

**AN EXPLORATIVE COMPARISON OF THE VALUE AND EXPERIENCES OF
THE COACH AND COACHEE DURING
EXECUTIVE COACHING**

by

Marina Hattingh

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'It concerns us to know the purpose we seek in
life, for then....we shall be more likely to attain
what we want'. *Aristotle*

Dedicated to

My Heavenly Father who gave me the ability to pursue my dreams

My father who always supported and encouraged me

My husband for his love and words of motivation

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- I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Hein Brand, for his support and guidance throughout the study
- I would also like to thank Eddie Ward who challenged my thoughts and helped me to form and shape the research topic

Declaration of Originality

I, Marina Hattingh, hereby declare that this Master's dissertation titled:

“An Explorative Comparison of the Value and Experiences of the Coach and the
Coachee during Executive Coaching”

is my own work and that acknowledgement has been given to all sources of
references.

ABSTRACT

This study set out to explore and describe the experiences of executives and coaches when going through a process of executive coaching. The rationale was that an understating of their experience and their perceived benefits that they gain from a coaching process, might afford insight into a relatively new field. Subsequently this could perhaps contribute to the knowledge of executive coaching in South Africa and develop the discipline further by focusing on the experiences of the different parties.

A qualitative approach was followed since it provides rich, descriptive data that increases the contextual depth. To ensure the quality of the research, sensitivity was given to criteria of transferability, credibility and dependability. Exploratory research was employed because executive coaching in South Africa has not been documented that extensively. This method was also chosen because the researcher aimed to describe and interpret the context-bound research subject. Grounded theory was used to analyse the qualitative data. Ten participants were interviewed individually to collect information regarding their experiences. Five coaches and five coachees were interviewed, the interviews were recorded, transcribed and analysed from a grounded theory perspective.

The findings indicated the experiences of coachees and coaches when going through a coaching process. There are five transcending findings that the researcher found very interesting although these were not all linked to the research questions. They are as follows:

- 1) Approach / focus of coach seems closely linked to experience of coachee
- 2) Coaches use very different paradigms / models

- 3) Use the term executive coaching interchangeable with other terms
- 4) Coach not unaffected by executive coaching relationship
- 5) Important for the coachee to feel that the coach understands his/her culture

The first indicates that the approach of the coach seems closely linked to the experience of the coachee”. The second indicates that coaches use different paradigms and some followed a more involved process. The third indicates that coaches also use different terms to refer to executive coaching which may lead to misunderstandings in the field. The fourth transcending finding indicates that the coach is not unaffected by the coaching relationship and that they also value growth and development from coaching. The last transcending finding indicates that the coachee feels it is important that the coach understands his/her culture and background.

This study contributes to the field of coaching, more specifically, executive coaching in South Africa. The findings also stress the importance of understanding and respecting the diversity in South Africa, specifically in terms of our cultures, backgrounds and different frameworks.



KEYWORDS

- Coach
- Executive
- Executive coaching
- Experiences
- Value/ benefit/ positive
- Relationship
- Leadership
- Development
- Mentoring
- Counselling
- Therapy
- Training
- Consulting



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Right Management Consultants (in Philadelphia) did a survey in 2004, and found that 86 percent of companies indicated that they use coaching as an intervention to sharpen and develop the skills of individuals who have been nominated as future organizational leaders (Michelman, 2004). The Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD) research suggests that around 87% of organisation use coaching to develop their employees (Britnor Guest & Willis, 2003). Executive coaching is becoming an important development intervention for high level managers that need to refine skills or change specific behaviours. A key focus is supporting executives to deliver and reach organisational goals more successfully and efficiently. From the research, it seems that it is becoming a more and more popular intervention.

Coaching is a growing industry and is already in use across the world as an important and valuable development intervention. Michal Goldberg, president of Building Blocks Consulting (Manalapan, New Jersey) says: "Coaching has evolved into the mainstream fast...This is because there is a great demand in the workplace for immediate results, and coaching can help provide that." (in Britnor Guest & Willis, 2003). Executive coaching assists the executive to integrate their strategic insight into their current leadership style. It focuses essentially on the development and application of core personal skills that the executive already has, but is not being applied or displayed (Berlyn, 2005).

Sherman and Freas (2004) believes that the environment of executive coaching is an 'untamed terrain' that is largely unexplored but full of promise. "Reliable

information about executive coaching is scarce, mainly because major companies did not use coaching much before the 1980s” (Sherman & Freas, 2004:1)

In South Africa the coaching field is a fairly accessible discipline and is starting to gain momentum in its popularity. However, little research has been done specifically in South Africa, to explore executive coaching.

1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY

Wright (2005:325) describes coaching as “one of the fastest-growing professions in the Western world.” Wendy Gabriel (In Sherman & Freas, 2004) states that she does not believe ROI are ever going to measure the real success of coaching and they prefer using a qualitative measure to assess the value. Annual spending on coaching in the United States is estimated at \$1 billion (Sherman & Freas, 2004). From this rough estimation it seems that coaching really adds value to organisations.

The International Coach Federation is the oldest professional coaching federation with more than 7 000 members, and was founded in 1995. The field of coaching is a relatively new field and it seems as if it is growing in popularity. Coaching is a method of assisting individuals or even groups, to improve their overall performance (Davison & Gasiorowski, 2006). It creates an environment where the coachee is able to develop the necessary skills attitudes and knowledge to meet their goals (Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998). The term “coaching” is becoming more popular and it is described as a powerful strategy for 21st century organizations (Wright, 2005). However, with little research focusing on executive coaching, specifically within the South African context, it is difficult to describe the true value of the coaching process.

The coaching field is a relatively new and unexplored field and the researcher believed a study in this field would add tremendous value. With widespread misconceptions relating to the coaching phenomena, it is important to explore

coaching and executive coaching to clarify the meaning and process. A lot of research and articles focus on the value of coaching for organizations, and most of these articles reflect the experiences and beliefs of executive coaches. However what are the experiences of executives that go through a coaching process? How meaningful is executive coaching as an intervention for the coachee?

The researcher realized that there is a need to explore executive coaching from the perspective of the coachee and the coach. Their perceived experiences of the overall process could support the development of executive coaching in South Africa. It could also support a stronger focus and awareness on the value that executives take from such a process. How do they view the process and what do they experience as valuable and meaningful? With all these questions, the researcher decided to investigate the coaching field within the South African context. However, with a strong focus on the specific experiences and value from the perspective of the executive and the coach.

1.3 OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

There are a number of factors in our current organisations that lead to increased demand for coaching as an intervention. The CIPD indicated that these factors include the fast paced business environment, flatter organisation structures, the importance of lifelong learning, the financial implications of poor performing executives and the trend for individuals to take greater personal responsibility (Jarvis, 2004). However, one of the greatest factors is the evolving business environment, and individuals and organisations have to learn to adapt to change more quickly. Axmith (2004) believes that executive coaching is a fairly new field that has emerged because of the increased pressure and demands on executives. The primary purpose of executive coaching is enhanced performance of the executive, and overall performance of the organisation.

Palmer (2003) believes an executive coach encourages executives to access their own wisdom and improve their skills. Executive coaching is based on the key

principle that the coachees know their own minds better than anyone else, and ultimately know the answers to their own questions.

Mark Muirhead, executive coach of the consultancy “The Mansell Group” says in the article ‘To the Top’ (Rumney, 2005) that he believes executive coaching adds value in areas like performance management, emotional intelligence and time management.

Little research has been done in the UK to measure the bottom line impact of executive coaching, possibly because of the difficulty in defining it. Equally, the personal value for the executive and the changes in his/her behaviour, motivation and leadership skills are hard to measure accurately (Palmer, 2003). From current literature it seems that the individual experiences enormous personal value from an executive coaching process. However, from the executive’s perspective, how do they experience the coaching process? What is the coachee’s most valuable or beneficial experience? As Christine Turner (2006) pointed out in a research article titled *Ungagged: Executives on executive coaching*, although executive coaching is a popular leadership development strategy, few studies have investigated its real value. A great number of articles have been published, describing executive coaching and its value from the coach’s perspective, rather than the coachee. “That’s like reading a report about an Olympic training program that omits the athletes’ experiences” (Turner, 2006:1). She further adds by saying that most of these are written descriptively rather than research-based.

Therefore, the researcher believed it would be extremely valuable to explore the experiences of the executives or senior managers that went through an executive coaching process. However, for the research it would also be interesting to explore the coaches’ perspectives, their own experiences, and what the coachee believes to be valuable experience. The researcher engaged in this study because the subject of executive coaching is an interesting field and also little formal research has been undertaken in South Africa. This study will therefore aim to investigate the different experiences and perceived values that parties gain from executive coaching.

1.4 CHAPTER DIVISION

This thesis consists of six chapters. Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that gives the reader the basic information regarding the study. Chapter 2 provides the reader with a theoretical background by focusing on definitions of executive coaching and discusses the different concepts that form part of the research. Research articles, books and other forms of scientific literature were used to clarify executive coaching and to investigate already published information regarding the subject. Other development interventions, such as mentoring, training, counselling and therapy, were also discussed to ensure that the reader is able to differentiate between these terms and methods.

Chapter 3 deals with the methodology orientation and approach of the study. It also shows how the data was obtained from the participants and what method was followed to analyse the results. The approach to the study is qualitative, without the intention of gathering statistical information. The experience of coaching was studied through the eyes of the participants who were able to deliver unique knowledge and descriptions from their personal experiences. The data was gathered through individual interviews with five coaches and five coachees.

Chapter 4 deals with the analysis of the data. A grounded theory approach, (see Chapter 3 for description) with open and axial coding was used to analyse the data and to extract the categories and themes. The different themes are discussed in this Chapter to ensure the reader understands the results and the themes that manifested in this study.

Chapter 5 deals with the final discussion of the study. The literature, research and the findings were integrated to form a comprehensive picture of the value of executive coaching. Possible shortcomings and further research areas were also discussed. The references that include all books, articles and internet-based information that were used for this research study, then follow.

1.5 AIM OF THE STUDY

In this study, by focusing on the experiences of executives that underwent executive coaching, the researcher aimed to explore the value of executive coaching. The phenomenon of executive coaching will be explored from the perspective of the executive and also the executive coach, to investigate the value of executive coaching from the different viewpoints.

It is an explorative study that aims to examine the perceived value of executive coaching and also investigate the different experiences of the parties involved in coaching. The coach and the executive's perspectives will be compared, to gain a greater understanding of coaching and the value of coaching for executives.

1.6 STATING THE PROBLEM

A large number of articles have been published, describing executive coaching and its value from the coach's perspective, but little formal studies focus on the coachee's experiences (Turner, 2006). "That's like reading a report about an Olympic training program that omits the athletes' experiences". She further adds by saying most of these are written descriptively, rather than research-based.

Therefore, the researcher believed it would be extremely valuable to explore the experiences of the executives or senior managers that went through an executive coaching process. How would they describe executive coaching and the value of such a process? It would however, also be interesting to explore the coaches' perspective, their own experiences, and what the coachee believes to be valuable experience. In South Africa little research has been conducted, focusing on executive coaching. Because the field is not strictly regulated and fairly accessible, the researcher believed it would be interesting to explore executive coaching and to investigate the different experiences.

The purpose of this study is, firstly to examine the experiences of a coach and a coachee during executive coaching. The study will also aim to explore the perceived

value or benefits that the coach and coachee experiences. The rationale of this study is to gain insight into their experiences, and how they view the value of executive coaching.

1.7 RESEARCH QUESTION

This is an explorative study that aims to examine the perceived value of executive coaching and also investigates the subjective experiences of the parties involved in coaching. The coach and the executive's perspectives will be compared to gain a greater understanding of coaching. Thus the research questions for this study are:

- What are the subjective experiences of the executive coach and the coachee during the coaching process?
- What is the perceived value or benefits of executive coaching from a coachee's perspective?
- What is the perceived value or benefits of executive coaching from an executive coach's perspective?

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Coaching is a relatively new field and it is one of the fastest-growing professions in the Western world. Because it is a relatively new field, there are a limited number of scientific studies that focus on coaching, especially in South Africa and on the South African population. Very few are specifically focused on the subjective experience of the coach and the coachee. There is also limited research that compares the perceived value and subjective experiences of the coach and the coachee during the coaching process.

This study will shed some light on the different perspectives and unique experiences of the coach and the coachee. Therefore, hopefully this study will stimulate further research on the unique relationship between the coach and the coachee.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

No man is so foolish that he may sometimes give another good counsel, and no man so wise that he may not easily err if he takes no other counsel than his own. He that is taught only by himself has a fool for a master.

– Ben Johnson

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is to review the current literature and professional thinking in the area of executive coaching. The associated literature that addresses information regarding the research question will be discussed. In the literature review the following areas will be attended to, firstly the history of coaching, executive coaching and definitions describing executive coaching. Because of common misconceptions around executive coaching and other disciplines, like mentoring or counselling, these will also be discussed comparatively to ensure the reader understand the different disciplines and how they overlap. The last section will address the value of executive coaching.

There is still a great deal of confusion and mystery as to what exactly happens in a coaching relationship when the coach and coachee engage. Most articles written on executive coaching, the process, what worked and outcomes achieved, is written from the coach's point of view (Kilburg, 2004; Lowman, 2005).

Lowman (2005:91) argued that, “Adding the perspective of the person being coached is especially useful because what interventionists think may be of importance to a process of change may not be what was viewed as being most helpful by the client”. The research therefore aims to provide a glimpse of how executives and coachees experience the process from their perspectives.

In this competitive environment, employees must learn to adapt quicker to a constantly changing workplace in order to stay competitive in the marketplace (Mink et al, 1993). Coaching is a popular tool in the workplace because of increased global changes, job transitions along with downsizing and restructuring which causes less effective, stressed employees (Wright, 2005).

More than ever before demands are being placed on the individual and the organisation to adapt and to change to stay competitive (Mink et al, 1993). Because of these pressures placed on executives, they need methods to release stress and prevent burnout. In order for executives to adapt to the ever-changing global environment and to stay abreast of market changes they need continuous learning and development.

The CIPD indicated that the following factors lead to an increased demand for coaching as an intervention:

1. The fast paced business environment,
2. The flatter organisation structures,
3. The importance of lifelong learning,
4. The financial implications of poor performing executives
5. The trend for individuals to take greater personal responsibility (Jarvis, 2004).
6. The evolving business environment and individuals and organisations that have to learn to adapt to change more quickly (maybe one of the greatest factors). This especially pertains to executives, as they are the visionaries and strategists who have to lead an organisation into the future direction.

De Vries (2005) believes the opportunity to continue to learn and to renew oneself has become a great motivator for executives. Mink also shared this viewpoint and stated that “in today's environment of comparatively rapid change, good coaching provides a foundation for continuous improvement” (Mink et al, 1993:1). Coaching has become one of the most powerful strategic and tactical weapons in the executive repertoire because of its potential to establish, fine-tune, or rebuild the executive's competencies that are needed to remain competitive in the work environment (De Vries, 2005).

2.2 HISTORY OF COACHING

Dilts (2003) indicates that the term ‘coach’ comes from the English word *coche* which means ‘a wagon or carriage’. A ‘coach’ is a vehicle that was used by people to transport them to their desired location. The concept ‘coaching’ being used to describe knowledge transference, was derived from the idea that the tutor or teacher ‘conveys’ or ‘transports’ the student through his or her studies (Dilts, 2003). Historically coaching was viewed as an action to improve specific behavioural performance. Therefore a coach will usually observe the behaviour of the student and give practical guidance on how to improve a specific skill. This development takes place through feedback and careful observation.

When people refer to a coach, the first thing that comes to mind is a sports coach. Although the term coach became popular in a sports environment, it is also now used to refer to people who coach others in the art of life or business (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005). Beginning in the 1980's the concept of coaching has expanded to where it also refers now to training or developing people within the business environment and not focusing only on practical skills (Dilts, 2003). Because it all started in a sports environment, it is necessary to examine it and pay attention to the sporting world. In organisations where personal development is difficult to measure and can be seen as indistinct or vague, it is the opposite in the competitive, sports-based environments where progress can be visibly seen (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005). It is

therefore more effective to use the sports metaphor in executive or business coaching as people may find it easier to relate to their favourite or successful sports person or team. .

Gallwey's book *The Inner Game of Tennis* first published in 1972, marks the emergence of a new approach to personal performance. Traditionally, sports coaches observed athletes and then instructed them to move more efficiently. However, Gallwey used a different approach that was influenced by his experience of Zen and mediation, and found it was much more effective to enable people to become aware of their internal state (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006).

In this book, he proposed that the opponent in one's mind, the internal critic, is far more powerful and influential than the opponent on the tennis court. He therefore believed that by silencing the internal critic and reducing the personal obstacles to their performance, the player released their natural ability. Their performance can therefore be increased tremendously without technical instruction from the coach (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006).

The philosophy affirmed that once an athlete learned to control the mind and the inner mental game, then the proper physical action will follow. Where the focus was on a more behaviouristic approach, it shifted towards humanistic transpersonal psychological principles. The new "coaching" approach focused strongly on the mental mindset of the athlete rather than only on the physical action (Verma, 2007). Gallwey extended his approach to other sports, and then the investigation of his corporate tennis-playing clients into the work environment (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006). Businesses started to adopt the same ideas and in the 1980's coaching became a popular term in corporate and business circles (Verma, 2007).

In 1988, Sir John Whitmore, a motor racing champion, published the book "*Coaching for Performance*" and also contributed to clarify the philosophy of Coaching practiced off the sports field. Coaching emerged as a practice used to help individuals increase their performance in all areas of life (Verma, 2007). The GROW model, originally conceived by Graham Alexander but brought to the

fore by Sir John Whitmore, became one of the most well-known and influential coaching models (<http://www.performancecoachinginternational.com/resources/articles/historyofcoaching.asp>).

The term 'executive coaching' was introduced in the 1980s in the UK through a small group of people including John Whitmore, Graham Alexander and their associates. They started as sports coaches using the Inner Game approach invented by Gallwey (Roberts & Jarrett, 2006).

Today coaching is utilized in several corporations, and currently a majority of Fortune 500 companies hire coaches to work with senior management. USA Today estimates that coaching is the second fastest growing profession in the United States, after Information Technology (Verma, 2007).

2.3 COACHING

People and companies adopt various forms and approaches towards coaching. The word coach has different meanings and roles attached to it and some might view it as a more directive approach where others believe it is a non-directive supportive role. There are two distinct ways to approach coaching and the development of the individual being coached. On the one side coaching from a sports related view is a more directive style and is closely related to the approach of mentoring. Transference is used, whereby an expert or person with prior knowledge or experience imparts his/her wisdom to others, for optimising performance (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005).

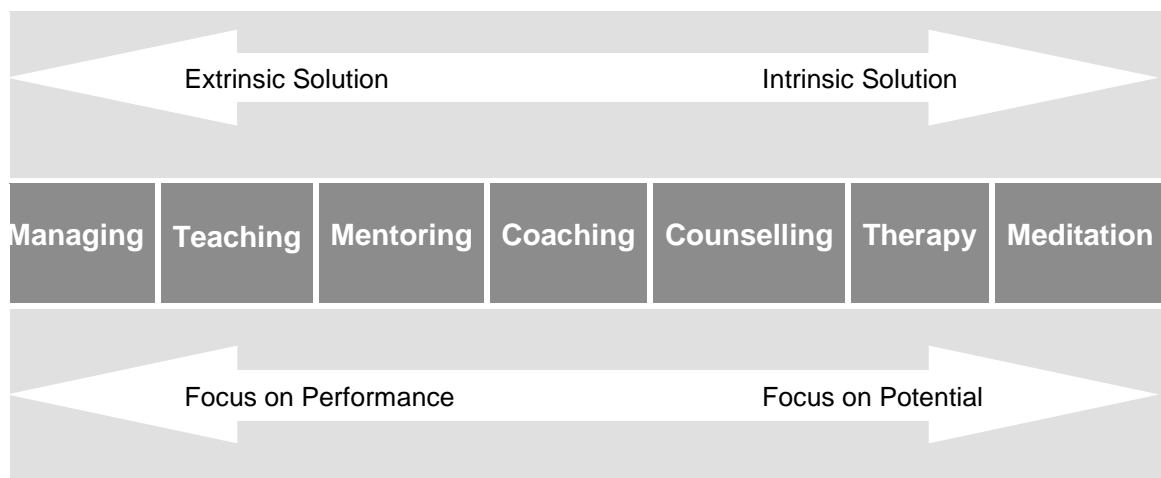
On the other side there is a non-directive style of discovery. This approach is from the viewpoint that the coach's role is to help others release untapped capability and potential (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005). It involves a process of self-awareness and self-insight, where the coach believes the "mind that asks the question, also holds the answer to the question". Coaches with a stronger background in psychology and psychotherapy seem to support the

approach of self-discovery, rather than a more behavioural or transferring approach.

There is an ongoing debate between which of these is a more appropriate style to use during the coaching process. In the literature and research articles that were explored, executive coaching specifically focused on a non-directive approach of self-discovery and very few experts viewed it as transference of knowledge. Therefore, the literature review will focus on coaching as a non-directive approach.

In Table 1 the coaching continuum is visually introduced. The left-hand side is a direct approach, leading to a less directive approach to the right-hand side. Management is typically where someone is commanding or directing people towards the completion or attainment of a specific goal (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005). Ideas will be given and specific instructions that need to be followed. It is an extrinsic or external solution and there is little space for self-discovery or learning. There is a strong focus on performance and success can be measured on the performance or task delivered. Therapy or counselling on the other hand is an approach where the individual is supported to discover themselves and increase self-awareness.

Table 1 Coaching Continuum (Leimon, Moscovici & McMahon, 2005)



The coaches work from the paradigm that the coachees know their own minds better than anyone else and ultimately know the answers to their own questions (Palmer, 2003). Therefore the role of coach is that of catalyst or facilitator, to support and lead the coachee towards new insights.

In the coaching process it is important to support the coachee to deliver change that will add value and be sustainable. Any lasting solution will be one that the coachee discovers, owns and is able to maintain, after the coaching process. If the coach is too directive in style and only provides the coachee with solutions to his/her problems and does not create an environment that leads to enhanced self-awareness and insight, little long-term benefits will be attained from the coaching process.

The Association for Coaching is a UK based professional association for coaches (www.associationforcoaching.com). The following are direct quotes from the association's guidelines regarding coaching:

- Coaching enables the clients to be the best they can be in the areas they choose to focus on.
- Typically the clients meet with the coach in a one-to-one confidential partnership. The client chooses the focus of the conversation and the coach works with them by listening and contributing observations and questions to help them clarify their understanding of the situation and to move them into action to enable them to progress towards their goals.
- Coaching accelerates clients' progress by helping them to focus on where they want to go, to become aware of blocks, attitudes and aptitudes that affect their choices and by supporting them in developing strategies to achieve their goals. Ownership of content and decisions remain with the client throughout.

2.4 EXECUTIVE COACHING

*'You cannot teach a man anything; you can
only help him find it within himself.'*

Galileo Galilei (1564 – 1642)

Executive coaching is a fairly new field and has emerged because of the increased pressures and demands on executives. The primary purpose of executive coaching is enhanced performance of the executive and the overall performance of the organisation (Axmith, 2004).

The battle for talent is a reality in today's organisations and people are being promoted to executive positions at a younger age. As a result executives experience such high levels of stress and enormous work pressures that they are not always able to share their concerns and issues with subordinates or team members. Taking on such a responsibility can often create feelings of insecurity and loneliness (De Vries, 2005).

Managing interpersonal relationships has become essential for executives as it differentiates mediocre, from high performing organisations (De VRies, 2005). Executive coaching is a highly-personal learning process that involves action learning and a partnership relationship with the coach, that enables the executive to reflect on his/her own behaviour and impact as a leader (Berlyn, 2005).

Coaching is an appreciative approach that incorporates a discovery-based inquiry and helps the executives to proactively manage their opportunities and challenges (Wright, 2005). Morris (In Perlik, 1999) also stated that coaching gives executives an opportunity to confront and deal with those day-to-day interpersonal challenges.

Murphy (2004) describes executive coaching in the management domain as an intervention that help organisations to reach their full potential by intervening at the executive level, to enhance their overall functionality through improved interpersonal skills and/or business savvy and knowledge. Murphy (2004) defined executive coaching as a formal activity performed by individuals outside the organisation, who aim to improve identified developmental needs of an executive.

Coaching involves a process where the coach aids the individual in realising the internal and external barriers that prevent learning and progress. It focuses on developing an executives full potential by leading him/her to think and act beyond existing limits and paradigms. It is a highly individualised process of development where the coach and the executive develop a development strategy to increase executive's effectiveness and examine the impact of behaviour and reflect on values and goals (Berlyn, 2005).

Coaching Definitions

The following definitions describe different views and approaches towards executive coaching:

“Executive Coaching is a facilitative one-to-one, mutually designed relationship between a professional coach and a key contributor who has a powerful position in the organisation...The coaching is contracted for the benefit of a client who is accountable for highly complex decisions with wide scope of impact on the organisation and industry as a whole. The focus of the coaching is usually focused on organisational performance or development, but it may also serve a personal component as well.”

Summary findings from the International Executive Coaching Summit, October 1999, compiled by Lee Smith and Jeannine Sandstrom, and including information produced by 36 coaches. (In <http://www.executivecoachacademy.com/definitions.html>)

“Coaching is a one-on-one development process formally contracted between a professional coach and a management-level client to increase the client's managerial and/or leadership performance, often using action learning.”

Robert J. Lee syllabus for “Change At the Executive Level” Fall, 2002 Syllabus, Milano Graduate School, New School University. (In <http://www.executivecoachacademy.com/definitions.html>)

“Executive Coaching is aimed at inspiring executive leaders to make behavioural changes which transform themselves and the people around them thereby increasing business results and performance.”

Jeremy Robinson, working definition of executive coaching. (In <http://www.executivecoachacademy.com/definitions.html>)

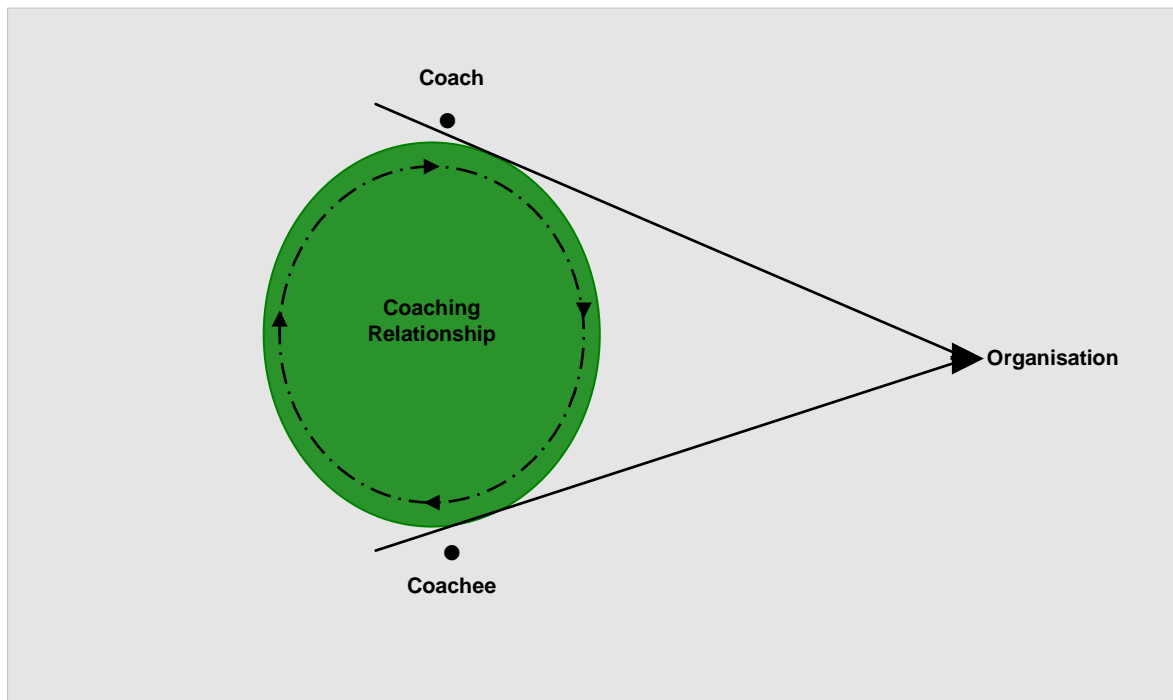
“The essence of executive coaching is helping leaders get unstuck from their dilemmas and assisting them to transfer their learning into results for the organisation.”

Mary Beth O’Neill “Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart” page 5. (In <http://www.executivecoachacademy.com/definitions.html>)

From the definitions it is clear that coaching involves a process that supports and helps the leaders or executives to be more successful in their positions. Some coaches work from different perspectives and methodologies, but the end result or focus is very similar and that is to impact on the executive’s ability to deliver organisational goals.

There are four important concepts that form part of executive coaching. Firstly it is the client, executive or coachee, the coach, the coaching process and lastly the organisation. The organisation is not necessarily always part of executive coaching, however when the coaching intervention is sponsored by the organisation it is crucial for the coach to provide some form of feedback to the organisation. Diagram 1 describes the different role players in the coaching process. In order to understand the process and each of these role players the concepts will be discussed and defined individually in the next section.

Diagram 1 Different role players in Executive Coaching (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005)



2.4.1 EXECUTIVE

- a) A person who is responsible for carrying out plans and managing other people in a business (www.mdbc.gov.au/subs/The_River/glossary.html).
- b) A person responsible for the administration of a business, having the function of carrying out plans or orders (wordnet.princeton.edu/perl/webwn)
- c) All persons whose assignments require primary (and major) responsibility for management of the institution, or a customarily recognized department or subdivision thereof (www.k-state.edu/pa/statinfo/factbook/2007/EEOC.DOC).
- d) Someone in a high position, especially in business, who makes decisions and puts them into action (Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary).

It is important to define an executive to ensure the term executive coaching is clear. The executive refers to those individuals or teams with executive responsibility or accountability and also decision-making authority. It will therefore include and focus on managers, directors or other high potential people (McAdam, 2005).

The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines an executive as someone with administrative or supervisory authority. Therefore, for the purpose of this study an executive will be defined as a high level manager or someone who is part of a senior management team of an organisation, or someone with decision-making authority.

2.4.2 COACH

- a) Instruction or tuition, a trainer or instructor.

The coach is the person guiding the coaching process. This coaching can take place in a one-to-one basis or it can take place in a team environment, depending on the requirements and needs (McAdam, 2005). In a team environment it focuses on a high-level management team that may require coaching to increase their effectiveness and address their overall efficiency. In this study, however, the focus is on coaching as an individual process and little time will be spent on team coaching as a process.

Whitherspoon and Randall (1998) use the metaphor of a practice field where soccer players are able to practice their skills and try out new ideas before going into the game. In a practice field, the players can be slowed down and new skills tried and tested. In the business environment, individuals meet with a coach who encourages them to try out different ideas. It is a situation where executives can 'practise', make mistakes and learn, before facing the actual challenges. It prepares them for future possible scenarios and possibilities.

Morris (In Perlik, 1999) believes that an executive coach is a personal consultant, who works with high-level executives to aid them in developing the personal and soft skills. It is an objective facilitator who encourages executives to access their own wisdom and improve their skills. Executive coaching is based on the key principle that the coachees know their own minds better than anyone else and ultimately know the answers to their own questions (Palmer, 2003).

The coach acts as a sounding board, allowing executives a safe and confidential environment to express their concerns, issues and problems faced in the work environment. Executive coaches help clients in setting higher rewards and in developing personal and professional goals that is aligned with corporate values. The coach inspires, motivates and challenges the executive with different techniques and viewpoints, in order for them to create win-win situations (In Perlik, 1999).

The role of the executive coach is to unleash the latent potential of the executive. Everybody has mental blocks or perceptions that hold them back from reaching their full potential and being the person they believe they can be (Berlyn, 2005). People may tend to impose restrictions on themselves that limit their knowledge and abilities. The executive coach aids the executive to identify these limiting beliefs and replace these with empowering thoughts and ideas (Berlyn, 2005). The coach is able to encourage continuous learning, much needed by the adults in the evolution of their career and personal growth, through listening, giving support, challenging them and providing feedback. Hancyk (2000) stated that coaching can make a significant difference in the growth of an individual if the person is motivated and interested in progressing.

Dotlich & Cairo (1999:1) wrote on the cover of their book *Action Coaching* that coaching is about "...how to leverage individual performance for company success." The coach is influencing others to develop high performing and committed individuals, through self-awareness and transformation, and thus having a positive impact on the organisation (Kinlaw, 1999; Hargrove, 1995).

"One of the roles of the coach is to provide a safe open learning climate that contributes to an individual's examination of ideas, strategies and blind spots" (Stone, 1999:18). It is therefore necessary to create a supportive and safe environment where executives can explore new strategies, even if it may feel uncomfortable (Katz and Miller, 1996). A coach also offers "...honest and objective feedback that *can* be accepted or rejected without job-threatening consequences or public embarrassment" (Katz & Miller, 1996:111).

McAdam (2005) believes there are a number of issues that are non-negotiable for a coach that attempts to deliver the desired outcomes in a coaching process:

- Firstly they need to know themselves, their strengths and limitations
- They need to be passionate about learning both from their own work and through review and reflection with an experienced supervisor
- They need to understand the organisational context in which coaching takes place
- They need to have undergone a professional training programme with observation as part of the process.

It is necessary for executive coaches to go through an appropriate training programme to ensure they understand themselves and their boundaries that surround the coaching process. If a coach attempts to deal with issues that fall outside his area of expertise, they may end up in a situation where they cause more hurt or problems for the individual.

There is not yet conclusive evidence on what makes a coach qualified or what makes one approach better than the other (Sherman & Freas, 2004). With few barriers to enter the coaching arena, many self-styled coaches enter the coaching field. Different approaches and techniques can produce similar results and it is therefore difficult to single out either training or practical experience as more important. Sherman and Frease (2004) indicate that the most important criteria are character and insight distilled from personal experiences, as well as formal training. It is therefore an ongoing debate as to what qualifies someone as an executive coach.

In South Africa there is not yet a professional body that monitors the coaches or individuals that call themselves coaches. It is therefore necessary to evaluate coaches individually and to identify someone with whom the coachee relates.

2.4.3 COACHING RELATIONSHIP/ PROCESS

Coaches provide executives with a partnership that aids them in achieving fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. Executive coaches support the client in bringing forth solutions and strategies, as they believe the client is naturally resourceful and already has the solution in their own minds. However, they need support and assistance to access these solutions and to consider the different possibilities (International Coach Federation, In Wright, 2005)

Coaching as a process allows individuals or executives to develop positive attitudes towards change and improve their learning and growth in organisations. Coaching is a powerful tool that assists executives in increasing their performance and enhances the quality of their lives (Mink et al, 1993).

In the coaching process the individual or executive brings something to the session that he/she wants to share. Therefore, coaching takes place in the area where the individual has chosen to learn or grow (Hancyk, 2000). Major change can take place when the individuals use their past experience and knowledge in a new situation. An envisioning process where the executive focuses on success can have profound effects and positive results (Wight, 2005). "People are motivated to work on their development when they perceive discrepancies between where they are, and where they wish to go. "The coach's task is to help people make sense of, and act on relevant information" (Peterson, 1996:79). Hancyk (2000) also states that the coaching process is most effective if the individual is a willing participant who has been informed of the process, benefits and potential learning.

One of the most important aspects of executive coaching is a trust relationship where the executive feels safe to share and express his/her ideas, emotions and challenges (Berlyn, 2005). The coaching relationships allow individuals to lower their defences and discuss personal issues, thereby also exploring their blind spots, attitudes, behaviour and weaknesses (Hancyk, 2000). The coaching process allows the individual to put everything on the table so that the client can

establish goals and create opportunities or strategies, to move out of the “stuck” phase (Wright, 2005).

The ‘whole person’ is able to show up in coaching and this approach recognises the fact that, at times, issues surfacing have a root cause in the individual’s personal life (Wright, 2005). "To achieve lasting and fundamental change, people need to alter their perspectives, to see things in a new light, or to overcome internal resistances that may be unrecognized and habitual” (Tobias, 1996:88). The coach is able to help the individual to explore patterns of behaviour that limit their progress, personal success and learning. This is done through artful questioning that challenges the individuals to be honest with themselves (Hancyk, 2000).

"Effective adult thinking is not that which provides immediate *answers*, but that which first discovers the important questions and exposes the important problems” (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991:311, quoting Reigel). Coaching is an ongoing process. "Meaningful changes seldom happen in one shot interventions, so an ongoing process is potentially more thorough and lasting" (Tobias, 1996:87).

Coaching is a process of self-discovery and the coach takes on a role of mirror and challenger (Mink et al, 1993:139). The coach therefore challenges the individual’s perceptions, views and beliefs in order for him/her to find new solutions to old problems or barriers. The coach is an independent sounding board and strategic partner in a confidential and safe environment. Sherman and Freas (2004) highlight the importance of chemistry and matching between the coach and coachee and that this should be one of the criteria when selecting a coach. DeNisi and Kluger (2000) confirm this view by stating that ‘chemistry’ in the coaching relationship can increase accountability and commitment from the coachee. The coach could use the relationship effectively to increase the manager’s accountability. They also believe that a trust relationship can help coachees cope with negative emotions and defuse defensive reactions (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000).

2.4.4 ORGANISATION/ SPONSOR

Executive coaching is usually sponsored by the organisation which nominated the coachee as a future leader and something which is possibly preventing the executive from performing optimally. It is therefore also important for the organisation to receive feedback on the coaching process.

Wasylyshyn (2003:139) defines executive coaching as the following: “Executive Coaching is a company-sponsored perk for top high-potential employees. It is a customized and holistic development process that provides deep behavioral insights intended to accelerate an executive’s business results and effectiveness as a leader. This coaching is based on a collaborative relationship among the executive, his/her boss, his/her human resources manager, and an executive coach.” With a strong emphasis on the organisation, it is important for the coach to build a good relationship with human resources or relevant stakeholders without compromising the trust relationship between the coach and coachee.

Michelman (2004) describes the coaching process as a three-way partnership. This is between the coachee, executive and the involved organisation, in which all parties agree on specific goals and outcomes to be achieved in the coaching process.

It is important for leaders to continue to grow and evolve as the environment changes. New leaders also need to be trained and developed to take on the increasing challenges of today’s organisations. Coaching continues to play a prominent role in assisting managers to transform into leaders and for leaders to effectively adapt to their changing roles and increasing demands (Hancyk, 2000).

2.5 DIFFERENT DEVELOPMENT INTERVENTIONS

Each person accumulates experiences that serve as the basis for new learning and exploration. The ability to relate new learning to life experiences, reinforces the learning and the relevance of new information in the learner's life. The coach facilitates the process of using positive life experiences in new situations and assists the individual to explore blind spots, perceptions and biases that might hamper personal growth and change (Hancyk, 2000). Coachees are therefore encouraged to incorporate their experiences and knowledge into new learning situations. "This is one reason why so much corporate training doesn't stick on the job; the process of connecting the past, present and new learning is left out" (Doyle, 1999:65). Through these application exercises, new skills and behaviours are learned and ingrained by the coachee. (Hancyk, 2000).

Coaching tends to be used interchangeably with other disciplines to describe 'helping activities'. There is however, a vast difference between these different disciplines and their approaches. The CIPD guide has identified some general characteristics of the coaching process (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- It is a one-to-one development discussions
- It provides the client with feedback regarding their strengths and development areas
- It focuses on specific problems or issues
- Executive coaching tends to have a longer time frame than other coaching initiatives
- It is a non-directive development initiative
- It focuses on developing both the individual and organisation's goals
- It assumes that the individual is psychologically healthy and does not require a clinical intervention

- It works on the principle that the executive is self-aware or can achieve self-awareness
- It is related to a specific time frame
- It is a skilled activity

As noted earlier the different approaches tend to be confused at times, and for the purpose of this study, it is important that the reader understands each of these approaches and how these differ from coaching. However, it is also important to note that these approaches also overlap and this contributed to the lack of conceptual clarity in literature (Murphy, 2004). While this is not part of the research question, it is important to get a clear idea of what coaching is, before continuing with the value of the approach.

Each of these are used as a development intervention but have different strengths and it is important to use the correct approach. If a coach or mentor attempts to aid a client with deep-seated psychological problems for example, he/she can do more harm to the client than add value. It is therefore vital for the expert to know where his knowledge or area of capability ends and when to refer a client.

In Table 2 the main characteristic of each intervention is highlighted.

Table 2 Coaching Distinctions (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005)

Coaching is:

- Solution and action focused
- Awareness based
- Focused towards task, performance and development
- Non-directive
- Structured

Mentoring is:

- Delivered by an experienced and usually senior internal or external manager
- Focused on career development, policy, politics and networking
- Giving Advice
- More free-form

Counselling is:

- Meaning focused
- Analytically based
- Focused on more feelings
- More free-form
- Usually external

Therapy is:

- Enable the individual to cope better in social, business or family environment
- Involve modifying behaviour
- Focus on more deep-seated and potentially damaging issues
- Qualified therapists or psychologists

Training is:

- Focused on developing skills and capabilities
- Concerned with imparting concrete knowledge and concrete matters such as products, corporate objectives and processes
- More group oriented
- Usually a structured training programme

Consulting is:

- Focused on considering problems, arriving at a conclusion and recommending advice
- Specific to the consultants area of expertise
- More directive and solution-based

Table 2 highlighted the different development interventions and these will be discussed more in-depth. Firstly, mentoring will be discussed and then follows counselling, therapy, training and lastly, consulting.

2.5.1 MENTORING

There is still a lot of confusion between the terms coaching and mentoring and some authors' use these terms interchangeably to refer to the same process (Murphy, 2004). However, this leads to confusion and there are definite differences between the two approaches.

Although both strategies use similar skills, there is a clear distinction between them with regards to purpose and provider. The term "mentoring" originates in Greek mythology. Odysseus entrusted the education of his son to a good friend named Mentor, saying to him, "tell him all you know" (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

This is still the purpose of mentoring, where an older and more experienced colleague shares business information, knowledge and skills with a less experienced colleague, to help the mentee progress in his/her career development. The mentor is usually an internal person and the focus is on long-term development rather than short-term development (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

Wright (2005) describes mentoring traditionally as a hierarchical relationship in which a higher-level individual transfers his/her domain-specific knowledge to a junior. The aim is to develop and grow a junior team member within the organisation and could also form part of succession planning (Murphy, 2004).

The key difference between coaching and mentoring is that mentoring traditionally involves an individual with expert knowledge, teaching, or passing on knowledge to someone without the same knowledge or expertise (Wright, 2005). The mentor therefore supports the growth process of the mentee and also

facilitates the upward mobility of junior organisational members (Allen, Russell, & Maetzke, 1997). An executive coach, however, is not necessarily more knowledgeable than his client, in terms of technical information. Coaching involves a process where the coach facilitates or assists the individual with learning, or in finding solutions to challenges (Wright, 2005).

The coach is more of a sounding board where the executive is able to reflect and discuss challenges rather than mastering a technical skill. Coaching requires self-direction, and mentoring is more a process of directing an individual to take the correct actions. However, both mentoring and coaching requires a relationship of mutual trust and respect, in order to be successful (Nykodym *et al.*, 1995).

Wright (2005) believes that the role of a coach is one of helping the client to learn how to achieve more, whereas the mentor aims to be a resource to the mentee. The mentor's focus is more on technical skill and expertise and the coach's skill lies in his ability to achieve without directing the client. Coaching requires the client to take ownership of his/her performance.

A relationship of mutual trust and respect is necessary for a mentee to benefit from a mentoring process, however, it is unlike coaching which is typically a less emotionally involved process with the focus on skill and knowledge development (Drodge and Murphy, 2002). With executive coaching, self-reflection and awareness are essential for the sustained change and growth of the executive. The coaching relationship could also anticipate more emotional involvement and openness from the executive (Drodge and Murphy, 2002).

Coaching as an activity, is mostly performed by outside consultants for the improvement and growth of mutually agreed development needs between an executive and his/her coach however, mentoring can occur either formally or informally at any level in the organisation and is mostly internal (Godshalk & Sosik, 2000).

The *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research* (1996), indicates that coaching involves the executive's entire psychological world and provides the opportunity for self-reflection and enhanced insight. Mentoring focuses more on mastering a specific skill (Murphy, 2004).

2.5.2 COUNSELLING

There are very significant differences between coaching and counselling in the focus and intention of the interaction. The counseling process is centrally focused on enhancing self-awareness that can lead to renewed goal setting or personal change through improved decision making, social adjustment, or career development (Rogers, 1980).

Coaching is a solution-focused and action-oriented approach and addresses aspirations, objectives and tasks. Counselling on the other hand is more meaning-based and focuses more on feelings and specific experiences. Counselling also aims to assist people in understanding themselves and their behaviour better, and is more a free-form approach. Coaching tends to be a structured process with specific goals to attain. Coaching puts the emphasis on gaining clarity on what the individual wants to achieve (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

2.5.3 THERAPY

According to Williams (2004) coaching differs from therapy as it is not about pathology and diagnosis but more importantly it is about the study of human potential and possibility. Coaching empowers the individual, and is a process that helps them to discover their opportunities and endless possibilities. It improves their overall mental health and quality of life (Williams, 2004).

Alexander and Renshaw (2005) believe that therapy is a process that enables the client to cope better in the world. It usually focuses on providing a treatment

for an underlying or deep seated problem that manifests in the individual's daily life (Davison & Gasiorowski, 2006).

The process aims at modifying behaviour to enable the client to fit more easily into the normal expectations of social, business or family life. Therapy is a valuable process when there are potentially deep seated or damaging issues that inhibit the individual, to cope with daily life, or hinders them from functioning normally (Alexander and Renshaw, 2005).

Therapy is usually carried out by a therapist, or someone who is trained in the mental health field and who is able to effectively assist the individual with this process. (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005) Therefore, it is important for a coach to know their own boundaries, and to realise when the individual is dealing with issues outside his/her area of expertise, and to refer such an individual to a therapist. Coaches who attempt to assist individuals with therapeutic issues could potentially harm the coachee if they are not trained to deal with these situations (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). Coaching, however, involves individuals who want to increase their performance levels and attain their goals at a faster rate. A coachee usually has a specific goal or outcome that he/she wants to obtain. The coach may therefore have experience in psychology, but is not necessarily trained in the mental health profession (Davison & Gasiorowski, 2006).

Williams (2004) describes coaching as a process that focuses on goals and assists the client to develop and grow. Very little time is spent in the past, and the coach focuses on future possibilities rather than past failures. The coach assists the executive to bypass mistakes and navigate them through the development process to acquire skills or accomplish personal and professional achievements (Silsbee, 2004 & Whitworth et al., 1998). Williams believes that therapy is about *recovering and uncovering* while coaching is about *discovering*. (Williams, 2004)

Both approaches also emphasise the importance and the value of the relationship between the therapist/coach and the client or executive. The

relationship is seen as the vehicle on which learning and change occurs (Davison & Gasiorowski, 2006).

2.5.4 TRAINING

Training is also a method of growth and development for individuals, however there is a vast difference between coaching and training (Druckman & Bjork, 1991).

The purpose of training is mostly to assist people in gaining knowledge on a specific subject and the learning and developing of a new skill (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). The approach is a more prescriptive and directive style, where the trainer or facilitator delivers the information. The trainer has a structured training agenda and the trainees adapt to the process (Schmidt and Bjork, 1992). Training is usually a classroom situation and it is a structured learning session where a specific skill or knowledge is transferred. The key objective of a training programme is to assist individuals in a learning process, to perform effectively on a specific post-training task (Druckman & Bjork, 1991).

Training is extremely valuable in learning new information and exposing individuals to new ideas and approaches. However, the drawback of training is that it is not tailored to the unique individual, their learning styles or their business context. It leaves the trainee with valuable information and knowledge but does not necessarily assist them in applying their new skills (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

Coaching on the other hand is a more individualised process where the coachee is able to discover and explore ideas and learning in their own time frame (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). The coachee usually sets the tone and specific goals are determined from his/her personal challenges. Together the coach and the coachee decide on the goals to be achieved during the coaching process (Wright, 2005). The coachee is able to learn through his/her own experience rather than being prescribed the correct way or the answer to a specific question.

It is a unique process that focuses on the individual's own learning goals and therefore the return on investment should be high (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

While coaching is also a method where learning takes place, the process involves a much more intimate exploration of the interpersonal dynamics that surround the executives work environment. Personal self-reflection is the cornerstone of the coaching process, where training typically involves an off-the-rack programme (Drodge & Murphy, 2002).

According to Schmidt and Bjork (1992) there are many instances where successful completion of a training program does not result in increased productivity or work performance. One study (Olivero, Bane & Kopelman, 1997) concluded that a training programme was considerably more successful and resulted in higher performance levels, when combined with one-on-one coaching sessions. Alexander and Renshaw (2005) also supports this view and stated that highly effective development is a combination of training and coaching that enables the individual to learn intellectually as well as through experience. Once the training has been completed, coaching can be used effectively to facilitate the implementation of this new learning and skills, so as to gain maximum benefit from the training process.

2.5.5 CONSULTING

Consulting is a directive approach whereby a problem situation is discussed and specific solutions or possible actions are provided. Consulting also depends on selling a specific skill or solution to the client that the consultant believes will be beneficial to the organisation.

Coaching and consultancy have different approaches and come from different psychological paradigms. However, they are believed to be a highly potent force when used in conjunction with one another (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

2.6 COACHING APPROACH

McAdam (2005) describes coaching as a pull action, whereas consulting, for example, is more of a push action in terms of the approach and communication style. The Push approach relies heavily on telling and selling. The Pull approach creates an environment where the executive or participant learn for themselves and identify possible solutions. It is a more supportive environment that is open to discussion and reflection.

While both styles of pushing and pulling have their place, there is a great danger in applying the pushing approach. One of the key differences in the coaching process is that it gives the executive the power and value through a pulling approach. This ensures that what is addressed is highly relevant to the coachee and means he is authentic in committing to a goal or course of action. This enabling process taps into their capability and gives them the flexibility to decide for themselves, the right way to move forward and to address their individual uniqueness. Ownership and buy-in happens automatically as they connect to the most important factors to enhance their work and private lives (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

There are various possible communication styles on the spectrum between pushing and pulling, including giving advice, making suggestions, giving feedback and asking questions. While the most valuable long-term benefit can be attained through asking questions, the coachee can also benefit from the other approaches. However, the coach should rather provide information for further reflection; than providing a definite 'right' answer. In this process it is important that the coach has a high level of self-awareness to be sensitive towards the executive, and to know when to apply which style on the spectrum. There is a difference in providing a genuine suggestion that can be rejected without any consequences, and giving instruction. The coach should be honest and open with the executive and rather try to provide descriptive non-judgemental feedback (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

Table 3 describes the difference between pulling and pushing communication approaches. Pulling style is a non-directive approach that includes listening, reflection, summarising, asking questions and making suggestions. A pushing style is more directive and includes giving feedback, offering guidance, giving advice, instructing and telling. Coaching in essence, is a more non-directive approach that gives the executive an opportunity to find the answers within his own wisdom with support from the coach. Each style has certain benefits and can be used very effectively, however, it is important to note that when coaching becomes more directive in style, it moves away from the value of coaching and its methodology. A directive style tends to push the executive towards a solution and they are not able to reflect on their own behaviour and learn form their own mistakes. They have little chance to enhance their self-insight and self-awareness.

Table 3 Pulling vs Pushing (McAdam, 2005)

Pull	Non Directive Listening Reflecting Summarising Asking Questions Making Suggestions	Counselling
		Coaching
Push	Directive Giving Feedback Offering Guidance Giving Advise Instructing Telling	Consulting

2.6.1 QUESTIONING & LISTENING

People are surrounded by family members, friends or colleagues who are very quick to offer unsolicited advice and give solutions. Without much feeling or thought, an instant opinion is offered (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). McAdam (2005) believes that coaching is different and that “coaching requires the coach to look, listen and learn, and to do this by active listening and a more forensic approach to questioning than many of us generally deploy.”

2.6.2 REFLECTION

The coach allows the executive the freedom and flexibility to reflect on their feelings and emotions and that is not possible in their work environment. Through reflection and asking the right questions, the executive is able to view or approach supposedly insurmountable problems in a different way, and new approaches to these old problems begin to emerge. The coach creates a safe environment for the executive and regularly holds-up the mirror for him/her. This empowers the client, and through enhanced self-insight and self-awareness, the executives are able to increasingly hold up the mirror for themselves (McAdam, 2005).

2.7 COACHING MODEL

The GROW model strongly influenced coaching and the development of coaching. The model was conceived by Graham Alexander and brought to the fore by Sir John Whitmore, and is possibly the best known coaching model. The GROW model provides a structure for the coaching conversation that is designed to ensure outcomes (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

Many coach training programmes use the GROW model as a framework to develop the coaching relationship. A study conducted (2002) by the Work Foundation and the School of Coaching in the UK revealed that 34% of coaches

use this model. Another third of the respondents use a variety of models and the remaining third did not use a specific model or approach (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2006).

The GROW model is a simple and effective model that can be applied to coaching interaction and captures a key aspect of coaching: enabling people to grow, develop their skills, achieve performance and gain fulfilment (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). The phases in the GROW model can be described as:

- Goal
- Reality
- Options
- Wrap-up

Effective coaches have GROW or similar models internalised so that it becomes an unconscious framework that guides the coaching process. Within this framework, the coaching process is natural and flowing. If the process becomes too fixed or rigid, it detracts from human connection and from the relationship. Although most sessions are cyclical in nature and not linear, the model enables the coach to recap earlier phases and assist the coach to see clearly and move forward (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

The GROW model and the different phases will be discussed and each step will be examined. In Diagram 2 the different phases can be clearly seen and a short description of each phase is provided.

Diagram 2 GROW Coaching Model (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005)



2.7.1 BACKGROUND/ TOPIC

Firstly the coach needs to establish and agree on a topic for discussion. This first part could also be known as the background phase where the coach builds rapport and asks questions to gain information. On occasion, it may be appropriate for a coach to suggest a topic, however, unless the coachee owns it and also has a serious need to discuss it, it should be put on the backburner (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

It is necessary for a coach to prepare for a session, however, if the previously identified topic is rigidly adhered to, he/she runs the risk of failing to connect authentically to the coachee. If the coachee expresses his/her topic in a rather vague and general fashion, it is important to unravel what he/she really wants to focus on. The coach can aid the coachee through questioning and probing to clarify his/her own mind so that the topic becomes illuminated (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). Again it is important to use a pulling style in this phase and not to prescribe to the coachee a topic for discussion but to let the coachee express his/her need and this will also lead to buy-in, especially if it is the first session.

Some valuable questions to establish the topic could include (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- What would you like to discuss in today's session?
- What topic do you want to address?
- What would be the most valuable subject to focus on?

2.7.2 GOAL

In the goal stage, the coach supports the coachee and enables him/her to establish where he/she wants to be and what is wanted by way of achievement (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2006). It is crucial to differentiate between the topic for discussion of a coaching session and a specific outcome. If the topic cannot be changed to a specific and achievable goal during the agreed time frame, it can lead to a purposeless and frustrating conversation. The intention therefore is to set a SMART goal to ensure the coachee is able to reach his goals and achieve the proposed results (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). SMART goals can be identified as:

S – specific

M – measurable

A – attainable, achievable

R – realistic, relevant

T – time-bound & tangible

It is necessary for a coach to ask penetrating questions about the goal to ensure that it is relevant to the coachee, and not just an expectation of the organisation. The client needs to take ownership of the goal and it needs to become real to the coachee. The goals that have personal meaning and relevance to the coach are usually the more likely goals to be achieved (Dembkowski & Eldridge, 2006). After agreeing on a topic, the coach should attempt to establish a goal. The executive may not yet be able to express it clearly and specifically. The coach therefore needs to probe and question the coachee until a realistic and clear goal has been established. It is necessary for the coachee to have clarity on what he/she wants to achieve, and this phase also enhances insight and ownership. Without a clear, specific goal the coachee may value the relationship and safe environment, however, the session will not have the goal-directed approach that differentiates coaching from other daily conversations. This tends to turn out as a meandering conversation without a real purpose or outcome. It is vital for the coach to ensure that the outcome is crystal clear for the coachee (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

The following questions can be valuable and used effectively to determine the goal (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- What would you like to take from this session?
- What output would you like to reach?
- What outcome would ensure time well spent?
- What would be most valuable as an outcome of this session?
- What does success look like to you?

2.7.3 REALITY

The temptation for the coach in this phase is to hurry to a solution and tell the coachee what to do to solve his problem. This would lead to instant gratification for the coach and may save time, but it defeats the purpose of coaching and prevents the coachee from learning and gaining long term wisdom and insight. Alexander and Renshaw (2005) believe that most of the time is spent in this phase. By presenting an opportunity to explore the coachee's ideas in a non-

threatening environment, the coachee is able to face reality. The coach is able to aid the coachee in viewing reality and to gain new insights and raise his/her awareness. It places reality into focus and the coachee will move to a place where he is confronted with the truth and the reality of moving forward and whether he/she is committed towards the process.

Open-ended questions and probing statements assists the coachee to understand and explore reality. These also enable the coachee to see things in a new reality. Some of the following questions can be utilised in the reality phase (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- Tell me about the situation.
- Describe your current reality as you experience it.
- What is your understanding of the situation?
- Describe in detail your experience.
- What control do you have?
- What have you already done?
- What impact does the situation have?
- What resources will you need to face this situation?
- What do you want to happen in this situation?
- What obstacles are you encountering?
- How would the status quo be beneficial?

Alexander and Renshaw (2005) believe that these questions are particularly helpful to high level managers, as they are rarely challenged by subordinates or colleagues in their work environment. It enables them to challenge their perception of reality. This phase is to create clarity and new ways of viewing old problems or situations and then the session moves into the Option phase where the coachee has sufficiently tested his reality to have a clear picture. The questioning and exploration often starts out broadly and moves to the more specific issues until the real problems are illuminated. As this happens the coach and the coachee is able to drill down into a new reality (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

2.7.4 OPTIONS

In this phase the coach and coachee explore and generate options on how to move forward from here. The coachee's reality has been described in detail and it is also important to revisit the goal and to decide if it is still relevant (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

In some instances the coachees are able to identify their issues, problems and development areas and little intervention is needed from the coach. If the coachee has a high level of self-awareness, it is a natural process of self-discovery and exploration. However, some coachee's may need more support and encouragement to discover and identify issues. Asking creative questions to encourage coachees to think 'outside the box' can be extremely useful to overcome barriers. It is important to revisit the initially agreed expectations if the coachee starts becoming dependent on the coach for answers, and it should be emphasised that the coaching process is predominantly non-directive (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). Otherwise the relationship moves to a dependent relationship where the coachee is not gaining the insight and confidence to find his answers, and no long-term learning is achieved.

In the Option phase it is effective to start by asking open-ended questions (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- What options do you have?
- What solutions are available?
- What ideas do you have?
- What have you tried in the past?

After the initial questions, a coach can use more creative, probing questions (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- What have you seen others do?
- If you were an expert in this area what would you do?
- If you had all the resources in the world what would you do?

Different options are considered in this phase and the coachee do not have to commit to a specific course of action. The aim is to find a variety of options that can be pinned down or discarded in the Wrap-up phase. It is important for the coach to remain non-judgemental and not to evaluate the possible suggestions. The coachee needs to feel free to make statements without judgement, as the options will be evaluated and tested in the next stage (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

2.7.5 WRAP-UP

This is the action phase. It may feel that some time has passed since starting the process to reaching a plan of action, but this process is where most of the coachee's learning and awareness takes place (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005). Therefore, the solution is very important, but the process on how to get to the solution is where the coachee grows and learns.

The Wrap-up phase is where the coachee arrives at a final option that is further broken down into specific action steps. The implications and practicality of the decision is evaluated, to ensure that he considered all possible areas. It is important for the coach to press the coachees until clarity is reached about the action steps. This phase ensures that obstacles are removed and actions established which are specific, measurable and time-bound (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005).

The following questions can ensure the action is thoroughly investigated and evaluated (Alexander & Renshaw, 2005):

- What are the implications of taking this action?
- How practical is it?
- How realistic is it?
- What possible obstacles could be in the way?
- Is there anything that would stop you from doing it?
- Are there any risks or downsides?

2.8 VALUE OF EXECUTIVE COACHING

'The unexamined life is not worth living'

– Socrates

Coaching has been used extensively in one form or another to increase the effectiveness and performance of individuals. However, recently coaching has entered the corporate environment where external and internal professionals are coaching individual managers. This resulted in increased productivity and efficiency of high-level managers as well as developing their ability to grow and learn. (Hargrove 1995; Whitmore 1998, Mink, Owen, & Mink 1993 and Kinlaw 1997).

Executive coaching has proven its value to CEOs facing complex business and personal challenges (Axmith, 2004). The war for talent is a reality in today's organisations and people are being promoted to executive positions at a younger age and this leads to increased pressures placed on executives (De Vries, 2005).

Executive coaching is a process that supports the executive's ability to integrate their strategic insight and their current leadership style. It also helps the executive to develop a personal leadership style that leads to effective retention of key personnel and higher productivity for the organisation overall. Executive coaching helps the executive to bridge the gap between certain personal skills or abilities and the successful application of these core executive skills (Berlyn, 2005). Axmith (2004) believes that the primary purpose of executive coaching is enhanced performance of the executive and overall performance of the organisation. De Vries (2005) emphasised the fact that managing interpersonal relationships has become essential for executives, as it differentiates mediocre, from high performing organisations.

The coaching process helps an individual to examine his/her own ideas and stimulates self awareness and self knowledge. It therefore, challenges leaders to consistently align their own actions and ideas with their perceived values (Mink et al, 1993). Mink (Mink et al, 1993:134) believes “coaching is leadership in action”. Hangrove supports this view by stating that coaching “...involves unleashing the human spirit and expanding people's capacity to achieve *goals* and to bring about real change" (Hargrove, 1995:6). Through the alignment of the executive's personal and professional goals, they are able to face the ever changing demands of the business environment (Berlyn, 2005). It also helps the executive to focus more on possible future scenarios, to develop their skill to deal with these difficulties and also to develop a strategic framework.

The coach also assists the executive to identify, plan and review a course of action and assists them to identify possible obstacles and to find answers to these challenges (Berlyn, 2005). This helps the executive to have a ‘planned course of action’ and once faced with these situations is able to quickly take a stand and make decisions, because these possibilities had already been investigated. Therefore, they are able to act with increased confidence and decisiveness.

Christine Turner (2006) wrote an article titled: ‘Ungagged: Executives on Executive Coaching’ where she explored the opinions of executives on the value and utility of executive coaching. From the research Turner (2006) identified five primary benefits of coaching. These are: continuous one-on-one attention; increased self-awareness, personal accountability for development; just-in-time learning and expanded thinking through dialogue with a curious outsider. One of the main benefits of coaching is the opportunity it provides the executive for reflective thinking. The coachee is able to reflect and understand his own behaviour by receiving objective and non-threatening feedback (Hancyk, 2000). Feedback is necessary for people to reach their full potential (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). The higher up an individual moves in the organisation hierarchy, the less honest feedback one receives and this hinders personal development (Saporito,1996). Executives are not always able to share their concerns and

issues with subordinates or team members. Taking on such a responsibility could often create feelings of insecurity and loneliness (De Vries, 2005).

Rumney (2005:39) wrote in his article *To the Top* about the executive Sampson's experience during coaching. Sampson said: "...having someone like Joe [executive coach] who understands me, knows what drives me, challenges me, and I can rely on 100% to keep any confidences, is absolutely invaluable." From this, it is evident that the trust relationship and understanding between the coach and the coachee appears to be one of the valuable factors for executives. Sampson also indicated that the coach was a sounding board for his thinking process and his role was to challenge, question and to expand his horizons when making decisions. The perceived value or benefits of executive coaching appears to vary from coach to coach. Joe Marmilic, an executive coach with the leadership development firm 'The Stephenson Partnership', views the value of coaching as more intangible or "soft skills" as he calls it. He believes that executives have a very high professional skill level, but may lack soft skills and coaching slows them down to reflect on their own behaviour and ultimately empowers them to deal with others in a way that will enhance their results (Rumney, 2005). Executive coaching provides support to ensure the executives retain their focus on their strategic and leadership goals, and turn their dreams into a reality (Berlyn, 2005).

Mark Muirhead, executive coach of the consultancy 'The Mansell Group', says in the article 'To the Top' (Rumney, 2005) that he believes executive coaching adds value in areas like performance management, emotional intelligence and time management. However, any issue that impacts on the performance of the executive is worth addressing through coaching.

Little research has been carried out in the UK (and also South Africa) to measure the bottom line impact of executive coaching, possibly because of the difficulty in defining it. Equally, the personal value for the executive and the changes in his/her behaviour, motivation and leadership skills are hard to measure accurately (Palmer, 2003).

“I see the role of an executive coach as bringing out the full potential of the individual. But ultimately, companies will only pay for coaching if there’s going to be a genuine return in terms of performance” (Palmer, 2003:28).

Turner (2006) stated that executive coaching is a popular leadership development strategy. However, little research has focused on exploring executive coaching from the viewpoint of executives who have been coached (Turner, 2006).

McAdam (2005) believes coaching can deliver the following benefits:

- Providing a sounding board for the executive
- It speeds-up the learning process and enables the executive to adapt more rapidly to changing conditions or new tasks
- It helps the executive to minimise interference and to reach their full potential
- Improves the ability of executives (and teams) to deliver excellent performance

In conclusion, it is clear that there are a number of benefits gained from a coaching relationship. However, most of these articles are written from the perspective of the coach and reflect the experiences of the coach. Therefore this study will focus on the experiences and perceived benefits of executives and coachees to gain clarity and insight into the coaching process and its value.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Research as a process starts with initial curiosity about what or why something is happening (Artinian, 1986). With time, questions develop, and we as human beings have a desire to understand or explain events (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Research is therefore a way in which to understand and explain events. The following chapter will therefore describe the research process which was used to investigate executive coaching as a phenomenon.

This chapter provides a description and brief explanation of the research process. It also addresses the theory behind the use of a qualitative data analysis process and the research design will also be considered. Thereafter the sampling procedure, data collection and method of data analysis are further explored and, lastly the validity, reliability and ethical considerations are discussed.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN

King, Keohane and Verba (1994) describe the research design as a plan that shows, through a discussion of data, how the researcher expects to use the evidence to make conclusions. Mouton (2002) similarly defines it as a plan or blueprint on how the researcher intends conducting the research. It provides a set of guidelines on how to reach the specific research goals (Mouton, 1996). The research design of this study is a qualitative approach, using grounded

theory, to explore and investigate the value and experiences of executive coaching.

3.2.1 QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

The aim of the study is to investigate the experiences and value-add of executive coaching from the coach and the coachees perspectives. A qualitative research approach was followed because it enables the researcher to describe and understand human behaviour rather than attempting to explain it (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

Quantitative research is a technique that uses statistical data and is usually based on numerical measurements of the specific aspects of the phenomena. However, a qualitative approach in contrast, covers a wide range of approaches but does not rely on numerical measurements (King, Keohane and Verba, 1994). The approach to this study is qualitative in nature as it attempts to investigate the experiences and value of executive coaching. This requires a descriptive answer rather than a statistical, quantitative answer (Burgelman, 1983). Qualitative research attempts to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2002).

Dick (1997) believes that “. . .qualitative information increases responsiveness. It is possible to work in natural language which is clearer for informants”. It also allows the participants to describe their attitudes and feelings without losing the rich descriptions and the essence of their experiences (Morse, 1994). This was very important for this research as it mainly investigates the coaching experience from the coach and the coachees’ perspectives and this approach enabled them to express their experiences freely.

One of the most important aspects of qualitative research is the ability to view the world through the eyes of the participant. Therefore, the study examined the information from the participants’ perspectives and tried to understand their individual experiences of executive coaching (Burgelman, 1983). Executive

coaching is explored through the participants' perspectives and provides the researcher with descriptive, firsthand experiences. Qualitative research requires the researcher to go beyond description and definition to reach the meanings, the concepts and the symbols that are understood by the participants (Bryman, 1998; Berg, 1989). As a result of the chosen method of study, the researcher is open and sensitive to any new information that may emerge in the context (Palys, 1997).

3.2.2 EXPLORATORY RESEARCH

The research is explorative in nature and investigates the different experiences of coaches and executives during coaching. Bless and Higson-Smith (1995) stated that the purpose of exploratory research is to gain insight into a situation. Because of little previous research studies on executive coaching, specifically in the South African context, the need arises to further explore this topic. Neuman (1997) also indicated that exploratory research can determine the feasibility of future or additional research.

Exploratory research was employed because executive coaching in South Africa has not been documented that extensively. This method was also chosen because the researcher aimed to describe and interpret the context-bound research subject.

3.3 RESEARCH METHOD

Grounded Theory

Grounded theory is a popular methodology that was developed in the 1960s by the founding fathers Glaser and Strauss (Corbin, 1998). This methodology is for developing theory that is grounded in data, which is collected and analysed through a systematic process. It has an enormous appeal for different

disciplines due to the explanatory power it gives the researcher (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). The methodology attempts to construct theory about important issues or experiences in peoples' lives (Glaser, 1978; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998). This is done through an inductive data collection process (Morse, 2001), in that the researcher has no preconceived ideas and is not attempting to prove or disprove theories. The focus is rather on important issues or experiences that emerge through the stories told by participants, about an area of interest that they have in common, with the researcher (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006).

Grounded theory is a systematic research approach that is used to collect and analyse qualitative data. It is used to generate explanatory theory that enables further understanding of social and psychological phenomenon (Charmaz, 1995).

The researcher constantly analysed and compared the data. This data was then interpreted and translated into codes and categories. This constant comparison of analysis enables the researcher to develop theories around the participants' experiences (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006).

Henwood and Pidgeon (1995) indicated that grounded theory is appropriate to use with any unstructured material, including transcript interviews which were used in this research.

Grounded theory requires the researcher to address common characteristics, for example, theoretical sensitivity, theoretical sampling, treatment of the literature, constant comparative methods, coding, the meaning of verification, identifying the core category, memoing and diagramming, and the measure of rigor (McCann & Clark, 2003).

3.3.1 SAMPLE

The aim of this study is to provide rich and full descriptions of the experiences of participants who were part of a coaching process. Merriam (1998) indicated that it is important to establish the criteria as this would guide the research study or the data retrieved.

Sampling in qualitative study, is less structured and less strictly applied than in the case of quantitative research (Sarantakos, 2000). Sampling in a qualitative research is relatively limited, not necessarily representative and the extent is not statistically determined. Non-probability, purposive sampling was used because people will be selected with a specific purpose in mind (Neuman, 1997). This sampling method is also used because the participants for this study are a difficult-to-reach, specialised population (Neuman, 1997). The subjects chosen were based on very specific characteristics (Doodley, 1984) and only respondents who met these, were selected to participate in the study. The study aimed to investigate the experiences around executive coaching and only very specific individuals have been part of the process. It was therefore necessary for the researcher to use non-probability purposive sampling as it is a difficult to reach this population.

Neuman (1997) indicated that non-probability purposive sampling is acceptable in specific situations. However, the negative of this approach is that the researcher is never certain if the cases selected are a representative sample of the population. The aim of this study is rather focused on in-depth information and an investigation on specific cases than to generalise. This explanatory study combined with the specialised field and difficult to reach population, supports the researcher's decision to use non-probability purposive sampling.

3.3.2 POPULATION

This research was focused on the South African population which experienced coaching as a process. This was a difficult to reach population and very specific strategies were used to find suitable coaches and coachees for the study. A

total of ten participants were used for this study, and because the depth of information was more important than the size of the population, it was decided to use a smaller sample size, but have individual, in-depth interviews. Five executive coaches and five coachees who had to meet very specific requirements, were nominated. The population was limited by geographical factors as the researcher was only able to conduct interviews within the Gauteng area.

3.3.3 REQUIREMENTS

The only requirements or criteria for the coaches were based on their experience and field of work. The coaches needed to have three or more years experience in executive coaching to qualify for the study. They also had to acknowledge that their process is described as executive coaching. Once certain that the coaches matched the required criteria, they were asked to participate in the research study. The coaches were then asked to nominate a suitable coachee and to contact the possible participant and determine if he/she is willing to take part in the study.

The criteria that were used to select the coachees were based on the following: time frame and level of position. It was important that the coachee has been part of an executive coaching relationship within the last 12 months, to ensure that the experiences are relatively fresh and clear in the participant's mind in order to recollect these experiences with ease. Because the perceived value-adds and experiences of the coaching process may differ from the start to the end of the process, it was necessary for the researcher to clarify how long the coachee has been in the coaching relationship. The other criterion is described as the level of position and the coachees had to be on a managerial level, or described as a decision-maker within their organisation as per definition on executive coaching in Chapter 2. If all these requirements were met, the researcher arranged individual interviews with the coach and the coachee.

3.3.4 LOCATING PARTICIPANTS

The internet was used to locate executive coaches in South Africa and institutions such as, i-coach Academy, were contacted to request names of possible participants for the study. Some of the coaches who were willing to take part in the study were also able to recommend other coaches in the industry. The possible coaches were contacted telephonically or through email to ensure that they met the specific criteria. Once determined that they met the criteria and, if willing to take part, they were asked to nominate one coachee. Because of confidentiality and sensitivity around the information, the coaches were asked to contact the coachee directly. Once the coachee's were comfortable enough to take part in the process, his/her details were given through to the researcher who contacted them to arrange an interview.

Executive coaches were asked to nominate suitable coachees and it is possible that the coaches' recommended individuals who they believed experienced the coaching process as more meaningful, as they may feel that the executive's experience could potentially reflect on their competence. Coachees could possibly be hesitant to share their real experiences as they may be scared that this will be shared with the coach. However, because of the sensitive issue regarding confidentiality, it was not possible to reach executives except through their coaches. These and other factors that possibly impacted on the research data will be discussed in Chapter 5.

3.4 DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURE

The purpose of collecting data was to generate valuable detail and descriptions within the specific context of executive coaching, to enable the researcher to understand the experiences of the participants.

The data collection process that the researcher believed will lead to valuable, descriptive data is semi-structured interviews. Face-to-face interviews have the

highest response rate and the researcher is able to engage with participants and facilitate cooperation (Neuman, 1997). Because of the sensitivity around the information, the researcher felt it is best to conduct face-to-face interviews, as it also provides the researcher the opportunity to put the participant at ease and to clarify any uncertainties around the research. It is an informative process and the researcher must be open to any new information that may emerge in the context of the interview and lead the study in a new direction because of the unique perspectives of the participants (Palys, 1997).

Data will be gathered with personal interviews that will be recorded and transcribed after the session. This is a sensitive topic, especially if the participants do not trust the interviewer, or rapport has not yet been established. If the participants assume the coach will have access to the information they might be less willing to share their experiences, and as such, the purpose and confidentiality of the study was discussed in detail.

The total sample comprised ten participants. In terms of gender there was an equal distribution with 50% of the participants (5) being male and 50% being female. Of the participants 80% were white and 20% were African. A summary of the participants' contextual data is provided in Table 4 and Table 5.

Five coaches (two male and three female) ranging in ages from 38 to 57, and with experience in executive coaching formed part of the sample. Their experiences varied from three years to eight years. All of them had different qualifications and work experience.

Table 4 Contextual Data of Coaches

CONTEXTUAL DATA – COACHES					
Participants	Age	Gender	Race	Years Experience	Qualifications
Participant 1	52	Male	White	8 years	Electronic Engineer MBA Owner Manager Course (Harvard)
Participant 2	57	Male	White	4 ½ years	Phd Theology i-coach Academy
Participant 3	45	Female	White	4 years	Diploma: Higher Education Certificate: Training, OD Specialist i-coach Academy (Master Professional Coach) Member of COMENSA
Participant 4	38	Female	White	5 years	Corporate Career Studied Political Science BCom Tourism & Travel
Participant 5	39	Female	White	3 years	MCom Industrial Psychology Member of SIOPSA

Five coaches (three male and two female) ranging in ages from 33 to 48 who had been part of a coaching process within the last year. Two of these five are African and the other participants are white. All the coaches are in management positions. A summary of the coaches' data is provided in Table 5.

Table 5 Contextual Data of Coaches

CONTEXTUAL DATA – COACHEES				
Participants	Age	Gender	Race	Level of Position
Participant 6	48	Male	White	Chief Executive Officer
Participant 7	37	Male	White	Deputy Managing Director
Participant 8	35	Male	African	Senior Manager
Participant 9	33	Female	White	Senior Marketing Manager
Participant 10	36	Female	African	Senior Manager

3.4.1 INTERVIEWING PROCESS

The techniques that are used to gather the participants' information and experiences regarding coaching need a high level of sensitivity and flexibility. Therefore, semi-structured interviews were used as this method is able to address more complex issues and allows more flexibility, both in what the respondent chooses to say, and in the direction taken by the researcher during the course of the interaction (Bryman, 1998). The open structure ensured that unexpected facts or attitudes could be easily be further explored (Sampson, 1972).

A very flexible interview schedule was adopted to elicit opinions and experiences in a few key areas:

- Experience during the coaching process
- Positive experience
- Most valuable from the coaching process
- Negative experiences
- Value of executive coaching in a work and personal context
- Importance of an engaged relationship

In order to ensure that the interviews were undertaken in the same style and focusing on the same areas, an interview structure with the specific interview questions was used by the researcher to ensure the correct questions were addressed. The flexibility of semi-structured interviews allowed the researcher to intervene or ask questions to clarify ideas or concepts. Five questions were posed to the coaches and seven questions to the coachees. Each interview took between 25 and 40 minutes to complete. However, the coachees' interviews took an average of 10 minutes longer.

The researcher preferred to use face-to-face interviews. However, one participant was unable to meet with the researcher and a telephone interview was scheduled. The interviews were recorded electronically and transcribed from oral to textual form to enable the researcher to analyse the data. All the

interviews were conducted in English as it is the business language in South Africa and all participants indicated that they were comfortable in English.

3.4.2 INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following questions were addressed to the coaches:

1. Describe your **experience** during the coaching process?
2. What did you experience as **positive** during the process?
3. What **negative** experiences did you have?
4. From your point of view; what **value** did coaching add to the **coachee**?
5. What **value** did you get from coaching?

The following questions were addressed to the coachees:

1. Describe your **experience** during the coaching process?
2. Why did you **engage** in executive coaching?
3. What did you experience as **positive** during the process?
4. What has been **most valuable** in the coaching process?
5. What **negative** experiences did you have?
6. What value did it add; firstly in your **work**, secondly on a more **personal** level?
7. How important is a 'fit' (**engaged relationship**) between you and the coach?

Kvale (1996) indicates that the qualitative interview is an informal and interactive method that moves beyond the unstructured, every day exchange of views and experiences. It is an open-ended conversation where misconceptions can immediately be explained. "The qualitative research interview attempts to

understand the world from the subjects' point of view, to unfold the meaning of people's experiences, to uncover their lived world prior to any scientific explanations" (Kvale, 1996:1).

The interviews remained flexible and the researcher attempted to create an open environment that allowed the participants to share detailed and accurate experiences of coaching. According to Kvale (1996) the researcher must create a trusting atmosphere to enable to participant to share their experiences honestly. An empathic alliance is also an important aspect of the interview process, as the researcher listens and observes, to extract the meaning of the described experience (Kvale, 1996).

3.5 DATA ANALYSIS

The transcribed data will be encoded using a grounded theory framework that consists of three main categories of coding, namely open coding, axial coding and selective coding (O'Callaghan, 1998). The data was analysed according to Strauss and Corbin's (1998) techniques for grounded theory. During the coding process, the researcher constantly moves between these three categories (De Vos et al, 2002).

3.5.1 THEORETICAL SENSITIVITY

Theoretical sensitivity is a concept that includes the researcher's level of insight into the research area, how attuned are they to nuances, their ability to reconstruct meaning and the experiences from generated data and a capability to separate the significant issues from the less important (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). It is the ability to identify the important data and to attach meaning to it, while collecting that data (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

The researcher therefore needs to approach the field with an open mind and without any predetermined ideas or theories, but rather "remain sensitive to the

data by being able to record events and detect happenings without first having them filtered through and squared with pre-existing hypotheses and biases” (Glaser, 1978:3).

3.5.2 TREATMENT OF LITERATURE

Glaser believes in a more traditional grounded theory approach and indicates that “there is a need not to review any of the literature in the substantive area under study” (Glaser, 1992:31). This is to ensure that the researcher approaches the data in an unbiased manner without any preconceived assumptions. However, Strauss and Corbin (1998) acknowledged many ways to proactively identify with the literature from the beginning of the research process. Interaction with the literature throughout the process contributes to the researcher’s theoretical reconstruction (Mills, Bonner & Francis, 2006). The literature is able to provide similar examples of the phenomena and is therefore able to increase theoretical sensitivity (Strauss & Corbin, 1998).

3.5.3 CODING

a) Open Coding

This part of the analysis pertains specifically to the naming and categorising of the experience or phenomena, through close inspection of data. During open coding the data is broken down to small parts, examined, compared and questions are asked relating to the phenomena under investigation (De Vos, 2002). Two analytical procedures are critical for coding, the first is making comparisons and secondly asking pertinent questions. Glaser & Strauss (in De Vos et al, 2002:346) refers to grounded theory as “the constant comparative method of analysis”.

All the interviews were transcribed and analysed according to open coding and axial procedures as outlined by Strauss and Corbin (1998).

The text was read through to ensure the researcher had a good understanding of the data. Then the text was closely assessed to form units of meaning. The

units are labelled and concepts are formed by grouping the ideas into categories (O’Callaghan, 1998). The objective was to identify emergent patterns in the data and a set of categories (Glaser, 1978).

As the first phase of the coding process, each interview transcript was analysed line-by-line. When analysing the data there’s interplay between the data and the researcher (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Because of this interaction between the researcher and the data, the process is not necessarily completely objective. It was therefore important for the researcher to also focus on theoretical sensitivity.

After all the interview transcripts had been analysed line-by-line, the essence of each concept was noted, central ideas were identified and scribed onto a separate document. After this process, it was important that the researcher again went through the information to compare the original ideas with the concepts and central ideas to ensure that the accuracy of the content was transferred. The researcher had to ask critical questions relating to the data to ensure that the real meanings were discovered.

Table 3.5.1 describes the different themes that transcended through the process of open coding from the coaches’ data and Table 5 describes the coaches’ themes.

Table 5 Themes of Coaches

Coaches	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Most Fulfilling, satisfying job ● Different experiences, goals & purpose for each session ● Different / variety for coach ● New learning & change (Coach & coachee) ● Active, intense listening ● Tough, taxing ● Solutions, results, well formed outcomes ● Coach – open minded ● Energised after coaching ● Building rapport ● Leave own things behind ● Develop a more conscientious person ● Every session triggers something and I also benefit



Positive Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coachee having the Ah-ha moments• Seeing change & growth• Adding value• Receiving positive feedback• Different perceptions is fascinating• Creating new possibilities• Coachee starts self-coaching
Negative Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Terminating the relationship• Failing to connect to the coachee• Coming to the end• Unable to mobilise the coachee• Withholding the process• Not willing to take part/ explore themselves• Value not measured• People without knowledge delivering low quality coaching• Distrusting coach's motives• Coachee thinking I'm here to teach you• Taking on too many sessions – realising how tiring it is• People not taking responsibility for their lives
Most Valuable – Coachee	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Better understanding of position and purpose (business/ personal)• Reaching targets / goals• Safe, non-judgemental space• Value of being listened to• Having someone to support and guide the coachee• Greater self-understanding & awareness• Assist coachee to address performance discrepancies• Having a space where it is just about him/her• Finding the truth in believes• Greater influence on all aspect of their life• Building better relationships• Assist coachee to deal with challenges, stress and confidence
Most Valuable – Coach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Personal Growth• Sense of meaningfulness• Making a contribution• Being part of the process• Positively effects my energy• Learn & understand coachee' business• Learn from their challenges• Wonderful to be part of the person's journey• Receiving the feedback• Being a catalyst for change• Seeing the benefits



Table 6 Themes of Coachees

Coachees	
Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough, difficult, uncomfortable • Facing yourself, own blind spots • Learning and growth took place – bringing out my ideas • Sounding board, reflection • Relaxing, liberating • Positive, magical • Feel vulnerable • Empowering • Change takes place • Receiving feedback
Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal Growth • Lonely at the top • Been listened to • Feedback • Gained insight • Real understanding • Truthfulness • Pro-active action – not only talking • Help to realise and overcome stumbling blocks • Gave some tools & techniques
Most Valuable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being listened to • Self-reflection that leads to new insights & learning • Optimising my potential • Support, guidance • Personal & emotional Growth • Positive effect on organisation/ work
Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time, lengthy process • Expensive • More flexible access to the coach • Coach should know when to end a relationship if it is not working • Initial discomfort before building a trust relationship • Facing reality • Coach is not understanding • Results is not tangible • Not getting answers or tools • Cultural differences – not being able to share personal challenges • Not being able to bring whole self to coaching – work focus
Value Add – Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on leadership/ management style • Handles stress better – calmer • More confident and comfortable with role • Relating differently to others (customers & colleagues) • More focused • Understanding self better • Stronger focus on strategic plan and growth of organisation



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changed the way I think • Started listening more • Behavioural change that changed my work environment • Learned new skills
Value Add – Personal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Different personal relationships (spouse, daughter) • Personal Growth • Reduction in anxiety, stress • Real understanding of others • Understanding life purpose • Know what you want • Enabled me to deal with issues more – not taking them home
Engaged Relationship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very important • Needs to be rapport • Trust & respect • Needs to feel that you can learn from coach

b) Axial Coding

Axial coding is defined as procedures where data is put back together by making connections between categories and to form new relationships. This is done by utilising a coding paradigm (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

c) Selective Coding

Strauss and Corbin (1990) define selective coding as the process of selecting the core category and systematically relating it to other categories, validating relationships and further refining categories.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research would be conducted in an ethical manner to uphold the principles of the social science approach. For researchers in the social sciences, that obtain their data by studying the behaviour, activities or experiences of human beings, the ethical issues are complex and pervasive (Williams et al., 1995). The ethical guidelines and standards form the basis on which the research will be conducted. Therefore, the ethical aspects and principles would continuously be part of every step, to ensure they guide the researcher and the study. The responsibility of ethical research rests with the researcher.

The participants would be informed of the purpose before giving their written consent. They would also have a choice to form part of the study, should they at any time feel their rights were abused or not respected, they would be able to withdraw from the study. The subjects would not be exploited for personal or financial gain and guarantees of privacy and confidentiality would be honoured. Research methods appropriate to the research topic would be used.

The study design would be released with the results and it also be made available to the subjects. Interpretations of the results would be consistent with the data collected and the researcher would, in no manner, attempt to manipulate or influence the outcomes or findings of the study. The researcher would strive to maintain objectivity and integrity in the conduct of the research.

3.6.1 VOLUNTARY PARTICIPATION

Participation in research often disrupts people's normal day to day activities and might require time and energy from participants. It also requires participants to reveal personal or sensitive information that may be unknown to others (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Participants were asked to take part in the study but could refuse or withdraw at any stage during the study. Two candidates were unable to take part in the study because of time constraints, however, the others participants were comfortable and some even excited to take part.

Consent was required from the participants. The researcher communicated the aim and purpose of the study to the participants to ensure they were clear on all the relevant issues that pertains to their participation. Only after the participants provided their consent to take part in the study would the researcher progress to the next phase, which was the actual interview. The participants were informed on confidentiality, anonymity, any possible risks and any concerns were addressed. Almost all of the participants were interested in the results of the study and the possibility of receiving a copy of the study was also discussed.

3.6.2 CONFIDENTIALITY

All information relating to participants that could possibly identify their identity would only be seen and handled by the researcher. Names, personal details or company information would not be mentioned to ensure confidentiality. After the necessary steps were followed to analyse the data, contact details and other personal information that could identify participants, would be destroyed.

3.7 QUALITY OF THE RESEARCH

Validity and reliability are critical issues in evaluating research findings (Chenitz & Swanson, 1986). In qualitative research, reliability and validity are addressed differently to quantitative research. The notion of trustworthiness of the research is important and Lincoln and Guba (in Babbie & Mouton, 2002) propose four constructs that reflect the assumptions of the qualitative paradigm. The four constructs which address trustworthiness in qualitative research are credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability.

Credibility is the alternative to internal validity and the purpose is to demonstrate that the research was conducted in a manner to ensure that the subject was accurately described and identified (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Grounded theory as a method, enables the researcher to increase credibility through testing. A procedure is built into the different steps of grounded theory analysis, to ensure that the researcher compares the hypotheses with reality and asks questions, makes modifications and tests again. This process of comparison and asking questions assists the researcher in guarding against biases (Corbin & Strauss, 1990).

Transferability is the alternative to generalisability or external validity. Miles and Huberman (1994) define transferability as the degree to which research findings

can be transferred to other settings or contexts. Babbie and Mouton (2002) indicates that, in qualitative research, the generalisability to other settings or populations may be problematic. Strauss and Corbin (1990) suggest that transferability can be increased by thoroughly describing the research context. Furthermore, Henwood and Pidgeon (1995) propose that to publicise the researcher's reflective process during knowledge production would also increase validity. The approach and reflective process that the researcher followed and that was directed by a grounded theory perspective is therefore discussed in detail.

Dependability is the third criterion in qualitative research to confirm the trustworthiness or reliability of the research findings. Dependability can also be related to generalisation of the results (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). To achieve dependability, it is important that the process of study is consistent and stable over time and across researchers and methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Data triangulation also adds to the reliability of the research as it increases the accuracy of data (Begley, 1996). This involves collecting data from different participants involved in the chosen field. The researcher therefore contacted different coaches who are not necessarily working from the same coaching perspective. The coaches therefore operate in different industries and work from different methodologies within the coaching field.

The last construct for judging the soundness of qualitative research is *Confirmability*. This refers to the traditional concept of objectivity (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). Miles and Huberman (1994) indicate that confirmability deals with the neutrality of the researcher and the freedom from biases and the explicitness about the inevitable biases that might exist.

3.8 CONCLUSION

This chapter has addressed the methodological process of the research. It provided a description and brief explanation of the research process and addressed the theory behind the use of a qualitative data analysis process. The

researcher will use a qualitative research design since it provides valuable descriptive data that increases the contextual depth.

Exploratory research was employed because executive coaching in South Africa has not been documented that extensively. This method was also chosen because the researcher aimed to describe and interpret the context-bound research subject. Grounded theory was used to analyse the qualitative data.

Thereafter the sampling procedure, data collection and method of data analysis was further explored and lastly the ethical considerations and the quality of the research, which forms part of the reliability, was discussed.

In the following chapter the analysis and interpretation of the data collected will be discussed.

CHAPTER 4

INTERPRETATION OF RESULTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the results of the study would be interpreted and discussed. The different categories and specific themes would be examined and the researcher would also consult current literature to determine what other researchers have established on executive coaching.

The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and value of executive coaching. Ten participants were interviewed to collect information to explore their experiences and views. Five of the participants were coaches and were interviewed to explore coaching from their perspective and the other five participants were coachees who had already been through the coaching process or were still part of a coaching relationship.

A qualitative approach was used, rather than a quantitative approach, in order to gain a better understanding of the participants' experiences. This approach also enabled the researcher to collect rich and descriptive data, rather than analysing it in a numerical and statistical style, as in quantitative research. The researcher required descriptive answers (Burgelmann, 1983) and attempted to study human action from the perspective of the social actors themselves (Babbie & Mouton, 2002). The methodology chosen, grounded theory, provided the researcher with an opportunity to investigate and explore the interactions and actions in relation to the context (Strauss & Corbin, 1990).

In the first part of the data analysis the coaches and coachees were divided into two main groups. The five coachees' data was analysed and categories and themes were extracted. A similar process was followed to analyse the data of the five coaches. In the discussion of the data the results of the coaches would firstly be discussed and then the coachees.

Diagram 3 provides the reader with a 'map' or some form of direction to follow. There are 5 different categories that will be discussed with a number of themes relating to each category. After the coaches' discussion, Diagram 4 will also provide clarity in terms of the discussion around the coachees' experiences.

COACH - EXPERIENCES

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Emotional
*Fulfilling & Satisfying
 Tough & Taxing
 Feeling Energised
 Open Minded*

Personal Benefit
*New learning & change
 (Coach & coachee)
 Variety for Coach*

Purpose
*Building rapport
 Different Experiences & goals
 Solutions & Results*

MOST VALUABLE - COACH

Personal
*Personal Growth &
 Learning
 Sense of
 meaningfulness
 Making a contribution
 Being part of the
 process & Seeing the
 Benefits
 Positively effects my
 energy*

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

Relationship
*Ah-ha Moments
 Adding Value
 Seeing Change & Growth*

*Coachee Starts Self-
 coaching
 Different perceptions
 Positive feedback*

MOST VALUABLE - COACHEE

Relationship
*Safe, non-judgemental space
 Value of being listened to
 Having support and guidance*

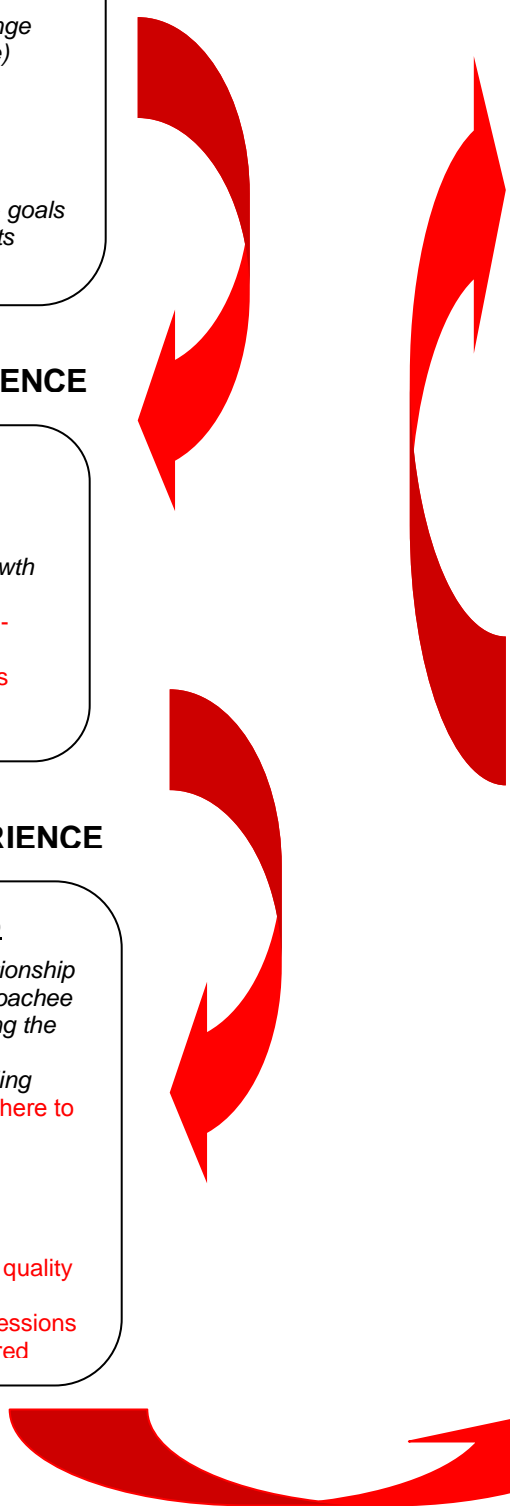
Work Benefits
*Better understanding of
 position and purpose
 (business/ personal)
 Reaching targets / goals*

Personal
*Greater self-understanding &
 awareness
 Other Spin-offs
 Dealing with challenges,
 stress and confidence issues*

NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

Relationship
*Terminating the Relationship
 Unable to Mobilise Coachee
 Coachee Withholding the
 Process
 Coachee Not Willing
 Coachee thinking I'm here to
 teach you*

Personal
*People delivering low quality
 coaching
 Taking on too many sessions
 Value not measured*



** Reoccurring Themes
 ** Independent Themes

4.2 OVERALL EXPERIENCES OF COACHES

The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three categories, namely: Emotional, Personal Benefit and Purpose. In each of these categories there are different themes. These will be discussed in more detail to explain and clarify the significant themes.

4.2.1 EMOTIONAL

Emotional as a category has two recurring themes namely: **Fulfilling & Satisfying** and **Tough & Taxing**. It is interesting that these two themes are almost opposite in their description and experience. **Fulfilling & Satisfying** as a theme is a recurring theme that indicates coaches experience the process as a positive and satisfying process. Where coaching was compared to a vocation (Described in Afrikaans: “*roeping*”) and described as one of the most satisfying things ever experienced, it seems that it is a very satisfying career and experience for the coach involved in this process. Participant 2 relates his experience in the following manner:

*“...its one of thee most **fulfilling** things I’ve done in my life ... I’ve never been so **satisfied** with what I’m doing...there’s **satisfaction**, amazing sense of **satisfaction** that comes with it.” (Participant 2)*

Participant 2 further describes his experience of coaching as a meaningful process that has a very positive impact and that he also ‘needs’ this process.

*“It’s such an **enriching** experience for me, and one would say, I need it for myself in a, in a way as well... I’ve been in different jobs, this one is not a job, uh I’ve been in what’s been called a **vocation** – ‘n *roeping* – uhm, this one is, and not that I’ve heard a voice somewhere, it just became it... I haven’t grasp it, but there’s a **sense of experience of meaningfulness***

uh that I haven't had in any other thing that I've been involved with." (Participant 2)

From the data it is evident that the coach experiences the coaching process as a very positive and fulfilling process that also creates a sense of satisfaction for him to be part of the process. He also indicates that it is more than just a job for him.

The other recurring theme that came out was **Tough & Taxing** and although the coaching process is experienced as fulfilling and satisfying, the coach also experience less positive emotions. Participant 2 and 3 relate their experiences in the following manner:

*"It's **tough**, it's **taxing**, uhm I can do maximum four clients a day." (Participant 2)*

*"I'm **tired** after that hour and a half or three hours..." (Participant 3)*

Although Participant 2 and Participant 3 indicate they are tired and that it is a taxing process, Participant 3 further describes the coaching process and indicates that she is on a high after each session. She explains that the process energises her own thoughts and ideas. The next theme **Feeling Energised** relates then to a coach, although tired after coaching, feeling energised and stimulated in their own ideas and thoughts after coaching. The one coach even indicated that she struggles to sleep after coaching. She relates her experiences as described underneath:

*"Uhm, my biggest experience after each coaching session is I'm on a **high**, even though I've worked hard... when I'm out there, I'm tired....but I am really on a **high** in terms of my own thoughts and thinking and **energy**.... its unbelievable. If I coached till half*

past 7 at night, I can't sleep that night..."
(Participant 3)

The other theme, **Open-minded**, refers to the coach being open minded and leaving their own thoughts behind to focus on the coachee. The coach indicates that it is important to be open-minded and to give real attention to the coachee and their issues. Therefore, part of the experience for the coach is to leave their own personal issues, challenges or thoughts behind and to bring his/her full attention into the coaching space. This is how Participant 4 describes her view:

"...just holding the space is a massive job you leave all your stuff behind..." (Participant 4)

These last two themes, **Feeling Energised** and **Open-minded** are not recurring themes, but were also found to be important.

4.2.2 PERSONAL BENEFIT

Personal Benefit as a category has two recurring themes namely: **New Learning & Change** and **Variety for Coach**. The first theme **New Learning & Change** relates to learning that occurs and takes place for the coach and also the coachee. The experience for the coach is firstly change. This is taking place in terms of how the coach thinks and views things. Insights and learning is taking place. The coaches also indicated that not only is the coachee learning, but they as coaches are also learning and growing from this relationship. There is change and both parties gain from the coaching relationships and this learning also leads to positive change. Participant 2 and 3 relates their experiences and views as follows:

*"People creating the **magic of change – positive change, new insights, new dreams** and making it real and start seeing that..."* (Participant 2)

*“...for highly effective individuals to work through either personal or organizational **change** or **transformation** ... **transition** there’s some form of **transition** that needs to take place which requires **transformation** in thinking, in doing, in being... I truly believe there’s learning for both, every time that you’re in that coaching.” (Participant 3)*

The other recurring theme is **Variety for coach**. This relates to the experience of coaches, that every coaching session is different and that this provides them with variety in their sessions. This also seems to relate to a higher level of satisfaction as they are never faced with exactly the same issues and this makes the coaching process so much more challenging. Participant 2 and 5 relates their experience in the following manner:

*“...in terms of something that has never happened before. It’s not a **repetition**...” (participant 2)*

*“Every coachee and what you want to achieve from that session and from that development is **different**. I think that’s nice and that’s **challenging**...” (Participant 5)*

In the category **Personal Benefit**, two recurring themes came out. The first is described in terms of the coaches’ experience, that new learning and change takes place with coaching, both the coachee and the coach learns and changes. The other theme is described as variety in the coaching sessions and that this variety provides the coach with challenges and very little repetition in their sessions. The next category, **Purpose** is the last category in the **Overall Experiences of Coaches**.

4.2.3 PURPOSE

Purpose as a category has three recurring themes namely: **Building Rapport**, **Different Experiences & Goals** and **Solutions & Results**. **Purpose** as a

category refers to some of the important things coaches mentioned as part of their experiences, although it can be viewed as part of things that are necessary for coaching. The first theme in this category is **Building Rapport**, which also includes listening. Listening in this specific category was seen as an action that contributed and led to building effective rapport. Listening as a theme is therefore combined with Building Rapport and is also included in this discussion, rather than making it a separate theme. Listening is one of the concepts that occurred regularly as one of the important and valuable actions of coaching. However, this will be discussed in more detail in Chapter 5. Participant 2 and 4 describe their experiences around listening and building rapport in the following style:

*“It’s all the time **creative listening** - you cannot relax... (Participant 2)*

*“...foremost experience for me is in the **rapport building**, so really just to **listen** and to be- and coaches often use just to **hold the space**... it is not just looking at a person its really sensing that person so that is for me the most crucial part of the coaching process. It’s the **rapport** and the real **listening**, and **listening** with all your senses ...” (Participant 4)*

From the data, it is evident that intense and active listening is viewed as an important aspect in the coaching relationship. Part of this active listening is also to build rapport with the coachee. Participant 4 is indicating that the coaches should be listening with all their senses and it moves to a level where it is not only listening but “really sensing the person” (Participant 4). It moves past only listening or passively being part of the session, it asks the coach to be really involved with all their senses.

The other theme **Different Experiences & Goals** specifies that each coachee is different and also how their experience of coaching differs. Because of all these differences, they also have other expectations and goals set for themselves.

Participant 3 indicates that these different experiences could also be dependent on their emotional intelligence and how ready they are to face their own blind spots. She describes it as follows:

*“...because of each individual being **different**... each uh purpose for coaching for that individual being **different** ... Uhm..... so for me the experience of each coaching intervention is, I would say **different**, depending on the topic that’s on the table ,depending on the EQ levels of the individuals that you’re working with and how ready are they to work with their blind spots.” (Participant 3)*

Participant 5 describes her views on the different experiences as follows:

*“...every coachee is **different**, what you’re trying to achieve is **different**.” (Participant 5)*

It is evident from the data that the coaches have some similarities in the different coaching sessions that can be generalised to all coaching sessions. These are building rapport, new learning and change taking place, etc. However, from this last theme it is also clear that there are different experiences from one coachee to another and that each session is different for the coach.

The last theme **Solutions & Results** refer to outcomes or solutions that must be reached through coaching. As Participant 2 indicated, it is not only to create nice moments, but something must be done or attained through these insightful moments. In others words, it is necessary for the coach to support the coachee to reach their set objectives. All five coachees that were interviewed were sponsored by their current organisation to undergo executive coaching. It is therefore important to reach the set objectives. The following describes Participant 2 and Participant 4’s experiences and views:

“...when you create new solutions or new realities whatever the case may be ... it’s not just creating a nice ah-ha moment, a nice insight but what about it, what are you going to do about it?” (Participant 2)

“Coaching has to show results...” (Participant 4)

The overall experiences of coaches were discussed in this section. There were three different categories that were discussed in more detail, namely, **Emotional**, **Personal Benefit** and **Purpose**. The next section will deal with the positive experiences of coaches and the themes that occurred.

4.3 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Positive Experiences refer to experiences that are positive to the coaches. The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three recurring themes that form part of the category **Relationship**. All of these positive experiences are experienced as a consequence of the coaching relationship and therefore are part of the **Relationship** category.

4.3.1 RELATIONSHIP

The three recurring themes are: **Ah-ha Moments**, **Adding Value** and **Seeing Change & Growth**. The last theme, **Seeing Change & Growth** is very similar to **New Learning & Change** that represented itself as a theme under **Overall Experiences of Coaches**. However, we will discuss this theme again and explore if it is similar in meaning. The other themes that are also relevant are the following: **Coachee Starts Self-coaching**, **Different Perceptions** and **Positive Feedback**.

Ah-ha Moments as a theme refers specifically to the coachees having a moment of insight or having a profound realisation. This was described by three

coaches as a very positive experience. The following is how Participant 1 and 4 described it:

*“...when they actually see the light, when they, when the **ah-ha moment**, you know, comes through...”*
(Participant 1)

*“...when you actually see people having those **ah-ha moments**...”* (Participant 4)

The next theme is **Adding Value**, this refers to the coach adding value or feeling that they are making a contribution to the coachee. Participant 5 describes her experiences in the following style:

*“...and something making sense to that person. Now that for me is a nice positive thing happening in a coaching session and, and the thing that you can actually **add value** and, and **change** and something **meaningful** with regards to their development or their career or whatever that might be.”* (Participant 5)

Participant 2 used a powerful metaphor to describe his experience of adding value:

“...to be the magic that people create, that people experience and the magic that they create in their own lives ...that is it” (Participant 2)

From the data it is clear that it is experienced as a positive factor, to add value and meaning to the coachee.

The themes **Seeing Change & Growth** is also a recurring theme that came out as a positive factor for coaches. It seems that the positive experience is relating to two factors, firstly for the coach to be part of the change and to experience this

with the coachee, but also positive for the coach to know that they add value to others' lives. Participant 1 describes it in the following manner:

*“So I think positive is always when you see people actually... **grow, change** ...” (Participant 1)*

Participant 5 describes her experience of seeing the change and being part of it as the following:

*“Well the positive for me as a coach is seeing the **change**, because you can actually, I've got to say see the **change**...” (Participant 5)*

This positive experience of **Seeing Change & Growth** relates then more specifically to the coach being part of this process and to see the coachee grow. There are three other themes that were also important as part of the positive experiences of coaches. These are: **Coachee Starts Self-coaching, Different Perceptions** and **Positive Feedback**. **Coachee Starts Self-coaching** refers to when the coachee has learned from the process. They are, therefore, able to reflect on their behaviour and find their own solutions, without the facilitation or intervention of the coachee. This is also seen as meaningful because it refers to lasting change taking place without creating a dependency in the relationship. It also indicates that learning took place for the coachee. Participant 4 describes it as follows:

*“I truly believe that you have your answers and that you are very resourceful and ... I'm very aware not to create co-dependency. It's about independency for me about coaching... I cut that down, I think three months, less than six months... but one can actually make **changes** there and it is not about creating a crutch.” (Participant 4)*

Participant 3 also indicates that she believes it is a positive moment when self-coaching occurs. She described her experience in the following manner:

*“...when the individual sits there “you know what”.. when **self coaching** actually starts “this and this and this” ... and they start asking themselves questions. That **self-insight**, that moment of **truth**, uh which ... has nothing to do with me.” (Participant 3)*

Different Perceptions, refers to people having different perceptions and the coachee experiencing this as fascinating, the opportunity to listen to others' viewpoints. Participant 4 highlighted this as one of her positive experiences in the coaching process. She describes it in the following manner:

*“I just find people fascinating... So for me as a coach it's the learning, it's just listening to how **other people perceive** and ...it is absolutely fascinating and I am just so **intrigued** with, how a person **thinks** that way ... so the positive part for me comes with this absolute **fascination** and **curiosity** in human beings and that makes me feel the **curiosity** for me.” (Participant 3)*

The last theme **Positive Feedback** refers to feedback being given to the coach. This feedback could also increase the coach's belief that they are adding value. This is also meaningful because adding value also came out as a positive, so it reinforces the positive experience. Participant 4 describes it as follows:

*“...and obviously when people afterwards send you sms' and or phone you or **commend** you, those are kind of **feel good** too.” (Participant 4)*

In this part, the positive experiences that coaches experience and perceive as positive, during the coaching process, were discussed. All of these experiences

are as a result of the coaching relationship and were all placed in the category of **Relationship**. There are three collective themes that were experienced by two or more coaches and these are: **Ah-ha Moments**, **Adding Value** and **Seeing Change & Growth**. The other three important themes, although not recurring, are: **Coachee Starts Self-coaching**, **Different Perceptions** and **Positive Feedback**. In the next section the negative experiences of coaches will be discussed in detail and explored.

4.4 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

Negative experiences refer to experiences that coaches perceive as being negative during the coaching process. The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of five recurring themes that form part of the **Relationship** and **Personal** categories. In the first category **Relationship** the following recurring themes are identified: **Terminating the relationship**, **Unable to Mobilise Coachee**, **Coachee Withholding Process** and **Coachee Not Willing**. It forms part of the Relationship category because these are part of the negative experiences that are taking place within the relationship. The other category, Personal, are themes that the coach experiences as negative, not within a specific coaching relationship, but this is part of personal experiences for the coach. It also seems that each coach may have a different area in their personal capacity that they experience as negative. Within the Personal category there are three separate themes, these are: **People delivering low quality Coaching**, **Taking on too many Sessions** and **Value not Measured**.

4.4.1 RELATIONSHIP

Relationship as a category comprises of the following recurring themes: **Terminating the relationship**, **Unable to Mobilise Coachee**, **Coachee Withholding Process** and **Coachee Not Willing**. The following theme is also part of this category but is a separate theme: **Coachee thinking I'm here to teach you**.

The first theme that will be discussed is **Terminating the Relationship**. This theme has two important aspects that are evident from the data. The first part is described by the coaches as a negative experience, when they have to terminate the coaching relationship, due to no connection between the coach and the coachee. Some of the other factors that could lead to a termination of the relationship could include actions from the coachee that prohibits the coaching process from moving forward and where the coach feels there is no other alternative. The coach experiences the termination of the relationship as negative and could feel that he/she as a coach has failed. Participant 3 explained it by saying:

*“...when you get to a point where you have to say to a client, there’s **no chemistry**, there’s **no connection**... in, in my view you need to find another coach.... because that’s why I say it’s negative because you could feel that I’ve failed and stuff ...”*
(Participant 3)

The second part of this theme is the termination of the relationship, when the process has been successful and the set sessions have been completed. This is more positive in its experience, as they part on good terms. This is described by one of the coaches as sad, rather than negative. Participant 3 describes her experience as follows:

“I think it’s not a negative but it’s sad, sometimes when we get to that point [parting] ... when you have to close this off, because it becomes a very close relationship ... people share their whole lives with you ...” (Participant 3)

The next theme **Unable to Mobilise Coachee**, can be described as the coach who feels that he/she is not making an impact on the coachee and that this person is not able to progress. It seems that this also creates some tension for the coach. Where they start out with set goals and results that need to be

achieved through the coaching process, the coach experiences it negatively if he/she is unable to mobilise the coach to reach these goals. The coach could also feel that this reflects on him/her as a coach, as he/she was not able to reach the set objectives, especially where the coach is hired by a company that expects specific results.

*“if people are so **stuck** that they, its very difficult to **move** them and you’ve tried your bag of tools and tricks and for some or other reason they are just so **stuck**. To get that core message across of what makes it so difficult for him/her to make the necessary **changes**. ... sometimes uhm anxious and somewhat uh, that’s a negative thing ... Why is it that I can’t get this person to **move**. Because I’m just there to help you, you ultimately have to make the **changes**.”*
(Participant 4)

From the data, it seems that the coach realises that it is the responsibility of the coachee to ultimately make the changes. However, it seems that the coach experiences this ‘stuckness’ as frustrating, as he/she is not able to move the coachee towards positive change. The next theme is **Coachee Withholding Process** and is closely related to **Unable to Mobilise Coachee**. The coach experiences both as frustrating as he/she is unable to influence the coachee towards positive change. However, the last theme is where the coachee is withholding the process through their actions. Participant 2 indicated that he had to ‘fire’ his client because of a lack of participation and other suspicious behaviour that was restricting progress. He experienced this as frustrating and preferred to end the relationship rather than to continue with a fruitless relationship. He describes it as follows:

“Well, the relationship also as it has happened for me once, it that, so to speak I had to fire a client, I am stopping this stuff now. Its not working, you don’t want to work what has happened. Ja, and then

becoming suspicious, uhm you know... and no matter how much you try to sort that out, and later said, well then stop it, it's not going to work, not between us..." Participant 2

Participant 4 describes her experience where the coachee keeps the relationship superficial, instead of addressing the issues directly. This also leads to the process taking longer to uncover and address the real issues. This is how she describes her experiences:

"... they try and keep it superficial for a very long, very long in comparison so then uh it just becomes a longer process in terms of uncovering the real stuff. That's not really a negative, it's, it's more pussyfooting around you know stuff, and I kind of like to get to that." (Participant 4)

Participant 5 has a similar experience where the coachee is withholding the relationship or process to progress and deal with the important issues. This is not necessarily intentional, however it takes more effort and energy from the coach to focus the conversations and deal with the important issues. Participant 5 describes her experiences in the following manner:

"...the most difficult situation I had to deal with is ... a coachee talks so much and you really struggle to bring it back to the issues that needs to be addressed ... have to kind of channel her energy ... and then let her talk but then at some point stop her, and focus the conversation. It is energy draining..." (Participant 5)

The next theme **Coachee not Willing**, refers to two different levels. Firstly this is where the coachee is unwilling to take part in a coaching process. Executive Coaching is in most cases sponsored by the organisation and this could indicate that the organisation recommended this intervention. However, the coachee

was not willing to participate. This is also a negative experience for the coach because he/she is then unable to mobilise this person towards positive change and growth.

“...the most negative for me is when a coachee didn’t want to participate in the programme to start off with. Uhm because you simply can’t be the progression of change happening...” (Participant 5)

The next level is where a coachee is not willing, or able, to explore themselves. It could be a challenging process to face yourself and your blind spots. Participant 4 explains that some people don’t allow themselves to go certain places.

“Some people are more difficult uh especially if they don’t allow it, or they don’t give themselves- or they don’t even realize they haven’t given themselves permission to go certain places ...” (Participant 4)

The last theme is **Coachee thinking I’m here to teach you**. This is not a recurring theme. The role of the coach can be seen as a facilitator, rather than a teacher-student role. Participant 3 therefore describes it as frustrating when a coachee expects her to teach them or to provide all the answers rather than being willing to explore themselves.

“It’s just getting past that space of I’m not here to teach you ... uhm just help you think about your own stuff. So for me...” (Participant 3)

4.4.2 PERSONAL

Personal as a category comprises of the following themes: **People delivering low quality Coaching, Taking on too many Sessions** and **Value not Measured**. These themes are not recurring and seem closely related to each

coach's personal negatives or challenges within the coaching process or industry. The first theme ***People delivering low quality Coaching*** refers to people who sell themselves as coaches and deliver this service, but are not experienced in the field. They don't possess the knowledge and theory and deliver sub-standard work. Participant 2 indicates that there is such a great need for 'emphatic human intervention in people's lives' that anybody is able to move into the field and 'help' people. However, with limited knowledge and experience, they deliver low quality coaching and reduce the richness of the coaching experience.

“My current negative is not about the coaching process its more around the coaching uhm industry and ... profession of people who dilute the richness of the coaching process... because the field is so ripe for any kind of, anybody for that matter who is willing to listen ... There's a, there's such a need for emphatic human intervention in peoples lives...that anybody can you know in a very charlatan way tap into that and then give people a limited value for what they should get from what I regard as true coaching is. ... I'm speaking of people who present themselves as coaches and for me they are not. Uuh there's' not a well groundedness in theory, in wisdom, understanding, uh life experience....” (Participant 2)

Participant 2 experienced the coaching industry and how people with limited knowledge move into the coaching industry as negative. He indicated that there was a great need to set proper standards within the industry to ensure that people receive quality coaching.

Taking on too many Sessions relates to the coach realising that coaching can be very emotionally draining and that they should also monitor their own levels. It is therefore important to know your capacity as a coach and not to arrange too many sessions as it could influence the quality of these coaching sessions.

“Uhm well its an interesting question for me during the process certainly something that I have definitely experienced as a coach, is if I take on too many coaching sessions, if I would have four coaching sessions, actually realize just holding a space for a person and how you have to focus yourself on that session and uhm so the negative stuff about coaching would be more an awareness of how you, how, how much it can take out of you, how draining it could be.”
(Participant 4)

The next theme is **Growth not Measured**. Participant 1 indicated that he experienced the lack of measurement in the coaching process as a negative. He was not able to measure all the areas of growth of the coachee. The value add was also not always tangible and because of this the coachee not able to visibly ‘see’ the results. Participant 1 related his experience as follows:

“I think which I’ve experienced is not really a negative is more a negative from my point of view in terms of - is that the growth is not always measured so, one should somehow... establish a baseline more formally... where you know this person is now growing in leaps and bounds I think their perceptions is like they’re not learning...” (Participant 1)

In this section the negative experiences of coaches was discussed. There are two main categories namely, Relationship and Personal. Relationship pertains more to the negative experiences experienced by coaches in relation to the coaching relationship. The main themes are: **Terminating the relationship, Unable to Mobilise Coachee, Coachee Withholding Process** and **Coachee Not Willing**. The other theme that is included in this category is **Coachee thinking I’m here to teach you**. The other category that was discussed is **Personal**. This relates more to personal challenges that the coach experiences,

not necessarily because of a specific coaching relationship or interaction. These themes are not recurring and include: ***People delivering low quality Coaching, Taking on too many Sessions*** and ***Value not Measured***.

4.5 MOST VALUABLE EXPERIENCES - COACHEE

This section refers to the most valuable experiences of coachees from a coach's perspective. The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three main categories, namely: ***Relationship, Benefits*** and ***Personal***. Relationship as a category refers to the valuable experiences of coachees in the coachee relationship. There are three recurring themes: ***Safe, non-judgemental space, Value of being listened to*** and ***Having support & Guidance***. ***Work Benefits*** as a category, refers to valuable experiences that contribute to the coachees work environment. There are two recurring themes in Work Benefits namely: ***Better understanding of position and purpose (business/ personal)*** and ***Reaching targets / goals***. The third category is Personal, which refers to valuable personal experiences of the coachee. The following themes form part of this category: ***Greater self-understanding & awareness, Other Spin-offs*** and ***Dealing with challenges, stress and confidence issues***.

4.5.1 RELATIONSHIP

Relationship as a category pertains to the areas that the coachees experience as most valuable as a result of the coaching relationship. However, it is important to note that this is from the coaches' perspective and how they view the valuable benefits of the coaching relationship. Through the process of open coding and axial coding, the following themes were identified: ***Safe, non-judgemental space, Value of being listened to*** and ***Having support and Guidance***.

From the data it seems that having a safe and non-judgemental space is an important factor for coachees. This is valuable as they are able to voice their

ideas and challenges without fear of judgement or reprimand. The coach indicates that they provide the coachee with a safe space where he/she is able to share their ideas and feel comfortable without any judgement. Participant 3 describes this as following:

*“...I think the other value add is, it’s just here’s somebody that I can talk to, that maybe have the same life experience, but it’s not going to tell me what I need to think of, how I need to think, it’s not **somebody judging me again**. So that’s the value add, its somebody that’s **creating that safe space** where I can be myself, I can think the silly’s stuff, say the most stupidest stuff uh if you want to call it that, but not being judged for saying that because part of voicing those assumed stupid issues is actually what it is about, what they need to work with... ja I think it’s just that, it’s somebody that there’s to **listen, without judgement**.” Participant 3*

From this data it also seems that the coachee finds it valuable to be able to express his/her beliefs and ideas freely. Participant 4 indicates that there are very few areas where a person can be honest and voice their ideas without judgement. Participant 4 describes her ideas as following:

*“There are very few spaces where you can actually just say it as it is, **without judgments** being held against you and without somebody wanting to solve your problems. And that for me would, be the first value for the coachee’s, this is a **safe space**, hear yourself speak.” Participant 4*

The next theme, **Value of being listened to** is also closely related to the previous theme. This relates to the value that the coachee take from being able to share their thoughts and reflect their ideas with someone. From the data it

seems that the coach believes the coachee finds it very valuable that someone is listening to them. This is how Participant 3 and Participant 4 describe their experiences:

“... ja, I think it’s just that, it’s somebody that is there to listen...” Participant 3

“First and foremost the value of being heard. Having a space where it’s just about him or her.” Participant 4

Participant 4 also indicates that having a space where it is only about the coachee is a valuable experience. The third theme in **Relationship** is **Having support & Guidance**. This refers to the value of having a coach who facilitates your thoughts, supports and guides you in the coaching process. It also seems to be valuable to realise that the coach is not alone on this journey, but that the coach is on this journey with the coachee. Participant 4 describes her experiences in the following manner:

*“And then it is certainly I think a wonderful relationship to have somebody that you feel **the person is on this journey with me**, we’ve uncovered the stuff and he/she has given me some pointers uh some actions and stuff to go and work with.” Participant 4*

Participant 5 describes the value of coaching in terms of the support and she uses the metaphor of an anchor to describe the support that the relationship provides the coachee.

*“...just having an **anchor** to help you tackle some of these issues.” Participant 5*

In the **Relationship** category there are three themes that indicate the importance of the relationship when being part of a coaching process. These themes were highlighted by two or more coaches as important and valuable experiences.

These are: **Safe, non-judgemental space, Value of being listened to** and **Having support & guidance**. In the next category the **Work Benefits** will be discussed as perceived by the coaches.

4.5.2 WORK BENEFITS

Work Benefits were also identified as an important category. This refers specifically to valuable experiences relating to the coachee's work environment. There are two recurring themes in this category namely: **Better understanding of position and purpose** and **Reaching targets / goals**. The first theme **Better understanding of position and purpose** indicates that the coaching process enables the coachees to be clearer, in terms of their role and position within their organisation, but also, to be more comfortable with their purpose. This theme relates to the coachee on a more personal level and on a business level. Participant 1 and Participant 3 describe their experiences in the following manner:

*“... the other one is a better understanding of your **role** and your **position** in your business and the journey of your business.” Participant 1*

*“...it ... this is what I want to do, the coaching conversations confirm that, uhm this is really what my **purpose** in life is, this is really what I should be doing. So there's clarity, **clarity** in their own minds of what they want to do with their lives, whether it be **personal or business**.” Participant 3*

The coaching process therefore supports the coachee, to find clarity in terms of their purpose, and as Participant 3 indicates whether it is on a personal or business level. Where **Better understanding of position and purpose** and **Reaching targets / goals** as a theme refers to clarity and a better understanding, the next theme **Reaching targets / goals** refers to the coachees actually reaching their specific goals. Participant 2 describes the value that a

coachee experiences of the coaching process as the value of setting a target or goal and reaching these goals. He describes it in the following manner:

*“People who set certain **targets** for specific reasons and they **reach it** ...the active kind of value that they want out of it...” Participant 2*

Participant 5 also indicated that coaching helps the coachee to deal with performance discrepancies so that they achieve their goals successfully. The category Work Benefits pertain to the perceived benefits that coaches believe coachees take from the coaching process. The two recurring themes are: **Better understanding of position and purpose** and **Reaching targets / goals**. The third category in this section will describe the personal benefits that coachees take from executive coaching, as described or perceived by their coaches.

4.5.3 PERSONAL

This category includes the possible personal value-adds that coachees experience when being part of the coaching process. The themes are: **Greater Self-understanding & Awareness, Other Spin-Offs** and **Dealing with challenges, stress and confidence issues**. Greater **Self-understanding & Awareness** relates to the coachee and their understanding and awareness of themselves.

*“The one is the bigger **understanding, self-understanding self-awareness, self-awareness** as a leader and who you are and your style and all that.”
Participant 1*

Other Spin-Offs as the second theme describes that although these are not the main reasons why a person undergoes executive coaching, the process has a powerful effect on other areas of the coachee. This could be on a personal level, in a family environment or wherever it adds value for the coachee. Participant 2 describes in the theme in the following manner:

*“...people for instance learn to relate better to wife’s or husbands or children uhm colleagues so its all these sort of **spin-offs** around it **away from the immediate issues...**” Participant 2*

Participant 2 also indicates that it enables the coachee to have a greater influence on other aspects of his/her life:

*“...it’s always having **bigger influences** on our lives, work, work place performance, sometimes in their career, career progress, that kind of thing...” Participant 2*

The last theme is **Dealing with challenges, stress & confidence issues**. From the data it is evident that Participant 5 also believes there are other value-adds that include building confidence in the work and that it calms the coachee and enables him/her to deal more successfully with stressful situations.

*“...and I think that positive feedback builds **confidence**, definitely, first of all and secondly I think, it just kinds of gets... a **calming effect**, its very stressful...” Participant 5*

In this section the most valuable experiences of coachees were discussed, as viewed by the coach or from the perspective of the coach. Three main categories were **Relationship, Work Benefits** and **Personal**. In the next section the value add for the coach will be discussed in detail.

4.6 MOST VALUABLE EXPERIENCES - COACH

This section refers to the valuable experiences or value-adds that the coach experiences from the coaching process. There is one category, namely **Personal**, as all of the themes in this section relates to the personal value of the coach.

The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of the following themes, namely: **Personal Growth & Learning, Sense of Meaningfulness, Making a Contribution** and **Being part of the Process**. The other theme that also occurred independently is: **Positively affects my energy**.

4.6.1 PERSONAL

Personal Growth & Learning as a theme refers to the coaches feeling that he/she also learns and grows tremendously through a coaching relationship. The coaches learn from the coachee and learn of their business environment. Therefore, it adds value at a personal and business level. Participant 2 describes it as part of his enrichment process. This indicates that through the coaching relationship the coach is not stagnant, but that the relationship also adds to his/her personal growth process. Participant 1 and Participant 2 describe their experiences in the following manner:

*“I think **personal growth** probably you know to be ahead and to try and understand the human nature and and the leaders business’ I think is one heck of a **learning curve...**” Participant 1*

*“I **learn** from every coachee issues that they deal with that’s where the interesting issues comes from, that they deal with issues that I’m also interested in...” Participant 2*

In this last statement Participant 2 indicates that the coachees become his role models and that he believes there is not a single person that he has not learned

from or, in other words, had an impact on him. This confirms the statement that the coach also learns and grows through coaching.

*“It started my own **enrichment**, my own **growing**, my own **growth**, my own **development**, my own even **transformation**, because sometimes you with stuff, fundamental issues in peoples lives... Uhm, and to see that they become **role models** you know so, I think it’s, there’s not a single person that I haven’t **learned** from. ” Participant 2*

The next theme: **Sense of Meaningfulness**, is very similar to the theme **Fulfilling & Satisfying** that forms part of the **Emotional** Category and which was discussed in the **Overall Experiences of Coaches**. It therefore stresses the meaningfulness that coaches experience when being part of the coaching process. The next theme: **Making a Contribution**, is also very closely related to **Sense of Meaningfulness**. From the data, it seems that the coaches experience a sense of fulfilment and meaningfulness, because they feel they are contributing and influencing the coachees’ life. This is how some of the participants described their sense of fulfilment and meaningfulness.

*“For me it is the value of, the **reward of fulfilment**...”
Participant 2*

*“...but there’s a sense of – experience of **meaningfulness** uh that I haven’t had in any other thing that I’ve been involved with.” Participant 2*

As indicated, **Making a Contribution** as a theme relates closely to **Sense of Meaningfulness**. Participant 4 describes her experience and also highlights the fact that the coach influenced the change in the coachee.

*“... its in a crux ...for me about a **meaningfulness**, it’s about making a **meaningful contribution** to*

*somebody... you have enabled.... You've been a **catalyst of change...**" Participant 4*

Participant 5 describes her experiences as follows:

*"...that you directed something and now that **makes sense to the others person** that you know will have an **impact** on that person, uh ja that's what I take from it." Participant 5*

The last recurring theme is: **Being part of the Process & Seeing the Benefits**. This indicates that the coach experiences it as valuable to be part of the coaching process. Being part of the process also indicates that the coach is able to see the benefits. Participant 4 pointed out that it is wonderful to be part of the coachee's journey. This seems valuable to the coach, as they are part of this positive process where they see growth, change and how people set themselves free.

*"So for- what I take out of that is it's wonderful just been **invited** to be part of this **person's journey...** and being **part of a process** where people can actually set themselves free..." Participant 4*

The coaching process seems to add valuable inputs to the coaches' lives that also effects them. Participant 4 indicates that being part of the coaching process and seeing this change and growth also impacts positively on her energy. The last theme is: **Positively affects my energy**, and this is how Participant 4 describes her experiences:

"...when I have a good coaching session... it greatly effects my energy in terms of just uh its wonderful to be part of that, to be part of that process." Participant 4

In this section the most valuable experiences of coaches was discussed. There is one category, namely ***Personal***, with four recurring themes: ***Personal Growth & Learning, Sense of Meaningfulness, Making a Contribution*** and ***Being part of the Process***. The individual theme is: ***Positively affects my energy***. This was the last section of the coaches' data and several areas were discussed namely: ***Overall Experience, Positive Experiences, Negative Experiences, Most Valuable – Coachee*** and lastly ***Most Valuable – Coach***. The next part will therefore address with the experiences of the coachees and a very similar process of discussion will follow. The final conclusions will be discussed after the coachees' data.



COACHEE- EXPERIENCES

OVERALL EXPERIENCE

Emotional
Tough & Uncomfortable
Relaxing & Unloading
Positive & Magical

Relationship
Facing yourself
Sounding board & reflection

Personal Benefit
Learning and growth

VALUE-ADD WORK ENVIRONMENT

Personal benefit
More confident and Comfortable
Feeling Calmer

Relationships
Increased Self-Awareness
Having different relationships

Skills & Work
Impact on leadership / management style
Stronger focus on Organisational issues
Better Focus
Develop Potential

POSITIVE EXPERIENCE

Relationship
Being listened to
Honest feedback
Real understanding
Truthfulness

Personal
Personal Growth
Gained insight
Overcome Stumbling Blocks to Reach Potential

VALUE-ADD PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

Personal benefit
Reduction in Anxiety & Stress
Growth

Relationships
Different Personal Relationships

Purpose
Understand Purpose Better

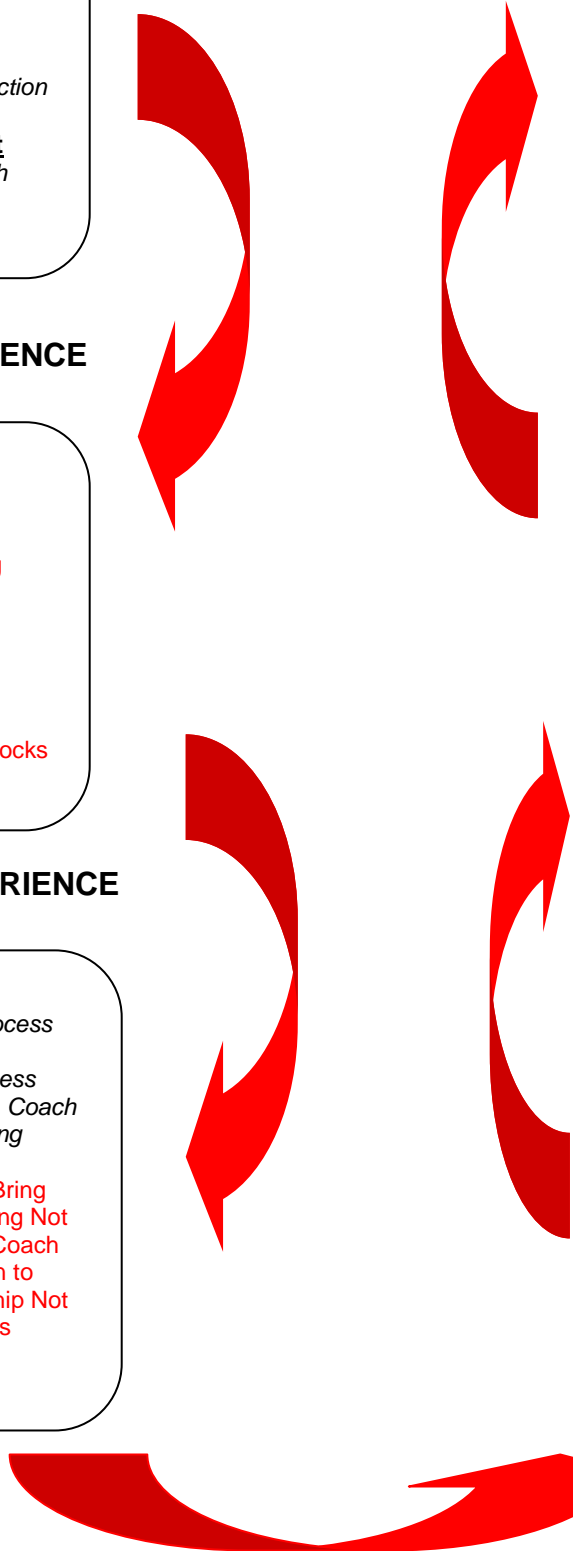
NEGATIVE EXPERIENCE

Time & Lengthy Process
Expensive
More Flexible Access
Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding

Not Being Able to Bring Whole-self to Coaching Not Ready and Honest Coach should know when to terminate a relationship Not Tangible Results

MOST VALUABLE

Relationship
Being Listened to
Support & Guidance
Taking Time to Reflect
Personal Growth & Optimising Potential



** Reoccurring Themes
** Independent Themes

EXPERIENCES OF COACHEES

This section will address the experiences of coachees when going through an executive coaching process. The data is based on a grounded theory analysis that was followed to analyse five coachees' data. In the first section the overall experiences of coachees will be discussed in detail.

4.7 OVERALL EXPERIENCES OF COACHEES

The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three categories, namely: **Emotional, Relationship and Personal Benefit**. In each of these categories there are different themes. These will be discussed in more detail to explain and clarify the significant themes.

4.7.1 EMOTIONAL

In the category **Emotional** there are three recurring themes that were identified. This category pertains to the experiences that coachees describe that are more emotional or that impacted on an emotional level. The following themes were identified through a grounded theory process: **Tough & Uncomfortable, Relaxing & Unloading** and **Positive & Magical**. It is interesting that the first theme describes the challenging part of the coaching process and the next two describe the positive experiences. The coaching process is described by coachees as tough, difficult and even uncomfortable at times. The theme **Tough & Uncomfortable** were highlighted by three of the five coachees as part of their experience of coaching and they referred to this experience fairly often. From the data it seems that at some stages the process may feel very uncomfortable and confusing to the coachees. Participant 8 also indicates that he felt vulnerable because you have to open yourself up to someone else and this is unsettling.

*“...it's a bit **confusing**, uhm, uh maybe a little bit – uhm what is the word I can use – uh **disconcerting** a*

*little bit because you have to open-up to this person... you have to give them a view into your life and be a little bit **vulnerable** uh so I think at first ...uh it **unsettles** you a bit, that was obviously very **uncomfortable** at first..." Participant 8*

Participant 9 describes the process as tough and it seems that this is closely linked to self-reflection, or the process of realising some personal challenges. This is how she describes her experiences of the coaching process:

*"...it's very **different**, uhm I think you... I think it's **tough** in the beginning... there are some **tough** times, you need to make some- you know- realize some stuff you know which is not lekke..." Participant 9*

Although coaching is described as a tough and difficult process, the next theme describes the positive experiences and indicates that the coaching process relaxes the coachee. The next theme **Relaxing & Unloading** really highlights how coachees experience the process. Participant 9 indicates that the process settled her down and allowed her to think differently about issues.

*"...in my personal opinion I think it **settled me down** a bit. I'm a **highly strung individual** so it makes you think about things differently." Participant 9*

Participant 8 indicates that the coaching process allowed him to unload his emotionally issues and things became clearer afterwards.

*"...it became ... I don't want to use **cathartic**, but it became specifically **unloaded**, you've **unloaded** uhm stuff that's becoming clearer after having conversation..." Participant 8*

Positive & Magical is the last theme in the **Emotional** category. Although the coaching process is experienced as tough at times, the experience is overall magical and positive. Participant 7 describes the process as fantastic, magical and magnificent. The data therefore indicates that this process was a very positive experience for him. This is how he portrays the coaching experience:

*“The coaching process is **magical**, its **intense** ...overall it’s a **magnificent** experience ... ja its never been easy, but its been **pretty fantastic**.”*
Participant 7

“...I think it’s overall positive...” Participant 6

In the **Emotional** category, three themes were discussed, namely: **Tough & Uncomfortable, Relaxing & Unloading** and **Positive & Magical**. The next category that will be discussed is **Relationship**.

4.7.2 RELATIONSHIP

Relationship as a category refers to the experiences of coachees as a result of the coaching relationship. The themes that were identified are **Facing Yourself** and **Sounding board & Reflection**.

The first theme **Facing Yourself** was identified as an important experience. The process allows coachees to face themselves and their own blind spots. This could also be part of the reason why the coaching process is described as tough and uncomfortable, because of the process of facing themselves and to realise their blind spots.

*“The tough part is **facing** uh, **facing** stuff that you don’t like to face, its you know its like **looking in the mirror** and you don’t always like what you see and that’s what you need to work on.”* Participant 9

Sounding board & Reflection as a theme refers to the coach that supports and assists the coachee with self-reflection and provides them with a sounding board. The coach therefore also facilitates this process of reflection that allows the coachee to gain insight. Participant 6 and Participant 8 describe their experiences of the coaching process as following:

*“I needed a bit of an **experienced ear** or a **sounding board**...” Participant 6*

“...to allow you to speak and have somebody listen to you...” Participant 8

The last category in **Overall Experiences of Coachees** is **Personal Benefit**. This refers to the benefits that the coachees described as part of the coaching experiences.

4.7.3 PERSONAL BENEFIT

The theme in **Personal Benefit** is **Learning & Growth**. This highlights the fact that part of the experience for coachees is the tremendous personal growth they experience in the coaching process. Learning and growth are taking place and this leads towards change.

*“So the overall coaching process for me has been one of a fantastic journey of **growth**...” Participant 7*

*“...it’s tough going through the process and you know **change** is always tough, this is a real **changing** process.” Participant 9*

Part of the **Learning and Growth** theme is then also the change that takes place. Participant 9 describes the process as ‘a real changing process’. This section dealt with the overall experiences of coachees. The next section will address the positive experiences of coachees when going through a coaching process.

4.8 POSITIVE EXPERIENCES

Positive Experiences refer to the positive experiences that coachees highlighted. There are two categories, namely: **Relationship** and **Personal**. **Relationship** refers to the positive experiences that are experienced as a result of a coaching relationship, where the second theme **Personal** refers to positive experiences that the coachee experiences as positive.

4.8.1 RELATIONSHIP

The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of the following themes, namely: **Being Listened to** and **Honest Feedback**. The other themes that also occurred independently are: **Real Understanding** and **Truthfulness**.

Being Listened to as a theme, indicates that the coachees experience it as very positive when being able to express their ideas and being listened to by the coach. Participant 10 describes the position of CEO as lonely and therefore highlights the value of the coach, where he is able to share his ideas and challenges.

*“...I think what I’ve experienced is that the job of a CEO is a bit of a **lonely** thing, there’s not a lot of people you can talk to uhm... I think in terms of **sounding board** it’s having the ability to **listen** and then just play it back what you’ve heard...”*

Participant 6

Participant 6 describes the value of being listened to as important, but also being able to reflect his ideas with someone. Participant 8 describes his experience of being listened to as following:

*“Definitely **been listened to**, definitely **been listened to**, I think that was very, that’s very*

*helpful... I think the big one uh was just that opportunity to be, to be **listened to**..." Participant 8*

It seems from the data that the coachees experience it as extremely valuable to be in the coaching relationship where they are able to express their ideas and feelings and the coach is listening to them. The next theme, **Honest Feedback** is also highlighted as a positive experience. Participant 10 describes the feedback as both positive and negative.

*"I think it is **feedback** – both negative and positive ...– that **feedback** I think was very – I would touch on that as a positive part." Participant 10*

From the data it is evident that the value of being part of a coaching process reflects the value of the relationship. The coachees indicate that it is valuable to be listened to and to receive honest feedback from the coach. The other themes that were also identified are: **Real Understanding** and **Truthfulness**. These themes also reflect the importance of the coaching relationship. The theme **Truthfulness** relates closely to **Honest Feedback** where the coachee values the coach's honesty. **Real Understanding** refers to the coachee feeling that the coach understands his/her situation and is providing support. The next category that will be discussed is **Personal** and there are two recurring themes that will be addressed.

4.8.2 PERSONAL

The Personal category refers to the positive experiences that impacted personally or added value to the coachee. The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of the following themes, namely: **Personal Growth** and **Gained Insight** (Ah-ha Moments). The other individual theme is **Overcome stumbling blocks to reach potential**.

The first theme **Personal Growth** refers to the coachees indicating that they experienced tremendous personal growth through the coaching process. Four

of the five coachees pointed out that growth and issues around this theme were experienced as very positive. Participant 7 indicates that personal growth is one of his positive experiences of the coaching process and he also referred to that coach as a mentor who assisted and supported him with growth and challenges around that. From the data, it seems that the support from the coach allowed the coachee to grow and take on challenges.

*“Sjoe, there’s a lot positive things, I’m just trying to put them into a short number of words... uhm, **personal growth**... the coach has become someone who mentored me in certain areas, **help me to grow** in certain areas, help you face things that you don’t really want to face as an individual...!” Participant 7*

*“You know there’s also an element of **growth**...”
Participant 10*

The next theme that is also a recurring theme is **Gained Insight**. The coachee indicates that the coach uses reflection and other techniques to allow her/him to reflect on their action and gain new insights into their own situations. This is how Participant 9 describes her experiences:

*“There are quite a lot of **realizations** that happened through the process, so it’s like that **ah-ha moment**...” Participant 9*

Participant 9 also highlights this process of reflection as very valuable and through the process and role-plays, she is able to realise how her own actions are impacting on her effectiveness.

The last theme in Personal category is **Overcome stumbling blocks to reach potential**. It is an independent theme and refers to the experience of the coachee that the coach assists her/him to overcome stumbling blocks. Participant 9 describes this in the following manner:

“...where there’s always a barrier prohibits you from reaching your optimal potential ...this whole process has helped me identify those stumbling blocks,... start identifying that and actually overcome that and stop limiting...your position in life I suppose.” Participant 9

Part of this theme is also the coach providing the coachee with some tools and exercises to enable him/her to overcome their personal stumbling blocks.

In this section the positive experiences, as described by coaches, were discussed. Two categories namely ***Relationship and Personal*** were identified. In the next section the negative experiences of coachees during the coaching process are discussed.

4.9 NEGATIVE EXPERIENCES

This section will address the negative experiences that coachees experience when going through a process of executive coaching. There are four themes in this section. In this category it was interesting and important to note that there were very few recurring themes. From the data, it seems that the negative experiences were closely linked to each individual’s experience of coaching and that the coaching relationship between the coach and coachee will impact on the coaching experience. The recurring themes are: ***Time & Lengthy Process, Expensive, More Flexible Access*** and ***Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding***. However, all the other themes were related to each coachee’s personal experiences and individual coaching relationship.

Time & Lengthy Process as a theme refers to two aspects. Firstly it seems difficult for the coachee to find time in their daily schedules for coaching. Secondly, because of other demands and responsibilities, it is a challenge to make time to meet with the coach. Participant 7 indicates that he becomes so

busy with daily operational tasks that he fails to realise when he needs coaching the most.

*“...the negatives... **finding time for coaching**, you get so busy and I think it is kind of life, you get so busy **doing rather than being** that some of the negatives are that you point in time where you really need coaching the most you don't actually know it...”*

Participant 7

There are two important aspects of the theme **Time & Lengthy Process**. The first is finding time for the coaching process. The second aspect of this theme is that coaching is a lengthy and timeous process. Participant 9 describes her experiences as follows:

*“I think sometimes also a bit of **time**, it takes a lot of **time** out of your programme and day to actually do engage in, in an hour-to-hour consolation like that, so it does take a bit of **time** and it's a **lengthy process** I think that's frustrating... you just do it, because that's what you want to do, but it is a **long process**.”*

Participant 9

The next theme is **Expensive** and, from the data, it is evident that the coachee experiences it as one of the negative aspects. Participant 6 indicated that he would like to make use of the coach on a more regular basis, however, because of resources (finances), he is not able to utilise the services of the coach frequently. Coaching is expensive from the company and individual's perspective. Therefore, as an intervention it is quite a costly exercise to go through a coaching process. 80% of the coachees that were interviewed for this study were initially sponsored by their companies to go through the coaching process. This is how Participant 9 describes her experiences:

“It’s expensive... It’s expensive for companies as well, businesses, its very expensive for a business to pay for it...” Participant 9

The next theme, **More Flexible Access**, indicates that coachees has a desire for more flexible access to their coaches. Therefore, whenever they feel they need the support or expertise of the coach they should be able to reach him/her immediately.

“...that has been a negative, when I needed the person I can’t get hold of the person or something like that...” Participant 7

The last recurring theme is **Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding**. This theme has two sub-themes that are part of the experiences of coachees and why the coach does not understand them. The first sub-theme relates to the coachee feeling that the coach does not understand the specific dilemma and that the coach is not providing him/her with the necessary tools or answers, to address his/her challenges. Participant 9 also described this experience as hitting a barrier, where she seems to feel that the coach does not understand her position.

*“I ,think, in terms of its **frustrating** cause, kind of, you know, **your not hearing** what I’m trying to tell you, **your not understanding** what I’m saying, or uhm.. you don’t really understand, or you know its, its that frustrating times where you’re **hitting kind of a barrier**, that, that’s a bit tough...” Participant 9*

The second aspect is where a coachee highlighted that the coach did not understand her background and specific cultural aspects. Because of these cultural differences, it seems that she feels she was not able to address or share some personal challenges and that the coach would not understand her challenges. This is how Participant 10 describes her experiences:

*“Uh I would think of the **cultural background** because... I don’t know what would have been the situation if I had a black lady; you know where there is also an **understanding the culture, where you’re coming from**, how you’ve been **brought-up** and things like that...” Participant 10*

The four recurring themes that were identified through the process of open coding and axial coding are: **Time & Lengthy Process, Expensive, More Flexible Access** and **Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding**. The independent themes and individual experiences are going to be further explored.

The first theme is **Not Being Able to Bring Whole-self to Coaching**, is an independent theme. This theme is closely linked to the previous theme and reflects some of the emotions of not being understood. The coachee seems to feel that she was not able to bring some personal issues or challenges to the coaching space. It therefore seems that although her goals were achieved, she would have experienced it as more meaningful when being able to bring her whole-self to the coaching relationship. She further describes her experience in the following manner:

*“...I did not have the sense of comfort, in also getting to some of my personal things or things that I’m going through... We kept it – you know at work level.”
Participant 10*

From the data, it seems that Participant 10 did not feel comfortable to share her personal challenges and that the coaching was more focused on work goals or tasks. She further added:

“Uhm I mean sometimes its also beneficial to see what is happening with your health, what is happening with your life situation at home and things like that so

*that somebody is able to understand the **whole package** of who you are and where you're coming from." Participant 10*

It seems that Participant 10 had a need to share issues around her health and personal life. It seems that she experienced it as a negative that she was not able to bring her whole-self to the coaching relationship.

Participant 7 describes his first coaching experience as a less positive experience. The first theme that forms part of his experience is **Not Ready and Honest**. This seems to be more of a personal negative for the coachee, as he was not being truthful to the coach. He indicates that although he wanted to undergo coaching, he was not ready for the process. He did not experience the process as meaningful, but was not able to be truthful to the person. This is how he describes his experiences:

*"The very first experience were negative because whilst I was- I wanted the process as such, I **wasn't ready** for the process, it was negative, it was quite a lot of **waste of time**, because as I wasn't **strong** enough to say this is not working for me **lets cut it off** now- immediately and it **dragged on** for a bit. What negative for me was also the fact that I realized then that I wasn't **truthful** to this person that was negative for me in terms of being **truthful**..."*
Participant 7

The other factors that contributed to the negative experience is that the coaching 'dragged' on and that he was not able to be truthful towards the coach about his own experiences. The second theme around Participant 7's coaching experience relates closely to the first theme.

The second theme is **Coach should know when to terminate a relationship**. The first coaching process was experienced as less meaningful and he indicates

that the coach should know when to end a coaching relationship. The coach should realise when there is not a real effort from the coachee (or both parties) and end the relationship, rather than to let it drag on and the coachee is not experiencing a meaningful contribution. Participant 7 describes his experiences in the following manner:

*“...to have the ability to understand that when there’s not a real uhm effort from both parties that the coach **needs to have the ability to fire** a client and **not be commercially oriented**, that I think that, that open honesty has to be there where you can **fire** each other at will.” Participant 7*

Participant 7 also indicates that a coach should not be commercially oriented and his focus should not be on financial gain, but rather on the coaching relationship and the coachee.

The last theme is: **Not tangible results**. Participant 9 indicates that she experiences this as part of a negative experience. The results are not tangible and, at times, she is not able to see the change that took place. However the feedback from team members and subordinates reflects that change did take place and that they view her in a different manner.

*“And it’s not, and its **not that tangible**, its like I said, I don’t know what difference does it make, but people tell me. **Not that tangible.**” Participant 9*

The first four recurring themes dealt more with negatives as part of the coaching experience and industry. These are: **Time & Lengthy Process, Expensive, More Flexible Access** and **Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding**. The four independent themes addressed more personal negative experiences of different coachees that seem to relate to their unique experiences. The four independent themes are: **Not Being Able to Bring Whole-self to Coaching, Not Ready and Honest, Coach should know when to terminate a**

relationship and **Not tangible results**. In the next section the most valuable experience of coachees is going to be discussed.

4.10 MOST VALUABLE

This section describes the most valuable experiences of coachees when going through an executive coaching process. There is one category, namely, **Relationship**. It is however, important to note that some of these themes are overlapping with other sections but, for the purpose of the study, it is important to discuss these again.

Through the process of open coding and axial coding, four different themes were identified. The **Relationship** category has four recurring themes namely: **Being Listened to, Support & Guidance, Taking Time to Reflect** and **Personal Growth & Optimising Potential**.

4.10.1 RELATIONSHIP

Relationship as a category refers to the valuable experiences gained as a result of the coaching relationship. The following themes were identified: **Being Listened to, Support & Guidance, Taking Time to Reflect** and **Personal Growth & Development**.

Being Listened to as a theme is very similar to **Sounding Board & Reflection** in the **Experience** category and in the **Positive** category **Being Listened to** was also identified as a theme. It is therefore clear that the coachees experience this as a very valuable and important theme. This is how Participant 8 describes the value of being listened to:

*“...being **listened to** - I think most importantly the fact that that person have taken that, that time to sit there and **listen** to you going yap yap yap...” Participant 8*

The next theme **Support & Guidance** refers to the coachee feeling that the coach supports them and guides them through the process.

“She [coach] was supporting me around my thinking, understanding ...” Participant 10

Participant 10 also indicates that the coach guides her thinking. Therefore this support and guidance is on two levels, namely guiding their behaviour and actions, and guiding their ideas and thoughts, as part of the reflective process. This is then also closely related to the next theme, **Taking Time to Reflect**.

The theme **Taking Time to Reflect** indicates that the coachee finds it valuable to be able to take time and reflect on their own behaviour. The value of analysing and thinking about their behaviour.

“I think its just taking the time to really sit and... analyze and give yourself time...” Participant 9

The next theme **Personal Growth & Development** refers to the coachees indicating that the process of executive coaching enabled them to further develop and grow themselves and their skills within their work environment. Participant 7 and Participant 9 describe their experiences in the following manner:

*“...the most valuable uhm **personal growth**, definitely for me the most valuable...but **personal growth**, most definitely, that was the most valuable for me.” Participant 7*

*“...that self **development**...how many of us take the time out to actively **develop** your individual and work behaviour or your individual issues....” Participant 9*

Participant 7 indicates that to him personal growth is definitely the most important value-add of the coaching process. The next section refers to the value add specifically within the work environment.

4.11 VALUE ADD – WORK ENVIRONMENT

This section refers to the valuable contribution that coachees experience in their work environment when going through a coaching process. In other words, what value did coaching add to their work environment? The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three main categories, namely: **Personal Benefit**, **Relationships** and **Skills & Work**.

4.11.1 PERSONAL BENEFIT

Personal Benefit as a category refers to the value-add that coachees experienced personally and that contributed positively to their work environment. The themes that were identified as meaningful are: **More Confident & Comfortable and Feeling Calmer**.

More Confident & Comfortable as a theme refers to the coachee feeling more confident and comfortable firstly with themselves and then in their position in the organisation. This is how Participant 8 and Participant 9 describe their experiences:

*“...where you start becoming a little bit more **comfortable** ...and you become **stronger** and a little bit more **competent** uh a you become a little- you **grow more into yourself**. .” Participant 8*

*“...the feedback I get from colleagues is that you’re much more **confident in your role** and you’re much more at **ease with who you are** in terms of what you bring to the table, you’re not that constant hunger, I*

need to do this, I need to deliver this, I need to prove this and I need to prove that...” Participant 9

Participant 9 also refers to her role and not feeling the constant need to prove herself. Therefore this theme relates to two levels, namely: feeling more comfortable with yourself and secondly feeling confident regarding your role and contribution to the organisation. The next theme, **Feeling Calmer**, seems closely related to the first theme and could be a consequence of **More Confident & Comfortable**. Where the coachee feels more confident and comfortable with his/her role and skills, they are possibly able to face challenges with a calmer and more confident approach. This is how Participant 9 describes her experience of **Feeling Calmer**.

*“...it has really given me a level of **maturity** in the way I interact with people, and it **calms** me down quite a lot, I get quite fiery and passionate about stuff and it kind of just made me **calm** down... so a level of **maturity** and **calmness** has come into the work environment, which makes the people around me **calm**..” Participant 9*

From the data it seems that she also feels that her calmer, more mature approach also impacts on her subordinates and team members feel calmer. It, therefore, seems that the coachee then also impacts on others around him/her and, because of the dynamics of a relationship, also influences the broader team within the organisation. The next section, **Relationships**, refers to the influence or impact the coachee has on people around him/her.

4.11.2 RELATIONSHIPS

The category **Relationships** refers to the coachee having different relationships, firstly with colleagues and secondly also with him or herself. The themes in this category are: **Increased Self-Awareness** and **Having Different Relationships**. Firstly, the increased self-awareness seems to enable the coachee to have different relationships with people around him/her. Secondly, the coaching

process seems to impact strongly on the coachees overall relationships. This is how some of the Participants described their experiences of **Increased Self-Awareness** and **Different Relationships**:

*“...think **understanding myself** and the **people around me better**. That’s probably the most valuable thing for me and I think that’s a direct outcome of the process.” Participant 6*

*“...having **different conversations**, cause first of all there’s real, major self awareness stuff that really happened, you know you start realizing some of the things that you may have, you may have been blind to... uhm that awareness, it **changes** the kind of way you may have **conversations with people**.” Participant 8*

*“...it has uhm really given me a level of maturity in the **way I interact with people**...you don’t necessarily realize you talk to people in the way that you talk to them because you are under pressure, learning how to talk to people even though you’re under that pressure. So people are finding that **interaction** and that behaviour from my side **different**...” Participant 9*

It is evident from the data that these two themes are closely related in terms of the coachee’s experience. Firstly, the coachees understand themselves better and are more self-aware. Participant 7 describes it as being more emotionally intelligent. This seems to impact on their relationship with customers, colleagues and overall, with themselves as well. Therefore, the coachees feel they are able to relate more successfully to others in the work environment.

4.11.3 SKILLS & WORK

The next category **Skills & Work** highlights specific areas where the coachee indicates that coaching contributed towards the development of their skills and enabled them to be more successful within their work environment. The following themes were identified: **Impact on leadership / management style, Stronger focus on Organisational issues, Better Focus** and **Develop Potential**

The first theme, **Impact on leadership / management style** is a recurring theme and it reflects the experienced value-add in the work environment, as described by the coachee. The coachees indicated that the coaching process enabled them to develop their leadership/management style and allowed them to be more of an influential manager. This is how Participant 7 and Participant 10 describe their experiences:

“...the work side of things, much better leader...”
Participant 7

“...influential management in terms of how to deal at a strategic level with leadership in understanding people and people behaviour...” Participant 10

The next themes are not recurring themes but were also very important and viewed as important value-adds. These themes are: **Stronger focus on Organisational issues, Better Focus** and **Develop Potential**.

The first theme **Stronger focus on Organisational issues**, indicates that the coachee believes coaching has added tremendous value in terms of organisational issues. Participant 7 indicates that he believes coaching has enabled him to focus better on the important organisational areas. There also seems to be an overall change in focus throughout the organisation, so it seems that the impact is broader than only on the coachee. This is how he describes his experiences:

*“...much better focused on **organizational issues**, internal organizational issues and with clients. Uhm focused day to day on implementation of our **strategic plan and growth issues** within the organization and huge focus, change in focus **throughout the organization...**” Participant 7*

Participant 10 indicates that it provided her with overall better focus in terms of where she is going. She describes the experience of **Better Focus** as follows:

*“...I think it’s a little bit of **focus**, **focus** uh on that I’m moving from here and this is **where I’m going...**”
Participant 10*

The theme, **Develop Potential**, highlights the experience that coaching develops the coachees potential and that he/she becomes more of what they can be. In this specific section, it was not a recurring theme, however, it was nominated as a theme in the Most Valuable category. Participant 8 describes his experiences in the following manner:

“...that’s what coaching does, ja...you start becoming more of who you can be...” Participant 8

In this section the value-add and experiences of coachees was discussed, specifically relating to their work environment. The following main categories were identified, namely: **Personal Benefit**, **Relationships** and **Skills**. The next section is going to address the value-add that coachees experience on a personal level. From this section, it is clear that there are very valuable experiences in the coachees’ work environment, however, what value do they experience in their personal lives?

4.12 VALUE ADD – PERSONAL ENVIRONMENT

This section refers to the valuable contribution that coachees experience in their personal environment when going through a coaching process. In other words, what value did coaching add to their personal environment? The process of open coding and axial coding led to the identification of three main categories, namely: **Personal Benefit**, **Relationships** and **Purpose**.

4.12.1 PERSONAL BENEFIT

Personal Benefit, as a category, refers to the value-add that coachees experienced personally and that contributed positively to their personal environment. The themes that were identified as meaningful are: **Reduction in Anxiety and Stress** and **Growth**.

The first theme **Reduction in Anxiety and Stress** is closely related to the theme in **Value Add – Work Environment, Feeling Calmer**, where the Participants indicated that they experienced the benefit of feeling calmer. Participant 7 describes his valuable experiences in terms of the reduction in “**anxiety and baseless fears**”. Therefore, it seems that the coachees feel there is less fear, anxiety and overall stress. It seems that the relationship with the coachees where they are able to share and reflect on some of these fears enables them to deal more successfully with these challenges.

The next theme **Growth** is also described in the **Overall Experiences of Coachees** and part of their **Positive Experiences**. This theme is therefore a very important and valuable theme for coachees. The following described Participant 7’s experience of the value of growth:

*“I’m not sure that you get the same- that everyone will have the same experience that I went through in terms of **personal growth**, I would love them all to have the same experience because my **personal growth has been unbelievable**. 2 years of **magical***

experiences ...the experiences has been so profound, in so many ways...real massive growth issues.” Participant 7

Participant 7 describes the growth as massive and he refers to the overall coaching experience as magical. It seems from this that the personal growth that he experienced is very valuable and profound. Participant 10 also describes the personal growth as very valuable in the coaching process:

*“Uhm on a personal, I think its **personal growth**, it has been **growth**, it has been reflective, to say look back and learn from the process...”* Participant 10

The next category, Relationships, will consider the change in relationships after the coaching process for coaches.

4.12.2 RELATIONSHIPS

The category **Relationships** refers to the coachee having different relationships with family members, or different personal relationships. The theme in this category is: **Different Personal Relationships**. This is how some of the Participants described their experiences of having different personal relationships:

*“...for my **wife** and we understand each other better.”*
Participant 6

*“...I think it had a big **change in my personal life**, uhm I was in a **very dark place** working myself into a stand still, having a very bad habit of dumping everything at home on my poor husband and putting quite a lot of strain on our relationship... and what the coaching has done is I, I’ve completely stopped taking that home...so it had a **tremendous effect** on my **personal life**...”* Participant 9

From the data, it seems that the coachees and their partners are able to understand one another better. Participant 9 also highlights the fact that she is able to leave her challenges at work and is not ‘dumping’ them on her partner anymore. It therefore seems that because of the coach listening and supporting her with reflecting on her stress and challenges, she doesn’t take these home anymore. The last category in ***Value Add – Personal Environment*** is ***Purpose***.

4.12.3 PURPOSE

Purpose as a category has one theme, namely: ***Understand Purpose Better***. This is an individual theme and was found to be an important factor in the coaching process. This seems to highlight the fact that coaching supports and enables the coachee to gain clarity, in terms of what they want, but more specifically, what their purpose is. This could be linked to their role in the organisation, but it is also broader than only within the organisation.

“...understanding of life purpose...” Participant 7

4.13 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the research findings were discussed in detail. Firstly the coaches’ experiences and perceived benefits were discussed and in the second section the coachees’ experiences were addressed. The research study produced valuable findings. The findings correspond with the objective of grounded theory, to develop an integrated set of concepts that provide a theoretical perspective on the value and experiences of executive coaching, from the coach and the coachee’s perspectives. Chapter 5 will further address and discuss the findings in relation to the prior assumptions from the literature study.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION

*The true journey of discovery does not consist
in searching for new territories but in having
new eyes.*

-Marcel Proust

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study set out to explore and describe the experiences of coaches and coachees when going through an executive coaching process. The main research question was aimed at the authentic experiences of both parties in a coaching relationship. Coaching as an industry is very positively promoted, but what is the real value for executives and how do coaches experience the coaching process? This study aimed to further explore the coaching industry in South Africa and provide professionals with valuable knowledge to contribute to a more effective coaching process.

With this final chapter the study draws to a close. The results and findings will be discussed in more detail with an integrated discussion, relating to the research findings. The current literature and prior assumptions from the literature study will also be addressed. The transcending findings will also be discussed. These refer to conclusions that were broader than the research questions, and were found to be very interesting. Thereafter, the limitations, recommendations and contributions of this study will be discussed.

5.2 EXPERIENCES OF THE EXECUTIVE COACH

The coaches' experiences are going to be discussed broadly to examine the different themes that transcended during the study. The coaches indicated that they experienced executive coaching as an extremely meaningful and **satisfying** process. Although it is, at times, **tough** and can be draining in terms of energy levels, it is a **valuable** and also **energising** process.

The coaches describe coaching and the experiences around the process as **meaningful**. The process keeps on **challenging** them and, in the process, the coaches also **learn** with and from the coachees. Because of the **different** executives, their different industries and individual **challenges**, the coaches learn from each coachee or coaching relationship. There is therefore **new learning and change** that takes place for the coach and the coachee. Because of the coachees dealing with **different challenges** and situations, each coaching is different from the previous relationship and this provides variety for the coaches. Each coachee also experiences the coaching process in a unique manner.

Davison and Gasiorowski (2006) believe that coaches experience a strong sense of **value** when helping others to develop and grow. The coaches are also continually focusing on their own self-development. They indicate that coaches usually believe or experience coaching as a calling or a mission. This confirms the statements of Participant 2 who described coaching as a calling rather than a vocation.

The coaches also indicate that it is important to **build rapport** with the coachee and part of this is to **actively listen** to the coachee. A **trust relationship** is the key and the coach also needs to stay open minded towards to the coachee and his/her unique challenges.

Davison and Gasiorowski (2006) indicate that an effective coach should have good communication skills. This should include the ability to **build rapport**, listen intensely and ask powerful questions to help the coachee to reflect.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) and the International Association of Coaches (IAC) have identified coaching core competencies that are important for a coaching relationship. Both certification bodies included the importance of *Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client* as part of their core competencies. This is described as the “ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust” (In Wright, 2005). This stresses the importance of building rapport with a client.

The coach experiences the ***ah-ha moments*** in coaching, as very positive. The moments where a coachee has a ***realisation*** or moment of ***enlightenment*** and things make sense. The coach experiences this ***change and growth*** as really meaningful and valuable. Part of these positive experiences is that the coaches also feel he/she is ***adding value*** to someone else’s growth and development journey. Therefore, being part of this ***change and growth*** gives the coach a sense of meaning and value.

Negative experiences that were evident, are when the coach has to ***terminate a coaching relationship*** because the coachee is not ***ready or open*** for the feedback and is ***withholding the process*** from moving forward. Another reason for terminating the coaching relationship is due to no ***connection or chemistry*** between the coach and the coachee.

DeNisi and Kluger, (2000) stated that the relationship between the coach and the coachee seems to be a factor that could optimize the process of self-development. They further confirmed that a ***trusting relationship*** can help the coachee to deal with negative emotions and defuse defensive reactions. It seems that in high-trust relationships the coach is able to impact more positively on the coachee. The coach is able to focus the coachee’s attention on opportunities of self-development rather than on threats arising from negative feedback (DeNisi & Kluger, 2000).

Coaches experience it as negative when they feel they are unable to ***mobilise*** the coachee or where they experience the coachee as ***stuck***. It also seems that

this could create some tension for the coach. Where they start out with set goals and results that need to be achieved, the coach experiences it negatively if they are unable to ***mobilise*** the coachee to reach these goals. The coach could also feel that this reflects on him/her as a coach, as he/she was not able to reach the set objectives, especially where the coach is hired by the company that expects specific results. Part of this frustration of coaches is reflected in themes like: ***Coachee not Willing, Coachee Withholding Process*** and ***Coachee thinking I'm here to teach you***. All of these themes seem to be linked to a frustration for coaches, where coachees are not taking personal responsibility for their own growth, but expect the coach to move them.

Evered and Selman (1989) believes that for coaching to be a successful intervention the coachee needs to be open to feedback, eager to learn from mistakes and ready to try new approaches. Goldberg (In Michelman, 2004) believes that simply a clear purpose will not guarantee value from coaching. A coachee needs to be open to feedback and needs to be willing to create change. This confirms the importance of the coachee being ready to create change and that if this is not evident, the coach could experience the process as very frustrating.

Other negatives that are more on a personal level refer to the coaching industry as a whole. Coaches with little experience or real understanding deliver low quality coaching because the industry is “open” and easily accessible, the real concern is that coachees receive sub-standard value.

There is no conclusive proof of what makes an executive coach qualified or capable. With little regulation in the industry, people are able to enter the field with little difficulty. Many self-styled coaches enter the field of coaching with varying experience and qualifications (Sherman & Freas, 2004).

Thompson (2004) states that the coaching field is currently unregulated and that many international companies attempt to create a certifying body for executive coaches. She further indicates that companies in the United Kingdom are

creating their own criteria for external coaches in an attempt to ensure value-add.

Another negative that was highlighted regarding coaching, is that results are difficult to measure, specifically where values are not tangible. Sherman and Freas (2004) believe that it is important to produce coaching results and goals that are measurable. It is important for organisations to know what is the return on investment of executive coaching. However, Wendy Gabriel (In Sherman & Freas, 2004), the manager of executive coaching at Deloitte & Touche USA, states that she does not believe ROI is ever going to measure the true value of coaching, so she rather assess the value with qualitative data. As such, coaching as an intervention, is difficult to measure and it is necessary to include the non-tangible value that coachees experience.

5.3 EXPERIENCES OF EXECUTIVES/ COACHEES

The coachees' experiences are going to be discussed broadly, to examine the different themes that transcended during the study. The coachees indicated that they experience executive coaching as an extremely **positive and magical** process. Initially, it seems **uncomfortable and tough**, partly because you have to face yourself and your own blind-spots, but also in terms of building a relationship with the coach. Turner (2006) indicated in her research article: *Ungagged: Executives on executive Coaching*, that *self-awareness*, including *blind spots* is one of the benefits that executives identified in executive coaching. However, she also indicated that it is not easy for the executive to be challenged outside his/her comfort zone. It can be very uncomfortable and challenging for executives to face their own blind spots.

Although it is tough, it also enables the coachee to **unload** and it is **relaxing**. An important theme that was highlighted was **facing yourself** and looking in the mirror. This is possible because of the coaching relationship and that the coach provides a sounding board for the coachee. The coachees are supported and

able to reflect on their own behaviour in a trust space where they also know the coach provides them with honest feedback.

Berlyn (2005:4) confirms the importance of having a **sounding board** and someone to assist the coachee to reflect by stating: “Everyone needs feedback, insights, and encouragement, particularly the executive leading an institution, but they still need to turn to someone, somewhere, for a confidential and informed sounding-board and advice” (Berlyn, 2005:4).

It is often lonely at the top and executives are unable to share organisational issues and stresses with colleagues. They generally keep their own counsel and therefore may feel isolated because of very few confidential spaces where they can honestly share their concerns. Executive coaching, therefore, creates an opportunity for the executive to have an independent **sounding board** in a safe and confidential environment (Berlyn, 2005). This confirms the importance of the coaching relationship where the coach can reflect and discuss his/her ideas and challenges.

Another important experience for coachees is the **learning and growth** that takes place in the coaching process. Berlyn (2005) believes the coaching experience is structured to enhance effective action, performance and **personal growth** for the executive individually, as well as for the organisation. Executive coaching is an individualised approach that provides an invaluable source of support and **development** for executives. Turner (2006) also believes that the primary purpose of executive coaching is to help executives learn and grow.

The positive experiences that the coachees highlighted were the fact that someone is **actively listening** to them and providing them with **honest feedback**. Berlyn (2005) confirms the importance of having a non-judgemental space that serves as a sounding board for coachees. This enables them to clarify their own values, beliefs goals and dreams. The coach also provides sensitive but **honest and direct feedback**.

Truthfulness from the coach and real understanding is a most valuable experience. From the literature it seems that **honest feedback** from the coach leads to the coachee's **growth and development**. It is therefore important for a coachee to receive feedback. By providing feedback and guidance in real time "coaching develops leaders in the context of their current jobs, without removing them from their day-to-day responsibilities", states Brian Underhill, a senior consultant at the Alliance for Strategic Leadership (In Michelman, 2004).

Maravels (In Michelman, 2004), a Minnesota-based executive coach confirms that **feedback** is extremely valuable for executives and their development. As executives progress in their careers, **development feedback** becomes increasingly important. However the **feedback** becomes less reliable and more irregular. She further states that executives reach a plateau in terms of interpersonal and leadership skills.

Bandura & Butz (In Kouzes & Posner, 1995) also believes that one of the key elements needed for **growth** and **learning**, is **feedback**. "Studies show that learning is severely hampered without feedback and that people's motivation (and subsequent performance) diminishes over time unless they know how they are doing" (Bandura & Butz, In Kouzes & Posner, 1995:288). It is therefore clear that **feedback** is an important factor of development and growth, specifically in also in the coaching process.

Personal growth is an important and reoccurring theme that reflects the coachee really feels executive coaching contributes to his/her **personal growth** and overall journey. The coachees also highlight the fact that they **gain insight**. They are then also able to overcome stumbling blocks to reach their personal potential.

The **lengthy** process is described as a negative experience of executive coaching. Firstly, executives are very busy and already have extremely high demands on their time. It is therefore difficult to make or find **time** for weekly coaching sessions. The other negative in terms of time, is that the process takes time to show results. The coachee needs to commit to the process for a number

of sessions and it is not a quick-fix approach. It takes energy and commitment from the coachee to make it successful. Executives have high demands on their time and need a good return on investment for the time they spend coaching (Thompson, 2004).

Coaching is also an **expensive** process from the perspective of the coachee and the organisation. Sherman & Freas (2004) indicate that executive coaching is far more costly per person than many other learning interventions. It is therefore important to qualify or select the potential candidate's carefully, to ensure the business payoff is more than the investment of the coaching.

Another negative experience for coachees is that they don't have **flexible access** to their coach. Therefore, it seems, when challenged with a difficult situation and where they need immediate support, they are not able reach the coach.

An interesting and very valuable theme is **Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding**. One coachee indicated that the coach did not understand more personal experiences because of a different background and culture. The participant was a black lady and she indicated her work environment was mostly dominated by white males. It seems therefore, that she felt a black coach with the same culture would better understand her specific challenges in the work environment. It also seems that she believed she would have felt more comfortable to share her personal challenges if the coach understood these.

The other negative experiences regarding coaching included **Not being able to bring your whole self to coaching, Not Ready and Honest, Coach should know when to terminate a relationship** and **Not tangible results**. One participant indicated that she was not able to bring her whole self to the coaching process and there were some personal challenges that she was not able to share. The coaches indicated that they experienced it as negative when the coachees are not willing to take part, or when they are withholding the process. The coachees also experience it as a negative when they are not ready for the coaching process and not honest towards themselves and the coach. The next

theme indicates that a coach should know when to terminate a coaching relationship, especially when he/she realises the process is not adding value or when the coachee is not committed. The coaches also indicated that they experience it as a negative when they have to terminate a coaching relationship because the coachee is not committed.

5.4 VALUE OR BENEFITS OF EXECUTIVE COACHING FROM A COACH'S PERSPECTIVE

The perceived value or benefits of executive coaching is now going to be discussed from the perspective of the executive coach. The coaches indicate that the coaching relationship is important and valuable to the coaches especially the value of having a safe, non-judgemental space where the coachees can share their concerns and reflect on new ideas. They also highlighted the value of having someone listen to your ideas and reflecting with you. Berlyn (2005) confirms the importance of having a non-judgemental space that serves as a sounding board for coachees. This enables them to clarify their own values, beliefs goals and dreams. The coach also provides sensitive but honest and direct feedback.

The coaches also believe that ***having support and guidance*** is an important factor that coachees find valuable. This refers to the value of having a coach who facilitates your thoughts, and supports and guides you in the coaching process. It also seems to be valuable to realise that the coachee is not alone on this journey. Linda Finkle (In Michelman, 2004), Washington based, executive coach indicates that one of the benefits of a coach is that he/she is an objective party. They are not tied to your organisation or part of your family and friends. They are tied to the coachee and will support the coachee and his/her development. Although families are very supportive, the coachee's decisions also impact on them, so they are not totally unbiased or objective. However, the coach is not impacted by the coachee's decisions, as he/she does not gain or benefit from his/her success or failures.

It is clear from the data, that the coach believes the relationship and a non-judgemental, supportive space is important for the coachees. Bluckert (2005) states that one of the great values of the coaching relationship is the experience for the executive, that someone is really supporting and encouraging him/her to believe in themselves and achieve their goals. When working with a coach an executive can expect to receive frank feedback that has nothing but a positive impact. It is a safe environment for both parties, where there is no shame or disgrace in acknowledging flaws (Reeves, 2006).

Kets de Vries (2005) indicates that it is not an empty statement when executives say there is nobody to talk to. Fast-tracked executives quickly discover that the higher they are in organizations, the more difficult it is to talk to others about their issues and concerns. Therefore, the supportive and safe space of a coaching relationship seems to be very valuable for executives who are not able to share their concerns with subordinates or colleagues.

Another benefit of executive coaching is that coachees better understand their position and purpose within their work environment and also on a more personal level. It leads to greater self-understanding and awareness. Coaching makes an executive more self-aware and provides a broader perspective on his/her role within the organisation (Reeves, 2006).

The coaches need a confidant that they can trust and is genuinely on their side. It is important that the coach provides the coachees with the necessary tools and supports them in facing and overcome obstacles in their work environment. With reflection on possible challenges and problems, both the individual and the organisation is more effective. Every executive needs a sounding-board to support them with continued self-development (Berlyn, 2005).

Some of the benefits within the work environment are that the coachee is able to reach his/her targets and specific set goals, more successfully. Michelman (2004) believes that coaching could also be valuable when executives are

dealing with a new role or challenge and to help them develop the skills that they may not have needed to rely on previously.

Coaching is not only needed when challenged with new assignments, but it could also play an invigorating role, says Michelman (2004). Vicky Gordon (In Michelman, 2004), CEO of the Gordon Group, added by saying that coaching can help executives to “develop new ways to attack old problems”. A coach is an external expert who is able to support you in getting to the root cause of problems and make essential changes.

Coaching helps the coachee to develop the essential attitude, skills and knowledge to reach their objectives (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998).

Other benefits described by the coaches are greater self-understanding, and dealing with challenges and stress more effectively. It is also evident that coaching could support the coachee in building his/her confidence when dealing with challenges. There seems to be other spin-offs that are not necessarily the main purpose for the coaching intervention or stated as part of the objectives, but coachees experience valuable inputs in other areas of their life.

Coaching is ultimately an opportunity for self-development and is useful to improve confidence and assertiveness. It could also enable the coachee to develop a new skill or approach, to prepare him for a new role. It is also helpful when identifying future goals and values (Reeves, 2006). Berlyn (2005) also states that the coaching process helps the coachees to face tremendous pressures in the work environment. Being invited to join an executive team creates enormous amounts of stress and may lead to feelings of insecurity (Kets de Vries, 2005). A coaching relationship enables the executive to reflect on these insecurities and deal effectively with the stress.

The second section of the benefits or perceived value of executive coaching, deals with the value that the coach takes from executive coaching. The coaches' most valuable experiences are closely related to their overall

experience of the coaching process. Therefore, some of the themes were already discussed in the first section. The coaches described their valuable experiences as making a contribution and being part of a coaching process, to see the change and benefits for the coachees. It seems therefore, that being a catalyst for this change and growth and experiencing this first hand, gives the coach a strong sense of meaningfulness that also positively impacts on his/her energy levels. Davison and Gasiorowski (2006) indicate that some coaches believe or experience coaching as a calling, so there is a strong sense of meaningfulness and making a contribution.

Berlyn (2005) believes that coaching is a highly personal form of interaction that benefits both parties. It is an intensely rewarding process and the executive coach experiences this sense of reward by achieving success with the coaching process and the coachee (Berlyn, 2005).

It is not only the coachee that grows and develops from the coaching process. The coaches indicate that they also grow and learn from each coaching session. Each coachee that they are working with brings something different to the table, and with each different scenario, the coach also experiences something valuable. Even though the coaching process is designed to enable the coachee to develop and grow, it seems that the coaches are not unaffected by the process but also experience personal learning and growth.

5.5 VALUE OR BENEFITS OF EXECUTIVE COACHING FROM A COACHEE'S PERSPECTIVE

The most valuable experiences of coaches, as a result of executive coaching, are going to be discussed. Firstly, the overall experiences will be discussed and then more specifically, within their work and personal environment.

Overall, coachees refer to the value of being listened to and being able to reflect on their ideas with an objective party. They also describe the support and the guidance from the coach, as very valuable. Berlyn (2005) confirms the

importance of having a sounding board and someone to assist the coachee to reflect by stating: “Everyone needs feedback, insights, and encouragement, particularly the executive leading an institution, but they still need to turn to someone, somewhere, for a confidential and informed sounding-board and advice” (Berlyn, 2005:4). Other important and valuable themes that were highlighted are: taking time to reflect on their (coachees’) own behaviour or specific challenges and personal growth that takes place as a result of the coaching relationship.

Stone (1999:18) believes that "one of the roles of the coach is to provide a safe open learning climate that contributes to an individual's examination of ideas, *strategies* and blind spots". Katz and Miller (1996) confirm this by stating that the coaching relationship is created to be a safe, supportive and confidential environment, where coachees are encouraged to try out new ideas. Executives think aloud in the coaching conversations and become more reflective. They gain access to their own unexplored ideas and knowledge (Turner, 2006).

The role of the coach is that of a sounding board, a trusted collaborator, challenger and catalyst for change (Turner, 2006). The coach is the facilitator or catalyst in the coaching process that supports the learning and change. The coach assists coachees to grow and optimise their potential. This growth, development and optimizing of their potential was highlighted as most valuable factors, in a coaching relationship.

Tobias (1996) described coaching as a process that allows continuous learning through support, encouragement and feedback, as behaviours are practiced and different approaches are tried. “Thus coaching supports learning and change by maintaining a constant focus on the growth and potential of the individual” (Tobias, 1996:87).

The coach assists the executive to identify his/her internal and external barriers which prevents him/her from moving forward. This process involves self-discovery where the coach adopts the role of mirror and challenger (Mink et al, 1993).

The value-add in the coachees' work environment, highlights key factors like feeling more confident and comfortable, in their role. It seems that reflecting on challenges with an objective party, helps the coachees to gain clarity in terms of their role and what is necessary to reach their goals. Also, feeling calmer when challenged, or overall being able to deal more effectively with difficult situations. Executive coaching enables the coachee to approach their work environment with more confidence and a wider perception of what is needed for them to fulfill their role (Berlyn, 2005).

Increased self-awareness also seems to be a benefit as a result of the coaching process. Coachees indicated that they are more aware of themselves, their own emotions and behaviour. However, the increased self-awareness and understanding also impacts on their relationships with colleagues and clients. The coachees therefore indicate that they are relating differently to people around them and this leads to different relationships. To integrate these themes further, the assumption could be made that the coachees' overall emotional intelligence increased after the coaching process. This in turn influenced the coachees' inter- and intra-relationships. Fortune magazine reported results of a survey of executives and managers who went through a coaching process for six months to twelve months. Seventy-seven percent of the executives described improved working relationships with their direct reports, 71% with supervisors, and 63% with peers (http://www.executivecoachcollege.com/roiof_executivecoaching.htm).

Sherman and Freas (2004:3) state that "it is remarkable how many smart, highly motivated, and apparently responsible people, rarely pause to contemplate their own behavior." Executives tend to move on rather than to reflect and they sometimes climb the career ladder without addressing their limitations. This is why coaching is so valuable, it slows them down, increases their self-awareness and they become more aware of the effects of their actions. Executive coaching seems to develop and enhance communication, interpersonal skills and overall relationships. This increases the coachees' self-awareness and provides career direction and motivation (Berlyn,2005).

Sherman and Freas (2004) believe coaching can empower executives to take responsibility for their impact on their environment.

Coachees highlighted the importance of coaching as it impacts and develops their leadership and management skills. They are able to lead team members more successfully and have a stronger focus on the key organisational issues. Berlyn (2005) reflects on the importance of executive coaching impacting on the organisational issues and leadership style of the coachee. He believes it is directed at increasing the coachees' ability to incorporate their new-found confidence and strategic insight into their current leadership style.

Stephen Fairley (In Michelman, 2004), president of Chicago-based Today's Leadership Coaching, believes that an increasingly important role of coaching is to equip senior executives with the challenges of managing younger employees. It helps coachees to better understand the younger generations of employees, their different work ethics and values.

Executive coaching should assist the coachee to develop a distinctive leadership and personal style that will lead to effective retention of people and also increase productivity. It is essential to focus on the development of core personal and executive skills (Berlyn, 2005).

The role of the coach is to help executives increase their focus on attaining desired goals (Leonard, 1998) or on achieving developmental milestones (Hargrove, 1995). The coachees indicated that coaching develops their potential so that they become more of what they can be. It also helps them to focus on the important factors for success within their work environment. With stronger leadership and management skills, the coachees are able to attain organisational goals more successfully through team members.

In the last part the valuable experiences of coachees within their personal environment is going to be broadly discussed. In their work environment, the coachees indicated that they feel calmer and more comfortable in their role. The

personal benefits include a reduction in anxiety and stress. Growth is also highlighted as a personal benefit. The coachees experience tremendous overall growth, that is not only linked to their work skills and abilities, but broader growth as a human being. Different personal relationships are also important benefits for coachees. Some of the coachees indicated that coaching had a strong impact on their personal relationships, whether with their spouses or family members. The coachees were able to share their challenges and stresses with the coach instead of ‘dumping’ them on family members.

5.5 TRANSCENDING FINDINGS

Transcending findings described the findings that go beyond the findings discussed in the previous section. It is also not necessarily closely linked to the research questions. However, the researcher found these interesting and valuable. Because these were not directly related to the main research questions, it is not possible to make definite statements regarding these findings. However, the researcher believed it important to discuss these as it is necessary to do further research around these themes.

5.5.1 Approach/ focus of coach seems closely linked to experience of coachee

The approach or method that the coach follows seems closely linked to the described experience and value of the coachee. In one situation the coachee indicated that she was not able to bring her whole self to the coaching sessions. There was a strong focus on the specific tasks and goals that were highlighted. In the interview with the coach, the focus was strongly on the specific tasks or goals to be achieved and the theme came strongly to the fore. Very little reference was made to other areas of the coachee. It is therefore clear that some of the coachee’s negative experiences relate specifically to the approach that the coach followed. Therefore some of the positive experiences will also relate to that specific coaching relationship. However, because each coaching

relationship is unique, there are definite experiences that are unique to that relationship and that were not recurring with the experiences of other coachees.

5.5.2 Coaches use very different paradigms/ models

There are definitely very different approaches and methodologies that are all described as executive coaching. It is therefore important for the coachee to clarify beforehand, specifically how the prospective coach describes executive coaching. What is the approach, model and methodology that they work from? Because it is not a requirement to be a member of a registered coaching body, there are different approaches, beliefs and styles, in conducting executive coaching.

Sherman and Freas (2004) believe that clients should evaluate coaches individually, because there are no universally reliable credentials that exist to identify capable coaches. “Perhaps the most important qualifications are character and insight, distilled as much from the coach’s personal experience as from formal training” (Sherman & Freas, 2004:5).

5.5.3 Use the term executive coaching interchangeable with other terms

It seems that there is not yet clarity in terms of the terminology and other approaches. Some of the participants used the terms ‘business coaching’ and ‘leadership coaching’ interchangeably, to refer to ‘executive coaching’. It seems that some of the coaches believe these terms refer to the same intervention. Although executive coaching has a strong leadership focus and development, it is not necessarily exactly similar. Executive coaching includes leadership development, however, with references to different names and terminology it creates a blurred effect among the different approaches and styles.

Davison and Gasiorowski (2006) indicate that the coaching field has become increasingly specialized. Coach U (2005) has identified 100 coaching specialties. Some of the coaching titles used in the coaching field include job coach, career coach, executive coach, life coach, relationship coach, business

coach, leadership coach, marketing coach, professional speaking coach, and author coach. It is therefore important for coaches to be clear in terms of their own approach and not to refer freely to all these styles, as they actually indicate a different approach, specialty and style.

5.5.4 *Coach not unaffected by executive coaching relationship*

The very interesting conclusion for the researcher was the idea that the coach is not unaffected by or immune against the impact of a coaching relationship. It is therefore not one party that benefits from coaching or only the coachee. The coaches indicated that they learn from coachees and their challenges, they also grow and develop as a result of the coaching relationship. Therefore where a lot of articles focus on the value the executive or coachee takes from executive coaching, it was very interesting to note that the coach also indicated very valuable personal experiences. Although this is not the main purpose of coaching, it is definitely an added consequence of the relationship.

5.5.5 *Important for the coachee to feel that the coach understands his/her culture*

An interesting and very valuable theme is Cultural Differences & Coach Not Understanding. One coachee indicated that the coach did not understand more personal experiences because of a different background and culture. It seems therefore that she felt a coach with the same culture would better understand her specific challenges in the work environment. In South Africa with 11 official language and even more diverse cultures, this is an important reality to take note of. It is therefore important to give executives a few options that enable them to choose a coach that they feel will understand them, their culture and their personal issues.

5.6 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study focused on investigating the experiences of executives (or coaches) and coaches. The coaches that participated in the study were recommended and contacted by the executive coach. It is therefore possible that the coaches nominated coaches who experienced the coaching process as very meaningful rather than coaches who did not experience it as so meaningful. This could have an impact on the overall results and skew the end results to present the overall process as a more positive experience. Furthermore, although confidentiality was discussed and clearly explained, there was still one participant who felt that the coach will be able to identify him. He seemed hesitant to share more negative experiences. The researcher therefore clearly explained the confidentiality around the research and other participants were very willing to share their true experiences. Therefore it is difficult to measure the true impact, but it is possible, that some coaches softened the negative experiences.

Durrheim and Wassenaar (1991) define generalisability as the extent to which the data and findings of a research study can be generalised to a broader population. The results are therefore limited in terms of generalisability, however it is tranche-situational. Although this is a limitation, it was not one of the main aims of the study to produce results that are generalisable. Non-probability purposive sampling was used as a sampling method and the sampling group was not a random sample. Because of the small sample, the results it is not necessarily a fair representation of South Africa's cultural and demographic status. Therefore the data do not necessarily represent the South African coaching population, but rather attempted to provide insight into the experiences and value of executive coaching.

Another possible limitation of the study is that only white coaches were interviewed. Two white males and three white females were interviewed and this does not represent the diversity of South Africa especially considering that the

one black respondent did mention the cultural challenges that relate to working with a white coach.

5.7 FUTURE RESEARCH

Little research has been done on the experience and perceived value of executive coaching within the South African context. Overall few studies have been done to investigate executive coaching in South Africa. It is therefore hoped that this exploration will lead to further studies. A more heterogeneous sample is recommended for future research, to focus more strongly on the impact of cultural differences on the experiences or values that the coachee takes from executive coaching. It seems that cultural differences have an impact on the experiences but it is not certain to which degree.

Another important factor that influences the experience of both parties in executive coaching, is the relationship and level of engagement between both parties. Bluckert (2005) indicate that the coaching relationship is not only a critical success factor, but may be the key factor. “Pay close attention to chemistry and the matching of coach to coachee” (Sherman & Freas, 2004:5). It seems that the relationship and chemistry between the two parties have a very strong impact on the level of engagement that the coachee experiences. It is therefore important that future research focuses on the impact of the relationship and on the perceived experiences of executive coaching.

There is a lot of controversy around regulating the coaching industry. While this is beyond the scope of this research study, it may be necessary for future researchers to focus on these issues and questions. The coaching industry is attempting to gain a greater level of identity and credibility in the marketplace (Stevens, 2005) and to achieve this there needs to be more clarity and consistency with what is being delivered to the market than currently is the case.

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ATTACHMENT A

INFORMATION LETTER

Dear participant,

You have been selected to participate in a qualitative study that aims to explore the coaching experience of the coach and the coachee during executive coaching.

The **purpose of the study** is firstly to examine the experiences of a coach and a coachee during executive coaching. The study will also aim to explore the perceived value that each party takes from coaching. These personal experiences and perceived values of the coach and the coachee will be compared with each other. The rationale of this study is to gain insight into their experiences and how they view the value of coaching.

The findings will provide a better understanding of the relatively unfamiliar field of the experience of the coach and the coachee during the coaching process specifically in South Africa. Once the data has been analyzed, the findings will be used to draw conclusions relating to the experiences during the coaching process. The study will also aim to shed light on the coaching field specifically in South Africa.

This study forms part of a masters' degree in Human Resources Management, conducted by Marina Hattingh, under the guidance of Professor Hein Brand at the University of Pretoria.

If you agree to participate in the study, an individual interview will be conducted with you (+30min) where the researcher will explore specific questions. These questions will be made available to you before hand so that you will have time to reflect on your experiences. The information obtained from the interview will be recorded electronically to enable the researcher to make thorough analyses of the content. The information will be used in the study to explore individual experiences. **All personal information received will remain confidential and your participation will remain anonymous.** Your participation in this research study is voluntary and you will be able to withdraw from the study at any time. Responses will be analysed and only consolidated results will be made available. The research will be published in the form of a research publication and will be available at the University of Pretoria. However, if you would like a copy of the findings you will also be able to receive an email copy of the final report.

ATTACHMENT B

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

Title of Research: An explorative comparison of the perceived value and subjective experiences of the coach and the coachee during executive coaching

Researcher: Marina Hattingh

Under the Guidance of: Prof Hein Brand, University of Pretoria

1. I have read the Information Letter for this study and have a clear understanding of the details of the study.
2. My questions regarding the study have been answered to my satisfaction, and **I understand** that I may ask further questions at any time.
3. I also understand that I am **free to withdraw** from the study at any time, or to **decline to answer** any particular questions in the study.
4. I agree to provide information to the researchers under the **conditions of confidentiality** set out on the information form.
5. I agree to provide the researcher with **truthful information**.
6. I understand that the information collected **will only** be used for the following study and that further consent will have to be obtained should the researcher wish to use it for another study.
7. I understand that the information will be **recorded electronically** to enable to researcher to analyse the content accurately. The information will be handled in a **strictly confidential** manner.
8. I consent to participate in this study under the conditions set out in the Information Letter.

Participant's Name: _____

Participant's Signature: _____

Researcher's Name: _____

Researcher's Signature: _____

ATTACHMENT C

Interview: Participant 7 (Transcribed Interviews)

1. Describe your **experience** during the coaching process?

The coaching process is magical, its intense, it has nothing but emotional issues tuned forward and backwards overall it's a magnificent experience and I think it would be valuable to almost anyone, as long as your open to the experience. I would recommend coaching to almost anyone at any position, no matter what you do. SO the overall coaching process for me has been one of a fantastic journey of growth, enlightenment, ja its never been easy, but its been pretty fantastic.

2. Why did you **engage** in executive coaching?

For all my staff I've drawn-up an HR matrix, a Human Resources matrix. Look as long as the cons of that matrix is training, any training for people, and you look at training and you say what training can you actually do for people, and they get to a certain level of, not technical ability, but a certain level of personal ability, what's the next step for them though. And its so difficult to bridge the next advise, because you can send people on management courses, you can send people on MBA's, and they, and they come-up and you hope you will actually be able to stimulate them to be better in their jobs and to develop leadership skills and those things. The problem, the fundamental problem that I have with all leadership type programmes is that they don't address the original me, which was the growth for the individual. Because you cannot be a leader unless you really understand yourself, why people motivations, why people reactions, why they do the thing they do, how you interact with people and its all based on the human experience in terms of there's some total of what they are at that point in time. So to really understand yourself is the basis of being, of any leadership because you cannot be a leader, lead people in real means unless you know yourself perfectly. Coaching is one of those things if you really go into it and adapt and give hundred percent you can actually start you learn about yourself tremendously. And through that process you can understand yourself, grow yourself and then get the outcomes you want.

3. *How was the coaching process?*

Yes the original coaching process is that they start you out, and my specific coach started out and said needs analysis, where are you now and where would you like to be. And the comings that I identified for myself is that I wanted to do some real growth and personal growth and various things and for the needs analysis that then came out that I need the personal growth and I will then focus on that area of expertise. A lot of times during the process I thought why- where's the link between the growth and the specific objectives and in the end you cannot believe that the two are mutually exclusive, because they are so linked completely. Myself as a leader in the organization are completely different than what I used to be in terms of really understanding my peoples' needs and understanding the individuals who they are and what they are and hence that's made me a lot better leader. So the link between coaching and performance I think is- there's a very strong link.

4. *What did you experience as **positive** during the process?*

Sjoe, there's a lot. Positive things, I'm just trying to put them into a short number of words. Positive, uhm, **personal growth, real understanding, truthfulness,** uhm **the proactive action, not just talking about things but really actually doing,** focusing on life comes-up, implementation orientated, you can't just be, uh just having someone to talk to about these issues, however at some stage it's not actually very good. I **think the coach covers a lot of different divide, not intentional, but there's a portion of coaching that's a little bit of therapy, a little bit about mentorship, a little bit about training, and etc.** but they're not really intended to be all those things specifically but they do overlap into those **areas, so the problems has been of, my coach has become in a lot of those areas, has become someone who mentored me in certain areas, help me to grow** in certain areas, help you face things that you don't really want to face as an individual, so the positives **has been monumental,** I think, overall uhm from **personal, business aspects, all aspects** really. *What was your first reason for coaching?*

Sjoe, 18 months ago I was- I was **really going through a period where I** thought **what is the next page, what is next for me, what's next for my company,** how do you take things froth from there. What was great is then I met this great woman around HR and she said have you thought about coaching, I said well what is coaching really, so I started the first step with enquiring about what is coaching (*cell phone*)

ringing) What was the question again? *Why did you engage in coaching?* Ja it was a real need, it felt like there was something missing, it felt like there was something I wasn't getting, so I couldn't really work out how to take that forward, so the HR lady, Lydia, Lydia said sjoe, have you thought about coaching before, so she explained the concept and found somebody the next day, the coach walked in to my office and uhm, we sat down we talked for 5 minutes and the very first thing I said to him in terms of coaching was, I said you've been sent to me, sort of from the universe and he sort of laughed and said I think I've been send and I think you've been send to me. So immediate rapport, this was absolutely fantastic, I had been through coaching prior to that, one experience of coaching prior to that and it didn't work uhm one I don't think I was ready and open to the experience and I think that's absolutely crucial, you cannot be completely truthful all the time who you are, what you're doing, why do you want coaching, with your coach then the process won't work. So ja it was really just an imbalance in my life and I wanted, I wanted some more balance.

5. What **negative** experiences did you have?

Uhm, things that are uncomfortable, negatives? The very first experience were negative because whilst I was- I wanted the process as such, I wasn't ready for the process, it was negative, it was quite a lot of waste of time, because as I wasn't strong enough to say this is not working for me lets cut it off now- immediately and it dragged on for a bit. What negative for me was also the fact that I realized then that I wasn't truthful to this person, that was negative for me in terms of being truthful, the coach also couldn't himself, I think the coach needs to have the ability to understand that when there's not a real uhm effort from both parties that the coach needs to have the ability to fire a client and not be commercially oriented, that I think that, that open honesty has to be there where you can fire each other at will. That's the basis of any relationship really. So those were some of the negatives that came through and my coach should've realized that and I should've been strong enough to hand in at an earlier stage and from the negatives the other things about coaching that is quite interesting is finding time for coaching, you get so busy and I think is kind of life you get so busy doing rather than being that some of the negatives are that you point in time where you really need coaching the most you

don't actually know it, you don't actually realize it and you don't actually utilize it and I suppose that's the difference between structured coaching and executive coaching. So I'm hoping this will fill the need where I need immediate mentorship or to bounce ideas or things like that and etc. and I think that's going to be a big positive that has been a negative, when I needed the person I can't get hold of the person or something like that, so I think that has been some of the negatives. *So do you think you have a more structured process now?* Yee we have a structured process, where we do have a six months period uhm, I get somebody else we contracted 24 hours and coaching for over 6 months, 4 hours a month, something like that and, ja 4 hours a month. That structured coaching and it was meeting every two months and at some stage you need a lot more in one week and a lot less in the next week. So now executive coaching is you can phone constantly to get a third eye on anything and every issue that come out business, personal etc. Can't come completely because we haven't completed the process, but I'm looking forward to the idea behind it. *The previous coaching relationship, were you not being honest or were the engaged relationship not there?* Uhm, I suppose the engaged relationship, I liked the individual, he was a very nice guy, you know also feeling comfortable with someone is one thing, feeling that the person has the ability to offer you something – and we can all learn from each other – but specifically at the right time. There's a saying that goes when the student is ready the master will appear. And I think it is largely true, I think that coaching is not a one fits all type of approach, it needs to be the coach and the person really needs to have an individual rapport uhm, I think it's quite crucial. We are in a path in the organization now where we have not- we've engaged with a company called coaching South Africa. In total in a realization that one coach will not fit everyone in the organization, for example some of my female members of staff I'm bringing in a female coach just to test this, to see if it makes more sense. So I think there's a couple of things the rapport needs to be there, the respect needs to be there, you also got to respect someone who's been in business or done some sort of uhm experienced issues that you go through, I think you need to have that sort of experience to get some sort of respect in that, perhaps coaches could be natural and intuitive leaders or coaches could be people who've been through that experience that and understands that and wants to focus on the individual rather than on the company. So I think that's potentially the ways how you can do your coaching.

6. *What has been **most valuable** in the coaching process?*

Sjoe, where to start, the most valuable uhm **personal growth**, definitely for me the most valuable, second I would say, **personal objectives**, uhm ja and then some other things, **emotional intelligence**, **overall balance as an individual**, those are all things- I probably have ranked them in order of priority, but personal growth, most definitely, that was the most valuable for me. **And the ability to have someone to-** you know I firmly believe in psychologists and therapists for everyone, I think we all in this life has issues, just the depth vary, the depth varies or the knowledge varies, or the understanding that varies and I think speaking to someone like a psychologist is **very rewarding and then speaking to someone like your coach is incredibly rewarding, issues getting to- speaking to someone.** **Start to finish the process has tremendous positive effect for individuals** and the value and the surprising in it won't be expected, you can get value add where you didn't expect any **value and ultimately all that can have a huge impact on your organization issues**, if you want to bring it back to the commercial reasons for coaching, which I think you need to get into to a certain degree because coaching is paid for- well my coaching is paid for by the company and needs to bring it back to that. **But massive value for me in terms of personal growth.** **Its been a great journey, hey.**

7. *What value did it add; firstly in your **work?** , secondly on a more **personal level?***

Uhm, the work side of things, **much better leader**, much **better focused on organizational issues**, internal organizational issues and with clients. **Uhm because I'm a much more, uhm emotional intelligent person I can deal with clients a lot better in terms of understanding their needs, understanding where they coming from.** **Uhm focused day to day on implementation of our strategic plan and growth issues within the organization** and huge focus, change in focus throughout the organization, **not just on core competencies but on personal growth of the individual.** ICAS wellness programmes, individual stress assessments in the companies, obviously we had in the past, I've offered them free gym contracts and those things, but now that they really want these guys to feel that they're special and being wanted and have their own brand IQ as such as individuals, that's been the real values that I found from the work perspective. You talk about the cost of coaching, the cost of coaching

compare to say a full MBA for some of your leaders in the organization and etc. And uhm, so I think the ROI- there are studies by Harvard investing I'm not sure equities and things, but I think the return on equities are unbelievable, hey. It's really hard to measure return on equity on something that is sounded on individual performance. It's hard to link it specifically but to what extent will our organization in the next 5 years be better because of that – I have no doubt the focus on the individual will reap huge reward. How can you be client centric when your not yourself, in love with yourself, centrally.

8. *What value did it add on a more **personal** level?*

Sjoe, uhm I'm not sure that you get the same- that everyone will have the same experience that I went through in terms of personal growth, I would love them all to have the same experience because my personal growth has been unbelievable. 2 years of magical experiences where I have literally sat with a coach and not spoken for 20 minutes because we just needed to be grounded almost, because the experiences has been so profound, in so many ways. The value uhm, real understanding of the individual, uhm huge reduction in anxiety and baseless fears and uhm just growth and understanding of life purpose, real uhm, massive growth issues. Those things, and uhm uh I like, for my, -you know if I look- the great thing about this is because of my personal journey and understanding of these things now is, where I look at individuals in the organization I get a really fantastic idea of their own issues, you know and it all comes back to child issues and where are we as individuals growing up and things like that. So what I've seen is, is within that the individuals are understanding now how to be a better coach, manager and in his role he understands which players he needs to push, which players he needs to pardon and which players he need to give love and relax and etc and how you deal with people better. So personal for and for the company uhm fantastic really, hey.

The problem with it at the moment is with, with just generally as human kind is the pace of work is just doubling and tripling and I think with email, uhm I think with the ability to communicate and with information overload the pace of work is three times as much as you used to work maybe 25 years ago or something and our ability to do that hasn't increased by the same margin the increase of stress levels and etc

So the ability a company's exco to actually implement uhm a strategic plan – stick to a strategic plan. Implementation is always the issues, never the thinking behind the actual plan, so executive coaching can **force you to really come back and clearly to being rather than just doing**. And that's one of the crucial elements of coaching is being rather than doing because **I think as human beings our experience should be in being – the magic of the moment rather than in actual just doing something.**



ATTACHMENT D

Participant 7	Themes
Q1 – Experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The process is magical and intense • Magnificent process • Valuable to almost anyone • Need to be open to the experience • Fantastic journey of growth • Enlightenment • Not an easy process
Q2 – Why did you engage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is few development interventions or training that focuses on developing personal ability • The problem with leadership-type programmes is that they do not address the original me or growth for the individual • You cannot be a leader unless you understand yourself • Need to know and understand people motivations, reactions and interactions • Basis of leadership is self-understanding • Learn a lot about yourself in coaching • Through the process you can grow yourself and get the outcomes you want • I was going through a period where I wondered about the next step personally and for the company • A real need • Felt something were missing • So immediate rapport, this was absolutely fantastic • Crucial to be honest and truthful with yourself
Q3 – Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There's a lot • Personal Growth • Real understanding • Truthfulness • Pro-active action – not only talking about issues but really addressing them • Coach has different roles • Help me grow • Supports coachee in all areas of life • Positive has been monumental – from all aspects
Q4 – Most valuable	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal growth • personal objectives • emotional intelligence, • overall balance as an individual • Having someone to talk to about issues • Tremendous positive effect for individuals • All can have a huge impact on organisational issues • Massive value in terms of personal growth • Great journey
Q5 – Negative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First coaching experience – wasn't ready and open for the process • Waste of time – wasn't strong enough to be honest and end the relationship • Realised I wasn't truthful to the person • Coach should also know when to end a relationship if it is not working • Coach should not be commercially (financially) oriented • Finding time • Become so busy when you need coaching the most you don't realise it • When you need the coach and not being able to get hold of him/her
Q6 – Value add 1. Work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better leader • More focused on organisational issues • Emotionally more intelligent – deal better with clients • Stronger focus on strategic plan and growth of organisation • Shift in focus throughout the organisation – stronger focus on personal growth of individuals
Q6 – Value add 2. Personally	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not sure that everyone gets the same value • Personal growth has been unbelievable • Magical experiences • Real understanding of individuals • Huge reduction in anxiety and baseless fears



	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Growth and understanding of life purpose• Better understanding of others' issues• Individuals are able to understand how to be a better coach, manager• Know how to manage others individually
Q8 – Engaged relationship?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Being comfortable is something else then feeling that you can learn from the person• Not a one fits all type approach• There really needs to be rapport• Respect needs to be there• The coach needs to have experience or something that I can respect
Anything else?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Coaching is not a one fits all process• Really needs to have individual rapport

ATTACHMENT E

Example of data analysis process

Experiences of Coachees		Frequency	Allocation
Theme 1	Tough, difficult, uncomfortable	X 10	Can 7 (1) Can 8 (5) Can 9 (4)
Theme 2	Facing yourself, own blind spots	X 8	Can 7 (1) Can 8 (1) Can 9 (3) Can 10 (3)
Theme 3	Learning and growth took place – brining out my ideas	X 7	Can 6 (1) Can 8 (1) Can 9 (2) Can 10 (3)
Theme 4	Sounding board, reflection	X 5	Can 6 (2) Can 8 (3)
Theme 5	Relaxing, liberating	X 2	Can 8 (1) Can 9 (1)
Theme 6	Positive, magical	X 5	Can 6 (2) Can 7 (3)
***	Feel vulnerable		Can 8
***	Empowering		Can 8
***	Change takes place		Can 9
***	Receiving feedback		Can 10

*** *Individual themes*