

Helping clients make progress

This is a draft chapter, part of the book “Progressed focussed work, *develop your mindset*”, published in Dutch in 2014 (Ontwikkel je Mindset, progressiegericht aan het werk).

Copyright: Gwenda Schlundt Bodien

Helping clients make progress

Gwenda Schlundt Bodien

We, humans, are remarkably resilient and self supporting. Very often we know exactly where we want to go and what works best for us to get there. A progressed focused coach keeps these kinds of thoughts at the back of his mind, when talking to his clients. He asks all sorts of questions which help the client to vividly visualise what he wants to achieve. He also helps his client to remember all the things that work for him to get there. Every now and then the coach suggests something that might help. He only does so after permission to do so.

In this chapter I describe the NOAM-seven-step-approach, a simple progressed focused coaching model. I illustrate the seven step approach with dialogues between a coach and a client. You will also find examples of progressed focused interventions with involuntary clients. These may come in handy when your client doesn't want to talk with you because someone else thought it would be a good idea for him to be coached. This chapter starts with the concept of *leading from behind*. That's a key concept which defines a progressed focused interaction.

Leading from behind

Work with what comes back to you (Berg, 1994); a progressed focused coach always responds to what the client has just said. More specifically, he acknowledges the clients perspective by repeating the key words or by using short phrases which show the client he has been listening carefully. This is the "behind"-bit in leading from behind. However, there is also a "leading"-bit. A progressed focused coach definitely leads the conversation in a certain direction. The coach asks leading questions, which help the client to clarify what progress looks like for him. These leading questions never put any pressure on the client. Slowly but surely the questions help the client to remember things that work for him. The coach stays, so to speak, one step behind the client. As if they are taking a walk together. The client decides where to go to next, the coach asks questions which help the client to make these decisions. Not only does the coach match the client's perspective, he also matches the client's emotions and speed of walking. The coach is not happier or more sad than the client. The coach does not abruptly change the topic of the conversation or the client's line of thought. The coach also never overtakes the client. Instead he patiently invites the client to take small steps forward by focusing on what works.

The NOAM-seven-step-approach

Careful analysis of how successful progressed focused coaching conversations usually unfolded resulted in the NOAM-seven-step-approach (Schlundt Bodien, 2008, 2009, 2013; Visser, 2005, 2008, 2013). These seven steps are by no means a rigid structure. They also are not prescriptive. The seven steps merely describe the ingredients for the progressed focused coaching mix. Which ingredient is added when depends on what the client is saying at that moment in time. The coach always responds to what the client is saying and by doing so the conversation could go criss cross between the seven steps. Chances are each of the seven steps will be addressed at some point during the conversation, but there is no law that says a conversation is only progressed focused when all the seven steps have been taken.

The seven steps are summarised below. You will also find an example of a progressed focused question for each step.

Step 1	Asking what would be useful to the client to talk about	How would you like to use our time together, so that this conversation is useful to you?
Step 2	Clarifying the desire for improvement	What would you like to change for the better?
Step 3	Defining the desired progress	What does better look like?
Step 4	Determining the platform	What have you achieved already?
Step 5	Analysing progress in the past	How did you achieve that? What worked well?
Step 6	Choosing one step forward	What does a small step forward look like?
Step 7	Asking if the conversation was useful to the client	Has this conversation been useful to you? If so, what was useful? How can you apply what was useful to you? If not, what could have made this conversation more useful to you?

© NOAM seven step approach – Gwenda Schlundt Bodien & Coert Visser

Step 1. Asking what would be useful to the client to talk about

The conversation starts with the usefulness question (Schlundt Bodien, 2005; Visser, 2005): what would the client like to talk about so that the conversation is useful to him? It doesn't matter if he doesn't immediately know the answer to this question. A prompt answer is not the reason why the usefulness question is asked. The reason to start the conversation like this is threefold. Firstly, to show the client from the very beginning that he is in the lead of the topic of conversation. Secondly, to make it clear that the purpose of the conversation is to talk about something that is useful to the client. Thirdly, to acknowledge that the client is the expert on what is useful to him at that moment in time. If the client needs some time to think about his answer, it may help to give him something else to talk about for a bit. Something simple, like whether he wants coffee or tea or what sort of work he does. Whilst talking about the easy stuff, the usefulness question lingers at the back of his mind. Chances are he will come up with an answer after having had some time to think. It is not recommended to proceed with step three, before having an idea about the client's answer to the usefulness question. Quite often clients go back and forth between step 1 and 2. They tell you something that bothers them, like a problem or a decision they feel they need to make and by talking a bit about that they find their answer to the usefulness question. An illustration of step 1 in a coaching conversation is the following:

Coach Welcome. What would you like to talk about so that this conversation is useful to you?

Client Yeah...eh...I was so pleased you could see me today, because I really could do with some help!

Coach Is that so? Will you tell me a bit more?

Client I started a new job two months ago...and I feel like having hit a brick wall! I have no clue as to what else to try to make things work in this new job! Two months in and I'm already exhausted! That's why I was so very pleased you could see me so quickly....

Coach So...you started a new job two months ago and it feels like you've hit a brick wall...so you were very pleased to see me so quickly...

Client Yes, that's right. I have no idea what to do...

Coach So, what would you like to talk about so that you can look back at this conversation as time well spent..?

Client I could really do with a new idea...something which I feel is worth trying...because without an idea that might work I might as well give up straight away...and I don't want that...

Coach Oké... if this conversation brings you a new idea, something you feel is worth trying, you will notice this conversation has been useful to you..?

Client Yes...that's right...

Step 2. Clarifying the desire for improvement

Step 2 is all about clarifying what the client wants to improve. Most clients struggle with a problem, a negative situation which bothers them. They want to get rid of the problem they're experiencing. Some clients don't feel they have a particular problem, but want to talk about how to achieve some goal. The progressed focused coach matches his language with his clients'. If the client says he has a problem, the coach asks what it is and how it bothers the client. If the client says he has a goal, the coach asks what he wants to achieve and why it is important to him. A common misunderstanding is that progressed focused conversations ignore problems and directly focus on the positive desired future. This is certainly not what I'd recommend. If you are not allowed to explore what bothers you, how can you define what better looks like? Talking about negatives and about how these negatives bother you is an important part of progressed focused coaching. However, the coach will often not go into the history of the problem nor will he try to find the problem causes. Talking about the history and the causes of a problem often strengthens the perception of how bad the problem is. A progressed focused coach asks WHAT the problem is and HOW the problem bothers the client (Walter & Peller, 1992). He stops asking questions about the problem when the client indicates he has said enough about what bothers him.

To proceed illustrating this is what step 2 looks like:

- Coach Okay... if this conversation brings you a new idea, something you feel is worth trying, you will notice this conversation has been useful to you..?
- Client Yes...that's right...
- Coach I see...So..you started this job two months ago and things are not working out the way you'd want them to....what is bothering you?
- Client What's bothering me....where do I start...? You see, in my previous job I was a team leader in a commercial organisation and now I manage a team of professionals who help people reintegrate into the labour market. These professionals have no clue whatsoever when it comes to thinking and acting commercially. However, it is something they will have to start doing soon! I've been assigned to change them into a financially viable team. Given my background that should be easy for me to do...but it's not! They said when they hired me they wanted me to change them....but now that I'm here, they tell me I don't understand their jobs...Now they tell me everything I suggest is "*not how it works here*" ...
- Coach Yeah....understandable...that's often what you see in situations like these....how does this situation bother *you*?
- Client It takes everything out of me...I drag myself to work and come home even more exhausted...I also become less and less friendly at work...I just put things bluntly now... because you know, we're two months down the line and nothing seems to change for the better...and if we don't start improving our financial situation swiftly, this team will be out on the streets at the end of the year! So it's hardly a luxury problem we're facing...
- Coach No...indeed...it's very important to improve the financial situation...in order for the team to keep their jobs...
- Client Exactly! Pretty stupid to be arguing as if we're opposing parties! I try to make them see their ways won't make our clients reintegrate into the labour market. They tell me I don't understand the problems these clients are facing and my expectations aren't realistic. It's so frustrating!
- Coach Yeah...frustrating indeed... So it bothers you that you seem to be opposing parties, when it is so very important for everybody to improve financially so that the team can continue with their work...?
- Client Yes....VERY important....yeah...that's what bothers me most...

Following this line of questioning will help the client to understand what he wants to improve. It's like exploring the topic, what's it all about? As soon as the client understands his desire for progress, the coach switches to talking about the desired future.

Step 3. Defining the desired future

Since the client has just been able to tell the coach what needs to change, he will now be ready to answer questions about what he wants to achieve. What does better look like? What does he want instead of the problem? Answering the desired-progress-question (Schlundt Bodien, 2014; Visser, 2008) helps the client to give a detailed and vivid description of progress in the future. As soon as a client starts describing his own positive behaviour in this desired future, something changes. Describing your own positive behaviour goes hand in hand with actually behaving that way. How that works? When we have a vivid picture of our own positive behaviour, we feel like we can actually behave that way. It feels like we're already doing it. The desired future feels within our reach and as a result we are more willing to do something to achieve it.

However, clients don't always give answers in terms of their own positive behaviours. When asked what they want to achieve, they sometimes tell you what they *don't* want anymore. Their answers start with describing the negatives they want to get rid of. They then proceed to tell you which means they need to get rid of the negatives. This usually involves someone else doing something different. These answers are good starting points for exploring the positive behaviour of the client in the desired future. The coach keeps on asking questions until the client answers in terms of his own positive behaviour: positive behaviour descriptions. To illustrate:

Coach Yeah...frustrating indeed... So it bothers you that you seem to be opposing parties, when it is so very important for everybody to improve financially so that the team can continue with their work...?

Client Yes....VERY important....yeah...that's what bothers me most...

Coach I can see how that bothers you... how would you like the situation to be?

Client I want an end to these continual arguments...this ferocious atmosphere in our meetings... It takes all the energy out of me!

Coach End these continual arguments....what would you like instead of the arguments and ferocious atmosphere in the meetings?

Client Peace and quiet! I want to feel peaceful again and enjoy my work...

Coach Yeah...of course....peaceful and enjoy your work....what could you do different if you felt peaceful and enjoyed your work..?

Client Ah...if my colleagues would show me they understood the importance of financial viability and they would appreciate my commercial guidance, things would improve no end!

Coach Indeed? Suppose your colleagues would show you they understood the importance of finances and appreciate your commercial guidance...what could you do different towards them then...?

Client Eh... I eh...would feel such relief!

Coach Sure! I understand that! How would your colleagues notice that you'd be relieved?

Client I think they would notice I was much friendlier to them...and that I would appreciate their craftsmanship...their knowledge and understanding of our target group is impressive as is their patience with their clients... they are very committed to doing what's best for their clients...I'm really impressed with that...If only they would *also* understand the importance of our financial viability...

Coach Impressive...so if they would show you they understood the importance of financial viability and they would appreciate your commercial guidance, then you could be much friendlier to them and

show them you really appreciate their craftsmanship, commitment and patience with their clients..?

Client Yes...yes...

Coach What would be the benefit of that?

Client That we'd be joining our forces...that we'd be working on the same goals...which is so badly what we need to do. Because only then will we survive this year...we really need each other to succeed. But now all we do is act as if we are opposing parties. I get more and more blunt about how I feel about their lack of financial common sense and they get more and more resistant to my ideas and tell me I don't understand their clients...

As you could see, the desired future involved someone else doing something different. This is a logical perspective when you are experiencing a problem. You probably wouldn't have the problem if someone else would behave differently. The progressed focused coach perceives this sort of answer as valid and as a good starting point for further exploring. It doesn't matter where the positive change starts; it's the description of this better future that the coach is after. So he responds by acknowledging the benefits of the other person behaving differently and then asks what the client could do different if that other person were to behave better. The coach doesn't ask the client what he could do to make the other person behave better, but asks what the client could do *if* the other person would behave better. These are two very different questions. The first question is a hard one to answer. It asks what the client can *do* to solve his problem. If the client knew what he could do to make the other person behave the way he wanted him to behave, he probably would not need help from the coach. He would have done it already. Asking what the client can do to make the other person behave differently will often lead to feelings of powerlessness and frustration. The client will easily turn to the coach and ask for advice. But advice in this stage of the conversation is not very helpful. The coach has no idea what the client has tried already and what works in this specific situation, so his advice is likely to be off beam. To imagine that the behaviour of the difficult person has already changed for the better and then explore what the client could do different, is a very different line of conversation.

So, instead of asking what the client can do to achieve the desired future, the coach asks a few other questions first. These are questions which lead the client to explore the progress that's already achieved in the past and present.

Step 4. Determining the platform

Before they come to a coach, clients have often tried to solve their problems themselves. They already have a pretty good idea about what works and what doesn't. That's interesting, because exploring what the client already knows about what works may help to determine the best way forward. Therefore the coach asks questions about the current situation. More specifically, about what works in the current situation. What has the client achieved already? How did the client achieve that? What is the benefit of what he has achieved already? The achieved-progress-question (Schlundt Bodien, 2008, 2014; Visser, 2008, 2013) helps to determine the platform: this is where the client is currently at. This question often sways their perspective. Instead of thinking about everything that stops them solving their problem, they start to see everything they already know that helps. They get a more realistic perspective on their situation. Of course it's difficult, but there are also things that go well and they might want to keep doing. They look a bit more optimistic at their situation and start believing a little more in the possibility of progress. Clients also often say they get the feeling their problem is less bad than they thought and that they have already achieved more than they thought.

However, there are no guarantees that the client will start to feel a bit more optimistic. Sometimes clients can't think of anything. This is rather unusual, because when someone has vividly described what he wants to achieve including his own positive behaviour in the

desired future, he uses his memory to find examples of situations in which this desired future already happened. Chances are that the client will be able to come up with an example in which the desired future already happened in the past. If not, the *coping question* may be helpful.

The coping question (e.g. Berg, 1994) basically asks how someone keeps going in very difficult circumstances. This question is only appropriate when the client perceives his situation to be extremely difficult and feels powerless to make progress. The coach first acknowledges this perspective of things being at their worst right now. For example by saying: "I can understand how hard things are right now....how do you manage to go on in these circumstances?" or "What helps you to hang in there?" The answer to this question probably is a reason for the client to not give up. The client says for example: "I refuse to give in! I want to be a good example to my kids!" Such a response reminds the client why it is important to him to make progress and why he wants to act to make things better. Asking the coping question when the client does not perceive his situation to be hopeless may backfire. The client might lose all hope, because if the coach perceives his situation as unbearable, it must be even worse than he thought himself.

Here's how the conversation regarding the platform unfolds:

Coach What would be the benefit of that?
Client That we'd be joining our forces...that we'd be working on the same goals...which is so badly what we need to do. Because only then will we survive this year...we really need each other to succeed. But now all we do is act as if we are opposing parties. I get more and more blunt about how I feel about their lack of financial common sense and they get more and more resistant to my ideas and tell me I don't understand their clients...

Coach That sounds good....working together to achieve the same goal....joining forces... on a scale of 0-10, where 10 is the how you would like things to be and 0 is the situation in which nothing had been achieved yet...where are you now?

Client Eh... 4 I guess...

Coach 4. What's already in that number?
Client The team has conducted the job interviews themselves, they have unanimously chosen me. So they really want to work with me. And I also felt I really wanted to work with them. We clearly like each other. So that's already in the 4.

Coach Ah, good...You really want to work together and clearly like each other...How did you manage to get to 4?

Client Well, I do feel we respect each other...I have accompanied them several times when they visited clients and I feel that they appreciated that. We also have agreed on our targets for this year and together we have presented these to the board of directors. That clearly gave us a feeling of joint responsibility and shared goals. But afterwards everything fell apart....we started arguing about how to achieve the targets...

Coach Okay... Respect, accompanied them to visit clients, agreed on targets and presented these together which made you feel jointly responsible for shared goals....sounds good...How did you manage to do that together?

Client Well...eh...we had organised a brainstorm session...it was early days....we explored all kinds of different angles....which methods work well to help clients reintegrate into the labour market, what each method would cost...how to use our internal and external network...

Coach Sounds interesting...What worked well then?
 Client Eh...I think what worked well was to share our common goals...to allow all possible angles....and of course we were enthusiastic back then, we weren't annoyed with each other when we just started working together...I'd only been there for a week...full of optimism
 Coach Yeah....exploring all possible angles with enthusiasm and optimism in a good atmosphere...what else worked to get to 4?
 Client I told them yesterday I was going to see you. They responded much better than I expected. They said they liked my honesty about my struggles and they felt I really wanted to succeed. They repeated they were happy I was the one to do the job with them. That was quite a relief...I must admit!
 Coach Indeed! So you were honest about this appointment today and they repeated their happiness re working with you...and they appreciate your efforts to succeed.
 Client Yeah...that's quite a lot already, don't you think.
 Coach Indeed!

The client gets more and more optimistic that the desired future is feasible. He realises everything that's already been achieved and what worked to achieve that. Something funny happens when people start thinking about positive things. We have a tendency to remember more and more examples of what we are thinking about. So if we think of one thing that went well, we remember more and more examples of what went well (unfortunately the opposite is also true).

As far as the scaling question (deShazer,1987; Visser, 2005; Schlundt Bodien, 2005) is concerned, it doesn't really matter what score the client comes up with. Whatever score he gives, it is a good starting point to ask what's already in that number and what he has done to get there. Whatever the client feels about the score, that's the perspective the coach acknowledges. So if the client feels a 4 is low, it is low. When the client feels a 4 is quite good, it is quite good.

In a progressed focused conversation emotions are taken seriously, without the coach addressing them directly. So if the client says something about how he feels, the coach acknowledges this feeling. Feelings are important indicators of the effectiveness of behaviour. If a client feels lousy, he probably is doing things that are not good for him. If the client feels happy, he probably is doing things that are effective. The coach will ask questions which invite the client to answer in terms of his own positive behaviour. That's where progress starts.

Now that the client knows what is achieved already, the coach proceeds with the analysis of previous successes.

Step 5. Analysing previous success

Problems are never always as bad. Situations are never always the same. Life always fluctuates. Sometimes problems are worse. Sometimes situations are better. Sometimes a problem does not bother us as much as at other times. Progressed focused coaches are interested in positive fluctuations. When were things a bit better? When were things a bit less bad? A previous success is a situation in which the desired future already happened. A positive exception (Visser, 2005; Schlundt Bodien, 2005) to a problem is a situation in which the problem normally would have happened, but didn't.

Step five focuses on how these situations occurred. That's how clients start understanding what works for them to achieve what they want to. As soon as the client comes up with an example, the coach gets really curious. He starts asking detailed questions about this successful situation. What did the client do that worked? Step 5 often helps clients to come

up with ideas. These ideas derive from their own successful experiences, which is pretty convincing that a) the client is capable of doing it again and b) it actually is something that works for the client.

What does the dialogue look like?

Client Yeah...that's quite a lot already, don't you think
Coach Indeed!
Coach Have there been more of those sorts of moments, where you noticed you were working on the same goals? Moments where you understood each other's angels and used those to make progress?
Client Eh... not that I know...no...not really...
Coach Not really...
Client No...you know...things often go pear-shaped in our meetings...You know, they elaborate on why this client can't come to our office and we have to keep on going to his home...because he has a fear of open spaces...Then I pontificate that the cost involved are huge AND it won't help the client to reintegrate in the labour market if he can't be bothered to come to our office!
Coach Yeah...I see...these sorts of discussions happen often in the meetings....so....has there been a meeting lately which was a bit less bad?
Client Eh...well...last week we had a nice time...a colleague had brought some cake, because it was her birthday...we had a good laugh together...however, that doesn't help us make money...
Coach Yeah...a good laugh...but what you want is to work together on achieving common goals and to use each other's angels...has that happened lately?
Client Well...maybe! It was not during a meeting though...
Coach Ah...what happened?
Client Last Monday a colleague and I were supposed to meet a unit manager at 11 am. When we turned up, he was nowhere to be seen. His secretary told us he was running late and we could wait in his office. So we waited.... 25 minutes later he showed up! Steam came out of my ears by that time! Next thing that happened is that my colleague asks him about his holidays! They start chatting about that for at least 5 minutes! Unbelievable! No wonder they're having financial issues here! I just didn't know what to say...What a mess, I thought to myself..
Coach Oh dear....so you kept quiet because you didn't know what to say...?
Client That's right! But what happened next was quite surprising...
Coach What's that...?
Client Well...my colleague smoothly directed the conversation towards our services...what we stood for...what we could offer him...what it would cost him...Amazing!
Coach I can imagine! What happened next...?
Client She told him about our targets; how we were going to achieve those...how we could help this him...what we needed from him...it was great!
Coach Great!
Client Definitely! I thought to myself:"She DOES understand it after all!"
Coach That's wonderful! She does understand it after all! So what could you do in that conversation..?
Client All I needed to do was support her every now and again...I have also told him about our professional team and how we will deal with his referrals....

Coach Sounds good!
 Client Sure does!
 Coach What was the benefit of all that?
 Client The unit manager made a referral the following day! That's good, because that was the third referral that week...so people are getting to know us and we're beginning to get good write-ups.
 Coach That's very good.
 Client Yeah...I'd almost forgotten about that...because the next day we had another one of those draining meetings...made me go bananas...
 Coach Yeah...that's understandable...

It's understandable, and not a problem, if at first the client can't think of a good example when things were better. It's a difficult question, so it may take some time to dig into the memories of a better past. The assumption is there are always examples of previous successes or exceptions to the problem. When we start remembering when things were a bit better, more and more examples will spring to mind. The coach helps the client by being patient and making his question a little smaller: have there been meetings in which things were a bit less bad? Sometimes clients come up with examples which they themselves don't find very relevant. Like this client, who tells about how the team had a good laugh and had some cake, but how this doesn't help their financial situation. If the client comes up with a previous success which is not relevant to the desired future, the coach helps him focus on examples which *are* relevant. Relevant examples are previous successes or exceptions to problems which are similar to the desired future. When the client can think of a relevant example, the coach is very interested in knowing what the *client* did that worked. What was his positive behaviour?

When one relevant example has been found, it's likely the client can think of more good examples. That's why the coach is hopeful when he repeats this question several times: "Have there been more situations in which things were (a bit) better?"

When to stop asking for more examples? Research (Schwarz et al., 1991) indicates it is a good idea to stop asking for more examples as soon as the examples that spring to mind slow down. More is not always better. How does that work? As long as coming up with examples is relatively easy, it is beneficial to talk about these examples. However, if the examples are really difficult to find, asking for more may backfire. People, who are asked to come up with 12 examples of their own assertive behaviour, rate their own assertiveness more negative than people who have been asked to come up with 6 examples. The reason is that people find it relatively easy to come up with the first few examples. But after awhile their fluency decreases. As a result they think: "If I have to put so much effort into finding examples, I must not be very assertive after all".

Asking for examples works really well when the client can take his time to remember them, when he finds relevant examples and when the coach stops asking for more examples when the fluency decreases.

At this point in the conversation the client has described his own positive behaviour in the past, the present and the future. Chances are he has some ideas regarding what works for him to take the next step.

Step 6. Choosing one step forward

Step 6 focuses on a small step forward in the direction of the desired future. The coach helps the client cross a bridge. On one side of the bridge there's the successful past. On the other side the successful future. It's a bridge of progress. This bridge is paved with ideas. Ideas the client thought of during the conversation. Most people can't read someone's mind and can't tell what someone is thinking. That's why it's important to ask the client open questions which help the client define his next step forward. If the question is too narrow, it will stop

creativity. So it is better not to ask: "What in this example of the better past can you use again in the future?"

What does the dialogue look like?

Client Yeah...I'd almost forgotten about that...because the next day we had another one of those draining meetings...made me go bananas...

Coach Yeah...that's understandable...

Client Yes...

Coach Is it useful to you to talk about it like this?

Client Yeah, sure!

Coach What's useful to you?

Client A lot, actually....I realise my team members are much better ambassadors then I give them credit for. There are so many times I could have picked up on this... Should have... But I'm so tense and stressed that I just overlooked everything they're already doing... I've started to pressurise them... and they've started pushing back...but what we want is to work together on the same goals..

Coach They're much better ambassadors....working on the same goals...How is this useful to you?

Client I'm going to stop pressurising them!

Coach Interesting! How will they notice you've stopped pressurising them?

Client By not interrupting all the time when they want to explain something to me...by listening and asking questions to better understand their point of view...by letting them know how much I appreciate their knowledge and craftsmanship...By giving them a chance to say something instead of monopolising the meetings...

Coach Sounds good...Listening, asking questions, appreciating...giving them a chance to say things...

Client Yeah...like that brain storm meeting and the meeting with the unit manager...I asked questions and gave them the floor...

Coach Ah... which questions..?

Client Eh... questions about what they want to achieve with a particular client...how they think we can achieve those goals within our budget...that sort of questions.

Coach Good...

Client Yes! Sure! Why didn't I think of this before! I was just stuck...Like a broken record...

Coach Yeah...that happens sometimes, doesn't it...?

The client has a clear idea about what he wants to do next. This is the last part of the conversation.

Step 7. Asking if the conversation was useful to the client

Step 6 and 7 sometimes merge. When the client knows what he wants to do next, step 7 focusses on a client-led finish of the conversation. If the client has no idea how to proceed yet, this step involves a bit more than that. In that case the coach can suggest to the client that instead of trying something different, he can start observing when things are a bit better. This intervention is called the observation suggestion (Kim Berg, 1994). When the client starts focussing on previous successes and positive exceptions, he will start to observe how his situation fluctuates. Focussing in when things are better helps to notice progress and it also helps to (subconsciously) create progress. Inviting the client to observe when things are a bit better subtly creates a positive expectation that things indeed will get a bit better.

If the client did come up with an idea for the next step forward, this is what the conversation looks like:

Client Yes! Sure! Why didn't I think of this before! I was just stuck...Like a broken record...

Coach Yeah...that happens sometimes, doesn't it...?

Client Absolutely.

Coach Where are we as far as you're concerned?

Client I think we're done...this afternoon we're in a team meeting again and I'll do it straight away.

Coach Sounds good! How would you like to go about a possible next coaching session?

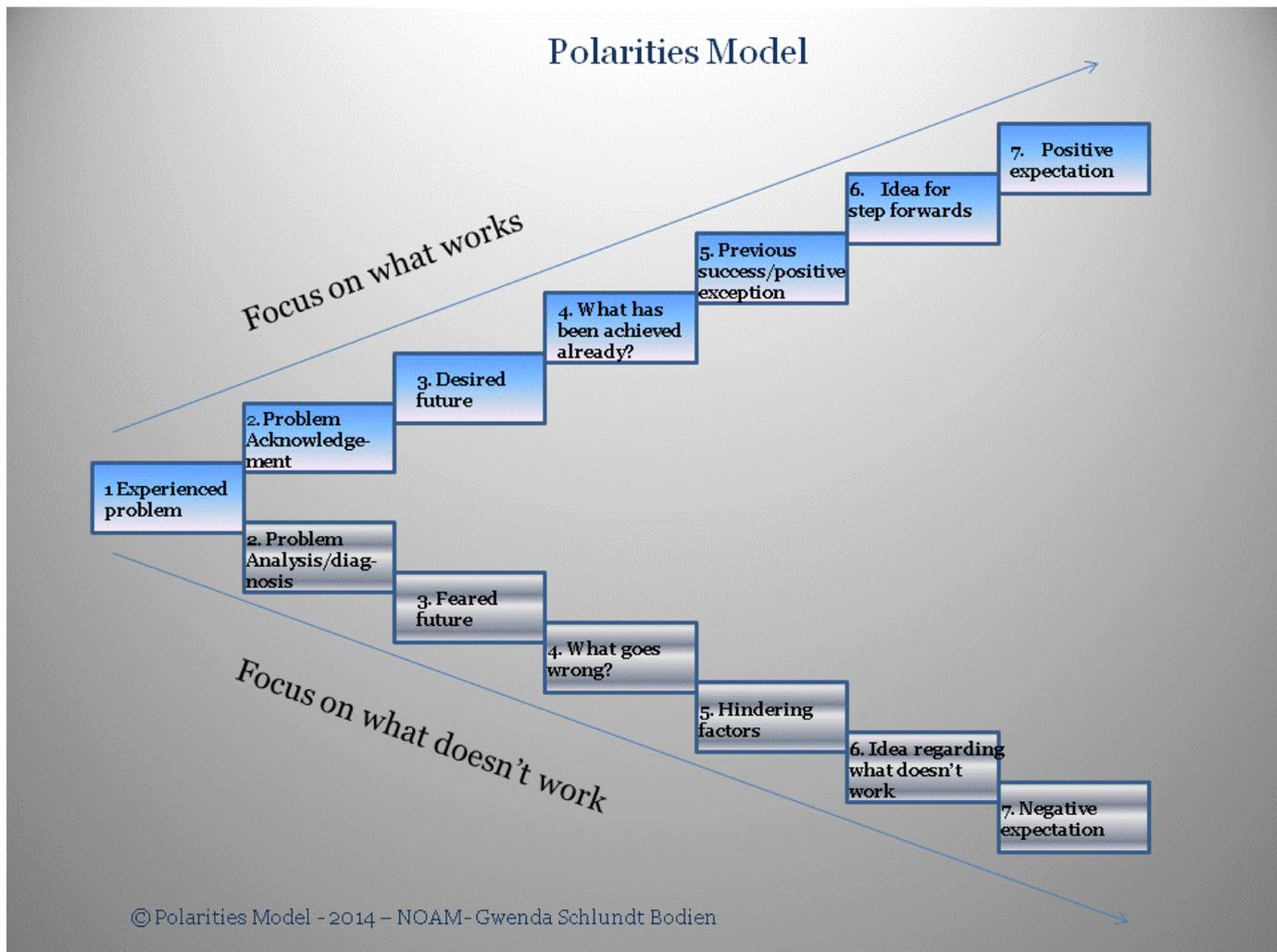
Client May I just call you when I want another chat?

Coach Sure, absolutely. You just call if you might feel the need for a chat.

What if the client indicates he didn't find the session very useful? In that case something probably went wrong earlier in the conversation. Maybe the conversation focussed on something that wasn't very relevant to the client. If the coach was really leading from behind, he would have noticed when the client started to be less interested and would have asked the usefulness question at that point. Whatever the answer is, if you take it seriously you're always able to make the conversation useful again, even if the client wants to change the topic of the conversation entirely. However, if you get the answer "no" to the usefulness question at the end of the conversation, you can still learn from it. A good follow-up question is: "What could have made this conversation more useful to you?"

Every conversation may be the last. That's why the coach doesn't assume there will be a next session. Instead he asks how the client wants to proceed.

This dialogue is a real life case in which all seven steps were taken. The perspective of the client goes back and forth between what works and what doesn't. It sways from problem focused to progress focused and back, as summarised below.



Suppose the client calls and wants to make the next appointment, which question do you think the progressed focussed coach will bear in mind?

The next session

It's the "what's better-question" (De Jong, Berg, 2008) . This question focuses on the progress that's been made between the sessions. Being aware of the progress one has achieved can be very motivational (Amabile, 2011) and that's the reason why asking this question in the following session may be beneficial to the client. But how about the principle of a client-led conversation? When the coach asks what's better, this implies he wants to talk about the things that were important to the client in the previous session. How is the coach to know this for sure? Lots of things may have happened in the life of the client and maybe the client made this next appointment for an entirely different reason. It seems that two progressed focussed principles are contradicting each other here. There is the principle that the client decides what he wants to talk about (leading from behind/client-led) and there's the progress principle (which tells us that focussing on meaningful progress is very motivational and gives interesting ideas for further progress). Here are a few thoughts on how to take both principles seriously and merge them in the conversation:

Consideration 1. One option is to first ask the usefulness question (what would you like to talk about so that this conversation is useful to you?) and if the topic is the same as the previous session then proceed with the what-is-better-question. This sequence makes sense to a client and it helps to focus both on what's relevant to the client and on the progress the client has achieved regarding this topic.

Consideration 2. If the client wants to talk about something completely different than the last time, it makes no sense to ask “what is better” with regard to what we spoke about in the previous session. The coach can still try to ask the what-is-better-question, if he has the client’s permission to do so. ‘Oké, so today we are going to talk about topic A...before we start...is it ok with you if we first focus on what’s been better lately?’ It’s up to the client to choose.

Consideration 3. Sometimes clients start talking about the topic that’s important to them straight away. The coach asks the usefulness question and the client starts explaining what’s bothering him. Now it’s even less logical to ask the what’s-better-question, because that would interrupt the clients line of thinking abruptly. Then it’s best to first talk about this new topic and follow the seven steps. If at some point the topic of the previous conversation pops up, it is appropriate to ask the what-is-better-question. In this situation the what’s-better-question is asked at a point in the conversation where it makes sense to the client because he is talking about the same topic as he did in the previous session.

Consideration 4. However, if the entire conversation revolves around a completely different topic, it is best not to ask the what-is-better-question with regard to the previous conversation. In that case the what’s-better-question can still be a good question, but then it focusses on what is better lately with regard to this new topic the client wants to talk about.

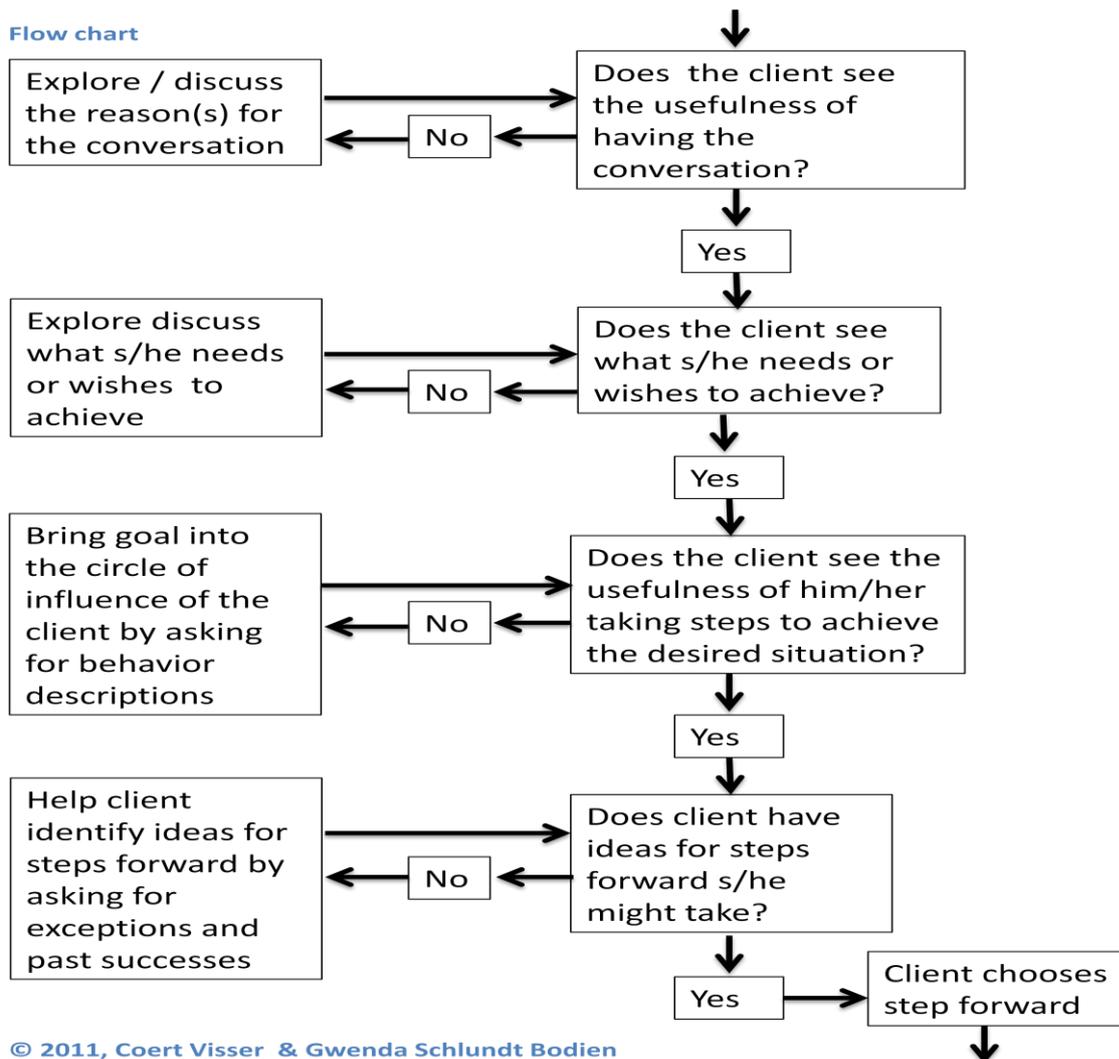
Just like the seven steps are a tool which can help coaches to know what is happening in a conversation, the flow diagram is another tool. When is a good time to take the next step in the conversation? How do you know the client has said enough about something? The flow diagram (Visser & Schlundt Bodien, 2011) may give the answer.

The flow diagram

How do you know if a client is ready to move from one step to the next? The answer is that the client will let you know via his responses. Suppose the coach has summarised the client’s perspective, using his key words and the client responds like this:”Yes, that’s right”. This is a clear indication to the coach that he may try to proceed asking the next question. However, if the client says:”Yeah...and also....blablabla”, then the coach knows the client hasn’t said enough yet and it’s better to listen and acknowledge what he’s currently saying.

What if a client seems to be resistant? If he doesn’t seem to like the questions or doesn’t seem to want to answer them? Is this a good sign? Does it imply the coach has found something to dig into a bit more? No. A progressed focused coach will take this as an indication he is not on the right track and should try something different. If a client shows resistance, this implies the coach is doing something that doesn’t connect with the client. If the coach listens carefully and joins the client again, the resistance will disappear and both of them will work together again on what’s relevant to the client. This doesn’t imply that progressed focussed coaches should always ask the right questions at the right time and should always summarise the client’s perspective perfectly. That’s probably undoable for any human being. More important than always doing the right thing at the right time is to allow the client to correct your mistakes. If a client shows resistance, you’re doing something wrong. If the client corrects your summary, you have not summarised his perspective well enough. If the client says “no”, it means he wants you to do something different. Progressed focussed coaches perceive these corrections as helpful, because they allow them to pursue a better course of conversation. The following flow diagram (Visser & Schlundt Bodien, 2012) shows which sort of interaction is appropriate at which point in a progressed focussed conversation.

Flow chart



© 2011, Coert Visser & Gwenda Schlundt Bodien

Involuntary clients

The flow diagram is a schematic representation of the interaction between the coach and the client. Does the client know his answer to the usefulness question yet? If not, the coach first focuses on clarifying the reason for the conversation and doesn't proceed to the next step before the client has a clearer idea what would be useful to talk about. Sometimes clients get sent to a coach by someone else. Their manager thinks they should change something and has decided coaching is a good idea, but the client himself is not so sure about it. Involuntary clients initially have no answer to the usefulness question, because they don't find the idea of coaching very useful in the first place. What does the progressed focused coach do?

Coach Welcome. What would you like to talk about today so that this conversation is useful to you?

Client Well, I really wasn't looking forward to this conversation to be honest with you...all week long I've been thinking: *Friday I will have to talk to this coach...what on earth am I going to talk about...I really don't want to stir things up again...* Things were just about to be a bit better at work...my manager has been moaning about coaching for such a long time that I just made this appointment so he would stop going on about it...

Coach I see...so your manager has been saying for a long time you should find a coach and because you wanted him to stop going on about it you've made

Client this appointment?
 Yeah....if I hadn't he would have gone on and on and on...when I said to him I'd made this appointment he stopped pushing...

Coach He stopped pushing....what's his idea you should use this coaching for?

Client He says I am unapproachable. He says he never really knows how I feel about things. And that my answers are curt. I don't join in conversations with my colleagues.

Coach Ah...I understand...and when you said to him you'd made this appointment he stopped pushing and things are a bit better at work?

Client Yeah...he stopped pushing...and things are a bit better.

Coach I understand....so you really weren't looking forward to this meeting with me, but if you hadn't made this appointment he would have kept on pushing and you really didn't want that....and now that you've made the appointment he's stopped pushing....and things are a bit better....How was that helpful to you, that he stopped pushing and things are a bit better?

Client Yeah, the atmosphere at work is a bit less tense. When we have a meeting we actually talk with each other now. Before I made this appointment he would say something, I would say "ok" and would leave again...but this week we actually exchanged ideas and information.

Coach Ah, so since you've told him about our appointment the two of you are exchanging information and ideas again and the atmosphere is better between you two...how does that benefit you?

Client I feel much better now...I was so tense at work...I hardly slept and sat there trembling behind my desk...I think I was on the verge of a burnout.

Coach And now you feel much better...that's good.

Client Yes, it is! Things were not heading in the right direction for me...

Coach And now that you feel much better...what do you do different now?

Client I sleep better, I don't tremble, and I am able to concentrate on what I'm doing...I join meetings again...

Coach Sounds good...what do you do differently towards your manager now that you feel better?

Client I've accepted he will never be a good manager.

Coach You've accepted that...what are you able to do differently now that you've accepted that?

Client I no longer criticise him in my mind.... I was constantly criticising him off before...I don't do that anymore... I just ask him what I don't understand and I don't judge him constantly...

Coach Ah...sounds good...and how does he respond differently to you?

Client I think he's relieved. He also asks me things now and sometimes he even explains why certain decisions have been made...that's quite something!

Coach Ok...that's good....what's better for you because of that?

Client Eh....you know...we have to be able to explain as a team why we prioritise certain products...and now that he and I exchange ideas again we're more able to explain this to the rest of the organisation...

Coach That sounds like quite an important improvement...

Client Yeah...yeah...absolutely

Coach Ok....so you came here today because your manager was very persistent and you wanted him to stop pressurising you...?

Client Yeah

Coach So how would you like to use our time together so that this meeting wasn't a waste of your time?

Client I...eh...I don't want to sink again...

Coach Not sink again?

Client Yeah....I was in a bad place...I almost had a burnout...I really don't want to go there again...

Coach No, I can imagine! So if we talk about not sinking again this conversation

Client might be useful to you?
 Yeah...I think so...yeah, I'd like to talk about that, is that ok?

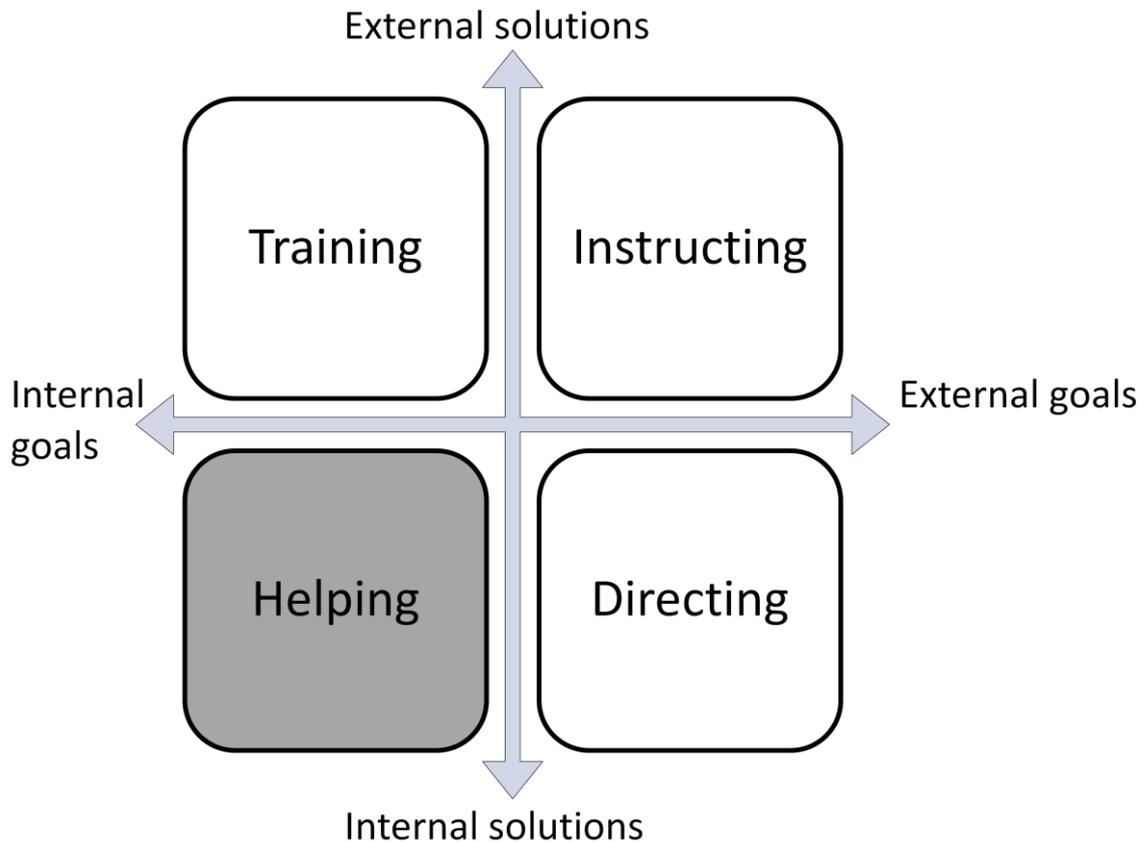
The coach explores the clients perspective and acknowledges this perspective full heartedly. When the client says he really didn't want to go, the coach takes that seriously and then wonders why the client has decided to make the appointment anyway. It's like solving a puzzle. Here's someone who explains to you why he doesn't want to be there. Why is that a puzzle? Because, the client explains why he *didn't* want coaching, but he hasn't explained why all-in-all it was better for him to *go* to the coaching. The coach already knows that the reasons to *go* weighed stronger than the reason to cancel; otherwise the client would have cancelled. So, what made the client decide to come after all? Most probably the reason to proceed is to avoid a negative. If the client would have cancelled, his manager would have kept on pushing. That's not what the client wants. By exploring the logic which made the client decide to proceed and then accepting this logic as a valid reason, the client starts opening up. There is always a positive reason behind the negative utterance. Exploring the positive reason why the client has decided to do what he is doing, helps the coach to understand what the client is after. It's like building a platform for asking the usefulness question. When the client starts answering the usefulness question, this is the start of the seven-steps-approach.

Giving advice

The coach and the client are in a process of finding out what works for the client. The ideas that are most useful to the client are the ones he comes up with himself. These are the ideas that perfectly fit his own situation, he has experience with them because otherwise he wouldn't have thought of them, and he is highly motivated to try these ideas since he thought of them himself. Based on his own experiences. Even though a progressed focussed coach will focus as much as possible on this so called internal solution, that doesn't mean to say the coach will shy away from giving advice all together. If the coach really believes his idea might benefit the client, he will ask permission to share his idea: "There is something I think might also work for you....would you like to hear it?" The client is still in the lead here. He can decide he has enough ideas and doesn't want to hear the idea of the coach. Or he can decide he's interested to hear more. In that case the coach says something like this: "The idea that popped up was regarding this book. It fits very well with what you say you want to learn.... Might it be interesting to you? It's up to you...?"

So, even though the coach suggest something, offers an external solution, this idea is in line with what the client wants to achieve and with what works for the client. The client decides if this idea is useful. When offering advice, it's also important to limit the number of tips to one of just a few. As soon as the numbers of tips get overwhelming, the client will conclude he's not able to make progress by himself and he needs an expert to tell him what to do.

There are four progressed focussed roles: helping, directing, training and instructing. Below you find the 4PFC-model, which summarises these four progressed focused competencies. The progressed focussed coach helps the client define his own goals (internal goals) and find out what works for him (internal solutions). Sometimes the coach steps into the role of trainer: internal goals, external solutions.



© 4PFC model - Gwenda Schlundt Bodien & Coert Visser

People who want to learn how to use the progressed focussed approach tell me that reading dialogues is very useful to them. Especially when the dialogue is not read in its entirety, but as follows: take a piece of paper and cover up the dialogue below. Read the first thing the client says and predict how the progressed focussed coach responds. Then, lower your piece of paper and read what the coach says and how the client responds. Predict how the coach responds next etcetera.

Progressed focussed dialogue

The client has made an appointment with a coach, but before the coach has a chance to ask the usefulness question, the client says the following:

Client	Yes...so...I need to tell you...I called you to make this appointment...but I've been pondering about what I need help with...and I couldn't think of anything...So then I thought...why is that? And then I found the answer: I am an involuntary client!
Coach	Ah, oké, an involuntary client... Would you tell me a bit more about that?
Client	Well, my manager has mentioned twice over the last few months that I could ask for your support... About three months ago, when I was stressed out because things were so very busy...and I had a headache most days...But then things slowed down, so I didn't need coaching anymore...but recently I had my appraisal interview and my manager said

he had looked at my diary and it had struck him it all looked inefficient to him. The way that I have organised my meetings and work. And then he said: "Have you made an appointment with the coach?" So...eh...I thought, ok then, I will. So, I am basically an involuntary client.

Coach I see...so first you were going to make an appointment when things were very busy at work...but then things slowed down and it wasn't necessary anymore. But recently in your appraisal interview your boss mentioned it again, because he perceives your planning as inefficient. And because this was the second time he mentioned coaching you thought to yourself, ok I'll make an appointment....But then you were pondering what you need help with and you couldn't think of anything...Yeah...I can see why it was hard to think of something....So...what made you decide to go ahead with our meeting?

Client Ah you know...when your manager mentions twice you can use a coach it's not very good to refuse....it's not like I don't want to improve myself...and I could do with working more efficiently...sure...But the way in which I got told I needed coaching wasn't so nice...

Coach Yeah...I understand....so what do you think your manager should see you do different, which would tell him coaching is no longer needed?

Client Good one....eh....what would he have to see me do differently....eh...two things I guess. One is that I set my boundaries a bit clearer. Because I only have 24 hours to do the work, so I really have to see *no* sometimes...Two is that I improve my planning and organisation skills, have a better overview And that's something I also want, really...I sure can improve in that area.

Coach Saying no sometimes, setting clear boundaries, improving your planning and organisation, having a better overview...What would be the benefit of improving these things?

Client My work would be...I would have more control over things...I wouldn't be surprised by things...Saying no is difficult in my job, because I'm supposed to help people...But I'll have to start learning how to do it, otherwise I'm doing things only half...If I'd work more efficiently and keep better track of my appointments, I would have a better overview and get more work done...

Coach Sounds good....so...would any of these topics be useful to you to talk about today?

Client I'm not sure....But...there's another topic that springs to mind now...

Coach Not sure, I understand that...so, what are you thinking about?

Client My manager! His behaviour in our meetings with other parties is terrible for me...he often uses confidential information in those meetings...which is very embarrassing for me.

Coach Embarrassing....How does that bother you?

Client It really disrupts what I'm trying to do in a meeting! I was in a meeting with two doctors and my manager...and I had told my manager I was having some problems collaborating with these doctors...So I've got this plan of what it is I want to achieve in my next meeting with them...and I'm really working hard to achieve that goal...and I'm well on my way to get where I want to be...and then out of the blue my manager says things like: "You told me you weren't very happy with your collaboration with them, would you like to talk about that now?" My goodness! That's so undermining!

Coach Ah yeah...you want to achieve your goals in that meeting....what would you like him to do different in a meeting like that?

Client I want him to give me the space to achieve my goals my own way. I want him to shut up about confidential stuff! But even if we've agreed beforehand that we will not give certain information to the parties we're having the meeting with, I still can't count on his discretion. I know he's only trying to help me. He really doesn't want to make things difficult for

me. So...maybe I'm asking too much...I expect him to listen to my problems and then understand when he can say something and when not...So maybe I am just unrealistic about wanting him to behave exactly like I want him to behave when I want him to...

Coach Right...so you'd like him to give you the space to achieve your goals in meetings with other parties...and to keep confidential information to himself....what would you be able to do differently in these meetings if he acted this way?

Client Not walk out on him... I undermine him sometimes, because I just bluntly point out what is wrong in what he's saying.... And then I just proceed with my own agenda...and that works, in the way that I do get what I want out of a meeting...but it's not the way I want it.

Coach Right...so you'd like him to give you the space to achieve your goals your way, and if he did that you would not walk out on him in those meetings..but instead....?

Client Support him! Take the same line together!

Coach Support him and take the same line together.

Client Yeah...

Coach Have there been meetings lately that were a bit like that?

Client Yeah sure...when we agreed on how to handle something...but what I really want is for him to give me more space and not use confidential information...

Coach Yes...and has that happened lately? That you noticed in a meeting that he gave you space and didn't use confidential information..?

Client Yeah...I also got space last week in a meeting with a group of external parties....He said some things that were plain nonsense...this group of external parties corrected him...and I could proceed with what I was doing...

Coach Oké... so if you agree on how to handle something it works and when someone else corrects him you get more space...have there been any other meetings where he gave you space to achieve your goals..?

Client Yeah...would you like some more coffee?

Coach Yes please.

Client Here you go...

Coach Thank you...

Silence.

Client pours coffee.

Coach In the beginning we were wondering if this conversation could be useful to you....

Client Yes...that's correct.

Coach So, has it been useful so far?

Client Definitely!

Coach Would you like to talk about this topic a bit further?

Client No, thanks, I've got an idea how to handle it already...and there is something else I'd like to talk about...

Coach Oké, what are you thinking about?

Client Yeah...you see, I am going to ask my manager before a meeting if he will give me some space to do my thing....and if I don't want him to use confidential information I shouldn't give him confidential information.

Coach Sounds good.

Client Yeah, so there something else I'd rather talk about now. That's my relationship with my supervisor.

Coach Yes?

Client I've worked here for a year now and I have a supervisor. He is self-employed and apart from being my supervisor he's also a project manager for our company. But I don't want his supervision anymore...it's not what I

need anymore.

Coach
Client You don't want his supervision anymore...
No, because he keeps asking me how I feel about everything....I just don't need that sort of supervision! When I just started working here I wanted to talk about how to handle work situations. But instead I had to dwell on my feelings. He said he wanted to talk about how my work affected me...about me personally, not about how I approach works situations which were difficult to me...and you know, he's my supervisor...so that's what we did...I've analysed my feelings till I was bored to death....to make things worse, he now wants to talk to me about developments in our organisation...plans and changes that are about to happen...how people like or dislike each other...and I wonder: why do you want to know? You are a project leader and you're asking me confidential information about my colleagues...I wonder why he is asking me all these things...

Coach
Client Ah... I see...so you're thinking...
Yeah...I want to stop this supervision.

Coach
Client Oké... and how is that a problem to you?
My manager has already said that if I want to stop my supervision that's fine with him. So I don't need to continue....but I'm afraid of how my supervisor will respond...

Coach
Client So you want to stop your supervision, and your manager will be ok with that..but you're wondering how to go about it so that your supervisor doesn't get upset with you?

Client
Coach Yes, exactly! Because I'd really like him to keep on being a project leader...because he is very good at that...so I don't want to stop working with him all together...

Coach
Client So, you want to stop this supervision and continue the collaboration with him as a project leader...and you're wondering how to tell him so that you will achieve that goal?

Client
Coach Yes! Exactly!
Coach en client think
Client looks hopeful at coach.

Coach
Client Oké... Shall we try...? What ideas do you have?
Well, I can say I don't want his supervision anymore because I don't think it is working out for me anymore....But that it would be a shame if he would stop being a project leader...
Client looks worried and questioning.

Coach
Client Yeah...that sends a clear message you want to stop the supervision...May I try something?
Yeas, please!

Coach
Client 'Dear supervisor, I have learned a lot this past year and I have noticed I am now at a point where I want to continue my development on my own...because I find it important to become more and more self reliant. That's why I'd like to enter a new phase in our working relationship. I want to stop the supervision as it is now, and I would like to proceed working with you in our projects. What are your thoughts about this?'

Client
Coach That's great! (*Picks up a pen and starts writing.*)
Does this come close to what you want to say? The idea is to show him you're trying to achieve a positive goal, without saying anything negative about the past...This sort of formulation uses the principle of a "positive no". Would you like me to explain?

Client
Coach Yes, I'd like that.
When you notice that you want to say "no" to a request you can use the principle of a "positive no". In order to explain why you want to say "no" to the request, you first ask yourself what your underlying "yes" is. What are your important principles and values which are the reason for your "no"?

Client Ah yeah...I want to continue my development on my own because I find it important to become more self reliant. That's why I say "no" to the supervision as it is now. That's perfect!

Coach Perfect...and your alternative "yes" is your gesture to show you're willing to maintain a good relationship and you want to find a way that works for both of you.

Client Yes...that's the bit in which I say that I would like to keep on working with him in our projects. And where I ask him how he feels about that...But I'm thinking...I have another alternative "yes"...I would like it if I could ask him specific questions when I encounter a problem...

Coach Ah..So your alternative "yes" is that you'd like to agree with him you may ask him for advice regarding specific questions and problems that may arise.
Client writes down alternative yes.
Coach is silent.

Client Super! This is great! Ha, now we've found more than one topic to talk about!

Coach Yeah...ha-ha..Has it been useful to you?

Client Yes! Absolutely!

Coach Shall we leave it at that?

Client Yes, that's ok with me.
Coach and client walk towards the door.

Client By the way...I really like that progressed focussed approach! I've just read a book about it.

Coach Ah, that's nice to hear.

Client Eh... May I call you if I want another session?

Coach Sure, that's fine!

Which interventions do you recognise in this dialogue? When you take the flow diagram, do you see what is happening? Where does the coach step into the role of trainer and why?

This chapter focussed on situations in which a coach wants to help a client achieving his own goals. The next chapter is about progressed focussed leadership: autonomy within structures.

Literature

- Adam, L. & E. Balci (2011), 'Fondness makes the distance grow shorter. Desired locations seem closer because they seem more vivid'. In: *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, Volume 47, Issue 1, January 2011, p. 16–21.
- Adriaanse, M.A. (2011), 'Breaking Habits With Implementation Intentions. A Test of Underlying Processes'. In: *Pers Soc Psychol Bull*, April 2011, 37, p. 502-513.
- Ambaay, N., Weisbuch, M. (2010) Non verbal behavior. Chapter 13 in S.T. Fiske, D.T. Gilbert & D. Lindzey (eds.), *Handbook of Social Psychology*. New Jersey, John Wiley & Sons.
- Ajzen, I. (1991), 'The theory of planned behavior'. In: *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 50, p. 179-211.
- Ajzen, I. & M. Fishbein (2005), 'The influence of attitudes on behavior'. In: D. Albarracín, B.T. Johnson & M.P. Zanna (eds.), *The handbook of attitudes*. Mahwah (NJ), Erlbaum, p. 173-221.
- Ajzen, I. & M. Fishbein (1980), *Understanding attitudes and predicting social behavior*. Englewood Cliffs (NJ), Prentice-Hall.
- Ajzen, I. (2002), 'Perceived behavioral control, self-efficacy, locus of control, and the theory of planned behavior'. In: *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 32, p. 665-683.
- Ajzen, I. (2005), *Attitudes, personality, and behavior* (2nd ed.), Milton-Keynes (England), Open University Press (McGraw-Hill).
- Amabile, T. & S. Kramer (2011), *The progress principle. Using small wins to ignite joy, engagement and creativity at work*. Boston (MA), Harvard Business Review Press.
- Anderson, H. & D. Gehart (2007), *Collaborative therapy: Relationships And Conversations That Make a Difference*. New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis.
- Aronson, E. (2010), *Not by chance alone, my life as a social psychologist*. New York, Basic Books.
- Arrowsmith Young, B. (2012), *The woman who changed her brain and other inspiring stories of pioneering brain transformations*. New York, Free Press.
- Balci, E. & D. Dunning (2009), 'Wishful seeing, more desired objects are seen as closer'. In: *Psychological Science*, Volume 25, Number 5, May 2014.
- Bargh, J.A. (2007), *Social Psychology and the unconscious. The automaticity of higher mental processes*. New York, Hove, Taylor & Francis, Psychology Press.
- Berg, I.K. (1994), *Family based services. A solution-focused approach*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Bonanno, G.A. (2009), *The other side of sadness. What the new science of bereavement tells us about life after loss*. New York, Basic Books.
- Bonanno, G.A. (2004), *Loss, trauma and human resilience. Have we underestimated the human capacity to thrive after extremely aversive events?*. Teachers College, Columbia University.
- Brehm, J (1966) hoofdstuk 22 in *Organization change: a comprehensive reader geredigeerd door Burke, W.W., Lake, D.G., W.*
- Colvin, G. (2008), *Talent is overrated. What really separates world-class performers from everybody else*. New York, Portfolio, member of the Penguin Group.
- Coffman, J.L., P.A. Ornstein, L.E. McCall & P.J. Curran (2008), 'Linking teachers' memory-relevant language and the development of children's memory skills'. In: *Developmental Psychology*, Vol. 44(6), Nov. 2008, p. 1640-1654.
- Colvin, G. (2008), *Talent is overrated. What really separates world-class performers from everybody else*. New York, Portfolio (member of the Penguin Group).
- Daniel, M.A.M. & G.O. Einstein (2000), 'Strategic and Automatic Processes in Prospective Memory Retrieval. A Multiprocess Framework'. In: *Applied Cognitive Psychology*, 14, John Wiley & Sons, Ltd, p. 127-144.
- De Jong, P. & I. Kim Berg (2008), *Interviewing for solutions*. Belmont (CA), Thomson Brooks/Cole.
- De Shazer, S. (1985), *Keys to solutions in brief therapy*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.
- De Shazer, S. (1988), *Clues: investigating solutions in brief therapy*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.
- Deci, E.L. & R.M. Ryan (2002), 'The paradox of achievement. The harder you push, the worse it gets'. In: J. Aronson (ed.), *Improving Academic Achievement. Impact of psychological factors on education*. New York, Academic Press.
- Deci, E.L. & R.M. Ryan (2004), *Handbook of Self-Determination Research*. Rochester (NY), The University of Rochester.
- Detert, J.R. & E.R. Burris (2007), 'Leadership behaviour and employee voice. Is the door really open?'. In: *Academy of Management Journal*, 2007, Vol. 50, No. 4, p. 869-884.
- Doidge, N. (2007), *The brain that changes itself. Stories of personal triumph from the frontiers of brain science*. New York, Penguin Books.

Dweck, C.S. (2006), *Mindset. The new psychology of success*. New York, Random House, Inc.

Dweck, C.S. (2002), 'Messages that motivate. How praise molds students' beliefs, motivation, and performance (in surprising ways)'. In: J. Aronson (ed.), *Improving academic achievement. Impact of psychological factors on education*, San Diego (CA), Academic Press, p. 37-60.

Dweck, C.S. (1999), *Self-theories. Their role in motivation, personality and development*. Philadelphia, Taylor & Francis, Psychology Press.

Edmondson, A.C. (1999), 'Psychological safety and learning behavior in work teams'. In: *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 44, p. 350-383.

Edmondson, A.C. (2003), 'Speaking up in the operating room. How team leaders promote learning in interdisciplinary action teams'. In: *Journal of Management Studies*, 40, p. 1419-1452.

Elliot, A.J. & C.S. Dweck (2007), *Handbook of competence and motivation*. New York/London, Guilford Press.

Ericsson, A.K. & N. Charness (1994), 'Expert Performance. Its structure and acquisition'. In: *American Psychologist*, Vol. 49, No. 8, p. 725-747.

Ericsson, K.A., R.T. Krampe & C. Tesch-Römer (1993), 'The role of deliberate practice in the acquisition of expert performance'. In: *Psychological Review*, Vol. 100(3), July 1993, p. 363-406. doi: 10.1037/0033-295X.100.3.363.

Ericsson, K.A., K. Nandagopal & R.W. Roring (2009), 'Toward a science of exceptional achievement. Attaining superior performance through deliberate practice'. In: *Annals of New York Academy of Science*, 1172, p. 199-217.

Ericsson, K.A. (2006), 'The influence of experience and deliberate practice on the development of superior expert performance'. In: K.A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P. Feltovich & R.R. Hoffman (eds.), *Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 685-706.

Ericsson, K.A. (2007), 'Deliberate practice and the modifiability of body and mind. Toward a science of the structure and acquisition of expert and elite performance'. In: *International Journal of Sport Psychology*, 38, p. 4-34.

Ericsson, K.A. (2009), 'Discovering deliberate practice activities that overcome plateaus and limits on improvement of performance'. In: A. Willamon, S. Pretty & R. Buck (eds.), *Proceedings of the International Symposium on Performance Science 2009*, Utrecht, Association Européenne des Conservatoires Académiques de Musique et Musikhochschulen (AEC), p. 11-21.

Ericsson, K.A. (2009), *Development of professional expertise*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

Feltovich, P.J., M.J. Prietula & K.A. Ericsson (2006), 'Studies of expertise from psychological perspectives'. In: K.A. Ericsson, N. Charness, P. Feltovich & R.R. Hoffman (eds.), *Cambridge handbook of expertise and expert performance*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, p. 39-68.

Finkelstein, S.R. & A. Fishbach (2011), 'Tell me what I did wrong. Experts seek and respond to negative feedback'. In: *Journal of Consumer Research*, Chicago, Chicago Press.

Fishbein, M. & I. Ajzen (2010), *Predicting and changing behavior. The reasoned action approach*. New York, Psychology Press.

Franklin, A., T.S. Trepper, W.J. Gingerich & E.E. McCollum (2012), *Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. A handbook of evidence-based practice*. New York, Oxford Press.

Fredrickson, B.L. (2009), *Positivity. Top-Notch Research Reveals the 3 to 1 Ratio That Will Change Your Life*. New York, Three Rivers Press.

Fredrickson, B.L., M. Tugade, C.E. Waugh & G.R. Larkin (2003), 'What Good Are Positive Emotions in Crises? A Prospective Study of Resilience and Emotions Following the Terrorist Attacks on the United States on September 11th, 2001'. In: *J Pers Soc Psychol.*, 2003 February, 84(2), p. 365-376.

Furedi, F. (2004), *Therapy Culture. Cultivating vulnerability in an uncertain age*. London, Routledge Chapman & Hall.

Gerrard, M., F.X. Gibbons, M.L. Stock, J.L. Dykstra & A.E. Houlihan (2005), 'The power of positive images. The role of social comparison in self-regulation'. In: D. de Ridder & J. de Wit (eds.), *New perspectives on health behavior. The role of self regulation*. New York, John Wiley

Norman, H. Reflecting team, Approaches in the workplace. In Gingerich, W.J., J.S. Kim, K. Geert, J.M. Stams & A.J. McDonald (2012), 'Solution-focused brief therapy outcome research, section III Reviews of the research in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. A handbook of evidence-based practice. New York. Oxford Press

Gollwitzer, P.M. (1999), 'Implementation intentions. Strong effects of simple plans'. In: *American Psychologist*, 54, p. 493-503.

Grant Halvorson, H. (2012), *Succeed. How we can reach our goals*. London, Plume, Penguin Books.

Hattie, J. & H. Timperley (2007), 'The Power of Feedback'. In: *Review Of Educational Research*, March 2007, vol. 77, no. 1, p. 81-112.

Hattie, J. & G.C.R. Yates (2014), *Visible learning and the science of how we learn*. New York, Routledge.

Heslin, P.A. & D. VandeWalle (2008), 'Managers' Implicit Assumptions About Personnel'. In: *Current directions in psychological sciences*, Vol. 17, number 3.

Heslin, P.A. & D. VandeWalle (2009), 'Performance Appraisal Procedural Justice: The Role of a Manager's Implicit Person Theory'. In: *Journal of Management*, 2009. DOI: 10.1177/014920630934289.

Hsu, L.M., J. Chung & E.J. Langer (2010), 'The influence of Age-Related Cues on Health and Longevity'. In: *Perspectives on Psychological Science*, 2010, 5: 632. DOI: 10.1177/1745691610388762 <http://pps.sagepub.com/content/5/6/632>.

Ibarra, H. (2003), *Working identity. Unconventional strategies for reinventing your career*. Boston (MA), Harvard Business School Press.

Kamins, M. & C.S. Dweck (1999), 'Person vs process praise and criticism. Implications for contingent self-worth and coping'. In: *Developmental psychology*, 35, p. 835-847.

Kaufman, J.C., S.B. Kaufman & J.A. Plucker (2013), 'Contemporary theories of intelligence'. In: J. Reisberg (ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Psychology*. New York, Oxford University Press, chapter 51.

Kohn, A. (1993), *Punished by rewards. The trouble with gold stars, incentive plans, A's, praise and other bribes*. New York, Houghton Mifflin Company.

Kolk, H. (2012), *Vrije wil is geen illusie. Hoe de hersenen ons vrijheid verschaffen*. Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Bert Bakker.

Koo, M. & A. Fishbach (2012), 'The Small-Area Hypothesis. Effects of Progress Monitoring on Goal Adherence'. In: *Journal of Consumer Research*, published by The University of Chicago Press. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1086/663827>.

Kumashiro, M. & C. Sedikes (2005), 'Taking on board liability-focused feedback. Close positive relationships as a self-bolstering resource'. In: *Psychological Science*, 16, p. 732-739.

Langer, E. (2009), *Counter clockwise, mindful health and the power of possibility*. New York, Ballantine Books, Random House Publishing Group.

Langendyk, V. (2006) 'Not knowing that they do not know. Self-assessment accuracy of third-year medical students'. In: *Medical Education*, February 2006, Vol. 40, Issue 2, p. 173-179.

Lemov, D., E. Woolway & K. Yezzi (2012), *Practice Perfect. 42 rules for getting better at getting better*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

Lepper, M.R. & M. Woolverton (2002), 'The wisdom of practice. Lessons learned from the study of highly effective tutors'. In: J. Aronson (ed.), *Improving Academic Achievement. Impact of psychological factors on education*. New York, Academic Press.

Masten, A. (2001), 'Ordinary magic. Resilience processes in development'. In: *Am Psychol.*, Mar; 56(3), p. 227-238.

Myers, Ch.G., Staats, B.R., Gino, F. (2014). My Bad! How Internal Attribution and Ambiguity of Responsibility Affect Learning from Failure. Harvard Business School NOM Unit Working Paper No 14-10

Nisbett, R.E. (2009), *Intelligence and how to get it. Why schools and cultures count*. New York, Norton & Company Inc.

Oettingen, G. & M. Hagenah (2007), 'Fantasies and the self-regulation of competence'. In: A.J. Elliot & C.S. Dweck, *Handbook of competence and motivation*. New York/London, Guilford Press, chapter 35.

O'Hanlon, W.H. & M. Weiner-Davis (1989), *In search of solutions. A new direction in psychotherapy*. New York, Norton.

O'Hara, D. (2013), *Hope in counselling and psychotherapy*. London, Sage Publications Ltd.

Patall, E.A., H. Cooper & S.R. Wynn (2010), 'The effectiveness and relative importance of providing choice in the classroom'. In: *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 102, p. 896-915.

Reeve, J., H. Jang, P. Harde & M. Omura (2002), 'Providing a rationale in an autonomy-supportive way as a strategy to motivate others during an uninteresting activity'. In: *Motivation and Emotion*, 26, p. 183-207.

Roeden, J. (2012), *Solution-Focused support of people with intellectual disabilities*. Bruchterveld, Uitgeverij Pirola.

Schlundt Bodien, G.L., Visser, C.F. (2010) Uitgangspunten progressiegerichte organisatieverandering. NOAM nieuwsbrief, www.noam.nu

Schlundt Bodien, G.L., C.F. Visser, m.m.v. J. Weber (2005), *Succesgericht HRM. P&O in uitvoering*. Alphen aan den Rijn, Kluwer.

Schlundt Bodien, G.L., m.m.v. C.F. Visser (2011), *Oplossingsgericht werken in HRM. Een methodiek voor de professional*. Amsterdam, Uitgeverij Nelissen.

Schlundt Bodien, G.L. (2013), *Progressie door zelfcoaching*. Culemborg, Van Duuren Psychologie.

Schlundt Bodien, G.L. & C.F. Visser (2008), *Oplossingsgericht aan de slag*. IJsselstein, Crystallise books.

Schlundt Bodien, G.L. & C.F. Visser (2011), 'What works in conversations with students'. In: *International Journal of solution focused practices*. August 2013, Volume 1, Issue nr. 1, 2013.

Schwarz, N., H. Bless, F. Strack, G. Klumpp, H. Kittenauer-Schatka & A. Simons (1991), 'Ease of Retrieval as Information. Another Look at the Availability Heuristic'. In: *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, Vol. 61, No. 2, p. 195-202.

Senay, I., D. Albarracín & K. Noguchi (2010), 'Motivating Goal-Directed Behavior Through Introspective Self-Talk. The Role of the Interrogative Form of Simple Future Tense'. In: *Psychological Science*, 2010, 21: 499, originally published online 9 March. DOI: 10.1177/0956797610364751

Tracy, J.L., R.W. Robins & J.P. Tangney (2007), *The self-conscious emotions theory and research*. New York, The Guilford Press.

Visser, C.F. & G.L. Schlundt Bodien (2008), *Paden naar oplossingen*. Driebergen, JustinTime Books.

Visser, C.F., m.m.v. G.L. Schlundt Bodien (2009), *Doen wat werkt. Oplossingsgericht werken, coachen en managen*. Culemborg, Van Duuren Management.

Visser, C.F., m.m.v. G.L. Schlundt Bodien (2005), *Doen wat werkt. P&O in uitvoering*, Alphen aan den Rijn, Kluwer.

Visser, C.F. (2013), *Progressiegericht werken. Oplossingsgericht vooruit*. Driebergen, JustinTime Books.

Visser, C.F. (2010), 'Self-Determination Theory Meets Solution Focused Change. Autonomy, Competence and relatedness support in action'. In: *InterAction - The Journal of Solution Focus in Organisations*, Vol. 2, No. 1, May 2010, p. 7-26(20).

Vygotski, L. (1978), 'Interaction between learning and development'. In: *Mind and Society*, Cambridge (MA), Harvard University Press, p. 79-91.

Walter, J. & J. Peller (1992), *Becoming Solution Focused in Brief Therapy*. London, Routledge.

Warner Burke, W., D.G. Lake & J. Waymire Paine (2009), *Organization Change. A Comprehensive Reader*. San Francisco, John Wiley & Sons.

Weiner-Davis, M., S. de Shazer & W.J. Gingerich (1987), 'Building on pretreatment change to construct the therapeutic solution'. In: *Journal of Marital and Family Therapy*, 13, p. 359-363.

Welch, G., L. Schwartz & S. Woloshin (2011), *Overdiagnosed. Making people sick in the pursuit of health*. Boston (MA), Beacon Press.

Wilson, D., M. Damiani & N. Shelton (2002), 'Improving the academic performance of college students with brief attributional interventions'. In: J. Aronson (ed.), *Improving academic achievement. Impact of psychological factors on education*. San Diego, Elsevier.

Wilson, T.D. & D.T. Gilbert (2005), 'Affective Forecasting Knowing What to Want'. In: *American Psychological Society*, Vol. 14, no. 3, University of Virginia, Harvard University, p. 131-134.

Wiseman, R. (2012), *Rip it Up. The radically new approach to changing your life*. London, Macmillan.

Zeigler, P. & T. Hiller (2001), *Recreating Partnership. A Solution-Oriented, Collaborative Approach to Couples Therapy*. New York, W.W. Norton & Company.