

**A description of executive coachees' experiences of working  
with the body, as part of transformative coaching.**

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of the requirements for the degree of  
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at Stellenbosch University



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**Degree of confidentiality: A**

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## **Declaration**

I, Roland Peter Cox, declare that the entire body of work contained in this research assignment is my own, original work; that I am the sole author thereof (save to the extent explicitly otherwise stated), that reproduction and publication thereof by Stellenbosch University will not infringe any third party rights and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

R.P. Cox

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## Abstract

Executive coaching is a burgeoning field and plays an increasingly influential role in organisational development. Transformative coaching is a powerful methodology suitable to executive contexts, yet not as prevalent in organisations as other approaches. One essential aspect of transformative coaching involves working purposively with the body of the coachee. While the body is central to these approaches and to transformation, there is evidence of an anti-somatic bias or marginalisation of the body in organisations.

This research explores the experiences of executives who have worked transformatively with the body in organisations in order to identify the challenges faced in this context and determine how they may be addressed, as well as uncover the role body awareness plays in executive coaching,

The study inquires into these experiences phenomenologically and a grounded theory approach is the qualitative methodology selected to analyse the data. How executives experience coaching to the body, how they make meaning of these bodily experiences in coaching and how they mediate between personal and executive realities are all areas of inquiry. The sampling was purposive and nine Capetonian executives were interviewed face-to-face using a semi-structured interview process of eight questions.

Findings suggested a number of interdependent elements at play in the executive context, from the personal and individual dimensions of transformation to factors that are historic and cultural.

On the personal level, executive coachees derived unique and significant gain from integrating the body in their coaching. Executives may require education around the concepts of the body in transformative work and organisational settings need to be conducive to this work. Currently this appears not to be the case and working with the body in organisations is met with resistance.

Transformative coaching that involves the body is personal. While it may be uncomfortable initially, the personal nature thereof proves significant. Coachees who purposefully and subjectively attended to aspects of themselves and how these aspects relate to each other reported successful transformation. Specifically, this means that those who learn how the 'narrative self' relates to the sensory self, or who personally explore the coherence between language and body, are able to transform. Inner body awareness, or the ability to hold a first-person perspective experientially, is thus vital for personal transformation. In line with this, recent neuroscience supports the findings of the traditional, experiential practices.

In future, both in practice and in research into this area, what is required is further collaboration between the experiential modalities of the body and those of the 'hard sciences' such as neuroscience. An Integral research framework (Wilber) is well suited to these research efforts, while a more coordinated 'pragmatic somatic' discipline such as that suggested by Shusterman is likely to be needed for transformative practitioners.

**Key words**

Executive Coaching

Transformative Coaching

Coaching the Body

Body in Transformation

Somatic Awareness

Anti-somatic bias

Coachee Experiences

Integral Coaching

Ontological Coaching

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## **List of acronyms and abbreviations**

RO	Research Objectives
ROI	Return on Investment
SE	Somatic Experiencing
US	United States

# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 INTRODUCTION

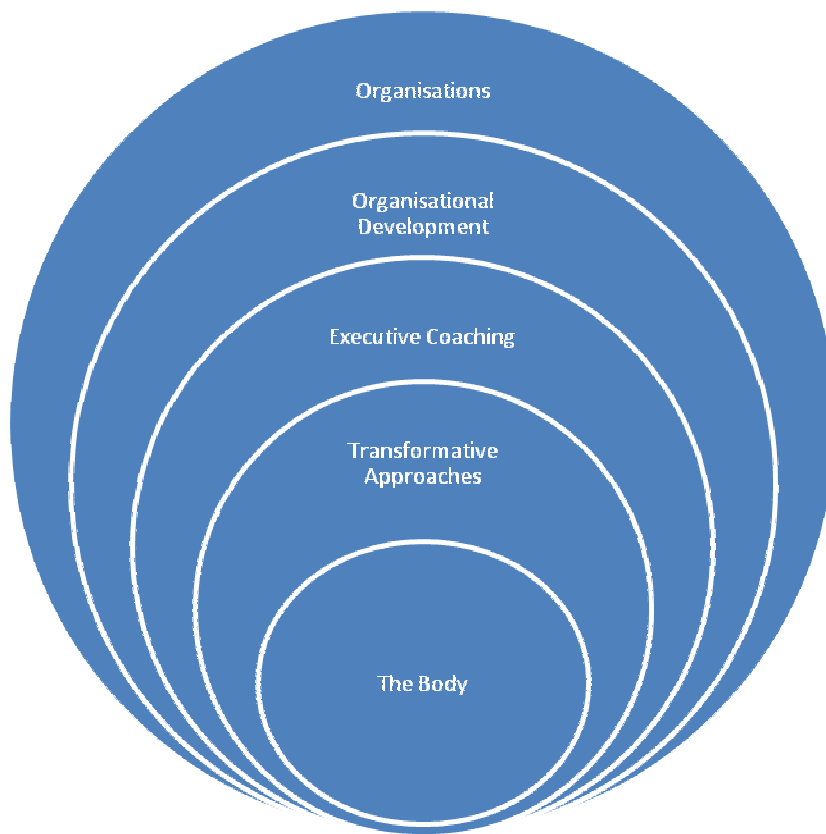
This study aims to contribute to the field of management coaching within organisations, by examining one aspect of an increasingly recognised organisational development tool, namely executive coaching. This category of coaching is evidently both effective and rapidly emerging as an established practice (Grant, 2008; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis & Passmore, 2011; Barlett, Boylan & Hayle, 2014). The examination of executive coaching in turn focuses on a form of executive coaching that is significant but seemingly underutilised within organisations. Consideration is given to a particular category of executive coaching, the transformative approaches, that claim significant impact in coaching individuals (Thach, 2002; Laske, 2003; Weiss, 2004; Hawkins & Smith, 2007; Askew & Carnell, 2011) and yet seem tangential to the majority of coaching practice with executives. In conceptualising and defining these transformative coaching approaches, this assignment explores the differentiating factors between these approaches and others. Transformative approaches claim to distinguish themselves by their efficacy, by representing a rise in the complexity of coaching and skill of the coach (Hawkins and Smith, 2007) and by attending to the *whole being* of coachees, including their bodies (Weiss, 2004; Flaherty, 2005; Sieler, 2007). It is this distinct aspect of transformative coaching, namely the integration of the body and physiology in coaching, particularly as practiced within two types of transformative approaches, Integral and Ontological, that receives the most attention in the research.

Within organisations, the individual coaching of the organisation's executives (executive coaching) has proven an effective developmental modality (Grant, 2008; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011), not only because of the positional influence of executives, but also for a myriad of other reasons too. Within the crowded universe of coaching approaches, most of which apply to executive contexts, a multitude of formats and methodologies are apparent, each deferring to diverse influences and making different assumptions about the nature of human beings (inputs), having contrasting areas of focus and processes applied (throughput) and with varying claims of results (outputs). In practice, disparate coaching approaches tend to pay attention to individuals differently and produce dissimilar conversations. In this regard, one categorisation of coaching approaches used is the distinction between transformative approaches and other approaches (Thach, 2002; Laske, 2003; Weiss, 2004; Hawkins & Smith, 2007; Askew & Carnell, 2011). The argument being that transformative coaching approaches work on 'deeper' levels, integrating more of the whole (human) being and thus producing more profound and sustainable levels of change.

With these assertions about transformative approaches, this assignment therefore 'zooms in' on a feature of transformative coaching that purports to be crucial to its success in bringing about embedded change, namely addressing questions around the body and physiology of the coachee. This research therefore asks questions about coaching conversations with executives that involve the body. These conversations about the body, while potentially profound in terms of the level of change they may produce, seem to occur with less frequency than conversations about behaviours, emotions or results, as would occur in translative approaches. Seemingly, there may be disagreements or misunderstandings about the importance of the body and conversations about it amongst both executive coaches and coachees, as well as an associated reluctance to discuss it as part of coaching.

This study is thus an inquiry into the phenomenological experience of executive coachees who have had such conversations, referencing the body, as part of transformative coaching. The expectation is that such an inquiry would provide insight into this way of coaching, shed light on possible misunderstandings or knowledge gaps for coaches and coachees and give clues as to how this may be addressed.

In order to illustrate the logic behind what is considered in this assignment a diagram may be helpful. Figure 1.1 (below) shows how focus progresses throughout this assignment from sub-discipline to sub-discipline, based on the apparent significant or efficacy in development. That is, from a broad focus on organisations to a narrower focus on organisational development, then in turn to executive coaching, and transformative approaches as a subset of coaching. Finally, attention is given to the narrowest focus, that of the body, within transformative approaches.



**Figure 1.1: Sub-disciplines of study: ‘zooming in’ on the area of inquiry**

Source: Author, 2015.

## **1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT**

**What are executive coachees’ experiences of working with the body, as part of transformative coaching?**

Expanding on this are the following sub-questions:

- How do executives experience coaching that addresses the body?
- How do executives make sense of these conversations?
- What relevance does coaching to the body have to their development?

## **1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

The central research interest in this inquiry is the description and understanding of individual executive coachees’ experiences of body awareness in the context of transformative coaching. As the nature of the data to be collected is mostly subjective, the ‘insider’s perspective’ (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), and will include both the meaning coachees make of these experiences and the relevance to their learning, the study orientates broadly around a phenomenological meta-

theoretical framework. As the study's focus is on how subjects make meaning of experience, how they interpret aspects of their own body and how they mediate between that interpreted reality and the reality of the executive world, the perspectives of symbolic interactionism (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), are also valid here.

Based on the criteria listed above, the research methodology of the study is exemplary of the qualitative paradigm.

### **1.3.1 The research aim**

The aim of this research is to explore executive coachees' experiences of working with aspects of the body, as part of a transformative coaching approach in organisations, in order to provide insights into the roles that awareness of the body plays in executive coaching, identify challenges faced in this context and determine how these challenges may be addressed.

### **1.3.2 Objectives**

1. To identify which aspects of the body are addressed in the coaching context.
2. To establish the meaning coachees make of this and the relevance thereof to their coaching and learning.
3. To provide insights into the relevance of somatic awareness in coaching
4. To identify challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context
5. To identify any specific limitations, hindrances or discomfort in having coaching conversations that address the body
6. To identify possible ways of removing limiting factors, discomfort, fears or concerns in coaching to the body in executive contexts, in order to enhance coaching effectiveness
7. To establish how coachees experience coaching conversations about their breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement in the executive coaching context
8. To establish what would make coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective for coachees

### 1.3.3 Overall design

This qualitative study is descriptive and attempts to explore the 'lived experiences' of executives, in terms of their awareness of their own bodies within transformative coaching, and the relevance and meaning of that experience to their learning and development.

### 1.3.4 Population and sample

Individuals who meet all of the following criteria delineate the study population in this assignment:

- They have received executive coaching - they are considered to be makers of executive decisions within an organisation and have been coached within that organisation in that capacity
- At any point within that coaching relationship, have had coaching conversations that included an inquiry into any aspects of their body
- The coaching methodology used is considered a transformative approach

A sample of the population described above is to be selected through the combined use of two non-probability sampling techniques. Purposive sampling and, in some cases snowball sampling, will be used. (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). This is due mainly to a small, specific population, and in the context of the third criteria above (coaching methodology), often the individual will be unaware of which coaching methodology his/her coach used. In cases such as these, coaches will be vital in assisting with selection, more so than coachees.

### 1.3.5 Questionnaire design

The method of observation in this research requires a technique and process that 'stays close' (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) to the subject explored. In order to describe and understand the 'lived experience' of having coaching conversations about the body, the inquiry needs to find the balance between rigour in questioning and yet remain open to following the flow and subjective nature of the meaning made and reported by subjects.

A semi-structured questionnaire will therefore guide a flexible interview process and questions are to be asked, as far as is possible, in a non-directive yet probing way. There are seven items in total, including one contingency question. Items have been kept short as well as simple in format and the sequence of questions is important and static, as the items may build on previous responses.



### 1.3.6 Data collection and analysis

Field research will take place by means of recorded, semi-structured, face-to-face, 'basic' interviews (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). These will occur after some coaching of coachees, or during a current coaching intervention. The names of participants (interviewees) are to be coded to protect their anonymity.

The 'neutrality' of the interviewer will play an important role. Due to the nature of inquiry around the body and possible self-consciousness on behalf of participants, it is important that the interviewer be seen as neither judgmental in any way nor be of a contrary opinion, for example. Gaining trust and building rapport will be vital (Babbie and Mouton, 2009).

The data analysis, based on the intentions of this study, namely the exploration and description of 'lived experiences', and the relevance and meaning of that experience, is best performed through the analytical approach of grounded theory. This approach to data analysis allows for the discovery of irregularities and patterns (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) and is well suited to the exploration in question.

### 1.3.7 Ethical considerations

In designing and planning this study, a number of ethical issues have arisen. The following have been considered and are an unlikely cause for concern:

- The research does not involve any access to organisational information, public information or records that disclose identities
- Related to the above, no institutional permission is required to gain access to participants
- The research does not involve anyone from vulnerable categories such as minors, people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, prisoners or the disabled
- No staff or alumni of the university (Stellenbosch) are intentionally involved
- The instrument used to gather data (a simple questionnaire designed specifically for this assignment) is not classified as a psychological instrument.

The following ethical issues have also been explored and may require further consideration:

- Confidentiality, informed consent, clarification of the research process and the right of withdrawal have all been granted or guaranteed, as is the assurance that personal data will be secure. All of the above have been articulated clearly in documentation to participants.

- Sampling may raise some concerns. Many of the potential study population may be executives that have worked with coaches known personally to the researcher. How will this affect ethical considerations?
- Related to the above sampling concern, it will be necessary to source executive coachees from other coaches and schools. How will this create further ethical considerations?
- Contractual issues - the nature of the type of coaching in questions means long term coaching relationships. What is the ethical impact of this?
- Working with the body - the work some coaches do can be considered intimate in nature and is often a function of a relationship that develops over time. How will the nature of this conversation and possible self consciousness around it, impact the study?

#### 1.4 CLARIFICATION OF KEY CONCEPTS

The parameters that determine the relevant concepts in this assignment all occur within the broader context of *the organisation*, the working environment of *executives*. It is this macro perspective that defines the entire field within which to begin this exploration.

##### 1.4.1 Organisations and organisational development

As we orientate this inquiry generally, but squarely within organisations *in all their forms*, it may not be necessary to spend too much time delineating this space. That said, how we define organisations will determine how we view them, study them, act within them and towards them.

Two concise points of reference may be useful here. Firstly, a simple yet shared understanding of organisations as people collaborating with shared intent, a view that has materialised from traditional definitions such as '(an organisation is...) a collection of people working together in a division of labour to achieve a common purpose' (Cascio, 1998 citing Schermerhorn, Hunt and Osborn 1994). In this view, organisations are ubiquitous and include businesses, partnerships, governments, non-governmental organisations, associations, societies, clubs, political parties, educational institutions, committees, juries and movements.

Secondly, there is a further useful distinction for understanding organisations as this author chooses to view them for the purposes of this inquiry. That is, the emergence within theoretical traditions in organisational theory between a mechanical perspective of organisations (informed by a machine age and an engineer's eye) and distinct from that, an organisation as a living system, attending to the social or communal (and even biological) aspects of organisations. This distinction

and the latter perspective is adopted and described succinctly by Senge (1990) as he cites De Geus, Allen and Sandow and Maturana.

#### 1.4.2 Executive coaching

Based on the above broad characterisation of organisations, it follows that any senior manager, head or director that has the power to execute decisions and take responsibility for important organisational functions, qualifies as an executive. Similarly, and again broadly speaking, coaching directed at these individuals would, for the purposes of this assignment, be considered executive coaching. McLeod (2003) cited by De Beer (2005), supports this broad view by asserting that all work based coaching is executive coaching.

Looking to the existing literature for further clarity on executive coaching the extensive work of Kilburg in this regard is indispensable. His specific work on defining executive coaching comprehensively tackles the full range of concepts pertaining to executive coaching. His definition thereof is widely cited, and aligns well with the perspective this assignment adopts:

Executive Coaching is a helping relationship between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to help the client achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement. Kilburg (2000)

Addressing *why* executive coaching warrants attention in this inquiry and following the thread of questioning *which* components of the organisation have the biggest influence on organisational growth, one widely acknowledged factor points to the leadership of an organisation. More specifically, the most senior leaders, the executive, holding the highest authority, responsibility and decision making power, have the largest influence over organisational culture and performance. De Beer (2005) confirms this and explains that any developmental work such as coaching, directed at the executive, promises maximum effect for the organisation.

Other studies that support the view of executive coaching's positive influence on organisations include:

- The extensive review on the impact of executive coaching by Fillery-Travis and Passmore, (2011)
- MacKie (2007) in his review of the evaluation of the effectiveness of executive coaching points to more thorough reviews of coaching effectiveness in Jarvis, Lane, & Fillery-Travis (2006) and Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson (2001).

- Authors such as Brooks and Wright (2007) confirm executive coaching as 'becoming mainstream' as it rapidly grows as a type of development practice, while Rooke (1999) refers directly to the relationship between organisational transformation and leaders' development. In later works Rooke and Torbert (2005) point to the critical nature of leaders' development for organisational growth.
- Ely (2006) also extensively reviews approaches, outcomes and all aspects of coaching over a multitude of studies, including expanding on ways to evaluate coaching interventions.
- Sieler (2007) and De Beer (2005) point to the increasing complexity of organisations and the rate of environmental and organisational change as grounds for a coaching approach for leaders. Both authors also point to the vital need for an approach that significantly shifts the way leaders view themselves, transcendent of behaviour, and in so doing better relate to their peers, their subordinates and their organisations.

### 1.4.3 Transformative approaches

With countless coaching approaches in existence, and the majority being applicable to the executive coaching context, evaluating the impact of the different approaches within that context proves challenging.

The distinction made by some authors (Thach, 2002; Laske, 2003; Weiss, 2004; Hawkins & Smith, 2007; Askew & Carnell, 2011) between transformative approaches and other approaches provides an important starting point for understanding transformative coaching and its significance.

In a study titled *Transformative Coaching*, Askew and Carnell, 2011) also categorise three levels of learning in coaching: (1) learning new skills and competencies (2) learning to see something differently and (3) learning more about the self in practice (reflective learning). They argue that this third level of coaching is the least supported in practice and 'requires attention' as it has the potential to bring about change that is effective, sustainable and transformative.

Weiss (2004), outlines three levels of coaching intervention that are broadly about *doing* (tasks and goals); *learning* (how to develop) and *being & becoming* (who you are). These three levels also indicate the 'depth' of the intervention, with the *being* level (or ontological level) considered a causal level of learning and thus *transformative*. Weiss goes on to say that transformative approaches address the *whole being* or person, in their full complexity, in coaching. As part of that all-inclusive complexity, a distinct aspect of transformative approaches is its integration of the body or physiology of the coachee (Sieler, 2007).

Sieler's (2007) ontological coaching, a transformative approach, claims deep change through changes in three domains - language (thinking), emotions and the body (physiology). An important

element of his approach is the importance of the congruence of emotions, language and body in coaching and change. Sieler also refers to first order and second order learning, a distinction between coaching through observing (and changing) behaviour and results *only* (1<sup>st</sup> order learning) and coaching that aims to observe a 'deeper', more causal relationship between how one views the self and therefore the world (2<sup>nd</sup> order learning). He refers to the latter as 'observing the observer', and defines the observer as the relationship, or congruence between the three domains of language (thinking), emotions and the body (physiology).

Two types of transformative coaching approaches seem to be prevalent mostly, namely Integral and Ontological approaches. Both these approaches address the whole being of the coachee and acknowledge the centrality of the body (Sieler, 2007; Flaherty, 2005).

#### **1.4.4 The body**

As mentioned above, the body is central to transformative coaching. This distinguishes it from other coaching approaches and includes the assertion that the body is 'a locus of transformation' (Flaherty, 2005) and thus the importance of working purposefully with the body in coaching. This assignment narrows its focus on one precise aspect of the learning within these approaches that involves the coachees' bodies and their experience thereof during coaching. With these assertions about transformative approaches, this assignment therefore zooms in on a feature of transformative coaching that purports to be crucial to its success in bringing about embedded change, specifically addressing questions around the body and coaching conversations with executives about the body. These conversations about the body, while potentially profound in terms of the level of change they may produce, seem to occur with less frequency than conversations about behaviours, emotions or results, as would occur in translative approaches. Seemingly, there may be disagreements or misunderstandings about the importance of the body and conversations about it amongst both executive coaches and coachees, as well as an associated reluctance to discuss it as part of coaching.

Sieler's latest body of work, the third in three volumes, is dedicated to the body and physiology of our being and the art of coaching in this area. Flaherty (2005) and Sieler (2007), whose approaches would be considered transformative, include working with the body and they make comparable points about the importance of the centrality of the body. Sieler's (2012) work offers more detail in terms of the specifics of coaching to the body by categorising ways of paying attention to the body. He details four areas - breathing, muscle tension, movement and posture.

#### **1.4.5 The influence of recent neuroscience**

While this study concentrates on modalities that have experiential components, recent discoveries in neuroscience cannot be ignored, especially where they compliment and substantiate the notion

of the centrality of body to transformation. The reciprocal relationship between our conversations (language), our nervous systems and our selves is of essence to coaching as it speaks to the core of what is malleable and changeable in humans. Neuroplasticity and interoception are two concepts that relate to our sense of self (Payne et al, 2015) and therefore executive coaching.

#### **1.4.6 The marginalisation of the body**

Working within organisations, this way (transformatively and with the body) can be challenging for a number of reasons, especially at executive level. Historically it seems that learning within organisations has been accepted if directed at cognitive levels and more recently emotional levels, but not at somatic levels. This predisposition or 'anti-somatic bias' even (Caldwell, 2014), may have significant drawbacks for organisational learning and the effectiveness of executive coaching.

### **1.5 IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY**

This study is thus a phenomenological inquiry into the experience of executive coachees who have had conversations referencing the body as part of transformative coaching. The expectation is that such an inquiry would provide insight into this way of coaching, shed light on possible misunderstandings or knowledge gaps (for coaches and coachees) and give clues as to how this may be addressed.

- The study will provide information and understanding on what executives experience as coachees in organisations when the coaching inquiry includes conversations about and around the body;
- It will furthermore provide insight as to what executive coachees concerns are, whether there is possible limitations, resistance or discomfort round these coaching conversations;
- And, finally, the study will benefit future coachees by possibly providing insights into what solutions may exist for the above

This study also aims to make the following contribution to the field of coaching, either in this assignment, or by paving the way for research to follow:

- Identify any resistance to working in this particular way (body work amongst executives), or ignorance surrounding this approach, for both coaches and coachees
- Facilitate conversations about the body between coaches and coachees by adding to the discourse in these conversations

- Normalise somatic learning in executive contexts - that is, facilitate a more integrated coaching approach from coaches and for coachees
- Learn how to have development conversations that include the body more effectively

## **1.6 CHAPTER OUTLINE**

Chapter 1 is an introduction (this chapter).

Chapter 2 provides a literature review.

Chapter 3 outlines the specific methodology employed in the study.

Chapter 4 provides a discussion of the findings in relation to previous research.

Chapter 5 gives a summary of the findings, a conclusion, as well as limitations of this study. It also offers some recommendations for future research.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1 INTRODUCTION

The review of relevant literature that follows, aims firstly to outline the area within organisational development that is executive coaching. A definition and broad, general demarcation of the area is attempted, as well as some reference to its recent, rapid emergence. Secondly, the chapter distinguishes between transformative approaches and other coaching approaches by noting some of the many distinctions made in the literature. The key differences, relevant to this assignment, between transformative coaching and other coaching approaches are explored briefly. Approaches that would meet the criteria of transformative approaches are named. Finally, the chapter includes some of the literature that informs approaches to the body and its centrality in transformation and transformative approaches.

The literature review thus focuses on the subsets of the organisation that claim significant impact in respective areas, namely executive coaching, transformative approaches and the body. This review explores these latter three concepts in detail, as follows:

- **Executive coaching:** The emergent state of executive coaching; a conceptualisation and definition; evidence of the effectiveness of executive coaching.
- **Transformative approaches:** A definition and clarification of the concept; types of transformative approaches.
- **The body (in transformation):** The centrality of the body to transformative work; the marginalisation of the body; the contributions of neuroscience

The importance of exploring these three concepts as subsets of each other, and the exact relationships between them, especially the effectiveness of executive coaching, the possible underutilisation of transformative coaching approaches (within executive coaching) and the marginalisation of the body in coaching (and in general), ties in directly with the research aim. Any insight into the phenomenological experience of executive coachees who have had transformative coaching involving the body may provide answers as to why approaches that are apparently effective, are not more widespread. In other words, if these approaches were indeed transformative, it would follow that they should be more widespread in order for executive coaching to be more effective. This assignment questions the possible obstacles to having more transformative coaching conversations. More specifically, what are the difficulties for coachees in having coaching conversations about their bodies in executive coaching?



A note on organisations and organisational development: A brief look at organisations and their development is necessary in order to contextualise the focus on executive coaching, transformative approaches and the body in this assignment. Within the expansive definition of organisations that is presupposed in this study is the sub-discipline of organisational development. Organisational development approaches are primarily based on the conceptual foundations of general systems theory as applied to organisations, and thus often include coaching (Kilburg 2000). The emergence of coaching over the past few decades or more has come about through a blending of traditional organisational development methods (Brock, 2008). The focus on executive coaching in this study is therefore as a 'sub-discipline of organisational development' as Kilburg (1996) has pointed out.

## **2.2 EXECUTIVE COACHING**

### **2.2.1 The emergent state of executive coaching**

In searching the literature on coaching, its burgeoning in the mid-nineties is striking. A significant and widely referenced study, Grant's (2008) annotated bibliography, specifically quantifies this escalation by contrasting the difference in the number of studies published over the first 62 years (1937-1999) of his analysis, namely 93, to the following nine years (1999-2008), namely 335. It seems evident that the turn of the century was also a turning point for the field of coaching.

Specifically with regard to executive coaching, four reviews of the literature in 2001, 2005, 2011 and 2014 all point to the mushrooming field of executive coaching and the accompanying organic nature of its growth (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011; Barlett, Boylan and Hayle, 2014). By looking at the focus of each of these studies, at that particular time, a story of executive coaching's emergence is apparent. The comprehensive review of executive coaching research in 2001 points to the scarcity of research at the time, while the integrative review of 2005 reports increasing popularity of executive coaching as a practice, but that the research is still in its infancy. Joo (2005) also distinguishes between the perspectives of practioners, the predominant writing of the time, and that of researchers (academics), looking in some detail at the types of research conducted, and concluding that most of them lack research quality - a view corroborated prior by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) and thereafter by Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2011), citing Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001). In their 2011 review of executive coaching research the authors contrast 20<sup>th</sup> century research (prior to 2000) to the state of research over the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century (2001 onwards). They note a significant turning point in coaching research, one where a natural evolution of knowledge is evident and research questions and methods start to change. Looking forward, their study considers possible directions for future research and predict that as the research and knowledge base matures beyond 2011, and the field emerges from a definition and exploration phase, so too will the questions, methodolgies and sophistication levels of studies eventually move

towards research excellence. Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2011) also point to the academic-practitioner divide and warn of the loss for the field of coaching should it be allowed to manifest.

In summarising the emergent state of executive coaching in 2015, it appears evident that the field has progressed considerably in size and maturity over the past fifteen to twenty years. As evidence is gathered as to the state of executive coaching research, practice and knowledge a number of themes emerge. These include:

- a radical growth and interest in the field (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011; Barlett, Boylan and Hayle, 2014).
- a recognition of the interdisciplinary nature of coaching and its influences from counselling, training, consulting and other organisational interventions (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Sherman and Freas, 2004 and Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011)
- a lack of empirical research (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011; Barlett, Boylan and Hayle, 2014)
- an increased demand for executive coaching services (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001)
- a rising number of professional coaches, including membership of (and commentary from) the International Federation of Coaches (ICF) (Joo, 2005)
- concerns and confusion around standards of practice, definitions, skills training and qualifications (Joo (2005), Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001) and Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2014)
- a distinction between practice-based evidence and scientific (empirical and other academic) research (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005). Essentially, as stated by Joo (2005), the practice is ahead of the theory. He points out that 71 percent of his research originated in practice journals and 15 percent in academic journals.
- a drive toward professionalism. Or, following from the point above, a need for practitioner to also become the researcher (Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011).
- an unfortunate divide between the academic and the practitioner which threatens future research, should cooperation between the two not be forthcoming (Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011).

Despite all of the above, executive coaching has a promising future (Joo, 2005 citing Sherman and Freas) and an offer of benefit to clients not offered by other interventions (Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011)

### **2.2.2 Executive Coaching: concept and definition**

The multiplicity of perspectives on executive coaching, and accordingly the breadth and range of definitions thereof, reflects the organic and explosive way the field has emerged since the mid-

1990s. Numerous definitions exist, each taking a different perspective, with no agreement (Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011).

There are a number of challenges in finding commonality and clearly defining the extensive field of executive coaching, partially due to the 'many different individuals and disciplines involved in providing executive coaching services' (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001). In addition to the interdisciplinary nature of the practice, there is also (as indicated in 2.2.1 above), rapid growth, a lack of empirical research and professional integration, an increased demand for coaching and a rise in the number of coaches. In attempting to establish a framework of shared understanding, authors have looked at the history and origins of coaching, the process of coaching, who coaches and who gets coached, amongst others.

Some authors (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011) have attempted to make distinctions between perspectives in terms of how those views have influenced definitions.

One such distinction is relevant to this study. Joo (2005) distinguishes between definitions that take an individual perspective and focus on the one-on-one nature of the practice, and others that take a broader view orientated towards teams and/or organisational levels. In a table of eight definitions (Appendix 1), which also specifies the respective purposes of executive coaching for each definition, he lists definitions in a range from specific to comprehensive.

The most specific definition, that of Peterson, addresses the individual, defining coaching as 'a process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge and opportunities they need to develop themselves and become more effective'.

The broadest definition specific to executive coaching in the table, that of Kilburg (1996), reads:

'Executive coaching is a helping relationship between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioural techniques and methods to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization within a formally defined coaching agreement.'

In a later study, Kilburg (2000) echoes his broad perspective when he refers to the increasing use of the term executive coaching to refer to 'any activities that focus on managers and senior leaders.'

Similarly, a decade later, the Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2011) review of a executive coaching research (2000-2009) acknowledges the many influences, naming counselling, psychology, learning & consulting (citing Tobias, 1996), and the challenges this brings to defining the field. They point to these diverse influences as the source of distinction between perspectives that seem to have developed from counselling and psychology, in contrast to those that hold a broader organisational point of view, using Kilburg's definition as an example of the latter. Based on their

reflection of the research of that decade, they offer their own definition as a 'broad definition of coaching':

'A Socratic dialogue between a facilitator (coach) and a participant (Client) where the majority of interventions used by the facilitator are open questions which are aimed at stimulating the self awareness and personal responsibility of the participant.'

What is also noteworthy, in terms of defining the field of executive coaching, is that in searching literature for clarity on what executive coaching is, the extensive work of Kilburg (especially his 1996 and 2000 studies) seems unavoidable and possibly indispensable. He is often cited and regularly used in summary, with authors agreeing that his work specifically and comprehensively conceptualises and defines executive coaching by covering the full range on the subject. He takes a broad, organisational perspective (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011); his definition represents a 'fairly comprehensive view of how executive coaching has been discussed and defined' (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001), and it is considered inclusive (Thach, 2002).

Possible reasons that Kilburg's conceptualisation and definition have endured so well for two decades (and cited so often), beside the obvious efforts he has made, may include the following:

- The inclusivity of his definition, in that he included 'a wide variety of behavioural techniques' as well as both a personal and organisational view.
- That due to executive coaching's pervasiveness, this inclusive approach now matches the *broadening* and burgeoning nature of the executive coaching field.
- That a lack of agreement has forced the delineation of the field to be broadened, in order to be more inclusive.

In short, the field has broadened and expanded to match his definition, thus rendering it accurate and timeless.

Returning to the relevance of Joo's (2005) distinction and categorisation of definitions to this study, Joo also offers a conceptual framework that concludes that executive coaching should consider the success of the individual *and* the organisation, thereby including and validating all perspectives on his continuum (Appendix 1). Stated slightly differently, Joo arguably concludes that effective executive coaching should both transcend the individual perspective and yet include it *within* the organisational perspective.

In summary of this section on the concept and definition of executive coaching, based on the above broad characterisation of executive coaching *within* organisations, it follows that any senior manager, head or director that has the power to execute decisions and take responsibility for important organisational functions, meet the criteria as an executive. Similarly, and again broadly speaking, coaching directed at these individuals would, for the purposes of this assignment, be considered executive coaching. McLeod (2003), as cited by De Beer (2005), supports this broad

view by asserting that 'all work based coaching is executive coaching'. The perspective of this inquiry is thus broad in terms of executives and executive coaching within organisations.

### **2.2.3 Evaluating the effectiveness of executive coaching**

The explosive emergence of executive coaching since the mid-1990s is evident (2.2.1 above), as is the possible acceptance of a broader, or even widening, definition of the field (2.2.2 above). Each of these phenomena supports the other and the incidence of coaching and recognition of its pervasiveness is undeniable. To some extent, this frequency or popularity of executive coaching points to the argument about its effectiveness, at least anecdotally. Within the literature on executive coaching, anecdotal evidence about the impact or effectiveness thereof is plentiful (MacKie, 2007). General statements about its impact are easy to find and assertions that executive coaching is becoming 'more welcome, more popular and more necessary' (Kilburg 2000, 53) and similar, are numerous.

With this expansion of the field, as well as anecdotal claims of its effectiveness, questions arise about the methods used to establish the effectiveness of executive coaching. In his 2005 review of the practice and research Joo concluded that these questions 'should be addressed head-on', and it is also around this time that we also see the maturation of the way the effectiveness of executive coaching is investigated. As we look at the type of evidence gathered and note how these studies are evolving, it may be useful to view research into the effectiveness of executive coaching in two phases that broadly represent the periods prior to 2006 and post-2006. In this section, attention is given to evidence that supports the impact of executive coaching in the context of its positionality within organisations. That is, evidence of the impact of executive coaching as a means to a wider, organisational effectiveness.

#### **Until 2006, a prevalence of anecdotal (non-empirical/non-scientific) research**

One specific paper on the role of executive coaching in assisting leaders to empower organisations (De Beer, 2005) mentions three studies that claim significant 'proof' that executive coaching works. The first, (De Beer, 2005 citing Brown and Hockman, 2004), reports that 24 executive directors in NGOs reported improved confidence, connection to and fulfilling organisational vision, better productivity, as well as improved management of others and of stakeholders' relationships. The second, (De Beer, 2005 citing Eaton and Brown, 2002), reports on a successful coaching intervention involving 85 managers on three hierarchical levels at Vodafone (UK) in 1999. The study claims a positive influence on the managers coached, their staff and the business overall. Some results included staff feeling appreciated and trusting of their managers; managers realising their potential and the importance of staff development; restoring Vodafone as market leader. The same study (De Beer, 2005) also mentions a survey designed to assess the effectiveness of

coaching as a management development tool. The survey reports the enhancement and establishment of skills, shifts in beliefs that inhibited performance and increases in confidence that significantly affected revenue.

Other studies that provide evidence in support of the effectiveness of executive coaching and its positive influence on organisations prior to 2006 include the extensive review on the impact of executive coaching by Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2011). These authors cite:

- Action research demonstrating the positive effect executive coaching and 360-feedback had on increasing leadership effectiveness and developing leaders in one organisation (Thach, 2002).
- A 2006 study by Parker-Wilkins attempting to measure return on investment (ROI) on an executive coaching intervention, which reported benefits in a number of business impact areas, including improved teamwork and team member satisfaction, increased retention and productivity, better quality of consulting and client satisfaction, as well as accelerated promotions. The ROI in this study is quantified at over \$3 million (700%).

Ely (2006) also extensively reviews approaches, outcomes and all aspects of coaching over a multitude of studies, including expanding on ways to evaluate coaching interventions.

Confirming Joo's perspective on the phases that research into executive coaching is going through, MacKie (2007) looks at the maturing of the research in comparison to other, related fields such as psychotherapy and training. He notes that prior to 2007 outcome variables and measures had been lacking and that study into the practice of executive coaching revolved instead around the satisfaction derived by executives or organisations. He reviews evidence in five categories, commenting on the rarity of studies in each, but provides notable examples in each of these categories, as follows:

- Surveys - The Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD)'s 2005 survey
- Case studies - A Libri and Kemp (2006) study that showed evidence of effectiveness through outcomes measures at both subjective (e.g., confidence) and objective levels (e.g. sales performance)
- Uncontrolled studies - Wasylyshyn's 2003 survey of her own coaching practice, which reported a range of positive outcomes especially among high performers and successful executives
- Controlled studies - A Hernez-Broome (2004) study using interviews and a comparison with a control group and showing that those coached had a greater success in meeting personal leadership objectives

MacKie (2007) cites the examples above and notes that what is required going forward, as good research practice into the effectiveness of executive coaching:

- Scientifically comparing these results and replicating them is near impossible
- More evaluation of the effectiveness of executive coaching is required through the use of case studies and controlled studies
- Agreement on outcome evaluation (individually and organisationally) in executive coaching, so that such 'professional consensus' may provide 'guidelines and protocols to inform evidence-based practice'.

### **Post 2007, more empirical studies begin to emerge**

Until around 2007, empirical studies providing clear evidence of the effectiveness of executive coaching are thus marked by their absence (Joo, 2005; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001). As a clear example, in Joo's (2005) review of the executive coaching literature, mostly from academic and practice journals, only 11 of the 78 articles read were research articles (6 quantitative and 5 qualitative). Some reasons for this deficiency include:

- The difficulty with controlled studies and isolating variables in organisational settings (MacKie, 2007)
- The range of activities under the coaching banner (MacKie, 2007)
- The lack of consensus on who does executive coaching and how it is done (De Meuse, Dai & Lee, 2009)

Since 2007, a number of key studies have featured in the literature, which starts to address some of the concerns above:

- A groundbreaking study by Grant, Curtayne and Burton (2009) involving executives in public health, claims to be the first randomised control study in which coaching was conducted by professional executive coaches external to the organisation. Quantitative and qualitative measures were included. Coaching enhanced goal attainment, increased resilience and workplace well-being and reduced depression and stress, for those coached. Qualitative responses indicated participants found coaching helped increase self-confidence and personal insight, build management skills and helped participants deal with organisational change.
- A meta-analysis of empirical research by evaluating the effectiveness of executive coaching (De Meuse, Dai & Lee (2009)
- A grounded theory approach looking at ROI in executive coaching by Lawrence and Whyte (2013)
- A critical reviews of the progress of executive coaching research by Fillery-Travis and Passmore (2014)

#### **2.2.4 The role of executive coaching in organisational development**

What can be inferred from 2.2 above, is that there is mounting confirmation of a maturing, evidence-based executive coaching field, in which the efficacy of executive coaching is being substantiated in increasingly more scientific ways. As Cavicchia & Fillery-Travis (2013) point out in their review, citing a number of authors, there is 'within this developing literature... a near universal positive evaluation of its efficacy.' In order to again contextualise the efficacy of executive coaching within the broader organisation, a final brief note on its wider influence is necessary.

With such efficacy in organisations, executive coaching starts to impact other aspects of organisations such as leadership, organisational development, performance or culture. 'Executive coaching...has an impact on leaders and decision makers, and consequently the performance of the organisation (Kilburg, 1996). Overall, 'executive coaching is an important leverage for organisational transformation' (Giglio, Diamante and Urban, 1998).

If it is evident that executive coaching influences leadership and transformation (and more), the converse may also be true. This raises questions about a number of interdependent relationships peripheral to executive coaching, including that of the coach-coachee, the relationship between coachee and organisation, the leader's relationship and attitude toward the organisation and the coach's relationship with the organisation.

Authors such as Brooks and Wright (2007) confirm executive coaching is 'becoming mainstream' as it rapidly grows as a type of development practice, while Rooke (1999) refers directly to the relationship between organisational transformation and leaders' development. In later works Rooke and Torbert (2005) point to the critical nature of leaders' development for organisational growth.

Poston, Manning & Barrow (2001) address the issues broadly by stating that 'the success of the (coaching) intervention is directly dependent on the quality of the relationships'. This is confirmed by Joo (2005), when he asserts 'this triangular relationship is the basis of the antecedents of effective coaching: coach characteristics, coachee characteristics and organisational support.'

It would follow that, based on these synergistic and dynamic relationships, the key to ensuring successful executive coaching lies with executive leadership. That is, the authority and responsibility for establishing organisational support for executive coaching lies most specifically with the leaders who hold the greatest decision-making power and have the largest influence over the organisational development, cultural and performance. De Beer (2005) confirms this and explains that because of this developmental work like executive coaching promises maximum effect for the organisation. In individual terms, this means that effective executive coaching throughout the organisation is therefore firstly a consequence of an individual (chief) executive's development, and secondly a consequence of his/her alignment, influence and support for broader transformational objectives.



## 2.3 TRANSFORMATIVE COACHING

In this section the focus shifts from the concept of executive coaching as an increasingly accepted organisational development tool with numerous coaching definitions and approaches, towards a particular subset of coaching, applicable within executive contexts, that may be seen as distinct for a number of reasons. Transformative coaching distinguishes itself (by definition) from other forms through its claims of a deeper and more sustainable impact on the coachee and a complete approach to working with the whole being of the client.

### 2.3.1 Concept and definition

Searching for literature that discusses, describes or defines transformative coaching proves problematic. It is easy to confuse transformative coaching as discussed in this assignment, with a number of other similar terms, associated distinctions and related concepts in the developmental theory of education, leadership and spirituality. These similar phrases may include the use of transactional, transformational, translative and transitional in various permutations. Although there may be overlaps with some of these concepts, and in some cases influence from them, this study aims to clearly distinguish transformative coaching as it is understood by the author from a number of other similar (and confusing) concepts. Firstly, in this study transformative coaching is clearly distinct from the following:

- ‘Transformational coaching’ and its popular use commercially. This phrase and method, and possible accompanying intellectual property in some practices, is used liberally online and can be misleading due to its many different interpretations and uses.
- Similarly, the popular distinction in leadership theory between transactional and transformational leadership, as originally developed by Burns in his 1978 book, *Leadership*, and that is the likely source of the commercial use of ‘transformational leadership coaching’.
- Transformational learning in education and adult learning (Mezirow, 1991)

The above distinctions may allude to one type of coaching, leadership or learning that is somehow ‘more than’ another, or at a higher level of complexity, such as Burn’s suggestion that ‘transactional’ is static while ‘transformational’ is dynamic (and therefore better) or Mezirow’s notion of a fundamental change in values, beliefs and assumptions (a perspective transformation).

While these concepts do not capture the full complexity of transformative work as it is intended in this study, the notions of deeper change, fundamental shifts or progressive levels of development are an important part of transformative work. So while transformative coaching often includes progressive levels of complexity, transforming a perspective or working through increasingly expansive stages (or levels), it also transcends these levels to form an all-inclusive or complete

way of working. Hence, the assertion that transformative coaching addresses the full complexity or *whole being* of a person in coaching, which would include progressive stages (levels) of development.

Using the distinction made by Wilber (2000) with regard to personal transformation, namely that of vertical and horizontal development, transformative coaching includes the notion of vertical development, the progressive stages (levels) of development, but also transcends this 'developmental approach'.

It follows from the above that a 'developmental approach' is necessary but not sufficient for transformative work. In other words, that while transformative coaching makes use of developmental approaches, it is also more complex than working 'merely' developmentally. In this regard, Hawkins and Smith (2007) refer to a 'coaching spectrum', a continuum of four dissimilar forms of coaching that address different aspects of the client. This continuum would also arguably represent a rise in the complexity of coaching and skill levels of the coach. The forms of coaching are described as follows:

- Skills coaching aims to enhance specific or general skill levels
- Performance coaching deals with level of performance and outputs
- Development coaching centres on the full learning and development of the client over a longer term and may include their learning capacity (within a single developmental level/stage)
- Transformational coaching attends to the client in their entirety, including the physical, emotional and cognitive domains, and the alignment between the three. It aims to shift the meaning scheme (worldview) or identity of the client, including from one developmental level/stage to another.

From the description above of 'transformational coaching', it is synonymous with the concept of transformative coaching as it is understood in this assignment. In coaching practice, this continuum also appears to be a relatively widespread understanding of four basic categories of coaching.

The reference by Hawkins & Smith above, to the physical, emotional and cognitive domains and the alignment between the three, is indicative of another transformative approach (fully discussed in the next section 2.3.2.2), namely Sieler's (2007) ontological coaching.

A key dimension of this transformative approach is the interrelationship between the three domains of language (thinking), emotions, and the body (physiology). What makes this approach transformative is that while learning may occur in each domain, an ontological shift (transforming way of being) only occurs when there are shifts in all three domains that result in 'a new coherence of language, emotions and body' (Sieler, 2007). This requires 'second-order learning' from the coachee - the ability to observe a 'deeper', more causal relationship between how one views the

self (language, emotions and body) and the world. Second-order learning, also referred to by Sieler as ‘observing the observer’ is distinct from first-order learning (observing behaviour and results only) but does not preclude the possibility of first-order learning. In this way, these two ways of learning also represent two distinct ways of observing, one more complex than the other, and thus also resembling the ‘coaching spectrum’ of Hawkins and Smith.

Similarly, the coaching spectrum of Weiss (2004), a transformative coach, outlines three levels of coaching intervention that are broadly about *Doing* (tasks and goals); *Learning* (how to develop) and *Being & Becoming* (who you are). These three levels also indicate the ‘depth’ of the intervention, with the *Being* level (also referred to as the ontological level) considered a causal level of learning and thus *transformative*. Weiss states: ‘At the third level, we work with our clients at the level of changing their “Way of Being.” At this level, we address the issue systemically—shifting how they relate to themselves, others and the world. As old lines of understanding are revised and redrawn, the tight container the person has inhabited cracks open and new possibilities arise. This new perspective offers an increased sense of freedom and spaciousness. The result is an alleviation of suffering.”

In the literature specifically on executive coaching, many authors distinguish between two, three or even four types of coaching, often from the perspective of encouraging a more transformative way of working.

Thach (2002), distinguishes broadly between two types of coaching, *performance* and *in depth*, while Laske (2003) makes a distinction between that of performance and developmental, referring to two different foci in coaching. He distinguishes between behavioural variables that spell out what a client does (his doing) in performance coaching and developmental variables that indicate who an individual is (his being) in developmental coaching. He adds that ‘being determines doing’ and that working on this more subtle level, including consideration of how an individual views the world, as well as how this may change over chronological time, addresses that individual’s predisposition to action, and therefore has more coaching impact. Conversely, coaching that centres only on behaviour and performance and excludes the worldview, developmental stage and potential growth of individuals, misinterprets executive change and the potential impact of executive coaching (Laske, 2003).

Furthermore, Laske’s earlier study (1999b), as reviewed by Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), goes as far as stating that the potential for change and thinking transformatively (including the way transformation is described and evaluated) is determined by development stage (ontic-developmental level) of both coachee and coach. This implies greater effectiveness of executive coaching where there is a developmental or transformative understanding (and readiness) in both the executive (of self) and the coach (of self and coachee). When executives understand their own growth in relation to their developmental levels much that is assumed about coaching, especially

that which is conceptualised behaviourally, may be called into question (Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson (2001), citing personal communication with Laske.

Finally, in a study titled *Transformative Coaching*, Askew and Carnell categorise three levels of learning in coaching: (1) learning new skills and competencies (2) learning to see something differently and (3) learning more about the self in practice (reflective learning). They argue that this third level of coaching is the least supported in practice and 'requires attention' as it has the potential to bring about change that is effective, sustainable and transformative.

## **2.3.2 Types of transformative approaches**

### **2.3.2.1 Integral coaching**

There are two main streams of coaching that use the term Integral to describe their approach, both are noteworthy international coaching schools based in the USA and Canada and both influenced by Ken Wilber and Integral Theory. The founders of both schools point to their own reflections around how humans change and how best to assist and support that change, profoundly and sustainably, as motivation for developing more coherent and less 'partial' coaching models and approaches (Hunt, 2007; Flaherty, 2005). That is, a more integral approach.

The inclusivity of the approach is also reflected in the way both authors refer to a coach's philosophical approach to humans, human development and change as the core discriminator between coaching approaches (and therefore schools). Flaherty (2005) introduces his work by asking 'what is a human being?' His view is that an explicit theory and understanding of human beings is both essential for coaching, as well as frequently assumed rather than elucidated and shared.

In the case of Integral Coaching, the view is that in order for change to 'occur in a way that is embodied and sustained' four perspectives on human development are integrated into a comprehensive and fully integrated coaching methodology (Hunt, 2007). These four perspectives are informed by Wilber's Integral Theory as represented by his AQAL (all quadrants, all levels, all lines, all states, and all types) model, which 'forms the primary lens through which our coaches come to know and appreciate their clients' unique worlds' (Hunt, 2007).

In addition to the four views that inform the client, coach and coaching, both Integral Coaching approaches also use a developmental model (stage model) of human development, in line with the Wilber's (2000) notion of vertical development. While the Integral approach is 'sourced by a "transcend and include" developmental model as described by Ken Wilber and Robert Kegan' (Hunt, 2007), Flaherty's method makes use of an adapted ten stage model (The Ten Ways), developed by Flaherty himself.

In both Integral schools, the third key model that informs coaching is a 'lines of intelligence' model. These six lines of intelligence (or development) are, in the Canadian school, cognitive, emotional, somatic, interpersonal, spiritual and moral (Divine, 2007). In the US school, the moral 'stream' as it is called is, replaced by an 'integration' stream.

A fourth common model is a 'type structure lens' (Divine, 2007). 'Type' as a facet of AQAL reflects aspects of client 'that remains core regardless of the growth that occurs through the structure-stage and/or state-stage development' (Divine, 2007). The tool used is the Enneagram, a popular 'type' system that charts nine core ways of being, thinking and feeling patterns, and corresponding habits and behaviours. This complex yet accessible tool is popular amongst many coaching practitioners. Integral Canada also uses *gender* as an additional type distinction, which clearly illustrates the permanent nature of type, and is easy to understand by all coaches.

Beyond these key models, the Canadian school of Divine and Hunt stays true to Wilber and Integral's AQAL model of development. They use a number of additional models to complete a complex 'constellation' of assessment and inquiry into human development.

These include firstly, a 'states' lens to draw attention to varying impermanent states coachees (and coaches) may find themselves in. This model includes 'heightened states (e.g., runner's high, in the zone), everyday waking states (e.g., emotions, moods), and gross, subtle, and causal state experiences and understanding' (Divine, 2007). Secondly, based on Wilber's use of 'altitude' or perspective taking, a 'levels of consciousness' lens that is a 'compilation of developmental research in the areas of self-identity, values, morals, and cognition (i.e., perspective taking)' (Divine, 2007 citing Wilber, 2006). The higher the 'altitude', the more expansive the level of consciousness held and expressed.

Finally, in the Canadian school the application of subject-object theory is utilised in a foundational model (Hunt, 2007). This model attends to the language of the coachee (and coach) and indicates how they make sense of their worlds in terms of what they identify with (subject) and 'dis-identify' with (object). This permutation of subject-object relations shifts and can be tracked as the individual develops.

### **2.3.2.2 Ontological coaching**

As with the Integral schools, there are currently two main streams of coaching that use the term Ontological to describe their approach, again both noteworthy international coaching schools based in the US and Australia, founded by Julio Olalla and Alan Sieler respectively, and both influenced by Fernando Flores, considered the founder of Ontological Coaching (Sieler, 2003).

The foundations of Ontological Coaching rest on the study of ontology, the study of 'being' and an inquiry into the nature of human existence. Sieler too introduces ontological coaching by asking 'what does it mean to be a human being?' and claims this to be the central question of learning.

That is, learning to be a human being, with a key outcome of Ontological Coaching being 'the constructive transformation of being, or deep change' (Sieler, 2003). The founders of Ontological Coaching therefore also seem to have developed the approach through questioning a deeper form of learning and coaching. Speaking in the context of organisations, Olalla (2004) confirms this in saying that '...the practice of ontological coaching was born as an intuitive response to the insufficiency of our current learning practices.'

Similarly, Sieler (2007) points to the increasing complexity of organisations, the rate of current environmental and organisational change, and the resultant flexibility and adaptability required from learners as the grounds for a new coaching approach. This new approach is based on 'a new understanding of human beings and human interaction' that is 'rigorously grounded in recent developments in existential philosophy, the philosophy of language and the biology of cognition' (Sieler, 2003).

Both authors also point to the vital need for an approach that significantly shifts the way leaders view themselves, transcendent of behaviour, and in so doing better relate to their peers, their subordinates and their organisations.

Ontological coaching thus claims to be a transformative approach, producing 'deep change' in individuals and organisations through coherent change in the three human domains of language (thinking), emotions, and the body (physiology). An important element of his approach is the importance of the congruence of emotions, language and body in coaching and the shifts possible with this in mind. As seen in 2.3.1 above, this distinguishes ontological coaching approaches from others by its emphasis on a deeper, causal relationship that is more subtle and more complex than coaching based only on behaviour and results, as is often the case in organisations.

## **2.4 THE BODY IN TRANSFORMATION**

An aspect of transformative coaching approaches (including Integral and Ontological) that distinguishes them from other approaches is the centrality of the body and the importance of working purposefully with the body in coaching. Flaherty (2005) and Sieler (2007), whose approaches are considered transformative, specifically include working with the body, provide detail on how to do so, and make comparable points about the importance of the centrality of the body.

### **2.4.1 The centrality of the body to transformation**

The notion of the centrality of the body appears in science, biology, philosophy, psychology, cybernetics and many other modalities. Many developmental modalities have focused on the human body 'as a locus of transformation' (Flaherty, 2005). With regard to transformative

coaching, Sieler (2007) states that coaching involving the body is 'the difference that makes the difference.' Conversely, Flaherty says that 'cognitive insights, however illuminating, are in no way sufficient for bringing about sustained change' (Flaherty, 2005).

Looking at the centrality of the body specifically to ontological coaching, Sieler's latest body of work (2012), the third in three volumes, is dedicated to the body or the physiology of our being and the art of coaching in this area. He offers a deep conceptual understanding of the role of the body in perception, learning and change. He asserts that 'of the three domains, the body is the slowest to change but the most profound' (Sieler, 2012).

Sieler (2012) is unequivocal about the importance of continuous somatic learning by engaging in subtle and skilful observation and adjustment of the body, for both coach and coachee. He emphasises the importance of this within coaching conversations in order to engage the coachee as a somatic learner and facilitate an 'ontological shift'. In other words, he emphasises the importance of engaging in somatic practices (especially somatic awareness) as a means of developing different and constructive meaning. Minute, ongoing physiological shifts generate new insights and meaning. Furthermore, by inventing 'new language' the coach is able to move beyond the mind-body split that occurs in the rational/analytical tradition.

Observing the relationships between language, emotions and body as a way of developing different and constructive meaning is reminiscent of Gendlin's (1978) work in his classic book, *Focussing* where he elucidates the notion of the 'felt shift'. Gendlin's key contribution was the finding that success in his psychotherapy was determined by the manner in which clients spoke about their issues, while being attentive to their bodily sensations and physicality in relation to that issue. He concluded that creating a 'felt shift', or an internal, sensory shift in relation to the issue, enabled changes greater than 'mere insight' (Gendlin, 1978).

Similarly, Somatic Experiencing, a trademarked practice developed by Levine (Payne, Levine & Crane-Godreau, 2015) also speaks to this relationship between what is spoken and thought (language) and specific aspects of the body. Somatic Experiencing (SE), although apparently applied mostly in the context of trauma and chronic stress, essentially encourages individuals to attend to internal, bodily sensations 'both visceral (interoception) and musculo-skeletal (proprioception and kinesthesia), rather than primarily cognitive or emotional experiences' (Payne et al, 2015). These authors also point out (citing Schmalzletal, 2014) that this method not only shares a focus on internal awareness with many other 'meditative movement' practices from eastern traditions such as Yoga, T'ai Chi and Qigong, and many forms of seated meditation, but that this general approach can be seen in somatic systems like the Alexander Technique, Feldenkrais method and others.

In Sieler's (2012) third volume of work, dedicated to the body, he integrates much of the work of these Western somatic approaches and takes this back to some accessible first principles. He

categorises four straightforward ways of paying attention to the body. These are breathing, muscle tension, movement and posture. This well packaged classification is easy to learn to work with for both coach and coachee and is thus suitable for executive coaching.

Many of the modalities and techniques discussed above arguably have an orientation that is mostly 'internal', in that they are significantly subjective in nature (sense of self, personal issues, sensations etc.). The significant transformative effects of working *across* domains of the self, or by purposefully attending to the relationships between facets of the self as it is embodied, are evident above. This 'cross-training', as it is occasionally referred to in transformative coaching, has significant transformative effects on human beings.

In practice, it can be difficult to distinguish between what is internal and external. Both the differentiation and the integration of the internal/external are important for transformation. Some modalities do focus clearly on external and more objective, perhaps measurable bodywork, such as sport and exercise. Furthermore, when combining or 'cross-training' across the internal *and* external domains, including working across domains, quadrants, lines etc, to use Integral Theory's distinction (Wilber, 2000) the impact on well being and transformation is even greater. What is essential for transformation in these approaches is described succinctly and unmistakably by Caldwell (2014) when she introduces the concept of 'bodyfulness':

From this perspective, we can also create balance by alternating between mindfulness and bodyfulness practices, what Silow (2012) calls *ascent*—movement from direct experience towards abstract thought, coupled with *descent*—a return to individual, subjective, sensuous depth. Again, this mirrors the way the body actually oscillates, between top-down and bottom-up processing, the balance between them as what promotes health and well-being.

Transformative body practices have also been influenced by many of the modalities that could be considered more 'external'. These may involve movement or physical effort more so than the internal practices, or perhaps less interoception and more proprioception. Flaherty's work refers to this 'external' work as the 'body and behaviour' aspects of the individual (Flaherty, 2005).

Examples of these kinds of practices abound and personal choice is imperative, as the way coachees engage with these practices, the quality of attention while practicing, is significant for personal transformation. Modalities that are exemplar of the centrality of the body to transformation, and have influenced Flaherty (2005) are the practices of yoga and aikido.

The Aikido-based practices of Heckler (1993) and Palmer (1994, 2009) draw significantly on this Japanese martial art to guide individuals in cultivating the wisdom of their bodies through movement, breath and meditation. This leads to an integrated sense of self (self-acceptance), enhanced quality of attention and self-regulation amongst other gains. The impact of both Heckler and Palmer on the transformative coaching world has been significant and both teachers refer



extensively to the body as a source and vehicle for unfolding of self-awareness, personal transformation and cultural harmony.

Palmer's work has evolved over time through her observations of the postures and gestures in effective people (Palmer, 2013) into practices and programmes designed specifically for leaders and organisational work. These 'Leadership Embodiment' techniques can be used 'at any time and any place to quickly shift from a reactive state to a more skilful and resourceful way of being' (Palmer, 2013). This set of practices is ideal for executive coaching contexts and is therefore seeing expansion amongst coaches and within organisational programmes (Palmer, 2013).

Unfortunately the recognition of these kinds of programmes with organisations is the exception and not the rule, despite significant evidence for the contribution of mindfulness, mind-body modalities or the movement sciences to emotional, physical and mental (Caldwell, 2014). Organisations have seemed reluctant to commit to these programmes, although there are other exceptions such as the Mindfulness (or MBSR) work of Kabat-Zinn, which is gaining popularity.

The benefits of this realm of work to organisations could be momentous. In reviewing the research over the past thirty years, loosely described as mind-body research, Caldwell (2014) uncovers a wide range of findings that show positive shifts in anxiety and depression, increased self-responsibility, cognitive and affective processing, emotional regulation, gains in working memory, increased empathy, capacity for high quality attention and higher measures of general wellbeing. The relatively slow adoption of the 'mind-body' and related approaches by organisations is surprising.

#### **2.4.2 The influence of recent neuroscience**

The literature on the centrality of the body to transformation (section 2.4.1) concentrates on modalities that have experiential components. That is, elements that the executive coachee can experience and make personal meaning of, as is at the heart of transformative coaching, and thus the overarching phenomenological framework of this study.

However, scientific discoveries in neuroscience have undoubtedly made significant contributions to many fields recently, including transformation and coaching, and continue to do so at a rapid rate. The literature reviewed in this section is selective and intended to show how the recent discoveries in neuroscience compliment and substantiate the notion of the centrality of body to transformation, specifically the elements of the body that can be known through personal experience.

In this regard, Sieler (2012) points out that one risk in the rapid growth and contribution of neuroscience, especially in the Western tradition, is the historic tendency to focus on the brain, instead of the entire nervous system. He quotes Damasio in this regard: 'The mind is embodied, in the full sense of the word, not just embrained.'

Of most importance in the context of this study is the reciprocal relationship between the nervous system and the body, and between conversations (language) and the body. There exists a 'circular causality' between bodily actions and the modification of the brain (Sieler, citing Freeman, 1999). Through sensation, perception and learning (practiced purposefully in transformative coaching) we assimilate our worlds through our experience. Where this is not purposeful, or within our awareness, it may be considered a habit, yet nevertheless remains influential in our development. Hence Flaherty's (2005) notion, that 'in essence, coaches coach the nervous system.'

Furthermore, where executives are concerned, this reciprocal relationship between body and conversation or language also affects others. In turn, beyond one to one relationships, this starts to have a cultural dimension. 'Who and how we are, individually and collectively, is embodied via the learning that occurs in the nervous system' (Sieler, 2012)

In coaching and transformation, it is this reciprocal relationship between our conversations (language), our nervous systems (including the brain) and ourselves and fellow human beings (partners, peers etc. in organisations) that is of essence, as it speaks to the core of what is malleable and changeable in humans. It is also happens that at this nexus, experiential modalities that perturb the nervous system meet the neurosciences.

In neuroscience, what is biologically modifiable is excellently represented by the idea of plasticity, or neuroplasticity. In the descriptively named book, *The Brain that Changes Itself*, Doidge explains the plasticity of the brain, including the relevance thereof to human development (Doidge, 2007).

Neuroplasticity essentially refers to the fact that nerve cells are malleable. Doidge points out that despite science believing for many years that brain anatomy was fixed, many of our pathways, that coordinate thinking and even basic reflexes that scientists used to think were hardwired are not. Speaking directly to its relevance to executive coaching, Doidge says this about neuroplasticity:

... scientists even showed that thinking, learning, and acting can turn our genes on or off, thus shaping our brain anatomy and our behaviour - surely one of the most extraordinary discoveries of the twentieth century.

Sieler points out that while coaches do not directly change the nervous systems of coachees, coaching is effective because the 'coach's manner of participating in the coaching conversation can be a perturbing influence" (Sieler, 2012)

Another example of findings in neuroscience supporting discoveries experienced by somatic practitioners relates to the rapid increase in research on interoception and its relevance to the sense of self (Payne et al, 2015). As with SE above, Damasio (Payne et al, 2015, citing Damasio, 2003) has suggested a link between sense of self and interoceptive awareness, essentially correlating the capacity for interoception and personal transformation. Damasio (Payne et al, 2015, citing Damasio, 1999) has also suggested that interoception is involved in cognition and decision-making.

A final example of where the discoveries of neuroscience have complimented experiential practices, is the finding that the autonomic nervous system (ANS) has 'an inherent capacity to self-regulate that is undermined by trauma' and that 'resetting' the ANS can restore the 'inherent capacity to self-regulate.' This mechanism is vital for the release of energy and natural survival reactions stored during a traumatic event, which is the basis of the healing in SE and Trauma Release Exercises. According to Levine, "Trauma lives in the body, not the event'.

### **2.4.3 The marginalisation of the body**

Learning and transformation through the ways addressed above, by subtle observation of one's body, can be difficult in executive contexts. Due to an increasingly fast paced, unpredictable and complex world, the approach to transformation required for executives, teams and organisations needs to transcend existing paradigms of change. According to Sieler, current paradigms seem to be dominated by the role of the intellect and yet our perceptions, thinking and action (behaviour) go beyond intellect and reside within our biology and physiology/body (Sieler 2012).

There is a long history of denial of the body in Western thought, as far back as Descartes and Plato (Sieler, 2012). Whereas ideally, any scientific, philosophical and pragmatic frameworks that involve transformation should incorporate biology and the body. Historically it seems that learning frameworks within organisations have been accepted and utilised if directed at cognitive levels and more recently, at emotional levels, but not yet at somatic levels. As Flaherty (2005), puts it: 'Just as the work of Goleman (emotional intelligence) and others has made it possible for us to speak about emotions on the job, the writings of Heckler, Caldwell, Keleman and Kabat-Zinn are bringing us closer to the day when we can comfortably speak of the body at work.'

Things are changing, but currently working within organisations in this way (transformatively and with the body) is still challenging, especially at executive level. These executive and organisational tendencies can create significant barriers for the effectiveness and sustainability of organisational and executive transformation (including executive coaching).

This organisational predisposition is confirmed by Flaherty (2005) when he states that the body is the most obvious part of a human being, (and) 'yet in our everyday world, and especially in business, the body is often ignored.' He adds that 'too many business people have shut down their body so that they can work more hours, take on more projects, jet through time zones.'

Flaherty is persuasive in his rationale for 'always including the body in our coaching work' and yet fully aware of the problematic nature of raising the topic of the body in executive contexts. He points out that the topic 'brings fear of comparison, prejudice, discrimination and intimidation.' While he is thus not surprised by the preference of most executive coaches to ignore the topic of the body, he encourages coaches to integrate the body into their personal practice and coaching offering, saying that without it coaching is limited:

Coaching that does not incorporate biology and the body in its conceptual framework and methodology runs the risk of ignoring a critical component of perception and behaviour, inadvertently denying clients the opportunity for profound learning and deep change.

In a recent article Caldwell (2014) provides a concise, yet informed summary of the marginalisation of the body, particularly in the West. Caldwell (2014), citing Berman (1989) says:

The marginalisation of the body has had such a long and cross-cultural history that we barely notice or care that the oppression of our bodily selves is constant, insidious, and potentially devastating.

One way this happens, that has particular relevance to this assignment, is ‘in the devaluing of the body itself as a source of identity and authoritative knowledge about our direct, lived experience of the world.’ (Caldwell, 2014)

Heckler (1993) shares these views and says that ‘working through the body is unearthing a wisdom that is often neglected and denied in our society.’ He warns that the ‘entire structure of our society runs counter to this way of life’ and that ‘our culture has become imbalanced, leaning towards cognitive learning and has lost touch with the wisdom of the body’.

Similarly, Caldwell includes in her analysis the wider, societal consequences of marginalising the body in contemporary life:

With rising complexity, technology’s increasing importance and a consequent decrease in the need for physical labour, comes a further urge to preference thoughts and ideas. Those that use and understand technology are become privileged and disembodied (ignorant or ashamed of one’s physical nature), while those that labour are increasingly marginalised in a ‘politics of the body’. As the privileged hire underprivileged labour to do work they can’t or won’t, the power differential continues and both groups are robbed of the opportunity to live a bodyful life.

Finally, Caldwell refers to an ‘internalised somatophobia’ caused by growing up in cultures that ‘valorise *bodylessness*’. Instead, she recommends *bodyfulness*, which she describes as an extension of embodiment that ‘...couples with a non-judgmental engagement with bodily processes...so that ...an increase in human potential may emerge.’

## 2.5 SUMMARY

The literature reviewed explored and conceptualised the burgeoning field of executive coaching. Evidence of its growth and efficacy in practice over the past three decades, as well as the more recent academic maturation of the field is apparent. Literature relating to the transformative approaches, a sub-discipline of executive coaching, provided evidence that this approach may

require particular attention in executive contexts due to its capacity for meaningful impact on the executive and possibly on organisational development efforts. Finally, a unique and essential aspect of transformative coaching was explored in the literature, namely the body. Evidence points to the centrality of the body's role in individual transformation, and yet some bias or marginalisation thereof in executive contexts. This may be obstructing executive coaching and having a negative impact on organisational development. The literature review was thus informed by the need to explore these three concepts as subsets of each other, as well as the exact relationships between each of them.

The logic behind the research methodology asserts that executives who have experienced transformative coaching hold vital information on the possible obstacles to working with the body in these settings. As Joo (2005) points out, 'because executive coaching research is still in its infancy and most case studies were based on the perspective of coaches, interpretive research using phenomenological approaches that examine the perspectives of executives being coached could add significantly to knowledge about executive coaching.'

The richness of the executive's subjective experience is therefore the focus of this research and the qualitative methods employed are discussed in the chapter that follows.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 INTRODUCTION**

The methodology chapter that follows contextualises the literature review and its relevance to the research aim, objectives and design. This includes briefly revisiting the aims and objectives of the research, orientating the study within a meta-theoretical framework and justifying the research design choices. Questionnaire design, sampling of the research population and data collection and analysis methods are also included, as well as the ethical considerations taken into account throughout the study.

##### **3.1.1 Research rationale and relevance of the literature**

The literature reviewed supports four core suppositions of this study. These are: (1) the growing contribution of executive coaching to organisations and their development (2) the efficacy of transformative approaches in working with executives sustainably and comprehensively (3) the centrality of the body to transformative approaches, and (4) the simultaneous marginalisation of the body generally, but also specific to most coaching.

The central research interest in this study was the discovery and description of executive coachees' individual experiences of their body in the context of transformative coaching approaches within organisations. The direct question asked was 'what are executive coachees' experiences of working with the body, as part of transformative coaching?' This question included looking at how executives experienced coaching that referenced their body in some way, how they made sense of these conversations (personal meaning) and what relevance to coaching the executive/client assigned to this body conversations.

The aim of this set of questions above was to provide insights into the role that awareness of the body plays in the executive coachee's development and to identify the challenges faced in this aspect of transformative coaching. Answers to these questions were sought in order to contribute to future coaching practice that addresses these challenges in some way, including the possibility of making coaching conversations around the body more comfortable and/or more effective for executive coachees.

#### **3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN**

A starting point in conceptualising a possible contribution to coaching was the researcher's understanding of the client-centric nature of coaching, a key differentiating factor in its comparison

to related fields. Initial questions arose around what coaching clients were currently experiencing, how they were making meaning of those experiences as well as the researcher's intention to understand these. In addition and following from this, how did the subjects foresee improvements to that aspect of their coaching, based on their experiences?

Similarly, as the nature of the data to be collected was to be mostly subjective and included both the symbolic meaning made and the personal relevance thereof to learning, the 'insider's perspective' (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) was central to the study. The study thus orientates broadly within a phenomenological meta-theoretical framework, aligning to a number of its key ideas. These include the idea of the 'centrality of human consciousnesses' and the understanding that humans are in a constant process of meaning making and interpretation of their worlds (Babbie and Mouton, 2009).

More specifically, as the study's area of interest focused mostly on subjective experience, how subjects made meaning of that experience and how they interpreted aspects of their own bodies, as a predisposition to action in an executive world, the perspectives of symbolic interactionism (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) were also valid. Furthermore, the symbolic interactionist views that this meaning making is constantly changing and being reinterpreted in social life, and that the researcher is required to understand meanings subjects assign to their experiences (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), were also relevant to this study.

### **3.2.1 The rationale behind the research design**

Phenomenology has traditionally been associated with a qualitative approach, for logical reasons (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). Based on the above orientation within a phenomenological framework, and the intentions of this study to describe (and contribute to understanding) individuals' experiences in terms of their own interpretations, a qualitative research paradigm was a coherent choice, well suited to inquiry into the subjective experiences of executive coaching clients and their context. The departure point for what is defined as qualitative is the 'insider's perspective' (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), an orientation which aligned well with the aims of this study, namely a first person perspective of transformative executive coaching conversations about the body, in order to enhance understanding of more efficient ways of having these conversations. Qualitative research in this respect aligned fully with Babbie and Mouton's (2009) 'broad methodological approach' describing phenomena 'from the perspective of the 'social actors' themselves'.

### **3.2.2 Overall design**

Based on the interests and questions above that formed the rationale and conception of this study, it was important to establish a qualitative research design that was best suited to meet the research objectives while simultaneously allowing for an interpretive approach and an emergent

design. That is, a design that captured the full richness and complexity of the information available - the 'actor's perspective' in 'thick descriptions' - as well as sufficient allowance for exploration of phenomena, while simultaneously being adaptive during the collection of data to allow an increasingly effective collection process. In addition, the research process needed to allow the researcher to be the 'main instrument' within the study, without the negative influences of biases or affecting the reliability and validity of the process.

### 3.2.3 Questionnaire design

The questionnaire that formed the basis for the semi-structured interview used for data collection was designed simply through a process of turning research objectives into questions, as follows:

Research Objectives	Interview Questions
	Briefly describe the coaching conversations that referred to your body?
1. To identify which aspects of the body are addressed in the coaching context	What aspects of the body were referred to in your coaching?
2. To establish the meaning coachees make of this (above) and the relevance thereof to their coaching and learning	What was the relevance of discussing (this aspect of) your body in coaching?
3. To provide insights into the relevance of body awareness in coaching	No specific interview question – this objective will need to be met through the inductive process
4. To identify challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context	What were the challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context?
5. To identify any specific limitations, hindrances or discomfort in having coaching conversations that address the body	What would have made coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective, for you?
6. To identify possible ways of removing limiting factors, discomfort or fears and concerns in coaching to the body in executive contexts, in order to enhance coaching effectiveness	What would have made coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective, for you?
7. To establish how coachees experience coaching conversations about their breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement in the executive coaching context	Contingency question, related to questions 2 & 3 and asked depending on how respondent answers:  What meaning did you make of coaching conversations about your: (a) Breathing (b) Posture (c) Muscle tension (d) Movement



8. To establish what would make coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective for coachees	What would have made coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective, for you (REPEATED)
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**Table 3.1: Questionnaire Design Table**

Source: Author, 2015.

The method of observation in this research required a technique and process that ‘stays close’ (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) to the subject explored. In order to describe and understand the ‘lived experience’ of having coaching conversations about the body, the inquiry needed to find the balance between rigour in questioning while remaining open to following the flow and the subjective nature of the meaning made and reported by subjects.

The planned semi-structured interview therefore guided and allowed for flexible interviews and questioning in a non-directive, yet probing, way. There were seven items in total, including one contingency question. Items were kept short and simple in format and the sequence of questions was relatively important, as the items could build on previous responses, but by no means static.

### 3.3 THE POPULATION AND SAMPLE

#### 3.3.1 Population

Individuals who met all of the following criteria delineated the study population in this assignment:

- Executive Coachees - that is, they had received executive coaching (an executive for these purposes was considered a maker of executive decisions within an organisation) and had been coached within that organisation in that capacity
- Executive coachees that at any point within that coaching relationship had coaching conversations that included an inquiry into any aspects of their body
- The coaching methodology in the instances above were considered a transformative approach - that is, the subject’s coach had used a transformative approach

Organisations were defined broadly and expansively for this study.

### **3.3.2 Sampling**

Sampling the above population was done through the combined use of two non-probability sampling techniques: purposive sampling mostly, and in some cases snowball sampling, was used (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). This was due mainly to a small, specific population of possible subjects. In the context of the third criteria in 3.3.1 above (coaching methodology), often coachees were unaware (or even mistaken) as to which coaching methodology his/her coach had used. In most cases therefore, coaches were vital in assisting with selection.

Three letters of request were emailed in order to draft participants - one each to the two Integral coaching schools in Cape Town, namely The Coaching Centre (TCC) in Bergvliet and the Centre for Coaching (CFC), housed at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business. Of the nine people eventually interviewed, one was sourced from TCC and none from the CFC. The other eight participants were all sourced via the third letter of request, which was emailed to the researcher's personal network of coaches.

See Appendix C and D for the full 'Recruitment Letter' and the 'Consent to participate in Research' form respectively. These documents accurately delineate the recruitment and sampling procedures, including some standard ethical considerations.

## **3.4 DATA COLLECTION**

Field research was conducted by means of recorded, semi-structured, face-to-face, 'basic' interviews (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). These occurred after or during an executive coaching programme of at least six months, in order to allow sufficient time for the subject to have had some psychological and biological development, with respect to the research question.

The names of participants (interviewees) were coded to protect their anonymity.

The neutrality of the interviewer played an important role. Due to the nature of inquiry around the body, and possible self-consciousness on behalf of participants, it was important that the interviewer not be seen as judgmental in any way or be of a contrary opinion, for example.

See section 4.3 for further information on data collection.

## **3.5 DATA PROCESSING AND ANALYSIS**

The data analysis was based on the intentions of the study, namely the exploration and description of lived experiences, and the relevance and meaning of that experience. This intention was best achieved through the analytical approach of grounded theory, which allowed for the discovery of

ir/regularities and patterns (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) and is well suited to the exploration and description in question. A grounded theory approach to data processing and analysis was therefore adopted. This meant that information was reduced from its recorded form to more manageable clusters and categories of information, using a table. This table, consisting of a row for each participant and a column for each question was populated by listening to each recoding in full several times for each participant. Coding of this text then proceeded by noting similar descriptions, ways of viewing questions, or tracks of thought by participants. Alternatively, noting internal similarities within participants, etc. This continued until firmer, final categories had been identified.

See section 4.4 for further information of data processing and analysis.

### **3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

In designing and planning this study, a number of ethical issues arose. The following generic areas were considered and are an unlikely cause for concern or irrelevant:

- The research does not involve any access to organisational information, public information or records that discloses identities
- Related to the above, no institutional permission is required to gain access to participants
- The research does not involve anyone from vulnerable categories such as minors, people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS, prisoners or the disabled
- No staff or alumni of the university (Stellenbosch) are intentionally involved
- The instruments used to gather data (a simple questionnaire designed specifically for this assignment) is not classified as a psychological instrument.

In addition, the following more relevant ethical issues were considered and explored:

- Confidentiality, informed consent, clarification of the research process and the right of withdrawal have all been granted or guaranteed, as is the assurance that personal data will be secure. All of the above have been clearly articulated in documentation to participants.
- Sampling concerns: many of the potential study population may be executives that have worked with coaches known personally to the researcher. How will this affect ethical considerations?
- Related to the above sampling concern, it will be necessary to source executive coaches from other coaches and schools. How will this create further ethical considerations?

- Contractual issues: the nature of the coaching in question means long-term coaching relationships. What is the ethical impact of this?
- Working with the body - the work some coaches do can be considered intimate in nature and is often a function of a relationship that develops over time. How will the nature of this conversation and possible self-consciousness around it, impact the study?

### **3.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The findings of this research assignment are rich in their descriptions of executives' experiences of undergoing transformative coaching in organisations. They elucidate a number of key challenges to coaching to the body in these contexts, which also resonate with literature reviewed. However, a number of cautionary notes are necessary at this point with regard to the limitations of this research:

- The sample size of this research was small. Only nine participants were interviewed. Although this is considered sufficient for a study of this nature, it does have implications for the way the results are generalised for other populations. That is, the transferability of the findings. It is noted however that, as Babbie and Mouton (2009) point out, 'in a qualitative study the obligation for demonstrating transferability rests on those who wish to apply it to the receiving context'.
- Related to the above, the nature of the purposive sample in this study was potentially problematic. Although the sample was not intended to be representative of any population, the range of a purposive sample is often limited (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), as it is likely to be in this case. All scheduled participants were Cape Town based.

See 5.3 for further detail on these limitations and more.

### **3.8 SUMMARY**

This methodology chapter described the research aim, objectives and design in some detail, and contextualised those within the assignment's phenomenological and qualitative paradigms. Specifics such as the way the questionnaire was designed and how sampling was carried out were also discussed. While the theoretical aspects of data collection and analysis methods were included above, as well as the ethical considerations of this study, the following chapter brings the research to life by discussing the fieldwork, including the operational aspects of data collection and analysis, and the possible biases within the study. The following chapter also covers the findings and how they relate to the research objectives and literature reviewed.

## CHAPTER 4

### FINDINGS

#### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The chapter that follows gives context to the field research, describes some aspects of the experience of data collection and describes both the data processing steps and data analysis procedures. The chapter also describes the eventual findings of the research, including the researcher's reflections, as well as summarising the findings in relation to the literature of the past and provides recommendations for the future.

#### 4.2 CONTEXT FOR FIELD RESEARCH

The context for the field research in this study is best understood by briefly revisiting the logic behind this assignment and its phenomenological and qualitative nature. Essentially, by aiming to explore executive coachees' experiences of working with aspects of the body, with the hope of generating insights about how to enhance these practices, it was necessary to 'get close' to executives and their understanding of events. Following the guidelines laid out in Babbie and Mouton (2009) this was achieved firstly, by choosing executives that felt the body had been central to a transformative coaching experience (hence the particular purposive sampling process), and secondly, by ensuring that the data collection and analysis stayed true to a 'contextualist' approach. This included understanding the subjective experiences of executives within their organisations, how each executive conferred meaning to their transformation, within their executive contexts and then describing the experience by using the conversational language of executives. The findings that follow endeavour to integrate all of the above in order to understand the role(s) that awareness of the body plays in executive coaching, identify challenges faced in this context and determine how these challenges may be addressed.

##### 4.2.1 Measurement quality

Following from the context above and in the endeavour to ensure valid and reliable field research, a number of concepts addressed in this section explain how measurement quality has been ensured.

Firstly, in terms of the two classic yardsticks of measurement (Babbie and Mouton, 2009), reliability and validity, this study relies a great deal on the researcher as 'instrument', the face validity of the questionnaire and the two aspects in concert.

Reliability is the 'repeatability' of an instrument (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). That is, whether it would measure the same phenomena identically a second time. A single observer (the coach

practitioner as researcher) was used to gather data in this study. This can pose some risk to reliability. However, due to the coach specific training and the interest and experience in the areas of transformation and the body, it is believed that this reliability risk will be minimised by the coach as interviewer. Furthermore, it is the researcher's belief that this background will generate the much needed 'truthful and credible inter-subjectivity' (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) that the 'researcher as instrument' will aim to achieve. This crucial yet paradoxical role that the coach as interviewer plays as the main 'instrument' in the data collection and analysis process is a 'peculiarity of objectivity' that is a very important aspect of qualitative research (Babbie and Mouton, 2009).

In terms of validity, the extent to which a measure adequately reflects what it intends to measure (Babbie and Mouton, 2009) this research relies on the questionnaire's face validity. All except one of the research objectives have been transformed directly into interview questions. Only one research objective is indirect and will require inductive analysis. See the Questionnaire Design table, Table 3.1, in 3.2.3 above.

#### **4.2.2 Profile of participants**

In short, nine executives were interviewed for this research, all in the same region, the Cape Town metropole. Five participants were female and four male. Demographics such as age and race were not measured or recorded in the study, as it was the belief of the researcher that they were mute factors in terms of the research objectives and that including this information was more likely to lead to research bias than contribute meaningfully to the data and findings. Similarly, educational levels were not taken into account. The executives interviewed worked in a range of organisations including financial services, petroleum, information technology, communications, publishing, procurement, wellness (an NGO), a higher education institution and a consulting firm. All nine participants were selected on the basis of their meeting of the criteria, namely, being coached in their executive capacity within their organisations, for longer than six months, by a coach using a transformative approach. Response rates were not applicable to this study in the traditional sense.

As described in 3.3.2, three letters of request were emailed to draft participants - one each to the two Integral coaching schools in Cape Town, namely The Coaching Centre (TCC) in Bergvliet and the Centre for Coaching (CFC), housed at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business, and one to the researcher's personal network of associate coaches. Of the nine people that ultimately made up the purposive sample, and were interviewed, one was sourced via the TCC, none from the CFC and the other eight from the associate pool.

### 4.2.3 Possible biases

- As with much phenomenological and/or qualitative study, one of the main biases of this research could arguably also be a key part of the research process. That is, the researcher as the 'main instrument' of the research, who in this case is a practitioner of coaching, with interest and experience in transformative approaches and the body, simultaneously acting as the interviewer-researcher.
- Related to the above is the fact that the practitioner coach acting as interviewer researcher is also active within the Integral and Ontological coaching circles in Cape Town. This may have had an impact on recruitment and interviewing, as I am likely to know the coach of each participant.

## 4.3 DATA COLLECTION

Data collection occurred in July and August 2015 in various venues throughout Cape Town. Adequate attempts were made to conduct these interviews in the organisational settings of the respective executives, but this was not always the interviewee's preference. Audio recordings were made of nine semi-structured, face-to-face interviews, each between 45 and 90 minutes long. The interviewer-researcher completed handwritten field notes during interviews to record important aspects of each answer and key insights. These were recorded according to which interview question they referred and a simple (1) to (7) categorisation of observations materialised. These notes also contributed to the adaptation of the semi-structured interviews as the data collection process emerged. The names of executives were coded at this point to protect their anonymity while allowing clear identification of their responses. Also noted was their gender, venue (off/on site) and the industry sector of the executive's company. These field notes of two or three pages per interviewee were collated throughout the data collection process until all data was collected. Finally, in order to summarise the pages of notes for ease of reference, the data was compiled succinctly into a one-page 'dashboard' type table. This Interview Table Précis (below) included the first précis of points made by interviewees and the first reflections by the interview-researcher and provided the first reference point for analysis.

	Name Code	Gender	Sector	Interview Venue	Field Notes – Précis
1	H	M	Financial Services	On-site	1. Subtle work with body is effective. 2. Separation of body/mind (& emotions) questioned by client. 3. Cultural/religious views about body practices may be prohibitive
2	K	F	Petroleum	On-site	1. Praised powerful, subtle effects of body work. 2. Evidence of specific improvements: awareness, anxiety, balanced, reactivity. 3. Specifically with posture, movement & tension.
3	M	F	IT/Knowledge	Off-site	1. "I've a different relationship with my emotions. I now choose my behaviours". 2. Speaks of working with 'state' & its impact. 3. 'We're not taught the physical aspects of emotions'
4	S	M	Communications	Off-site	1. "Leaving body out, limits coaching". 2. "The body is central to what employees offer organisations & is untapped". 3. "Organisations are biased towards verbal & verbal slugging preferred".
5	D	F	Publishing	On-site	1. The body work 'didn't stick'. 2. Organisational insights. 3. There are personal & organisational limitations.
6	P	M	Procurement	On-site	1. "My body is my spokesperson & if you don't get that you're missing the point". 2. "With my coaches there was a mutual understanding that the body simply must be addressed". 3. "The body is not a subset of your being"; "Being interviewed consolidated things".
7	R	F	Wellness NGO	Home	1. "I've learned that breathing gets me through what was emotionally challenging". 2. "The connection between physical/emotional, the experience to the senses, was significant". 3. Movement during coaching & being off-site were significant.
8	A	F	Academic	On-site	1. 'Field' as another element of body, mentioned. 2. Movement was an empowering discovery. 3. Gender raised as a possible barrier?
9	E	M	Consulting	Off-site	1. Coachee's level of engagement with coaching was significant (but sceptic initially). 2. Relationship with coach significant? 3. Social & Environmental pressures are barriers?

**Table 4.1: Interview Table Précis**

Source: Author, 2015.



#### 4.4 DATA PROCESSING STEPS AND ANALYSIS

While the data collection, processing and analysis stages of this study were separated for reporting purposes, the unfolding thereof in practice was much less linear and far more entwined. For example, some initial data processing and analysis occurred early on during the data collection stages, from the first question in the first interview. The very first question to the first interviewee (H), when asked to describe the coaching conversations that referred to the body, answered ‘what do you mean by the body?’

As both a practitioner-coach and as interviewer-researcher, an unexpected realisation at this point demonstrated my role as the ‘main instrument’ in the research. I realised that firstly, I had not considered defining the body for participants, and secondly, that participants would be making meaning of ‘the body’ phenomenologically throughout the research. I became aware that I would need to ask questions about H’s understanding of the body (‘the text’) in this first interview and that there would probably be comparative moments (and text) in interviews that followed. In H’s case, his coaching topic as well as his experience of coaching and the body involved significant relationships and revealed a relational worldview. This question and response thus provided the first insights and preliminary coding in that it became apparent that H’s orientation to coaching and the body was clearly ‘relational’. This was in line with the Integral theory referenced in Integral Coaching and discussed in 2.3.2.1. It also demonstrated the point made by Strauss and Corbin (1990), as cited by Babbie and Mouton (2009) that ‘data collection, analysis and theory stand in a reciprocal relationship with each other.’ See the first reported finding under 4.5.1 for further explication of this point.

Building on the above and from the data collection process in the field, the more formal organising, processing and analysis of data evolved from the Interview Table Précis (above) and the accompanying handwritten field notes. The next part of the processing stage involved listening to each recording attentively while further populating and expanding the précis table with more substantial summaries of the interview data, interview-by-interview and question by question. During this process, further conceptual categories and coding began to emerge, based on the participant’s answers as well as the interviewer-researcher’s observations and insights.

The result of this data processing stage was a more comprehensive view of the interview data in a nine (participants) by seven (questions) matrix, the Interview Table Extended (Appendix E). This table offered some perspective on which questions and participants provided richer and more relevant data in terms of this study’s research objectives. More specifically, consideration of this extended table (Appendix E) seemed to indicate that questions 4, 5 and 6 had a high face validity, in that they had measured accurately what they had intended to measure (Patton, 1997).

In addition, it appeared that these three questions, and notably the responses of five interviewees to these questions, had provided richer, more complex insights on the relevant research objectives, and more pointedly, the overall aim of the research (see 1.3.1). Responses to the remainder of the

questions as well as responses by some interviewees provided less meaningful data in terms of the research questions and objectives.

## **4.5 MAIN FINDINGS**

The order of the findings reported in this section is based on the validity apparent in the Interview Table Extended (Appendix E), as discussed in the previous section 4.4. That is, the most evident and relevant findings to the research aim of understanding (and ultimately enhancing) coaching conversations around the body, appear first. This is then followed by findings that are less distinguishable and meaningful. How findings correlate to the relevant research objectives is discussed throughout this section and, where possible, reference is made to the literature reviewed in Chapter 2. A Findings Summary Table is provided to summarise findings and the interviewer-researcher's reflections concludes this section.

### **4.5.1 At least two direct ways to ensure that coaching conversations around the body are more comfortable and effective in executive contexts**

The findings in this section address research objectives five, six and eight, and to some extent research objective four. See Table 4.4: Findings Summary Table.

- **A venue that is favourable to respite and body work**

Six of the nine participants felt that an off site venue (away from the organisation and office) was more conducive to having executive coaching conversations that involved the body. Requirements mentioned included venues that allow for movement during sessions (M), privacy from colleagues (D), an open, flexible and free environment (M/H), 'pleasant space' (K) or 'quiet setting' (E) where time is not a factor and coachees don't feel rushed (M). An outdoor venue was suggested by some participants (E/R) to enable walking sessions and one other suggested the beach as an example of an environment where the senses can be engaged appropriately for 'body work' (E).

Also interesting in terms of this finding is the three executives who did not express concerns about venue or setting. The three executives who did not raise these concerns were all chief executive officers, two of whom had quiet, spacious corner offices.

- **Adjunct body work and practices, including edification**

Most participants spoke about wanting to do more around the body and body work. This included the wish for more body related conversations (K), developing or setting up body work both sooner and in a more concentrated way (S) in our organisations, educational institutions, private lives and between coach and coachee. This includes "developing specific activities for the body" (K) in parallel to coaching, such as yoga, trauma release exercises (K), dance or rolfing (S) as well as being assigned more body practices (K) and more varied practices (S) by the coach. The hope amongst participants seemed to be for some guidance, and even education, from the coach

(supported by the organisation), expecting the coach to be a generalist in terms of body practices and modalities.

In addition, all participants had experienced a realisation around the importance of physical wellbeing and six of the nine participants had correlated that and the more subtle aspects of their bodies to their learning. These realisations had led some to aspire to (and request support for ) a continuation of body work beyond coaching in order to embody what was learned during coaching.

Finally, group sessions, or sessions that were not one-on-one, were also suggested (K/P) where a more shared language around the body can be introduced. This would include some content that informs and prepares coachees for having meaningful conversations about the body.

The two findings above draw attention to many of the general threads of this assignment. While the prevalence of executive coaching is on the rise in organisations (Grant, 2008; Kampa-Kokesch & Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis & Passmore, 2011; Barlett, Boylan & Hayle, 2014) and its efficacy is evident (Grant, 2008; Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson, 2001; Joo, 2005; Fillery-Travis and Passmore, 2011), approaches on the transformative end of the spectrum, that work on 'deeper', more sustainable levels (Hawkins and Smith, 2007; Sieler, 2012, Weiss, 2004) are not entirely accommodated in most work places. It is evident that the established discourse, which influences training and development (including executive coaching) as well as the working environment created, needs some backing in organisations.

#### **4.5.2 Personal limitations, hinderances or discomforts identified by coachee**

The findings in this section address research objectives five and six. See Table 4.4: Findings Summary Table.

All nine participants spoke of a form of 'general discomfort' (H) with attending to the body during executive coaching, especially at the beginning of their coaching. This 'general difficulty' (K) includes the 'initial scepticism' (M) and 'apprehension with the newness of it' (H) or 'novelty' (K) of paying attention to oneself in an unfamiliar way. Some participants commented 'It's not natural' (M) and 'I struggled conceptually at times' (K), while others spoke of their own 'sense of urgency' (A) or self consciousness (S) impacting their ability to be present to conversations about the body. Further acknowledgement in this vein include these comments: 'I can be quite inattentive' (D); 'There were discomforts, but they were more about me than the organisation' (P); 'My own pain body. And boredom (with the lack of mental stimulation in attending to body)' (E); 'I needed to keep it together. I'm still uncoiling. I only realised this after stopping (months after the 6 month coaching programme). This was a major impediment' (R); 'The breathing practices challenged me spiritually' (H) ; 'Physical and emotional buttons get pushed' (D).

The findings above confirm the personal nature of executive coaching and support a body of evidence that speaks to the importance of doing this work subjectively, purposefully and attentive

to the many aspects of the self (sense of self, personal issues, sensations etc.), Discussed under 2.4.1, the centrality of the body to transformation. The modalities of Focussing (Gendlin, 1978), SE (Payne et al, 2015) and Ontological coaching (Sieler, 2012) allude to this. In addition, coaching conversations around the body initially require a slight tweaking of attention as well as language from the coachee (Sieler, 2012).

#### **4.5.3 A number of interdependent challenges faced by executive coachees in the context of coaching to the body in organisations.**

This section addresses research objectives four, five, six and eight in concert with one another due to the interdependent nature of the evidence gathered on these objectives.

In practice it is difficult to separate what would make coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective (RO 5, 6 and 8 in 4.5.1, above) from the evidence of current challenges or limitations that exist for executives (RO 4, 5 and 6 in this section, 4.5.3) because removing the barriers mentioned below, will also automatically contribute to the efficacy of the work. It is therefore important to see this section in relation to 4.5.2 as a possible addition to ways to remove limitations and make coaching conversations around the body more comfortable and effective in executive contexts. A prime example of this, and a point which could arguably have been included in the previous section, is that of the personal, internal challenges of executives as individuals.

- **Relational (coach-coachee)**

Six participants mentioned their relationships with their coaches as a significant influence on the ability to have effective coaching conversations about the body. Again, much of the commentary about the relational may overlap with the personal challenges above. One similarity is that most of the commentary was a form of initial scepticism about the coach. The reason these comments have been categorised separately is the distinctive inter-subjective (or relational) nature of these challenges.

Four participants (M/K/R/H) initially had general relationships concerns about the coach, making comments like 'I was initially (at the beginning of the relationship) more sceptical' (M), while three (A/R/H) also had concerns specifically about the gender differences between them and their coaches. 'At face value the coach looked like they were from another world (in terms of race, gender and socio-economic level)' (R)

These initial concerns later seem to be unfounded as all nine participants ultimately reported fair to good relationships with their coaches. For seven of the nine participants the cohesion in the coaching relationship was an inextricable part of the success of the body aspects of the coaching.

Supporting this link between a good coaching relationship and coaching success, the two other executives that reported limited success with their coaches, also reported limited success with the bodily aspects of their coaching. These participants made these comments: 'The coaching that referenced the body didn't stick' (D) and 'My coach was too 'green' and I 'red' (a reference to their Insights profiles). And we got on too well. He was warm and funny. Perhaps we had too much fun. We laughed a lot. We often had to remind ourselves to do the work. And so my coaching only helped a bit. And not with the body stuff.' (E)

These findings relating to the relationships between coach and coachee support the conclusions of Poston, Manning & Barrow (2001) and Joo (2005), that 'the success of the (coaching) intervention is directly dependent on the quality of the relationships'. Joo's (2005) commentary about the importance of the characteristics of coach and coachee are also relevant as these characteristics have direct bearing on the coachee-coachee relationship.

- **Organisational culture and leadership**

Eight of the nine participants described some negative influence their organisations had on executive coaching in the context of coaching to the body, or ways in which organisational behaviour and culture do not support this work. There was a general feeling that corporate structure and/or culture, including leadership, was not entirely conducive to this work. Most (six) of these participants felt that organisations could do more to support coaching that addresses the body.

There was an overall feeling that corporate life was too fast paced, too results-orientated or too bottom-line driven to integrate the fully human aspects of employees, which includes the body at work. There was a feeling amongst five participants that organisations can be indifferent to basic psychological and biological needs. Comments on this point included:

'Generally we're too rushed to attend to how things feel (incl. the sensory)' (M); or 'The language of coaching to the body is still foreign to corporate culture. So referencing the body is either misunderstood or not accepted at work. An externalised body chat is OK, like a conversation about ergonomics, but not linked to behaviour or emotions. There is no space for vulnerability. The expectations from the organisation are that the body is denied (in reference to being overworked)' (K); or "Corporate's don't understand. They don't get 'the whole person' idea. The realisation that the body is not just a vehicle that carries your head to work. The body, the head and everything that makes it operate is what you bring to work. What an employee is selling not only about selling their time, but a way of being. So productivity or lack thereof can stem from a variety of different sources. Understanding the body and how it influences every aspect of you being is a largely untapped space."

Participants also commented that at times the mind-set seemed more than just ignorant or indifferent, but occasionally overtly challenging. Some experiences were discouraging of any body-

related coaching and unfavourable towards a culture of acceptance and learning. These comments referred to executive team coaching sessions:

“Because these are people you work with, the physical is frowned upon. Those people (in group sessions) who couldn't relate to the work, mocked or dismissed the others. It's considered 'kumbaya' to do this work” (M); or “Many of these things are seen as outside the realm of what the employee does at work. And are seen as alternative, edgy, cranky therapies. They should be seen as extremely useful pathways that benefit the entire way of being and the organisation.” (S)

Other comments referred to a broader organisational culture in general: “The context is set up for you. And its a construct of the organisation and the individuals within the organisation. It's the culture of the organisation. It can be disparaging.” (W)

In conjunction with the above evidence of organisational indifference or partiality, participants also referred to ways that were considered preferable in their organisations. This evocative statement by one participant summarises the preconceptions apparent in his organisation:

“The environment is very structured, verbal and cerebral and favours this type of expression. It doesn't lend itself to physical expressions. I had reservations about using my body in communicating, as it would be seen as uncontrolled or uncoordinated. Verbal skill is dominant in this environment. And persuasion of this type is preferred. Reason and language, versus the physical cues of influence or dominance. Conflict too - its also seen as needing to be expressed verbally and in a reasoned way. In open plan any physical expression gets interpreted in the organisation as conflict. So disagreement is ok, verbally. Any physical expression of it is not. A cutting or pointed remark is more acceptable. Physical expression is not. Organisational culture is reasoned, layered, nuanced. The orientation towards body in our team was like that too. Very few actively, consciously and comfortably engaged their bodies. And also, within our organisation the culture was quite homogenous. Diversity in organisations is espoused, but the reality is we reinforce the existing hegemony by employing people who have some essence of that sameness. And the sameness defines us.” (S)

Interestingly, three of the participants (A/P/D) who all held the most senior positions in their organisations (two CEO's and a deputy) saw some of the above slightly differently. While they agreed there were ways to make executive coaching conversations around the body more effective, differed from the others in what needed to change. They seemed to speak on behalf of the organisation as an entity but minimised the notion that challenges could be attributed to organisational culture and structure. Their view was either that there were no organisational challenges (A) or that the coach (or coaching process) needed to do more. This includes understanding organisations better so as to appropriately contextualise executive coaching to the body within the organisation's requirements and realities, thereby making this approach more acceptable to executives and thus more successful. These participants (P/D) felt that the coach had to 'bring the body work back to organisational realities' and 'make it practical and effective',

assist in 'enrolling the team and getting the others to buy in' as well as 'understand that entrenching this work in an organisation is a long process; a journey'.

A noteworthy contrast in perspectives and experiences is evident here between the most senior executives (three participants at CEO level in this study) and other executives. There are two different phenomenological experiences of how conducive the organisation is to executive coaching involving the body, and what the barriers, if any at all. The three chief executives seem less mindful of the role of organisational behaviour and culture and thus unlikely to see it as a potential barrier to executive coaching. Their main focus is on the relational dynamics between the coaches and coachees and between the coach and the organisation. In contrast, the other six executives seem to think that organisational culture (and leadership) do play a role and that better organisational facilitation of this kind of developmental work is required. In mentioning the impact of personal challenges (above) all executives were in agreement on its role and no contrast existed.

This also speaks to a final point related to organisational culture, namely leadership. Assessing the views above, and the subtle discrepancies amongst them, it is understandable that the influence of the nature, behaviour and structure of leadership on how the challenges in question are viewed, is essential. In this context, one participant stated the following:

"It needs to happen at very senior levels. This has the biggest impact. Varying levels of leadership are always present (during executive team coaching). So rank and power are at play too. This encourages one to adjust one's engagement. And 'water it down'. Embracing new modalities is set there. People's willingness and openness to embrace alternative modalities, ways of being can be influenced at this level. The tone of every organisation is ultimately set at the highest level" (S)

The findings about organisational culture and leadership seem to align well with literature on the role of executive coaching in organisational development in 2.2.4. The amount of evidence collected, indicative of the enthusiasm with which participants volunteered this information, also appears to reflect the quantity of literature on the subject. Evidently, executive coaching does have influence on other aspects of organisations such as leadership, transformation, organisational development, performance and culture as Kilburg (1996), Giglio, Diamante & Urban (1998) and Rooke (1999) pointed out. The converse, the reciprocal influence of leadership and organisational culture, is perhaps even more evident judging by participant responses. As discussed in 2.2.4, this confirms the interdependent nature of these forces, the importance of the quality of the relationships (Poston, Manning & Barrow, 2001) and the necessity for organisational support (Joo, 2005).

Furthermore, the findings support comments made in 2.4.3 about the marginalisation of the body, including Flaherty's (2005) comments about the body being ignored at work. One participant (K) echoed his words almost verbatim when she tells how her fast-paced organisation expects staff to deny their bodies in order to (over) work, resonating with Flaherty about business people having to shut down their bodies to work more hours.

In addition, Sieler's (2012) view that current paradigms seem dominated by the role of the intellect and that a form of cognitive bias exists within organisations is confirmed by participants, especially (S). The findings confirm the necessity for learning frameworks within organisations to go beyond the cognitive and intellectual and reside within our biology and physiology/body (Sieler 2012).

- **Societal norms and practices (broader culture)**

Three participants (R/M/S) who commented on the influence of organisational culture on coaching in this context also alluded to the idea that this was not only an organisational issue, but reflected a broader, societal world view. In other words, they implied that organisational culture is often a microcosm of the surrounding social order and that perhaps our challenges begin there. The implications for this study is that the way our society views and refers to the body (in education or the media for example) also has bearing on the way our organisations view the body at work. Any such societal influence on organisations may be impacting executive coaching and the challenges faced in the context of coaching to the body.

As an example, one participant (M) noted simply that 'we're not taught from a young age to recognise physical feelings. If one's physical and emotional feelings were tied in from a young age, this would be helpful'. Another executive (S) commented how he as a young gay man always felt conscious about the way people read his body signals, fearing that it would 'give his game away'. He felt he had to 'reign it in' and that these personal and social experiences contributed to a denial or underutilisation of his body as an integrated part of his being. 'It became the moat within which I operated', he said. 'Because of my experiences, my conditioning that 'body equals bad', especially when it's uncontrolled, it became easier to compartmentalise and shut out aspects of my being as opposed to operate in concert'. This meant that a long part of the initial coaching process was spent reversing this and 'reconnecting'. He goes on to say coaching would have been enhanced by 'acknowledging (sooner) that conversations about the body are integral to and an inalienable part of the process. Had I come into the coaching process with healthier body awareness, acknowledging the role of the body in my communication and my way of being, connected and not suppressed, it would have helped me be more fluid, fuller, richer and more engaged; having more productive conversations.

The findings in this section resonate with much of the literature in 2.4.3 about the marginalisation of the body, especially in terms of broader society. Much of Caldwell's commentary rings true, especially her comments on the devaluing of the body as a source of identity and authoritative knowledge about our direct, lived experience of the world' (Caldwell, 2014). Participant (S) experienced this at work, with his executive team, as well as elsewhere in broader society and shared a similar view to Caldwell's notion that the 'the oppression of our bodily selves is constant, insidious, and potentially devastating' (Caldwell, 2014).

In combination, the two sections above, on organisational and societal attitudes towards the body and learning, bears out Heckler's (1993) cautionary comments that the 'entire structure of our



society runs counter to this way of life' and that 'our culture has become imbalanced, leaning towards cognitive learning and has lost touch with the wisdom of the body', as well as Caldwell's (2014) ideas of an increasingly marginalising 'politics of the body'. It is noteworthy that these powers and power dynamics are evidently in play in some organisations.

#### **4.5.4 No correlation between the aspects of the body addressed in the executive's coaching and their coaching topics, or the personal meaning they made.**

This section directly addresses three research objectives (RO). Firstly, research objectives one and two, which aim to identify the aspects of the body that are addressed in the coaching context, the meaning coachees make of this and how this is relevant to their coaching and learning. Secondly, research objective seven - to establish how coachees experience coaching conversations about their breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement in the executive coaching context.

Apart from two (A/D), most participants easily listed the aspects of their bodies that were addressed in coaching (RO 1), listed their coaching topics and discussed how these topics were addressed by attending to the specific aspects of the body they mentioned (see Table 4.2 below for lists of the aspects of the body and the coaching topics). Every coaching case was unique, in that the connection between body aspects, topics and the exploration thereof throughout coaching was subjective. There was therefore no distinguishable pattern or universal experience amongst the nine participants in terms of the way coaching topics, their experiences of their bodies in coaching and which aspects of their bodies were attended to. While each executive coachee made personal sense of their own bodily experiences in relation to their learning there is no apparent correlation between specific aspects of the body, coaching topics and experience. Whereas some aspects of the body, such as breathing or posture, featured within most executive coachees' conversations about the body, the topics addressed through these aspects were subjective and disparate. While breathing, for example, may have been a common aspect of the body in coaching conversations, and vital to addressing a universal or underlying component of a complex coaching topic, the descriptions thereof by coachees is distinct in each case. Table 4.2 below shows a full list of aspects of the body referred to in coaching conversations as mentioned by participants (RO 2), as well as a full list of their coaching topics, which contributes to research objective three (RO 3).

Aspects of body (RO 2)	Coaching topics (part of RO 3)
Breathing Posture (incl. neck/shoulders) Muscle Tension (incl. neck/shoulder tension) Movement ‘Body Language’ Touch Sensations (incl. heartbeat or temperature) Positionality (one’s position relative to others) Field (awareness of surrounding space) Stress Mood & Emotions (as expressed in the body)	Self Awareness Self Regulation and State (incl. EQ & ‘completing the loop between what I think, feel & sense’) Presence (incl. being present/centred/grounded) Communication & Expression Relationship Building Anxiety (incl. slowing down) Anger Management Managing Conflict Decision Making Managing Energy (and integration) Mindfulness (incl. quality of attention) Confidence (self consciousness)

**Table 4.2 Lists - Aspects of the Body & Coaching Topics**

Source: Author, 2015.

The findings above again bear out the personal nature of executive coaching. While it is evident that those participants who worked transformatively, especially those who were attentive to aspects of the self, benefited from the coaching, the way this occurred for each coachee was highly subjective. Most participants could relate to Sieler’s (2012) four categories of breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement and some coaching topics were common. However, the subjective nature of links between body aspects, topics and the meaning made for each coachee was different. This speaks to the ideas of a subtle, personal ‘felt shift’ (Gendlin, 1978), or the focus on internal awareness and relationship between body and language of SE (Payne et al, 2015) or Ontological coaching (Sieler, 2012).

#### **4.5.5 Individuals have varied ideas of what ‘the body’ means**

The findings in this section address research objective three and seven. See Table 4.4: Findings Summary Table.

As discussed in 4.4 above, some realisations occurred during data collection of the study, when the first interviewee (H) was asked to describe the coaching conversations that referred to his body. His answer questioned the definition of 'the body' and showed that there were a number of possible ways of viewing the body. This data was an unexpected start to evidence that executive coachees hold varied perspectives on what comprises the body. Throughout the interviews, participants took distinctly varying perspectives on what 'the body' meant to them. One way to distinguish between the different ways participants referenced their bodies is the distinction between an internal and external perspective in 2.3.2.1. While some spoke of the body mostly in terms of exercise, wellbeing or an observable and measurable perspective, others were focused on more subjective aspects of their bodies, such as sensory awareness or anxiety. To further illustrate the point, a good example is where breathing was mentioned. Some participants attended to the subjective experience of breathing and its personal relevance, while others focused on the measurable, observable and behavioural aspects of breathing. This internal/external distinction can be further categorised according to the four Integral quadrants discussed in 2.3.2.1. Recorded in Table 4.3 below is an indication of the executive's perspectives on the body, as per an analysis of their descriptors in the nine interviews. This assessment includes some reliance on personal experience as an Integral coach-practitioner over the past six years. Participants usually held or orientated towards, one or two perspectives (quadrants).

<b>Relational</b>	<b>Internal</b>
Building relationships (H/P) Leadership (P)	Quality of attention (H); Differentiation or connection between sensations & feelings (K/R); Sensory awareness (K); Breathing (S/R); Emotions (M/R); Authenticity (S); Identity (E); Restlessness/Calmness/Mindfulness (E/A); Intentions/Congruence (P); Awareness (K); Anxiety (K); Balance (K); Breathing (S/M/R/H)
<b>Organisational</b>	<b>Behavioural</b>
Positionality (H/P/A)	Breathing (D/S/R/A/E); Movement (M/K/S); Posture (P/M/K/D/S/H/R); Tension (M/K/S); Exercise (S); Health & wellbeing (D); Moods (as expressed in body) (D)

**Table 4.3: Integral perspectives on the body**

Source: Author, 2015.

Notes (1): This classification is made cognisant of the Integral notion that all phenomena arise simultaneously in all quadrants; (2) As this study focused on individual experiences, the bias to individual (right side) of the model is deemed appropriate.

While the findings in this section once again substantiate the personal nature of executive coaching, and the points about findings made above in section 4.5.3 and 4.5.4 are valid here too, a further link is noted. Amongst participants there were tendencies to relate to aspects of themselves with a bias to either an internal or external view of their bodies. As mentioned, breathing was discussed by some participants with an internal orientation, focusing on sensations, while others (external orientation) noted the postural aspects of their breathing and how they presented accordingly. This evidence is in line with Integral Coaching's differentiation of the body (Flaherty, 2005; Divine, 2007; Hunt, 2007 and Wilber, 2000).

Tabling this finding here according to the Integral Coaching quadrants (Flaherty, 2005; Divine, 2007; Hunt, 2007 and Wilber, 2000) in Table 4.3 also gave rise to the next finding in 4.5.6 as the correlations between inner body awareness and reported success in transformative coaching emerged inductively from examining this information in table form.

#### **4.5.6 Possible correlation between inner body awareness and reported success in transformative coaching.**

The findings in this section address research objective three and seven. See Table 4.4: Findings Summary Table.

One noteworthy discovery in having coded the executive's perspectives according to the Integral quadrants (4.5.4) is the relationship between the reported efficacy of coaching to the body - those participants that spoke highly of coaching conversations that addressed their bodies, finding it effective and empowering - and the following two phenomena:

- Holding an internal/individual perspective (or the ability to speak 'from' that perspective)
- The capacity to 'speak from', or differentiate all four perspectives or quadrants. That is, if participants had a wider a range of perspectives (more than one or two)

It is possible to argue from the finding above, that in order to experience the benefits of executive coaching that references the body and to do 'body work' effectively, a coachee has to have developed the ability to 'inhabit' his/her own body subjectively. In other words, for executive coaching to have a greater impact and to be experienced as transformative, the coachee needs to develop the capacity to hold a body-based, first person perspective.

This finding confirms what many of the authors reviewed in 2.3 and 2.4 are pointing out and arguably substantiates all the findings above and the thread of this assignment.

Firstly, the finding makes meaning of personal transformation in line with Integral Coaching (Flaherty, 2005; Divine, 2007; Hunt, 2007 and Wilber, 2000) and highlights how valuable it is for transformation to both differentiate and integrate aspects of bodyhood. The one supports the other.

Secondly, this finding lends credibility to the work of both Integral Coaching (Flaherty, 2005; Divine, 2007; Hunt, 2007 and Wilber, 2000) and Ontological Coaching (Sieler, 2012) as it highlights the importance of inner body awareness for transformation, especially in contrast to the external domains which usually receive more attention in our culture (Caldwell, 2014, Heckler, 1993, Flaherty, 2005).

Thirdly, it clearly validates the 'felt shift' or internal awareness (interoception) notion and the work of Gendlin (1978), SE (Payne et al, 2015) and to some extent Sieler's (2012) work. This can be best described, simply in terms of Gendlin's discovery that transformation occurs when an individual purposefully connects the language used to explore coaching topic 'to physical sensations in relation to the issue'. That is, a sensory shift in relation to the issue, enabled changes greater than 'mere insight' (Gendlin, 1978). Sieler's (2012) emphasises on the importance of engaging in somatic practices (especially somatic awareness) as a means of developing different and constructive meaning, is also supported by this finding. A 'new language' (Sieler, 2012) of the body does evidently hold transformative potential.

Finally, this finding broadly supports the influence of recent neuroscience in 2.4.2. It specifically corroborates the findings of Damasio and other neuroscientists (Payne et al, 2015) with respect to the link between interoception and a sense of self and possibly therefore between interoceptive awareness and personal transformation. Flaherty's (2005) assertion that 'coaches coach the nervous system' then also finds scientific support.

#### **4.6 RESEARCHER'S REFLECTIONS**

Countless personal reflections have occurred throughout the full period of the research assignment and in the interests of brevity only a small selection have been included. These represent a cross section of insights, from those recorded in speculative and reflective field notes to those that swirl around in the recesses of the researcher's psyche:

- I noticed that during data collection and then listening to the recordings, some sounded more beneficial than others did. I preferred some interviews to others in terms of data. Initially I was concerned that this was possible bias and would affect the validity of my research. However, as the analysis emerged, the richness of certain information and my original instincts began to correlate. Some participants simply did open up more and provide richer accounts of their experience. I realised that this was likely a good demonstration of the fine line between bias and being an 'instrument' in the research. I now believe that my experience as a practitioner coach was invaluable in helping me to build trust and establish rapport with participants and this enriched my research.
- Over the time that the research took place I noticed that, for me, some aspects were in the foreground and others not. For example, the field of executive coaching is now quite established and 'mainstream' and this domain was less appealing to me. In my research

the intriguing dimension was that of the body, more and more so. It seemed more 'cutting-edge' and had more potential for 'answers'. This excited me but also cast some doubts for me in terms of the research process. As the subject matter is quite new, I wondered if this study should have been exploratory instead of descriptive.

- As the body and its 'status' at work seems like a relatively unknown area, my choice of Grounded Theory as a method of analysis seems to have even more potential than ever. But was it ultimately the right choice? Did I follow the steps in a 'text-book' way and has enough of a categorisation emerged? What future categories and theories will guide the way we ask questions about the body at work?
- I'm very excited about the findings. It seems like we have a quick fix or two that can make a real impact. And then also a momentous challenge for our society - the othering of each other, especially related to the body. The most exciting finding is the correlation between inner body awareness and coaching success. The importance of interoception in transformation holds great potential in organisations. And neuroscience to back it up.
- (Personal reflections - an excerpt from my summary notes): My original curiosity as transformative coach (and researcher), which became this qualitative inquiry under a phenomenological umbrella, has been satisfied. The foremost musings of this investigation essentially centred on how executive coaching could be better. While organisations wield such influence in a global reality and most people are inextricably linked to their work, both economically and in terms of identity, surely there are more transformative gems in those corporate corridors, waiting to be discovered? Furthermore, in the coaching context, who better than the executives to hold the keys to that treasure of transformative potential? Initially, the answer seemed to lie in getting closer to the executive coachees at the cold face of the organisational grind. And now this proves to be valid! Listening to executives holds immense potential for transforming the way we work, relate and organise ourselves economically.

#### **4.7 SUMMARY**

This chapter described the findings of the research assignment, as they became evident for the researcher. While all research questions have been suitably addressed and new information has emerged from each, the findings also reveal some complexity in the way some are interrelated.

Two straightforward findings indicate relatively easy ways to enhance executive coaching that involves the body. These improvements include consideration for venues and some education around the body in coaching. Personal, initial limitations or discomforts experienced by coachees have been identified.

Aspects of the body addressed in executives' coaching have also been identified, as well as the personal meaning made by individuals. No correlations were found between aspects of the body and coaching topics, indicating that coaching involving the body is distinct for each executive. In line with this, executives also described varied ideas of what 'the body' means to them.

Complexity emerged when findings revealed a number of interdependent challenges executives faced in coaching to the body in organisations. Here three related areas were categorised as relational (coach-coachee), organisational and societal.

Finally, in terms of findings, a possible correlation between inner body awareness and reported success in transformative coaching was noted.

In categorising the findings, and looking towards future improvements to executive coaching and the body, it is evident that there are personal (subjective/individual) areas as became apparent from research objectives one, two, three and seven as well as relational (intersubjective) and organisational (collective) areas, as emerged from research objectives four, five and six.

While relatively uncomplicated coaching measures may be implemented against findings in the 'individual' areas, findings pertaining to the 'collective' are more interdependent and more complex. For example, quick fixes may come from a venue change while deeper, more sustainable change will emerge from addressing the impact of broader societal change on executive coaching.

In the following chapter, these findings are summarised and recommendations made, including the possibilities for future research.

Research Objectives	Findings
<p>1. To identify which aspects of the body are addressed in the coaching context</p>	<p>A full range, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Breathing</li> <li>• Posture (incl. neck/shoulders)</li> <li>• Muscle Tension (incl. neck/shoulder tension)</li> <li>• Movement</li> <li>• ‘Body Language’</li> <li>• Touch</li> <li>• Sensations (incl. heartbeat or temperature)</li> <li>• Positionality (one’s position relative to others)</li> <li>• Field (awareness of surrounding space)</li> <li>• Stress</li> <li>• Mood &amp; Emotions (as expressed in the body)</li> </ul>
<p>2. To establish the meaning coachees make of this (above) and the relevance thereof to their coaching and learning</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very subjective, personally significant &amp; transformative</li> <li>• No correlation between aspects of body &amp; coaching topics</li> </ul>
<p>3. To provide insights into the relevance of somatic/body awareness in coaching</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Best described simply in terms of Gendlin’s discovery that transformation occurs when an individual purposefully connects the language used to explore coaching topic ‘to physical sensations in relation to the issue’. Somatic awareness (the internal response) of issue ‘creates more of a sustained change than mere insight’. Sieler, Payne et al agree</li> <li>• This also confirmed by Ontological and Integral’s cross training over three domains or lines of intelligence and four quadrants.</li> <li>• Interoception correlates to transformation</li> <li>• See 4.5.6 for a full explanation</li> </ul>



<p>4. To identify challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Adjunct ‘body work’ and practices, including edification</li> <li>• Venues not always conducive</li> <li>• A number of interdependent challenges faced by executive coachees in the context of coaching to the body in organisations, including:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Relational (coach-coachee)</li> <li>▪ Organisational culture &amp; leadership</li> <li>▪ Societal norms &amp; practices (broader culture)</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p>5. To identify any specific limitations, hindrances or discomfort in having coaching conversations that address the body</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venues not always conducive</li> <li>• Adjunct ‘body work’ and practices, including edification</li> <li>• Personal limitations, hindrances or discomforts identified (client)</li> </ul>
<p>6. To identify possible ways of removing limiting factors, discomfort or fears and concerns in coaching to the body in executive contexts, in order to enhance coaching effectiveness</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Venues not always conducive</li> <li>• Adjunct ‘body work’ and practices, including edification</li> <li>• Personal limitations, hindrances or discomforts identified (client)</li> </ul>
<p>7. To establish how coachees experience coaching conversations about their breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement in the executive coaching context</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Very subjective, personally significant &amp; transformative</li> <li>• No correlation between aspects of body &amp; coaching topics</li> </ul>
<p>8. To establish what would make coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective for coachees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A venue that is favourable to respite and body work</li> <li>• Adjunct ‘body work’ and practices, including edification</li> </ul>

**Table 4.4: Findings Summary Table**

Source: Author, 2015.

## CHAPTER 5

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

The global emergence of Executive Coaching over the past few decades and especially its burgeoning since the mid-2000s means that the array of disciplines, formats and training programmes, as well as the number and types of coaches in practice is immense. This rapid expansion raises many concerns and questions for a budding profession, especially the need for collaboration amongst practitioners and academics and an evidence-based set of knowledge or best practice.

Within the context of this explosive growth of executive coaching, this research endeavoured to explore and apply some level of discernment amongst the many methods by examining the claims of those executive coaching approaches that assert significance in terms of efficacy, sustainability or quality. *Transformative coaching* was identified as a way of coaching that is distinct from other formats for a number of reasons, such as its way of attending to the 'whole being' of executives. The research looked specifically at one aspect of this 'whole being' approach, namely the centrality of the body, within two types of transformative approaches (Integral and Ontological coaching) which appears to have significant potential to influence executive coaching and therefore organisations. The research addressed coaching conversations about the body with executives and asked questions about their subjective experiences within the organisational context.

The meta-approach adopted for this research was phenomenological, as it was considered important to capture the 'lived experiences' of executives truthfully, according to the ways they were perceived and conceptualised by executives. This approach proved valuable in encouraging executives' full expression of their experiences of coaching conversations around their bodies, while also tapping into some of the organisational context that influenced these experiences. The nuances within these contexts revealed interesting insights into organisational culture and leadership and its influence on executives and transformation. A grounded theory approach was implemented for the analysis of data to allow the integration of possible new perspectives and categories that may contribute to how practitioners work with the body, transformation, executives, leadership and culture in coaching.

The research provided some evidence that organisational development efforts would benefit from executive coaching that integrated transformative approaches. In addition, evidence in this assignment indicates that coaching could be personally meaningful and effective for executives when conversations about the body and physiology are integrated into their coaching. The current organisational landscape may evidently not be optimal for these types of coaching conversations, based on the views of leaders, organisational culture or a wider societal mindset.

This chapter provides a summary of the findings with some conclusions, addresses the limitations of the research and provides recommendations accordingly. Possible future research is also discussed.

## **5.2 SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS**

The main findings of this assignment and their relevance can be summarised as follows:

### **5.2.1 The basic foundations for coaching to the body**

Although they're not strictly about coaching to the body of the executive, there are at least two basic conditions that are evidently required to enhance the way 'body work' is currently happening in organisations. These conditions sit in conjunction with coaching, and support transformative practices in executive coaching.

The first theme is that of venue or setting. There is a distinct sense amongst executives that either an off-site venue is required or that their corporate offices are not ideal for coaching to the body. This seems to be not only about the physical characteristics of the space such as size, noise and privacy, but also about time constraints and the capacity of the executive to shift their state to one that facilitates ease and awareness, for the sake of coaching.

The second theme is one of education and practises. Virtually all executive coachees who had experienced coaching involving the body aspired to do more 'body work' in relation to their development. This ranged from physical exercise to maintain health and wellbeing, but mostly included practices outside of the work such as dance or body based modalities like rolfing, yoga or kinesiology. There is need for supportive practices in parallel to the coaching as well as thereafter, guided by the generalist knowledge of transformative coaches. Also, as a foundation for this work to take place in organisations, executives believed their exposure to body work could have come sooner and been more concentrated. There may be a call by executives for a foundational understanding of why the body is relevant to learning, what 'body work' entails and how it can be facilitated at the workplace. This has significance for training and HR and other associate fields.

### **5.2.2 The highly subjective nature of coaching and the body**

Two of the findings in this research assignment pointed to the personal nature of this kind of coaching with executives. One finding suggested there was no correlation between the aspects of the body addressed in the executive's coaching and their coaching topics, or the personal meaning they made. In other words, that the link between aspects of the body and coaching objectives is not universal, but subjective and relevant to each executive's learning in a different, personal way. While aspects of the coaching conversation were similar and can be categorised into, for example, breathing, posture etc., the meaning ascribed to that aspect and the learning components thereof were subjective.

Another finding in a similar vein suggested that views of the body, and what that ‘the body’ entails are disparate and subjective too. For executives, there exists a wide range of understanding and conceptualisation of the body and exactly what it refers to. Throughout the research the range of perspectives executives had on ‘the body’ was noticeable and the researcher instinctively categorised them according to his training and the Integral Coaching quadrants. While some executives had an externalised (objective) view of their bodies focused on behaviour, exercise or physique, others had an internal (subjective) views of their bodies such as sensory awareness or anxiety.

### **5.2.3 Possible link between inner body awareness and reported success in transformative coaching.**

In exploring the personal relevance of somatic awareness, one finding suggests a link between inner body awareness (interoception) and the reported efficacy of executive coaching. That is, those who reported coaching success in this study evidently had an increased ability to hold a first person perspective, especially in terms of their somatic awareness. It is possible to argue that increasing body awareness, or the ability to ‘inhabit’ one’s own body subjectively, greatly enhances the reported success of transformative coaching as Gendlin (1978) pointed out in his work.

### **5.2.4 Personal discomforts and limitations identified**

The research clearly identified, in line with one of its objectives, the kinds of personal discomforts experienced by executives, mostly at the start of their transformative coaching programmes. These discomforts can be described as a generalised apprehension with the novelty and unfamiliarity of the process, but may also include personal issues like self consciousness or quality of attention.

This point also speaks to and confirms the subjective nature of coaching and the body as per 5.2.2.

### **5.2.5 The interdependent nature of the challenges of coaching in this context**

One group of research findings is effectively a list of interdependent factors that influence coaching to the body in organisations. There are three categories of findings, as follows:

- **Relational (coach-coachee)**

The relationships between coach and coachee is vital, and a clear determinant of executive coaching success. This appears to be especially true in the area of the body. Executives who felt their ‘body work’ was successful reported a good relationship with their coaches, and conversly, those that didn’t report success, did not report a good coach-coachee relationship. Overlaps also exist with relational challenges and what has been classified as personal, such as initial scepticism, but in this category the challenges are distinctly intersubjective. Essentially this

uncertainty hinges on perceived difference at the beginning of a new relationship and can include gender, race or socio-economic status for example. These fears dissipate as the relationship builds.

- **Organisational Culture and Leadership**

There was significant evidence from executives that their organisations had influence over the success (or otherwise) of executive coaching in the context of coaching to the body. Generally, executives felt that their organisations (and leadership specifically) could be more supportive and proactively create a conducive culture. Organisations were described as too fast, too profit-driven or indifferent to coaching to the body. The sense was that the relevance of the body to learning and coaching is not yet understood by most organisations. Evidence was provided of organisations or executive team members, discouraging body-related coaching conversations and creating an atmosphere unfavourable to transformative work. Attitudes towards transformative approaches indicate a misunderstanding of the relevance, efficacy or contextuality for the organisation. Evidently this approach is up against organisational preconceptions, habits and behaviour that are entrenched and not open to change. Existing ways of doing things that are cerebral, outcomes based and transactional, prevail.

While a number of executives held this view, it is likely that chief executives were less aware of organisational culture as a potential barrier, seeing the coach-coachee relationship with the organisation or executive team as more of a determinant of success or lack thereof. This contrast in views highlights the pivotal role of leadership in facilitating a coaching culture in organisations.

- **Societal norms and practices (broader culture)**

Some executive coachees provided evidence that the nature of organisational culture was a function of a broader, societal view. This implies a wider, more societal influence on organisations and their attitudes on transformative coaching with executives. This evidence may point to the influence of our institutions (media and education) on answers to the challenges faced in the context of coaching to the body. It's possible that societal attitudes towards difference, whether about body shape, sexuality or gender, for example, may be part of the challenge to effective transformative work in organisations.

### **5.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH**

The findings of this research assignment are rich in their descriptions of executives' experiences of undergoing transformative coaching in organisations. They elucidate a number of key challenges to coaching to the body in these contexts, which also resonate with literature reviewed. However, a

number of cautionary notes are necessary at this point with regard to the limitations of this research:

- The sample size of this research was small. Only nine participants were interviewed. Although this is considered sufficient for a study of this nature, it does have implications for the way the results are generalised for other populations. That is, the transferability of the findings. It is noted however that, as Babbie and Mouton (2009) point out, 'in a qualitative study the obligation for demonstrating transferability rests on those who wish to apply it to the receiving context'.
- Related to the above, the nature of the purposive sample in this study was potentially problematic. Although the sample was not intended to be representative of any population, the range of a purposive sample is often limited, as it is in this case. To illustrate, all nine executives were Cape Town based, all had been coached by an Integral or Ontological coach and a number of the executives had (unknowingly) shared the same coach.
- The research objectives of this study were possibly, in hindsight, too similar and too broad in their scope. Eight research objectives were formulated, some with overlapping areas of inquiry. The wording of research objectives, for example, could have been improved upon, as they tended to elicit similar responses in some areas.
- Some aspects of trustworthiness could be limiting in this study. There were no member checks or peer debriefing of any sort in this study, for example. All interpretations were made from the one interview and recording only (for each participant) and no third party contexts included in the analysis. Data was therefore not triangulated (Babbie and Mouton, 2009).

#### **5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH**

Recommendations for further similar research include the following:

- The biggest improvement on this study would come from improving facets of trustworthiness. Member checks, peer debriefing and other forms of triangulation would increase the quality of the study.
- A larger sample size, where possible, with a wider range of diversity with respect to executive coaches would also improve this research. For example, a geographically wider sampling process, a larger sample or executives from other transformative approaches could add to the quality of the study.

- Research methods other than the ones used in this study should be considered to study similar aspects from other perspectives. For example, surveying a wide range of coaches, nationally or internationally, from a large number of organisations could add a valuable dimension to this research.
- Reconsidering the research objectives of this study and focusing on fewer, more concise objectives may produce richer, more textured data.

Based on the findings of this research assignment, a wide array of future research is possible. Here is small selection of what could be explored to contribute to the body of knowledge:

- A study exploring the link between inner body awareness (interoception) and personal transformation, amongst executives or with a broader population. While studies in neuroscience and the health sciences are addressing this scientifically, the coaching field may require an exploration of these concepts in terms of their specific relevance to organisations.
- Also specific to organisations, a study into the quality of attention common within organisations and what influences this. With the importance in this study attributed to attention to the inner body and states, it is possible that the quality of attention in organisations per say, is a barrier to transformative work.
- A study amongst coaches as to their perceptions of transformative approaches and any possible 'barriers to entry', misconceptions or related perspectives that may be prevalent.
- A study into the cultural, leadership or ergonomic aspects of organisational openness to transformative coaching. What exactly can be done in or with our organisations to facilitate transformative work with the body in organisations?
- An explorative study into what elements and concepts could be included in an education or training programme of 'shared language' around working with the body. There is need for a common approach and vocabulary of study.
- Related to the above study, and in line with a definition of grounded theory further research could start to address 'second order constructs, a hypotheses and ultimately a theory' (Babbie and Mouton, 2009). This may contribute to a common approach amongst practitioners and an interdisciplinary approach to transformative work with the body.

Finally, two authors, considered experts in this field have made comments with regard to what they believe is required in this field. Both of these views ought to be considered as a guide for the direction of future research. Caldwell has this to say:

What lies ahead likely involves the sorting out of the underlying mechanisms that allow many varied, experientially based treatments to work. In a sense, we may be looking at a kind of neo-behaviorism, one that can be profoundly more sophisticated, one that centralizes body-centered self-reflection, one that abolishes the arbitrary and false distinction between physical, emotional, and mental health, and one that reclaims overarching human values such as empathy, compassion, relational atonement, and the need to live a contemplative, creative, and contributively life. The construct of bodyfulness may be an essential element in reaching these goals. (Caldwell, 2014)

While Shusterman advocates the development of Somaesthetics, a coordinated discipline of theoretical and practical bodywork aimed at somatic self-improvement, an idea supported by 'a wide variety of somatic theorists, educators and practitioners (Sieler, 2012). He adds that such 'pragmatic somatic' disciplines affirm deep reciprocal influences between somatic and psychological development' (Sieler, 2012, citing Shusterman.)

## 5.5 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there seems to be a number of apparent truths related to this research. The qualitative methodology chosen to inquire into the experiences of executives proved successful in that it allowed the researcher to have intimate interviews that gathered rich data, from a purposive sample.

What has been substantiated by reviewing the relevant literature and conducting the research in this context is noteworthy for future transformative coaching with executives.

The executive coaching field is growing rapidly and becoming further entrenched in organisations as a developmental tool. Research into its effectiveness is gaining traction and valid evidence thereof is mounting.

There is some consensus that coaching at the transformative end of the spectrum is powerful and requisite, but the approach is more complex and involves higher skill levels. While this is possibly a barrier to entry, there are other obstacles for transformative work in organisations. Paradoxically, it is evident that the body is both central to transformation and yet marginalised in organisations (a phenomena related to broader society's attitudes). This presents a dilemma for bona fide organisational transformation.

The findings suggest a number of interdependent, multi-factorial elements that influence these phenomena, ranging from the personal and individual dimensions of transformation to factors that are historic and cultural.

On the personal level, executive coachees derived unique and significant gain from integrating the body in their coaching. Executives may require education around the concepts of the body in transformative work, and the setting in organisations needs to be conducive to this work.



Transformative coaching that involves the body is personal. While it may be uncomfortable initially, the personal nature thereof proves significant. Those coachees that purposefully and subjectively attend to aspects of themselves and learn how these aspects relate to each other report successful transformation. Specifically, this means that those who learn how the 'narrative self' relates to the sensory self, or who personally explore the coherence between language and body, are able to transform. This means that inner body awareness, or the ability to hold a first-person perspective experientially, is vital for personal transformation. In line with this, neuroscience supports what the more experiential modalities have been discovering through practice.

In future, both in practice and in research into this area, what is required is further collaboration between the experiential modalities of the body and those of the 'hard sciences' such as neuroscience. An Integral research framework (Wilber) is well suited to these research efforts, while a more coordinated 'pragmatic somatic' discipline suggested by Shusterman (Sieler, 2012) is likely to be needed for transformative coaches.

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## APPENDIX A

### Table 1 (Joo)

**TABLE 1: Definitions and Purposes of Executive Coaching**

Author(s)	Year	Definition and Purpose
Peterson	1996	Coaching is <i>the process of equipping people with the tools, knowledge, and opportunities</i> they need to develop themselves and become more effective (p. 78).
Kampa-Kokesch and Anderson	2001	Coaching is <i>a form of a systematic feedback intervention</i> aimed at enhancing <i>professional skills, interpersonal awareness, and personal effectiveness</i> .
Orenstein	2002	Executive coaching is referred to as a " <i>one-on-one intervention with a senior manager for the purpose of improving or enhancing management skills</i> " (p. 356).
McCauley and Hezlett	2001	Executive coaching involves <i>a series of one-on-one interactions</i> between a manager or executive and an external coach in order to further <i>the professional development of the manager</i> (p. 321).
Bacon and Spear	2003	Coaching in business contexts can generally be defined as an informed dialogue whose purpose is <i>the facilitation of new skills, possibilities, and insights in the interest of individual learning and organizational advancement</i> (p. xvi).
Hall, Otazo, and Hollenbeck	1999	Coaching is meant to be <i>a practical, goal-focused form of personal, one-on-one learning</i> for busy executives and may be used to <i>improve performance or executive behavior</i> , enhancing a career or prevent derailment, and work through organizational issues or change initiatives (p. 40).
Kilburg	1996	Executive coaching is a helping relationship formed between a client who has managerial authority and responsibility in an organization and a consultant who uses a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods <i>to assist the client to achieve a mutually identified set of goals, to improve his or her professional performance and personal satisfaction</i> , and consequently <i>to improve the effectiveness of the client's organization</i> within a formally defined coaching agreement (p. 142).
International Coaching Federation (ICF)	2003	Professional coaching is <i>an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses, or organizations</i> . Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life.

## APPENDIX B

### Semi-structured interview questionnaire

#### **A description of executive coachees' experiences of working with the body in transformative coaching.**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Roland Cox, BA Industrial Psychology (Hons), from the Faculty of Economics and Management at Stellenbosch University. The results will contribute to a research assignment if partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Philosophy (Management Coaching).

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Code of participant: \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Initial questions (yes/no), for confirming sample:**

1. Have you received coaching in your organisation?
2. Are you an executive in the organisation?
3. Are you aware of what approach your coach used, or what training they had?
4. Did any of the coaching conversations include reference to your body?

#### **'Body' questions:**

1. Generally, (briefly) describe the coaching conversations that referred to your body?
2. What aspects of the body were referred to in your coaching?
3. What was the relevance of discussing (this aspect of) your body in coaching?
4. What were the challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context?
5. Were there any specific limitations, hindrances or any discomfort in having these conversations, and if so what were they?
6. What would have made coaching conversations around the body more comfortable or more effective, for you?

Additional, contingency question, related to questions 2 & 3, and asked depending on how respondent answers:

7. What meaning did you make of coaching conversations about your:
  - a. Breathing
  - b. Posture
  - c. Muscle tension
  - d. Movement

## APPENDIX C

### Recruitment Letter

Roland Cox  
PO Box 51166  
Waterfront  
8002

July 2015

To whom it may concern

**RE: A request for assistance in finding participants for Masters Research**

I would like to request your assistance in finding participants willing to be interviewed for a research assignment I'm currently conducting. The research is part of an MPhil in Management Coaching at Stellenbosch Business School.

The purpose of the study is to examine the experiences of executive coachees, specifically around coaching conversations that refer to the body, within transformative coaching approaches.

Participants would be required to meet with me for one ninety-minute interview (semi-structured), in the latter half of July 2015. In order for coachees to be suitable for the study they would need to meet the following criteria:

- They have received Executive Coaching
- At any point within the coaching relationship, coaching conversations included an inquiry into any aspects of the coachees body
- The coaching methodology used is considered a transformational approach (this includes Integral & Ontological)

All standard ethical procedures and considerations will be rigorously adhered to and anonymity for participants is assured. Sessions will be recorded, (possibly) transcribed and their names coded.

A *Consent to Participate in Research* form that participants will be required to sign on the day of the interview has the following noteworthy inclusions:

**POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The risk to you as participant is low and relative to your daily life, negligible. Any foreseeable discomfort or inconvenience you may experience is likely to be minor. Based on your guidance and feedback on the day, any discomfort you may have around conversations about your body will be considerate and managed accordingly. This is likely to be similar, or less uncomfortable than in your coaching conversations.

**PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no payment for participation. Any transport to and from the venue will be for your account. Refreshments will be provided on the day.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law.

All interviews will be recorded (audio) and subjects will not be allowed to review or edit recordings. Access to the recordings will be carefully controlled and be heard by the Roland Cox, the investigator, and a transcriber only. The transcriber will only have access to the code and not the name of the participant. Recordings will be used for educational purposes only and will be erased by the end of 2015.

Confidentiality will be further maintained by means of a coding system whereby names are substituted by codes (e.g. D3) and data is safeguarded under lock and key in the interviewer's home office.

No information will be released to any other party for any reason, other than what is recorded anonymously in the research assignment published.

**PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you do not want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. These circumstances will include the following:

- Cases of eligibility to participate being called into question based on the criteria described in the original recruitment letter. For example, you had not received executive coaching.
- The interview does not make known a satisfactory level of information relating to coaching conversations about the body.

Consent to exclude a participant will not be sought from that participant.

Your assistance is appreciated.

Should you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me on [roland@aspiral.co.za](mailto:roland@aspiral.co.za) or 082 934 7464. Alternatively, my supervisor, Dr. Dorrian Aiken on [dorrian@dorrianaiken.co.zo.za](mailto:dorrian@dorrianaiken.co.zo.za)

Yours sincerely,

Roland Cox

MPhil student, USB



## APPENDIX D



UNIVERSITEIT • STELLENBOSCH • UNIVERSITY  
jou kennisvennoot • your knowledge partner

### STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

#### CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH

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#### **A description of executive coachees' experiences of working with the body in transformative coaching.**

You are asked to participate in a research study conducted by Roland Cox, BA Industrial Psychology (Hons), from the Faculty of Economics and Management at Stellenbosch University. The results will contribute to a research assignment if partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Masters in Philosophy (Management Coaching). You have been selected as a participant in this study because you (1) have received executive coaching, (2) using a transformational approach (including Integral or Ontological coaching) and (3) aspects of that coaching conversation included reference to our body.

##### **1. PURPOSE OF THE STUDY**

The purpose of the study is to describe executive coachees' experiences of working with specific aspects of the body, as part of a transformative coaching approach, in order to provide insights into the role that awareness of the body plays in coaching.

Specifically, the study aims to:

8. To establish the meaning coachees make of this and the relevance thereof to their coaching and learning.
9. To provide insights into the relevance of somatic awareness in coaching
10. To identify challenges, if any, in coaching to the body in the executive context
11. To identify any specific limitations, hindrances or any discomfort in having coaching conversations that address the body
12. To identify possible ways of removing limiting factors, discomfort or fears and concerns in coaching to the body in executive contexts, in order to enhance coaching effectiveness
13. To establish how coachees experience coaching conversations about their breathing, posture, muscle tension and movement in the executive coaching context

##### **2. PROCEDURES**

If you volunteer to participate in this study, we would ask you to do the following:

- Agree to one ninety minute interview to be conducted face to face in a comfortable setting, on an arranged date in the latter half of June 2015.
- Mutually agree and confirm the date, time and venue for that interview as far as possible in advance.
- Confirm your availability for that interview three days prior to the date and time.
- Arrive timeously
- Respond openly and honestly to the interviewers questions. These will be semi structured and there will be less than ten questions.
- Make yourself available for a period of one month after your interview for one short follow up call (telephonic) for any clarifying questions, if necessary.

### **3. POTENTIAL RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS**

The risk to you as participant is low and relative to your daily life, negligible. Any foreseeable discomfort or inconvenience you may experience is expected to be minor. Discomfort you may have around conversations about your body will be taken into consideration and managed accordingly based on your guidance and feedback on the day. This is expected to be similar, and probably less uncomfortable than in your coaching conversations.

### **4. POTENTIAL BENEFITS TO SUBJECTS AND/OR TO SOCIETY**

#### **Benefits to subjects**

- The study will bring enhanced self awareness to participants, especially around the relationship between their bodies and its relevance in coaching

#### **Benefits to society**

- The study will provide information and understanding on what Executives are experiencing as coachees in organisations when the coaching inquiry includes conversations about and around the body;
- It will furthermore provide insight as to what executive coachees concerns are, whether there is possible limitations, resistance or discomfort round these coaching conversations;
- And, finally, the study will benefit future coachees by possibly providing insights into what solutions may exist for the above
- This study aims at starting to make the following contribution to the field of coaching, either in this assignment, or by paving the way for research to follow:
  - Identify any resistance to working in this particular way (body work amongst executives), or ignorance surrounding this approach, for coaches and coachees
  - Facilitate conversations about the body between coaches and coachees by adding to the language used in these conversations

- Normalise somatic learning in executive contexts - that is, facilitate a more integrated coaching approach from coaches and for coachees
- Learn how to have development conversations that include the body more effectively

### **5. PAYMENT FOR PARTICIPATION**

There will be no payment for participation. And any transport to and from the venue will be for your account. Refreshments will be provided on the day.

### **6. CONFIDENTIALITY**

Any information that is obtained in connection with this study and that can be identified with you will remain confidential and will be disclosed only with your permission or as required by law. Confidentiality will be maintained by means of a coding system whereby names are substituted codes (e.g. D3) and data is safeguarded by limiting access to recordings and transcripts to the interviewer and transcriber only. The transcriber will only know the code. Recordings will be kept under lock and key in the interviewer's home office.

No information will be released to any other party for any reason, other than what is recorded anonymously in the research assignment published.

All interviews will be recorded (audio) and subjects will not be allowed to review or edit recordings. Access to the recordings will be carefully controlled and be heard by the Roland Cox, the investigator, and a transcriber only. The transcriber will only have access to the code and not the name of the participant. Recordings will be used for educational purposes only and will be erased by the end of 2015.

### **7. PARTICIPATION AND WITHDRAWAL**

You can choose whether to be in this study or not. If you volunteer to be in this study, you may withdraw at any time without consequences of any kind. You may also refuse to answer any questions you don't want to answer and remain in the study. The investigator may withdraw you from this research if circumstances arise which warrant doing so. These circumstances will include the following:

- Cases of eligibility to participate being called into question based on the criteria described in the original recruitment letter. For example, you had not received executive coaching.
- The interview does not make known a satisfactory level of information relating to coaching conversations about the body
- Consent to exclude a participant will not be sought from that participant.

### **8. IDENTIFICATION OF INVESTIGATORS**

If you have any questions or concerns about the research, please feel free to contact the Principal Investigator, Roland Cox on [roland@aspiral.co.za](mailto:roland@aspiral.co.za) or 082 934 7464. Alternatively, my supervisor, Dr. Dorrian Aiken on [dorrian@dorranaiken.co.za](mailto:dorrian@dorranaiken.co.za) or 021 447 7617

**9. RIGHTS OF RESEARCH SUBJECTS**

You may withdraw your consent at any time and discontinue participation without penalty. You are not waiving any legal claims, rights or remedies because of your participation in this research study. If you have questions regarding your rights as a research subject, contact Ms Maléne Fouché [mfouche@sun.ac.za; 021 808 4622] at the Division for Research Development.

**SIGNATURE OF RESEARCH SUBJECT OR LEGAL REPRESENTATIVE**

The information above was described to [me/the subject/the participant] by Roland Cox in English and I am in command of this language or it was satisfactorily translated to me. I participant/the subject] was given the opportunity to ask questions and these questions were answered to my satisfaction.

[I hereby consent voluntarily to participate in this study. I have been given a copy of this form.

\_\_\_\_\_ Name of Subject/Participant

\_\_\_\_\_ **Name of Legal Representative (if applicable)**

\_\_\_\_\_ Signature of Subject/Participant or Legal  
Representative                      Date

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

I declare that I explained the information given in this document to \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the subject/participant*] and/or [his/her] representative \_\_\_\_\_ [*name of the representative*]. [*He/she*] was encouraged and given ample time to ask me any questions. This conversation was conducted in *English* and no translator was used.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR**

**DATE**

## APPENDIX E

### Interview Table Extended

	Name Code	Q1: Brief description of body coaching	Q2: Aspects of the body	Q3: Relevance of 2	Q7: Meaning of Breath, Movement, Posture, Tension
1	H	"Giving your mind time" Building relationships Being present Re-energize	Breathing; Touch; Posture General mostly! Positionality	B=reflection of who UR & needs to be ready, 4U to doing things well Wellbeing/Health (BP); Impacts relationships Relevant to Exec situation	Positionality Quality of attention? "as much as 70% of coaching was about 'state' Rounded! Energised!
2	K	Exercises to do (coaching practices) Biodanza TRE 8 sessions Meditation	Posture, Tension, Movement Neck & Shoulders	Anxiety Rationalising less Anger Managing conflict Self regulation	Sensory awareness; Patience Body awareness; Integration Self perception more accurate Acting out less Differentiation between sensations & feelings Generally very empowering
3	M	"It was about how it physically feels to be emotionally experiencing something" in moments of anger, anxiety, physically what happens - where does the feeling start, where does it move to, where does it change, and is it recognisable? Are there triggers that you can maybe identify or preempt an emotional response. Essentially physical manifestation of an emotional state (general head, heart, gut too)	Physical sensation, being aware of heartbeat, temperature. And physical form (body language)	<b>To make an emotional state recognisable - it's easier to connect to sensations than emotions. So recognising change easier. Also, recognised that there isn't really a separation between emotional and physical Relationships - building, maintaining - specifically self regulation (by being aware of sensations). Noticing when I get worked up - anger and passion, enthusiasm. Responding vs. reacting. Different relationship with my own feelings (integrated, calmer) "Whole value of coaching - how you choose, influence own behaviour"</b>	Breathing = checking in, self regulation. One can use this to change emotional state Tension = same Movement = same Posture (incl. gestures) = also state, self regulation

4	S	Wide ranging, over extended period... Introduced into coaching when verbal/linguistic was producing limited insights. And where there was a disconnect between verbal and physical Drawn attention & connection to the physical where I was not conscious of in process	Muscle tension, Breathing, Posture, Tone/Pitch, Movement, E.g. one session we walked around the block rapidly, to introduce elements beyond verbal. Such as change of breathing, pace.	I'm a head type (Ennea). The enviro is very structured and verbal and cerebral and favours this type of expression. The enviro doesn't lend itself to physical expressions. I had reservations about using my body in communicating. As it would be seen as uncontrolled, or uncoordinated. <b>Note, as the coaching evolved it became easier to identify this and this allowed for a broader range of physical expressions. And I became more aware of the expanded range of body options - more expansive and expressive. And holding yourself and your position in conversations in a more authentic way Epiphany - what you bring to work is everything. An employee is their way of being. Understanding the body and how it influences every aspect of your way of being. I would not have realised this were it not for the coaching journey.</b>	Muscle tension, Breathing, Posture, Tone/Pitch, Movement, E.g. one session we walked around the block rapidly, to introduce elements beyond verbal. Such as change of breathing, pace.  See Q2 & Q3
5	D	Coaching that referenced body didn't stick Wellbeing, practices, health, activity e.g. regular swimming produces my best thinking	Mood, as expressed in your body	Facilitative, Flow, free up the mind and moods. Integration <b>Not tied in directly and clearly enough!</b>	<b>Breathing &amp; Posture was discussed, but it wasn't mapped directly to anything we were trying to achieve.</b>
6	P	Centred on the topic, but always went back to body.	Posture was a huge component. Undoubtedly the biggest impact. Generally my posture wasn't aligned with my feelings & intentions. "I was giving that plan too much water" over using posture (power posing). Touch. I don't like touching or being touched, so don't shake hands. Positionality - I always sit at the end of table. People started taking it personally. Stress in body. Talking.	Awareness alone was hugely impactful See Q2/Q7	Positionality (see Q2/3); Breathing - I was too calm. Disturbed people. I have now learned to match others. Muscle tension - robotic speech, jaw tension, shoulder tension (posture?) - I looked like I was irritated, so people didn't want to bother me. Movement - helping me be less cognitive Alignment of above for congruence of message

7	R	Two main conversations specifically around body are vivid for me: 1. Barriers I encounter in following through on a big decision. This was emotionally provocative for me, and what was useful was the observations I was given (incl. breath). Becoming aware and then helping me to make the connection between my emotions & the sensations of that experience. 2. Centring, grounding, and rooting. "Bring the self back to the self" (posture)	See Q1 & Q7	Generally, helping me make a connection between coaching topic, a conversation (often located in head) or the heart/rush of emotions... (With the body).. And trying to completing the loop (energy flow) of what I think, feel and what I experience & sense.	Breathing - see Q1 & Q2 Posture - see Q1 & Q2
8	A	Not remembering	Personal space (spaciousness), comfort Field/Positionality Personal space vs. Closeness	Assured, without being arrogant. EQ. Calm. Leadership. Personal comfort. Confidence. Sense of urgency (inner body awareness) not connected. The more confident I become, the more aware I'm of others & letting them be (comfortable).	Breath - Calmness, Mindfulness Field/Positionality
9	E	Relationship between head & body. (I've always been wired... & trying to get grounded) Tension (lots!) Exercise. IBS	Body practices/Meditation Muscle Tension Breath The 'pain body' See Q1 & Q7 (loss got me into my body)	Restlessness. Slowing down. Being centred. Being too 'red'. Vs Green & fishing Moving from outcomes based to more process orientated Coaching only helped a bit. Identity...	Muscle Tension Breath  See Q1 & Q2

Q4: Challenges of 2,3 in the exec context	Q5: Specific limitations	Q6: Possible improvements
Enviro - yes, off-site, relaxed enviro (nature) better (open/free)	Breathing challenged me spiritually the newness thereof=apprehension (general discomfort). Gender/relationship with coach	Subtlety, indirect was powerful "It wasn't necessarily an agenda item"
Language of coaching is still foreign to corporate culture. Referencing body is foreign and not understood or accepted Externalised body chat (ergonomics) is OK, but not linked to emotions, behaviour etc. No space for vulnerability. Expectations are that body is denied, marginalised. off-site worked (no enviro barriers)	General difficulty/novelty Exercises sometimes difficult (coaching practices) Struggled conceptually at times Off-site worked. No enviro barriers	Off site worked <b>VENUE</b> Different enviro, pleasant space Develop specific activities for the body, like yoga, TRE etc. More conversations around the body Body stuff, in a more concentrated way, sooner set up opportunity for body work beyond coaching
Individual. Different for some people. The people who could not mocked, dismissed. We are not taught from a young age to recognise physical feelings. When emo/phy are tied in from a younger age, this would be helpful. Because it people you work with, the physical is frowned upon. This context is set up for you (Culture?). Disparaging - kumba-ya. "The context is a construct of the organisation and the individuals within the organisation." Enviro: Glass windows, exposed. Off-site would have worked better.	"It's not natural", is the only barrier (head/neck muscles example) Initially, beginning of relationship, more sceptical. "Generally, we're too rushed to attend to how things feel"	Off-site would have worked better, sometimes. <b>VENUE</b> Esp. for longer sessions. Physical movement! E.g. a walking session. Preparation? Content? Group sessions - Pre info required. Shared language. Not so much in 1:1. Flexible timing. Not being rushed.
The enviro is very structured and verbal and cerebral and favours this type of expression. The enviro doesn't lend itself to physical expressions. I had reservations about using my body in communicating. As it would be seen as uncontrolled, or uncoordinated. Verbal skill is dominant in this environment. Persuasion of this type is proffered - reason, language. Versus physical cues of influence or dominance. And it also fitted in with my way of being. My habit is to use reason to convince. Conflict too, also seen as needing to be expressed verbally & in a reasoned way. E.g. Cutting/pointed remark more acceptable. Physical expression not accepted. Org culture is reasoned, layered, nuanced. The orientation towards body in our team was like that too. Very few actively & consciously, comfortably engaged their body it was more about what they said. More difficult to read but always present. Open plan - any physical expression gets interpreted in the organisation as conflict. Leadership - nature & structure of - (flat) - so varying levels always present. Therefore rank & power at play too. This encourages one to adjust one's engagement. watered down.	Sexuality? My self-consciousness. For me personally, the body is not a tool/weapon that I naturally resorted to using. I always felt conscious about the way people read my body signals. 'Giving your game away'. Disagreement was ok, verbally. Any physical expression of this was not ok. OTHERING/Marginalisation of body. Corporate don't understand. Many of these types of exercise are seen as being outside the domain of ... they don't get the whole person. So lack o productivity can be seen from originating in a variety of different sources. Introduce the corporate to the full range of body practices. These things should not be seen as alterative, edgy, cranky therapies. But as extremely useful pathway to benefit entire way of being that could also benefit organisation. HOW? It needs to happen at very senior levels. As this is biggest impact of orgs. Embracing new is set there. That tone is set at the highest level. (LEADERSHIP) Culture: Homogenous, so easier. Diversity. We reinforce the existing hegemony. Sameness defines us.	PERSONAL: By acknowledging the integral and unalienable nature of the process. My way of being... These things were overwhelming to me. So I became fluid at moving between these three spaces. I compartmentalised. Now I work more in concert. You can't. It needs to happen at the pace of the coachee. It is very personal. Being introduced to different forms of body work. For example, being introduced to Rolfing for example worked for me. A variety is needed. Introducing people, generally, to dance, yoga. Not so much in coaching, but generally in life, and education.



<p>Organisational: Depends how visible things are (glass/open plan) Context is important; setting the scene we noted that virtually all our difficult executives have body issues. Unintegrated. Behaviour</p>	<p>"I can be quite inattentive" Personal: Discomforts, physical &amp; emotional buttons gets pushed Culture or religious barriers... Check if it will offend</p>	<p>Offsite is better <b>VENUE</b> Executives must be seen to be participating Wellness programme. Validity, grounding things in evidence</p>
<p>Bring body work back to organisational realities. Making it practical &amp; effective. Enrolling my team &amp; getting the others to buy in. Understanding that entrenching this work in an organisation is a journey, a long process. Culture: We are an international team. Different cultural habits... Being calm, or eye contact, punctuality not always welcome It's about adaptability essentially.</p>	<p>PERSONAL "Discomforts, yes. But that's more about me than the organisation". Individual and internal challenges.</p>	<p>Implicit nature of the body coaching conversations. Organic. "The fact that I was in it before I realised" So, not labelling it as such. There would have been no value if it. "Almost like an unwritten understanding between coach and client"</p>
<p><b>NOTE:</b> How we provide an authentic service to its clients and part of that authenticity is how do we do that internally (in org). How does our internal life reflect what we do externally? Thinking about those two moments in coaching I became aware of how thin the edge is for executives in organisations. The temptation to ensure the internal and external balance is often at the cost of the health &amp; wellbeing of the executive. If staff look after the wellbeing of clients, and director looks after wellbeing of staff, who looks after the director? Also, in my own experience, talking about that, people respond warmly and enthusiastically. Right from the start we contracted to work in a certain way. Because of our service) coaches approach ... enough of a fit. Like a river finding its pathway, quite effortlessly. And when there were obstacles, even those were handled in such a way that didn't just speak to the intellect; it didn't just speak to the common sense. It was an effort from coach and client to find a way that is gentle &amp; kind &amp; forward moving. And my experience is that you cannot have that if you don't look at all the layers that constitute a human being. So, it was subtle but it was conscious, and it was there. It refers to a multi dimensional plane, so energy, rather than just the physical body. This was part of the working concept.</p>	<p>Q4 cont... there were many challenges on the surface. At face value the coach looked like they were from a different world. (race, gender, socio economic).. Setting time aside I only realised this after stopping work. I'm still uncoiling. I needed to keep it together. This was a major impediment. And when you hold your body. The work with my coach enabled me to do this. Power and how it's constructed. Expert, race, rank, authority? And this isn't only the heaviest, riches, most degree.</p>	<p>Following from Q5: The ability of leaders to be aware of themselves The more productive sessions were the ones out of the office. <b>VENUE</b> Even the walk, the transition out of the executive's space. Cost was also an obstacle. This work can be very useful, but it's not affordable to most. This could be a viable way of supporting leaders... A more directed conversation? (Directed at body/energy) if done gain: Midpoint... to have a conversation about this very kind of thing. A walk up the mountain, touching, the coiled up ness was a barrier. Physically doing something during the sessions, when appropriate. Crayons, paper, working with hands - clay, stress ball, feet. Biofeedback. Like connecting physically. Feet on the ground. (Like a muscle tag?) More tangible (physical) ways, not words. Stretching the vocab to engage at different levels. When noticing energy levels are 'up', just acknowledging... reflecting back. Power and how it's constructed. Trust.</p>
<p>None</p>	<p>My own sense of urgency, impacting on my presence</p>	<p>No idea</p>
<p>Relationship with Coach - G is too green. I was too red. We really got on. He is warm, funny. Perhaps had too much fun. Not work. Laughed Enviro: settings/venue were too busy (an outdoor session would have worked nicely)</p>	<p>PERSONAL: Pain body (boredom?) "Used to hate weekends" better now</p>	<p>Quiet setting. Or 'walking barefoot on the beach'. <b>VENUE</b> The executive's relationship with things that affect the body. Eating, sitting, music. Stimulants/Depressants. Sensory Intelligence. Lombard. Presence! (no identity) Change capitalism (impossible task). Leadership really! Universal consciousness needs deep pain body (loss) to emerge</p>

