lives, to cultivate what is best within themselves, and to enhance their experiences of love, work, and play.” (<https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu>, n.d.) Most Twentieth Century psychological research often focused on what was wrong with humans. Some believed the absence of mental illness would equal happiness and well-being. It turns out, wellbeing is a separate thing (Ben-Shahar, 2014). The interpretation above also roughly defines the distinction between therapy and coaching.

## **Coaching Psychology**

There is no one definition of coaching psychology. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018). It has been defined as the “enhancement of well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in child and adult learning or psychological theories and approaches.” (Grant & Palmer, Coaching Psychology Workshop, 2002) Coaching psychology also has been defined as “applied positive psychology.” (Australian Psychological Society Interest Group in Coaching Psychology). The integration and complementarity of these two field, positive psychology and coaching psychology has been explored over the years.

## **Positive Psychology Coaching**

The term “positive psychology coaching” was first coined by Robert Biswas-Diener and Ben Dean (Biswas-Diener & Dean, 2007) in their book of the same name. Many authors, researchers and “pracademics” have their perspective of the relationship between positive psychology and coaching. Kauffman wrote in her book that “the heart of positive psychology, like coaching, lies in the practitioner’s choice to shift attention away from pathology and pain and direct it toward a clear-eyed concentration on strength, vision, and dreams. (Kauffman C. , 2006). Positive psychology has become happily integrated with coaching psychology theory and practice over the past decade. (Panchal, Palmer, & Green, 2018). In the book <the Complete Handbook of Coaching>, (Kauffman, Boniwell, & Silberman, 2010,2014), the authors define positive psychology coaching as “a scientifically rooted approach to helping clients increase well-being, enhance and apply strengths, improve performance and achieve valued goals.” This perspective emphasizes the close relationship between positive psychology and coaching. Panchal, Palmer and Green (2018) indicated that that definition emphasis the saying that “coaching is a “natural home” for positive psychology.

To summarize, positive psychology and coaching psychology have a close relationship with each other while they developed separately along the way. Positive Psychology Coaching naturally became an approach to coaching.

## **Neuroscience and Coaching**

In recent years, researches of the brain and the nervous system allowed us to deepen our understanding about the human brain, minds and other aspects. A neuroscientific approach to coaching can be particularly beneficial when working with clients who have a need for a clear understanding of why things work. (Riddell, 2018) I am also aware that while there are many aspects of neuroscience which might be relevant to coaching practice, the importance to avoid misunderstanding or myths needs to be closely attended to. While the whole overview of application of neuroscience is not the scope of this thesis, I chose to focus on some key research which I believe is relevant to what I want to argue later.

## **Somatic Coaching**

Somatic coaching is a change process that works by transforming a person’s embodied shape, deepening their awareness of their habitual patterns and narratives and supporting them to move towards who they wish to become in their life and in their work. (Aquilina & Strozzi-Heckler, 2018) Somatic Coaching is an approach of coaching which informed me a lot in my latest coaching practice and is related to the third part of my practice of change activity.

#### 4. Related and vital theories and concepts

In the following sections, I am going to cover some introductions to some relevant theories and concepts. The purpose is to pave the ways for the ongoing stories in the practice of change. I might just mention the name of some particular theories and concepts in the model or metaphor without further explaining of what it is.

##### **Self-determination theory (SDT)**

Self Determination Theory (SDT) is a macro-theory of human motivation and personality development that is attracting increasing attention within the coaching literature. (Spence & Deci, 2013). At its core, there are three fundamental psychological needs, autonomy, competence and relatedness, which are the precondition for a person's level of functioning and well-being. Central to SDT is the assertion that it is important to differentiate types of motivation in order to understand and predict different qualities of experience and behavior. (Spence G. B., 2018) I think SDT is the theory for coaching. In coaching, intrinsic motivation is the kind of motivation the coach pays most attention to. By evoking and powerful questions, a coach helps the client set his/her owned, value coherent goals. (autonomy); expand awareness and build competences by co-creating and producing valued outcomes through using his/her strengths and abilities (competence); and lastly, the coaching relationship lets the client feel closely and securely connected to the coach (relatedness).

Relatedness can also mean the supported relationship with others, for example, the relationship between team leader and members. Here we focus more on the relatedness in the coaching relationship. In other words, consciously seeking the overlapping between one's value and goal, building the pathway to achieve intrinsic motivation by trustful support which is a coaching process manifesting SDT.

##### **Positive Emotion--Broaden and Build theory**

Since positive emotions had been ignored or marginalized for a long time. (Fredrickson B. L., 1999) with the movement of positive psychology, the researches have started to unlock the forms and functions of positive emotions. The broaden-and-build theory describes the form and function of a subset of positive emotions, including joy, interest, contentment, curiosity, pride, love and so on. Positive emotions not only broaden an individual's momentary thought-action repertoire. But also, positive emotions promote discovery of novel and creative actions, ideas and social bonds, which in turn build that individual's personal resources, ranging from physical and intellectual resources, to social and psychological resources. (Fredrickson B. L., 1999) Positive emotions have been also shown that have a result of more altruistic, helpful, cooperative and conciliatory behavior (Barsade & Gibson, 2007), which will in turn trigger positive emotion (Fredrickson & Joiner, 2002), creating a positive feedback loop.

## **The Positive Emotional Attractor (PEA) and Negative Emotional Attractor (NEA)**

Technically, the PEA and NEA are stranger attractors articulated first by Ed Lorenz (1963). Once people get caught in the pull of an attractor, a person's mood, state, feelings, thoughts, and behavior cycle within a self-perpetuating loop. (Boyatzis R. E., 2011). There are many benefits for people in the PEA states. Recall of the positive feedback loop mentioned in the last chapter, once the positive emotions are aroused, the PEA state would result in a person being cognitively open (Ashby, Isen, & Turken, 1999) (Estrada, Isen, & Young, 1994), perceptually open and accurate in perceptions of other (Fredrickson & Branigan, 2005) (Talarico, Bernstein, & Rubin, 2008), and more emotional open (Critchley, 2005). In addition, a person in the PEA state, is believed to be calmer, healthier. (Boyatzis R. E., 2011)

PEA and NEA are not merely bi-polar. (Russell & Carroll, 1999) In Boyatzis's model (Boyatzis R. E., 2008), the three dimensions of PEA and NEA are a continuum of affect aroused from positive to negative, a continuum of a neural activation and endocrine arousal labeled as from parasympathetic nervous system (digest and rest) to sympathetic nervous system, and a continuum of the relative degree of intensity in the activation from low to high. In other words, a person will be more or less in PEA or NEA. More importantly, the appropriate balance among the PEA and NEA can affect a person's sense of well-being, as well as their ability to learn, develop and create. (Boyatzis R. E., 2011)

## **Character Strengths**

Due to the movement of positive psychology, there is a development of a science of human strengths. In some places and cultures, people still use a deficient, problematic-lens to seek for solutions. However, there is a growing body of evidence (Cooperrider & McQuaid, 2012) that suggests we should reverse this approach. (McQuid, Niemiec, & Doman, 2019) Studies have found that there are many benefits for people who regularly use their strengths, from increasing well-being (Seligman M. , Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005), experiencing less stress (Park & Peterson, 2009), to be more confident (Govindji & Linley, 2007) and more engaged in work (Minhas, Developing realized and unrealized strengths: Implications for engagement, self-esteem, life satisfaction and well-being., 2010) and so on.

There are several ways to integrate strengths into coaching, such as using assessment to expand the use of strengths language and knowledge of strengths, connecting strengths with some particular goals, and combining strength with a growth mindset (Dweck, 2007) which sending information that all the character strengths are malleable and have potential to be developed, learned and used when challenges arise. (McQuid, Niemiec, & Doman, 2019)

The main tool on strengths that I am using for my coaching practice is the Value in Action (VIA) survey of character strengths for adults and youth, which was created and developed by Peterson, Seligman and teams. (Peterson & Seligman, 2004)

### **Neuroplasticity-tapping into the brain's potential for change**

Coaching is not to change another people's brain,( that sounds scary!), and also it is not an assertion that a "brain-based" approach is effective for coaching. (McKay & Kemp, 2019) However, having a better understanding of how our brain functions and what it is capable of, it is a great learning experience and knowledge for coaches, with neuroplasticity being one of them. Neuroplasticity is the notion that the human brain is capable of change throughout all of life. (Ganguly & Poo, 2013) (Lepousez, G., Nissant, & Lledo, 2015)

This is good to know that there is a potential for change, but one also needs to be aware that the adults brain only permits change when it judges that the change to be important, rewarding, or good for it (Merzenich, 2012), which means, practice and repetition is not enough, also needed is focus, effort, positive reinforcement and motivation from the clients. (McKay & Kemp, 2019)

One of the elements which is often included in coaching is to change behavior or habits. Research shows that to wire a new desirable or positive behavior to the previous cues using the principles of focus, efforts, positive reinforcement and motivation is a good strategy. (Graybiel & Smith)

More about neuroplasticity is in the Part Three on the practice of change.

### **Body intelligence**

"An increasing number of studies in the field of neuroscience are beginning to offer scientific grounding as to why learning with and through the body creates consistent and sustainable outcomes." (Aquilina & Strozzi-Heckler, 2018) Amanda's book's title <Your Body is Your Brain> (Blake, 2018) already describes the main information. Candace Pert expresses the same message by saying "I can no longer make a strong distinction between the brain and body." (Pert, 1997) Our brain is not sitting in a vacuum, is it extended into the whole body. From this view, when coaches help clients make a change, the body play a vital role. If we ignore the body, we will lose many resources of information and also go back to habitual ways of doing things unconsciously.

### **Armoring**

People employ physical contraction to either stifle or fend off unwanted emotions (Blake, 2018), this is a process called armoring. Armoring is "the condition that results from energy being bound in a muscular contraction and not being allowed to flow through the body." (Catone, 2014)

Armoring can affect how your heart beats, how your gut digests, and how your lungs breathe. (Fogel, 2009)

### **Implicit Memory**

According to science, human beings have many kinds of memories, one of them called implicit memory. That is the sensory, bodily based skills and procedures that support automatic, unconscious action. (Siegel, 1999) Different from explicit memory, we constantly building our implicit memory from the first day.

Armoring and implicit memory will be mentioned in the Part Two of practice of change.

### **Emotion Contagion (Limbic Resonance)**

Our emotions are contagious through neural mechanism. (Boyatzis, et al., 2011) (Boyatzis R. , 2011) Our body and mind are open systems. We affect one another's bodies, brains, and visceral states without even meaning to. (Blake, 2017) Research in Yale Business School's research has found that when people work together, their moods naturally tend to converge. (Barsade, 2002) The experience of the PEA and NEA mentioned above is spread to others and becomes a shared experience. (Boyatzis R. E., 2011)

Losada and Heaphy (2004) also claimed that in the team environment, when the ratio of positive to negative statements between team members reach more than 2.9 and above, the team performs better.

To summarize the related science and theories in this chapter, some related subjects and disciplines have been introduced above. Again, the purpose was to introduce some basic content paving the ways for the later content so that we can discuss more smoothly later in the thesis. Also, it is always interesting to think of what other related theories and content could be included and what is totally not related.

### **5. Building a model for coaching practice**

Coaching is a customized practice; no two clients' desire, situation, styles are the same. The purpose of building a model is to experiment with new possibilities using a combination of different tools. Ideally, coaching practice should not have a fixed formula in practice. By taking clients on a more experiential journey a coach can empower them with a deeper awareness of

- What they most commit to and what their heart desires

- The habitual and unconscious ways in which they are holding, which might not server them anymore
- Potential practices for facilitating change
- A new way of being that transcends limitation, making a transformational difference
- Ways to embody a new way of being and live a full and rich life.

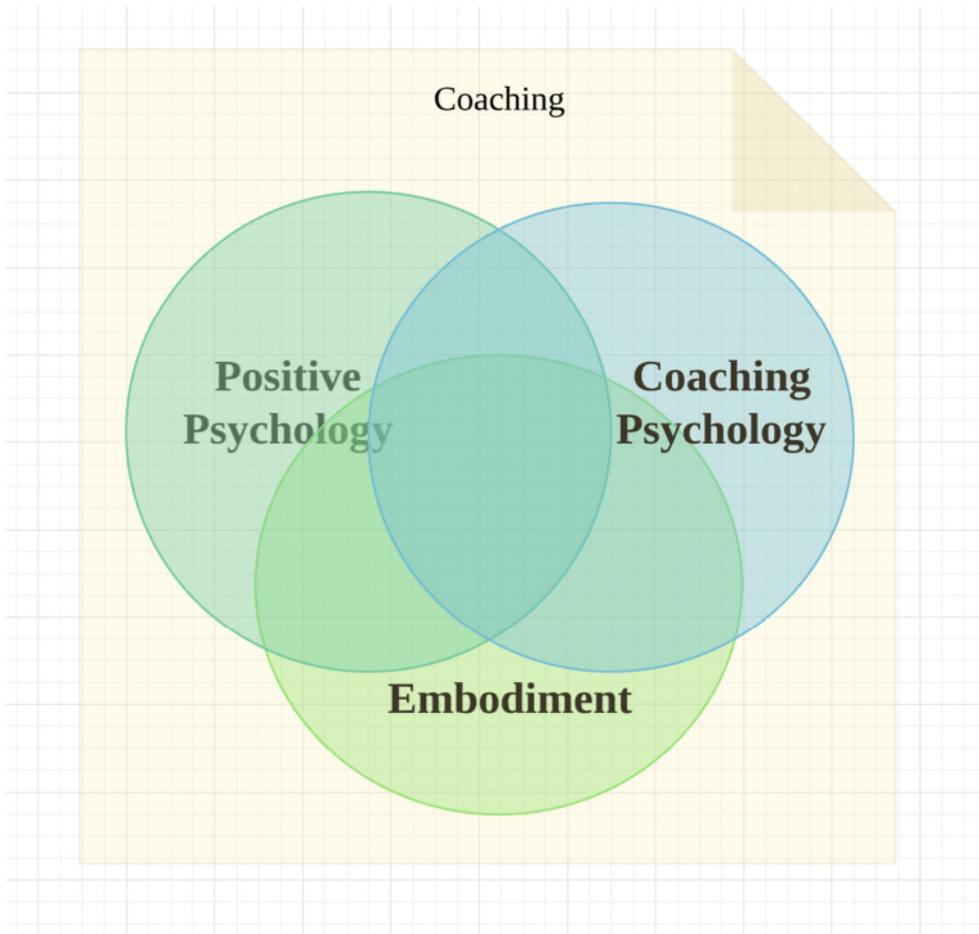


Figure 2: An integrated approach to coaching

For this reason, I have built a model illustrated in the figure above. It is an integrated model for my coaching practice. The model will be unfolded gradually through explanation of its processes and details in the practice of change.

This chapter has explored some theoretical and practice basis of coaching and related science. While the initial questions prompted by being a positive psychology coach were focused on utilization of the tools and interventions from positive psychology to coach, positioning these questions in the context of prior work has enabled me to recast these questions in the light of the evolving challenges and obstacles. The context of this work is evolving requirements for coaches and leaders and in this light, the question of what are the potential integrations or combinations in

the models of coaching that are currently at the forefront of knowledge in the field. The link between theory and practice still lacks evidence, so my practice is particularly pertinent.

## Chapter Four: Method(ology)

In the previous chapter I explored the theoretical and practical basis of coaching psychology. While the field of coaching is developing, there still are significant gaps of knowledge at the point of integration of tools or approaches, and little is understood of how this applies in practice. The motivation chapter described how my work practice provides a driver for changes that align those questions and my goal of a personal framework of practice to develop an integrated coaching approach. In this chapter, I describe the underlying methodology and the detailed methods that have enabled me to align my research with my personal development.

Abstract from my learning agreement, showed in the figure 2, the overarching research methodology is one of “auto-ethnographic action research”. (Wang, 2018)

- One part of method is “action research”.  
The action research is the main methodology for my practice change project. Action and reflection are contained within every cycle of practice. Every cycle is not fixed and will be adjusted, modified according to the real situation. The action research is showed as the lower part of the graph.
- The other part of method is the “auto-ethnographic”.  
This part describes a framework of method how I describe, reflect and learn from the change process. The auto-ethnographic approach is demonstrated as the upper part of the graph below.

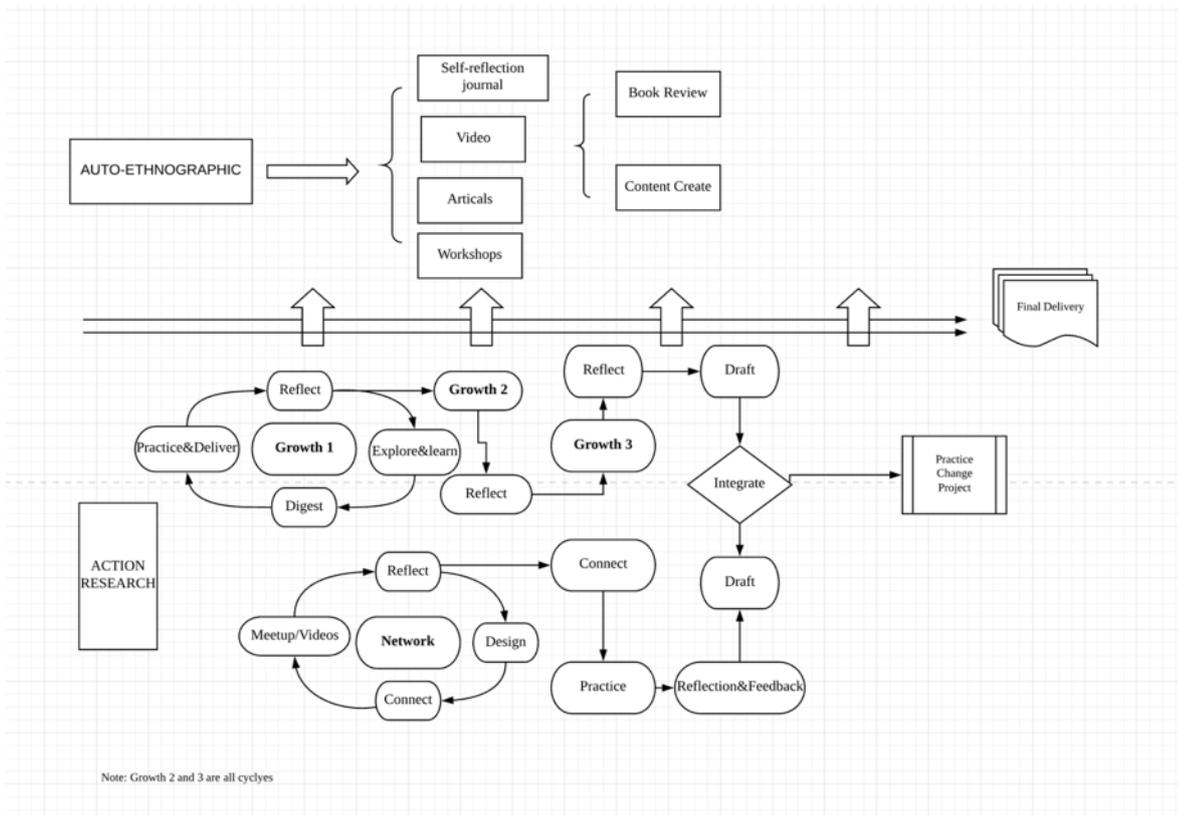


Figure 3: The “auto-ethnographic action research” (Wang, 2018)

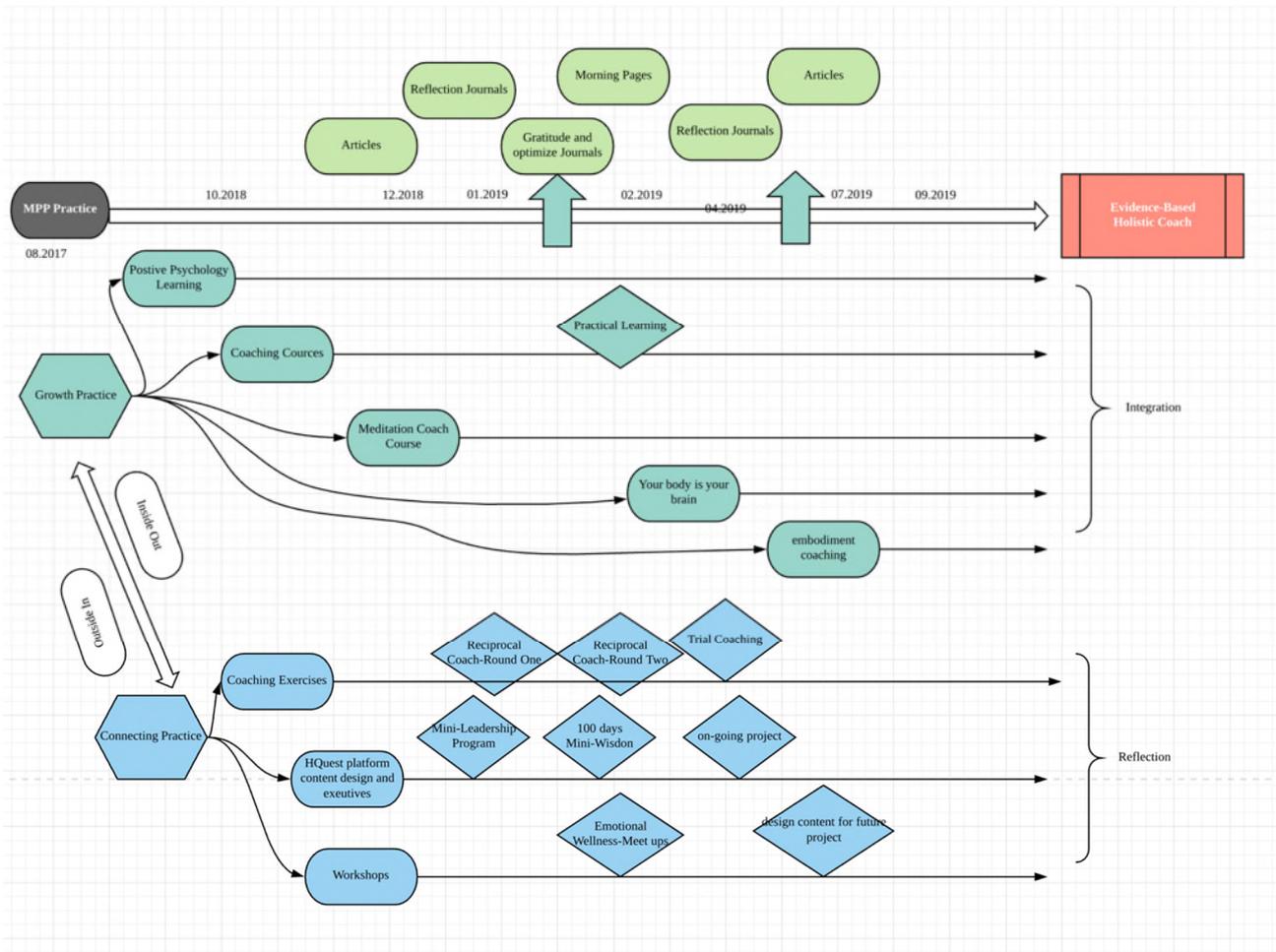


Figure 4: the methodology and actual time line

Figure four shows in detail of what the methodology contains. As Figure 3 illustrated, below the timeline is the action circles I took and am taking. Every action is not linear but circles, which contain the process of plan/reflect, learn, digest and practice/deliver. The action part could be divided into two categories, growth and connect. Growth is mainly about learning, exploring the gap of knowledge and equipping myself with knowledge, from unknow to known, while connect is mainly about networking, applying knowledge into real-time practice, receiving feedback and reflections. The two main areas inform each other, growth practice builds foundations for connecting, connecting give positive feedback and informs on the gap for potential growth circles. The growth circles are also processing from inside out, from learning to real-world practice. The other connecting cycles are processes from outside in, from practice to learning.

Above the timeline is the auto-ethnographic method of how I learn and reflect from the practices of changes. This is actually a very interesting and important part. Many of my insights are emerged when I wrote the reflection journal or articles.

This thesis tells the story of a project based on learning and growth which begins with me as a positive psychology coach, and then develop my personal and professional framework of practice, to become an integrated approach coach. These two threads are closely interwoven, and this chapter has described the nature of this interweaving. The methodology of the work is auto-ethnographic action research that is in effect a cultural anthropology on my own professional practice. The detail method for the practice of change will be described in the following chapters.

Over the time of the process, I have worked in practicing coaching with twenty-two clients from different geographic and backgrounds. The problems or challenges we had discussed went through inter-relationship, intra-relationship, leadership, and business development, but the details of their stories are not relevant here. My focus here is on my development and understanding of my model of coaching practice as I worked with these clients. The coaching practices with them have informed my thinking, learning and reflections, which has gradually developed into a coherent model of my own practice.

In this chapter, I have also described my methods of writing reflective articles, reflection journals, longhand writing and so on to provide the means of development of my professional framework of practice. As they are all hand-written in the notebooks, they can be attached as evidences if needed.

## Chapter Five: Practice of Change

In earlier chapters, I have described the overall opportunities to make change in my practice which is to create a more integrated approach to coaching. In the previous chapter, I described an action research approach to undertake this change. I will divide this change process into three main parts. Each part contains some sets of growth practices and connecting practices cycles together. The first part is practicing as a positive psychology coach, the second one is reflecting on the gaps and looking for an improved approach and solutions, the last one is practicing coaching in a more integrated way. This “Practice of Change” chapter contains the narrative of my practice change, reflections on that, and implications for the integrative approach of coaching.

### 5.1 Part I: Practicing as a positive psychology coach

This chapter describes the first part in the change program, practicing as a positive psychology coach. The motivation for this is described in the previous chapter and this specific area is considered in terms of literature and practice context. Alternative courses of action will be described and a chosen process detailed. The process and results are described. The work is considered in terms of its contribution to positive psychology practice, and finally it is considered in terms of my emergent professional framework of practice.

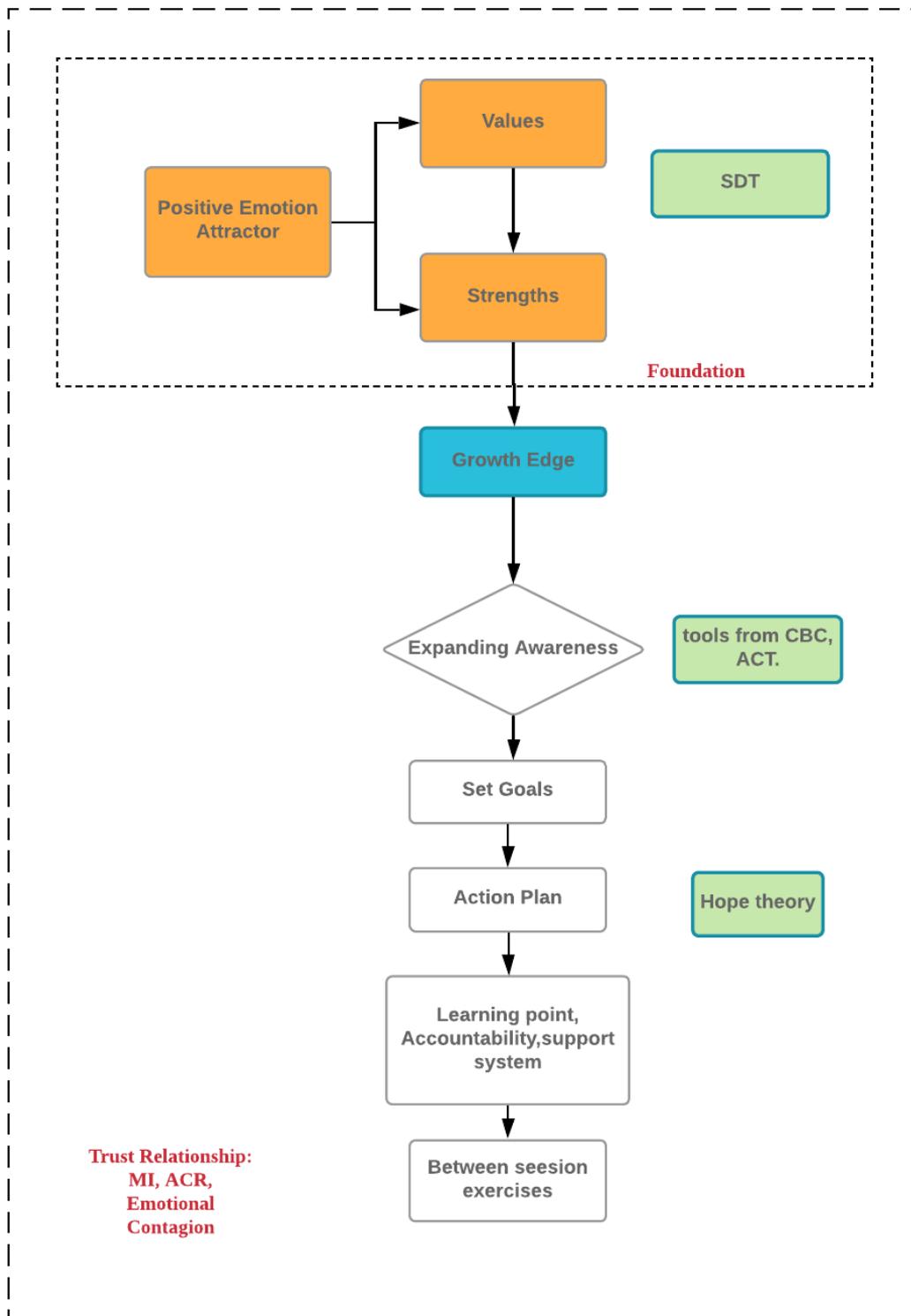
#### (1) The definition of Positive psychology coaching

While there is diverse definition for positive psychology coaching, to clarify, the definition by Dr. Green and Palmer (Green & Palmer, 2014) is worth noting: “positive psychology coaching is an evidence-based coaching practice informed by theories and research of positive psychology for enhancement of resilience, achievement and wellbeing.” And I will discuss how my model connects to this definition later in the thesis.

#### (2) The development of a coaching model

My model of coaching has been evolving with my practice of it. I am always applying my learning into practice, and in turn undertake reflections to make sense of the coaching practice, which in turn enabled the development of my model. The model which I demonstrate in this thesis, is not the best or last model for my coaching practice, but it is the model which in many ways most resonates with my current learning applications and reflections on practice. In the next paragraph, you will see my model and I will describe its features.

### (3) The model of positive psychology coaching



SDT: Self Determination Theory  
 MI: Motivation Interviewing  
 CBC: Cognitive Behavioural Coaching  
 ACT: Acceptance and Commitment Therapy

Figure 5: the model of positive psychology coaching

This diagram above is my model of positive psychology coaching. It is a coaching model for a single coaching session, which could provide the big structure for coaches. The content within the dotted portion is the foundation for each coaching session for me. The three elements in the foundation are coaching on values, leveraging strengths and positive emotion attractors. I will further explain the three elements in the following paragraphs.

The foundations could help clients become more resourceful and more resilient in their circumstances. Then the coaching session will go to the growth edge after building the foundation. The growth edge is where the clients could see their difficulties or limitations as opportunities for growth or transformation; it is also where the clients could shift from rigidity or chaos to more flexibility. In other words, they start to shift their perspectives on their problems.

Tools from cognitive behavioral coaching and acceptance and commitment coaching, solution focus coaching could be used here to support the clients in expanding awareness.

Then it is time to design action items, talk about accountability, crystalize a learning point at the end of the session to support the client take actual action. Exercises from the positive psychology toolkit could be applied between the sessions depending on the situation of clients. This is a general description of this model. In the next section, I am going to further describe the main component for this model.

#### (4) Main components

To further explain my model of positive psychology coaching, in the following chapter, I am going to further explore three main components in my coaching practice that are informed by positive psychology (shown in the diagram). They are coaching on values, utilizing strengths and the power of positive emotions and positive emotion attractors. For me, they are the foundation of each coaching session.

- Coach on Values

Philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche once said. “he who has a why to live for, can bear almost any how.” (Nietzsche, 1889)

What are you here for? What is most important to you? What make your life worth living? What motivates you? If life knocks on your door, what would it step you into? What do you want your life to be about?

What are the values? Values are the leading principles that can guide you and motivate you as you are moving through life. Values are your heart's deepest desires, how you want to be, what you want to stand for, and how you want to related to the world around you. Connecting with values and acting on them will give you a sense of contentment, fulfillment and abundance because you are always satisfied.

Values are different from the goals, values are ongoing actions. (Russ, 2008) Values are the guiding stars for our life. Values embed life with purpose and meaning, which is a component for well-being in the PERMA (PERMA stands for positive emotion, engagement, positive relationship, meaning and achievement). (Seligman M. , 2011) Connecting with our values gives us a sense that our hard work is worth the effort.

The following are essential steps to take in regards to values:

- a. Get clarity about your values. Tools like: “letter from the future self”, “what you want people would say in your eulogy”, or some future back casting questions informed by appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider & Whitney, 2005) can help clients to be clear about their values. The same is true for the exercise adopted from psychologists Kelly Wilson and Tobias Lundgren. They categorize values into four categories, relationship, work/education, leisure and personal growth. Using tools from Swedish psychologist Tobias Lundgren's like his “bull's eye” or similar tool or “life wheel”, could help to further clarify where you are now in regards to fully living with your values.
- b. Set purposeful, meaningful goals which are coherent with your values, i.e., immediate moment, short-term and also long-term goals.
- c. Take actions from there

- Strengths

What strengths do you have? How could your strengths help here? What strengths you want to cultivate more? If you can let go of the deficiency lens and shifts into a strength's lens, how could things be different here?

Coaches can help clients get knowledges and insights about their strengths, cultivating the strengths they want to grow, and add a strengths-perspectives to their world view.

- Positive Emotions

What went well today? What are the three good things happening in your life? What are the three things you are most grateful for?

As mentioned in the review of literature, research has been shown that positive emotions have lots of benefit for people, such as make them cognitively more open, give them ability to perceive more, and see the bigger pictures, and be more emotionally open. As a result of the benefits, starting coaching sessions with positive emotion, and PEA improves the chances to build a great foundation for the clients. “Repeated arousal of NEA will result in the many dysfunctional aspects of chronic sympathetic arousal and likely lead to cognitive, perceptual and emotional impairment.” (Boyatzis R. E., 2011) In our modern society, the brain can perceive many situations as threats, such as mails, news, incivility, being stuck in traffic, being cyberbullied, kids screaming, difficulties in parenting, you name it. People hearing the message and feeling the threat will move into the NEA, which leads to activity in the sympathetic nervous system and resulting cognitive, emotional and perceptual impairment. (Boyatzis R. E., 2011) In that state, clients are less likely to make a change and get insights during coaching. Instead of defending themselves, or being stuck in the problem, PEA paves the ways for the clients to experience more openness, and greater resourcefulness. This is obviously helpful for coaching.

#### (5) Connection and further discussion

In the following section, I am going to describe what is the connection between my model and a RAW Model of Flourishing (illustrated below), created by Dr. Suzy Green and Stephen Palmer, (2019) (2014), which provided me with a framework to consider the connection between different approaches and the integration of positive psychology and coaching psychology within an evidence-based coaching context. And then, I will summarize what might be the potential contribution my model of positive psychology could make into the current model and then finish by some suggestions for further discussion.

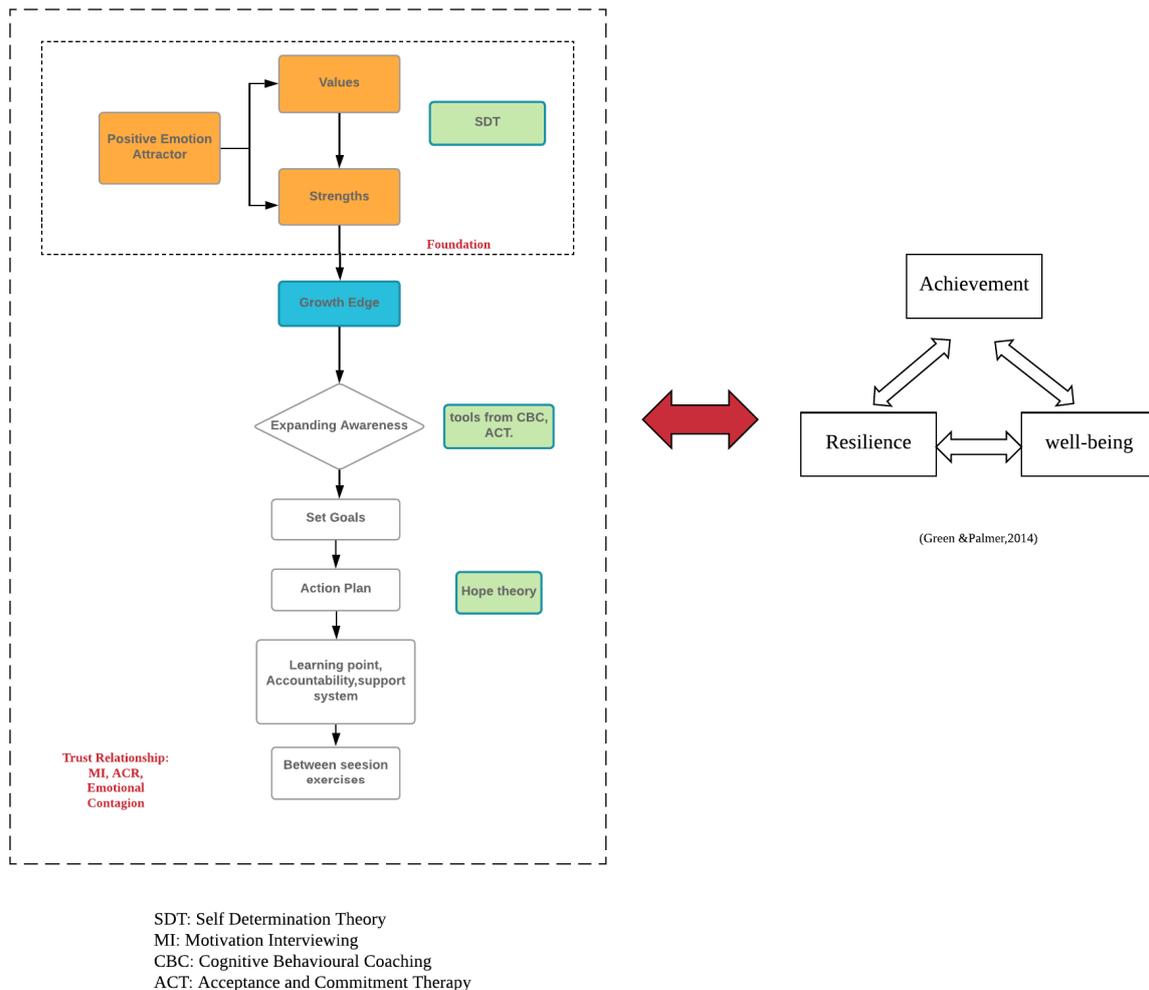


Figure 6: The connection between RAW and my model

I discussed above on the three main components of my coaching model, i.e., coaching on the values, utilizing the strengths and emphasizing on the positive emotions and positive emotion attractors. These are three form the foundations for the coaching session. My model is more about a loose structure for each session but still I found the connection between my model and the RAW model of Flourishing. (the right part of the graph above) Again, my model of coaching actually is the guidance for one single session and contained the three aspects from the RAW model together, which are resilience, achievement and well-being. The undoing hypothesis of positive emotion (Tugade, Fredrickson, & Barrett, 2004) which has been tested in a series of experiments showed that positive emotions have a unique ability to physiologically down-regulate lingering negative emotions, which is the ability to bounce back from stressful encounters. By helping the clients hardwire positive emotions into their

strengths, it is possible to enhance their coping process in stress situations so that they increase their resilience over time. Positive emotion also connects with well-being in many ways. Positive emotion affects physical and psychological health. Findings suggest that positive emotions are valuable tools not only for immediate health concerns, but also for long-term beneficial outcomes. The broaden-and-build theory also gives a framework to demonstrate the functional utility of positive emotion for better decision making and being more open-minded, so that it is more easily possible to achieve goals and achieve more. Also, by enhancing the client's strengths awareness, knowledge and use, could have a benefit for their achievement and well-being by increasing their engagement, confidence and self-belief, and by lowering levels of stress, anxiety and depression. (Mcquaid, Kern, Morris, & Jacques-Hamilton, 2019) (Minhas, 2010) (Seligman M. , Steen, Park, & Peterson, 2005) In addition, coaching for values and helping clients set goals coherent with their values, has a direct connection with enhancing their well-being by increasing purpose and meaning in life.

To summarize, the model I build condenses the three main essentials of the RAW model into every coaching session. This has the potential to contribute to the coaching practice of some coaches.

#### (6) The action circles and the auto-ethnographic output

This part of content can be incorporated into the growth practice of positive psychology learning, coaching courses and the networking practice of coaching practices. The output of the auto-ethnographic method includes the articles and reflection journals.

This chapter described how I practice as a positive psychology coach. In the growth circles, knowledge is built by learning and reflection circles. At the same time, practicing coaching utilizes positive psychology theories and tools happened in parallel. These practices resulted in better understanding of the knowledge of positive psychology and getting better in applying them into the coaching practices. It has provided a way forward, but some details or gaps still existed or were unknown. Finally, I reflected on my emerging framework of practice, while I already had capabilities in design, the addition of participatory aspects has added an important strength to it.

## 5.2 Part II: The gaps, reflections and learning

In previous chapters, I described my practice as a positive psychology coach, and how I applied knowledge from positive psychology to coaching practice. As I practice, I felt that there are some myths in my practice. In the following chapters, I am going to begin with telling some case stories

and then describe the gaps I found, following that with the learning triggered by reflections on the gaps, and the emergence of the integrated model.

(1) Several Stories—having difficulties to committing to change (myself as a coachee and a coach)

Like Aquilina and Strozzi-Heckler (2018) put it, the unexamined social patterns individuals have inherited are integrated in their muscular, organ and nervous system and it would be impossible to unpack their various issues without working directly through the body. This is exactly what I found.

In one coaching practice, my role was as a coachee this time. I was working with a coach from Australia. The issue I brought to the conversation was about my relationship. I want to have better communication with my husband and also try to find some strategy towards the balance between work and family. We worked together for six sessions in total. The coach asked many great questions throughout the sessions. Questions like “what do you think the ideal situation might look like?” brought me some clarity around the way of communication I want. “What you most appreciate about your husband?” reminded me to be grateful for the positive traits within my husband. And also, the coach was very empathetic and caring which helped us to build a trust relationship from the very beginning. I felt relaxed and wanted to share and be open to the possibilities that the coaching could benefit me.

After the whole six session, I wrote in my reflection diary: “Elly (not her real name) is very warm, kind and willing to help me get out of the stuck. She is also very empathetic and showed lots of understanding to my situation. What benefitted me most is the reminder of “being grateful” which indeed enhances my well-being and positive emotions daily. Also, the fixed mindset “all or nothing” always was a hindrance in my way to accomplish my work. I am able to remind myself to be more compassionate. Our conversation makes me aware of my thinking patterns from different angles and I am able to catch the mindset I have at the moment. However, I have the feeling that I didn’t solve the problem or challenge in some degree. I still held so many emotions when my husband could not cooperate and the way we communicate could not change much. I am not able to take persistent action to change our conversation style in a profound way. Why is that?”

A similar situation happened when my role was as a coach in a practice. Marla (not real name) is a self-employed coach and a mother of three lovely boys. She is so motivated and hard-working. She encountered some lows and anxieties when her business started growing. She

noticed her clients sometimes made her felt so tired and drained of her energy, even though she loved her work a lot. In our coaching sessions, as we talked about these situations by provoking her thoughts around what do the lows mean to her, what was a better way to think of the lows and clients, Marla started to make progress and had some new insight in the way she considered the situation. During the time we worked together, we explored the possible roots under the surface and reframed her thinking, building new perspectives.

I used some questions to build relationship and provoke her positive emotions, helping her become more resourceful. I noticed that every session she would bring some words to express more negative emotions or thoughts, like “felt stressed,” “frustrated,” “not good enough,” “not worthy.” She was still functioning, but no doubt she could do better.

After four sessions together, even though she said she enjoyed our sessions I still felt like there were more possibilities for her and I suspect she had the same feelings, too. After every session, I would draw the mind-mapping for her to reflect on and we build some exercises which she could do between sessions. Even so, I felt that I left some jobs undone which made me feel frustrated. I couldn't stop thinking “where is that feeling coming from? What are other possibilities?”

## (2) The gaps

By writing my feelings down and reflecting over time, I became gradually aware of several possible gaps between the current model I had and the better outcome I could produce for the client.

- One is working with positive emotion only versus working with whole spectrum of emotion. I didn't mean that positive psychology ignores the importance of negative emotions, because it never did, “but the emerging field and popularity of positive psychology has replaced our focus on need and deficiencies with a focus on the positive and the possible, in this fervor, we may be masking the important role of the negative.” (Boyatzis R. E., 2011) What I also want to put emphasis on is the awareness and the capability for a coach to cooperate with the whole range of emotions. In my practice, I found that I lacked the capability to work with the client's “negative emotions”, such as sadness, frustration, anger, anxiety, disgust etc. Kauffman, Boniwell, and Silberman (2010,2014) also noted two key critiques of positive psychology coaching, one of them is there is a lack of balance, with insufficient attention given to, and acceptance of, negative emotions and deeper underlying issues. Like Dr. Green and Palmer also mentioned in their book (2019), “suitably qualified positive psychology coaches may be

able to assist coaches falling within the languishing domains who are experiencing such emotions.” This also echoes the capability which a coach needed to work with emotions.

- Secondly, the gap I noticed was that the questions I asked or tools in my toolkit were mainly working with just thinking which I sometimes felt could not be helpful and powerful enough. However, if the aim for coaching was to facilitate transformational change, and Changing is a process which includes both finding new thinking and more importantly, building a new pattern or shape for the body, there is no reason for the coach only to expand awareness and address the perspectives in the thinking-self, and ignore the body or the felt-self. I will further expand my explanation later.
- Thirdly, lack of some practices that could help the clients keep moving towards the goal. There are several exercises which are positive psychology interventions, such as “letter from the future”, “gratitude letter”, “gratitude journal”, etc., which I used with my clients. However, practices here which I mean something they could practice continuously, not the one-time exercise, that could help them move into the new being. To articulate my perspective here, I want to connect my argument here with the concept of neuroplasticity. Learning or change happens through repetition over time, so having a practice for clients which can help them to step into the changes and learnings.

The questions in the practices remained for a while till I attended a conference which opened new doors for me and I got some insights from there. That was a turning point for me.

The story continued. I got an opportunity to attend a coaching conference which had a lot of opportunities to witness some master coaches from different backgrounds demonstrate their coaching. There are two main observations I had and I wrote them down in my reflection diary:

- “Most of them asked questions about the feeling. Questions like ‘where do you feel the most intense feeling in your body?’ ‘Try if you can move your thinking into your body, how do you feel?’ Why do they ask about feeling so much? What are the mechanisms behind that?”
- “Wow, the client in the session got the insight so quickly after connecting to their feelings or shifting their postures and movement. Why is that?”

I was amazed by the questions they asked around the clients’ sensations inside their body and the immediate outcome they got in 50 minutes coaching sessions. I wanted to find out the mechanism behind that.

### (3) Some learnings

#### **Seeking for answers and Building the bridge**

After the coaching conference, I had some new directions for my research. My questions and observations guided me into a new field and framework of knowledge which might serve my coaching practice. Following from there, an integration approach would be a must in my coaching practice. In the following sections, let's dive into what I learned and gathered together.

My intention for this part is to gather my learnings together so that later I can discuss how to connect what I learned with my coaching practice.

This is how I recorded it in my journal: "Our world views are wired into our body and affect how we behave every day. If coaching is to facilitate transformational change and help clients transcend limitations and not serve them anymore, then we not only need to work with the thinking-self (conceptual aspects), but also need to work with the embodiment approach." My learning journey had shifted again.

I categorized my learning content into three bullet points:

- Our body-brain connection cannot be ignored. This part explains a lot why we need to touch "sensations" in coaching.
- How we become who we are today is closely related both to our brain and body from the very beginning. Coaching is not about digging into the history, but it cannot avoid working with the history.
- Coaching on emotions. By understanding the emotion's rhythm, we can coach with emotions more confidently.

I will explain how these learnings could contribute and connect with my coaching at the end of this part. They were important milestones for informing my coaching practice later.

#### **The body intelligence**

"Your brain is distributed throughout your entire body, and your body also subtly take shape in response to your life experience. Through the unconscious and highly adaptive processes of implicit memory and armoring, you put successful behaviors on neuromuscular autopilot." (Blake, Your Body is Your Brain, 2018) "An increasing number of studies in the field of neuroscience are beginning to offer scientific grounding as to why learning with and through the body creates consistent and sustainable outcomes. Research has established a link between the brain and body, not only through our neural pathways but also through the discovery of neurotransmitters in our

heart, gut and connective tissue. Our enteric nervous system consists of around 100 million neurons and can send as many messages to the brain as it receives. Science is suggesting that our brain extends down into our entire body. (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018)

To further illustrate what important role our body plays here, I made a table which contains the different parts of our body and each part’s highlighted function. By reading it, one can easily see the reason for saying that “our body is our brain” and the benefit of asking questions of body intelligence in coaching.

Extended brain	Highlighted Functions
The heart-brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Amygdala, our stress alarm fires six to eight milliseconds after each heartbeat. Your heart is telling your brain when there is a threat. (Hassert, Miyashita, &amp; Willias, 2004) (Blake, Your Body is Your Brain, 2018)</li> <li>• The heart produces oxytocin-the bonding hormone, which related connection to others. (Gutkowska, Jankowski, Mukaddam-Daher, &amp; McCann, 2000)</li> <li>• Heart has a direct impact on assessments of safety and danger, on level of connection, on brain and cognitive function (Blake, 2017)</li> </ul>
The gut-brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The enteric nervous system in the gut operates highly independently of the brain in the head, and it embeds roughly 100 million neurons, more than the spinal cord or the peripheral nervous system (Blake, 2018) (Gershon, 2003)</li> <li>• Gut-mood association develops further as we grow, sensations in the gut is linking with our emotional experiences. (Mayer, 2011) Dr. Emeran Mayer also described the gut as “a peripheral extension of the limbic system.”—the vital part of our emotional brain. (Blake, 2018)</li> </ul>
The lung-brain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different breathing patterns are correlated with different emotional states. (Philippot, Chapelle, &amp; Blairy, 2002), the way you habitually breathe affects your state of mind. (Philippot, Chapelle, &amp; Blairy, 2002) (Blake, 2018)</li> <li>• The muscles that support breathing are densely innervated by your autonomic nervous system, which</li> </ul>

	plays a central role in your fight or flight response. (Blake, 2018; Carter, et al., 2009)
The Vagus Nerve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The vagus nerve innervates the heart, gut, and lungs directly. (Blake, 2018)</li> <li>• Eighty to ninety percent of vagal nerve fibres are afferent, meaning they send signal to the brain rather than receiving signals from the brain. (Berthoud &amp; Neuhuber, 2000)</li> </ul>
The skin	<p>Skin and head-brain are very connected.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Skin and head-brain arise from the same layer of embryonic tissue. (Blake, 2018)</li> <li>• Our skin is also tightly tied to emotion. (Blake, 2018) Specialized nerve fibres in the skin travel from the skin directly into the emotional brain. (Olausson, Lamarre, Backlund, Wallin, &amp; Starck, 2002)</li> </ul>
The connective tissue	Connective tissue, or Fascia, is densely innervated by an automatic nervous system, which manages automatic emotional reactions such as the fight or flight response. Many fascia nerves connect to the insula, which is a part of the emotional brain involved in self-awareness. (Blake, 2018) (Schleip R. , 2003) (Schleip, Findley, & Huijing, 2012)

Table 1: the body intelligence

The table above tells where our interoception sensations mainly come from. “**Interoception**” is the term scientists use to describe our visceral experience. (Blake, 2018) , it is the ability to feel one’s own body states and emotions. (Fogel, Body Sense: The Science and Practice of Embodied Self-awareness, 2013) As the table above illustrates, our heart, gut, lungs, skin, the Vagus Nerve and connective tissue all provide unique signals to the head-brain about our internal states. Building awareness and paying attention to these inner states is helpful for the process of accepting, and cultivating resilience, in comparison to avoiding or suppressing. “Minimization, Numbing and disassociation from our sensations are common responses to difficult life experiences.” (Aquilina & Strozzi-Heckler, 2018). Remember I mentioned in the motivation part of this thesis, that our context is becoming more and more complex and full of uncertainty, so the tendency to dissociate with our sensations cannot be underestimated.

**“Exteroception”** is another form of information which is afferent information, which means the body affecting the brain. The direction of the information is from down to top. The basis five senses which are smell, listen, taste, sight and touch are forms of exteroception. Exteroception is sensations interpreted as coming from outside of one’s body. (Fogel, *Body Sense: The Science and Practice of Embodied Self-awareness*, 2013)

**Proprioception** is another class of sensory experience, it encompasses your sense of balance and tells you where your body is in place. (Blake, 2018) Dr. Amy Cuddy is a professor in Harvard Business School, her popular research about “power poses” tells us that simply by changing our posture for a very short time, one to two minutes, it can deliberately change our own internal sense of power and even how other people perceive us. (Carney, Cuddy, & Yap, 2010)

To summarize, in the previous chapters I gather the learning together to illustrate the idea that our body and head-brain are intimately connected. In fact, in many instances it makes more sense to say the body leads the brain. (Blake, 2018). In coaching, asking questions around sensations provides opportunities to tap into the body intelligence. This is helpful in the process of waking up our sensations; by practicing, we are enhancing our awareness. “Choice follows awareness”, Aquilina and Strozzi-Heckler (2018) wrote: “the more aware we are, the more choice we have in responding to situations in new ways.” Making conscious choices empowers our clients in their lives.

### **How we become who we are**

Like we see in the metaphor of a tree, which will naturally make its shape through assimilating nutrients, sunshine, water and soil, so we see (as Blake assumes) that “three primary evolutionary pressures drove the development of the brain: the need for physical safety, the need for emotional communication, and the need for social navigation. Your brain is your social and emotional sense organ.” (Blake, 2018) The human brain evolved to take shape in response to the availability of the three essential nutrients, capturing strategies that work to keep us safe, make us connected and respected and put those behaviors on autopilot. Like the previous chapters described, the shaping doesn’t happen only in the skull, but through our whole nerves systems and body. Just like Blake, Rick Hanson (2013) wrote in his book, the three basic needs are safety, satisfaction and connection. This is a simplified way to explain, but it explains how our brain takes physical shape as it learns behaviors that optimize access to the three basic nutrients.

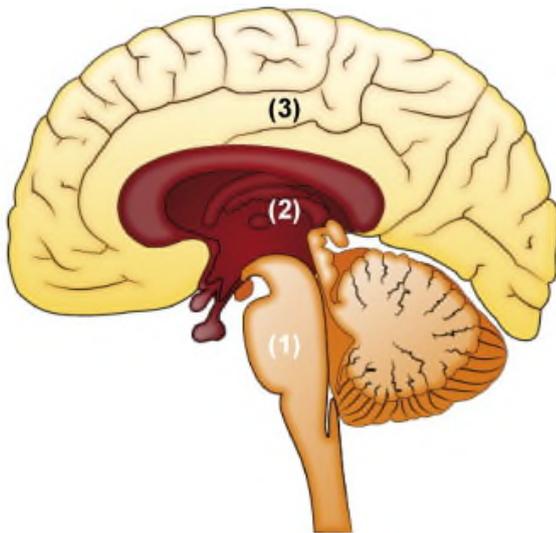


Figure 8: Picture from (Janssen, 2008)

To further illustrate, the picture of the brain shows that our triune brain consists of three different layers through which the information is processed (1) physically (reptilian brain), which takes care of safety, (2) emotionally (mammalian brain or limbic system), taking care of connection, and (3) intellectually (mammalian brain or neocortex), which takes care of dignity.

Different brain regions develop at different rates and are plastic at different life stage. Cortical regions devoted to vision, hearing, and touch develop first, while the prefrontal cortex which is called to be the CEO of the brain, whose function includes planning, attention, social interaction and emotional regulation refines its circuitry well into the late teens and late twenties. (McKay & Kemp, 2019)

Besides that, the environment, like family, community, institution, social norms and spirit also play a role in influencing how we shape up. Our body and brain are highly adaptive to what happens around us. In somatic coaching, “a somatic coach supports their client to experience how their history lives in their muscular, organ and nervous systems, and how it becomes explicit in the world as narratives, sensations, emotions, worldviews and ways of being.” (Aquilina & Strozzi-Heckler, 2018)

Plus, our implicit memory and process of armoring literally have a physical record. They are stored in the neuromuscular patterns that affect virtually every tissue in our body. By change of the brain, by implicit memory and by armoring, we gradually become our embodied self.

To further explain, the client who is helped by a coach today, is closely related to the story he/she carried with them all the way. Coaching is to help the client becoming the person he/she wants to become, making transformational changes and achieving dreams. As our bodies are tuned to certain

emotional and relational ways of being, that affects both the options and possibilities that we see. (Blake, 2018) Helping the clients expand awareness around how they became the person today is not only good for accepting rather than avoiding or depressing, but also opens up new possibilities for them. Our embodied behaviors, patterns, habits and perceptions are all intelligence adaptive responses which we can trust ourselves. By building understanding towards our adaptive behaviors, we can then be more compassionate toward ourselves. From there, clients begin a process of ending an automatic way of being that has outlived its usefulness, they become more capable to respond, rather than being just reactive to circumstances. Life no more happens to them, but happens by them. I will clarify the connection between this learning with coaching practice at the end of this part.

### **Working with emotions**

In this chapter, I will summarize my learning about emotions, the motivation, knowledge and tools to work with it and connect with coaching practice.

We all have emotions. And more and more research has shown that the ability to be aware and regulate emotion of oneself predicts success better than the intelligence quotient. There are several existing theories about what is emotion but emotional languages, awareness, and emotional intelligence are still underestimated in practice.

Responding to the gap I observed in part one of change of practice, the needs of and lacking the capabilities of working with not only positive emotions has also been noted by some experts. In Kashdan and Biswas-Diener's book <The upside of your Dark side> (Kashdan & Biswas-Diener, 2014), they also provide a strong argument for the need to working with the full range of human emotion. In their words, too much positive emotions could potentially lead to an individual's downfall, and the negative emotions are a critical mechanism which lead to enhanced resilience and increased happiness. (Panchal, Palmer, & Green, 2018). Take optimism for example, extreme optimists have been shown to make poorer investment decisions than pessimistic counterparts because they appear to ignore disconfirming information and miss opportunities. The need for balance against unchecked optimism is appearing in economic and neuroscience literature.

People tend to avoid and suppress unpleasant emotions which naturally don't feel good. "Suppressing or turning away from our difficult emotions is not healthy or helpful." Dr. David put it, (2016) "This is associated with lower levels of resilience, lower levels of wellbeing, and higher levels of depression and anxiety. And it also impacts our relationships and our ability to achieve our goals." When Boyatzis wrote about the NEA (Boyatzis R. E., 2011), he argued, despite the dysfunctional aspects of remaining in the NEA for long, arousal of the NEA may serve to facilitate

better performance in activating the organism (i.e. preparing one to defend, waking up a person), providing a balance for the negative effects of excessive or unchecked optimism, and it is helpful when someone desires to stretch, develop or harden themselves. Myself experienced the uncomfortable emotions when I am out of my comfort zone all the time. This personal experience is resonant with what Julie Norem mentioned in her book (Norem, 2001): “although the most important benefit of the NEA for a human is to defend it against threats, a major benefit to help in growth is the experience of stretching or challenging oneself beyond a comfort zone.”

In the last paragraphs, I emphasized the needs and the capability of coaches to work with the whole range of emotions, especially so-called “negative emotions”, but how to work with them?

“Emotions are not reactions to the world, they are constructions of the world.” (Barrett, 2018) Emotions are our brain’s best guess according to its reading information from our body, and then constructing a meaning based on our previous life experience. Emotions do not happen to us, but are built by our brain based on the concepts we have from our life experiences. Same as thoughts, perspectives, emotions are also built by us. By understanding that emotions are actually the outcome of our previous life experience, and by building an awareness of our habitual patterns or helping our clients to do so, we can literally have more choice of how to respond to life scenarios and become more able to have control or become the author in our life.

By understanding the theory of constructed emotion, it is not difficult to say that emotions are the bridge between our sensations, such as from interoception mentioned previously, and our conceptual thinking. And it is stuff which we cannot ignore as a human being.

In somatic coaching, a concept called Rhythm of Energy (Aquilina & Strozzi-Heckler, 2018) also can be an add-on to working with emotions, especially so-called “negative emotions”. Rhythm of energy has four stages: awakening, increasing, containing and completing. If we left some emotions unexamined or unseen, they could not be fully processed or go through the four stages, then would hide in our body in some ways. I think this might also relate to some chronic pains. So, the capability to working with the full range of emotion mindfully is really important in view of the fact that the coach’s job is to helping people to reach their potential.

(4) The emerging of the integrated model: connect learning with coaching practice

In the following paragraphs, I am going to clarify how I connect my learnings with my coaching practice by connecting it with my coaching purpose and the gaps I perceived in my practices(which mentioned early in the thesis).

To recall my purpose of coaching practice: it is to take clients on an experiential journey where a coach could empower them with a deepening awareness of:

- What they most commit to and their heart desire
- The habitual and unconscious ways in which they are holding and might not serve them any more
- Potential practices to facilitating changes
- The new way of being that transcends limitation, making a transformational difference
- Ways to embody a new way of being and live a full and rich life.

Transformational changes happen in an experiential way. To echo with my purpose in coaching, here is how to connect the learning with intention in coaching:

- In coaching, helping the clients to build their capacity of connecting with their body intelligence has the potential to inform them on what they care about most and design actions most coherent with their values, which make the value component into an embodied level.
- As mentioned in the concept of neuroplasticity, change only happens when it is important, emotionally engaged and supported. And also, for new learning in adulthood we also need the process of disruption, which is a de-armoring process. I have mentioned the related content in the previous chapters of “how we become who we are”. In coaching, helping the clients to expand awareness of their habitual being and unconscious patterns creates greater potential for them to have multiple choices in responding.
- The concept of body intelligence also diversified my coaching toolkit by forming practices which involved the body, e.g., through change of posture or gesture. These practices used in the sessions and in-between the sessions have the potential to facilitate changes in a different way.
- The effectiveness or power of coaching often manifests in helping clients opening up or shifting their unhelpful beliefs or patterns.

##### (5) The action circles and the auto-ethnographic output

This part is mainly about building the bridges between the gaps found through reflection, gaps between my previous coaching practice and the coaching purpose I wanted to achieve. The process contains the learning evolved by that and the connecting practices which experimentally put my learnings into practice in the trial coaching practices. For the auto-ethnographic part, I shared articles on the public platform, sharing my ideas through calls and feedbacks and comments from others. Also, reflections were recorded in my journals.

To recap, in the second part of my practice of change, I was guided by reflections and observations from my own story and client’s story into a new learning world. My questions led me to the whole

human evolution of intelligence and helped me to supplement my toolkit with the embodied part, not only the thinking. It also helped me to understand why tapping into the sensations is so powerful in coaching, and how to use the embodied wisdom to facilitate changes. Besides that, I got the understanding how to work with a greater range of emotions and learned to extend my coaching practice.

This part of learning and reflections helped to fill the gaps which I noted down at the beginning of the second part of practice of change, and paved the way to build an integrated model for coaching practices. In the next part, I will describe the definition and techniques of my integrated model and then follow up with some discussions.

### 5.3 Part III: a call to integration and practice an integrated approach

In this chapter, I will start with some inspiration, which, for me, is a calling for integration. Then I will introduce some different aspects of integration and describe what is an integrated approach for coaching. I will finish this chapter by an example of an integrated practice which I found very valuable and which can be used as a good supplement for coaching practices.

I want to begin this part with a phrase taken from some keynotes:

“Healthy living systems are characterized by differentiation and integration...linking this growing embodied self-awareness with conceptual self-awareness leads to greater integration. Amplifying both conceptual and embodied self-awareness while in action, embedded in relationship, in the context of our daily life, leads to still further integration.” (Blake, 2018)

“How we perceive, think and act is much more than an intellectual endeavor. Our perceptions, thinking and behavior reside within our biology and body...Coaching that does not incorporate biology and the body in its conceptual framework and methodology runs the risk of ignoring a crucial component of perception and behavior, in advertently denying clients the opportunity for profound learning and deep change.” (Sieler)

“A new behavior requires a reorganization of ourselves, behaviorally, cognitively, and somatically”. (Silsbee, 2008)

“Transformation occurs when the entire being of person is addressed.” (Strozzi-Heckler, 2014)

This is a calling for integration, integration of approaches, tools and perceptions. To coach the whole human being instead of splitting apart thinking and feeling.

(1) The integrated approach of coaching: definition and explanation

a. The definition of integrated model of coaching

The integrated approach coaching is a model of psychological coaching based on the principles of the positive psychology approach, but which also actively acknowledges and utilizes principles and techniques derived from the embodiment and somatic approach. Therefore, it works towards identification of values and embodiment of those values, and the enhancement of authentic strengths for an experience of being. The purpose of this coaching approach is to utilize

embodiment methods to facilitate the clients' change which is coherent with their values. To conclude, it is an approach that integrates conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness into a positive psychology coaching model.

b. The diagrams of the model

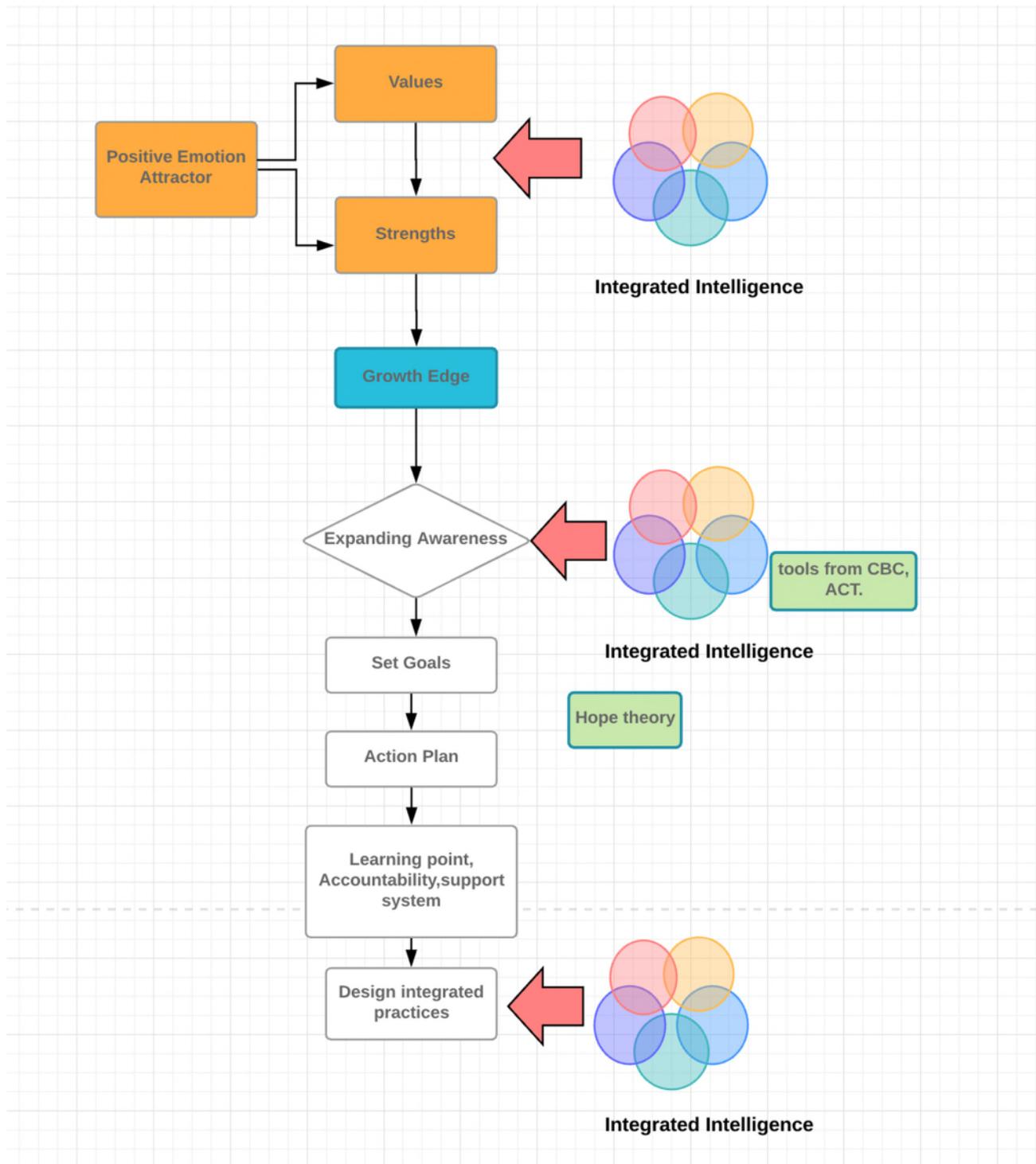


Figure 9: Integrated approach model of coaching

The integrated intelligence will be explored below.

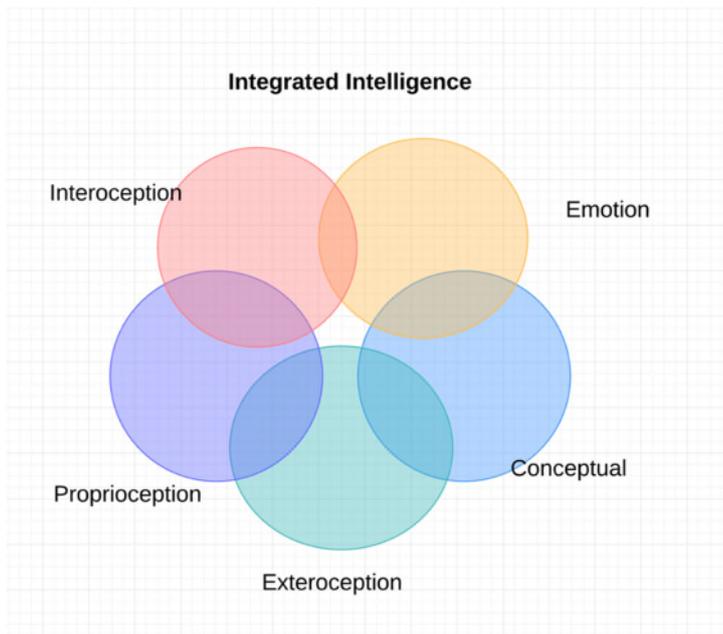


Figure 10: Integrated Intelligence by Amanda Blake (Blake, 2018).

This is an integrated intelligence model from Amanda Blake. This is a model which integrated the conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness. I am going to discuss how to apply the integrated intelligence into coaching practice, especially in the model of positive psychology coaching.

Integrated intelligence includes five main components. Interoception, proprioception and exteroception are body intelligence components we have discussed above. I will explain my interpretation about emotion in this model and pave ways for the integration. "The term feeling and emotion are similar yet different, feeling and emotions go together" (Fogel, *Body Sense: The Science and Practice of Embodied Self-awareness*, 2013) A feeling is any sensation you sense that is experienced as coming from our bodies. Feelings can be any temperature, pressure or movement sensations, such as warm, cold, tingling, contraction, intense, jumpy, or "butterflies" in stomach, and so on. "Emotion is the embodied evaluation of those feelings, reflecting how good or bad something feels to us accompanied by a motivation or urge to act in a particular matter in relation to that sensation thing or being that seems to be causing the emotion." Emotion will lead to action. Emotion is always accompanied by urge to act, or an action tendency. (Frijda, 1986) As we discussed previously, emotions play an important role in human life. They imbed much information that could inform coaching, so that clients can be helped more profoundly.

c. Further exploring the model

The model highlights two things. First is to coach people for foundations, which are values, strengths, positive emotions, in an embodied level. The purpose is to help clients to embody the resources and built the inner strengths, so as to enhance resilience. Second is to coach with both conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness throughout the session. In the following paragraphs, I will explain what I mean.

(i) I have discussed three main components in my positive psychology coaching practice model. There are values, strengths and positive emotions. In this chapter, I will further extend these three components to explore what they could look like in an integrated approach. The intention here is to illustrate that coaching on the three main components in an embodied way might make a huge difference and have great potential to support clients to live life fully.

- **Feel your Values, be committed**

There is still a difference between knowing one's values and living with one's values. There is also a difference between knowing to commit and being committed. In the foundation of coaching, we can utilize the integrated intelligence to support clients fully explore their values beyond their knowing. The somatic tools can be used to support the clients to tap into their body intelligence and then feel their guiding stars, which are the things most important to them. Why it is important? It is because learning (or change) only happens when it is important to the organism. (Merzenich, 2012) Strong emotional engagement supports neurobiological learning.

- **Strengths are also embodied**

In the previous chapters, I have talked about how we embodied our habitual way of being along the way we grow up, the thoughts, behaviors, perceptions, personalities, postures, gestures, and more importantly, also our strengths. This is a privilege to not only know what is your strengths, but also know what owning your strengths feels like. By owning the strengths, one is more likely to act and respond to the external environment in accordance to those strengths. So, the tools and intervention of strengths from positive psychology can help clients increases their knowledge of their own strengths, and then the embodiment part could help them to really connect with their strengths, empowering them to be more able to connect their strengths with external circumstances.

- **Positive Emotion**

As mentioned, studies have shown that positive emotions have many benefits, from being physical healthier to becoming more resilient, and bouncing back from stress more quickly. We also talked about that emotions are the bridges for sensations and thoughts.

- Facilitating change

In order to make changes happen, we also need attention, practice and movement. How we move also closely ties to how we perceive and to our emotions. Here is another aspect that embodiment could add on to the previous model. An integrated practice which integrates movement, emotion and conceptual insight might make a great contribution to support clients in their endeavor to change and become the best version of themselves. For example, a practice called 3M, movement, mantra, mood, is a good example of integration. I learned this from Amanda Blake. In her words, the practice is designed to activate the different functions networks of the brain which is an integration. (Blake, 2018) Movement is a form of embodied practice, Mantra represent positive affirmation which is a form of conceptual self-awareness and then Mood is the bridge between sensations and interpretations.

- (ii) The integration of conceptual and embodied self-awareness

The integration of conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness creates more possibility and diversity to coaching methods so that they can help support the coach to coach the clients to connecting to their best self. What is the integration of conceptual self-awareness and embodied self-awareness? People might more familiar with the mind and body connection. Clinicians and educators who work with embodied self-awareness often talk about ‘mind’ and ‘body’. The concept that the ‘mind’ is the head and the ‘body’ is below the neck is an oversimplification which can lead to misconceptions. The problem is that the mind is part of the body and the body has a mind of its own in its peripheral nerve cells and receptors and in its bath of circulating fluid rich in neurotransmitters and neurohormones.” (Fogel, *Body Sense: The Science and Practice of Embodied Self-awareness*, 2013) That is to say, our body and mind are so connected. What people normally call “mind” is what scientists called “conceptual self-awareness”, while “body” really stands for “embodied self-awareness”. “Both of these forms of self-awareness depend on connections between the brain and the rest of the body, and as we shall see, utilize very similar neural process.” (Fogel, *Body Sense: The Science and Practice of Embodied Self-awareness*, 2013)

Embodied self-awareness provides the way for coaching to connect with the true self.

“...the False Self sets up as real and it is this that observers tend to think is the real person. In living relationships, work relationships, and friendships, however, the False Self begins to fail...At the extreme the True Self is hidden.” (Winnicott, 1960) As Winnicott pointed out, the True Self is our embodied self-awareness, our ability to stay comfortably in the chaos of the subjective emotional present, and to use that to inform, verify, and update our conceptual self-awareness. The False Self is our conceptual self-awareness in the condition that it becomes divorced from the regulating

reassurance of embodied self-awareness. (Winnicott, 1960). It is the stories we tell about ourselves that are not based in the “reality” of our sensations and emotions in the subjective emotional present. We developed our embodied self-awareness over time through close interpersonal relationships from the first day when we were infants.

(iii) Change continues via practices after sessions

One more difference between this model and the previous one is that the embodiment element provides more practice which could help clients keep doing and practicing the new shape they want to be in. For instances, practicing some movement plus mantras together or centering practices. This keeps changes happening after sessions and escalates the process of neurobiological learning.

(2) The action circles and the auto-ethnographic output

This part’s content mainly reflected in the embodiment coaching learning and experimenting coaching practice. The practices are still in the experiment stages. I joined communities with coaches with similar interests and background which can be recorded in my connecting action circles. The auto-ethnographic outputs are reflection journals and articles.

## **Chapter Six: Review of practice change and further discussion**

### **1. Summary**

In this chapter, I review my practices of change, highlighting relevant insights gained. Each of the stages of the practice are explored in terms of the reflections and impacts of that practice. This review is done in the context of coaching as an intervention in human development identified in my literature review and knowledge of prior practice. I examine the extent to which this contributes to advancing that field in theory and practice, and the limitations of those findings. This, and a revisiting of the original motivations for the work lead to suggestions for further study and research.

In the three parts of practice change. I have described how my professional coaching practice changed from mainly applying principles from positive psychology and evolved into an integration with embodiment elements. By reviewed and reflected over the whole journey, I want to summarize my reflections.

The use of integrative models of coaching has a potential to broaden the scope of possibilities for coaches in their aim to support the clients to become their best self. In this thesis, I propose a model which integrates positive psychology principles and tools with embodied principles and knowledge. It is worth highlighting that the ideas of integrating the positive psychology and embodiment perspectives to guide coaching practice is not totally new, this thesis aimed to put them into a more unified framework and formalize the idea. Further research is needed to let this framework be fully validated because of the coach and client's limitations.

### **2. Discussion with colleagues**

I have described my model to other coaches in my community, shared my insights with them and also sought some feedbacks. What I hear is they all can relate to my observations of gaps when practicing as a positive psychology coach. And also, they were aware that this model has some interesting and courageous perspectives to bring. For example, do we need to go to the problem and set the tone for each session from the beginning of the session, in other words, do we need to strictly go with the clients' agenda. Or how do we seek feedback from clients, in a more traditional way or do we include other stakeholders. There are different perspectives down in the coaching community. Coaching is not a linear process, so does coaching practices development. I think there are so many interesting topics worth further discussion and should encourage more practitioners and researchers to exchange and discuss more frequently and deeply.

### **3. Further reflection: I was called to be in a dance in coaching practice.**

"As our way of living and working as a species on an earth with finite resources and a new age of human activity impacting earth's evolution comes into central focus, approaches that allow us to let go of what we have assumed to be true and allow hidden or ignored patterns to emerge, approaches that consider not just the individual coachee but explicitly consider the system that they are part of, are required." (Palmer & Whybrow, 2018)

These words made me reflect my practices continuously. I think the call for integration emerged as the current world's uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity grew, but more importantly, there is not THE or AN accurate and certain answer. There are diverse possibilities that exist. Holding that tension and still being able to dance is perhaps what we are aiming for. Play, dance, experiment with liberty and freedom in coaching practice and at the same time stretch ourselves, learning to unlearn, let go and develop and grow. Don't get attached to a particular coaching model and its underpinnings. Get curious about new scientific discoveries. Be ever ready to let go of coaching models that you relied upon. Invent and adopt new ones when new discoveries emerge. (Moore, 2015)

I think questions we can ask ourselves as coaches are: "What are your purposes in coaching?" If the future generation asks, what contribution did you make as a coach? Are you able to answer? What would the future coaching look like? What do we need to unlearn to serve better?

This chapter has reviewed my practices of change. The development of the coaching model is shown to have had measurable impact in facilitating people to make transformational change. It has also contributed to a greater understanding of coaching practice. A model of integrated approach coaching was developed, but it is noted that the generalizability of this is limited by practitioners and clients. It would be useful for further research to explore.

In the chapters above, we just went through the practices of change and reviewed the whole process. Hopefully, you have built a picture of what happened in my journey and how it evolved. In the next chapter, we will step back again, to have a look at the canvas (big picture) of this profession. I will use a chart to talk about topics like what is this profession's boundary and principles, what is the mind-set, code of ethics and so on.

## Chapter Seven: Professional Framework of Practice

As described in the motivation chapter, there are two goals for understanding this professional practice research, the need for a more integrated approach of coaching and my goal of becoming an integrated coach.

In this chapter, I describe and discuss this new professional framework of practice. The intention is that the articulation of the role is a significant contribution in itself so it is written in a transferable manner, although illustrated and informed by my practice of change projects described in previous chapters. Lastly, I reflect on my personal learning journey, asking how closely the current practice aligns with this new framework.

Professional Framework of practice canvas Integrated-approach coach	
<p style="text-align: center;">Competencies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing trust and intimacy with client</li> <li>• Coaching presence</li> <li>• Strong Active listening skills</li> <li>• Powerful questioning</li> <li>• Direct communication</li> <li>• Creating Awareness</li> <li>• Designing actions skills</li> <li>• Planning and goal setting</li> <li>• Managing progress and accountability</li> <li>• Master Positive psychology knowledge</li> <li>• Emotional intelligent skills</li> <li>• Leadership skills</li> <li>• Social intelligent skills</li> <li>• Embodied awareness</li> <li>• Embodied qualities</li> <li>• Somatic Capabilities</li> <li>• Networking</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Virtues</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Curiosity</li> <li>• Empathy</li> <li>• Compassion</li> <li>• Resilience</li> <li>• Optimism</li> <li>• Cooperation</li> <li>• Mindfulness</li> <li>• Courageous</li> <li>• Care</li> <li>• Commit</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Mindsets</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Growth mindset</li> <li>• Open mindset</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Future focus</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Different approach integration</li> <li>• Measurement</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Keep learning and reflection</li> <li>• Vulnerability</li> <li>• Big picture thinking</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Match clients to approaches</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;">Boundaries</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coaching versus Therapy</li> <li>• Coaching versus Consulting</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;">Limitations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Quality assurance</li> <li>• Need supplement knowledge for clients</li> </ul>

Table 2: The Professional Framework of Practice Canvas

The integrated approach coaching in this thesis lays emphasis mainly on the integration of positive psychology principles, tools and embodiment elements. There is also an integration of the mind and the body. Against this background to achieve an integrated approach needs the mastery of positive psychology, embodiment and coaching practice competences. Master means not only knowing the knowledge, but also embodying the wisdom into one’s personal life and applying the knowledge to practice.

In this chapter, I have described the role of the integrated approach coach and listed the needed competences and virtues for this profession. There are also some limitations and future focus for it needs further study.

## Chapter Eight: Conclusion

In this thesis, I have described my professional framework of practice from a positive psychology coach to an integrated approach coach. In this final chapter, I recap my contributions in the three areas initially outlined:

### 1. the articulation of the framework of practice

I am an evidence-based integrated-approach coach who assists people to close the gap between who they are capable of and their current self, support them to fully express themselves in order to reach their full potential and make transformational changes by evidence-based interventions and tools which come mainly from positive psychology and embodiment principles.

### 2. The change in practice associated with that framework

In becoming an evidence-based integrated coach, I have changed my practice by taking an integrated approach. The change in practice associated with that framework main is reflected in three processes:

- Practicing as a positive psychology coach and being aware of some gaps
- Exploring the gaps and bridging the bridge by learning and experiments in practice
- Integrating the learning with the previous model, practicing the integrated model of coaching

### 3. The impact of that change.

There is both impact in my personal life and professional practice and also for the coaching practice in a broader sense. For me, I have become more competent in coaching by embodying my learning and reflecting practices. Also, this integrated approach might provide some help for coaches who are mainly from a positive psychology background and have found limitation in their practices. Plus, it also can be a supplementary tool for somatic coaches who are not familiar with positive psychology principles and evidence-based benefits.

For all of these, I place the findings in the context of established literature and practice, and reflect on my personal learnings from that.

To summarize, I am an evidence-based integrated coach who assists people to optimize their lives, fully-expressed themselves in order to reach their full-potential and make transformational change with the support of evidence-based research, interventions and embodied intelligence.

In becoming this, I have changed my practice through taking an integrated approach which emphasized multi-subjects' integration and embodied intelligence.

This professional framework practice has impact both on the personal and professional level.

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## Appendix I Curriculum Vitae

### Wenling Wang

(Certified Coach, Trainer, Positive Psychology, Embodiment)

17 Sunnyside Place, Glen Eden, Auckland, 0602

Phone: +64-027 525 8060

Email: [wenlingwang01130113@gmail.com](mailto:wenlingwang01130113@gmail.com)

### Personal inspiration:

Seeking the opportunity to practice and contribute my knowledge and experience in the field of Positive Psychology, Embodiment and Coaching to real world. Love learning and connecting with people. Conscientious, dedicated individual, who flourishes with passion and perseverance. Quick to learn, diligent and meticulous, thrives in a demanding environment and relishes challenge. Naturally self-motivated with energy and enthusiasm, works well on own initiative and performs effectively under pressure. Personable and assured, possesses excellent interpersonal skills. Work both independently and as part of a team, demonstrating the motivation and organization required to meet demanding targets.

Expertise and Further research interests:

Embodiment-oriented Leadership development and training, Emotion Intelligence application, Coaching Psychology, Coaching approaches and application, Organizational development

### Expertise and Strength:

- Embodiment
- Coaching
- Somatic Coaching
- Positive Psychology Training and coaching
- Appreciative Inquiry
- Connection
- Leadership training
- Event planning
- Mindfulness
- Motivation
- Mindfulness
- Team Management and motivation
- Goal Setting
- Target-Driving
- Business Analyst
- Love and kindness
- Compassion
- Teamwork
- Authenticity
- Gratitude

### Education History

Otago Polytechnic, Auckland  
September 2019

Time: August 2017-

Masters of Professional Practice (Level 9),

Professional Practitioner Thesis: Integrated Model of positive psychology coaching and Embodiment

#### **Positive psychology related Certifications**

Leading Positive Change through **Appreciative Inquiry** from Case Western Reserve University  
Coursera course

**Positive Psychology: Applications and Interventions/** Martin E.P. Seligman's Visionary Science/Resilience Skills/ from University of Pennsylvania Coursera courses

Positive Psychology: **Positivity** from University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Coursera course

## **Coaching and Embodiment**

**Certificated Positive Psychology coach** (125 training hours and real-time coaching, School of coaching Mastery-in process)

ICF Certification in process

**Power of Embodied Transformation** (Coaches Rising)

**Body=Brain** (Embright with Amanda Blake, Science of Embodiment)

Coaching Skills for Managers Specialization (Managing as a Coach/ Setting Expectations and Assessing Performance Issues/ Coaching Practices/Coaching Conversations) from University of California, Davis Coursera courses

**China University of Petroleum-China**  
**June 2007**

**Time: September 2003-**

Bachelor of Management in Finance Management (Finance)

## **Awards**

**Corporation Scholarship (awarded to the top 10%, twice)**

**2nd Scholarship (awarded to the top 5% among 60 students)**

**Excellent Student Leader (awarded to the excellent ones in union)**

**Excellent Leader (awarded to the excellent ones in student community)**

**The Certification of Global Management Competition (awarded to the top 4 teams in school)**

## **Work History:**

**Inner-growth and HQuest:**

**Date:** 2018.01-now

- Deliver workshops (Meetup groups in Auckland and abroad) and training
- Life Coaching (Clients from all over the world)
- Executive Coaching

**Organization:** St Pierre's Sushi (Lincoln Road, Auckland)

**Date:** 2017.10-2018.09

- Practice and observe in popular hospitality company
- Reflection on how the team works, management style and staff development.
- Deep understanding in New Zealand's customer service market

**Skills Gained:**

- Communication skills, communication by knowing and loving others, more than efficient
- Time management skills, finish work excellently in pressure environment
- Face to face customer service skills and telephone customer service
- Working in a team environment, supporting, learning, sharing with my team
- Goal-oriented and initiative attitude
- Always positive attitude, sharing positive mindset and skills to others
- Learning from experience and reflection

**Company Name:** Dali HooLoo Bed and Breakfast (Hostel, China)

**Date:** 2012-2017

**Position:** General Manager

**Roles & Responsibilities:**

- Creating the bed and breakfast include:

- Researching tourism industry
- Analyzing Profit model
- Marketing on the internet
- Day to day operation include:
  - Managing, training, inspiring staff
  - Welcoming the Guest from all over the world, show our hospitality and passion in serving
  - Planning for special and customized detail service, for example plan to serve different drinks and food during their living and take of care them till their check out
  - Guiding guest about their tour
  - Giving travel routes suggestion and making daily plan for them
  - Understanding Client's special needs and preferences
  - Organize trips according to individual needs
  - Dealing tactfully with customers and providing customer satisfaction
  - Maintaining standards
  - Taking feedback and suggestions from guests

### **Key Achievements:**

- **rated 8.7 out of 10 scores on Booking.com**
- **got all positive comments on Airbnb**
- **always fully booked in advance of the summer season**
- **become life friends with my previous guests**
- **operated well with 50,000 dollars net income per year**

### ***Skills Gained:***

- Strong customer service skills and great customer service attitude
- Planning events to meet different needs
- Maintain business like communications, conduct and appearance
- Demonstrate courteous, positive and professional behavior at all times
- Time management and project management
- Solving Urgent Problems

***Company Name:*** China Galaxy Securities Company Limited

***Date:*** 2007-2012

***Position:*** Senior Manager

### ***Roles & Responsibilities:***

- Structuring the initial public offering for the non-listed companies
- Giving advises to companies' strategies and regulating their management
- Financing, restricting and risk management
- Giving advises to improve on organization
- Writing reports to government
- Researching into diverse industries
- Timing to issue stocks and pricing stocks of companies

### **Key Achievements:**

- **Worked with different teams (more than 20 people) professionally**
- **Persuaded several companies into stock market**
- **Helped several companies to regulate their management**
- **Helped companies to refinance more than millions from stock market per year**

## **References**

James Harrison--Mentor, Tutor, Lecturer (Otago Polytechnic Auckland International Campus)

[James.Harrison@op.ac.nz](mailto:James.Harrison@op.ac.nz)

Samuel Mann--Mentor, Lecturer (Otago Polytechnic: Dunedin Campus)

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