

The strategic coaching matrix

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Abstract

A coaching matrix will be described which can be used to stimulate autonomy and winning behavior. The focus in this matrix is more on a strategy to realize a goal and less on solving problems. The coaching matrix is a universal concept which can be used by coaches, professionals and managers as well as by their clients and employees.

1. Introduction

The principal objective of coaching is autonomy. Autonomy is another word for managing yourself in relation to others. According to Berne (1964) autonomy implies awareness, spontaneity and the capacity for intimacy. But he never gave an exact definition of autonomy. Berne's description of autonomy seems not to be complete because the function of the positive part of the Parent ego state is left out.

According to the concept of the coaching matrix we are autonomous when we are competent (think logically), confident (manage our emotions), committed (take care of the needs of ourselves and others) and in control (act effectively).

By using the coaching matrix, all four aspects of autonomy, thinking, feeling, caring and acting, can be improved. The strategy in the coaching matrix is that the focus is more on realizing a goal and less on solving problems. This mind shift from what is impossible to what is possible can improve winning behavior.

History

Since 1975 the discount matrix (Schiff, 1975) was used in a psychiatric hospital in the Netherlands in a successful way. But this model was less suitable for clients in organizational, educational and counseling fields. These clients did not suffer from a disease but wanted to develop their competencies in order to realize a goal. The problem with the discount matrix was that the word 'goal' is not even mentioned in this Schiff model. So if we add this concept, two categories of actions emerge:

- problem solving actions (options, Schiff, 1975) for clients who suffered from symptoms
- goal directed actions (opportunities) for clients with a developmental issue.

2. The strategic coaching matrix

The idea of a strategy emerged when I realized that a single step is not sufficient to realize a goal. It is more efficient to develop a logical sequence of goal directed actions. This is called a strategy. A strategy means: a sequence of steps to be taken to get from A to B. Since then the concept "strategic coaching" is used for clients who want to realize their goal.

For many coaches, managers, teachers, mediators and clients to whom I explained the strategic coaching concept, it was an eye opener that a goal can be realized without solving all the problems.

The problem might be that your car is broken. Your goal is to be in time at your appointment. Instead of repairing your car or calling a roadside assistance (options) it might be better to call a taxi (opportunity) in order to be in time at your appointment.

If the problem is that a manager is suddenly ill, you can choose for waiting for the results of the medical treatment (option) or you can choose to look for an interim manager (opportunity) in order to make the profits you want.

If you work with somebody who is very critical of you, you can try to change this person or you can put his way of acting on the agenda (options). It is also possible to look for another person to work with, to change jobs or start giving him or yourself compliments in order to feel better (opportunities).

According to Berne (1972) a winner is somebody who realizes his goal. Berne never defined a winner as somebody who solves his problems.

The strategic coaching matrix is based on the idea that autonomy implies four chronological competencies:

1. think logical in order to collect the relevant facts,
2. manage your emotions in order to analyze the problem,
3. define your goal and take care of your needs,
4. act effectively.

To stimulate logical thinking, a coach asks: “what are the facts?” When the facts are differentiated from the (script) assumptions, the next question is: “what is your problem?” When the problem is analyzed in terms of feelings, the question is: “what is your goal and what are your goal directed actions?”

The client is in charge and writes these answers on a big piece of paper divided into a matrix. In this way, the strategic coaching matrix can be used as an instrument to activate the client.

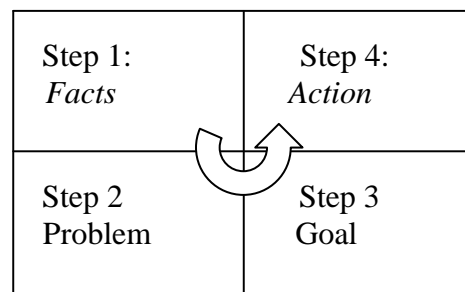


Figure 1 The four steps in the strategic coaching matrix

Examples:

Step 1: What are the facts?	“It is raining”.
Step 2: What is the problem?	“If I walk outside I will get wet, and that feels unpleasant”
Step 3: What is your goal?	“I want to feel comfortable by being dry.”
Step 4: What is your action?	“Change my clothes and next time I will take my umbrella with me.

Step 1: Fact	'My boss criticizes me'
Step 2: Problem	'I feel irritated.'
Step 3: Goal	'I want to feel happy at my work.'
Step 4: Action	'I will ask for positive strokes and next time I will protect myself from his criticism, just as I do with an umbrella when it rains.'

3. The theoretical base

3.1. Four thinking styles

Four different ways of thinking are integrated in the strategic coaching matrix. During human evolution these four types of thinking styles have developed in a chronological way. Each type of thinking was necessary to develop into the next one. And each type was an enormous progress in the autonomy of mankind.

These thinking styles are:

- Feedback thinking: developed since 150.000 years ago
- Feed forward thinking developed since 50.000 years ago
- Logical thinking developed since 500 years ago
- Dynamic thinking developed since 50 years ago

Of course these figures are rough estimations.

Feedback thinking

In pre-historic times, about 35,000 years ago, Neanderthals and Cro-Magnon men lived in the same valleys in Europe.

The thinking process of the Neanderthals was based on feedback mechanisms. They only hunted when they were hungry. They did not make a plan before they ran out of food. Their hunting strategy was simple: they hid themselves in the bushes and waited for an animal to pass by. Because of the structure of their brains, they probably could not think in images and were not able to think ahead in time. In cybernetics, this is called feedback thinking. The Neanderthals survived for more than 100,000 years but they did not develop new tools or skills during that time (Jones, 2007).

Based on feedback thinking we are aware of the error signals of our body, our mind, or even our car. For example, if the fuel warning light goes on in our car, we react to this feedback signal by going to a petrol station to fill up the tank. Then the warning-light goes off.

In feedback thinking there are two options:

The red light on my dashboard is on or off. My suitcase is packed well or I have forgotten to pack certain things. A company has a profit or a loss. When driving a car I stay in lane or not. This kind of thinking is called digital.

We have a lot of feedback signals in our body and in our mind, like sensations of hunger, cold, sleep and emotions. These signals stimulate us to fulfill our physical, psychological and social needs. In feedback systems we want to rid ourselves of error signals like hunger, sleep or cold, a depression, a debt or a conflict in order to survive.

In psychotherapy feedback, error controlled, digital thinking is very important. The suffering of patients is based on errors. They want to rid themselves of their feedback signals that are called symptoms.

The more anxious a person, the more error controlled his thinking, the more the feedback system is activated in order to create safety, continuity and stability. Just like the Neanderthals did during 100,000 years.

Feedback thinking is stimulated by asking: “what are the facts and what is the problem?” If the answers are correct, the next steps in the coaching matrix can be taken: “What is your goal and what is your action?” These last two questions stimulate feed forward thinking, which takes place in other parts of our brains than feedback thinking.

Feed forward thinking

The thinking process of the Cro-Magnon men, our ancestors, was not only based on feedback mechanisms, but also on feed forward mechanisms. They could think and communicate in

images. This enabled them to visualize and discuss the future. They made a hunting plan before they ran out of food because they realized that no hunting today will mean no food tomorrow. Based on their ability to anticipate and to plan, they developed a strategy in their hunting techniques. Instead of waiting for animals in the valley, they climbed to the top of a hill and looked around for signs of animals. Then they stalked the animals until they caught and killed them. They developed a lot of new tools and skills and made impressive painting in caves as can be seen in Lascaux. In cybernetics this is called feed forward thinking. The Cro-Magnon men were more autonomous than the Neanderthals. Based on their paintings we now assume that they were more competent, more confident, more committed and more in control. By using their imagination, they created more opportunities to realize their goal and they had a better communication style than the Neanderthals. That is probably one of the reasons why they survived and the Neanderthals did not. In the evolution of mankind, feed forward thinking was an enormous step forward (White 1989, Diamond 1989, Putnam 1988).

Our feed forward system becomes active when errors have been repaired. Once the petrol tank of our car is full, we can choose where to go. Feed forward thinking is based on curiosity; our need for information. When our curiosity is stronger than our fear we start to explore the world around us. Feed forward thinking is not digital (on/off) but analogue, based on visualization and imagination.

In coaching, feed forward, information controlled, analogue thinking is very important. The client does not ask for help but for support. He is doing well and wants to do things better. These clients do not want to rid themselves of symptoms but they want to realize something new. Their question is: "What are my talents and how can I develop them?" They generally do not come to talk about the problems of their past, but want to discuss their competencies and their possibilities in the present and the future. They want to add something, formulated in a positive goal like: "How can I become a better manager, how can I improve the effectiveness of my team, how can I improve my results as a teacher, as a leader, as a sportsman"?

Curiosity and the need for exploration are important for survival. The more information, the better our thinking process, the more autonomy, the better our chances of survival. In prehistoric times curiosity and exploration were important in order to find new hunting fields. Nowadays it is important for companies to create new products and explore new markets based on their feed forward mechanisms.

Cybernetic program

When feedback and feed forward thinking are integrated into a system it is called a cybernetic program. Norbert Wiener (1894-1964) a mathematician, introduced the word cybernetics in the 1950s. (Wiener, 1948, 1961).

Cybernetics is the science of control and steering mechanisms based on automatic regulation and communication mechanisms. This can be applied to industrial processes but also to psychological processes. In cybernetics one can study the regulation of the temperature in buildings, the regulation of the blood pressure in our body but also the regulation of human communication. A cybernetic program is essential for survival (feedback) and development (feed forward). The better our cybernetic program, the more autonomous we are. By using the coaching matrix, the cybernetic program of a client can be checked and improved.

Eric Berne, was influenced by cybernetics and he was acquainted with Norbert Wiener (Kreyenberg, 2005). Berne was as a psychiatrist, trained in diagnostics and treatments of

mental illnesses. His focus was feedback oriented: what is wrong with this patient and how can this be treated effectively. Most psychiatrists and psychotherapists are better in feedback thinking than in feed forward thinking. It is their job and they are good at it. This kind of thinking results in stability and continuity of the theory and offers the best chances to survive emotionally and physically for the patient. In this kind of thinking examinations and research are important. But for the development of new concepts we also need the creativity of professionals who are also able to think feed forward. And Berne was able to do that when he developed the TA concepts.

Managers, teachers, trainers and coaches mostly work with clients with developmental questions. Their clients are not suffering from an illness, they do not want to change but they want to develop their competencies. In this case, a therapeutic intervention like caring confrontation of discounts as applied by the Schiffs (1975), is not sufficient and may even have a negative effect. This is because a confrontation can be interpreted as a negative stroke and the focus of the intervention is more on the problem and less on the goal. So, coaches, managers, teachers and trainers are often looking for a more feed forward and a less feedback model. A strategic coach gives positive strokes for every positive step into the right direction. This kind of operant conditioning (Skinner, 1968) is pleasurable and more effective, for men but also for animals like dogs, dolphins, horses and even monkeys.

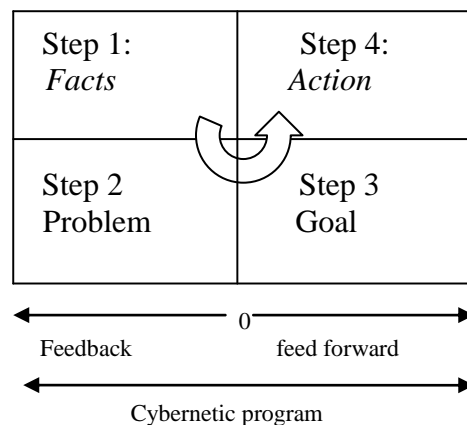


Figure 2 : The strategic coaching matrix and cybernetics

Logical thinking

The second step forward in human thinking was during the Renaissance. Logical thinking, based on cause and effect, was known in the time of the Greek and Roman culture. In western society there was a rebirth of this logical thinking in the time of Copernicus (1473-1543), Galileo (1564-1642) and Newton (1643-1727). In their time this was revolutionary. Based on logical thinking sciences were developed, illnesses were cured, buildings were designed, the art of painting changed and water management systems were developed.

Logical thinking transcends feedback and feed forward thinking. Feedback thinking is based on errors and feed forward thinking is based on fantasy or intuition. But there is no logical explanation.

By using their logical thinking people thought until 1900 that the world could be predicted and shaped by mankind. During that time they were convinced that they could forecast the weather accurately, manage the irrigation systems or influence the climate changes of the globe.

In the coaching matrix four (chrono) logical steps are taken. If, the answers in one step are not correct, the next step cannot be taken. So, when a client is stuck in the process, it is necessary to go back to the former step and check the validity of the answers. This process is both logical and chronological.

In order to stimulate logical thinking a coach can give a definition of each step and ask relevant questions. By doing this the Adult will be decontaminated and integrated.

- Facts: a fact is something everybody agrees upon.
In order to stimulate logical thinking the coach can ask: “is this a fact or an assumption?”
- A problem is a fact which disturbs you on an emotional level.
In order to analyze and define the problem, the coach can ask: “what is your emotional reaction to this fact and how does it disturb you? Is this an individual, relational or systemic problem?”
- A goal is a point to focus on.
In order to stimulate logical thinking, the coach can ask: “what is your goal and is this SMART (Specific, Measurable, Acceptable, Realistic, and Timetabled)? To my mind a goal must be attractive, not just acceptable. In order to prevent that a bank robber fits into this definition, I added the words Ethical and Loveable. So a goal must be SMARTEL.
- An action is the movement from A to B. A is mostly the problem and B is the goal.
In order to stimulate logical thinking the coach can ask: “what are your steps, what is the sequence and how are you going to train them in order to be effective?”

Dynamic thinking.

Poincaré (1854-1912) the founder of chaos theory calculated that the non-linear systems which can be seen in the universe, cannot be explained by logical, deterministic thinking. So besides our cybernetic program and logical thinking, we need another way of thinking. The third important step in human thinking is dynamic thinking, based on chaos theory, developed since 1950. By that time computers were powerful enough to prove that Poincaré’s calculations were right. Since then scientists have realized that living systems are much more complex than Copernicus, Galileo and Newton thought (Vester, 1988, Dörner, 1997, Kreyenberg, 2005). The weather cannot be forecast in an accurate way, no matter how fast our computers are. Water management is much more complex than building dikes and digging canals. The unpredictable supply of water cannot be managed by logical interventions. Recently several dikes in the Netherlands were demolished in order to prevent the country being flooded. Here the unpredictability of the water is taken into account. And the same will be true for climate changes.

This complexity and unpredictability can also be seen in psychotherapy and coaching. The art of therapy or the art of coaching cannot be learned from a book. Just like cooking cannot be learned from a cookbook. A good cook never cooks in exactly the same way. There are always variations: the ingredients vary, the pans might be different, colleagues differ and consumers change. A good cook is an artist: he interacts with his food. He is a step ahead in the process. He looks, listens and tastes the food. These variables can make cooking unpredictable. A good therapist or a good coach is like a good cook. Every session, the coach is different, each client is different, the environment may alter and the focus of the session is different. The coach is part of the process and in every session he sees or hears different details. This means that the outcome of coaching or therapy cannot be explained by logical,

deterministic thinking. Psychotherapy and coaching are much more complex than can be structured in a protocol. Coaching and psychotherapy are non-linear processes as Poincaré called it.

The word chaos can be misleading. As illustrated above, a good cook does not work in a chaotic kitchen, a good cook is not a chaotic person but in his work he is part of a complex, always changing and dynamic system.

Chaos theory states that events never occur twice in the same way. In our rational thinking we assume them to be similar, but there is always a slight difference. Our world is a complex, dynamic and unpredictable system, vulnerable to external influences. Time makes the unpredictability greater. This complexity is symbolized by the metaphor of the butterfly in Brazil, which can, after a long time, cause a Tornado in Texas (Senge, 1990).

Edward Norton Lorenz (1917-2008), a mathematician and meteorologist further developed the chaos theory since 1961 (Lorenz, 1993). Scientists like Lorenz, Feigenbaum, Yorke, Takens and Mandelbrot discovered and described patterns of order in the chaos.

Fractals

The complexity of the ever-changing world is so enormous that we, as human beings, can only understand reality by reducing it into fractals: simple, visual, universal concepts. A fractal (fractus, Latin = broken) is a mathematical term which was for the first time used by Mandelbrot (1970). Fractals are patterns of order in the chaos. The same pattern recurs on different levels, from the microscopic to the various levels of the visible structure (Kreyenberg, 2005). Whether you zoom in or out, you will always see the same pattern. This is called self-similarity. Fractals can be seen in clouds, coastlines, rivers, plants, lungs, blood vessels and brains.

The concept of fractals can be transferred to social systems. Then we see the same social pattern repeat itself at micro, meso and macro levels. Understanding fractals helps us to understand complex living systems like nature, organizations, families, etc. A fractal can be used for self management (Verbeke, Mosmans, 1990), developing relations or organizing systems. We can stimulate our autonomy by thinking in fractals.

Is the strategic coaching matrix a fractal?

In the coaching matrix the complexity of human communication is broken down to four parts. That is a reduction of reality. The strategic coaching matrix is, just like a fractal, a simple visual pattern that can be used to improve our thinking process. Whether you zoom in or you zoom out, you will always see the same pattern (self-similarity).

Zooming in

Each part of the coaching matrix can in itself be divided in four other parts.

Let us do that for Facts.

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1.1. Facts of facts (existence of facts). | Does the fact exist at this moment? |
| 1.2. Feeling of facts (significance of the facts) | What is your emotional reaction to that fact? |
| 1.3. Goal of facts (changeability of facts) | Is it possible to change that fact? |
| 1.4. Action of facts (personal abilities) | Can you react in a different way to the fact? |

These four concepts are part of the discount matrix (Schiff, 1975).

In principle this can also be done for the other parts.

We can only go to the next step if all questions in the former steps are answered correctly.

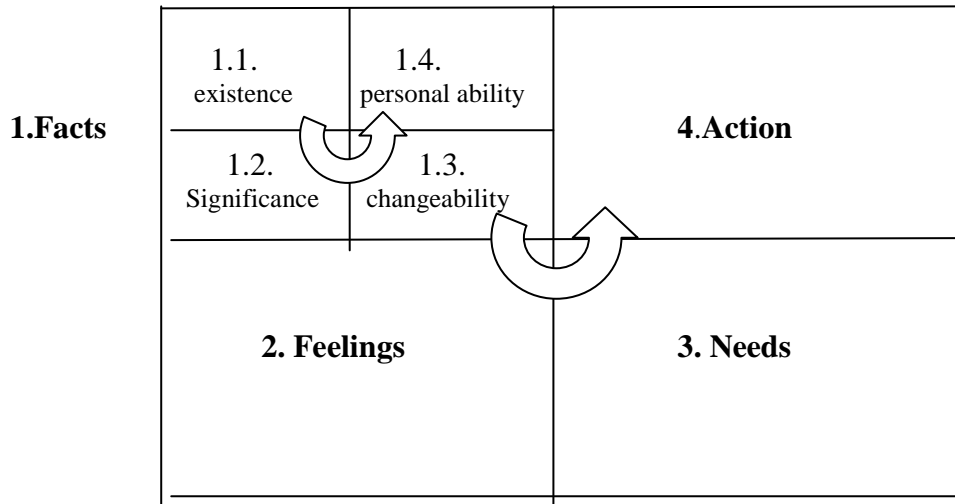


Figure 3: Zooming in

Zooming out

The coaching matrix in itself can also be a part of a bigger matrix. In order to see this matrix, we have to take more distance. If there is a coaching matrix, there might also be three other matrices, which form together a new, bigger matrix.

The focus of the coaching matrix might be labelled as more feed forward and more goal directed. In the same way the focus of a psychotherapy matrix can be identified as more feedback and more feeling directed.

If, in the same way we look at facts and feedback : science and research might be put there. In the right upper part, actions, development of products might be put there.

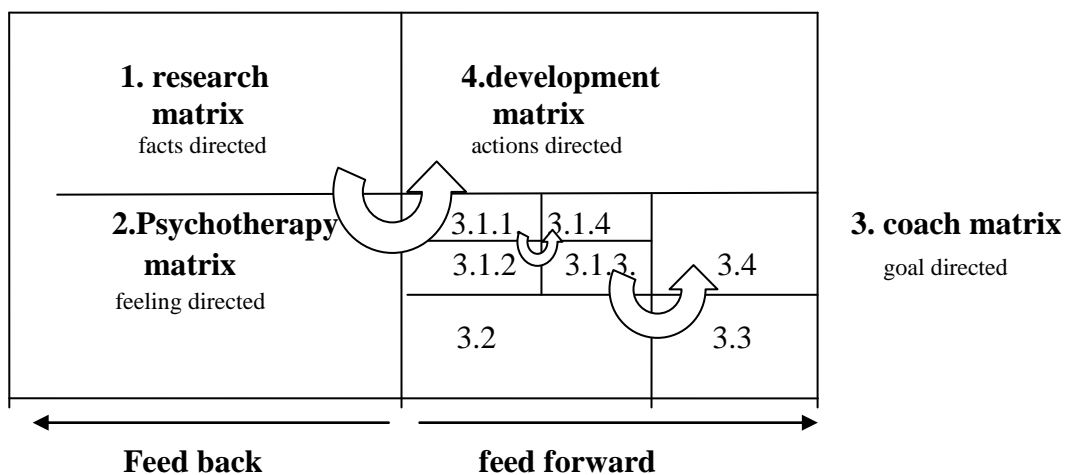


Figure 4: All three levels analysis coaching matrix

3.2. Concepts of Attachment theory

Clients will only develop their competencies or learn new skills if they feel safely attached. It is important to realise that a safe attachment is one of the most important success factors in realizing a goal.

Robertson (2003) describes two sources of safe attachment: people and matter. According to Robertson a safe attachment is necessary in order to explore. Based on this exploration our maturity will grow. Maturity is defined as the ability to manage complex, ever changing situations. Robertson developed the AEM cube, which stands for attachment, exploration and maturity. It is a scientifically based instrument for assessment, teambuilding, coaching, and empowerment.

According to Robertson (2003) matter attachment means: I feel safe when I can count on my salary, my job, my car, my savings, etc. People attachment means: I feel safe when I can count on my family, my colleagues, my clients, my team members, etc.

Generally dogs are more people attached: they feel more safe in relation to a master, as opposed to cats who are generally matter attached: they feel more safe in relation to their food.

The difference in thinking between those two groups is illustrated in figure 5.

Sources of safety	
<i>Matter attachment</i>	<i>People attachment</i>
<i>Do we have enough money?</i>	<i>Do we have enough employees?</i>
<i>Do you like your car?</i>	<i>Do you like your colleagues?</i>
<i>I am your boss, I hope you will make money</i>	<i>I am your boss, I hope you like it here.</i>
<i>Writing an article</i>	<i>Talking with people</i>
<i>Organizing papers</i>	<i>Organizing a network</i>
<i>What do you think?</i>	<i>How do you feel?</i>
<i>What is your target?</i>	<i>What do you need?</i>
<i>Let us have sex</i>	<i>Let us love each other</i>

Figure 5: Differences in thinking between matter and people attachment (Robertson, 2003)

Of course a safe attachment of a client is not solely people or solely matter oriented. Most people have a mixture of these aspects. This mixture is called their comfort zone. People who prefer to operate from Thinking and Acting (part 1 and 4 of the strategic coaching matrix) are often more matter than people attached. They behave on the “social’ level. They prefer to go from facts to actions. Thanks to these matter- attached people we can live in warm houses, drive cars and speak to each other by way of mobile phones. People who prefer to operate from Feeling and Caring (part 2 and 3 of the strategic coaching matrix) are often more people than matter attached. They prefer to focus on problems and personal goals. Thanks to them we can live and work together in a social way.

The coaching matrix can be extended as follows:

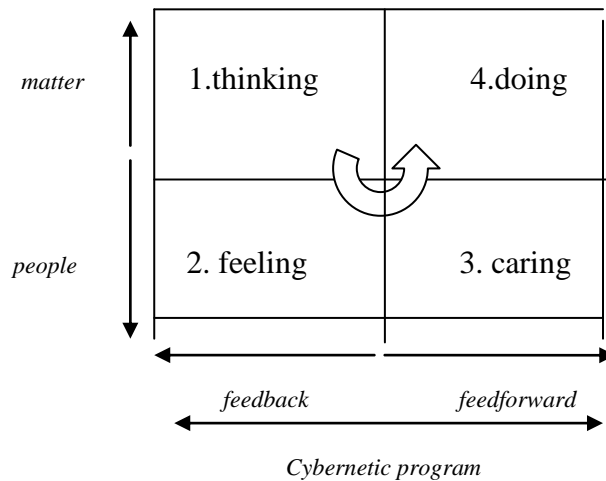


Figure 6: Sources of safety and cybernetics

3.3. Concepts of transactional analysis

Eric Berne developed the concepts of transactional analysis during the time that chaos theory evolved. Berne was in training as a psycho-analyst. By that time the theory of psychoanalysis had become very complex. In order to explain this complexity of the human mind to his patients, Berne developed simple visual concepts after he was deferred as a member of the Psychoanalytic Association in 1956 (Stewart, Joines, 1987). By doing this, his patients could understand concepts like ego states, transactions, games and scripts, thanks to the reduction of the complex reality. By zooming in or out, we can recognize ego states: in people, in relations, in families, in companies and in countries. Even within an individual we can zoom in and we can recognize ego states in the ego states. This self-similarity can be seen in the first, second or third order structural analysis as described by Schiff (1975).

Most TA concepts have a lot of characteristics of a fractal. We can recognize ego states, games and scripts all over the world: in religion, in education, in politics and in management. But, it is true, fractals are a reduction of the complex reality and nobody has ever seen an ego state, a game or a script. We just see the person with a pattern of repetitive behavior.

Thanks to this reduction, Berne could communicate in these terms with his patients. By doing this he stimulated the emancipation, the democratization and the autonomy of his patients. He gave them information and education, instead of, or as well as medication. Based on this he was able to make agreements with his patients which he called a therapeutic contract (Berne, 1966).

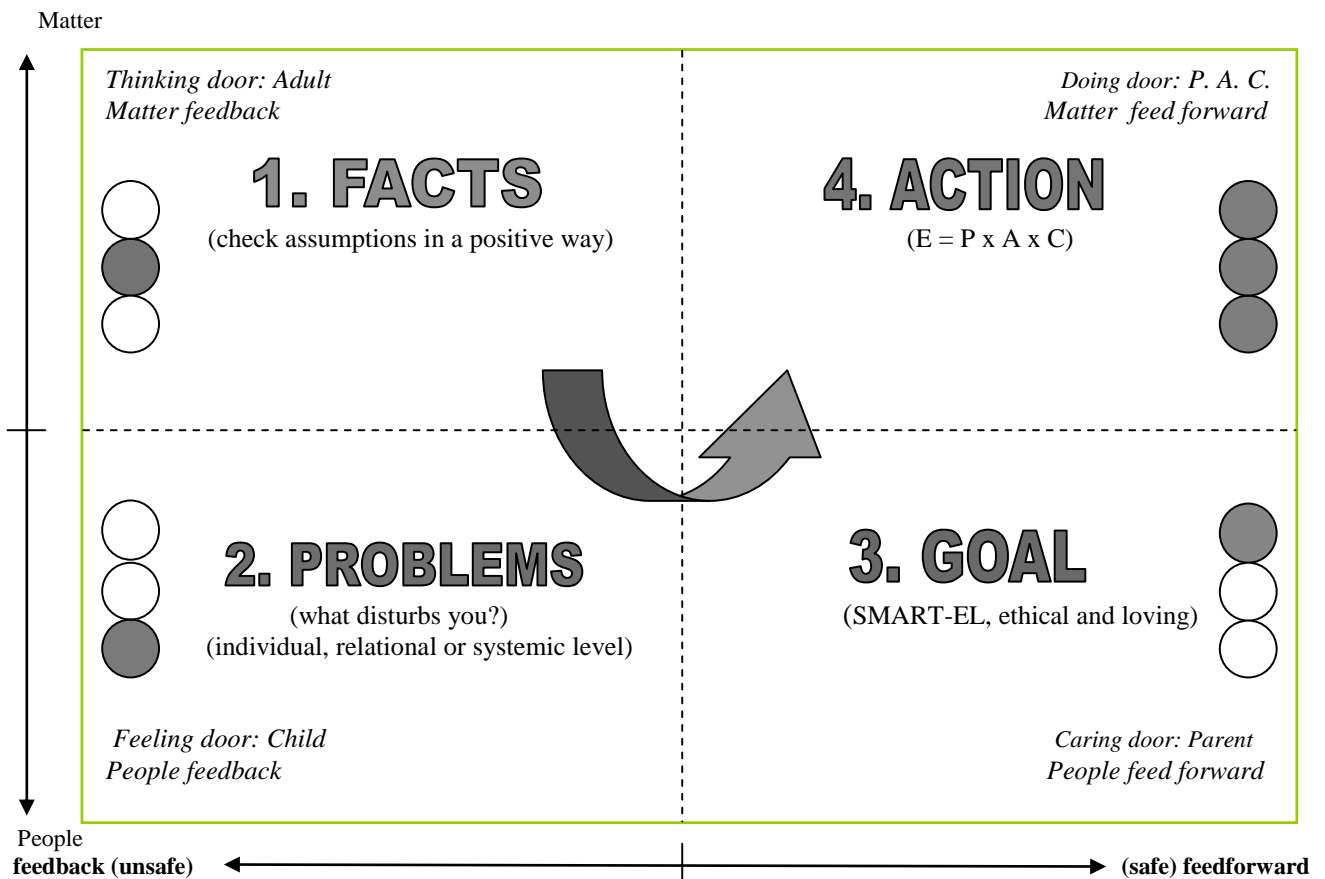
Ego states

Berne (1966) described three ego states: Parent, Adult and Child.

1. By asking: 'what are the facts?' a coach stimulates the Adult ego state. From this ego state we can differentiate between facts and assumptions.
2. By asking: 'what is the problem and what do you feel?' a coach stimulates the Child ego state. From this ego state we can analyse problems and manage our feelings.

- By asking ‘what do you need in order to realise your goal and how do you take care of that?’ a coach stimulates the Parent ego state. From this ego state we can choose a goal which is good for me, for you, for others and for the world around us.
- By asking ‘based on these three answers, what will be your strategic action?’ a coach stimulates the client to integrate these three ego states. Base on this integration we can develop a strategy to go from A to B. These actions are effective when they are based on the integration of the three ego states.

Effectiveness = Adult x Child x Parent ($E = A \times C \times P$).



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Figure 7: The coaching matrix

Doors of communication

Ware (1983) differentiates between communication patterns based on thinking, feeling and doing. He uses the metaphor of a door that can be used to make contact. He differentiates between an open door, a trap door and a target door.

Based on the coaching matrix there are four doors of communication. Thinking, feeling, caring and acting.

To my mind a door can be:

- Open: This door is the door people feel safe to communicate through.
- Closed: This door is closed, based on a script decision. Communication results in blocking transactions.

- Turning: Communication through this door may lead to repetitive communication patterns without any progress. It is often a ‘game door’ or a ‘racket door’ and can be used by the client to avoid the opening of a closed door. Communication results in tangential transactions. (is this the right word Schiff uses? Answers just beside of the question)

For making contact, the best way is to start communication through the open door.

For clients in part 1 of the strategic coach matrix, use the thinking door.

For clients in part 2 use the feeling door,

For clients in part 3 use the caring or nurturing door,

For clients in part 4 use the acting door.

Do not ask a somebody with a closed feeling door:

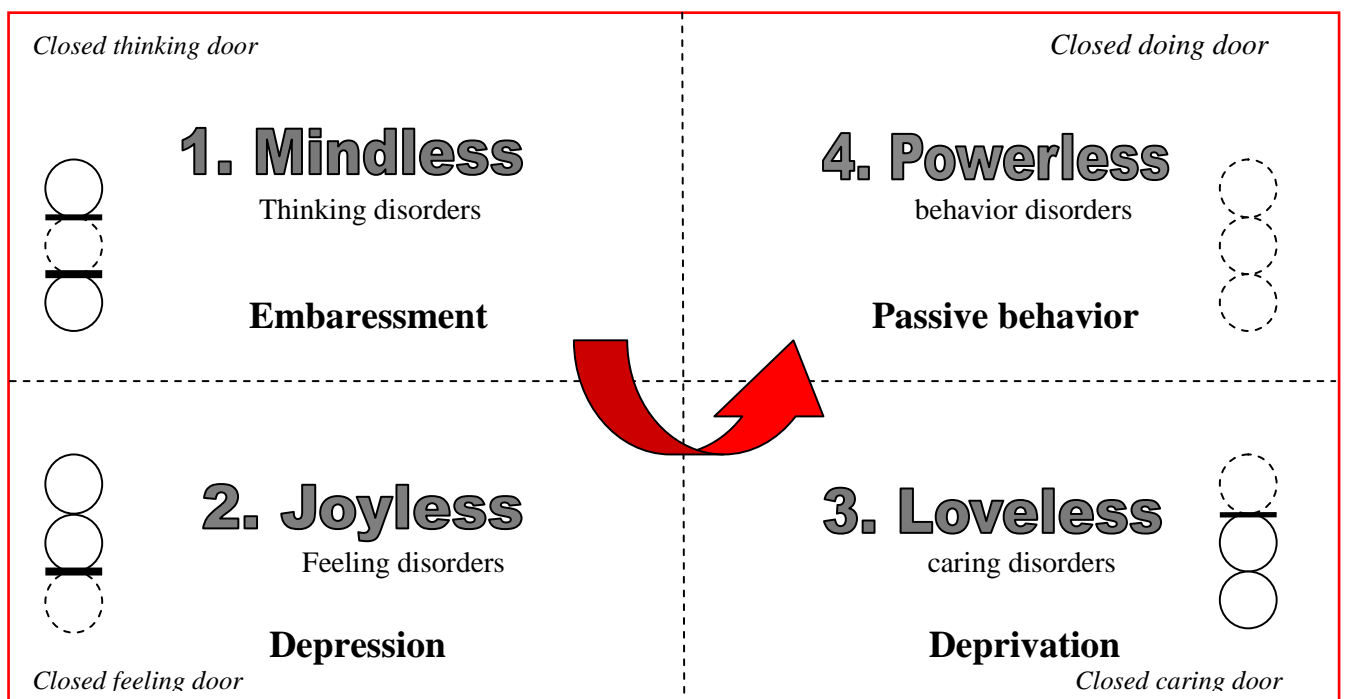
“How do you feel?”

If the thinking door is open, it would be better to ask:

“What do you think you are feeling?” The answer may be: “ I think I am happy today”.

As long as the word ‘thinking’ is used , the communication will go on.

The safer people feel, increasingly other doors will open and the relationship becomes stronger.



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Figure 8: Coaching matrix script site

3.4. Other theoretical concepts

Lateralisation

The activities in the four parts of the strategic coaching matrix correspond with different activities in our brains.

Part 1 and 2 (Feedback systems) are more left brain activities, corresponding with the thinking of the Neanderthals.

Part 3 and 4 (Feed forward systems) are more front brain and right brain activities, corresponding with the thinking of the Cro-Magnon. They could visualise and imagine as demonstrated in cave paintings.

The connection between both parts of the brain is made by the corpus callosum. In working with the strategic coaching matrix it is often amazing how difficult it is for some people to change their focus from facts and problem to goals and actions. It is as if their corpus callosum is blocked. EMDR (Shapiro, 2001) can help open it up.

Punishment and reward circuit.

In the brains a punishment and a reward circuit can be activated.

The punishment circuit (the periventricular system, or PVS), enables us to cope with unpleasant situations. It includes various brain structures, such as the hypothalamus, the thalamus, and the central grey substance surrounding the aqueduct of Sylvius. Some secondary centres of this circuit are found in the amygdala and the hippocampus.

The reward circuit is located along the medial forebrain bundle (MFB). The ventral tegmental area (VTA) and the nucleus accumbens are the two major centres in this circuit, but it also includes several others, such as the septum, the amygdala, the prefrontal cortex, and certain parts of the thalamus.

The punishment system is based on errors. Every error is corrected by an internal negative response in our brains, experienced as a punishment. Our jail system is an example. This system corresponds with parts 1 and 2 of the strategic coaching matrix: what are the facts (courtroom) and what is the problem (the damage). The punishment is the consequence. This consequence can lead to a negative emotional effect. That leads to stress hormones like adrenaline and nor adrenaline. This can lead to repeat crimes. It would be more logical if repairing the damage was also implemented.

The reward system is based on operant conditioning. Every step in the direction of the goal results in a reward. This leads to the release of dopamine, a neurotransmitter which has a positive emotional effect. In this system learning to realize a well defined goal is based on positive emotional experiences. This corresponds to parts 3 and 4 of the strategic coaching matrix. Using this system one can teach a dolphin to jump through a hoop, if you have enough fish to reward it with. During the training, the dolphin can be rewarded by a combination of fish and sounds until the sounds will be a sufficient reward.

Learning theories

Argyris and Schön (1996) differentiate between two forms of learning:

- The traditional form: learning facts.

Information is given by, telling, by book or by computer. In this 'talk and chalk' form of learning, the teacher is in control of instruction. (Kaufmann, 2002, Fuchs, Fuchs, Powell, Seethaler, Cirino, Fletcher, 2008).

- The open form: discovery learning.

This kind of learning is based on the theory of Piaget who observed the learning process of (his) children. He saw that children learn by doing things and acquire new knowledge

from these experiences. This kind of learning is called constructivism. Since the 1960's constructivism has had a great impact on learning theories and teaching methods.

In the literature there is no evidence that one form of learning is better than the other (Dean & Kuhn, 2006, Kirschner, Sweller and Clark, 2006).

From the perspective of the coaching matrix, a learning process is most effective when it is based on a cybernetic program. This program integrates both forms of learning:

- Feedback based, error controlled learning. This corresponds to the traditional form of learning facts and applying them by solving simple problems. At the end there is an assessment of the knowledge of the client. This kind of learning is effective for clients with a low task maturity grade; the starters in the learning process. It is based on learning to think logically.
- Feed forward based, information controlled learning. This corresponds to the open form of learning: a process where the clients acquire new knowledge by doing. This kind of learning is effective for client with a high task maturity grade; those who are advanced in the learning process. It is based on learning from complexities.

According to the strategic coaching matrix there are four chronological styles of learning.

1. Learning facts (part 1).

2. Learning from errors (part 2).

In this traditional kind of learning process, the teacher rather than the learner is responsible for feedback by checking errors and doing assessments.

3. Goal based learning; in which client learns to define his own goals (part 3).

4. Action based learning a process of acquiring knowledge by doing (part 4). This is also called inquiry based learning, based on the idea that learning starts by questioning.

In this style of open learning, the feedback lies increasingly with the learner rather than the teacher (Von Glaserfeld, 1989).

These four chronological steps in this learning process focus on the autonomy of the client. The teacher has to adapt his teaching style to the maturity grade of the client. If a teacher starts at a level which is too high, clients will be left behind. If a teacher stays at a level which is too low he can slow down the learning process of the client.

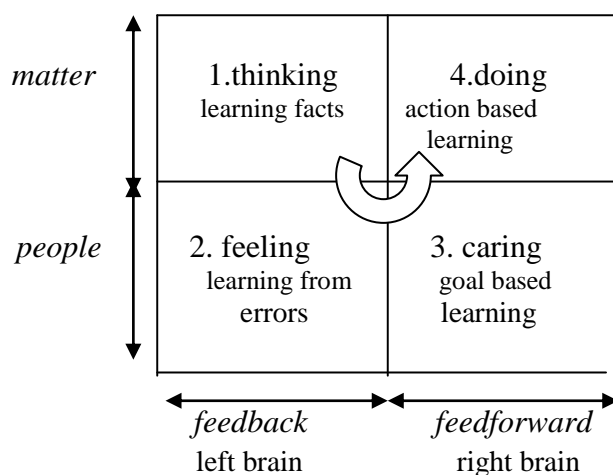


Figure 9: Learning styles and lateralization

Leadership theory

A leader can stimulate the growth and development of the follower by using the right form of leadership style. A leader must adapt his style to the needs of the person being led. The strategic coaching matrix can be used to make the right choice. From this matrix, four styles of leadership can be differentiated:

1. Focus on thinking. Leadership style: high directing, low supporting.
2. Focus on managing emotions and solving problems. Leadership style: high directing and high supporting.
3. Focus on caring in a loving way. Leadership style: low directing, high supporting.
4. Focus on acting effectively. Leadership style: low directing, low supporting.

The result will be autonomy, based on the ability to manage yourself in relation to others. These four styles correspond with the four leadership styles (S) of situational leadership theory (Hersey and Blanchard, 2008): Telling (S1), Selling (S2), Participating (S3) and Delegating (S4).

In this theory the leadership style depends on the development level (D) of the follower as interpreted by the leader. The higher the competence, the confidence, the commitment and the control, the higher the autonomy and the lower the need for leadership. Since 2008 the word development level is changed into performance readiness level (R) (Hersey, Blanchard, & Johnson, 2008).

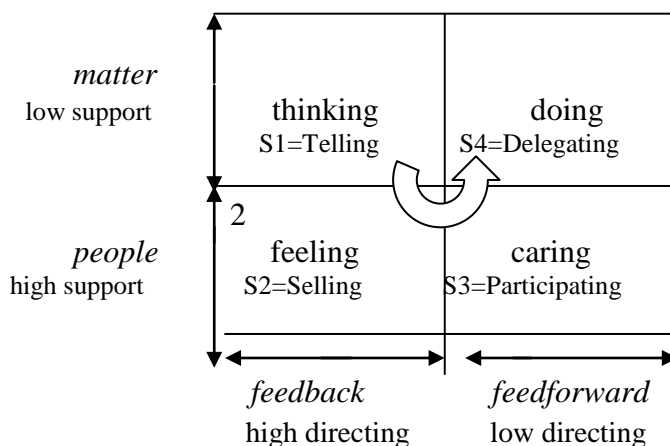


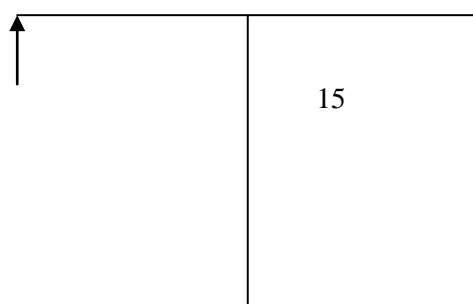
Figure 10 : Leadership styles from the perspective of the coaching matrix

Group development

Tuckman (1965) introduced four different phases that are necessary and inevitable for building an effective team.

These phases are:

- Forming. In this phase team members are uninformed, they get to know one another, and exchange information. This corresponds to part 1 of the strategic coaching matrix: thinking
- Storming. In this phase problems will emerge, team members will confront each other, conflicts will arise. This corresponds to part 2 of the strategic coaching matrix: feeling
- Norming. In this phase team members change from error controlled to feed forward controlled thinking. They accept their individual differences and take care of each other's needs. This corresponds to part 3 of the strategic coaching matrix: caring



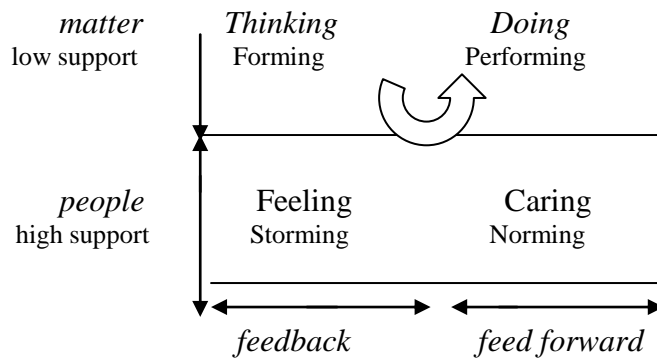


Figure11 : Tuckman's group development from the perspective of the coaching matrix

- **Performing.** In this phase a team has realised autonomy and can act effectively and be goal directed. This corresponds to part 4 of the strategic coaching matrix: acting. Later on Tuckman suggested 'adjourning' as a fifth phase. Here a team is completing the task and breaking up. Others suggest for this phase the term 'mourning'. When a team lasts it may transcend to transforming or reforming. Equally, scoring can be used, for measuring the results of the working together.

4. Applications

The strategic coaching matrix can be used as a tool to look for patterns in the complexity of the world around us in order to develop a strategy to realise a goal.

4.1. Assessments

Matter-attached people feel safe when they have to deal with things, like money, houses, computers, medical instruments, cars, planes, targets, profit, etc.

People-attached clients prefer to deal with people. They often work as a teacher, a team leader, a nurse or a human resource manager.

Using the strategic coaching matrix we can define four groups of employees:

- 1: Feedback/ matter attachment.
Core competence: Thinking. They concern themselves with facts.
Focus: money, costs, profits, hardware, buildings, cars. They work as a controller, accountant, in an archive, stocks, warehouse, museums, as a scientist, etc. They like to organize the world around them.
They are good for: continuity, safety, and balance.
- 2: Feedback/ people attachment.
Core competence: Feeling. They concern themselves with problems.
Focus: supporting employees with personal problems, assessments or promotion, career dilemma's.
They work as a nurse, counselor or personnel manager.
They are good for: the right person in the right place.
- 3: Feed forward/ people attachment.
Core competence: caring/ nurturing.
Focus: the needs of the company, the need of the customers, now and in the future.
They work in marketing, sales, public relations, and training or in a role as a leader

They are good for: development of services.

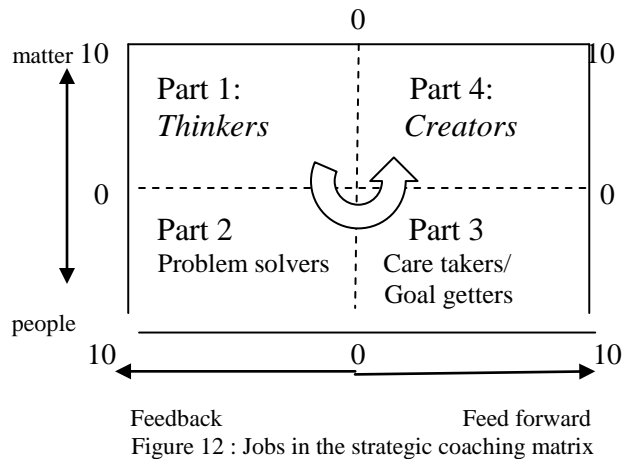
4: Feed forward/ matter attachment.

Core competence: doing.

Focus: create a new world around us: development of instruments, new products and creation of theoretical models or new theories.

They work as professionals who like to do their job on operational level.

They are good in: doing their job, developing new products.



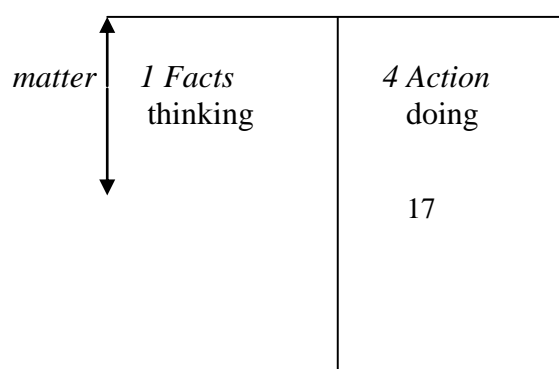
The more the position is on the edge, the more specialized the person is. The closer a person falls to the center, the more generalized he is.

Employees, who make a switch in their career, often shift to another part in the strategic coaching matrix. If that is the case they also have to develop other core competencies and use other communication doors. If these doors are closed, a coach can be helpful to re-open them.

Robertson (2003) developed a questionnaire in order to determine a person's comfort zone. If, as a consequence of reorganization, employees have to perform out of their comfort zone, they will react feedback error controlled. This will block new developments.

4.2. Teambuilding

For coaching complex dynamic systems like an organization, a team, a staff group or a family, the strategic coaching matrix can be used to break up the complexity of what is happening. For the successful survival and growth of a system it is important that employees from each part of the strategic coaching matrix are represented in the team and work together with the employees from the other parts.



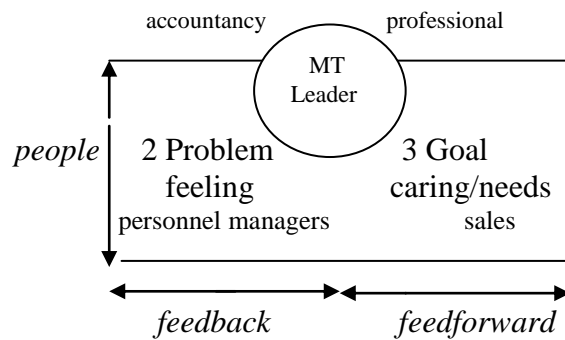


Figure13: Balancing a team

Often this is like putting different dogs and different cats together in one basket. Mostly this complicated because each of them has a different way of communicating. In order to prevent misunderstandings, a team needs a fifth person who speaks all four 'languages'. That team leader must have all four doors open! He is the mediator; he connects people by building bridges. Without such a team leader conflicts within a company are unavoidable (Realin, 1991).

The strategic coaching matrix can be used to see what elements are missing in a team and what has to be developed in order to realize a balance.

The strategic coaching matrix can also be used to get an interdisciplinary agreement. In order to achieve a winning team contract, it is important that employees of each of the four groups are involved. This can be done by asking the next chronological questions:

- 1: Thinking: Do we all agree on the facts? If yes we can go to the second part:
- 2: Feeling: Do we all agree on the problem? If yes we can go to the third part:
- 3: Caring: Do we all have the same goal? If yes we can go to the final part:
- 4: Acting: Are we all willing to take the necessary actions? And do these actions correspond with the competencies of the persons involved?

5. Conclusion:

The strategic coaching matrix can be used in many situations; education, psychotherapy, management, counselling and coaching.

By using this model one can improve the autonomy of oneself, of clients, employees, students and family members. It is a helpful model to realise goals in complex, ever changing situations.

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