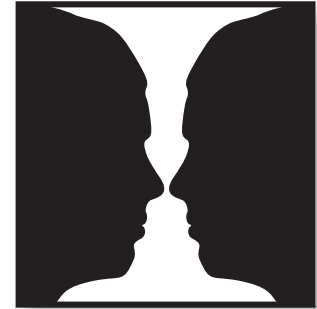


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The role of the coaching relationship in the coaching process

Kristina Gyllensten and Ole Michael Spaten

Abstract

Ole Michael Spaten interviews Dr Kristina Gyllensten on the coaching relationship, newer findings and future research. In this interview, Gyllensten emphasizes the importance of coaches being aware of and working with the coaching relationship since it is valuable to coachee's perception of the coaching process. Additionally, she states that Coaching relationship depends on trust and is improved by transparency. Moreover, Gyllensten defines coaching relationship as a unique, co-created and evolving relationship that consists of the coaching alliance and additional client and coach contributions. Finally, she suggested that future research could focus on the negative effect of coaching.

Keywords: Coaching relationship, Coaching alliance, Coachees, Coach

Ole: When and how did you realize that the alliance / relation between coach and coachee was an important and under researched topic?

Kristina: When I started to plan my doctorate in beginning of the century (makes me feel old saying that), focusing on coaching and occupational stress, I was training to become a counselling psychologist. Within the field of counselling and therapy, the relationship between the client/patient and therapist has always been considered important. Therefore, it was natural to consider the relationship in coaching as well.

Luckily, Alanna O'Broin and Stephen Palmer (who was my supervisor) had started writing about it.

Ole: Could you further expand on what brought you to this research field?

Kristina: In my research I was not primarily focused on the coaching relationship, rather I wanted to find out more about whether coaching could be useful in dealing with occupational stress, considering the fact that coaching was becoming increasingly popular at the time.

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However, while doing the research interviews it became clear that the coaching relationship played an important role in how the coaching was experienced by the coachees.

Ole: It could be great if it is possible more clearly to define the coaching relationship?

Kristina: I think that Alanna O'Broin and Stephen Palmer's definition is good: "a unique, co-created, evolving relationship comprising the coaching alliance plus additional client and coach contributions" (O'Broin and Palmer, 2008, p 295). And they define the coaching alliance in the following way. "The coaching alliance reflects the quality of the coachee's and coach's engagement in collaborative, purposive work within the coaching relationship, and is jointly negotiated and renegotiated throughout the coaching process over time (O'Broin and Palmer, 2010, p 4).

Ole: What is some of your most important findings concerning the coaching relationship and the coaching alliance?

Kristina: The coaching relationship is perceived as valuable by coachees, and it is dependent on trust and improved by transparency. So it is important that coaches are aware of, and are working with, the coaching relationship. Nevertheless, the relationship is not the only factor making coaching useful. Working towards goals and improving performance are also valuable components of coaching.

Ole: What do you think would be future key research areas for scholars interested in further understanding and development of this field?

Kristina: Being a therapist, as well as a coach, it is natural to look at the development of research within the therapy field, and the investigation of negative effects of therapy is growing. I think this is an important topic in coaching as well, especially considering the fact that some coaches are practicing coaching without much training. Finding out more about what happens when the coachee find the coaching unhelpful or even worse. I have not done a literature search on this topic so I am not aware of the

current research situation, so there may be good research on this in the coaching filed.

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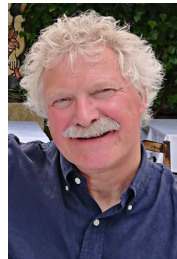
Kristina Gyllensten is a licensed psychologist, licensed psychotherapist with a CBT specialization, supervised in CBT and doctor of psychology. Active as chief psychologist in Gothenburg and supervisor of stage-1 educations in CBT. Kristina offers cognitive and behavioural therapy (CBT) to young people and adults in Gothenburg.

Kristina Gyllensten lectures regularly at CBT courses. She was previously principal and examiner at the stage-1 educations in CBT at the Centre for Cognitive Psychotherapy and Education in Kungälv. Kristina has also been the principal and responsible for training in psychological coaching at adSapiens.

Kristina Gyllensten has been a licensed psychologist since 2005 and a licensed psychotherapist with a cognitive focus since 2008. Kristina is moreover a supervisor trained in CBT and has since 2007 supervised students in cognitive and behavioural therapy in step-1 training in cognitive and behavioural therapy. Furthermore, Kristina offers psychological coaching to individuals and companies.

Kristina Gyllensten has been involved in introducing training in psychological coaching in Sweden and is among the leading scholars and practitioners and additional co-author of the book Psychological Coaching.

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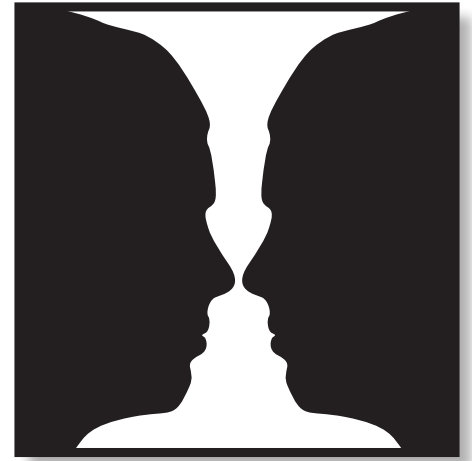


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Award winning psychologist Ole Michael Spaten is a leading pioneer in Danish Coaching Psychology research; he conducted the first Randomized Control Trial in Scandinavia evaluating the effectiveness of brief cognitive behavioral coaching. He is the founding editor-in-chief of the Danish Journal of Coaching Psychology. Ole's research interests and publications relate to self and identity, social learning, coaching psychology-psychotherapy practice and intervention.



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