Exploring Presence in Executive Coaching Conversations

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A thesis submitted for the partial fulfilment of the requirements of the award of Doctor of Coaching and Mentoring (DCM)

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September 2017

Abstract

Presence is considered to be one of the main factors contributing to the quality of the coaching relationship and the use of self by the coach. As such, there is a growing, opinion-based body of practitioner literature on the topic. In addition, presence is recognised by professional coaching bodies as an important coaching competence. To date, there has been little formal research into this concept in executive coaching and in particular, there has been no investigation of presence from the client perspective. The study addresses this gap in knowledge by exploring the research question: *"What is presence and how is it experienced by coaches and clients during the executive coaching conversation?"* The qualitative methodology of conceptual encounter, extended through a focus group, was used to develop a model that gave equal weight to both client and coach perspectives. By mapping the experience of the research partners, this model extends the current understanding of presence, clarifies boundaries with other related terms, and helps to develop a richer language that may inform future debate. Findings have addressed the nature of presence, which was conceptualised in terms of an aware mode and an absorbed mode, as well as internal, external and relational dimensions. In addition, a dynamic nature was reported, both within and between individuals. Conditions that help presence to arise have also been proposed, along with a set of outcomes that address how coaches use presence, how they help their clients to develop it, and how it contributes to the executive coaching process. The findings suggest that presence, as a way of being, is an essential requirement in executive coaching with significant implications for theoretical knowledge and professional practice.

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Chapter 1 – Introduction

My motivation for studying presence in executive coaching conversations is derived from my attempts to make sense of the phenomenon as it related to my practice in three ways. Firstly, as my practice has developed over the past fifteen years, I have become more aware of both my own sense of presence and the presence of my client. A description of my personal experience of this phenomenon prior to this study is presented in section 1.2. In summary, I associate it with having a relational attitude of being with my client as well as a sensitivity to my own thoughts and feelings at any particular instance during a coaching session. I noticed that when I felt present in this way, the coaching felt effective and helpful to my clients. I was curious about their experience, whether they also felt this sense of presence and, if so, how our being present together affected each other during our conversation. This curiosity extended to wondering how other executive coaches and clients made sense of the concept and whether this was a factor worthy of greater consideration in executive coaching as a whole. This personal motivation was the primary reason for choosing executive coaching as the research context.

Secondly, I encountered a variety of different descriptions and definitions of presence in the literature that when taken as a whole, seemed vague, inconsistent and incomplete. There was no comprehensive conceptualisation of presence that articulated an overall structure encompassing both client and coach experiences, or that clarified boundaries and overlaps with other concepts. Through conducting one of the first rigorous studies into presence in the executive coaching context, I wanted to make a contribution to theory by delineating a clearer and deeper understanding of the concept than had existed before in this context.

Thirdly, I felt that there was an opportunity to broaden the current appreciation of this concept within the executive coaching profession and the professional coaching bodies. In particular, the definition of presence as a coaching competency used by the professional bodies and which influenced coach development, seemed somewhat narrow in light of my own experience. As a practitioner, I wanted the study to have value in its application to the profession by contributing to the debate concerning presence as a coaching quality, as well as informing training and development programmes and coaching supervision.

1.1 Opening Definitions

Collins English Dictionary (Anderson, 2005) defines presence in three ways that are relevant to this research. It refers to a person being physically present: 'Someone's presence in a place is the fact that they are there'. In the executive coaching context, this can be extended to mean that both coach and client are present to and with each other, not simply physically, but mentally, emotionally, somatically and spiritually. Secondly, it states that: 'If you say that someone has presence, you mean that they impress people by their appearance and manner'. This might refer to a coach's presence as perceived by their client. Thirdly, if someone has presence of mind, 'you approve of them because they were able to think and act calmly in a difficult situation', such as when a coach is able to see a wider perspective and offer a calm, considered sounding-board to a client facing a challenging situation.

These generic definitions are developed in more depth in the coaching practitioner literature. Silsbee (2008) emphasises a somatic nature arising in the here-and-now by defining it as: 'A state of awareness, in the moment, characterised by the felt experience of timelessness, connectedness and truth' (p.22). He accentuates the inner, individual experience, whilst Stelter (2014) conceptualises the relational aspect by stating that: 'The goal is to develop a presence and an attunement where the participants are constantly trying to tune in to each other' (p.59). This also introduces the notion of a collaborative intent where coach and client aim to develop presence towards each other at the same time.

Whilst there is a growing body of knowledge in the practitioner coaching literature, there has been little formal research performed. However, there is a more mature understanding outside the coaching context, in other similar professions where dialogue is the basis of the professional interaction. For instance, in the therapeutic context, Bugenthal (1987) accentuates the relational aspects as well as depth of commitment involved by defining it as:

> The quality of being in a situation or relationship in which one intends at a deep level to participate as fully as she is able. Presence is expressed through mobilisation of one's sensitivity—both inner (to the subjective) and outer (to the situation and the other person[s] in it)—and through bringing into action one's capacity for response. (p.222)

He views the notion of presence as being something that is communicated and which has an action-oriented quality whilst also discriminating between an internal and external aspect. In the teaching context, Kessler (1998) identifies the qualities central to teaching presence as, 'An open heart, and a caring discipline' (p.31). She suggests presence can be cultivated or practiced, and in referencing 'an open heart' she introduces an attitude of compassion. Finally, Scharmer (2009), in an organisational context, comes from a different perspective again, incorporating a different temporal aspect to Silsbee's 'in-the-moment' description, by referencing a slowing down experience:

> A change of social space (a de-centering of the spatial experience), of social time (a slowing down of the temporal experience to stillness), and of self (a collapsing the boundaries of the ego). The outcomes of this process include a heightened level of individual energy and commitment; a heightened field quality of collective presence and energy, and profound long-term changes. (p.15)

The internal effects of presence are pronounced in this definition compared with others and he introduces outcomes in terms of heightened energy and long-term change. The concept is also informed by dialogic thinkers such as Buber (1958, 1988) and Bohm (1996), who view presence as a necessary requirement for communicating with another person effectively through fully utilising one's senses, perception and intuition. Buber calls this type of interaction 'genuine' or 'I-Thou' dialogue and differentiates its quality from most of the everyday conversations we participate in, which he calls 'I-It' dialogue, where the focus is on issues and objects rather than the person-to-person relationship.

These diverse descriptions demonstrate that the notion of presence is constructed in many different ways. It can be viewed as a state of awareness, involving being in-the-moment, being sensitive to inner thoughts and feelings, and being attuned to another person. It is described as something that can be experienced internally and expressed towards another person and it has utility, through effects or outcomes that emerge during dialogue. From the coaching perspective, it appears to be a desirable quality that contributes to coaching effectiveness and which can be practiced and learnt. My own experience, explained more fully below, is that presence can incorporate all of these views.

1.2 My Personal Experience of Presence

Over the past fifteen years as an executive coach, I have noticed that some coaching sessions or periods within a session seem to flow better than others. I have also observed the many flashes of insight in clients where problems seem to resolve without any obvious coaching intervention. I have watched as clarity has suddenly emerged and a transformative experience has followed. I have also worked with clients as they have experienced many smaller changes. I have often wondered why flashes of clarity, big or small, have happened at a particular time, and how these insights might become more commonplace. Sometimes I have felt heavily involved in this change process and sometimes I have been more of an apparent bystander or observer as my client made progress with me simply being in the room with them. As I noticed my own sense of connection with a client develop, I wondered what it was about my relationship with them that helped or hindered the coaching process.

As I have grown in experience I have become more aware of and sensitive to my feelings as I experience each moment with a client, and I now communicate my inner world more regularly as an integral part of my coaching process. This has led me to begin to appreciate how I personally experience my own sense of presence. For me, it requires an aware intention to notice my thoughts, feelings and somatic experiences during the coaching conversation. I often feel a sense of compassion towards my client and my mind can feel much like a still lake mirroring the reflections of its surroundings. I am not jumping to conclusions, thinking too hard or making any judgements: I am just receiving. Questions or reflections seem to emerge from within me without prior thought that seem to be helpful or useful to my client. Sometimes there is just silence and a patient, internal listening whilst waiting for something between us to emerge. At these times, I feel present and available to whatever is about to come and I trust that I don't need to be in control. I haven't always coached with this awareness and I remember spending a lot more time in thought, in my head, trying to work things out on behalf of my client.

I have found that this attitude of deep attention is reciprocated. My clients seem to respond in a way that creates a richer kind of communication between us that is very different to any other work-based conversations they have. This deeper sense of connection seems important and fundamental to the coaching process.

1.3 The Executive Coaching Context

The boundaries for the investigation were determined by the research question and the one-to-one nature of the coaching conversation. Given that the motivation for the study arose from my practice as an executive coach, I wished to contribute to this context and to differentiate this from other areas of coaching such as life coaching, personal development, career counselling and coaching supervision. Whilst there are similarities and overlaps in the characteristics and aims of all of these, the primary objectives differ from executive coaching.

In order to provide an appreciation of the research context, it was helpful to establish a working definition for executive coaching, to describe its purpose and to understand what makes it effective. A number of definitions exist, which are broadly similar in that they focus on a client's development during a one-to-one coaching relationship in an organisational leadership context (Blumberg, 2016; Ennis et al., 2015; Bartlett et al., 2014; Maltbia et al., 2014, 2011; Baron and Morin, 2009; Feldman and Lankau, 2005; Joo, 2005; Wasylyshyn et al., 2003; Hall et al., 1999). For example, Maltbia et al. (2014, p.165) cite a common understanding of executive coaching as, 'A development process that builds a leader's capabilities to achieve professional and organisational goals', whereas Feldman and Lankau (2005, p.829) include a temporal aspect: 'A short- to medium-term relationship between an executive and a consultant with the purpose of improving an executive's work effectiveness'. For the purposes of this study a fuller definition offered by Ennis et al. (2015) is adopted:

> Executive coaching is a one-on-one individualized process to benefit the leader and his/her organization. Working with goals defined by both the leader and the organization, a qualified and trusted coach uses various coaching methods and feedback data to develop the leader's capacity for current and future leadership. This coaching is guided by a coaching partnership to achieve maximum impact and the highest level of learning. (Ennis et al., 2015, p.8)

A successful coaching engagement helps the client to achieve goals such as improved performance, sustained behaviour change, and increased self-awareness (Ennis et al., 2015; Bartlett et al., 2014; Wasylyshyn, 2003; Hall et al., 1999). In so doing, there is reasonable consensus that success is dependent on three broad criteria: the competency and attitude of the coach; the strength of the coach-client relationship; and the intrinsic motivation of the

client (Sonesh et al., 2015; Smith and Brummel, 2013; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011; McKenna and Davis, 2009).

In the literature, presence is seen as an important aspect of the coaching process that contributes to the first two of these criteria. It is cited as a core coaching competency in recent research (Blumberg, 2016; Lawley and Linder-Pelz, 2016; Maltbia et al., 2014; Griffiths and Campbell, 2008) and is recognised in the coaching competency frameworks of some of the professional coaching bodies, such as the Executive Coaching Forum, the Association for Coaching (AC), and the International Coach Federation (ICF). In addition, a number of studies investigating the strength of the coach-client relationship have referenced presence as a factor (Sonesh et al., 2015; Stelter, 2014; Baron and Morin, 2009; Drake, 2007; Gyllensten and Palmer, 2007). With respect to the third criteria of effective coaching, there is a lack of research into the client experience of presence in general and its involvement in a client's intrinsic motivation in particular. My practitioner experience suggests to me that an association exists. For instance, a lack of motivation on the part of the client is likely to affect their ability to be fully present in the coaching process. Viewing presence wholly from the coach's perspective as a single element or skill within a competency framework seems restrictive and reflects a reductionist stance. My sense is that the concept is more holistic and relational in nature. In summary, this investigation incorporates a broader meaning of presence than is apparent in the current coaching literature, incorporating the client's voice and acknowledging the complexity of the coaching process in a qualitative inquiry.

1.4 The Research Gap

A superficial review of the literature suggested that there is a lack of research into the concept of presence in coaching and yet a number of researchers have recommended further studies in this area. Will et al. (2016) requested that: 'Future studies should consider the impact of the coach's presence on the client's behaviour' (p.62). Drake (2007) also recommended further research, which he felt should focus on a contextual rather than transactional approach to coaching with an emphasis on, 'The dynamic field and the coach's presence' (p.289). In the specific context of executive coaching, Wasylyshyn and Kaiser (2015) noted that the role of presence, 'has yet to be researched' (p.287). In response to this gap in knowledge, a more detailed literature review was conducted to inform a deeper understanding of how presence is conceptualised and how it might contribute to or be involved in the coaching process (see chapter 2). Thus, the following questions were asked:

1. How are concepts of presence described in the selected literature?

2. How does the selected literature inform the practice of executive coaching?

In conducting the review, Oxford Brookes' Discover search engine was used to review the internal Oxford Brookes library catalogue and external journal articles and conference papers. Google scholar was also used to identify sources. The review included all relevant peer-reviewed journals relating to presence in coaching and the helping professions, as well as seminal texts, academic sources (such as dissertations, theses and conference papers), and non-academic sources (such as professional practice books and articles). The main databases searched were: Academic Search Complete; British Education Index; Business Source Complete; EBSCO; Emerald and PsycINFO. Primary search terms were: presence; coaching presence; therapeutic presence; nursing presence; teaching presence; executive coaching; coaching; and dialogue.

A search of post-2000 academic journal articles with presence in the title revealed just three coaching-based studies and none in the specific context of executive coaching. Siminovitch and Van Eron (2008) investigated the part presence plays in the intentional use of self as a coaching process, whilst both Korthagen et al.'s (2013) investigation into the coaching of teachers and Kinsella's (2012) study involving on-line coaching of mature students were informed by Scharmer's (2009) model of presence. Presence also emerged in the coaching literature as a phenomenon connected to other concepts such as empathy (Will et al., 2016); Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow (Wesson, 2010; Du Toit, 2014); coach attitude (Augustijnen et al., 2011); meaning-making (Stelter, 2007); mindfulness (Passmore, 2009; Collard and Walsh, 2008) and collaborative dialogue (Stelter, 2014). In addition, there is a growing opinion-based practitioner literature on presence, which argues that presence is a key factor involved in the quality of the coaching relationship and the coach's use of self (Iliffe-Wood, 2014; Du Toit, 2014; Silsbee, 2008). Presence is also recognised by some professional coaching bodies as an important competence (ICF website, 2017; AC website, 2017). In light of the recommendations for further study and the current interest in the concept, a more systematic analysis is required of what presence is and how it is involved in the coaching process.

1.5 Research Aim and Objectives

Having identified a gap to be addressed, the research question investigated was: *"What is presence and how is it experienced by coaches and clients during the executive coaching conversation?"* The aim was to explore both the meaning and experience of presence from the perspective of both participants in the coaching dialogue. To achieve this aim, the study focussed on the following objectives:

1. To review the literature and critically evaluate research in coaching, psychotherapy, nursing and teaching;

2. To explore presence in executive coaching from the perspective of both client and coach;

3. To evaluate the research data to develop a broader and more evolved concept for presence that addresses both its meaning and its involvement in the coaching engagement; and

4. To contribute to the body of theoretical knowledge by providing a richer conceptual map that incorporates new insights into presence in executive coaching.

In meeting these objectives, the research will contribute to theoretical and practical knowledge by proposing a more substantial concept than has previously existed, supported by a rigorous research process. It will also enrich the language and conversation concerning presence and contribute to the debate concerning its role in executive coaching. As a result, it will enable both coaches and clients to improve their understanding of the concept and its significance in the conversations they have. It may also help the development of recommendations for practice that will be relevant to coaches, coaching supervisors, educators and assessors of coaches.

Having introduced some opening definitions, summarised my personal experience, identified the research gap and presented the objectives of the study, the next section presents the rationale for extending the literature review to incorporate a wider body of literature and provides an overview of scope.

1.6 Widening the Net

The literature review was extended beyond coaching to include studies and articles from other helping professions. The reason for broadening the scope beyond coaching is a desire to understand how presence is conceptualised in other one-to-one relation-based professions, with a view to leveraging this learning to inform the specific context of executive coaching. The phenomenon has been researched more deeply in psychotherapy, nursing and teaching, and over fifty post-2000, largely qualitative academic papers have been published with 'presence' in the title. In comparison, only two studies relate to coaching over the same period (Maltbia et al., 2011; Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2008). The concepts of presence emerging from these areas are situated within a variety of theoretical perspectives that also underpin coaching such as phenomenology, humanism, the transpersonal, Gestalt psychology, dialogic theory and person-centred approaches. A brief introduction to this literature is provided below.

Therapeutic presence has been the subject of a growing number of studies and articles throughout the twenty-first century. For instance, Bugental (1992) described it as mobilising and responding to one's sensitivity towards internal and external perceptions; Geller and Greenberg (2002) emphasised that it involved 'being with' rather than 'doing to' the client; and Colosimo (2013) accentuated a deep sense of listening.

The context of nursing brings with it elements of the nurse-patient dialogue centred on patient care. The theory of 'true presence' is posited by Parse (2015) as a way of being that takes the other person's values as its guide, where the nurse approaches patients with an intense attention to the meaning of what they are experiencing. Parse situated her concept within a paradigm of care she called 'humanbecoming', which assumes human beings are expert in their own health and where there is an emphasis on the co-created human experience. Similarly, teaching presence is seen by Solloway (2000) as a quality of compassionate and non-judgemental attention, akin to mindfulness, that helps a teacher be open to the complexities of the classroom. Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) posit a theoretical foundation for teaching presence as a response to an educational climate of checklists, measures and standards. They include alert awareness, compassionate receptiveness and a mental, emotional, and physical connection to students in their definition. Gunnlaugson (2011) bases his idea of teaching presence on an entirely different theoretical foundation, drawing on Scharmer's (2009) concept, which involves reflecting on

experiences of the past and learning from the future as it emerges. It requires a deep, inward listening and an ability to connect to intuitive, tacit wisdom. By suspending judgement and letting go of old belief systems, new learning emerges.

In considering transferability, insights from these perspectives should be treated with caution due to the differences in context. In particular, the balance of power between the professional and their patient, client or student is different to that of the coach-client in executive coaching. However, a brief synopsis of this wider knowledge base suggests that similar ideas of presence can provide insights that are relevant to the research question and are worthy of further investigation. In summary, notions of presence emerging from this literature are involved with or connected to a variety of relational concepts such as being collaborative, intuitive, mindful, compassionate, non-judgemental, reflective and empathic.

Knowledge also exists in other contexts. For instance, Sanchez-Vives and Slater (2005) studied the immersive experience of virtual reality and how people become present within their virtual experience, whilst Wilson (2010) and Platt (2007) conceptualised it as an aspect of divine experience. Causal mechanisms for presence have also been investigated, such as the neurophysiological mechanisms posited by Persinger and Makarec (1992). The implications of this secondary body of literature for coaching are not clear. The virtual reality sense of presence raises interesting questions of who or what are we present with when immersed in the virtual world, whilst divine presence appears to be a different concept altogether. Both contexts are considered to be sufficiently removed from executive coaching to be considered beyond the scope of the study. Likewise, since the study is exploratory and concerned with questions of how presence is experienced, rather than why, the neuroscience aspects are also excluded from the investigation.

The theoretical perspectives investigated in the literature review (see chapter 2) are summarised in Figure 1.1. As explained, knowledge was drawn from the professional domains of executive coaching, coaching, psychotherapy, nursing and teaching. This literature was itself informed by underlying theories and philosophies such as phenomenology, humanism, transpersonal theories, Gestalt psychology, person-centred approaches and the philosophy of dialogue. By synthesising knowledge from these multiple standpoints, a sound theoretical foundation for presence was established.

Figure 1.1 The Theoretical Perspectives on Presence
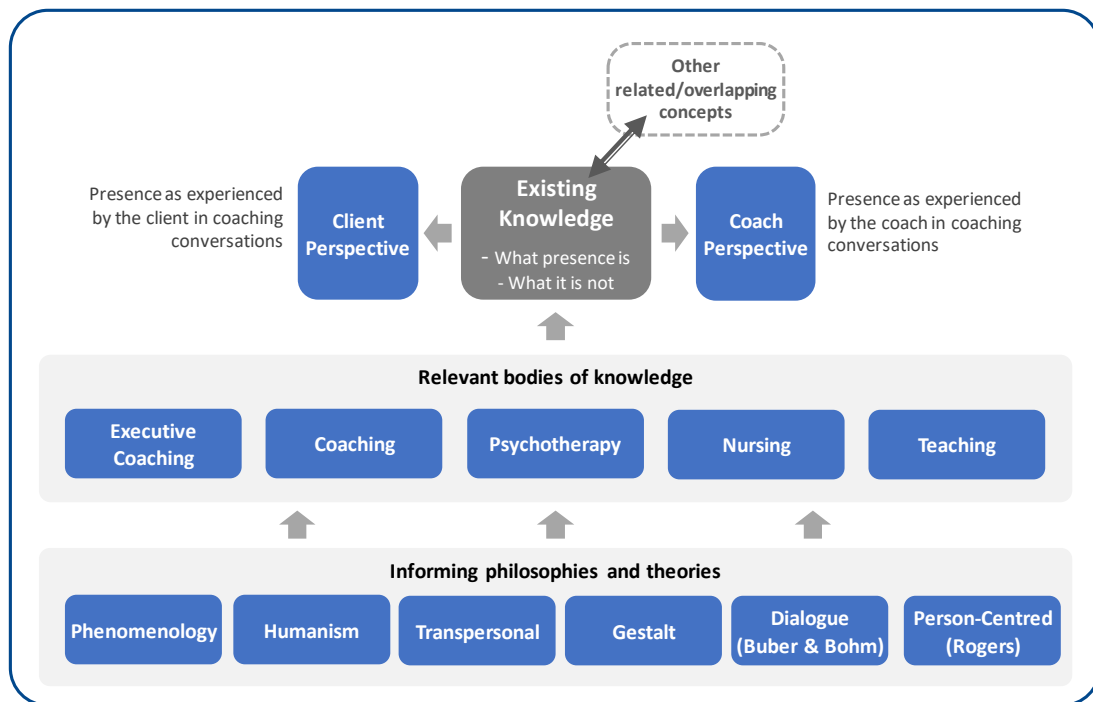
1.7 Research Design

The investigation was performed within a constructivist research paradigm, through which the multiple realities of research participants were investigated using the methodology of conceptual encounter (De Rivera, 1981). This methodology is consistent with constructivist research and suitable for exploring human experience, since it emphasizes the collaborative construction of abstract concepts that are grounded in the direct experience of research partners. A summary of the approach used is shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 The Conceptual Encounter and Focus Group Process
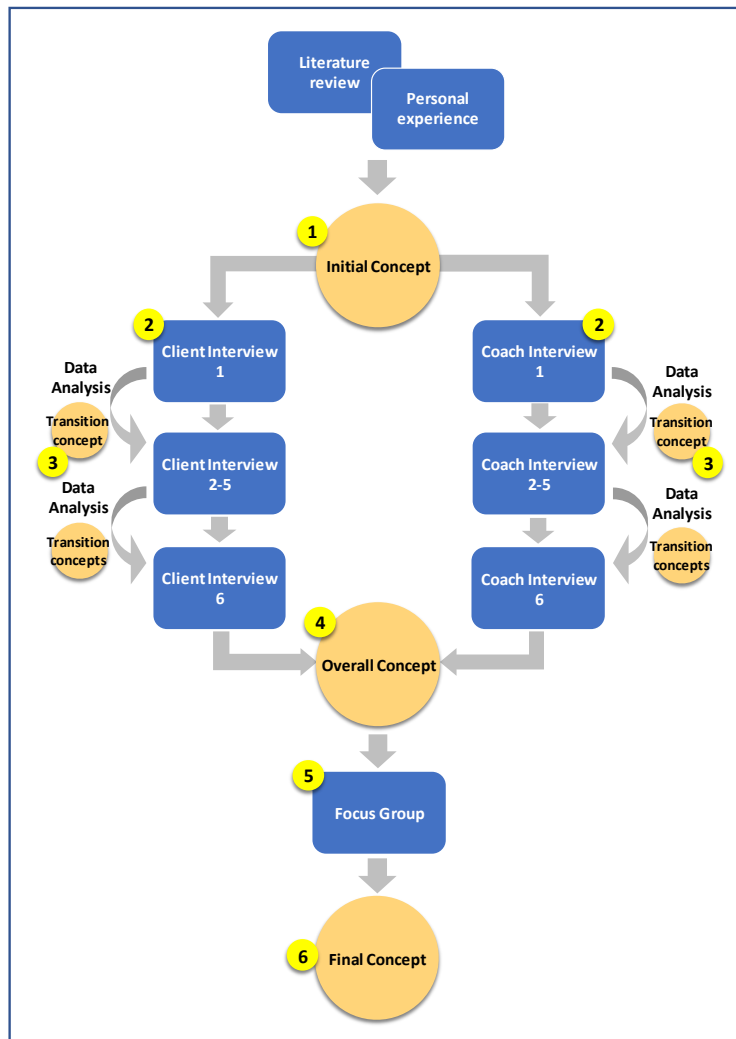
It firstly involved the generation of an initial concept informed by a combination of my own experience and a review of the literature (step 1). Semi-structured interviews with client and coach research partners were then conducted in parallel (step 2) so that the concept evolved independently from each perspective. Data analysis was performed in an iterative, inductive manner so that each concept moved towards maturity via a number of transitions (step 3). The outcome of the data analysis from these two parallel inquiries was an overall concept that encompassed both perspectives (step 4). To extend the research, the interviews were followed by a focus group consisting of two coaches and two clients (step 5), which culminated in the final concept (step 6). This extension was designed to leverage the creative power of group dynamics and explore group consensus to provide further insights. The focus group complemented the conceptual encounter interviews and improved the credibility of

the research by demonstrating to participants the transparency of the evolutionary process. This design is presented in detail in chapter 3.

1.8 The Structure of the Thesis

The framework that guided this study is shown in Figure 1.3. It represents how I approached the investigation of the research problem and provides a coherent structure for the study. At its core are the purpose, context and research question. These are connected through a series of 'onion rings' to a review of existing knowledge, the choice of a suitable methodological approach, the presentation of findings, and the consequent contribution to theory and practice. A brief synopsis of the chapters is provided below.

Figure 1.3 The Structure of the Thesis
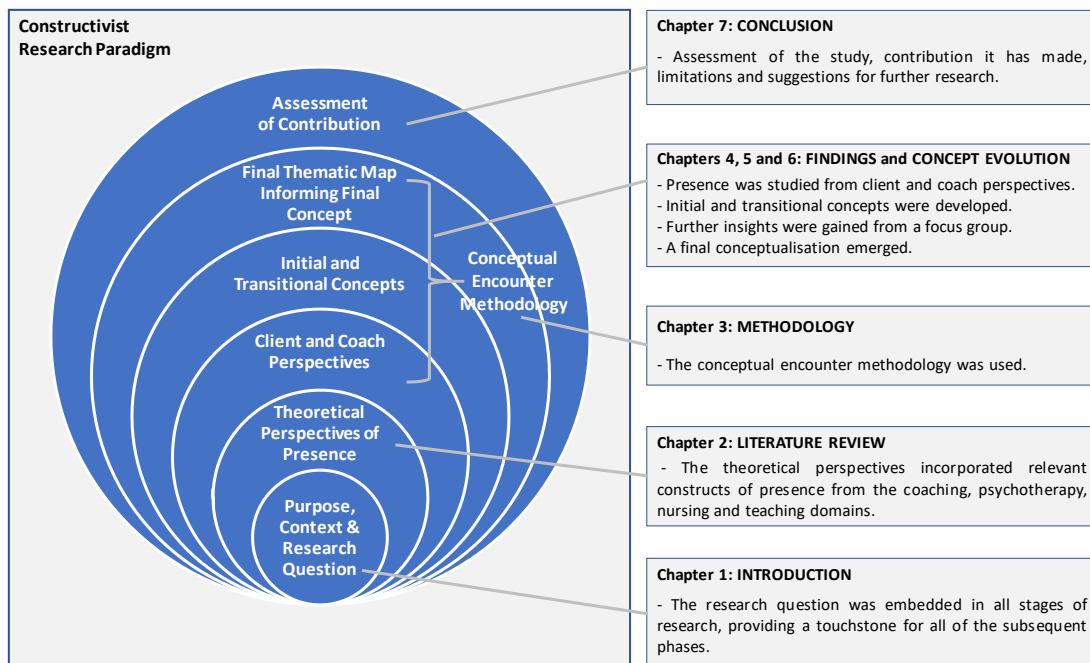
Chapter 1 – Introduction. This chapter has introduced the research problem and my motivation for investigating it. It has located presence within the executive coaching context and summarised the scope of the literature related to presence. It has then set out how the problem will be investigated by introducing the research strategy.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review. This chapter reviews the field of knowledge related to presence. The sources and scope of the literature are first described and justified. The coaching literature is then presented and the scope extended to include other helping

professions including psychotherapy, nursing and teaching. Some broad themes emerge from the review, which are presented and critically reviewed. The review is organised around both the professional contexts and these emergent themes.

Chapter 3 – Methodology. The research strategy for the study is presented. This includes discussion of the theoretical framework and the rationale for choosing a constructivist research paradigm. The chosen methodology of conceptual encounter is described and substantiated as the primary research approach. The rationale for extending the research through the use of a focus group is also explained. In designing the research, the approach to selecting research partners, and the means of collecting and analysing data are described. This recognises the iterative approach to concept development as the interviews progress, as laid out in the methodology, which means that data collection and data analysis are intermingled. Issues of quality, reflexivity and ethics are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapters 4 and 5 present the research findings. Chapter 4 reports on the nature of presence, including its qualities, structure and dynamics, whilst chapter 5 focuses on the conditions that help a person to have presence and the effects or outcomes of presence during the coaching conversation.

Chapter 6 – Evolution of the Concept. Since the main artefact emerging from the study is a conceptualisation of presence in executive coaching conversation, this chapter describes how this evolved. Whereas chapters 4 and 5 reported on how the findings were organised into the detailed codes, sub-themes and themes, this section illustrates how an overall, dynamic concept emerged from the data. It begins with an introduction to the initial concept and presents some of the transitional ideas and structures that acted as waypoints towards a final rendering. It illustrates the creative process, which involved a continuous moving back and forth through the data, combined with reflection and contemplation, so that as the researcher I was, in De Rivera's words, 'gradually becoming more alert to the nuances and patterns of the phenomenon' (De Rivera, 1981, p.12). The chapter culminates in the presentation of the final concept.

Chapter 7 – Conclusion. This chapter summarises the contribution that the research has made to theory, practice and methodology, and revisits the research question in light of the findings. It presents the main claims of the study, discusses limitations and makes recommendations for further research.

Chapter 2 – Literature Review

Given the lack of research specific to executive coaching, the scope of the review firstly encompasses an appreciation of the current concepts of presence in both the executive coaching and generic coaching literature. It then extends to include constructs of presence in other helping professions that have a similar dyadic, relational quality. These include psychotherapy, nursing and teaching. Exploring presence as a concept in these related contexts enables learning from a wider body of knowledge that has relevance to executive coaching.

2.1 The Coaching Literature

One of the reasons for exploring how presence is involved in the executive coaching conversation is in response to the need to learn more about the abilities that executive coaches need to coach effectively. This need is referenced by Feldman and Lankau (2005) in their review of the future agenda for executive coaching research: 'Researchers should focus on identifying critical elements of the process that characterize functional and effective relationships' (p.844). Similarly, Bono et al. (2009) studied executive coaching practices and concluded that, 'An important area for future research is to determine what knowledge, skills and abilities coaches must have to address the various types of issues they face' (p.392). This section appraises presence in the coaching literature both from the perspective of a competency and as an aspect of the coaching process. Two key themes emerged: the internal dimension and the relational dimension of presence.

2.1.1 Presence as a Coaching Competency

In their study into evidence-based coaching standards, Griffiths and Campbell (2008) reported that clients and coaches made frequent reference to the notion of coaching presence, which they described as the ability to tune into or connect to the client. This finding has been extended by recent research into core executive and organisational coaching competencies that have situated presence as a coaching competency related to a coach's emotional intelligence and which contributes to an effective relationship with the client (Lawley and Linder-Pelz, 2016; Maltbia et al., 2014). Coaching practitioner literature describes the competency of presence in similar terms (ICF website, 2017; AC website, 2017;

Cox et al., 2014; Ely et al., 2010, Bono et al., 2009, Feldman and Lankau, 2005). The International Coach Federation (ICF), a professional coaching body, incorporates coaching presence into its competency framework, emphasising the need to be fully conscious and able to listen to the client with one's whole self and with all of the senses, including intuition (ICF website, 2017). It also highlights the need to practice being present. The Association for Coaching (AC) also includes presence as a competency, highlighting the need to pay close attention and be engaged with a client (AC website, 2017). However, there is a lack of agreement as to the meaning of presence as a competency. This is in part due to a lack of consistency in the competency frameworks themselves. The following analysis of how presence is understood by the professional bodies illustrates this lack of clarity.

The ICF describes eleven coaching competencies grouped into four categories: co-creating the relationship; setting the foundation; communicating effectively; and facilitating learning and results. Coaching presence sits within the first category of 'co-creating the relationship'. Griffiths and Campbell (2008) empirically examined the ICF competencies and presented evidence that presence was connected as much to other categories of 'communicating effectively' and 'facilitating learning and results'. In contrast, the Association for Coaching (AC) lists twelve executive coaching competencies that overlap but also differ significantly from the ICF framework. One category of their model is 'managing self and maintaining coaching presence' (AC website, 2017); however, recent research by Sonesh et al. (2015) suggests presence could be part of a different AC category called 'relational skills' (p. 192). They also associate presence with empathy (referenced by AC but not ICF); respect (referenced by both ICF and AC); and trust (referenced by ICF but not AC). This lack of consistency is indicative of a more complex, systemic set of interdependencies between presence and these other relational elements involved in coaching. It also suggests that deeper structural issues exist in framing presence as a competency at all. These disparate arguments in the literature demonstrate a lack of common agreement of how presence is involved in the coaching process and how it contributes to overall coaching effectiveness.

2.1.2 Presence as part of the Coaching Process

Whilst different researchers and practitioners conceptualise the coaching process in different ways, presence has been cited as a common underlying element (Wasylyshyn and Kaiser, 2015; Stelter, 2014; Armstrong, 2012; Augustijnen et al., 2011; De Quincey, 2000). For instance, Wasylyshyn and Kaiser (2015) conceptualised presence as involving an ability to

create a trusting, relational space where vulnerability can be expressed and difficult issues discussed, in order to generate a sense of perspective and harmony. Armstrong (2012) also connected presence with the relational aspects of coaching, suggesting that it was a fundamental condition. In presenting her concept of 'coach-custodian', she emphasised the importance of 'knowledge between' (understanding the dialogic space and facilitating client-centred learning), rather than 'knowledge about' (for example leadership or management theory) or 'knowledge how' (a coaching method or process). In developing 'knowledge between', a coach needed: 'A capacity to be present, reflexive and to maintain the space of dialogue' (p.41).

Stelter (2014, 2012) presented a similar concept of coaching that he called 'collaborative practice', based on four pre-conditions: responsiveness; relational attunement; withness-thinking; and conversation ethics. He saw presence as the scaffolding for all of these conditions. Responsiveness means each person deeply listening to the other and working with the spontaneous in-the-moment reflections that emerge. Relational attunement involves, 'Developing a presence and an attunement, where participants are constantly trying to tune in to each other' (p. 59). Withness-thinking, adopted from Shotter (2005), involves a strong somatic sensation when one person comes into living, interactive contact with another. In the coaching context, 'In a mutual process of withness-thinking and presence, the conversation becomes a dynamic dialogue' (Stelter, 2014, p.60). Finally, conversation ethics involves navigating the coaching conversation based on an ethical stance of commitment to mutual development and collaborative meaning-making, with responsibility for each partner to be, 'Present for the sake of the other as well as for themselves' (p.60).

With the above pre-conditions in place, Stelter (2012) developed an argument that transformational coaching operated on three levels. The first, akin to Armstrong's (2012) 'knowledge about' discussed above, involves meaning-making based on objective experience (for instance, the issue being discussed). The second, reflecting 'knowledge between', is concerned with a process of subjective relation between coach and client, which requires a stronger relational connection. The third is concerned with learning and change through joint meaning-making based on a deeper exploration of identity and values. Stelter (2012) envisaged a 'third generation of coaching' that integrates these three levels to provide the

client with a powerful means for change. He posited that it is through having an attitude of presence that third-generation coaching occurs.

A notion of presence in the context of a transformational coaching process is also developed by De Quincey (2000) through his idea of intersubjective co-creativity, where one person experiences themselves differently as a result of engaging with another, who is a, 'Reciprocating center of experience' (p.138). In De Quincey's terms, being in relation allows a person to become more aware of their own identity and self: 'There is something about the nature of consciousness, it seems, that requires the presence of the "other" as another subject that can acknowledge my being' (p.148). He emphasises the need for a coach to have a quality of 'engaged presence' to access this deeper level of relation. Experiencing relation in this way is not straightforward, as De Quincey noted: 'The experiential difference is dramatic. Unfortunately, I can no more give a prescription for how to do this than I can for how to fall in love. But I trust that the ability is innate' (p.152).

In summary, presence is conceptualised as a competency and aspect of the coaching process in different ways; however, two broad themes emerge. Firstly, it involves a person's awareness of their thoughts, sensations and feelings in-the-moment, which can be labelled the internal dimension of presence. Secondly, it is involved in the experience of being in relation with another, where it is associated with developing a level of depth in the coach-client relationship, which can be labelled the relational dimension. These two themes are discussed in more detail below.

2.1.3 The Internal Dimension of Presence

The internal dimension relates to the coach's awareness of being present in-the-moment and encompasses their phenomenological experience (Iliffe-Wood, 2014; Du Toit, 2014; Maltbia et al., 2014; Stelter, 2012, 2009, 2007; Silsbee, 2008; Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2008, 2006; Bluckert, 2006). For example, Stelter (2007) and Silsbee (2008) perceived it as a state of awareness, with Silsbee (2008) describing an experience that is, 'In the moment, characterised by the felt experience of timelessness, connectedness and a larger truth' (p.22). By being present, the coach can communicate insights and observations back to the client with the benefit of heightening client awareness (Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2008). Similarly, Maltbia et al. (2014) referenced this internal dimension when situating presence as an emotional competence involving a process of self-awareness, where a coach accesses

their coaching presence, 'By being conscious of one's own thinking and effectively managing emotions (self and others) to ensure client engagements are experienced as open, flexible and productive' (p.177). Here, they link presence with an intended outcome that contributed to coaching effectiveness. This dimension of presence is further highlighted by Bluckert (2006) who made an association with authenticity. This relates to the internal dimension in the sense that it involves an awareness of self and values. Specifically, he equated presence to an awareness of the congruence between one's values and action, stating that it was, 'The degree of integration between what you say you are about and how you act in the world' (p.126). This relationship to authenticity is echoed by Tsivacou (2005), who views presence as an awareness of the inclinations of one's inner self.

A connection between presence and mindfulness emerged as an aspect of inner awareness (Cox, 2013; Hall, 2013; Passmore, 2009; Collard and Walsh, 2008; Childs, 2007). Collard and Walsh (2008) described mindfulness as, 'being fully awake, about being in the here and now, about being connected to the flow of every experience and enjoying a sense of oneness between mind and body' (p.33). This is very similar to the construct of the internal dimension of presence and there is an argument for seeing the two concepts as equivalent, exemplified by Childs' description of mindfulness as: 'Being in the present on purpose' (Childs, 2007, p.367). Other recent research however, supports a view that they are closely related yet distinct, with Hall (2013) positing that presence is a condition for mindfulness: 'Presence is the underlying state that we access through mindfulness and is also available to the client in the coaching conversation' (p.43). A similar relationship emerged from a very different context through a study by Büssing et al. (2013) into the use of mindfulness techniques to improve situational awareness in German soldiers. This study also characterised presence as an underlying construct of mindfulness and demonstrated that the state of being present improved self-control.

In contrast to mindfulness, Wesson (2010) linked the notion of being present with characteristics of Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow in her study of flow in coaching. Csikszentmihalyi defined flow as a state of consciousness that occurred when a person was fully absorbed in an 'optimal experience' i.e. an activity which was performed for its own enjoyment and which fully challenged their mental or physical abilities. Wesson investigated the subjective experience of flow in one-to-one coaching situations, discriminating between 'coach-flow' and 'client-flow'. She reported clients experienced flow when they accessed

both their intellect and their intuition, whilst coaches facilitated flow through their sense of presence, or constant observation. Thus the internal dimension of presence seems related to both flow and mindfulness. However, whilst both are reported to be experienced as states of awareness, there are clear differences. Whilst flow is concerned with being so fully absorbed that there are no distracting thoughts and awareness of surroundings is lost, mindfulness is characterised by a hyper-focus on being fully awake in the here-and-now.

2.1.4 The Relational Dimension of Presence

On the basis that coaching conversations have the potential to be deep and constructive experiences, the relational dimension conceptualises how presence is involved in the interaction between client and coach. Thinkers such as Buber (1958, 1988) and Bohm (1996) viewed dialogue as the essence of human relationships, seeing it as a means of communicating or meeting with another person through fully utilising one's senses, perception and intuition. Buber (1958) described presence as a necessary aspect of what he termed a 'genuine' or 'I-Thou' dialogue. He differentiated this from other forms of dialogue by arguing that there is a dialogical dimension to human existence that has two orientations. The first is a subject-object or 'I-It' perspective, which dominates human relationships and is common whenever there is discussion of an issue, thing or opinion. A person is focused either on an object, for example, the coaching issue, or sees the other person as an object. This type of communication leads, in Buber's view, to a surface-level relationship between the participants in the conversation.

The second orientation is an I-Thou realisation, which requires a much greater investment of one's self in the relationship. There is a total immersion in the experience of being with another which, 'brings out the inner meaning of life in intensified perception and existence' (Buber and Herberg, 1956, p.12). A pre-condition for I-Thou dialogue is that a person invests their whole self in being present, genuine and unreserved in their communication through an attitude that Buber called inclusion. Inclusion is an aspect of relation between two people, where one party experiences a common event from the standpoint of the other without losing any of their own felt reality of the same experience. I-Thou dialogue also requires a person to fully recognise and confirm the presence of the other so that the other consequently feels this sense of confirmation and being truly understood. The combination of inclusion and confirmation raises dialogue to a transformative level where two people meet at a different, fully mutual level of relationship. Gordon (2001) associated I-Thou

dialogue with a relational immersion of presence: 'The realm of the Thou emerges when I am in full presence to the being to whom I relate, to whom I speak the primary word I-Thou' (p.117). He acknowledged that the type of interaction Buber describes is very different to the type of conversation normally found in the workplace: 'In the lives of those persons who are totally engrossed in the realm of the I–It, for instance businesspeople or politicians, moments of meeting the Thou through grace are probably very rare' (p.118).

In coaching, Buber's concept of I-Thou and its connection to presence finds parallels in the coaching processes presented in section 2.1.2 above, such as the coach-custodian (Armstrong, 2012), withness-thinking (Stelter, 2014), and engaged presence (De Quincey, 2000). They espouse similar dialogic attitudes and their common aim is to develop a much deeper relationship with a client than would normally be experienced in the workplace.

A further aspect of the relational dimension is the concept of the coach as a witness to the client. Siminovitch and Van Eron (2008), informed by a Gestalt approach to coaching, argued that the coach's supportive presence as a witness to the client's learning was an important function of the coach's role. In a later work, they stated that the coach's presence was, 'A powerful witness to assist the client's consciousness' (Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2008, p.105). Similarly, Stevenson (2016) and Stelter (2014) referred to witnessing, with the latter viewing it as an important part of the relational process: 'The coach will act as the reflective dialogue partner (a witness)' (Stelter, 2014, p.62).

The literature relating to presence in coaching is summarised in Figure 2.1 below. Moving in an anti-clockwise direction, the map depicts literature associating presence with the coaching process; the client; the internal and relational dimensions; and its benefits. The map reflects the lack of agreement in the definition of presence as a competency and the lack of knowledge concerning the client experience of presence.

Figure 2.1 Literature Map of Presence in Coaching

Deep Listening
Stelter (2014, 2012)

Third Generation
Stelter (2015)

Engaged Presence
Childs (2007)

Authentic
Bluckert (2006)
Tsivacou (2005)

Mindfulness
Cox & Jenkins (2013)
Hall (2013)
Passmore (2009)
Collard & Walsh (2008)
Childs (2007)

Presence as Competency

Lack of agreed, consistent definition
ICF, AC, EMCC websites (2017)
Sonesh (2015)
Maltbia et al (2014)
Cox et al (2014)
Ely et al (2010)
Bono et al (2009)
Griffiths and Campbell (2008)
Feldman and Lankau (2005)

Coach Attitude

Lack of research into client perspective

Client Flow
Wesson (2010)

Client

Presence in Coaching

Benefits

Powerful Means for Change
Stelter (2012)

Heighten Client Awareness
Siminovitch and Van Eron (2006)

Stelter (2012, 2007)
Silsbee (2008)
Du Toit (2007)
Siminovitch and Van Eron (2006)

Here-and-Now

Characteristics/ Qualities

Relational Aspects

Mutuality and Connection
Stelter (2014)
Silsbee (2008)
De Quincey (2000)

Experience of Flow/ Timelessness

State of Awareness
Silsbee (2008)

Wesson (2010)
Silsbee (2008)

Genuine Dialogue
Gordon (2001)
Bohm (1996)
Buber (1958, 1988)
Buber and Herberg (1956)

Knowledge Between
Armstrong (2012)

Withness Thinking
Stelter, (2014, 2012)
Shotter (2006)

Witnessing
Stelter (2014)

Stevenson (2016)
Siminovitch and Van Eron (2008)

Internal Dimension

Relational Dimension

2.2 The Psychotherapy Literature on Presence

The psychotherapy literature related to presence has relevance to the executive coaching context as the therapist-patient relationship shares similar characteristics, such as: a one-to-one, confidential, professional relationship; requiring the professional and client to develop an effective working relationship; and aiming for behavioural change that involves enhancing client self-awareness and learning (Joo, 2005). The concept of presence in the context of psychotherapy has been widely investigated in recent years, and concepts relating to the internal and relational dimensions have emerged through a number of academic articles and studies (Schneider, 2015; Anderson et al., 2014; Boeck, 2014; Colosimo and Pos, 2015; Geller and Greenberg, 2012, 2010; Granick, 2011; Krug, 2009; Bradford, 2007; Chidiac and Denham-Vaughan, 2007; Cooper, 2005; Friedman, 2002; Greenberg and Geller, 2001; Craig 2000; Bugental, 1992; Jacobs, 1989; Rotenberg, 1983).

The focus has generally been on the presence of the therapist ('therapeutic presence'), which is seen as essential to the intended outcome of healing arising from the therapeutic encounter (Greenberg and Geller, 2001). Yontef (2002, 1976) argued that presence requires authenticity, transparency and humility, regarding it as a foundation for awareness, which allows a therapist to respond appropriately and wholly to a given situation. Similarly, Jacobs (1989) viewed presence as key to the therapeutic process by contributing to a feeling of being understood, as well as engendering feelings of safety and well-being.

The notion of witnessing was proposed by Anderson et al. (2014), which depended on an internal sensing function where presence acted as an enabler. Boeck (2014), and Granick (2011) also placed witnessing at the heart of their concept of therapeutic presence, with the former arguing that presence included, 'Bearing witness to their client, co-creating empathy and cultivating therapeutic affirmation' (p.2). Connected to witnessing is the sense of being watchful. This term was used by Geller (2013) in her research into therapeutic listening, whilst Anderson et al. (2014) referred to 'watchful observation' (p.8).

The ability to listen on a deeper level than normal is commonly linked to presence. For example, Colosimo (2013) concluded that presence was the foundation for active listening, whilst Lee and Prior (2013) found that presence contributed to the ability to listen deeply with both the conscious and unconscious mind. They advocated that professional trainers should transmit or model presence as a means of developing listening in students. Similarly,

Gardner (2015) observed that presence enabled, 'Listening from the heart' (p.82), whilst Geller and Greenberg (2002) felt presence meant listening as a whole-body experience.

In common with the coaching literature, presence in psychotherapy is also informed by concepts relating to mindfulness. For instance, Baker (2016) studied trainee therapists' experience of mindfulness and found that presence helped them, 'To experience a deeper relationship' (p.12). In addition, Anderson et al. (2014) developed a construct comprising qualities of curiosity, humility, silence, and reverence, and concluded that a mindful approach to therapy could be used that incorporated these facets. Lastly, Schneider (2015) differentiated presence in the psychotherapeutic context from its association with mindfulness as a spiritual practice, arguing that there were a number of secular ways that it could evolve, including through profound interpersonal relationships. In becoming present, Bradford (2007) claimed that, 'The therapist 'gets present' by collecting himself in a way that calms and clears his mind for an in-the-moment encounter' (p.28). Likewise, Geller and Grenberg (2002) reported therapists used their breath, 'As a focal cue or using encouraging self-statements in becoming present' (p.77), whilst Granick (2011) found that therapists made an intentional effort to become present through body language and eye contact during a session.

Colosimo and Pos (2015) sought to clarify the relationship between presence, mindfulness and empathy. In common with Hall (2013) and Childs (2007) presented earlier in the coaching context, they concluded that presence was an underlying factor for mindfulness. They also found that whilst it was an antecedent for empathy, it was, 'Necessary but not sufficient for therapists' capacity to express empathy' (p. 111). In proposing presence as a key factor for mindfulness and empathy, they linked it to therapeutic effectiveness, stating that it was, 'A fundamental, trans-theoretical phenomenon implicated in the provision of effective psychotherapy' (p.111). This link between presence and empathy was also emphasised by Friedman (2002), who saw presence as an essential quality with which to experience the other side of the relationship.

Colosimo (2013) investigated non-presence, defining it as, 'The outcome of any process that interferes with, blocks, or prevents the therapist from communicating that he/she is present' (p.24). He identified constituents such as, 'Not-here' when the therapist is distracted; 'not-now' when there is a lack of relational synchrony between therapist and client; being 'closed'

when the therapist is not receptive or open to the client; and 'separate' when there is a lack of connection or rapport in the relationship. In further research, he also cited common reasons to be pulled away from presence, including intellectualisation, fear, fatigue, reactivity and distractibility (Colosimo, 2015). The 'closed' supposition is supported by Geller et al. (2014), who described a lack of presence occurring when the therapist shuts down, resulting in the client experiencing a feeling of lack of safety, causing them to withdraw.

In addition to the internal and relational themes that have already been discussed, two other major aspects of presence emerged from the psychotherapy context that were not overt in the coaching literature. These are the external dimension, and the therapeutic presence as a way of being, discussed in the following sections.

2.2.1 The External Dimension of Presence

The theme of the external dimension of presence encompasses how presence is perceived by others. Rotenberg (1983) posited that it was necessary for the therapist to feel the client's presence in order to communicate fully with them. Friedman (2002) went further, suggesting that growth only occurred through relationships where each person was fully present to the other. In his study investigating relational depth, Cooper (2005) reported findings related to a reciprocal perception of presence that he called co-presence or co-flow. He found that, 'Not only did therapists experience a presence towards their clients, but also a presence from their clients back towards them … one might term this a 'co-presence'; or a 'co-flow'' (p.93).

Whilst Cooper (2005) studied the presence of the client as perceived by the therapist, other research inquired into the client's perception of therapist presence (Granick, 2011; Geller et al., 2010; Geller and Greenberg, 2002). Granick's (2011) findings suggested that therapist presence could be perceived by the client and that it had a beneficial effect on the relationship, whilst Geller and Greenberg (2002) posited that it was also a factor in session effectiveness, concluding that, 'It may be the degree to which clients perceive the therapist as present that impacts session outcome and the therapeutic relationship' (p.607-608). Geller et al. (2010) investigated this proposition further by developing a therapeutic presence instrument to assess the in-session presence of the therapist as perceived by both client and therapist. They found that there was a correlation between clients who perceived high levels of therapist presence and those who felt the therapy session was positive and enabled change. Conversely, they also found that client-reported outcomes of sessions did not relate

to therapist self-ratings of presence. This conclusion suggests whilst the client's perceived sense of therapist presence is associated with beneficial outcomes, the therapist's self-perception is not.

Colosimo and Pos (2015) also investigated therapeutic presence in a quantitative study and hypothesised that it was detectable by others. They generated verbal and non-verbal markers for expressed presence, which they defined as a, 'Manifestation of being present during therapeutic encounters' (p.100). In addition, they also tested for 'non-presence', demonstrating that a lack of presence, as a negative factor in therapy, could also be perceived by the client.

Chidiac and Denham-Vaughan (2007), on the other hand, explored presence more generically, without relating it specifically to either therapist or client. They developed a Gestalt-inspired construct involving 'fluid responsiveness' and 'energetic availability', positing that each of these aspects could be experienced in oneself (the internal dimension) or perceived by another (the external dimension). For instance, they proposed that fluid responsiveness is perceived from another as, 'Feeling held/safe and with a person who is well resourced', and experienced in oneself as, 'Knowing what I know [which] liberates me to focus on others, on the new' (p.11). Energetic availability, on the other hand, is perceived from another as feeling noticed and seen, and experienced in oneself as feeling alert, yet calm. In studying this external perception of presence, Chidiac and Denham-Vaughan (2007) discriminated between therapeutic presence, the 'stage presence' of an actor, and charisma (meaning a charming and magnetic personality), surmising that people may have stage presence or charisma without having presence. Conversely, charismatic energy is often characteristic of people with presence. The similarity between stage presence and charisma was also the subject of recent research in the performing arts by Camurri and Zecca (2015), investigating the existence of an expressive 'presence energy' in actors, concluding that this existed and could be learnt.

These studies demonstrate that one person's presence can be perceived by another and that there is an association between perceived presence and effective therapy. Whilst aspects of the expressed qualities of presence are attractive, the concept is not perceived to be the same as charisma. In the executive coaching context, this has implications for the development of the coach-client relationship and the effectiveness of coaching. If both coach

and client can perceive each other's presence and it has a positive effect, then it can be seen to be desirable for both parties to cultivate it.

2.2.2 Presence as a Way of Being

Presence as a way of being is at the heart of many concepts of presence in the therapeutic literature (Olson, 2016; Schneider, 2015; Anderson et al., 2014; Tannen, 2009; Greenberg and Geller, 2001; Bugental, 1992). For instance, Bugental (1992) viewed therapeutic presence as an embodied and artful way of being, rather than an intellectual activity or technique. This view is supported by Tannen (2009) who distinguished between, 'A therapist's way of being and the application of knowledge or technique' (p.26). This is also consistent with Schneider (2015) who stated that, 'Presence is neither 'performed' nor 'acted'. It is lived' (p. 310). He advocated training approaches that accentuated this experiential focus and raised concerns that presence was being engaged as a technique in psychotherapy, rather than being regarded as an attitude to be cultivated. He highlighted how a reductionist approach was limiting the effectiveness of practice.

Anderson et al. (2015) referred to a way of being, knowing and relating, entered into through an attitude of openness, receptivity and curiosity to each moment. Similarly, Greenberg and Geller (2001) described it as a sense of inner expansion and a grounding of self, emphasising the relational attitude of being with and for the client. They associated it with Rogers' (1957) concept of congruence, summarised as having the ability to be aware of one's internal experience and being willing to communicate this to another. Rogers also recognised this association, and in his later years came to view presence as an underlying principle of his practice, stating:

> I am inclined to think that in my writing I have stressed too much the three basic conditions (congruence, unconditional positive regard, and empathic understanding). Perhaps it is something around the edges of those conditions that is really the most important element of therapy — when my self is very clearly, obviously present. (in Baldwin, 2000, p.30)

Finally, Olson (2016) suggested that therapeutic presence, as a way of being, impacts relationships in the context of more general human interactions beyond the therapeutic. The conclusion from this research was that presence, whilst learnable, is a quality associated with

one's way of being and attitude toward a relationship, which can be cultivated through practice.

In summary, the concept of presence in the therapeutic literature offers additional insights and learning for executive coaching, in particular with respect to the themes of the external dimension and the notion of presence as a way of being. Although Bugental and Bracke (1992) cited presence of both therapist and client as a key aspect of psychotherapy, the overwhelming focus of the literature is on the presence of the therapist, with little research into the presence of the client. The literature map in Figure 2.2 summarises the concept in this context.

Figure 2.2. Summary Map of Presence in Psychotherapy
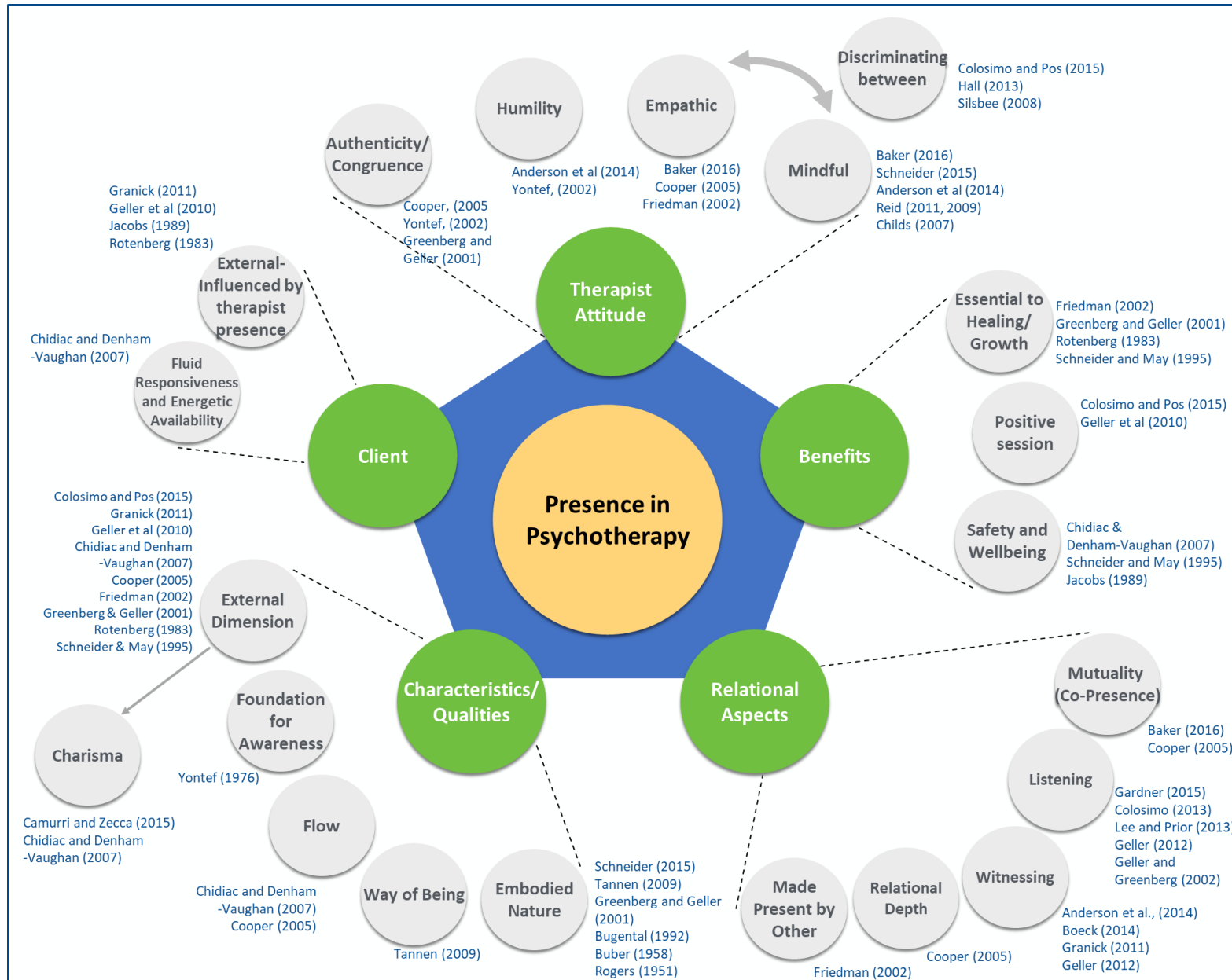
2.3 The Nursing Literature on Presence

In the nursing literature, presence is viewed as an essential part the nurse-patient interaction (Plessis, 2016; Kuis et al., 2015, 2014; Turpin, 2014; Boeck, 2014; Zyblock, 2010; Finfgeld-Connett, 2006; Covington, 2003; Godkin, 2001; Doona et al., 1999; Hines, 1992). As such, it is considered central to the patient experience and an aid to the healing process. Doona et al. (1999) defined nursing presence as:

> An intersubjective encounter between a nurse and a patient in which the nurse encounters the patient as a unique human being in a unique situation and chooses to spend her/himself on the patient's behalf. The antecedents to presence are the nurse's decision to immerse her/himself in the patient's situation and the patient's willingness to let the nurse into that lived experience. As a consequence of nursing presence, both the nurse and the patient are changed. Both are affirmed as unique human beings, and the nurse is affirmed as a professional and the patient as a person in need. (p.12)

This definition highlights openness towards, and affirmation of, another human being, which resonates with Buber's (1958) dialogic ideas of inclusion and confirmation presented earlier. It also emphasises the importance of mutuality and posits that both patient and nurse change as a consequence of the nurse's presence.

An important finding of Doona et al.'s (1999) study was that nursing presence was more developed in more experienced nurses. Godkin (2001) also investigated the relationship between a nurse's experience and presence and envisaged a three-stage hierarchy that related presence to increasing levels of expertise. The first level she called 'bedside' presence, which represents a novice nurse's presence and involves connecting to the patient in a non-clinical manner. The second level is 'clinical presence', where a more experienced nurse is able to go beyond the scientific data and empathise with the patient. The third and highest level is 'healing presence', which she claimed was attained by very few experienced nurses. It incorporates the previous two levels, adding self-awareness and attentiveness and involves, 'Self-awareness, and the ability to relate closely with another person, empathize, and lend one's attention' (Godkin, 2001, p.15). This idea of a hierarchy suggests that presence becomes more influential in the healing process as a nurse becomes more experienced and develops a greater awareness of self. The connection between presence and healing is also common in the therapeutic literature, where the relationship similarly

involves a patient who is seen as unwell and who is seeking help from the therapist or nurse to get better (Colosimo and Pos, 2015; Geller and Greenberg, 2010; Phelon, 2004). The relevance for executive coaching may be that as coaches also direct their presence in the service of their client, healing may also be an outcome. This tentative assertion is worthy of further investigation.

A number of meta-reviews of nursing presence have been performed (Turpin, 2014; Zyblock, 2010; Finfgeld-Connett, 2006; Covington, 2003), with differing yet complementary purposes. Covington (2003) introduced 'presencing' as a term to describe the act of being there for another and synthesised knowledge of nursing presence into four conceptual perspectives: as a way of being and behaving with another; as a process of relating that promotes healing; emphasising authenticity; and as a specific nursing intervention where a nurse spends caring time with the patient. Finfgeld-Connect (2006) came to similar relational conclusions, describing presence as, 'An interpersonal process that is characterized by sensitivity, holism, intimacy, vulnerability and adaptation to unique circumstances' (p.708). By also linking presence to vulnerability, she suggested that nurses put themselves on a more equal power footing with their patients by being present in this way when typically, in a professional environment, it is the patient that is vulnerable. Like Doona et al. (1999), she concluded that patients needed to be open to the nurse's presence.

In a similar vein, Zyblock (2010) stressed the requirement of openness, linking it to trust: 'The patient needs to be able to trust the intentions of the nurse, perhaps more than any other healthcare professional' (p.122). In seeking to clarify the concept, her key insight was that presence is central to the healing relationship with the patient and has the potential to have a significant impact on the lives of both patient and nurse. The most recent review was conducted by Turpin (2014) with the purpose of comparing the concept nursing presence with presence within other helping disciplines, including psychotherapy and teaching. She concluded that whilst there were many similarities across the professions, there was a gap both in interdisciplinary research and in research designed to differentiate nursing presence from related concepts of presence. This echoes the identified gaps in executive coaching.

Focusing on nursing presence as a way of being, Boeck (2014) acknowledged the different conceptual interpretations of presence in nursing, noting that, 'The concept of presence varies according to one's personal history of belief, sensory experience, and truths' (p.1). She

identified common attitudes that characterised this way of being, which included caring, empathy, listening and communion. She also linked nursing presence to holistic nursing practices, and introduced the notion of 'kything' as an aspect of presence, which she defined as, 'Spiritually manifesting oneself to another using no words, just being totally open and available to one another' (p.2). Like Finfgeld-Connect (2006) and Doona et al. (1999), she emphasised the condition of nurse-patient openness to each other, and the benefits of presence being a virtuous circle of improved well-being for both nurse and patient.

In common with Boeck (2014), Parse's humanbecoming paradigm (Parse, 2015, 2008, 2007) also viewed nursing presence as a way of being. Humanbecoming has become an important theory in nursing care, where the goal of the nurse is to live with, 'true presence in bearing witness and being with others in their changing patterns of living quality' (Parse, 2015, p.269). The concept of 'true presence' is central to this theory (Bunkers, 2012; Parse, 2007) and involves honouring patients by putting them first in a deeply respectful way. It is defined as being:

> A powerful human-universe cocreation that flows from the assumptions and principles of humanbecoming and honors the beliefs that individuals know the way and live personal value priorities (Parse, 2007, p.217).

Associated with true presence is the notion of lingering presence, which is the experience of true presence acting in the future (Parse 2008). Lingering presence implies that the influence the nurse-patient encounter has on both parties extends beyond the actual in-the-moment experience they have together.

Through recent studies, instruments for measuring presence in healthcare have been developed (Kuis et al., 2015; Kostovich, 2012). Kostovich (2012) investigated the contribution of nursing presence to effective nursing practice using an instrument she called the presence of nursing scale (PONS). She based her study on a framework consistent with the holistic, multidimensional concepts of presence described above and her findings demonstrated a strong correlation between presence and patient satisfaction. Similarly, Kuis et al. (2015) sought to develop a self-report instrument for presence for Dutch caregivers, concluding that measurement of the concept was possible and such an instrument had validity.

In summary, the nursing literature offers a rich description of nursing presence in the context of the nurse-patient interaction and patient care (see Figure 2.3). Presence is viewed as a way of being that requires the patient's openness, with the literature highlighting attributes such as authenticity, vulnerability and a holistic approach to care. It also emphasises how presence contributes to practice by promoting healing, improving patient satisfaction, and increasing well-being for both nurse and patient. In addition, a link is established between a nurse's experience and their level of presence. Whilst the context of executive coaching is different, there are similarities in the common desire to develop a positive, trusting relationship based on an attitude of care, compassion and a commitment to being in the service of the other. It is interesting to note the centrality of presence as a concept in nursing care and to appreciate its importance in a movement towards holistic care that goes beyond the clinical. This continues to be an area of growing interest in the profession reflected in the vibrant nature of research.

Figure 2.3. Literature Map of Presence in Nursing

- Vulnerability and intimacy
  Finfgeld-Connett (2006)

- Authentic – part of identity
  Godkin (2001)
  Covington (2003)

- Immersion in patient's experience
  Covington (2003)
  Doona et al (1997)

- Caring and Empathic
  Boek (2014)
  Covington (2003)

- Bearing witness

- Honouring patient

- 'True' presence
  Parse (2015, 2008, 2007)
  Bunkers (2012)

- 'Mature' presence leading to healing
  Godkin (2001)

- Nurse Attitude

- Openness to presence
  Finfgeld-Connett (2006)

- Patient

- Willingness to allow nurse's presence
  Doona et al (1997)

- Presence in Nursing

- Benefits

  - Holistic practice
    Boek (2014)
    Kostovitch (2012)

  - Central to healing process
    Du Plessis (2016)
    Kuis et al (2014, 2015)
    Turpin (2014)
    Finfgeld-Connett (2006)
    Covington (2003)
    Godkin (2001)
    Hines (1992)

  - Improved wellbeing (nurse and patient)
    Boek (2014)
    Finfgeld-Connett (2006)
    Doona et al (1997)

  - Patient satisfaction
    Kostovitch (2012)

- Characteristics/ Qualities

  - Holism and spiritual aspect
    Boek (2014)

  - A Quality of Listening
    Boek (2014)

  - Temporal moments
    Godkin (2001)

  - Way of being
    Boek (2014)
    Covington (2003)

- Relational Aspects

  - Meaningful exchange
    Zyblock (2010)

  - Interpersonal process
    Zyblock (2010)
    Finfgeld-Connett (2006)

  - Change
    Doona et al (1997)

  - Equal power

  - Mutual openness
    Finfgeld-Connett (2006)
    Boek (2014)
    Doona et al (1997)

2.4 The Teaching Literature on Presence

Similar to psychotherapy and nursing, the concept of teaching presence has been the subject of research in the educational context through a number of studies (Gardner, 2015; Day, 2012; Gunnlaugson, 2011, 2009; Meijer et al., 2009; Miller, 2007; Kornelsen, 2006; Rodgers and Raider-Roth, 2006; Solloway, 2000; Kessler, 1998). Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006) viewed presence in a teacher as being fully attentive in-the-moment, defining it as:

> A state of alert awareness, receptivity and connectedness to the mental, emotional and physical workings of both the individual and the group in the context of their learning environments and the ability to respond with a considered and compassionate best next step. (p. 266)

They highlighted the qualities required for presence in a teacher as self-awareness, in-the-moment reflection and compassion, whilst also citing trust between teacher, student and school as a prerequisite. In systems terms, this can be likened to trust in coach-client-organisation system in the executive coaching context (Huffington, 2006). In common with Chidiac and Denham-Vaughan (2007) above, who studied the psychotherapy context, some studies link presence to Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow (Day, 2012; Walker, 2011, 2010; Kornelsen, 2006). Day (2012) extended this association to include the student perspective. He found that teacher presence was, 'Not sufficient to achieve optimal learning. Students themselves must also be willing and able to be present' (p.18). This willingness has resonance with the intrinsic motivation required by the executive coaching client, presented in the introduction as one of the three criteria for effective coaching. Conversely, Ahangar Ahmadi (2016) found that a lack of presence was due to mind-wandering, anxiety and stress. These reasons are similar to those cited by Colosimo (2013) in a psychotherapy context.

Gardner (2015) broadened the concept of teaching presence to encompass in-the-moment decision-making and the need for a personal teaching philosophy, viewing it as, 'An act of relationship between teacher and student' (p.4). She pointed to the need to find ways to develop presence in teachers and suggested that appreciating its importance in teaching would help the profession acknowledge the limitations of competency models in capturing the complexity of teaching effectiveness. Kornelsen (2006) concluded that teachers became present through experience and Kessler (1998) reported that, 'As a teacher, I find a daily meditation practice essential in cultivating presence' (p.36). This chimes with similar

conclusions that emerged from the other contexts discussed above. In assessing the importance of teaching presence to the profession, Miller (2007) claimed that from the perspective of holistic education, it is more important than the teaching strategies used.

The concept of 'presencing' as defined by the organisational theorists Scharmer (2009) and Senge et al. (2005) combines the words 'presence' and 'sense' and refers to the ability to sense and bring into the present a vision or idea from the future. This concept has been applied to educational contexts in recent research (Korthagen et al., 2013; Kinsella, 2012; Gunnlaugson, 2011, 2009; Korthagen and Vasalos, 2009; Meijer et al., 2009). Meijer et al. (2009) investigated the concept with respect to the process of reflection in teacher learning and posited six stages of development, with the three latter stages involving 'discovering presence', 'deepening presence', and 'maintaining presence'. In the same vein, Gunnlaugson (2011, 2009) and Kinsella (2012) both developed pedagogical frameworks based on Scharmer's (2009) concept. Gunnlaugson (2011) was critical of a prevalent framework of education and learning dominated by observing, analysing and discussing subjects at a distance, rather than involving contemplative approaches such as presence as part of an attitude of being more attentive and mindful. This reflective attitude was also the subject of research by other educational scholars, including Solloway (2000) and Kessler (1998) who also accentuated the value of a deeper, intersubjective, shared experience between educator and student. This reflective connection to presence was similarly highlighted by Korthagen et al. (2013) in their study of the coaching of teachers. In contrast, Nielsen et al. (2011) questioned the breadth of application of Scharmer's (2009) concept in the context of education, stressing a need to demonstrate clearer educational value.

As a concept in teaching (see Figure 2.4), presence has similarities to the other contexts described. It is fundamental to the teacher-student relationship and incorporates in-the-moment attentiveness, self-awareness and compassion in the teacher. The student's willingness and ability to be present resonate with comparable patient and coaching client attitudes. The association with flow reflects the work of Wesson (2010) in the therapeutic context and is developed in the educational context by Walker (2011, 2010) who advanced a related concept of social flow. This has interesting implications for coaching and the idea of simultaneous flow between coach and client could be explored. Finally, Scharmer's (2009) idea of presencing or manifesting the present by sensing the future, introduces a further dimension to the concept which may also have implications for coaching.

Figure 2.4. Literature Map of Presence in Teaching

2.5 Summary

In this chapter, I have reviewed the coaching literature relevant to the phenomenon of presence. Overall, this literature remains largely opinion-based and the current conceptualisation of presence is vague, fragmented and incomplete. There are overlaps with other concepts as well as missing elements, such as the client perspective. It does not help that there has been no attempt to study presence empirically in the executive coaching context. What is needed is a more systematic analysis of what presence is and how it is involved in the coaching process. This is the research problem I am interested in addressing, which seems important to how executive coaching is practiced and taught.

I have also reviewed the relevant literature in psychotherapy, nursing and teaching, where a richer body of theoretical knowledge exists that can be used to inform an understanding of the concept in executive coaching. In these contexts, presence has become the subject of many studies in its own right, in contrast to coaching where it tends to emerge as a secondary focus. Therapeutic presence has been conceived as a way of being and, in contrast to the coaching literature, has been investigated to some degree from the client perspective. The literature on nursing presence has focussed on the role of presence in improving patient care, epitomised by Parse's (2007) concept of true presence, which is viewed as central to patient satisfaction and healing. Finally, teaching presence can also be seen to hold attributes in common with the other professional contexts, including alert awareness and compassion in the teacher, and a need for openness in the student.

The executive coaching profession would benefit from learning from these related contexts in order to develop greater clarity and depth in how the phenomenon is understood. As Zyblock (2010) noted with respect to the nursing context, 'It is clear that the concept of presence has been fragmented into numerous types, used indiscriminately, and combined with other loosely-defined concepts' (p.122). Similarly, Colosimo (2013) challenged the psychotherapy profession to, 'Disentangle it [presence] from related variables' (p.13). These sentiments apply equally to presence in executive coaching. A summary of the review is distilled into the key themes shown in Figure 2.5.

Figure 2.5 A Summary of Existing Knowledge

Chapter 3 – Methodology

Returning to the research question (*'What is presence and how is it experienced by coaches and clients during the executive coaching conversation?'*), this chapter outlines the theoretical framework within which this question is situated and sets out the research approach used to explore it. It explains the choice of justifies the research design. Data collection and analysis methods are presented, and quality and ethical considerations addressed.

3.1 Research Strategy

3.1.1 Theoretical Framework

The research paradigm that underpins the study is constructivism, which holds that, 'The manner in which the material world shapes and is shaped by human action and interaction depends on dynamic, normative and epistemic interpretations of the material world' (Adler, 1997, p.322). Constructivism supports the acknowledgement of multiple perspectives of reality, an appreciation that people create meaning together through dialogue, and that as a result, interpretation of reality can change. Constructivism also supports the view that how constructs are perceived depends on the experience of the people holding them. Whilst no single reality has primacy, truth can be viewed as, 'The best-informed and most sophisticated construction on which there is consensus at a given time' (Schwandt, 1994, p.243). The epistemological position for the research is transactional/subjectivist where knowledge is created in the interaction between researcher and participant (Guba and Lincoln, 1994).

In seeking to fully describe a research paradigm, Heron and Reason (1997) proposes the axiological question of what is worthwhile and valuable in the study of the human condition. In this inquiry, the value of investigating presence is bounded by the view of the researcher, the participants and the readers of the research. Value as perceived by the reader can be viewed as the degree to which the findings communicate something that connects with their reality or that helps to organise their observations of the world (Vidich and Lyman, 1994). As a practitioner, providing value as perceived from the executive coaching community is one of my motivations for undertaking the study.

3.1.2 Research Design

In recognising that, 'Ontological and epistemological positions invariably inform methodological and methods choices' (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2010 p.4), there needs to be coherence between the research question, philosophical paradigm, research strategy and the chosen methodology. The research design depicted in Figure 3.1 was constructed to achieve this.

Figure 3.1 Summary of Research Design
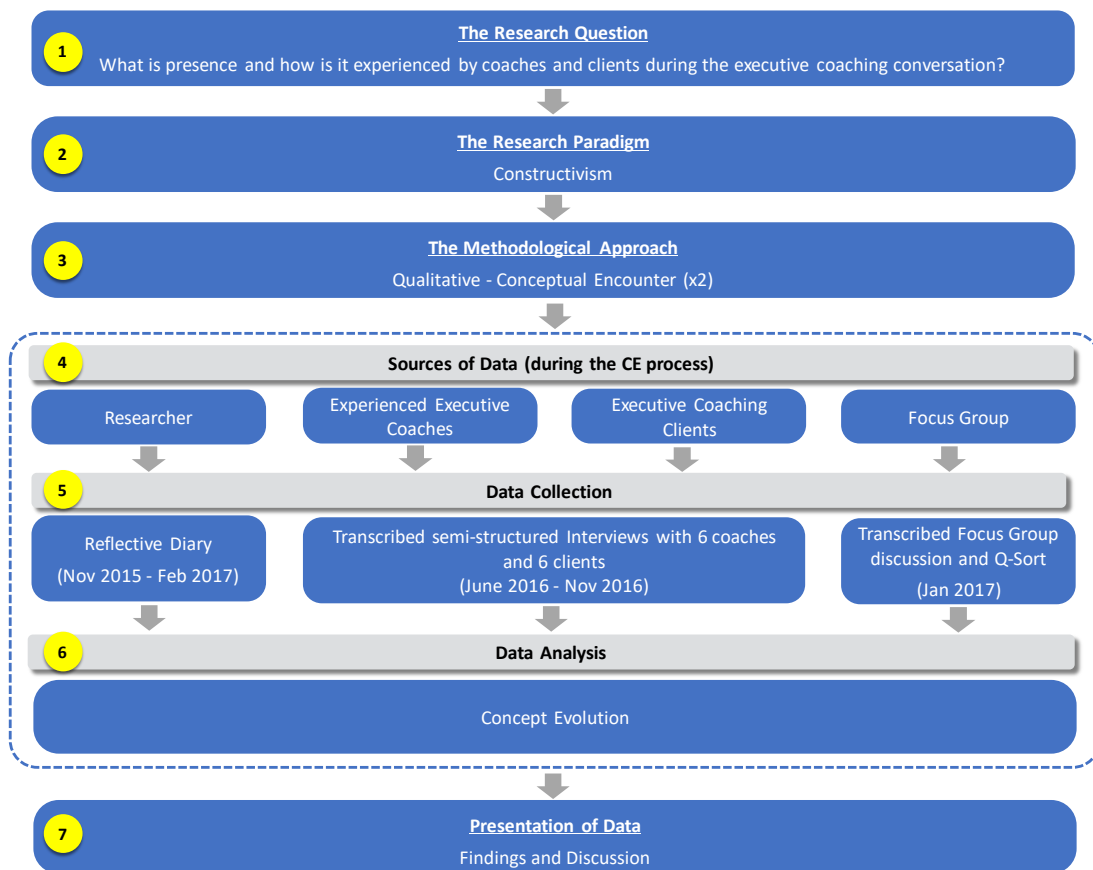
The research question (item 1) is investigated from a constructivist stance (item 2), which supports a qualitative approach (item 3). The focus of qualitative research, as presented by Hesse-Biber & Leavy (2010), is firstly to investigate an under-researched area by being exploratory, and secondly to generate a rich description. This is achieved in this study through the generation of a conceptual map for presence as it was experienced in executive coaching conversations by client and coach research participants.

A number of potential qualitative methodologies were suited to investigating the research question, including phenomenological approaches, case studies and grounded theory (Creswell and Poth, 2017). I have chosen conceptual encounter (De Rivera, 1981) as the best fit (item 3). It is phenomenological in nature (McLeod, 2011), and aims to understand how human experience is structured or 'mapped', whilst emphasising the partnership between researcher and 'research partners', recognising the active role of both. In common with other phenomenological methods, 'Social reality has to be grounded in people's experiences of that social reality' (Crotty, 1998, p.24). Applying De Rivera's (1981) analogy of the conceptual encounter process being like drawing a map, the current map seems incomplete; the overall territory is not well charted and it lacks a defined boundary. Conceptual encounter seemed well-suited to developing a more sophisticated conceptualisation than currently exists. It is compatible with the constructivist stance, and values a collaborative approach to the construction of meaning.

Two parallel conceptual encounters were conducted, one exploring the client perspective and the other the coach. Following the conceptual encounter process, the research was extended through the use of a focus group, comprising both clients and coaches, which used the Q-sort technique (Stainton Rogers, 1995) to further explore the concept. The sources of data (item 4) were therefore me as the researcher, client and coach research partners, and client and coach focus group participants. Data collection (item 5) occurred through the transcription of interviews and the focus group discussion, and by means of a reflexive researcher diary. Data analysis (item 6) occurred iteratively after each interview. This allowed the concept to continuously evolve as the interviews progressed, which was a core aspect of the conceptual encounter approach. Finally, findings were presented, key themes summarised and claims discussed (item 7). In summary, the research was designed to investigate the research question in an effective manner in order to develop a conceptual map for presence in the executive coaching context. The next section explains in more detail how the methodological approach was implemented.

3.2 Conceptual Encounter

The conceptual encounter methodology has been used to research human experiences as diverse as emotion (De Rivera and Kaya, 2005; Lindsay-Hartz et al., 1995; De Rivera et al., 1989) and false memory (De Rivera, 1997). In the specific context of coaching, Bachkirova (2015) adopted it to investigate self-deception in coaches, whilst Maxwell (2009) investigated the boundary between coaching and therapy/counselling. This section describes how the approach was implemented in this study. It discusses the role of the researcher, the selection of research partners and presents in more detail how the overlapping data collection and data analysis activities were performed.

3.2.1 Procedure

A summary of the procedure for conceptual encounter, as described by De Rivera (1981) is shown in Figure 3.2.

Figure 3.2 Summary of Conceptual Encounter Procedure
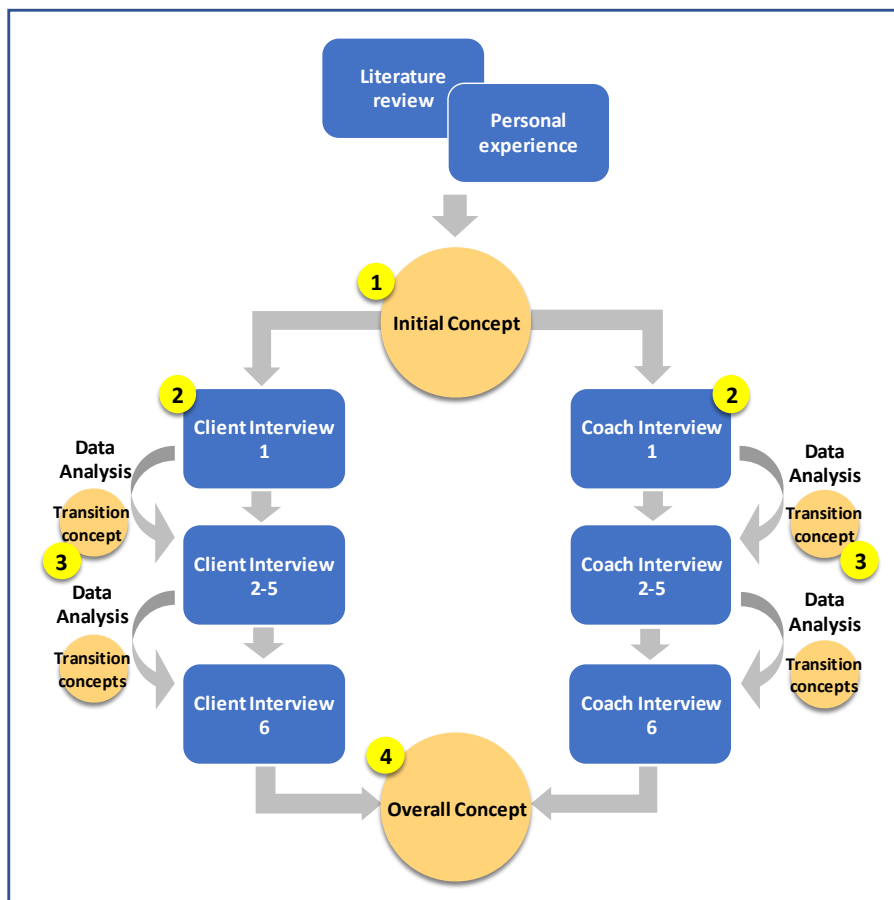
In step 1 an initial concept of presence was developed prior to the interviews, based on my personal experience and the review of relevant literature. This sensitised me to the phenomenon prior to the interview stage. An advantage of extending the scope of the literature review beyond the coaching context was the ability to synthesise cross-disciplinary learning, which allowed a broader, richer initial concept to emerge. My reflections on this learning were recorded in a research diary and a continuous process of reflexivity throughout the inquiry became an essential part of the sense-making process. Central to the approach are a series of semi-structured, in-depth interviews with research partners (step 2). The two parallel inquiries shown in here were conducted in the same way. For instance, following the left-hand path of diagram 3.2, after each client interview, data was analysed and the concept modified (step 3) so that data collection and data analysis overlapped 'with the analytical endeavour of understanding how the experience is structured' (Madill and Gough, 2008). This iterative procedure allowed a client concept to emerge that incorporated all of the research partners' experiences. The same procedure was followed for the coach inquiry (the right-hand path of diagram 3.2). A choice could then be made at step 4 to decide whether the client and coach perspectives represented a single, overarching concept or whether they were two distinct phenomena. As will be seen in chapter six, the respondents showed a similar shared understanding so that a single overarching concept emerged.

By performing two parallel conceptual encounter processes, client and coach voices were treated with equal significance, which addressed a gap in the current research which focussed on the coach perspective. Since the study aimed to explore the full range of a research partner's experience, it was not felt necessary to limit the investigation to a case where clients and coaches who were directly related to each other on either side of a dyad (i.e. through interviewing both a coach and their corresponding client). The unit of analysis was therefore the individual interview, which explored the specific experience of the research partner, rather than the coaching dyad.

As the investigator, I was also 'in' the research due to the requirement to develop an initial concept and through the collaborative nature of the interview dialogue, where meaning-making occurred between me and the research partners. My responsibility was to be fully committed to the research and fully accepting of the experiences that were being reported (De Rivera, 1981). This collaborative approach is in keeping with a constructivist paradigm and contrasts with the positivist idea of the independent observer (Crotty, 1998). It also

differs from other qualitative approaches such as grounded theory that view the researcher's role as entering, 'the research setting with as few predetermined ideas as possible' (Glaser and Holton, 2004, p.54). The procedure is primarily inductive for two reasons. Firstly, through meaning-making resulting from the collaborative inquiry during each interview and secondly, as meaning emerges during data analysis and the interpretation from interview to interview. Deductive elements will also be intermingled since my pre-formed interpretations (informed by literature and personal experience) will inevitably influence this emergent process to some degree.

In summary, during a conceptual encounter inquiry, an abstract conceptualisation emerges that is continuously informing and being informed by researcher and successive research partner experience. 'The dialectic encounter between concrete instances of the phenomenon and abstract, elegant conceptualisation' (De Rivera, 1981, p.6) is at the heart of the method. As a result, data collection and data analysis are intertwined in a cyclical spiral that moves the concept towards maturity. The intended outcome is a complete and sophisticated conceptual map of the nature and structure of presence in the context of executive coaching. De Rivera (1981) considers the conceptualisation to be complete according to three criteria: it reveals the phenomenon in a new way and provides new insights; it encompasses all of the experiences that have been related; and it is parsimonious and elegant.

3.2.2 Selection of Research Partners

Research partners for the interviews were accessed initially via purposive sampling using the researcher's professional networks and professional coaching fora. Snowball sampling was also used as a pragmatic means for accessing client participants via the coaching partners already engaged. Research adverts were sent to individuals and coaching fora requesting participation. In order to enhance the trustworthiness of the data, clear eligibility criteria were published in the adverts and participant information sheets (PISs: see Appendix 2). These stipulated that clients were required to have received coaching within the previous twelve months, whilst executive coaches needed to be current practitioners holding a postgraduate coaching-related qualification, with a minimum of five years' experience. The PIS stipulated that if more than the required number of eligible participants came forward, those first to respond would be selected, although this situation didn't arise. These eligibility

criteria were based on the assumptions that memory of lived experience would still be fresh and that deeper academic and practical coaching experience would enable richer insights from the coach's perspective. The ability of research partners to engage with the concept was important in order for it be well-informed and sophisticated. Participants therefore needed to be competent in order to, 'Interpret the substance of the construction' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.111). Twelve research partners (six coaches and six clients) were recruited that fulfilled the above criteria. Of the six coaches interviewed, four were women and two were men. Five were based in the UK and one was based in Spain. Of the six clients interviewed, four were women and two were men. Four were based in the UK and two were based in the Netherlands. Their details are summarised in Figure 3.3.

Figure 3.3 Details of interview research partners

Ref	Coach/Client	Male/Female	Country of Work	Position
Coach #1	Coach	Male	UK	External Executive Coach
Coach #2	Coach	Female	UK	External Executive Coach
Coach #3	Coach	Female	Spain	External Executive Coach
Coach #4	Coach	Male	UK	External Executive Coach
Coach #5	Coach	Female	UK	External Executive Coach
Coach #6	Coach	Female	UK	External Executive Coach
Client #1	Client	Female	UK	HR Director
Client #2	Client	Female	UK	HR Director
Client #3	Client	Male	UK	CEO
Client #4	Client	Male	Netherlands	Director
Client #5	Client	Female	UK	Director
Client #6	Client	Female	Netherlands	Director

3.2.3 Data Collection

The semi-structured interviews lasted between 1 hour and 2.5 hours. They were generally face-to-face, although Skype and telephone were also used. A recording was made of each interview which was later transcribed and held on a password-protected computer, in line with data protection requirements. The interview process was based around a loose set of pre-determined, open-ended questions (see Appendix 3), designed to explore research partners' recollections of their experience of presence. De Rivera (1981) recognised that the

quality of the data depended on the ability of the researcher to involve the interviewee fully as a partner in the research enterprise and to accept the other person's experience in a spirit of openness and curiosity, especially when there was disagreement with the evolving concept. The goal of the interview was therefore, 'To see oneself in others, to understand self through understanding others' (McLeod, 2011, p.156).

Two parallel conceptual encounters were performed, one with six clients, the other with six coaches. The time-consuming nature of the interviews and the analytical depth required necessitated this relatively small sample size, which was within the recommended range for phenomenological inquiries (Gray, 2013; Fischer, 2011) and comparable to recent studies in coaching that have used the conceptual encounter methodology (Bachkirova, 2015; Maxwell, 2009). Each interview involved two distinct stages. In the first stage, the research partner was invited to recall experiences of presence that had occurred in a coaching conversation; in the second, the researcher's conceptualisation was introduced and allowed to 'meet' these concrete experiences.

First Stage of Interview

My approach as an interviewer was to ask open questions with the aim of helping the research partner to recall specific experiences of presence in as much detail as possible. I acted as a facilitator to draw out depth and detail to ensure that their experience was fully understood. I also sought to develop a rapport so that the interview became a flowing conversation that developed spontaneously and creatively. This required regular summarising, checking of understanding and relating back to the research question. A vignette of the first client interview (see Figure 3.4) illustrates how this first stage proceeded in practice. It was an enlightening and insightful process and the dialogue often developed and deepened considerably as the research partners immersed themselves in their recollections.

Figure 3.4 Vignette of Interview Dialogue

Researcher	Research Partner
What does presence mean to you as it applies to being coached?	*Oh, I was going to describe it more generally in terms of just what it means to me.*
Yeah, you can start there then. That's absolutely fine.	*I think it's probably about being there in the moment and having absolute full, undivided attention and being, in a lot of cases, there for the benefit of perhaps not yourself, but other people.*
So it has to do with being in relationship then, somehow for you?	*Yeah, I think it does.*
Is it something that you have a sense of, you're aware when you're present, when somebody else is?	*I think it's very easy to see when people aren't present obviously.*
In what way? How does that come across to you?	*Distraction, physical clues around lack of attention, lack of being engaged in the conversation or the discussion or the topic or whatever. I think it's probably… is it hard? I'm not sure if it's hard to recognize when people are completely fully present or not. I think it's probably easy to see when people… you have a sense that they are engaged and they are involved. But the depth to which that may be I think is probably harder to say.*
So, there's something about layers or depths, do you think?	*I think possibly, yeah. And again, thinking from a coaching environment, probably because I've known the person who coached me for a long time and we would work on some pretty difficult projects, we had a lot of trust already. But I think he always made it very clear that the time that we spent in a coaching discussion, he was absolutely there for me and everything that he said or did, or contributed in our conversation, was entirely geared around what he heard me saying, and him supporting me playing that conversation out with him.*
And how does that connect to presence? You mentioned something about trust in there, and something about that contracting of being there for you. Where does presence sit in that?	*I'm not entirely sure I know, but I think it's probably an important part of … the trust piece is an important part of being assured that the person that you're with is entirely and fully and deeply engaged, rather than they're just paying attention to [the] conversation but perhaps no more than that. I think that trust is probably quite important to having a sense that the depth of presence is there.*

The open questions prepared beforehand (see Appendix 3) helped to structure the first stage of the interview. As it proceeded, the interactive nature of the dialogue became more pronounced so my interventions and the research partner's responses merged into a process of co-creation, 'In a way that challenges the distinction between participant and researcher' (Madill and Gough, 2008, p.255).

Second Stage of Interview

In the second stage of the interviews, I shared the current state of the concept and explored with the partner how well the abstraction fitted their recounted experience and understanding. During this process, different recollected experiences came to the fore, new insights emerged and differences surfaced as we both benefitted from the experience of collaborative sense-making. As a result, the research partner was frequently able to view their experience in a new or different light. On occasion, insights emerged for them that were helpful for their own understanding of coaching, and for me both as researcher and coach practitioner.

Ensuing interviews followed the same pattern, using the most recent version of the concept, which thus evolved throughout the interview process in an iterative manner. Each version built on the ever-growing body of collective human experience and culminated in a final model that comprehensively answered the research question. As a result, a map of presence was more sophisticated than previously held by either the research partners or me.

3.2.4 Data Analysis

As discussed, data analysis using a conceptual encounter approach occurred in an iterative fashion. In De Rivera's (1981) view, 'The concrete experience of the partner's individual case provides the raw data of the investigation – the 'facts' of 'existence' or 'reality', which the investigator's conceptualisation must fit' (p.5). The interview transcripts were imported into the NVivo tool (a qualitative data analysis computer software package) and studied in order to identify the structure and characteristics of presence that matched the research partners' experiences. The main analytic technique used to aid this process was an inductive form of thematic analysis, which is a flexible procedure that can be used to support a variety of qualitative methodologies (Boyatzis, 1998). This was used to develop

codes, sub-themes and themes from the data using six analytical steps, as shown in Figure 3.5.

Figure 3.5 Data Analysis

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5	Step 6
Immersion and reflection	Recording initial ideas and identifying areas of contrast	Assigning initial codes, sub-themes and themes	Refining and reorganising codes, sub-themes and themes	Creating final definitions and labels	Selecting specific extracts from the data

Relating back to the research question |
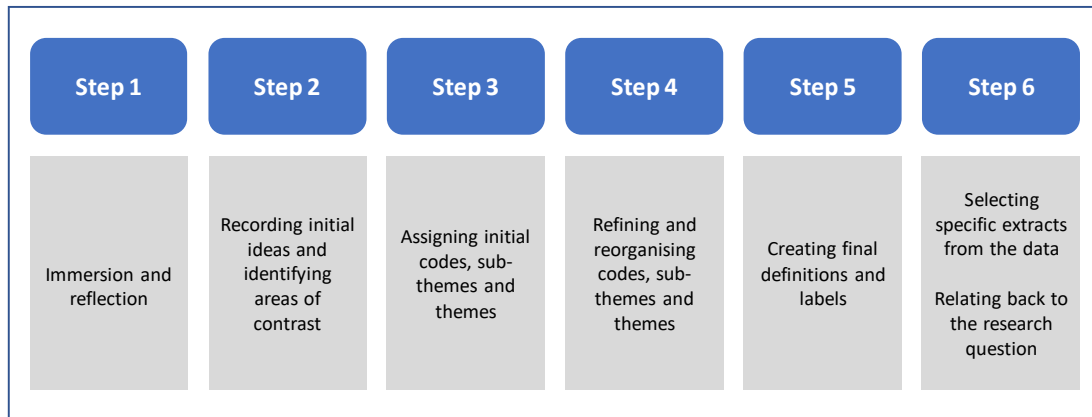
Analysis began with a period of familiarisation with the data through immersion and reflection. Each interview transcription was read and the recording reviewed (step 1). Ideas for potential categories were then noted, along with areas of similarity and difference in the data (step 2). Constructs were interpreted from the data through a process of abstraction, which first involved assigning codes to data extracts (step 3). Coding was based on a range of scrutiny techniques of the data including repetition, metaphor, similarities and differences (Ryan and Bernard, 2003). Experiences and views that resonated, challenged or extended the model were also included. Codes were then categorised inductively into broader sub-themes and themes designed to capture and unify the nature of the experiences into a meaningful whole (DeSantis and Ugarriza, 2000). In this way, a conceptual map or 'node tree' was developed in NVivo (step 4), which was continuously refined. It was frequently necessary to move back and forth between different interview transcripts as sense-making progressed and NVivo was especially useful in being able to reconfigure the node tree in different ways, whilst retaining a link to the detailed underlying extracts of data.

As the concluding interviews were analysed, fewer new themes emerged and decisions were made on the final thematic definitions and labels (step 5). Specific extracts from the data were then selected as relevant examples of the findings, which could be related back to the research question (step 6). This iterative analytical approach thus led to a meaningful, abstract conceptualisation being developed from an ever-growing field of experience. To illustrate how the procedure worked in practice, the vignette from the first client interview

presented in Figure 3.4 above was coded as shown in Figure 3.6 and even at this early stage, it can be seen that a structure was starting to emerge.

Figure 3.6 Coding the Vignette

Initial Theme	Initial Coding	Quotation
Internal dimension	*In-the-moment*	*"I think it's probably about being there in the moment…"*
Internal dimension	*Full undivided attention*	*"…having absolute full, undivided attention"*
Relational dimension	*There for the benefit of others*	*"being, in a lot of cases, there for the benefit of perhaps not yourself, but other people"*
Lack of presence in other	*Ease of noticing*	*"…is it hard? I'm not sure if it's hard to recognize when people are completely fully present or not."* *"I think it's very easy to see when people aren't present"*
Lack of presence in other	*Distraction*	*"…distraction, physical clues around lack of attention"*
Lack of presence in other	*Lack of engagement*	*"lack of being engaged in the conversation or the discussion or the topic or whatever."*
Dynamic nature	*Layers/depth of presence*	*"The depth to which that may be I think is probably harder to say."* *"I think that trust is probably quite important to having a sense that the depth of presence is there."*
Conditions	*Related to trust*	*"…the trust piece is an important part of being assured that the person that you're with is entirely and fully and deeply engaged, rather than they're just paying attention to conversation but perhaps no more than that."* *"I think that trust is probably quite important to having a sense that the depth of presence is there."*

Care was taken to avoid any tendency to treat the data in an overly reductionist manner that could lead to the loss of meaning in the wider context of the interviews. To combat this, analysis continually moved between the written transcripts, the original recordings and the evolving concept. In addition, full paragraphs of data were assigned to NVivo codes, even though a much smaller extract of data was finally used. In this way, meaning as intended by the research partners during the interview dialogue was preserved. This analytical procedure

was carried out separately for the client and coach perspectives, allowing structures and characteristics to emerge independently as far as possible, given the same researcher was interpreting the data from each encounter in the same temporal period.

As the researcher, my role was to create an abstract conceptualisation that attempted, 'To capture the essence of the phenomenon – to describe how the experience is organised – its structure' (De Rivera, 1981, p.5). This meant going beyond a faithful description of the characteristics of presence to include perceiving the dynamic changes in presence that occur during an executive coaching conversation, identifying other organising structures, and appreciating the notion of lack of presence. At the same time, the analysis assessed whether a single conceptualisation covering both client and coach perspectives was possible or whether they were in fact distinct phenomena. The analytical process was fostered through working with the medium of the research diary, which helped reflection and analytical questioning (Creswell, 2013). This was particularly helpful when working with the metaphors that partners used to describe presence. A rich description of these metaphors was encouraged during the interviews and they become a valuable creative aspect of the data.

There was a vibrancy to the interviews and focus group discussion. The subject matter clearly engaged the research partners and the collaborative nature of the discussion helped establish rapport quickly, which allowed creativity and insight to surface as well as the confidence to challenge. The dialogue during the first stage of the interviews was very exploratory and open-ended, whilst in the second stage it was more structured and there was an easy flow between the recounting of experience and reviewing the abstraction.

3.3 Focus Group

Following on from the one-to-one conceptual encounter interviews, the research was extended by convening a focus group. This included investigating consensus and difference of participant views using the Q-sort technique (Stainton Rogers, 1995).

3.3.1 Rationale for using a Focus Group

A characteristic of the one-to-one semi-structured interviews was that, to some degree, they were led by me as the researcher, in a general direction that was partly defined by the use of a loose set of pre-defined questions. Whilst this was helpful in providing a structural

template and ensured that the interview time was used effectively, it might also have had the effect of limiting creativity by leading the research partner to follow a particular line of thinking. Using a focus group helped to develop the concept in news ways and allowed connections between different elements of the concept to be explored. It altered my influence as researcher and helped to address issues of undue researcher influence in the interpretation of findings. Through leveraging the benefits of group dynamics to generate 'interaction data' (Lambert and Loiselle, 2008), it provided a different exploratory context and extended the research. In particular, the correspondence between the client perspective and the coach perspective could be investigated in a group discussion that involved both clients and coaches.

Further, consensus and difference were explored between the focus group participants by using the Q-sort technique (Stainton Rogers, 1995). The strength of this technique is in investigating subjective points of view (Bachkirova et al., 2015) and involved asking the focus group participants to rank a set of descriptors of presence in order of how characteristic they perceive them to be. These descriptors were derived from the previous conceptual encounter data analysis, hence the procedure complemented and built upon the previous concept development by adding a further richness to the findings, especially with regards to generating group insights involving metaphor and differences between coach and client perspectives. The Q-sort procedure is explained in more detail in the next section.

In summary, the focus group approach was used as a way of changing the dynamics of research participation to complement and extend the conceptual encounter methodology whilst also addressing some of the perceived limitations of the one-to-one interview approach. It encouraged the diversity of all participant views to be expressed and leveraged the creative potential of a group process that, 'Capitalises on communication between research participants in order to generate data' (Kitzinger, 1995, p.299). It aligned well with the constructivist paradigm and methodological approach, and further improved the credibility of the research, as judged from the perspective of the participants. The procedure for data collection and data analysis from the focus group discussion is detailed next.

3.3.2 Selection of Focus Group Participants

The focus group had four participants, as is appropriate for qualitative research investigating a complex subject (Bloor et al., 2001; Kitzinger, 1995). The same selection process and criteria were adopted to select focus group participants as for the interviewees. One client and one coach had been involved as research partners in the conceptual encounter process, and the other two group members were new to the research.

Figure 3.7 Details of focus group research partners

Ref	Coach / Client	Male/ Female	Country of Work	Position
Coach #A	Coach	Male	UK	External Executive Coach
Coach #B	Coach	Female	UK	External Executive Coach
Client #C	Client	Female	UK	Director
Client #D	Client	Female	UK	Director

3.3.3 Data Collection

Before the focus group convened, the Q-sort technique (Stainton Rogers, 1995) first required a concise set of descriptors or Q-items describing the concept, to be generated. A set of thirty-six items (see Figure 3.8) was pre-generated on cards, which were drawn from the final conceptual encounter conceptualisation and had themselves been distilled from a larger initial sample of seventy (see Appendix 5).

Figure 3.8 Q-Items used in Focus Group Discussion

Ref	Q-Item
1	The other person takes me out of presence
2	I readily notice when the other person is present or not
3	Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them
4	For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence
5	I only know that I've been present when I stop being
6	You can only be authentic if you're present
7	Presence is something I feel in my body
8	The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's
9	I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session

Ref	Q-Item
10	Presence helps insights to come
11	I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face
12	Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it
13	I can empathise with someone without being present
14	It is important to practice presence
15	It's easy to stay present
16	Being present and having presence are the same thing
17	I know I'm not present when I start judging the other
18	Presence is the same as charisma
19	I can be present without tuning into the other person
20	Being present means I feel connected to my intuition
21	When I'm present, I feel able to take risks
22	Presence helps me have perspective
23	Presence involves the intellect
24	Being present engenders trust
25	The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt
26	Eye contact brings me into presence
27	I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time
28	It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore
29	It's hard to be present when the other person isn't
30	There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's
31	Being present makes me feel energised and alive
32	I am present when my mind is uncluttered
33	There is an absorbed quality to presence – like being in flow
34	Without presence, I feel boredom
35	When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside
36	There is something about presence that can't be put into words

The process of distillation to arrive at the final thirty-six items was performed by me as researcher and aimed to achieve the balance, clarity, appropriateness, simplicity and applicability (Cross, 2005), following the guidelines suggested by Bachkirova et al. (2015). These stipulated that each item should represent one aspect of presence only; opposites should be avoided; and they should be distinct from one another. In this way clarity of interpretation is preserved, and redundancy avoided. In addition, the set of items should capture the full range of the phenomenon as far as possible. This meant including aspects of

presence related to its characteristics, dynamics, conditions and effects. The generation of these items needed both care and creativity to reflect the range of subjective experiences they represented. After the development of the final set of Q-items, the focus group discussion was held and the overall process comprised five steps, as shown in Figure 3.9.

Figure 3.9 Summary of Focus Group Process

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4	Step 5
Pre-Focus Group - Develop Q-Items	Perform Q-Sort	Review and discuss	Present concept	Review and discuss
A set of 36 items, or phrases, that describe the concept are pre-generated on cards. Q-Items have emerged from the conceptual encounter process.	Each participant individually sorts the Q-items into a forced ranking and the results are recorded.	Group views and insights are explored based on the discussion of the Q-sort rankings.	The conceptual model is presented The model synthesises findings from the two parallel conceptual encounters.	A group discussion combines feedback on the conceptual model with the learning from the Q-sort discussion

In step 2, the Q-Sort exercise was performed. A PowerPoint presentation explaining the technique was first delivered to the group (see Appendix 4). Each participant was then requested to individually sort the Q-items into a forced normal distribution (called a Q-sort factor array, depicted in Figure 3.10) according to a specific 'condition of instruction' (Watts and Stenner, 2005, p.75). The condition of instruction chosen was how characteristic or uncharacteristic each item was of their personal construct of presence. To aid the sorting process (Stainton Rogers, 1995), participants were first requested to separate the items into three piles of 'most characteristic', 'least characteristic' and 'neutral'. They were then requested to place their items onto the Q-sort factor array using the first pile (most characteristic) to complete the right-hand side, the second pile (least characteristic) to complete the left-hand side, and the third pile (neutral) to complete the middle section. It was emphasised that items could be moved around until the participant was satisfied.

Figure 3.10 The Q-Sort Factor Array

(Adapted from Stainton Rogers, 1995)
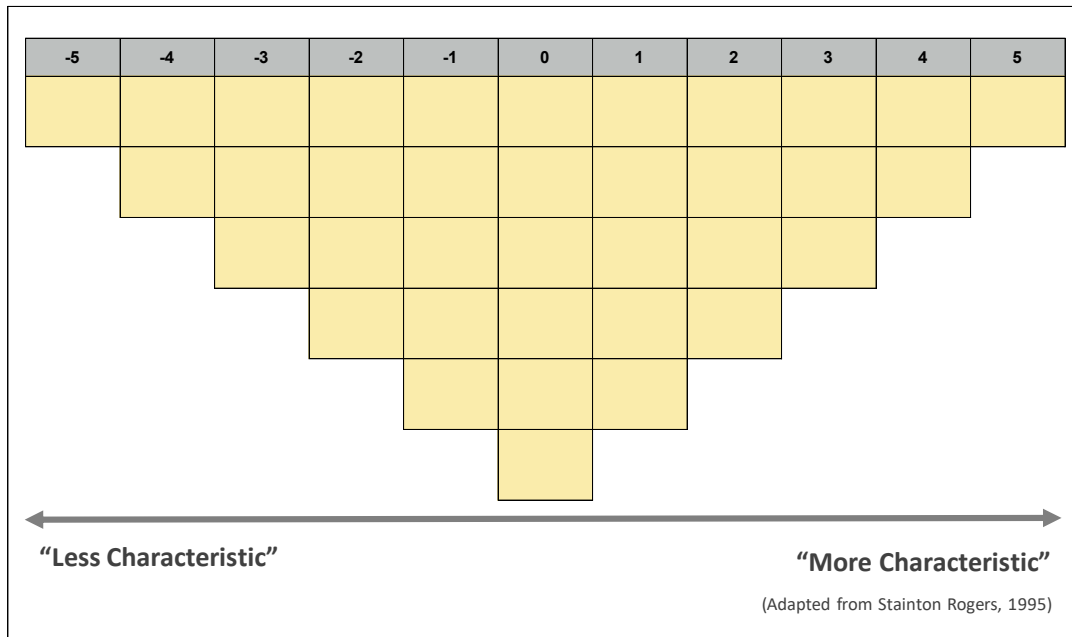
In step 3, a group discussion was facilitated, which explored the views and insights of the group based around the individual Q-sort rankings. In keeping with the spirit of conceptual encounter, participants were encouraged to reflect on their personal experiences when illustrating their rationale for ranking. This provided a qualitative evaluation of the items and an understanding of why participants ranked them as they did. Particular attention was given to rankings of +/- 3, 4, or 5, as they signified items that were at either extreme of the ranking array. These rankings generated a rich discussion that led to further experience-based insights. In step 4, the conceptual model that had emerged from the conceptual encounter process was presented to the group and a further group discussion was facilitated in step 5 that combined group feedback on the model with further reflections from the Q-sort discussion. New thoughts and insights were captured and, as with the interviews, the focus group discussion was recorded and transcribed.

3.3.4 Data Analysis

The Q-sort output of the four participants was photographed. An example is provided in Figure 3.11 below (see Appendix 6 for full details).

Figure 3.11 Example of a participant's Q-Sort
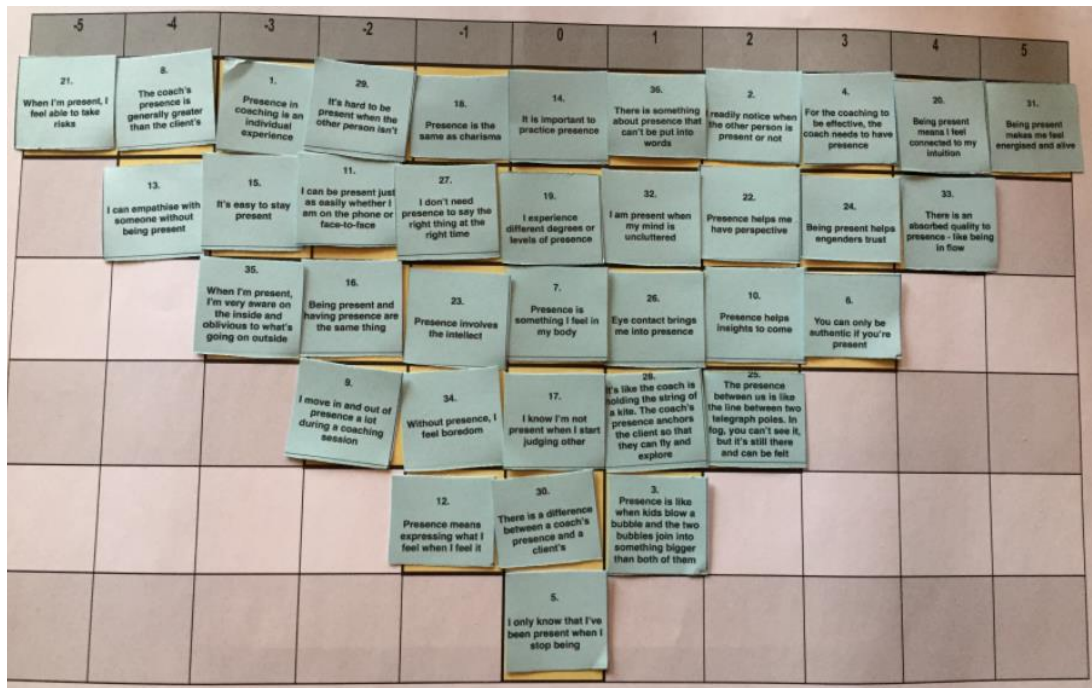
Each participants' raw Q-sort chart was used qualitatively as a basis for group discussion and to indicate group consensus and difference. The transcribed discussion was then analysed with the same mindset of immersion and reflection that was applied to the interview data. The Q-sorts were also analysed following the focus group and each participants' data was collated as shown in Figure 3.12. To help the analysis, their most characteristic items (e.g. items scoring +3, +4, and +5) were shaded blue, and their least characteristic items (-3, -4 and -5) were shaded amber. The five items with the overall highest and lowest total scores were also shaded blue and amber respectively. This analysis was combined with the conceptual encounter output to further enrich the conceptualisation.

Figure 3.12 The Q-Sort Analysis

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
31	Being present makes me feel energised and alive	2	5	4	1	12
4	For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence	3	3	2	3	11
24	Being present engenders trust	3	3	2	3	11
20	Being present means I feel connected to my intuition	1	4	3	1	9
10	Presence helps insights to come	1	2	1	4	8
22	Presence helps me have perspective	-1	2	1	4	6
25	The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt	-3	2	3	4	6
36	There is something about presence that can't be put into words	-1	1	4	2	6
5	I only know that I've been present when I stop being	5	0	1	-1	5
6	You can only be authentic if you're present	4	3	-1	-1	5
28	It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore	2	1	0	2	5
33	There is an absorbed quality to presence – like being in flow	0	4	2	-1	5
7	Presence is something I feel in my body	1	0	3	0	4
32	I am present when my mind is uncluttered	2	1	-1	2	4
2	I readily notice when the other person is present or not	3	2	-3	0	2
3	Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them	-5	1	5	1	2
29	It's hard to be present when the other person isn't	4	-2	0	0	2
19	I can be present without tuning into the other person	1	0	0	-1	0
14	It is important to practice presence	1	0	0	-2	-1
26	Eye contact brings me into presence	0	1	-2	0	-1
34	Without presence, I feel boredom	-1	-1	-2	3	-1
27	I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time	0	-1	-2	1	-2
1	The other person takes me out of presence	-2	-3	1	1	-3
9	I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session	2	-2	-2	-2	-4
21	When I'm present, I feel able to take risks	0	-5	1	0	-4
30	There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's	-1	0	0	-3	-4
13	I can empathise with someone without being present	0	-4	-1	0	-5
17	I know I'm not present when I start judging the other	-2	0	0	-3	-5
12	Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it	0	-1	-3	-2	-6
23	Presence involves the intellect	-1	-1	-3	-1	-6
15	It's easy to stay present	-1	-3	-1	-2	-7
11	I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face	-3	-2	2	-5	-8
35	When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside	-3	-3	-4	2	-8
16	Being present and having presence are the same thing	-4	-2	-1	-4	-11
18	Presence is the same as charisma	-4	-1	-4	-4	-13
8	The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's	-2	-4	-5	-3	-14

Most Characteristic

Least Characteristic

3.4 Issues of Quality

In addressing issues of quality within a constructivist paradigm, Guba and Lincoln (1995) recommend considering credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. Credibility involves establishing that the results are believable from the perspective of the research participants. To enhance credibility, interview transcripts and draft materials were made available to the research partners. In addition, instances of data that did not fit the model were reported as examples that challenged the clarity of the emerging concept. Further confirmation was provided by there being two focus group members who had also been involved in the conceptual encounter interviews so they had the opportunity to critique the concept that had been developed through their previous participation. Consequently, they were able to observe how well the model had incorporated their experiences.

Transferability refers to the degree to which findings can be generalised or transferred to other contexts. In constructivist thinking, this is an assessment made by the person who wishes to do the generalising. To assist this decision-making, a detailed description of the context of the research and the associated assumptions has been provided, which may help the reader to decide whether the research conclusions have resonance beyond the views of the research participants. As the researcher, I have been transparent in my assessment of the transferability of constructs of presence from other contexts and the rationale may also apply in the other direction.

Confirmability is the degree to which findings can be confirmed by others. For this project, a clear audit trail is maintained from source data to analytical interpretation. To enhance confirmability, all interviews were recorded and then transcribed verbatim. Transcripts were uploaded to NVivo, which allowed me to trace any quote used in the analysis and findings back to its source document. This line of sight from the research interview audio recording, through the transcript, and into interpretation and analysis provided transparency and demonstrated that the experience and views of the research partners were reported faithfully when evolving the concept. In addition, the methodology itself is self-confirming, meaning that a theoretical claim as to the nature and characteristic of presence would not stand up to the encounter process unless there was experiential evidence to support it. In addition, as a claim from one interview must also bear scrutiny with all subsequent interviews, each encounter serves to maintain the integrity of the previous work whilst generating new knowledge which is then confirmed by the subsequent encounters.

Finally, dependability is concerned with ensuring that changes in context that occur during the research are fully documented and explained. To this end, the research includes the documenting of all methods used, data collected and decisions made during the investigation. Both dependability and confirmability may be improved by a data audit after the completion of the study to assess data collection and analysis procedures.

3.5 Ethics

Within the constructivist paradigm, nothing is ever certain, so the ethics that frame the relationship between research stakeholders are an important focus (Rodwell, 1998). For example, factors such as the compatibility of world views and the power differential between researcher and partners will influence the research findings. Guba and Lincoln (1995) consider ethics to be intrinsic to constructivist research because consideration of the values of the research participants is central to the inquiry process. Ensuring honesty, openness, and respect for competing world views is fundamental to good research practice and safeguards must mitigate against risks of collusion and any attempt to use data to support a personal agenda. To this end, this research adheres to the Oxford Brookes ethical code of practice for research involving human participants (Oxford Brookes website, 2017).

A formal university ethics review process was performed prior to project approval and guidelines were followed to ensure that there was informed consent and adequate data security. As mentioned, prior to interviewing, all research partners were provided with a Participant Information Sheet (PIS), which advised them of their rights to confidentiality and data protection, and explained the aims of the study in simple, nontechnical language, allowing them to make an informed decision as to whether or not they wanted to participate (see Appendix 2). At the start of the interviews and focus group, consent was sought and evidenced via a consent pro-forma (see appendix 9). It was made clear to research partners that they were participating voluntarily and that they could withdraw their consent at any point during the research. To minimise the potential for collusion, my own coaching clients were ineligible. This ensured that client research partners were at least one step removed from me as the researcher. To ensure anonymity, all interview records were held on a password-protected laptop and individual names were coded. Similarly, any quotations and vignettes used to illustrate the conceptualisation were also anonymised.

3.6 Reflexivity

Reflexive practice using a research diary helped me to become more present to my 'conscious use of self in practice as a result of constructivist inquiry experience' (Rodwell, 1998, p.221). In extending the ethical imperatives to my personal approach as the researcher, I attempted to equalise any perceived power differential between myself and the research partners using a similar stance to that which I adopt as a coach. This meant being authentic, empathic and adopting an attitude of unconditional positive regard (Rogers, 1957). In practical terms, it meant not pursuing lines of inquiry that felt inappropriate, emphasising that partners did not need to answer all questions, that they could work with their own questions and that they were free to leave or close the interview at any time. In this way, political power and ethical behaviour was shared and negotiated with all participants, and their views, experiences and interpretations were fully respected.

One of the main motivations for choosing conceptual encounter as a suitable methodology was that it recognises the importance of the creative working alliance between researcher and research partner. For me, this introduced a degree of intimidation when applying it in practice because of the clear reliance on the ability of the researcher. In stressing the power of the approach, De Rivera states that it is, 'Completely dependent on the personal qualities of the researcher' (De Rivera, 1981, p.13). I felt a weight of expectation to create a concept that was rational, clear and innovative and feared that the analytical process might be messy and difficult. I recognised my lack of experience as an interviewer and my possible shortcomings in making sense of data that had the potential to be very broad, conflicting and vague. I also recognised the importance of seeing the data from the research partners' perspective as far as possible, rather than my own. I decided to apply my experience as a coach to the development of the relationship with my research partners and to trust the creativity of both the dialogic process of the interview and my reflexive practice. I conducted a pilot interview with both a coach and a client to sharpen my interviewing technique, and practiced reflexivity through my journal. Thus, I was confident that I had done everything I could to ensure that the outcome of the study reflected trustworthiness and that the journey would be self-developmental, enriching and rewarding for both the research partners and myself.

During the interview process, there were certainly instances where I felt attached to the development of the concept in a particular direction and where I felt some anxiety when

presented with experiences that seemed to conflict with it. These moments often proved to be very creative, signifying the need for a new direction, lateral thinking or increased abstraction. The tension between letting go of the old and allowing space for the new became a common experience while using this methodology.

3.7 Limitations and Assumptions

As with all research approaches, conceptual encounter has limitations. For instance, this study used words and the English language to access and report participants' experiences. This is not generally an issue for native English speakers as English is a rich and nuanced language, but it may have presented more challenges to three of the research partners who did not have English as their first language. It also excludes experience that is expressed in different ways other than language, for instance through a work of art or creative performing. Its power is in uncovering the structure of human experience as described by research partners, but it is not designed to explain how or why this structure occurs.

Conceptual encounter starts with an initial concept derived from the researcher, which will naturally influence how the researcher interprets the experience recounted by the partner or vice versa. A set of assumptions are therefore already in place, although these can be challenged at any point. A different starting point may suggest a different set of assumptions and consequently, the concept may evolve in a different direction; thus the research context is necessarily unique. De Rivera (1981) emphasises that there is considerable skill involved in intuiting, 'An abstract form that succeeds in capturing the essential relationships involved in all of the concrete experiences' (p.6). There is therefore significant power, trust and analytical expertise in the hands of the researcher to arrive at a final, elegant conceptualisation. An inability to do this may limit the research outcomes.

3.8 Summary

This chapter has presented the theoretical framework for the study and discussed the research strategy, which takes a qualitative approach and adopts a constructivist stance. It has included the reasoning for the choice of conceptual encounter as an appropriate methodology and explained the research design. It has also provided a justification for two parallel lines of inquiry (one from the coach's perspective and the other from the client's) as a means of ensuring that each voice in the conversation was treated with the same significance. Since common themes emerged from both client and coach perspectives and respondents reported a similar understanding of presence, this procedure led to the generation of a single overall concept that encompassed all research partners' experiences. Had this not been the case, two separate coach and client 'maps' could have resulted (chapter six explains how each map evolved in more detail). In particular, the reasoning has been presented which justifies the choice to investigate the full range of each research partner's experience of presence rather than choosing the specific case of a coach-client dyad (i.e. selecting a coach and their corresponding client as a unit of analysis). The rationale for a focus group has also been explained, which allowed data from the interview process to be used in a Q-sort exercise in order to explore the group participants' views of consensus and difference. This novel extension to the methodology extended the research and enhanced credibility. Issues relating to quality and ethics were discussed through a constructivist lens, some aspects of my reflexivity practice as a researcher were explored and finally, potential limitations and assumptions were addressed. The next chapter presents and discusses the findings of the study.

Chapter 4 – Findings I: The Nature of Presence

The next two chapters report on the findings that emerged from the conceptual encounter interviews and focus group. This chapter focusses on understanding the nature of presence as experienced by the research participants, whilst the next explores their understanding of its antecedents and effects in the executive coaching conversation. Presence is first described in terms of the three themes that emerged from the literature review: the internal, relational and external dimensions. Secondly, two modes of presence are conceptualised, distinguishing between an aware and an absorbed nature. Thirdly, findings revealing a dynamic nature are presented, and the metaphorical expression of presence is discussed.

Under each section, for the purposes of consistency and ease of reading, the client conceptual encounter findings are presented first, followed by the coach perspective and then the focus group output. In this way, similarities and differences between client and coach experiences are reported side by side. As there are fourteen voices involved in total, I have used simple numbering, such as coach #1 or client #1 to differentiate between interview participants and lettering (e.g. coach #A, client #C) to represent focus group participants. This minimises the disruption to reading flow and avoids the need to hold in mind many names.

4.1. The Three Dimensions of Presence

The construct of the three dimensions was a suitable means of conceptualising the findings, as presented below.

4.1.1 The Internal Dimension

The internal dimension involves a person's internal awareness of being in the here-and-now during the coaching conversation. It includes awareness of one's own mental, emotional and somatic experiences as well as an awareness of the environment.

Being in the here-and-now

Both client and coach related experiences concerned with an awareness of being in the here-and-now, characterised by a sense of being awake and open to what is unfolding. Client #5 related that, *"when I'm present, I am in the here-and-now"*; client #1 experienced, *"much more stillness and everything much more clearly focussed"*; whilst client #6 described her experience in these terms:

> *For me, it [presence] is when you have the stillness almost of being in that moment […]*
> *It's like every second you're just there, and every second you're there again, present to*
> *what you're feeling, your environment.*

She recounted how her coach helped her to experience her emotions more deeply, which, when accompanied with an attitude of openness or welcoming, helped her to change:

> *When I'm in my emotion and the coach is helping me to stay there, to fully experience*
> *it and almost, we've talked about accepted, I prefer to use 'welcoming'. If I truly*
> *welcome whatever I'm actually feeling anyway, then it allows it to change I guess, to*
> *move.*

Client #2 experienced presence in similar terms, also highlighting a sense of stillness and openness: *"Presence is about being in-the-moment […] It's about being still, about being open, about being focussed, and your mind not being cluttered with your stuff."* These findings suggest an intentionality about maintaining presence that is synonymous with practicing mindfulness (Passmore, 2009; Collard and Walsh, 2008), also illustrated by client #4:

> *I just recognise that my thoughts are going somewhere else, and I just say, 'come back'.*
> *Just pulling them back in-the-moment, and that's my mindfulness basically. It's about*
> *realising and being conscious that your mind is drifting away.*

Findings from the coach perspective painted a similar picture. Coach #4 described his experience as, *"being here right now, available if you like […] It's being completely here, fully"*, whilst coach #2 also associated presence with a sense of calm: *"When I really know that I'm*

present with somebody […] it feels I'm completely calm, completely relaxed. I'm not thinking about anything. I'm just responding to what's coming through."

The Somatic Experience

Client and coach research partners both associated presence with an awareness of their somatic experience. Client #5 felt that when he was present he could, *"sense body sensations"* and emphasised that presence involved listening internally on a somatic level: *"You might mentally be able to go, 'Oh, I'm present, I'm listening to you.' Does your body say that? What's actually going on in-the-moment?"* Similarly, client #6 recounted becoming present through listening to her body: *"One element that helps me to get there, is to actually get into my body […] How does my body feel about that?"*

From the coach perspective, coach #2 reported feeling connected to her body when she was present, rather than being, *"in my head"*. Coach #3 on the other hand, experienced changes in breath: *"I would notice that my breathing is slower, that I'd be breathing from the stomach"*. The chest, heart and stomach area were cited as particular physical centres for feeling presence. For instance, coach #2 reported:

> *The place that I feel it is kind of here. It's kind of my heart/gut. That kind of area. It's at the core of my body. It feels calm, still, quiet and I feel it in my whole body. My whole body feels light, settled, relaxed.*

In similar terms, coach #3 felt that, *"it [presence] is being able to activate both your heart and your head"*, whilst coach #4 related: *"I go [patting stomach] or whatever. If I know them well, I go, 'This is quite an emotional thing.' In my intuit, in the conversation, I think I'm quite present in those moments. That for me is real."* Coach #6 distinguished between her feeling of presence and empathy: *"As we're talking now I'm feeling it [presence] in my solar plexus. It's a sort of warmth that emanates from my core. Sort of a seat being warmed. It's hard to describe it, and empathy, that doesn't describe the feeling either."*

Findings from the focus group provided further insight into this somatic experience of presence. To recap, the focus group comprised two clients and two coaches. They each performed a Q-sort on 36 Q-items or phrases that represented different aspects of presence,

after which a group discussion was facilitated. Three items related to the somatic experience and the scores are shown in Figure 4.1 below.

Figure 4.1 Investigating the Somatic Nature of Presence

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
31	Being present makes me feel energised and alive	2	5	4	1	12
7	Presence is something I feel in my body	1	0	3	0	4
23	Presence involves the intellect	-1	-1	-3	-1	-6

The highest overall score of the focus group Q-sort was for the Q-item 31: *Being present makes me feel energised and alive*. By scoring this item +5, coach #B placed it highest of all the 36 Q-items in her assessment of what was most characteristic of presence, whilst client #C placed it second-highest by scoring it +4. Coach #A and client #D gave it a positive mid-ranking. This suggests that there was a reasonable consensus amongst the focus group participants that this item was characteristic of presence. During the group discussion, coach #B explained her reasons for ranking it highest in these terms:

> *It [presence] is kind of my life source […] it runs through everything […] It's not life without it, if that makes sense. I can't do my job [as a coach] without it. I can't be effective without it. Everything to me affects every relationship and when I'm not present, I'm not in relationship with the person.*

A weaker level of consensus was evident concerning Q-item 7: *Presence is something I feel in my body*. Whilst client #C again felt the somatic element strongly characterised presence, the other participants gave it a mid-ranking. Similarly, for Q-item 23: *Presence involves the intellect*, all participants viewed it as less characteristic of presence, with client #C having the most pronounced view.

In summary, findings relating to the internal dimension illustrate how presence is experienced by both clients and coaches as their personal sense of being awake and aware to themselves and their environment. Research partners are able to notice their mental, emotional and physical experience consciously at the time it occurs.

Lack of Presence

Part of understanding what presence is, is understanding what it is not. Research partners reflected on their awareness of a lack of presence in various ways. For instance, client #2 linked it to a lack of openness: *"It's harder to be present if you're not open to the learning because then you're holding back in a situation, or putting walls up."* Client #3 cited being *"preoccupied and bored"* as his experience of not being present, and being *"cluttered in my mind"*, whereas client #5 reflected that he was largely not present at all whilst being coached: *"I was not aware at all. I was not present at all. I didn't even know what it was to be present".*

Coaches were also able to express when and why they weren't present, with thinking too much and mental chatter being recurrent themes. Coach #2 described her lack of presence as: *"I get caught up in the thinking. Then I remember that I've got caught up in my thinking and I go "oh yeah, it just happened, it is as it is"".* Similarly, coach #3 recounted that, *"I had a lot of self-talk that I was more aware of and I don't think I was listening to her and I caught myself doing things like 'mmm, yeah.'"* Coach #4's experience was that, *"it's a head activity […] I'm not as present as when I'm in my intuition."* He also associated feeling anxiety or worry with not being present, saying, *"I worry about my breath and if I'm worrying about my breath, it takes away from my presence."*

Lack of presence relating to the internal dimension was explored in the focus group through Q-item 34: *Without presence, I feel boredom* (see Figure 4.2). Client #D felt boredom was strongly associated with a lack of presence, whereas the other participants indicated a weaker link.

Figure 4.2 Q-item 34

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
34	Without presence, I feel boredom	-1	-1	-2	3	-1

Overall, both clients and coaches noticed a lack of presence either during the coaching conversation or as a result of later reflection. They described their experience in a variety of ways, both in terms that were the opposite of presence (e.g. a lack of openness), and through other characteristics such as being bored, judgemental or anxious.

4.1.2 The Relational Dimension

It is plausible that the internal dimension can be experienced alone. However, the relational dimension, presented next, requires two people to be in dialogue. Presence in this dimension centred on an awareness of 'being with' the other person and involved a sense of mutuality or reciprocity. The relational dimension is also understood through an appreciation of what it is not.

Being With

'Being with' involves the experience of presence that comes with client and coach being in relation and available to each other. For instance, client #2 stated:

> It [presence] is just about the person being with me and me being with the person. As a coachee, when coaching has gone well for me, the person isn't trying to direct or judge or move it in any way.

She suggests here that presence is bound up with a quality of availability and togetherness, also associating it with a non-judgmental attitude in her coach. Client #4 felt that, *"presence is where, as a client, the coach is fully with me"* whilst client #3 highlighted a characteristic of relational clarity: *"If we're talking about presence, there's a cleanliness. The presence has to be neither you nor I are befuddled with anything else around us."* Similarly, client #5 experienced it as like being in a bubble with his coach: *"It felt like we were both in this bubble, able to really create something together. I think it was the element of presence that we had for each other".* Client #6 also referred to a bubble and feelings of companionship:

> The most recent is probably this weekend where I had an experience being coached on a particular point and it felt, I guess I'm trying to think what made me think of that in terms of the presence, and I think it was that I felt accompanied […] it just felt like there was a little bubble around us.

From the coaching perspective, coach #6 related that presence was, "s*omething about your 'being with', which perhaps is another way of talking about presence."* She went on to recount an experience with a particular client where they were both *"very much in-the-*

moment […] There was something very present tense about it – current […] The sensation was that, we are here together now, in this space together."

During the interview with this research partner, a moment occurred that highlighted this 'being with' aspect. We were interviewing via Skype and the connection broke for a few moments. She reported:

It's been paralleled here with us waiting for the other connection to come back […] I don't feel the sense of being waited for because that would trigger a hurry up. As you said, you're there, ready when I'm ready to come back […] just looking at you I had that sense of you just calmly being there.

This shows how a relational presence can carry participants through an environmental disruption. The sense of 'being with' and a person being available remains whilst the physical connection is broken.

Mutuality

Extending the sense of 'being with', client and coach research partners recounted experiences that described a reciprocity or mutuality of presence. For instance, client #2 envisioned a meeting of presence: "*In terms of presence, the coaching relationship has to be mutual […] there has to be a meeting of presence, if you like."* Client #4 felt that, "*the best results come when both [client and coach] are present, just focused*", whilst client #5 also experienced a sense of reciprocity with a view that, *"your own presence [affects] the other's presence, and the other has an influence on your presence."* Due to this influence, client #2 felt that, "*there is mutual responsibility around presence."*

Mutuality suggests an interdependence between the presence of client and coach, which client #6 experienced as the whole being greater than the sum of its parts: *"It feels like it's an all-encompassing thing that then brings something else into the space that on your own you wouldn't, just wouldn't have been able to bring out."* It is interesting to note that she received coaching via Skype and reported that although the experience is different to face-to-face coaching, mutuality can be felt regardless of whether or not she shared the same physical space.

This sense of mutuality was also cited by coach research partners. Coach #1 observed, *"I've been very present but they've been very present too";* coach #4's experience was that it was *"A level of communication that's going on [between us] at some level",* and coach #5 related being *"In tune with what you're hearing from them."*

Lack of Presence

A lack of presence with respect to the relational dimension is experienced as a lack of connection with the other person. Client #3 experienced this as being, *"like you're always on edge […] The relationship isn't there […] It's a problem-solving session as opposed to a coaching session almost."* Client #6 perceived it when there was a lack of *"100% leaning into each other to actually create that space"*, so that in her experience, the space collapses, meaning that, *"what [space] you're creating isn't as efficient and functional as it should be."*

Coaches described their experiences of a lack of relational presence in similar terms, referring to a lack of flow, feeling 'clunky', or misfiring. Coach #1 sums this up: *"I'm almost starting to think: 'This feels like we're misfiring', or either…maybe the client's not present…that's something about it, it's about the client's presence as well as my presence."*

In summary, the findings indicate a recognition of the interdependent nature of presence between coach and client and that a lack of presence in the relational dimension can adversely affect the coaching relationship.

4.1.3 The External Dimension

The external dimension of presence involves how it is perceived and experienced by others. Client #6 described an experience of her coach's presence as, *"feeling their warmth"*, whilst client #4 commented on a quality of attractiveness: *"You're drawn [to people with presence], that's what I think […] You're naturally drawn to what you're lacking."* This perception of presence highlights a charismatic nature, yet both client and coach research partners distinguished between the two concepts. Client #1 associated her coach's presence with having an undivided attention and concern for her, whereas she pictured charisma as being more concerned with the self, and not a desirable quality for a coach.

[Presence is] being there in-the-moment and having absolute full, undivided attention and being, in a lot of cases, there for the benefit of perhaps not yourself, but other people […] charisma is all about ego, and I'm not sure I'd find that particularly helpful.

From the coach perspective, research partners reported a tacit awareness of their clients' presence. For instance, coach #4 asked: *"What gives me a clue they're present? I just feel it"*; coach #6 felt, *"if they're really present, you pick that up"* and coach #5's experience was:

You can sense with their body language, their eye contact, their facial expressions […] I think also, sometimes you get little nuggets in their responses to questions. "You ask the tough questions, don't you? You've got me thinking there." A little expression that gives you a hint that they're there; they're really in-the-moment, thinking about that kind of thing.

Coaches also recognised the charismatic quality of presence, acknowledging that it was possible to be charismatic without presence, as coach #1 related:

I guess with charisma, what I am saying is, you don't have to have presence to be charismatic. You have to have something but it's not necessarily presence. But if you are very present, then it comes across in that kind of charismatic vein. This idea that you have something about you, people warm to you or whatever it might be. There's an aspect of charisma that overlaps somewhere with presence.

This distinction between presence and charisma was investigated in the focus groups through Q-item 18: *Presence is the same as charisma* (see Figure 4.3). All research participants rated it as being less characteristic of presence compared with the other Q-items, with coach #A and both client research partners ranking it as one of their least characteristic items.

Figure 4.3 Q-Item 18

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
18	Presence is the same as charisma	-4	-1	-4	-4	-13

During the focus group discussion, coach #A felt the main differentiator between presence and charisma was that presence has *"empathy attached to it"*, whilst client #C's experience was that, *"charisma [is the] aura that you have as you just are as a person. And then for me, the presence is almost the state that you bring to a specific interaction."*

A person perceiving presence in others might describe them as 'having presence' as distinct from having charisma. The relevance of this term was explored in the focus group through Q-item 16: *Being present and having presence are the same thing* (see Figure 4.4). Coach #A and client #D placed this in their three least characteristic items, whilst coach #B and client #C gave it a mid-negative ranking.

Figure 4.4 Q-Item 16

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
16	Being present and having presence are the same thing	-4	-2	-1	-4	-11

This suggests that the participants felt that there was a difference between the two constructs. The ensuing group discussion indicated a level of uncertainty regarding 'having presence', as coach #B queried: *"Are we talking about presence impact or presence being presence? […] Should I judge it on whether it's relevant to being present or on whether it's relevant to the Ready-Brek glow I have when I walk into a room?"* This distinction seems to be associated with a perceived difference between presence related to attention and presence as a quality that is transmitted to other people, as coach #4 explained:

> *I see that as the presence of "this is my presence in the room, this is the energy that I want to transmit into the room." […] This is the presence of impact rather than the presence of attention. But the presence of impact is still important.*

The external dimension was explored in the focus group through Q-item 2 (*I readily notice when the other person is present or not*) (see Figure 4.5). Both coaches rated this item as more characteristic of presence, whereas as client #C rated it as less characteristic, with client #D neutral. This suggests that coaches are more practiced or experienced than clients in noticing presence in the other.

Figure 4.5 Q-Item 2

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
2	I readily notice when the other person is present or not	3	2	-3	0	2

In summary, some research partners reported that they perceived presence during the coaching conversation through qualities such as warmth and attention, distinguishing this from charisma. Being present and having presence were viewed as different constructs.

Lack of Presence

Lack of presence with respect to the external dimension involves the lack of presence in one party being perceived by the other. This is recognised in various ways. For instance, client #1 cited a lack of engagement and involvement: *"Distraction, physical clues around lack of attention, lack of being engaged in the conversation […] I think it [lack of presence] is probably easy to see."* She also suggested that presence was not binary, that there may be a depth to it, which she found harder to observe: *"You have a sense that they are engaged, that they are involved but the depth to which that may be, I think is probably harder to say."* Client #2 recounted a situation which highlighted the connection between lack of presence and a lack of perceived empathy and openness: *"That was a lack of presence because there was no empathy, there was no reading of the situation […] I think in those situations, there isn't empathy, there isn't sensitivity, there isn't openness."* Lack of presence was also perceived in a more tacit manner as reported by client #4: *"These things are hard to explain, but sometimes people listen but they're not there."* Client #5 related a perception of his coach not being truly attentive with a sense of fake-ness: *"It feels fake. I don't know if it is fake, but it feels fake for me, then I kind of switch off."* Perceiving this affected his own sense of presence: *"I tend to get out of my presence in the process."* This illustrates how a perceived lack of presence in the coach can affect the presence of the client.

From the coaching perspective, research partners reported that they associated a lack of client presence with mental distraction. For coach #5, this occurred at the start of a session: *"They would often walk in five minutes late, distracted by the last meeting"*. For coach #1, it occurred at the end: *"A bit of her has already gone to the next meeting"*. It may also be more

subtle, as coach #6 related: *"It might be a thought the other is caught in and you can see that they've gone somewhere else in that moment."* Coach #5 recounted how a lack of presence could be perceived as a dissonance between words and body: *"You might be saying that, your body's not saying that. Your body's saying something very different."* Like client #5 above, she perceived fake-ness when a coach does not practice presence as a state of being:

> *It's like this thing about presence. If you do the unconditional positive regard, if you try and do the empathy, it's kind of fake. But when you are being those things, and I think it's like, in NLP [Neuro Linguistic Programming] they talk about mirroring, matching and all that kind of thing. What NLP tries to do is train people to do that. But we do it anyway. When we are totally present with somebody, we're automatically mirroring and matching. We don't even have to think about it. There is a difference between faking it and really being it.*

Overall, research partners reported experiences of a lack of presence from the other person. This was perceived as a lack of attention, engagement, empathy or openness. They also highlighted a requirement for the other person's presence to feel authentic.

4.2 The Two Modes of Presence

The findings presented under the theme of the internal dimension speak to a mode of presence that is associated with being awake and aware. Research partners also reported that presence could be experienced in a second mode that is more absorbed and unconscious in nature, such as when somebody is lost in thought about a past situation or issue, and less aware of their environment. This mode is characterised by a lack of awareness and a sense of time passing quickly. For example, client #6 described: *"This unconscious act of being present"*; client #1 recounted that, *"time did go very quickly and yet once you're in it [presence], it actually feels, again, quite still. It's quite strange"*; and client #2 associated it with wellbeing: *"When it has been very present, time goes quickly and it's enjoyable."*

Coaching research partners reported similar experiences. For instance, coach #4 felt that: *"When you're really fully present, you're completely unaware of whether you're present or not. It's not a conscious thing"*, whilst coach #2 echoed the sense of timelessness when recounting comments made by a client: *"At the end of the three hours, guaranteed, every time he goes, 'I can't believe that's three hours gone,' because it's like it's timeless."*

Distinguishing two modes or ways of experiencing presence suggests that both are used to make meaning during a coaching conversation. For instance, one person might be more aware whilst the other is more absorbed. Client #6 reported her experience of both modes:

There's an unconscious presence around it, right? Because you are actually allowing yourself to fully experience that emotion. And then I guess coming out of that, once it's evolved and you are – maybe you'd have a more conscious presence.

This absorbed mode bears a similarity with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow, introduced in chapter 2. This association was explored in the focus group through Q-item 33: *There is an absorbed quality to presence – like being in flow* (see Figure 4.6).

Figure 4.6 Q-Item 33

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
33	There is an absorbed quality to presence - like being in flow	0	4	2	-1	5

Client #C and coach #B ranked this item as more characteristic of presence, with the other two participants giving it a more neutral rating. Coach #B rated it as one of the most characteristic items (+4). She described her experience more fully during group discussion:

There's a dual quality to presence, like being in flow. When I'm in a coaching scenario where it's the best it can be as I want it to be, I very often don't remember what I said. It's that idea of being so absorbed, that the two hours feels like five minutes. In the end, you just think 'wow, what just happened?' It's almost like everything else stops.

This is a similar experience to that described by the interview research partners above. In addition, coach #A reported his experience of being on the edge of both modes, so that he was, *"a participant but also being able to be like a drone and come up and say: "Are we on track here?""* This ability to both participate and observe is an example of how he moves between modes during the coaching conversation. Similarly, client #C related her experience of being present in both modes during a coaching session where the challenge was to *"find that really lovely balance where you can be inside and outside at the same time."*

4.3 Presence as Metaphor

Presence can be an elusive concept that seems to resist attempts at clarity and research partners from both perspectives commented on their difficulty in describing it. This difficulty was most pronounced early in interviews when initial descriptions were solicited. For instance, client #2 responded, *"I find it really hard because when you said, 'What is presence?' I thought 'Well, blow me'. I think I should know, but I don't"*, whilst client #4 thought that *"these things are hard to explain".* Coaches were equally challenged, with coach #1 reporting, *"I find the concept of presence quite elusive"*, and coach #6 commenting, *"I find it quite difficult, and almost resist trying to describe it. I know it."* Trying to put an experience into a language that perhaps does not have the richness to adequately convey the required meaning led coach #2 to state:

I can think of experiences, no problem. Putting them into words is the difficulty. And I think that's part of the thing about presence. You're trying to put into words something that there are hardly any words for. Because it's more of a sense of feeling than it is something that you're doing.

In the focus group, the notion of presence being difficult to describe was explored through Q-item 36: *There is something about presence that can't be put into words* (see Figure 4.7). Client #C ranked this as one of her most characteristic items (+4), whilst the other participants gave it a more neutral ranking.

Figure 4.7 Q-Item 36

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
36	There is something about presence that can't be put into words	-1	1	4	2	6

During the group discussion, coach #A went on to say, "*I agree with you, that you can't put it into words"*, whilst coach #B felt that, *"we're trying to cage something that doesn't want to be caged."*

This tacit sense of knowing echoes Polanyi's claim that, "we know more than we can tell" (Polanyi, 2009, p.4) and Wittgenstein's (1961) view that concepts that have an ineffable

quality can only be shown, not said. One way of achieving this showing is through imagery and metaphor. In a phenomenological context, Ervas and Sangoi (2014) argue that metaphors can be seen as representative of our experience, being used to better understand, express and communicate tacit knowledge. Similarly, Lakoff and Johnson (2008) claim that we seek to grasp concepts that are not clear to us in terms of other concepts that are. It was noticeable that both research participants and I reached for metaphors during the interviews and focus group discussion in order to do this. These are summarised in Figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 Metaphors for Presence

Driving fast narrows your view. Driving slower [being present] allows you to see more depth and it's safer.

The coach is on the edge of my experience so I can move towards them in sort of a vacuum. If the coach gets too involved the power of presence goes.

I'm underwater and it's dark and when the coach asks me to, "Look left," I look left and I am present at that moment. Otherwise, I am present, but only inside. It's an inside-outside thing.

If that [presence] gets broken, the bubble's burst and you're out there thinking about other things.

Driving fast vs driving slow

A Vacuum between client and coach

Diving deep without drowning

A bubble

Pinprick of light

Being underwater

I dive into the deep and the coach pulls me out if I'm about to drown.

A pinprick of light in a dark room - all you can focus your attention on is the pinprick of light.

Client Perspective

It's like also it can go above the surface of the water, there are times you can go fast, then if you could slow down, you missed the whole underwater world.

Metaphors For Presence

Presence is like holding a string of the kite. It's about getting some sort of fixed space that you can move around.

Coach Perspective

Clouds are the atmosphere that allows the rain and lightening. Presence is the atmosphere that allows insight and creativity.

Kite on a string

Clouds and rain

Two car passengers

Sherpa Guide

Bubbles

Cameras and Drone

Telegraph Cable

The coach is the passenger, and the client is the driver. I'm not taking them on the journey. My presence makes the difference to route and destination.

It's like when kids blow bubbles and sometimes those bubbles come together and join.

I often think of that relational space as a bubble with a flexible boundary and we are inside that bubble.

It's like a drone going from eye level to high level.

It's like seeing all these TV dramas, two shots from the same camera of the same thing simultaneously on the same screen.

It's like you and your client are telegraph poles and the telegraph wire is the connection between you. In thick fog that telegraph cable is still there. Presence is something to do with clearing the fog away.

It's like being a sherpa guide. You offer a rope to the client so that they can lower themselves into a crevasse a little bit, getting the feeling of being there, feeling really safe because they can come out of it.

The similarities and differences in the use of metaphor between client and coach research partners reflect their respective perspectives. From the client perspective, client #1 used a 'pinprick of light' metaphor, stating, *"it's like having a pinprick of light in a dark room, so all you can focus your attention on is just the pinprick of light"*, whilst client #5 related to an underwater analogy that aptly conveyed his sense of being absorbed:

> *It's like I'm going underwater and it's dark and when the coach asks me, "Look left," then I will look left and then I may be present at that moment. Otherwise, I am present, but only inside. It's an inside-outside thing I realised.*

He went on to explain that his coach's presence would, *"allow me to dive into the deep and will pull me out if I'm about to drown."* He also evoked the sense of mutuality of presence when referring to a vacuum between himself and his coach:

> *I let go of the being aware of the things around me when I fully trust, and then a certain presence of the here and now goes away. It's like, if I use the same example, being on the edge. If the coach is on the edge, I can move towards the coach in sort of a vacuum between me and the coach. If the coach would go too much into my story, I would be pushed back. If he would go too far into his own story, the vacuum would not ... It's like the power would go.*

This suggests that he is in the more absorbed mode of presence, whilst his coach is *"on the edge"*, in the more aware mode. If the coach becomes too absorbed, *"the power would go"*. The experience of presence in the more aware mode was described by client #5, who related it to 'driving fast vs driving slow':

> *If you drive fast, your range of view narrows down. You maybe arrive faster, but are you sure that's where you want to be? And in the case of a crash, you're way better off. If you drive slower, you can enjoy the scenery, enjoy the road – it's safer and then you can see more depth. I don't know if that's completely that, but every time I start to rush, I remind myself of that. And I think it's also about the presence, because when you're there, not pushing and calm, fully with your senses somewhere, it's a very slow process for the ones that like to run. But then you see the depth.*

By being more aware, there is a noticing that occurs that may not otherwise be apparent in day-to-day working life.

Coaches also conveyed presence in metaphorical terms, with the difference that they often focused on their own influence compared to their client. For example, coach #1 suggested a 'kite on a string' metaphor, where the coach holds the string for the client who, as the kite, is free to explore:

> *I think a bit about the presence, for me, is a little bit about anchoring the session in some way or maybe holding a string of the kite, maybe it's not anchoring. Either way, it's about getting some sort of fixed space that you can move around.*

This idea of the coach using presence as a point of stability, emphasising characteristics associated with the relational dimension, is echoed by a sherpa metaphor used by coach #3:

> *Having presence as a coach is like being a sherpa guide. You offer a rope to the client so that they can lower themselves into a crevasse a little bit, getting the feeling of being there, feeling really safe because they can come out of it. I think it's about leadership in terms of the state of presence and where you could go when you're in that state. If I'm the sherpa guide, and have the confidence and understanding and empathy with the person on the other end, knowing maybe what they're fearing, I'd still help them to go there. That for me makes presence. It's the empathy, the charisma, the trust, the awareness. If a sherpa guide wasn't aware of everything that was going on, you know; the rocks falling down, the clouds forming which meant the rain is going to come, they wouldn't be safe and that wouldn't necessarily help the client.*

This metaphor accentuates a sense of trust and connection between client and coach, mirroring the client perspective provided by client #5 above, where he trusts his coach's presence to allow him to explore underwater without drowning. Coach #1 also envisaged presence in its relational dimension using the very different imagery of a 'drone':

> *It's almost like one of those drones at a football match which is actually going from eye level to high level and is able to be there all the time. And the presence thing is about using that ability to be with the client as wholly as you can for as long as you can.*

This illustrates his movement between the more absorbed and more aware modes, whilst relationally 'being with' his client. This relational emphasis was further illustrated by coach #2, who envisioned presence as a line between two telegraph poles:

> *If you think of a telegraph cable, you've got two poles, which are you and your client and the telegraph wire is the connection between you. In thick fog that telegraph cable is still there. If both of us are present to each other, it's like a bright, cloudless day and that connection is really clear. Presence is something to do with clearing the fog away. It allows that view to be seen, and also felt. When you're remembering that you've got this within you, you don't need to do anything to clear the fog away. It just goes – it's like it just dissipates.*

This metaphor evokes a similar sense of trust as the 'sherpa guide' whilst also drawing out the mutuality that comes with each person being present to the other. The association with weather conditions introduces an image of the effect that presence has between client and coach, whilst the invisible connection reflects the strength of their relationship regardless of what happens concerning the weather. Client #3 put it slightly differently: *"We've been talking about the presence between us, it may actually be the presence around us as opposed to between us."* This sense of presence *"around us"* was likened to a bubble by coach #1: *"It's like when kids blow bubbles and sometimes those bubbles come together and join",* and coach #6: *"I often think of that relational space as a bubble with a flexible boundary and we are inside that bubble."* The lack of presence was also interpreted in similar terms by client #3: *"That's where boredom comes in. If that [presence] gets broken, the bubble's burst and you're out there thinking about other things."*

During the interview process, metaphors usually emerged spontaneously and generated further conversation, either within the same metaphorical domain, or else by interpreting experiences in different ways. For example, during the interview with coach #1, I offered the 'clouds and rain' metaphor, saying: *"Presence is almost like an atmosphere to allow insight. You can't have rain without clouds let's say, or you can't have insight and co-creativity without the clouds being present."* He replied:

> *You can have a rainbow without certain clouds [...] and you don't always get a rainbow [...] I think we could both strive to be present. You could both be present without getting*

into that flow we've been talking about. I suppose you could both be almost present in your own spaces and somehow not connect. Unusual, but I suppose it's possible.

Hence, he built on and extended the metaphor I had used, and then interpreted it in terms of the need for mutual presence. Following this, his train of thought moved to a specific instance he had experienced where he was challenged to be mutually present, recalling, *"I worked hard to be mutually present, to do the things we've been talking about […] my empathy started to, I want to say evaporate, but was I still present?"* In this example, the metaphor led to a connection with an experience, whilst in other instances, it emerged from sense-making of the experience.

In the focus group, three metaphors that emerged from the interviews were used as Q-items as shown in Figure 4.9. Both clients and coach #B agreed on the 'telegraph poles' metaphor (item 25) as characteristic of presence, whilst coach #A felt it was one of the least characteristic items. Coach #C ranked the 'bubbles' metaphor (item 3) as her most characteristic item, whereas coach #A ranked it as his least characteristic. None of the research partners viewed the 'kite on a string' metaphor (item 28) as strongly characteristic or uncharacteristic.

Figure 4.9 Q-Items for Metaphor of Presence

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
25	The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt	-3	2	3	4	6
28	It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore	2	1	0	2	5
3	Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them	-5	1	5	1	2

Overall, the views of the focus group around the metaphorical imagery were mixed. The findings suggest that specific metaphors either do or do not appeal. Coach #A exemplified this lack of appeal for both the 'telegraph poles' (-3) and 'bubbles' (-5) metaphors: *"They're quite personal. I intellectually get them but they don't do it for me."* Client #C, on the other

hand, felt strong resonance for the same items, rating them as +3 and +5 respectively and describing the 'bubbles' metaphor as capturing the sense of mutuality of presence, so client and coach are *"leaning in to create this bubble. The metaphor described this well for me."*

In summary, the metaphorical expression of presence represents a valuable and novel means of capturing the tacit quality of the phenomenon that is difficult to articulate in normal language. It emerged naturally during the research process and De Rivera (1981) recognised that the conceptual encounter, in its present form, 'uses words to gain access to experience and is therefore limited by the scope of language' (p.26). He suggested broadening the approach, stating: 'If we wish to complete access to the full range of experience, we must have some way of encountering the everyday behaviour for which we have no words' (p.26). The use of metaphor has helped to achieve this.

4.4 The Dynamics of Presence

The findings so far have focussed on the nature of presence with respect to three dimensions, two modes and its metaphorical expression, with research partners reporting experiences of both presence and its lack. In presenting its dynamic nature, this section focusses firstly on how a client and coach can experience presence in different ways during the same coaching moment; and secondly, on how presence changes between them during the coaching dialogue.

4.4.1 Experiencing Presence Differently

Research partners reported experiences where, during a particular period of coaching, the client was experiencing presence in its more absorbed mode, whilst the coach was in the more aware mode. This occurred when the client was very present to a situation that they were recounting or reliving, whilst the coach was in-the-moment, deeply listening. Client #5's experience of this was, *"I let go of the being aware of the things around me when I fully trust, then a certain presence of the here-and-now goes away"*, whilst his coach was, *"staying on the edge of that reality of mine, being with my story but not going into my story."*

From the coaching perspective, coach #1 felt his presence also involved being both part of the conversation as well as an observer: *"There is a power dynamic where the coach, with agreement of the coachee, is both in the conversation, but is watching the conversation."* He

went on to recall an experience that highlighted the difference between this and his client's more absorbed experience:

My recollection is, she did […] a massive majority of the work. Once or twice I had to say, "What are you thinking?" or "What are you seeing?" We were both highly present, there was an element of flow, there was an element of co-creation. She was kind of in charge, and at the end, I was kind of saying to her, "Tell me what just happened." It was pretty astonishing. That wasn't all about presence, it was about presence and movement. It wasn't static presence.

Even though he felt that both parties were *"highly present"*, he was clearly present to a different experience of the coaching conversation than his client, to the point where he needed to ask, *"What are you seeing?"* Similarly, coach #6 also recounted an experience of her and her client being present in different modes:

This chap I saw this week talking about his background. I could see at one point he was talking about a certain episode and he said, "I was lured into this relationship." I said, "Lured", that's an interesting word to use. And he went off into […] his past. He just veered off to explore that statement of 'lured'. […] He was present to the situation that created the word to come out. He was exploring that. I was sitting there still present to recognise that he was physically with me but he'd gone into a different space. And then he brought it back to share with me when he'd thought about it.

Coach #4 recalled a situation as a novice coach where he was uncomfortable experiencing presence as simply 'being with', whilst his client explored an issue.

I got really uncomfortable and I was sitting there thinking, 'I'm not really making any difference to her, she's just talking'. And she spotted it, so she noticed it. She said to me, "I'm an extroverted thinker. I have nowhere else to do this, I have nowhere else to just talk openly about what's going on in my head. You have no idea that just talking to you really helps me."

These findings show that client and coach can experience presence in different ways during the same coaching period and in doing so, they each contribute to the coaching dialogue.

4.4.2 The Changing Nature of Presence

Research partners experienced changes in their presence in a variety of ways. For example, client #1 noticed a change between the beginning and the end of a session: *"It is like going in in one frame of mind and coming out of it much more quiet"*, whilst client #2 focussed on the change in its mutual nature across the coaching engagement:

> *That level of mutuality of presence will vary within a session and between sessions. Because I think it probably takes a deep level of concentration, emotional things can happen within that time, so I think, I don't think the level of presence will always be constant.*

She acknowledged the effort and intentionality to be present and implied that emotional changes can precipitate a change in presence. Client #5 described his experience in different terms, reflecting that people become present in their own unique way: *"Everyone has his own way of being present […] It's sort of an escalating movement, in-out, in-out, but very rapidly."*

From the coach perspective, coach #3 recognised the difficulty of maintaining a state of presence: *"To be in that complete present state all the time, I would find difficult. I still find difficult"*, whilst coach #6 pictured presence between herself and her client as being a continuous ebb and flow:

> *In my picture, there were sort of wavy lines and then we go mutual again and then we had more wavy lines because I would be challenging him. Maybe that's the bit of the ebb and flow of presence.*

Some coaches noticed a shift from presence to a lack of presence only after the change. For instance, coach #1 thought that, *"it's probably easier for me to see when I've drifted off than when I'm actually in it"*, whilst coach #4 found that, *"it's the moment you think, 'I'm fully present', and actually I'm no longer fully present."* A complete loss of presence can also be regained in a moment, as coach #4 experienced:

> *And there's always a moment I think: 'This is too hard. Why am I sitting here?' Sorry, now I think about it, it's almost as if that moment triggers a moment of presence. The*

moment that I notice I've gone too…I shouldn't be here, is the moment I actually become here in a strange sort of way.

When considering the dynamic nature of presence in the focus group, the four Q-items shown in Figure 4.10 were ranked by participants.

Figure 4.10 Q-Items Related to the Dynamic Nature of Presence

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
29	It's hard to be present when the other person isn't	4	-2	0	0	2
1	The other person takes me out of presence	-2	-3	1	1	-3
9	I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session	2	-2	-2	-2	-4
15	It's easy to stay present	-1	-3	-1	-2	-7

In general, participants placed these items in the middle section of the Q-sort array (i.e. rankings between -2 and +2), indicating a lack of strong views. Coach #A was alone in feeling that: *It's hard to be present when the other person isn't* (item 29) was strongly associated with presence, whilst both of the coaches shared the view that: *The other person takes me out of presence* was less characteristic (item 1). There was a weak indication that: *I move in and out of presence a lot during a session* (item 9) was less characteristic. This was also the case for item 15: *It's easy to stay present*. Here, three of the research partners ranked it as mildly less characteristic with the fourth, coach #B, having a stronger view. This suggests some consensus that they found it challenging to be present all the time. When exploring this dynamic nature during the focus group discussion, coach #A referred to the sense of a continuum and connection:

Are we thinking about presence as either on or off? I guess there's a piece around 'Where is the gradation?' […] There's a bit occurring to me about someone who was not very good at presence, like a coachee or even coach […] and yet someone might be better over a period. […] Maybe rapport is in some sense something about two connected presences […] rapport might be the intersection of two lots of presence. And that being increased in some sense.

This prompted client #C to respond: *"I guess it can happen spontaneously. You can have that without understanding it I would say. With an individual. And at the same time, the more you work with someone, probably the easier it becomes because of the trust that you build because of the openness and the vulnerability."* Both views reflect dynamics both within a coaching session and across an engagement with a suggestion that presence can develop the longer as the relationship develops. Coach #B felt that during a session, *"there's definitely a going in and going out"*. She saw it as part of the coaching role to *"bring the client into presence if they're not"*. This intention of the coach will also affect the dynamics of presence and is explored in more detail in the next chapter.

In summary, research partners experienced presence as a dynamic phenomenon. It was not a state that was constant or static, but changeable and affected by one's internal processes, the other person and the environment. If the coaching relationship can be likened to a dance between coach and client, with all of the movement, creativity and interdependence the analogy evokes, then presence may be seen as the music, whose underlying rhythm allows the dance to flow.

Chapter 5 – Findings II: Conditions, Outcomes and Use

The last chapter presented findings related to the nature of presence. This chapter reports on the findings related to the conditions required for the research partners to become present; the features of the coaching conversation that are enabled by presence; and the use made of presence by both client and coach.

5.1 Conditions for Presence

If presence can be viewed as the 'atmosphere' within which coaching occurs, the research partners reported that the conditions that were helpful in generating this atmosphere included: the attitude of the client and coach; practice and experience; a conducive environment; and more dynamic factors during a session.

5.1.1 Attitude of Client and Coach

Clients and coaches reported that their presence was supported by the attitude they brought to coaching. From a client perspective, attitudes of empathy and openness were highlighted. For example, client #2 saw empathy as a condition, recalling a situation where there was a *"lack of presence because there was no empathy"*. However, client #1 felt that empathy was not necessary stating: *"You can be present without necessarily having a great deal of empathy to start with."* In linking openness to presence, client #2 related the need for *"holding your mind open."* Likewise, client #6 felt in order to be present with her coach, she needed to be *"completely open to anything being possible."* Client #3 described his experience in more visceral terms, connecting openness to a willingness to be vulnerable:

> *Presence to me is my willingness to be coached. My presence is my openness to the process. My presence is critical. I don't think there's any point in being coached unless you're completely willing to open your entire world and say, "This is me; this is the raw me and this is what I need and this is what I've got." I think if you don't have that presence, it must be very difficult to coach someone.*

He went on to link presence to his coaching objectives: *"That's the point, that presence of, "I know why I'm here and what I want from it," I think is critical."*

From the coach perspective, empathy and openness were also reported as conditions, along with other relational attitudes such as being unconditional, compassionate and respectful. Coach #1 suggested that there was a mutual relationship with empathy when recounting his experience with a challenging client: *"I tried being present but ultimately the lack of empathy started to corrode the presence. There must be something about them being mutually affirming."* Coach #6 felt there was a link with a willingness to be open, with the coach having *"unconditional openness to whatever's coming, whatever's going into the space"*, and coach #3 stated, *"when I'm totally present, I have nothing but compassion and kindness for the person."* This was echoed by coach #4, who further linked a need for respect and a sense of trust to conditions for presence, stating:

> *If I can come at them without judging them, and with a real, almost like an unconditional, positive regard for them, that, for me, is the condition that starts to move us toward relationship trust, and therefore, presence. And if I can't, I find it very difficult to get present with them. In fact, it's almost impossible.*

He reported that he sometimes struggled to maintain these attitudes, which then affected his ability to be present: *"There's something about utter respect, that's what it is. Non-judgmental. What gets in the way of my presence, the other side of the condition is, if I'm judging them, if I don't feel respectful of them."* This suggests that coaches are sometimes challenged to maintain an attitude that allows them to be present especially when there is a lack of connection with their client or a difference in values. However, coach #6 felt that, *"you could be really present with someone even if you didn't share their values"*, and coach #2 related an experience that challenged her ability to maintain presence:

> *I was making so many judgements about her [...], like, 'Why can't you get that this coaching is really good?' And she was saying things like: "This coaching is not really working for me" [...] I was kind of battling with myself to keep myself present.*

Coach #3 also recounted a struggle with being present with a person whose personality challenged him: *"I've got a current client who I just almost don't connect with at all. I don't even like the guy. [...] I think actually the presence for me is actually staying with it."* His insight in recounting this experience was that whilst it seemed that he needed to connect with his

client in order to be present, in fact presence was more about being aware of his own judgements.

In the focus group discussion, having an empathic attitude was investigated through Q-item 13: *I can empathise with someone without being present* (see Figure 5.1). Coach #B ranked this statement as one of the least characteristic of presence, indicating that she felt there was a strong association between presence and empathy and that empathy was more of an effect of presence than a condition. The other focus group participants were neutral in their ranking, and thus no clear consensus of the relationship emerged from the group.

Figure 5.1 Q-Item 13

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
13	I can empathise with someone without being present	0	-4	-1	0	-5

In summary, the attitude of both client and coach was found to be a condition for presence, with clients highlighting openness and coaches suggesting other relational attitudes such as being unconditional, compassionate and respectful. Whilst emphasising their need to hold these attitudes, coaches reported the personal challenges of doing so, which affected both their presence and their ability to connect with a client. There was a lack of clarity as to whether empathy was a condition or effect, with one coach suggesting presence and empathy were "*mutually affirming*", which perhaps illustrates a more complex, interdependent relationship between them.

5.1.2 Practice

Some coach research partners felt that presence was developed through practice. For instance, coach #5's view was that, *"absolutely you can practice it"* because it was *"a muscle that needs flexing a lot."* Coach #3 regularly discussed presence with her clients and used techniques for being present as part of her process. She recounted this instance:

She came in almost breathless. It was almost like this verbal diarrhoea that was so speedy and then we again talked about her need to be present in the session and that she'd get much more out of it if she were present. Then we did the exercise, just a

Gestalt technique about what's outside, what's inside, and talked about different senses, really calmed her down, changed the breathing. And it's helpful for me as a coach as well so I was doing it with her. The fact that we've done that together very recently was helpful I think for me in that session when I felt I wasn't present.

It is interesting to note her acknowledgement of the mutual benefit from the technique they practiced, which was reflected in a change in her own self-awareness.

The focus group explored the need for practice through Q-item 14: *It is important to practice presence* (see Figure 5.2).

Figure 5.2 Q-item 14

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
14	It is important to practice presence	1	0	0	-2	-1

All of the participants give it a mid-rating, with only client #D giving it a negative rating. This suggests three participants felt a degree of association with practice as a condition. During the focus group discussion, coach #B recognised the value of practice but felt, *"I don't know how to do that [...] I do think it's quite hard to practice presence"*, whilst coach #A drew a parallel between practicing presence and practicing mindfulness:

It probably is a good thing to practice, but how to practice? And for me, the practice is mindfulness. The ability to be present more of the time for me and a lot of my colleagues that I've talked about it with, is about practicing daily mindfulness. I also do with clients to help them do the same thing.

5.1.3 Experience

Two aspects of experience as a condition for presence were reported, with both emerging from the coach perspective. The first concerned coaches feeling more present due to experience, whilst the second was the assumption that the coach's presence is more developed than the client's.

In addressing the former, coach #1's experience was that: *"I think I create it [presence] more now after doing it [coaching] for five years."* He also recounted a difficult moment of coaching where he was better able to maintain his presence because of his experience:

> *Three years ago, I can imagine the logical part of my head feeling offended by that and not being able to get past it. Now probably, which is an interesting thing with a bit more experience, I could probably say, 'That's one for later' […] and come back [to being present].*

Similarly, coach #6 recounted how her experience had helped her to shift from 'doing' to 'being', which allowed her to be more present:

> *Rather than […] push them through the Grow Model or whatever it is […] it's just as important to offer that space [of presence]. It's probably what I talk about when I talk from shifting from doing coaching to being a coach.*

These views resonate with me as a practitioner. As I have grown in experience, I have felt more embodied in my coaching and more 'unconsciously competent'. I rely less on techniques and plans 'for' my clients. My experience is that releasing my attention from these other 'doing' preoccupations allows me to be more present with my client. Coach #1 reflected a similar sentiment: *"I probably take less notes now […] I'm now more just for the person."*, whilst coach #3, who trains coaches, put it this way:

> *We train inexperienced coaches and I don't think they believe me when I say, "Great, read all the books, learn all the questioning techniques, you can learn all the techniques in the world, you need to throw all of them away once you're in front of the client. You just need to be yourself." You can see them writing, 'How do I be myself, is there anything I need to do?' The struggle I always have is how to get them from absent to present – absence to full presence.*

Whilst these findings suggest experience is important, coach #2 also pointed out that you can be a *"very experienced coach […] who has not got the presence and then you have a brand-new coach who has got the presence."*

In addressing the second aspect of experience, which is the argument for coaches' presence being more developed than their clients, client #5's view was that: *"I think most people [clients] are not aware and are not present at all."* Coach #3 was more tentative in her view: *"I'm a little more practiced to being present than my clients. I think it's a journey."* In contrast, the focus group discussion indicated that the participants felt that there was no obvious difference in the level of presence between client and coach. Thus, the least characteristic of all 36 Q-items was item 8: *The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's* (Figure 5.3).

Figure 5.3 Q-item 8

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
8	The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's	-2	-4	-5	-3	**-14**

Client #B, client #C and client #D all rated this as one of their least characteristic items, with Client #C explaining that, *"true presence in the coaching sense can only happen for me if both [client and coach] are present."*

5.1.4 A Conducive Environment

Having a conducive environment was also found to be a condition in helping the client and coach to be present. Client #3 recounted an undesirable environment that adversely affected his ability to be present:

> *I've had coaching sessions with [my coach] in the wrong room, for example, and it's made me feel less at ease because it's white walls and there's no windows or something [...] take people out into an environment that's got comfort.*

Likewise, coach research partners recognised the importance of a favourable physical space. This was important to coach #1, who felt that, *"the external environment can be very important. You're almost creating part of the external environment"*. He felt that being in a conducive space helped both parties because, *"there's that sense of coming into a place and taking a big relaxing breath and saying, "Great, now we can go to work together.""* Similarly, coach #6 connected her experience of coaching in her converted shed with her ability to be

present: *"I really like having people here in my shed. Somebody called it 'my sacred space'. I don't know about sacred, but it is a nice space. […] You can be present."* She contrasted this with a coaching colleague who, *"walks and coaches. It doesn't have to be a fixed place. He creates presence with these clients as they move together."*

An important aspect was to remove clients from their normal work life, as coach #3 commented: *"They need to be out of their work environment. That's absolutely the first thing".* This is also important for coaches, especially if they are internal, yet it can be difficult to arrange as coach #5 related: *"I think particularly coaching in-house; I was doing a job as well. It wasn't just coaching. I might be rushing from meeting to meeting and then one of those happens to be a coaching session."* On a different note, she also felt that reducing external disturbances was important, because, *"something can distract, whether it's a noise outside the room that takes you away [from presence] for a moment"*, Coach #6 also recounted a situation where being present with her client was affected by a distraction:

> *Sitting in the coffee bar for example, somebody might come to clear the table. That would momentarily disrupt the thing. We're both kind of in suspended animation waiting for him to go away again, and then we quickly resume where we were.*

Client #3 felt that the physical positioning of client and coach in the face-to-face encounter was helpful to a feeling of being present, stressing that his coach was always *"very keen to sit close to me, like you did. Rather than sitting there and it being face-to-face, it's next to the person. I think that's important."* Client #6 felt that this aspect of physical proximity extended to coaching that is not face-to-face, recalling an experience of being coaching by Skype, where the technological challenges affected her presence:

> *I remember one example where it was on Skype and the communication broke down about five times in the hour, and I got so frustrated because every time you're just into something and then it just takes you out of it. Almost like the bubble burst every time and you then have to reform it and get back into that.*

She felt able to be present with her coach by Skype, but in a different way than being face-to-face, which allowed a *"closeness that you can feel in the embodiment."*

Physical proximity as a condition for presence was investigated in the focus group via Q-item 11: *I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face* (Figure 5.4).

Figure 5.4 Q-Item 11

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
11	I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face	-3	-2	2	-5	-8

Coach #A, coach #B and client #D felt this was less characteristic compared to the other items, with the latter viewing it as the least characteristic of all items by ranking it as -5. This suggests a consensus between the participants that it is easier to be present when face-to-face. The exception was client #C, who viewed this item as more characteristic, ranking it as +2. Significantly, both the coaches, and client #D participated in coaching conversations that were face-to-face, whilst client #C received coaching via Skype and telephone.

These findings indicate that a conducive environment is a factor in helping the research partners' presence. This is a subjective experience that often seems to be influenced by the preferences of the coach and includes the ambience of the room, a lack of external distraction and physical proximity.

5.1.5 In-Session Factors

As discussed, research partners reported that attitude, practice, experience, and a conducive environment all affected presence. In addition, other factors influenced presence more dynamically during a coaching conversation. These included practicing somatic techniques, allowing time at the start of a coaching session to become present, and making eye contact. For instance, client #4's coach focussed on breath:

She asked me to sit and just breathe for a moment, [...] I basically calmed down and it turned out that behind that was something else, to start with. It was not about the solution, there was something that touched upon my values. [...] When you're there, not pushing and calm, fully with your senses somewhere, [...] then you see the depth.

Through an awareness of her breathing, she became more present and was able to see her situation from a different perspective. Client #6, also used breathwork: *"Breath is a big thing for me, kind of take a big breath and try to push the thoughts away and focus"*, as well an intentional focus to listen to her body as a precursor to becoming present. She tried to *"get into my body. To actually really try to stop thinking about things and rationalising things [and] consciously think 'Okay, how do I feel about this?' But not just from a rational perspective.... 'how does my body feel about this?'"*

From the coach's standpoint, coach #1 described a ritual for helping himself to become present at the start of each coaching session:

> *It's about trying to arrive in enough time, trying to arrive without a big issue, domestic or professional in my head […] it's something about getting into the room, getting into the space, getting my butt at the back of the chair, getting my feet squarely on the floor and actually feeling an element of being a bit rooted and a bit anchored […] it's about getting some sort of fixed space that you can move around.*

For him, this preparation helped his mental focus and decluttered his mind: *"It feels almost like a physical relaxation, pull my shoulders back […] empty my head a bit of all the stuff that's been kicking around."*

Coach #5 recalled her experience as an internal coach, where she was frequently holding a number of coaching assignments in the same day, typically with a fifteen-minute break between each session. She recognised that she needed time to become present to each client and intentionally gave herself a few minutes to adjust:

> *After a few minutes warm up, I'm there and I'm with it. I will often do the small talk to start with. I find that that can help me be present. Talking about how the kids are, how the holiday was.*

She also recognised that this preparation time was also valuable in helping her client to become present as well:

> *There is a physical or calming and relaxing thing happening in each other's company. There's a bringing each other into presence. If you are the client, you're coming in from*

a rushed workplace, I'm five minutes late as your coach. There's something about as presence takes hold in the room and we start to develop a working relationship.

This practice of allowing time for clients to become present was reported by other coach research partners. For instance, coach #3 related that, *"there's some time gap for that state change to happen and that might mean that they're more focused on that session and they're ready",* whilst coach #2 noticed that, *"when they arrive, they get caught up and you see in the physicality that they're not as settled and not as relaxed, and then they start to connect there and their whole-body kind of relaxes."* As her client became present, she observed: *"Their talking slows down, their body gets stiller, their eyes are not darting around so much."*

Presence may also be influenced through the use of eye contact, as client #6 related: *"Making eye contact with the person, like a more intense eye contact will bring me back [to presence]."* From the coaching perspective, coach #1 emphasised the importance of eye contact to him: *"I'm trying to be 100% present to the best of my conscious ability, of which 95% is looking the client in the eye",* whilst coach #5 felt she could sense her client's presence through, *"their body language, their eye contact, their facial expression".*

Eye contact as a possible condition for presence was explored in the focus group through Q-item 26: *Eye contact brings me into presence* (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5 Q-Item 26

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
26	Eye contact brings me into presence	0	1	-2	0	-1

All focus group participants sorted this item as a mid-ranking compared to the other Q-items. During the focus group discussion, further insights emerged. For instance, coach #B felt that it was part of her coaching presence, stating: *"It's the eye contact that you give, it's the warmth of your handshake."* She elaborated further:

Eye contact is a big one. With eye contact, there's confidence. You've got to be confident to really look at somebody and engage with them. So, for me, that's a huge part of presence.

During the focus group discussion, the point was also made that eye contact was not always a condition for presence and that for some people, or in some situations, it may not be appropriate to make eye contact. This was cited as an example of why Skype coaching might be preferred by some people who find physical proximity and eye contact uncomfortable. Equally, people can be very present and not make eye contact when, for example, they are deep in thought or in an absorbed mode two state, as coach #B stated: *"When we think, we tend to break eye contact"* going on to state that on occasion she would *"deliberately break eye contact so I'm not in your space. Otherwise, I'm in your thinking space. It's situational, isn't it?"* In contrast, client #D connected eye contact to trust, stating, *"I wouldn't trust you if I couldn't look you in the eye".* This is an example of how a condition for presence can also be linked to other factors in the relationship, such as trust, demonstrating how the idea of a linear cause-and-effect relationship between many elements is somewhat simplistic.

5.2 Presence as an Enabler

The findings indicate that presence plays a role in enabling other coaching conditions and processes to occur. These can be viewed with respect to three areas: enabling safety and trust; feeling connected with the other person; and accessing internal resources.

5.2.1 Safety and Trust

Clients reported an association between presence, safety and trust. For instance, client #2 felt that, *"a coaching situation is this safe environment where you can work things through […] both parties have to be open and present"*, whilst client #6 recounted: *"When he's present, when the coach is present, there is that sense of support almost like a safety net."* For client #1, it was important that he trusted that his coach was present:

> *The trust piece is an important part of being assured that the person that you're with is entirely and fully and deeply engaged, rather than they're just paying attention to conversation but perhaps no more than that. I think that trust is probably quite important to having a sense that the depth of presence is there.*

Similarly, client #5 saw trust as key to his experiencing a moment of presence: *"There is a moment, that's what I would call the presence, where I notice that I allow myself to go. To*

give my whole, give the control to the coach, but it's about trusting. It's all about trust." He recounted relying on his coach being present to him, as his support: *"It's completely safe, but somehow I have the need of someone there who, like I said, will avoid the drowning."* A similar view is expressed by client #6, who associated trust with a relational presence: *"If you have trust, if you have the presence, if you have the relational presence, then whatever is happening is perfect and is what it needs to be."*

From the coaching perspective, coach #1 related his presence to the sense of safety he transmits: *"I think I can be very present, I can give a lot of sense of safety and security."* Coach #4 felt that: *"You need trust in order to create it [presence], and it also creates trust"*, whilst coach #1 felt that presence was connected to *"that authenticity and that honesty and that trust"* in the other person. Coach #3 explained her experience in terms of the 'sherpa guide' metaphor, where she engendered trust in her client because she was present: *"If the sherpa guide wasn't aware of everything that was going on, you know: the rocks falling down, the clouds forming which meant the rain is going to change, they wouldn't be safe"*

In the focus group Q-sort, all four participants linked presence with engendering trust (see Figure 5.6), with no significant differences between the views of clients and coaches.

Figure 5.6 Q-Item 24

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
24	Being present engenders trust	3	3	2	3	11

This suggests a group consensus that presence is a condition for trust. Connected to trust is the sense that the other person is authentic and the link between authenticity and presence was also explored through Q-item 6: *You can only be authentic if you're present* (Figure 5.7).

Figure 5.7 Q-Item 6

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
6	You can only be authentic if you're present	4	3	-1	-1	5

The rankings show a sharp contrast in viewpoint between clients and coaches. The two coaches ranked the item as strongly characteristic of presence, whereas the two clients both viewed it as mildly less characteristic compared to other Q-items, giving it the same rank of -1. Since many coaches value their relational attitude as important to their coaching process, and as reported in the previous section, they view presence as a condition for these attitudes, these findings are not a surprise.

5.2.2 Feeling Connected

Client #1 recognised that her coach's presence enabled her to feel connected: *"So the sense of the other person having presence? Yeah, absolutely. I feel you're connecting to something inside"*. Similarly, client #3 recognised that presence helped to create *"a link between [us], but it's actually something around us as well"*. This sense of connection is often tacit and is intimately involved with the nature of presence in its relational context, hence the metaphors described in chapter 4 ('the sherpa guide', 'telegraph pole' and 'kite on a string').

An aspect of feeling connected that emerged primarily from the client perspective was feeling seen and listened to. Client #6's experience was that presence *"leaves me feeling seen, I think [...] that's a massive thing, to feel seen and to feel understood."* Similarly, client #3 associated his coach's ability to listen with *"a very strong presence".* Whilst critiquing the concept during the second part of the interview, he commented: *"I love this phrase here 'I feel seen.' It may be that you want to say, 'I feel seen slash heard.'"* Client #4 felt that when her coach was present he was, *"not only listening but also hearing what I'm saying. Not only hearing the verbal expressions, but also being there."* Client #2 extended this sense of being listened to by making an association with her coach's insightfulness: *"If somebody asks insightful questions, they're listening [...] you're not going to do that well if you're thinking what you're going to cook for tea when you get home."* Conversely, client #4 felt that a characteristic of a lack of presence was *"listening without being there."*

If feeling seen was more associated with the client view, an attribute of connection that was predominantly related to the coach perspective was a sense of making appropriate responses due to being in presence. This might involve asking a question or offering an intuitive insight that seemed to be the right response at the right time. For instance, coach #1's experience was that, *"the presence thing is when somebody answers a question, be able to answer in-the-moment, ask or follow up in-a-moment",* and coach #5 asked of herself, *"Are*

you present enough to read a situation to say whether that is the right thing to talk about?" Coach #2 related that by being present, her responses became spontaneous: *"I've got no planning of what words are going to come out"*, whilst coach #6 recognised a tacit or intuitive ability: *"It [presence] is about saying the right thing at the right time […] there's a strong intuitive link. A bit tacit."* Conversely, coach #3 suggested: *"If I wasn't present, I don't think I would be able to ask questions at the appropriate level."*

Coach #1 highlighted that this ability of appropriate response was mutual and emerged from the relational presence between client and coach:

> *When you're in relational presence, when you've got this mutual flow going, there is something about as a coach and as a client – this could be coming from either case, this isn't just the coach – you just say things at the right time. There's an appropriateness about what is said and what comes up.*

This mutuality was also experienced by coach #4, who commented on the significance for his clients' learning: *"They are also becoming aware of the right question for them to ask themselves. That feels quite important."* His experience of an appropriate response related to intuition and spontaneity:

> *I remember another client of mine I was coaching and I remember saying at one point in time in the conversation, "I just don't feel like I'm adding any value here." He said: "That's my problem. I've been trying to name it. That's my issue. I don't know what value I'm adding." It was kind of a moment of truth for me actually, it was probably quite a present moment, although I hadn't done it deliberately, I had done it completely spontaneously.*

These findings suggest that presence helps client and coaches to feel connected with each other. Clients reported feeling seen and coaches developed an intuitive sense of appropriate response. Whilst other relational factors are undoubtedly involved, this research reports that presence is a factor of some significance.

5.2.3 Accessing Internal Resources

Through being present, the research partners reported an ability to access intuition, have insights, gain a sense of perspective, and experience flow. These are collectively labelled internal resources. In accessing intuition, client #1 tentatively felt that presence was an enabler: *"For me, intuition in this sense [of being present] is an outcome almost…It almost means you've become more and more intuitive."* The link between presence and intuition was also explored in the focus group through two Q-items (see Figure 5.8).

Figure 5.8 Q-Items 20 and 23

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
20	Being present means I feel connected to my intuition	1	4	3	1	9
23	Presence involves the intellect	-1	-1	-3	-1	-6

Two of the participants gave Q-item 20: *Being present means I feel connected to my intuition* a high ranking, whilst the other two gave it positive mid-ranking. All the participants also gave Q-item 23: *Presence involves the intellect* a negative ranking, with client #D viewing it as one of the least characteristic items. This suggests a reasonable group consensus that presence is involved with intuitive, non-intellectual processes.

The link between presence and insight was highlighted by client #4's experience:

And then when you're being in presence, there's a sense in the room of being calm and still potentially, of a lot of co-creation, a lot of innovation or seeing things differently, so this 'wow' moment occasionally that comes up.

This connection between presence and moments of insight resonated with coach research partners. Coach #1 described his experience in similar terms, highlighting the witnessing aspect of his presence: *"I was present at that moment. I didn't engineer that moment; I didn't necessarily plan that moment but I was present at it and I'm going 'wow' but the client's going 'WOW'."* In a related manner, coach #4 recounted: *"There's been two or three or four times when he's just got it […] It's almost as if that moment triggers a moment of presence."* Similarly, coach #5 highlighted the transformative effect of her presence on her client: *"That*

was all she needed to hear. It completely changed her state. In that moment, what she needed was a different perspective […] That came from being really present in the moment."

The relationship between presence and insight was explored in the focus group through Q-item 10: *Presence helps insights to come* (Figure 5.9). Three of the participants gave a positive, mid-ranking, whilst client #D felt that it was strongly characteristic. She felt that it *"helps me have insight because there's very little time in my working life that allows me just to focus on me and think about me."*

Figure 5.9 Q-Item 10

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
10	Presence helps insights to come	1	2	1	4	8

A third aspect of accessing internal resources is the ability to have perspective. Client #6 felt that this led to a perception of choice: *"Everybody is always in their own perspective, and then the fact that you can be present to it means that then it becomes your choice."* In a similar vein, client #1 associated presence with a sense of perspective that she felt led to a sense of well-being: *"I suppose the feel-good factor [of presence] is about having a sense of perspective. Things that look completely chaotic and insolvable; seem to be much more easily compartmentalised and resolvable."* The focus group explored perspective and presence through Q-item 22: *Presence helps me have perspective* (Figure 5.10).

Figure 5.10 Q-Item 22

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
22	Presence helps me have perspective	-1	2	1	4	6

Client #D felt this statement was strongly characteristic: "*It [presence] helps me with perspective*", whilst coach #B and client #C felt that it was somewhat characteristic. Coach #A ranked it as less characteristic. This suggests some consensus in the group that connects presence to enabling perspective.

Some research partners viewed presence as an enabler for Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) flow experience. For instance, coach #1 felt that, *"there's something about presence for me being linked to flow and it might be a precondition for flow"*. Likewise, coach #2 also saw presence as an underlying condition: *"I would say you can't be in flow if you're not present. Flow comes from presence."*

Client #1 was lukewarm to the association of presence with an outcome of healing: *"I do understand the sense of making things right. [...] Whether I'd call it healing or not, I'm not sure [...] Maybe it's just more about resolution, getting things resolved."* Client #2 had a stronger stance, being very clear in her view that, *"I don't like the word 'healed'. That doesn't sit well with me."* Similarly, client #3 stated: *"I would never say, 'I feel healed.'"* These views do however suggest that there is a broader sense of well-being and satisfaction that also emerges from the coaching perspective. Coach #4 does identify with the sentiment when discussing a specific experience, saying, *it's got a healing presence about it"*, whilst coach #1's view was that, *"we might not be able to heal something but we might be able to soothe it and accept it"*. Coach #6 has a similar view relating that it concerns,

> *"Soothing, balancing. I think there's something about the balance, so that I wouldn't use healing either [...] a healer and someone who is healed, coming for healing because it implies a hierarchy. But I think there's something about... I'm just looking at the word* soulagement *and the suffix is something about underlying, underneath."*

5.3 Using Presence

Findings emerged that related to how coaches used their presence during coaching and how they helped their clients develop presence. From the client perspective, clients reported an expectation for their coach to be present.

5.3.1 Coaching from Presence

Clients and coaches use presence for the same purpose: to help the client achieve their desired outcomes. To this end, both parties' ability to be present is directed in the service of the client. Clients expected their coaches to be present in order to contribute to the work that they were there to do. Client #6 wanted her coach *"to have the presence to say, and to feel, 'there's more there'"*, whilst for client #2, these expectations meant, *"being insightful,*

knowing when to say nothing, knowing when to say something". Client #5 needed to know *"that they are interested, that they are focused."* He required *"the other person to be fully present so that I can let go."* These views suggest that clients want their coach to demonstrate presence and express this to them as part of their coaching process. This notion could be conceptualised as the coach showing a 'professional presence', as explained by client #3: *"I think the presence does need to be professional in the session that you're having. I really do."*

This use of presence may be on a mental, emotional or physical level. For instance, client #6 highlighted how her coach used her somatic awareness as part of her coaching process:

> *I have currently a coach that's very much embodied, very much into somatics, and she will often say to me, "Gosh, that gave me goose bumps." She feels, physically, some of the things, some of the energy that we create together.*

Correspondingly, coaches reported that they actively used presence to coach. For instance, coach #1 reported that he relied on his presence to make an appropriate response to his client (*"In being present, I can know what feels right")*, whilst coach #4 reflected on how he used his presence as a means of creating a favourable space: *"Am I creating a safe environment? Am I creating a containing space by the way I am being?"*

The use of self is a common approach in coaching (Iliffe-Wood, 2014; Du Toit, 2014; Silsbee, 2008). The implication for this study is that presence underpins the process of noticing and self-listening which the coach then expresses. For example, coaching research partners commonly use their bodily awareness, as coach #4 reported:

> *Sometimes when I'm listening to a client talk or I'm seeing they're crying, I will then listen to how my stomach feels. If my stomach feels calm, then I know that they're okay, and if my stomach feels tight, then I know they're not okay.*

Coach #5 related how she was developing her ability to do this: *"Working on understanding the sensations that are going on in my body means that in a coaching situation, I'm able to draw on a lot more to say what's going on in me."* Similarly, coach #3 described how she used her somatic experience to encourage a response from her client:

I would typically say in the coaching session […] "I feel a huge tension in my body when you say that. When I tell you that John, what does that do for you?" I couldn't do that unless I was present.

The need for the coach to have presence was explored in the focus group discussion through item 4: *For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence* (Figure 5.11). All participants viewed this statement as being characteristic and overall, it was one of the top 5 most characteristic items in the Q-sort, suggesting a strong group consensus.

Figure 5.11 Q-Item 4

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
4	For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence	3	3	2	3	11

5.3.2 Developing Presence in the Client

Client #5 reflected that coaching helped clients to become more present, even though it wasn't necessarily an explicit goal: *"But along the way, [clients] become more aware of many things, and by doing that, the result is that they are becoming more present."* Other client research partners also reported how their coaches helped them become present. For instance, client #6's coach focussed on her somatic experience: *"'Where do you feel that in your body?'"*, whilst client #5 coach commented: *"Gosh, you've gone flat. A second ago, you were talking to me about something that was really exciting and you were there, and then suddenly, you've gone. Where are you?"*

Coach research partners agreed with the client's experience. Whilst they reported that they did not generally discuss presence overtly during coaching, they often influenced their clients to become present in a number of ways. For instance, coach #5 felt that presence *"is powerful. I think in the sense that if you're wholly present and you can bring someone through that, you can influence someone to be there with you."* Coach #4 recounted two typical examples of how he sensitised his client to become more present. Firstly, he would say: *"You've really got to hear me now. It's really, really important that you hear what I've got to*

say and that you take it in." This served to bring his client into a deeper awareness of the present moment. Secondly, he would offer an awareness exercise to his client:

"How about in between now and the next time we meet, you just notice whenever you have this feeling and just write down the facts on one side of the page and interpretations and drawings on the other side?" […] It's getting them awake to themselves.

Whilst these are common interventions used by coaches, they can be interpreted in this context as examples of an invitation to the client to become more present. This sense of invitation can also operate on an unconscious level through modelling, as coach #2 explained: *"It's almost like they see me connected to my true self, and they remember they are connected to their true self. But it's an unconscious thing. It's not me saying to him 'OK, be present, tap into your wisdom.'"* Coach #6 expressed a similar sentiment:

There's something about what I do that encourages them to be present with me […] there's something about me encouraging them to come with me. And then we're in together; we're in that space together that we could only be in at that moment in time.

Likewise, coach #1 linked this modelling of presence to the effectiveness of his coaching:

Modelling calm, modelling lack of absence, modelling lack of distraction is about allowing the client to come into the room and take their time to do it on the basis that we're both present, that's when we do really quality work.

In helping his clients become more present, coach #4 reported his own motivation and how it affected him. The sense of well-being comes through from the feelings he describes:

Being awake, alive […] I try to help clients get to that point because the sheer joy of it […] there's a sheer joy and bliss in those moments. Whether you're on your own, whether you're with somebody else; of being really awakened, really alive and really present to what's going on in the world and kind of noticing everything and that tingle that comes from being in that space.

In this chapter, findings have linked presence to engendering feelings of safety and trust, a sense of connection, and an ability to access internal resources that help the coaching process. A connection with well-being also emerged. The discussion has presented a number of conditions for presence, including attitude, practice, experience, a conducive environment and in-session factors. Finally, how coaches use presence has been reported, with an intention to coach from presence and a commitment to develop it in their clients.

Chapter 6 – Evolution of the Concept

This chapter presents an account of how the concept of presence evolved throughout the conceptual encounter interviews and focus group. At the outset, an initial concept was constructed, which was used as a basis for the first interviews. This developed along separate paths during the parallel client and coach conceptual encounter interviews and some transition states are presented in order to demonstrate the iterative nature of the data analysis process. The concept is then described as it stood at the end of the interview stage, having been synthesised from both client and coach perspectives. This was introduced to a focus group of two clients and two coaches, and as a result, the final concept emerged, which is explained here in detail.

6.1 The Initial Concept

An initial construct of presence was generated as a result of reflecting on my experience as a coach and a client, and from the learning resulting from the literature review. This learning occurred on several levels. Firstly, new ideas were introduced that broadened and clarified my appreciation of the phenomenon, for instance presence as witnessing (Stevenson, 2016; Ahangar Ahmadi, 2016; Stelter, 2014; Boeck, 2014; Anderson et al., 2014; Bunkers, 2012) and healing (Colosimo and Pos, 2015; Geller and Greenberg, 2010; Phelon, 2004; Godkin, 2001). Secondly, concepts emerged that I was tacitly aware of that served to clarify my experience, for instance 'being watchful' (Anderson et al., 2014; Geller, 2013). Thirdly, I was able to make sense of the phenomenon through the emergence from the literature review of the three broad themes of the internal, relational and external dimensions of presence. In addition, I discovered that other researchers and writers, in common with my experience, had also characterised presence as a concept that was challenging and elusive to define. This helped me to appreciate that by attempting to clarify meaning and elucidate structure, the research I was undertaking could make a valuable contribution to theory and practice in executive coaching.

In arriving at an initial concept, I used my reflexive journal to describe my personal experience of presence, reflecting on how I experienced it both as a practicing coach and as a client who has received coaching (see Figure 6.1).

Figure 6.1 What is presence to me? (extract from reflexive journal)

Presence is a state that feels different to my 'normal' or habitual state. It feels like I am absorbed whilst at the same time, focussed. There's something loose and relaxed about it. Concentration is easy. I notice my sense of compassion for the other person and feel myself relaxing and listening fully to them. It feels like sitting in the lee of the wind on a cold spring day, when the sun is shining and I can feel its warmth – it is nurturing and there's nowhere else I'd rather be. It's something I enjoy and something happens that makes me feel good. I feel resourced and powerful. I sometimes feel a resistance to coaching, or being coached, but when I am in the coaching room everything melts away. I feel fully aware of the other person as a whole being; at the same time, I am monitoring my bodily experience and my thoughts as we talk, sensitive to what comes up, intuiting what is needed. This feeling of presence energises me and continues after the dialogue has finished.

I viewed it as a similar construct for both client and coach perspectives, being linked to my attitudes and awareness as a person, rather than to a specific role I was occupying. I used this personal experience and a synthesis of the key findings from the literature review to generate an initial model (Figure 6.2).

In terms of structure, the model envisages presence with respect to three 'dimensions'; a 'continuum' and 'dynamics'. Firstly, the internal, relational and external dimensions were informed by the literature review (Chapter 2). Whilst the literature referred mainly to the practitioner perspective, I felt these themes had meaning for the client perspective as well. To recap, the internal dimension relates to the client or coach's subjective experience or their awareness of being present within themselves; the external dimension relates to one person's perception of presence in the other; and the relational dimension involves the attitude client and coach hold towards each other and the connection they make. Secondly, as a continuum, I envisaged a lack of presence at one end of a spectrum and full presence at the other with the idea that the client and coach would move through different levels of presence from one end of the spectrum to the other. Thirdly, as the person moves between polarities, dynamics of presence emerge. Both parties may move forward or backwards along the continuum at different rates and at different times, perhaps many times during a single

coaching session. In exploring these dynamics, I was interested in investigating how presence changed during a coaching session conversation, across the coaching engagement and as a result of client or coach experience.

Expanding on the notion of a continuum of presence, I envisaged four stages of presence as shown in Figure 6.2. This schematic represents how I make sense of my own experience.

Figure 6.2 Continuum of Presence
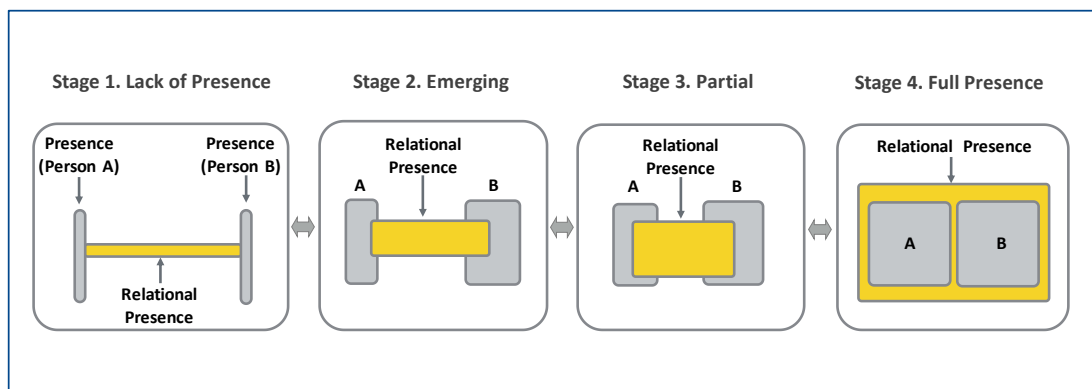
Stage one shows a lack of presence in both person (A) and person (B) and consequently, the relational presence between them is weak. Stages two and three represent subsequent stages of developing presence. As it develops in either or both client and coach, there is also a strengthening of the relational presence between them. Stage four represents a situation where both parties are fully present and the relational connection between them is so strong that it envelops and surrounds them.

Combining these stages with the internal, relational and external dimensions of presence led to the development of the initial concept in Figure 6.3. With reference to this diagram, a lack of presence (stage one) might be experienced internally as boredom, a lack of focus or a feeling of being distracted. At this stage a person may not have any awareness of their level of presence, simply experiencing the conversation and addressing the issues without reflecting on or monitoring their internal feelings or dialogue. Relationally, there is more of a focus on the content of what is said rather than being present to how the coach and client are communicating and connecting. This may be characterised by a limited sense of empathy, a lack of positive regard or a tendency to intellectualise. When viewing a lack of presence through the lens of the external dimension, one party might perceive the lack of presence in the other as being judged, misunderstood or manipulated. There may be a lack of trust and

a discomfort with showing vulnerability or disclosing sensitive information. With reference to the literature review, this construct fits well with Colosimo's (2013) broad definition of 'non-presence', defined as: "The outcome of any process that interferes with, blocks, or prevents the therapist from communicating that he/she is present" (p.8).

Conversely both parties are fully present in stage four. Here, the internal dimension might involve an ability to maintain an awareness of one's self moment-to-moment, together with feeling deeply curious and watchful. People in this state would also be aware of their own congruence, that their actions and behaviours were aligned to their values and beliefs. Relationally, Roger's (1951) conditions of empathy and unconditional positive regard would be experienced by both client and coach, together with Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) experience of flow, and there would be a sense of healing. In the external dimension, the presence of one party would be perceived by the other as feeling seen and accepted. There would be a sense of the other person having a high 'presence energy' and the positive experience of being in their company would stay with them after the coaching engagement.

The initial concept was intended as a starting point to stimulate the discussion that occurred during the second stage of the conceptual encounter interview process in which the concept 'encountered' the experience of the research partner. For this reason, stages two and three were not completed at the outset. As a researcher I recognised that after creating this start point, I needed to allow the inductive nature of the inquiry to take prominence so that the voices of the research partners were fully heard.

Figure 6.3 The Initial Concept Presented to the First Research Participants

Continuum of Presence

Dimensions of Presence	STAGE 1. Lack of Presence	STAGE 2. Emerging	STAGE 3. Partial	STAGE 4. Full Presence
Internal: The sense of one being present	• Limited awareness of self • Limited awareness of environment • Lack of congruence between values, beliefs and behaviours. • Not sensitive to change • Preoccupied and/or bored	to complete	• Inconsistent ability to maintain awareness of self in-the-moment. • Varying level of awareness of environment. • Reasonable congruence between values, beliefs, behaviours • Sensitive to change • Deeply curious and present	• Ability to maintain awareness of self in-the-moment (thoughts, feelings, emotions, soma) • Ability to maintain awareness of environment (scanning foreground and background) • A physical sense of presence • Strong sense of congruence between values, beliefs and actions • Watchful • Sensitive to change • Deeply curious and present • Synchronous events are common
Relational: The ability to be mutually present to each other	• Focus on the issue • Sense of living in the intellect • Lack connection/attunement • Boredom • A sense of clunkiness • Limited sense of empathy • Low sense of positive regard • Lack of flow with another • Insight co-creation and a-ha is absent • Preoccupied	to complete	to complete	• High sense of connection/attunement • High sense of empathy • Unconditional positive regard • Sense of mutual flow • Simultaneous focus and perspective • Feeling of closeness (physical, emotional, spiritual) • Sense of healing • Insight, co-creation and a-ha is common • A sense of feeling heightened presence to normal
External: The sense of presence of the other	• No sense of "presence energy" • I feel invisible • I don't feel able to disclose • I feel judged / manipulated	to complete	to complete	• High "presence energy" • I feel seen • I trust • I feel accepted • The experience stays with me after the session
Dynamic Nature	Presence (Person A) Presence (Person B) Relational Presence	Relational Presence A B	Relational Presence A B	Relational Presence A B

6.2 Evolving the Concept

The conceptual encounter methodology encouraged a continual evolution of the concept. This occurred in collaboration with research partners during the interviews and post-interview analysis. Consequently, the concept underwent numerous transitions between the initial and final versions. These transitions were a combination of continuous incremental change and more transformational development as a result of sudden insight. In order to demonstrate a line of sight between the initial and final concepts, reflections on the practicalities of data analysis are presented alongside a discussion of some of the transitions.

6.2.1 Moving Beyond the Initial Concept

I worked with the same basic structure of the initial concept for the first few client and coach interviews and in general the research participants were able to relate well to the notion of the internal, relational and external dimensions. When reviewing the continuum there was consensus around many of the descriptors of full presence and lack of presence. However, the categories on the continuum of 'emerging presence' and 'partial presence' didn't resonate in the same way and I came to see them as too simplistic and linear. Research partners described a more complex dynamic of moving in and out of presence and didn't identify with the discrete mid-stages I initially conceptualised. In addition, some partners challenged the diagrammatic representation of the dynamics (for instance, the sense of being enveloped by a relational presence). It also became apparent that some of the characteristics of being fully present could be thought of as conditions or outcomes rather than attributes. This method of organisation was not clearly delineated in the initial concept.

As the interviews continued I reflected that I had become quite attached to the initial model I had conceived, illustrated by a desire to retain its basic format rather than exploring different ways of conceptualising the underlying structures. This attachment was reinforced by my perception that research partners tended to challenge or confirm the detailed aspects of the model, such as a specific characteristic, rather than challenging its fundamentals. Thus, I decided to experiment with alternatives ways to visualise a conceptual structure.

At the same time, I was analysing the interview transcripts with the aid of NVivo and constructing a node tree to organise the data, where each node represented a code or thematic category. In order to allow the client and coach conceptual encounters to develop

independently as far as possible, I created two separate NVivo projects, so that a separate node tree evolved for each perspective as dictated by the data. The advantage of this approach was that it allowed the continuous evolution of each perspective as new data and new meanings emerged. In addition, the node trees for each perspective and the underlying data extracts could be easily compared and contrasted. Inevitably, codes and themes overlapped to some degree due to similar client and coach experiences being reported.

An example of an extract of the client and coach node tree at a particular point during the analysis is shown in Figure 6.4. This relates to a theme labelled *moving in and out of presence*, which was common to both perspectives. The two trees developed independently in this inductive analysis process, so the client perspective contains sub-themes labelled *choice; coming into presence*; and *constant vs fluctuating*. The coach perspective, on the other hand, involves *becoming present; bringing each other into presence; client; in-presence; moments; not-present;* and *staying present*. An example of a full snapshot of the node trees for each perspective, taken mid-way through the analysis, is shown in Appendix 8.

Figure 6.4 Extract of NVivo Node Charts
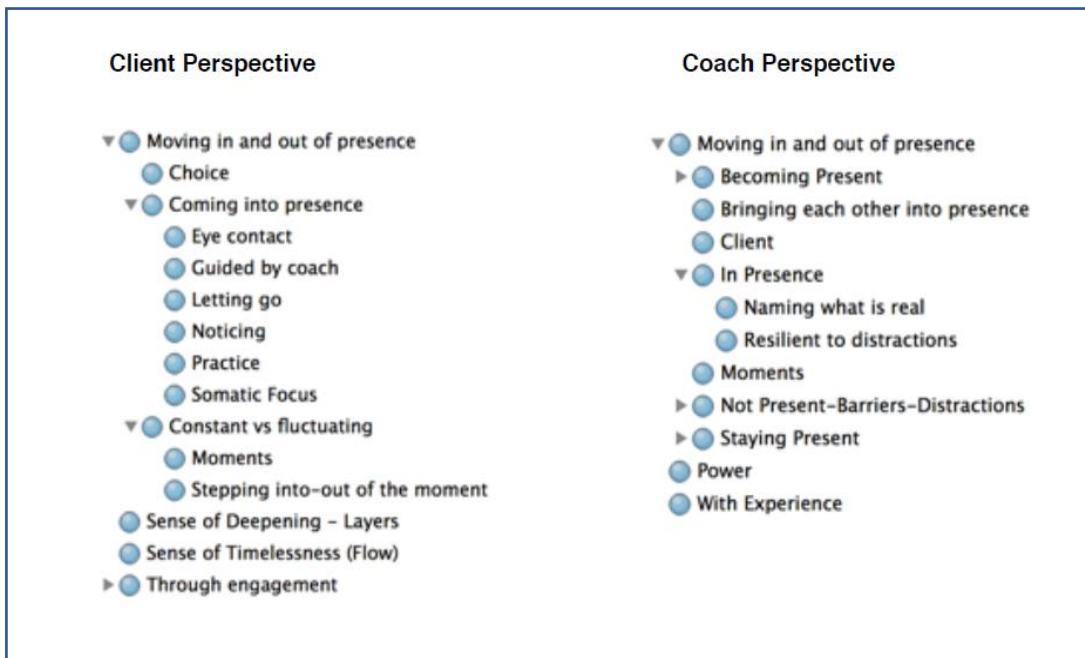
The process of coding and re-coding data, labelling and re-labelling the nodes and the continuous re-organising of the node tree was invaluable in allowing an immersion in the data and a mechanism for attempting to visualise structure. In an effort to experiment with an alternative means of visualisation and to harmonise the sense-making through NVivo with the sense-making during interviewing, I decided to re-draw the node trees as mind maps and use them as transitional concepts to discuss directly with research partners. Some snapshots of specific stages of development are reproduced and explained below as a means of providing further insight into the evolutionary process.

6.2.2 Transition #1

One of the mind maps used for the client perspective is shown in Figure 6.5. It is essentially an NVivo node tree and the theme labelled *Relational Aspects* has been highlighted for illustrative purposes.

Figure 6.5 Transitional Concept: Prior to Client #4 Interview
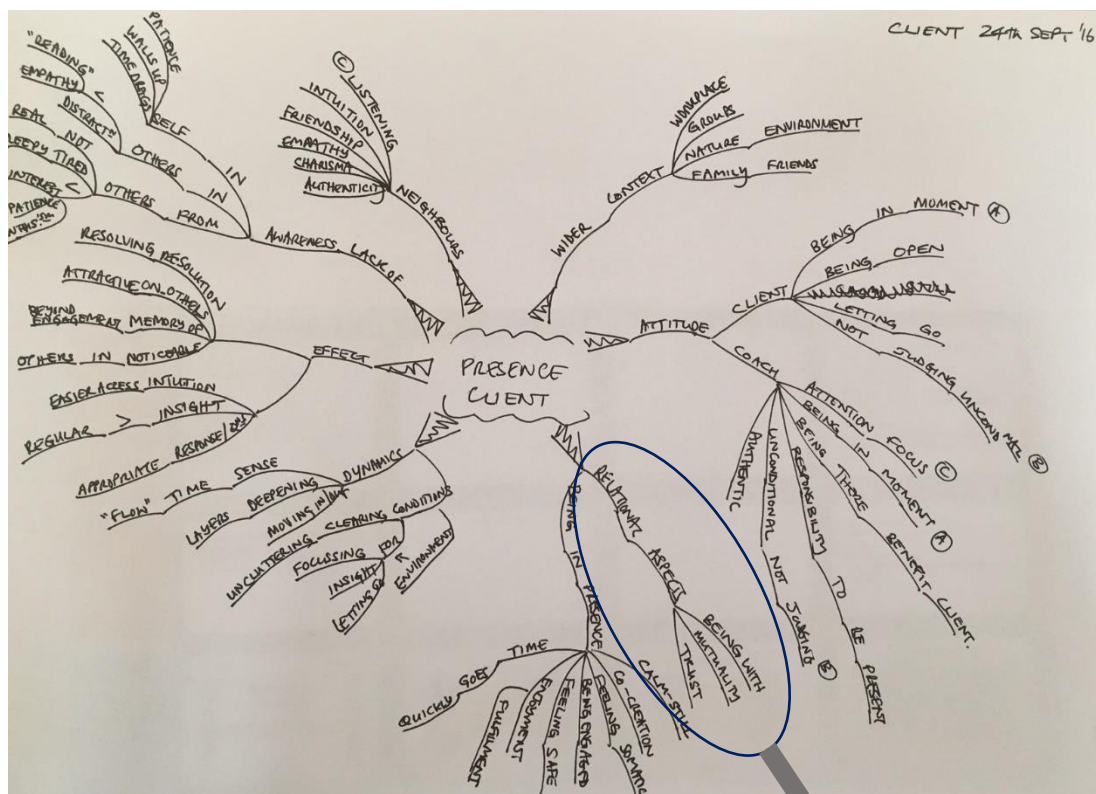
As can be seen, this is a theme for a set of related characteristics labelled *being with*, *mutuality*, and *trust*, that emerged from the interview transcripts. This map was used as the basis for the interview with client #4 and underwent modification as a result of the interview dialogue at the time. After the interview, the changes were reflected in NVivo and there were further modifications as a result of subsequent data analysis of the transcript a few days later. In this way, concept evolution progressed as a result of both a creative dialogue with research partners and through post-interview interpretation. Mind maps were also constructed for the coach perspective and an example is shown in Figure 6.6.

Figure 6.6 Transitional Concept: Prior to Coach #5 Interview

Relational Presence
- Being with
- Authentic
- Bringing each other into presence
- Conditions
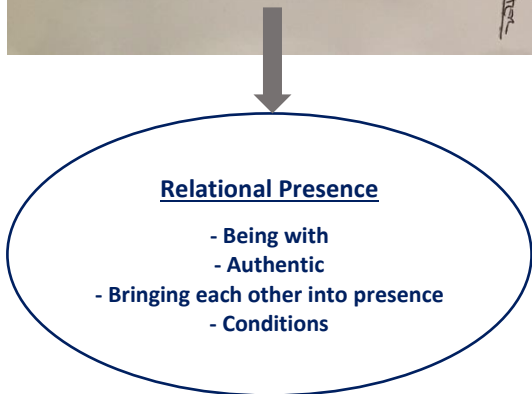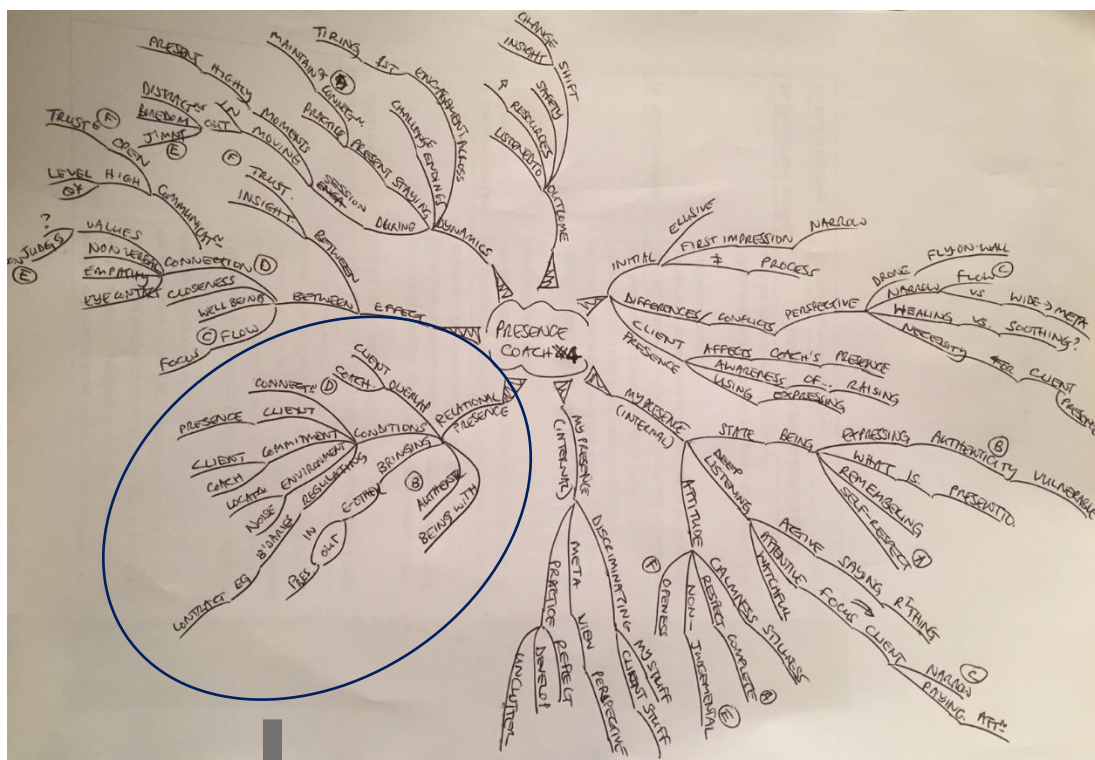
This allowed a simple, visual means of comparing the two perspectives, so that where data elements were similar, consistent categories began to emerge. For instance, in the map below, the theme labelled *Relational* contains the sub-category *being with*, in common with the client view shown in Figure 6.5. It also includes other categories labelled *authentic*, *bringing each other into presence*, and *conditions*. Where the sub-categories between each client and coach maps were labelled differently, the underlying data for each perspective could be reviewed in NVivo to decide whether there were similar data elements or distinct differences. In this way, the two perspectives could inform each other. This process helped me to assess whether the two constructs were similar enough to be interpreted as the same phenomenon or distinct enough to be treated separately. It is also important to note that whilst these maps were presented during the actual interviews, I was also experimenting more freely with different ways of interpreting and seeing the underlying structure.

6.2.3 Transition #2

As the concept continued to develop through the use of mind maps and experimentation, different organising structures presented themselves. Prior to the last client interview (client #6), the conceptualisation had evolved to a schematic (Figure 6.7), which depicts three different visualisations. By this time I had moved away from relational presence being visualised as enveloping or surrounding both coach and client (as described in the initial concept) and now conceived an overlap between client and coach presence, as shown in box one. This seemed to better reflect the sense of mutuality that had emerged from the findings. For instance, coach #1 had commented on the initial continuum schema:

> *I understand what they [the pictures] are doing, and I take something from the size of the grey boxes, the size of the presence if you like and also the relational piece […] the thing that springs to mind to me is almost a Venn diagram. I'll try and draw something [shows Venn diagram] …that joint mutual presence, it's where you've actually got a big overlap and in a sense, the presence between the coach and the coachee, there's more and more of that in the intersection.*

This new construct depicted how client and coach both directed their presence toward the client. A further innovation that arose in this transition was the notion of a coach's 'professional presence', which emerged from the client #3 interview. This was interpreted from both client and coach perspectives as a quality that a coach is expected to have, which

provided a foundation for other relational attributes such as authenticity, congruence, empathy and attentiveness. In addition, I interpreted some of the client conditions for presence as attitudes. In box two I attempted to evoke the dynamics of presence more visually. This diagram shows the coach and client each moving in and out of presence, oscillating between a lack of presence and being in presence. As they do so, their relational presence also changes. I conceived this as being like the bellows of an accordion, continuously moving in and out throughout the coaching conversation. Box three emphasised that relational presence depends on the individual being in presence, and that the presence of one person is perceived by the other (i.e. its external dimension).

Figure 6.7 Transitional Concept: Prior to Client #6 Interview

Box 1. Relational Presence

Expectation of coach's presence	Relational presence	Attitude of Client in presence
Authentic	Being available to each other	Being open and willing to be coached
Congruent	Feeling of mutuality / connection	Being in the moment
For the benefit of the client	In the relational moment	Being aware of why we're here
In the moment	Rapport	Not judging
Empathic	Safety and Trust	Responsible for growth
Insightful / perceptive	Express what is present	
Attentive / Listening		
Not judging		
Self-Managing		
Responsible for being present		

Box 2. Dynamics

Coach
- Lack of presence
- Moving in and out of presence
- In Presence
- **Relational Presence**
- In Presence
- Moving in and out of presence
- Lack of presence
Client

Box 3. Being Present

Being in presence	Aware of coach's presence
- Grounded	- Sense of coach's presence
- Creative	- They "stay with me"
- Feeling engaged	- Feeling of being seen / listened to
- Feeling safe and trusting	- On my agenda
- Having choice	- Appropriate response
- Sense of purpose	- Insights from coach
- Sense of timelessness	- Coach is perceptive
- Have insights	
- Range of awareness	

When this model was discussed with client #6, she immediately looked at the diagram in box 1 and felt that it didn't fit her ideas. She wanted to *"squish them together"* so that the representation was more a: *"100% leaning into each other to actually create [the relational] space."* This view differed from both the representation in the initial concept and from coach #1's Venn diagram and is an example of cases where the research partners have similar ideas about a construct but visualise them in different ways. My role was to find a means of interpretation that encompassed all views. I felt the advantage of this transitional model was its more visual nature, which allowed a different level of engagement with the research partner compared to the initial concept. However, the use of multiple diagrams seemed unwieldy and overly complex. I was still searching for something more elegant and intuitive.

6.2.4 Transition #3

At the end of the conceptual encounter interviews I had gathered data from six coach and six client interviews and generated a number of different ideas for a conceptual structure. At this point, after collating all of the analysis, including the two node trees in NVivo and the latest transitional concepts, I chose to attempt to develop a single concept encompassing both client and coach experiences.

In developing the next model, I was inspired by Wilber's integral model of human consciousness (Wilber, 2000), which has informed transpersonal approaches to coaching (Rowan 2010, in Cox et al., 2014; Frost, 2009; Chapman and Cilliers, 2008) and nursing presence (Shea and Frisch, 2016). Wilber proposed two perspectives of reality: a continuum between the subjective interior and objective exterior; and a continuum between the individual and the collective. This gives rise to four quadrants, shown in Figure 6.8.

Figure 6.8 Adapting Wilber's Integral Model

	INTERNAL (SUBJECTIVE)	EXTERNAL (OBJECTIVE)
INDIVIDUAL	Quadrant A "I" *What I/You Experience*	Quadrant B "IT" *What can be experienced by another*
COLLECTIVE	Quadrant D "WE" *What We Experience*	Quadrant C "ITS" *The Coaching Community's Experience*

Quadrant A refers to consciousness as experienced subjectively by the individual including their mental, emotional and somatic experience. This is the perspective of the 'I' and is interpreted in this research context as representing the internal dimension of presence. Quadrant B encapsulates a person's perception of the other, including behaviours and body language. This is the perspective of the 'IT' and is interpreted as incorporating the external dimension of presence. Quadrant C includes aspects of the collective concrete world consisting of institutions, rules, techniques and frameworks. Wilber called this quadrant the 'ITS' to represent the objective collective. When related to this research, this quadrant might include training courses, competency frameworks and the body of knowledge related to presence. Finally Wilber named quadrant D the 'WE'. This represents the subjective, collective experience, which comprises cultural norms, common language and shared meanings. This can be interpreted as including the relational dimension of presence. My adaptation of Wilber's model in terms of presence is shown in Figure 6.9.

Figure 6.9 Transitional Concept – Focus Group

	INTERNAL (SUBJECTIVE)	EXTERNAL (OBJECTIVE)

QUADRANT A: "I" - What I/you experience

A stage

Levels (within a stage)

BEING IN PRESENCE
- An ineffable quality
- A state of being
- Experience of flow
- Connected to intuition
- Connected to body
- Simultaneous wider perspective and deep focus
- In-the-moment

DYNAMICS
- Feeling of moving in and out of presence
- Fragility

CONDITIONS
- Practice
- Uncluttered mind
- Open to what comes
- Aware of being not present
- Remembering to notice body and feelings

LACK OF PRESENCE
- Feeling of boredom
- In head
- Internal chatter
- Lack of clarity/focus

INDIVIDUAL

QUADRANT B: "IT"- What can be perceived by another
- They have sense of calm, balance and goodwill
- There is a charismatic quality about them
- Regular insights occur
- They are perceptive
- Sense that they are there
- Change in coach's presence is noticeable
- Coach needs to have presence for effective coaching
- A conducive environment
- Issue focussed
- Sense of fakeness
- Taking notes
- Incongruent actions

COLLECTIVE

LACK OF PRESENCE
- Distractions prevent presence
- Pulled out of presence by other
- Judging other
- Coach on own agenda

CONDITIONS
- Coach is deeply listening
- Coach is empathising
- Coach is non-judgemental
- Coach is on client's agenda
- Client is willing to let go

DYNAMICS
- Client feels able to let go
- Different levels/layers - changeable
- Moments of insight
- Each person is affected by the presence of the other

BEING IN PRESENCE
- Feeling of safety and trust
- Feel able to take risks with other
- Regular eye contact
- In tune with each other
- Appropriate response in-the-moment
- Shift/change
- Insights emerge from both
- Mutual flow experience
- A deep sense of connection that is more than both
- An ineffable quality

QUADRANT D: "WE" - What we experience

- Presence not recognised in coaching processes
- Coaching community view aspects as separate elements
- Coach presence reflected in competency frameworks
- Coach training includes presence
- Coach contracts with client to be present
- Client presence recognised as important to coaching outcomes
- Presence knowledge base develops
- Noticeable changes in client behaviour/attitude
- Coaches cultivate and use their presence as standard practice
- Coaches and clients work together to develop mutual presence
- Presence widely viewed as a systemic relational phenomenon essential in coaching

QUADRANT C: "ITs" - The coaching community's experience

The appeal of using Wilber's model as a basis for interpretation was its emphasis on the integral nature of a phenomenon, which involves (in Wilber's terminology) width and depth. Width means understanding presence from the viewpoint of all four quadrants, as well as appreciating the inter-relationship between them. Depth refers to a hierarchy of developmental 'stages' of consciousness for each quadrant. For presence, these stages were defined as *lack of presence*, *conditions for presence, dynamics* and *being in presence*. For each quadrant and stage, I mapped the specific characteristics that had emerged from the conceptual encounter process and attempted to convey a general sense of movement from the centre outwards towards a higher order of presence. Hence, the label *An ineffable quality* was used for the outermost descriptor in quadrants A and D to denote its tacit nature. I felt this interpretation was a helpful means of combining the dynamic nature of presence with

its internal, external and relational dimensions. Since this model was the outcome of the conceptual encounter interviews, it was used as basis for discussion with the focus group, presented to participants after they had completed and discussed the Q-sort exercise, providing an opportunity to review and extend the model.

The conclusion of the group discussion was that the structuring of presence around the three dimensions coupled with the idea of a dynamic movement towards and away from presence resonated with the group. For instance, coach #B commented that, *"the piece around how you can flick up and down makes some sense"*. However, the attempt to map characteristics into a hierarchy was challenged for three principal reasons. Firstly, the use of 'conditions' and 'dynamics' as stages gave an impression of a linear progression, whereas client #C felt that *"there's more of a loop of and a flow"*. Secondly, the placing of the detailed characteristics in each quadrant from inner to outer was seen as overly simplistic. Thirdly, there was some challenge around which stage a particular characteristic belonged to. For example, 'eye contact' was placed in quadrant D under 'being in presence', yet the group discussion showed that for some clients and at some stages of the coaching engagement it may serve to move someone away from presence, as it could feel uncomfortable.

When reflecting on this feedback I recognised a tendency to force my data to fit Wilber's model. For instance, in constructing quadrant C I had relied heavily on my experience and observations in the literature review, but the content had not been a focus during the interviews. I felt a need to complete this area in order to remain faithful to the four-quadrant model. On reflection, the content of quadrant C had more value to an assessment of the practical contribution to knowledge rather than being a direct outcome of the research or of direct relevance to the research question. These concerns led to the need for a reappraisal of the model and a period of further data analysis and immersion took place to integrate focus group findings with the previous work. This culminated in the final concept.

6.3 The Final Concept

The final conceptualisation of presence in executive coaching conversations is presented below. It builds on the findings presented in chapters 4 and 5 by synthesising the conceptual encounter and focus group analysis into a coherent and more sophisticated model than had previously existed in this research context. In summary, presence is viewed as a way of being involving three facets of experience. Firstly, there are two modes: mode one concerns being more aware of the here-and-now and mode two involves being more absorbed by one's inner experience. Secondly, there are three dimensions: how it is experienced internally; how one's presence is perceived externally by the other person; and how it is experienced relationally between client and coach. Thirdly, there are dynamics involved in moving between the two poles of a lack of presence and full presence. The following sections present the final concept with respect to these three facets. They build up the model towards its full representation and also re-engage with the literature where relevant in order to compare and contrast the research related to other contexts.

6.3.1 The Two Modes

The two modes are shown in Figure 6.10. The notion of these modes emerged as a finding regarding the nature of presence presented in chapter 4. In mode one, research partners reported feeling present in a very conscious way and sensitised to their in-the-moment experience. They are intentionally noticing what is going on between themselves and the other person, and are aware of their mental, physical and emotional experience. In mode two, they are so highly focussed and absorbed in their experience that they lose a sense of being in the here-and-now. Instead, they are highly present to their experience rather than present in the room. These modes of presence were reported as being dynamic with both client and coach able to move between them during a coaching session.

Figure 6.10 The Two Modes
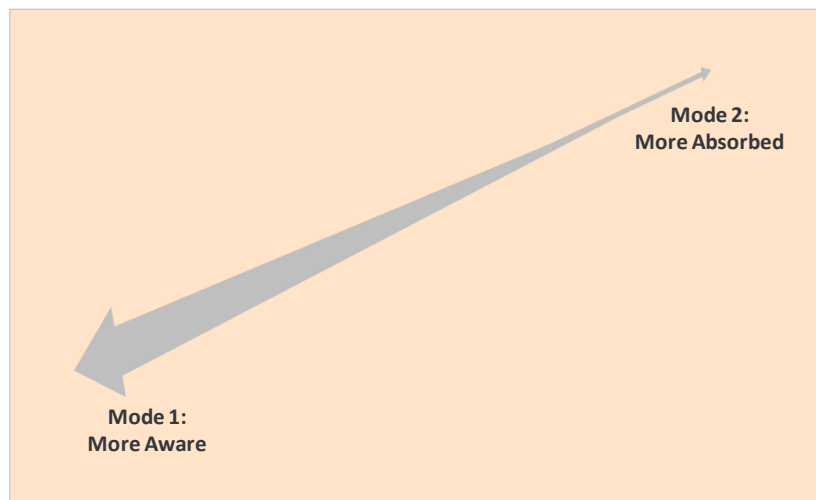
There is a parallel between these two modes and Bradford's (2007) research in the psychotherapeutic context. He distinguished 'unconditioned presence', which referred to an effortless state of consciousness, from therapeutic presence, which he surmised was an attentive focus on the here-and-now. He emphasised that unconditioned presence was inherently ineffable and viewed it as a powerful force in therapy. Geller and Greenberg (2002) also identified an attribute of presence involving a dual level of consciousness, which allowed the therapist to be 'deeply engaged and immersed in the client's experience, yet the therapist maintains an appropriate objectivity by being centered, unshaken, spacious and responsive to what is being experienced by the client' (p.83).

6.3.2 The Three Dimensions

The three dimensions shown in Figure 6.11 formed part of the initial concept. They emerged as themes originally during the literature review, which associated them with the presence of a coach, therapist, nurse or teacher. This meaning was extended during the conceptual encounter to encompass both client and coach experiences.

Figure 6.11 The Three Dimensions
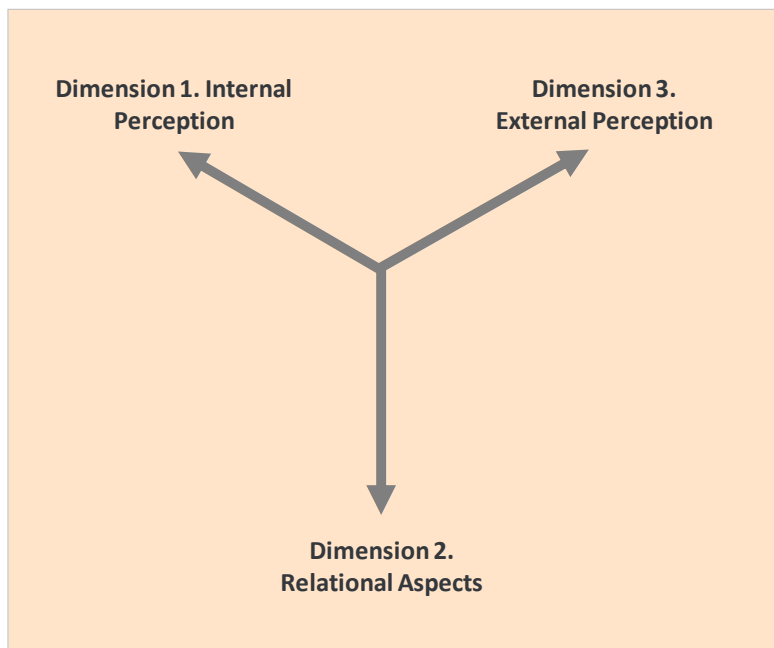
In the final concept, the internal dimension refers to the client or coach's internal awareness of being present, in the here-and-now. This internal awareness may encompass the mode one experience of having an open, calm, clear mind and a sensitivity to somatic and emotional feelings. Equally, it may describe the internal experience of mode two, such as a sense of timelessness and a feeling of well-being. The internal awareness of mode two is more of a reflective process occurring after the event, as by its nature there is a sense of being absorbed during the present.

The relational dimension is conceived as the mutual experience of being with the other person whilst holding a person-centred attitude. It is informed by the relational philosophies of Buber (1958) and Rogers (1957) and involves both client and coach being present to each other, with the overall purpose being in the service of the client. There is a sense of companionship, warmth and inclusion, which enables a deep connection and heightened communication, where the whole feels greater than the sum of its parts. This relational dimension may be felt regardless of physical proximity, as in telephone or Skype coaching.

The external perception of presence initially emerged as a theme from the psychotherapy literature and was interpreted with respect to how the presence of the therapist was perceived by the client. The findings here suggest that this theme is relevant to the coaching

experience of both client and coach. It is therefore defined as the client or coach's perception of the other person's presence. For example, the findings reported that the perception in mode one might be that the client felt listened to, whilst the perception in mode two may be that the coach experienced the client as being lost in their own narrative.

Whilst the two modes and three dimensions deconstruct presence, in reality the subjective, objective and relational experiences cannot be divided or isolated. They are part of an interdependent whole.

6.3.3 Conditions, Dynamics and Outcomes

As well as two modes and three dimensions, the final concept also encompasses conditions for presence, its dynamics and outcomes, which are discussed in this section. These are shown schematically in Figure 6.12.

Figure 6.12 The Dynamics of Presence
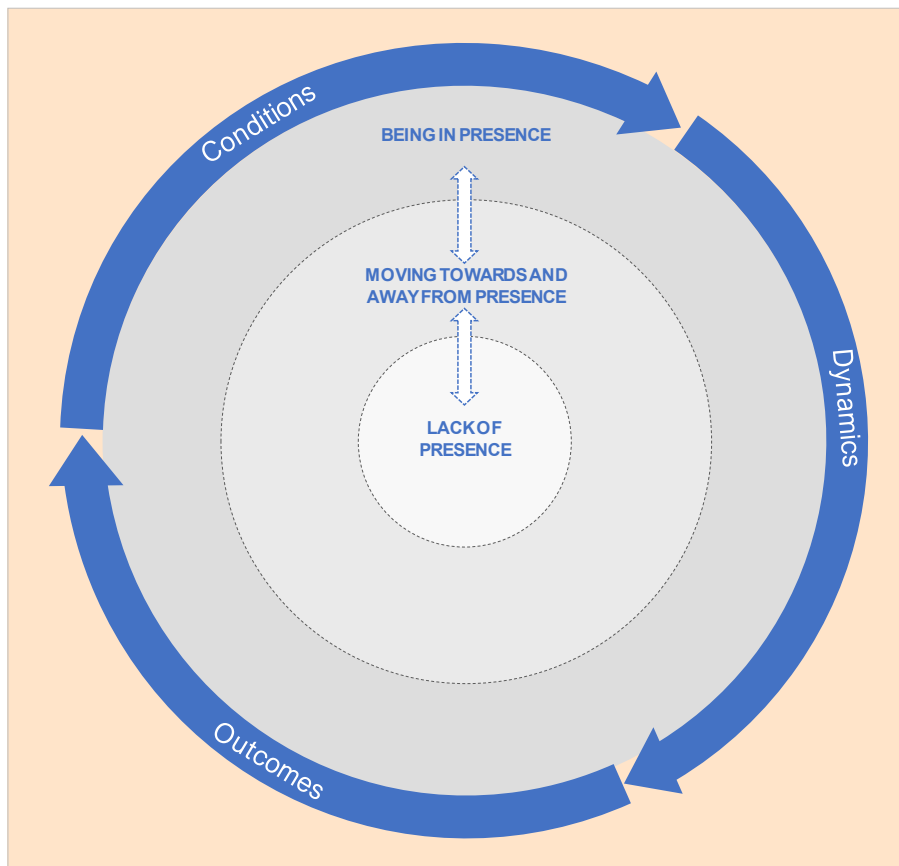
Conditions

The conditions for presence that emerged from the findings included client and coach attitudes (e.g. openness, compassion, respect, and to some degree, empathy); practice; experience; and a conducive physical environment. They also involved more dynamic factors that occurred during a coaching session such as the use of personal rituals, breathwork, grounding exercises, making eye contact and allowing time at the beginning of a session for both parties to become present.

Whilst many of these links have been made in previous research in other professional contexts, they are new to executive coaching. In addition, given that the literature review identified a general lack of consistency in positioning antecedents or effects of presence, it may be that the relationships are more complex and interdependent. As a focus group participant commented on the relationship between conditions and dynamics,

> *There's [sic.] more interactions between these two. Because it might be that you've got one that creates a certain dynamic and you can influence the condition […] I don't really see those two in that [linear] order in such a rigid way.* (Client #C)

For this reason the final concept assumes an interdependency between conditions, dynamics and outcomes that is more systemic than linear. This is represented schematically in Figure 6.12 as a circular, rather than linear, relationship.

Dynamics

Both client and coach research partners viewed presence as a desirable quality, yet they experienced it as fluctuating and unstable. Their ability to be present was affected by internal or external distractions (e.g. wandering off, becoming preoccupied or a technical disturbance) and as a result they reported moving towards and away from presence a number of times during the course of the coaching conversation. They experienced a lack of presence through characteristics such as a lack of openness, boredom, anxiety, a lack of focus, judging the other person and internal chatter. When not present they reported a variety of ways of becoming so, either through their own intent (for instance making eye contact, sitting upright in their chair or letting go of distracting thoughts), or through feedback from the other person. As a consequence of these various dynamics between client

and coach, the findings developed an impression of each party continuously moving towards and away from presence, with each affecting each other.

The research related to the dynamics of presence is limited. A dynamic aspect of presence was cited as a factor in educational leadership by Duignan (2009), who envisaged presence in terms of, 'dynamic influence fields' (p.154), whilst Colosimo (2013), with respect to therapist presence, reported that the therapist was, 'consistently attuned to client's experience' (p.60). Similarly, Kostovich (2012) and Finfgeld-Connett (2006) included a dynamic aspect in their concepts of nursing presence with the latter concluding that, 'Presence occurs in a context of dynamic adaptation to unique circumstances' (p.711).

Outcomes

The findings of this research demonstrated that coaches use their presence as part of their coaching process to facilitate change and raise awareness in their clients, for instance through modelling or verbal feedback intended to sensitise and raise awareness. The final concept defines the outcomes of presence as: enabling safety and trust; feeling connected with the other person; accessing internal resources; and enabling well-being.

Returning to the literature, similar outcomes have been reported. For instance, in coaching, Stelter (2012) and Siminovitch and Van Eron (2008, 2006) viewed the use of the coach's presence as an important factor in the change process and in raising client awareness. In the other helping professions, Geller et al. (2014) cited safety and trust as a key outcome, Covington (2003) suggested that nurses used presence to develop the patient relationship, and the impact on well-being was well recognised (Olson, 2016; Geller et al., 2014; Boeck, 2014; Reid, 2011; Finfgeld-Connett, 2006; Doona et al. (1997).

One specific outcome that emerged from the findings was the observation that presence is linked to transient moments of insight and change. Whilst there are also links with the dynamics of presence, it is viewed in the final concept as an outcome. Re-engaging with the literature in this specific area, a connection may be advanced between these moments involving presence and other research into significant coaching moments. For instance, recent research in coaching has investigated 'critical moments' (De Haan, 2008; Day et al., 2008), with De Haan et al. (2010) studying the specific context of executive coaching. Defining a critical moment as 'an exciting, tense or significant moment' (De Haan et al., 2010, p.610),

they found that it commonly resulted in increased awareness. The authors suggested the need for, 'Radically new ways of understanding the client's experience of coaching, as distinct from the coaches' experiences' (p.616). The findings from this study may contribute to this understanding.

In the psychotherapy context, Granick's (2011) study of client perception of therapeutic presence found that peak moments of therapist presence were found to improve relational dynamics. Similarly, Stern (2004) posited that developmental change occurred in spurts due to 'critical' or 'now' moments of the present which he called 'moments of meeting' when, 'A major emergent property declares itself' (p.369). In stressing the importance of these moments, he vividly describes the involvement of presence:

> Often in therapy, one is not really "there" in the present. One is evenly hovering in the past, present and future. But as soon as a now moment arrives, all else is dropped and each partner stands with both feet in the present. Presentness fills time and space. There is only now. Usually the ongoing present is a nonsensory, implicit aspect of experience. In a now moment, it becomes felt and explicit. (p.370)

The interdependence of these conditions, dynamics and outcomes, interacting across three dimensions and two modes, generated a final conceptualisation that synthesised the experiences of clients, coaches and researcher. This is depicted in Figure 6.13, supported by the thematic map in Figure 6.14, which provides the next level of detail. The concept is further explained in a short summary YouTube video at this link: https://youtu.be/vPHjY_2VoWI

Figure 6.13 The Final Concept of Presence
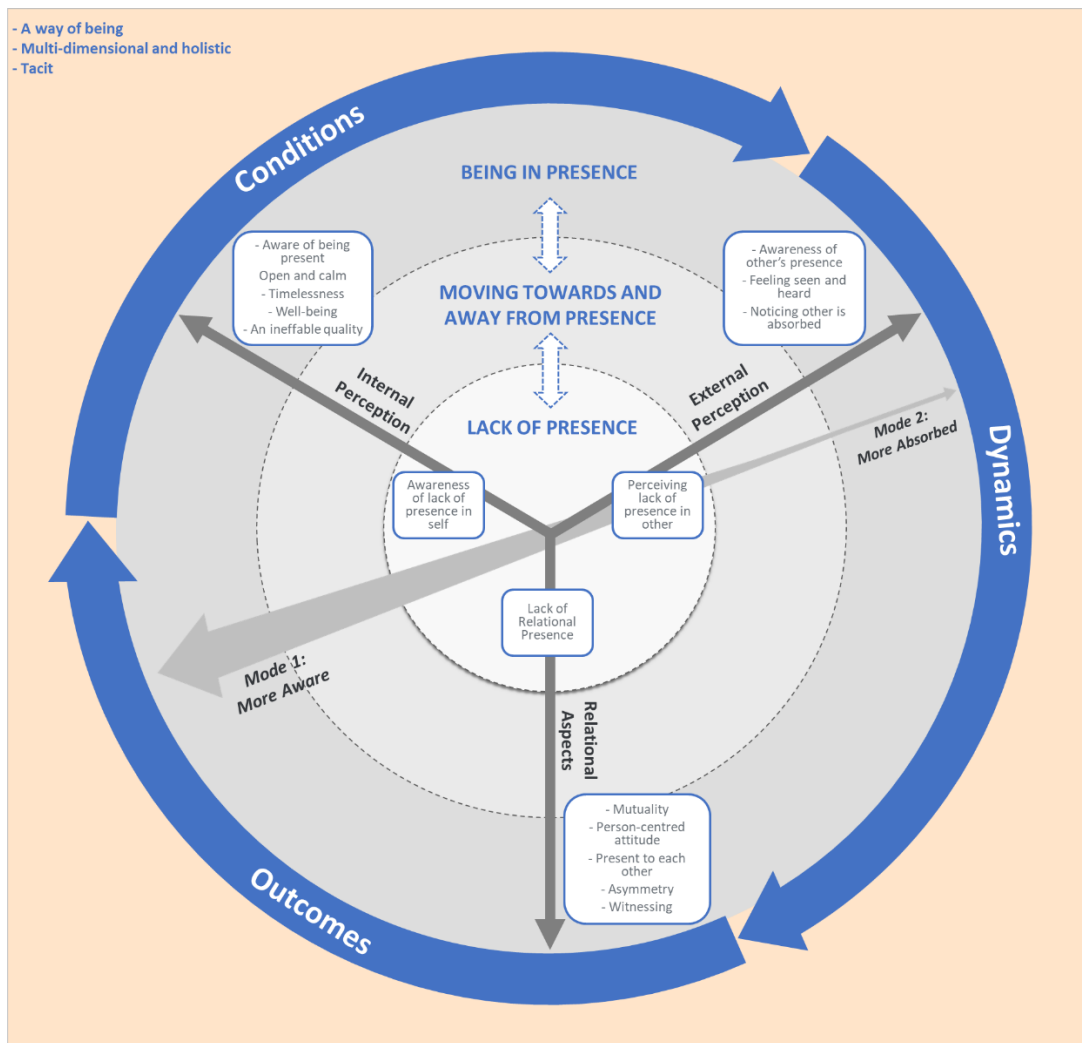
Figure 6.14 A Thematic Map of Presence

Nature		
General	Way of being
	Multidimensional and holistic
	Tacit
Modes	Mode 1 - More aware
	Mode 2 - More absorbed
Internal Dimension	Being in the here-and-now
	Somatic experience
	Lack of presence
Relational Dimension	Being with
	Mutuality
	Lack of relational presence
External Dimension	Perceiving presence in other
	Perceiving lack in other
Dynamics	Moving in and out of presence
	Between client and coach

Conditions		
Attitudes	Openness
	Non-judgemental
	Empathic
	Compassionate
	Respectful
Practice	Practice
Experience	Experience
Environment	Conducive environment
In-Session Interventions	Preparation
	Practicing somatic techniques
	Allowing time to arrive
	Eye contact

Outcomes		
Enabling	Safety and trust
	Feeling connected
	Accessing internal resources
	Enhanced empathy
	Enabling well-being
Utility	Coaching from presence
	Developing in Client

In concluding this chapter, it is appropriate to return to De Rivera's purpose for adopting the conceptual encounter methodology, which is to, 'Articulate an abstract description of the general phenomenon that will illuminate our specific experiences and enrich our appreciation of life' (De Rivera, 1981, p.3). In line with his three criteria for assessing completeness, the final concept has made explicit some aspects of the phenomenon that were previously only implicit; it has encompassed all of the different experiences that different research partners have related; and it has achieved a sense of maturity that did not otherwise exist.

Chapter 7 – Discussion and Conclusions

The study has explored the following research question: *What is presence and how is it experienced by coaches and clients during the executive coaching conversation?* Previous chapters have set out the research aims and context, explored the relevant literature, explained the methodology and presented the findings and transitional stages that have led to a final conceptualisation. This chapter presents the research contribution by first revisiting the research problem in light of the study and then discussing the main claims. The case for the contribution to knowledge is made, study limitations are discussed and implications for further research presented. The chapter concludes with the personal reflections of the researcher.

7.1 Contribution of the Research

In terms of contribution, the study has addressed the research gap through the development of the final concept, thus extending the scope of current research about presence in executive coaching in six ways: providing a common language; broadening the conceptual understanding; incorporating the client perspective; developing a structure that articulates its dynamic nature; addressing boundaries with other related concepts and where possible, providing some clarification; and in recognising the limitation of language, incorporating metaphor as a conceptual aid. These areas are discussed in more detail below.

7.1.1 Addressing the Research Gap

As explained in the introduction, my interest in this topic arose from my experiences as an executive coach and as a client. The research question was developed initially from these experiences, with a review of the literature revealing a gap with respect to the executive coaching context. In particular, across the whole domain of relevant literature, there was little research that related to the client perspective of presence. Since I experienced it personally as a relational phenomenon, it seemed fundamental that the client perspective should be explored as much as that of the coach.

The study has addressed the gaps relating to presence in executive coaching in general, and the lack of the client voice in particular, by generating a broader concept than existed before

in this context. The choice of methodological approach was instrumental in answering the research question, as was the decision to extend the scope of the literature review to include other professions with similar relational qualities. The common link across this knowledge base was that presence was viewed as a one-to-one, relational phenomenon. The cross-profession learning that resulted helped to inform the initial ideas for the concept, although insights were held lightly as it was acknowledged that there were significant contextual differences between executive coach-client and nurse-patient, teacher-student or therapist-client dyads. Having reviewed the literature and established the gap, the strength of the conceptual encounter approach lay in the process of the concept meeting the concrete experience of the research partners. If learning from other contexts was not reflected in their experience, then the case for applicability in this context could not be made.

The primary deliverables of this research (discussed in the previous chapter), are the final concept of presence, supported by a thematic map. The final concept proposes a structure based on the two modes, three dimensions and a dynamic nature, influenced by conditions and generating outcomes. The thematic map depicts the next level of detail and illustrates the organisation of themes and sub-themes. The primary claim of the research is that these constructs exist and reflect the experiences of the research partners. The findings have yielded detailed descriptions of these experiences, which have been synthesised to evolve the final concept. A summary description for presence in executive coaching conversations has also been developed as a result of this work and is provided in Figure 7.1. This description and the final concept have emerged through a qualitative inquiry process that has revealed a multidimensional, complex and tacit phenomenon comprising a set of attitudes and intentions that, together, reflect the research partners' experience.

Figure 7.1 A concluding description of presence

Presence in executive coaching conversations is a way of being, experienced by client and coach personally and relationally, which is viewed as being desirable, beneficial and fundamental to the coaching process. It can involve a highly developed awareness of and sensitivity to the here-and-now, as well as a deep level of absorbtion, or presence to, an inwardly experienced process. As such, it is constituted by a set of qualities, such as feeling a sense of heightened mental, emotional and somatic awareness, a sense of being in-the-moment, and a sense of timelessness. Presence also involves being in relation with the other person, experienced through a sense of connection and mutuality between client and coach that is engendered by the cultivation of attitudes such as openness, empathy, compassion and respect. Conversely a lack of presence is experienced as the absence of these qualities so that the coaching conversation is a dynamic movement in and out of presence. The presence of one person is perceived by the other in multiple ways such as a sense of warmth, feeling fully seen and heard or a person seeming absorbed and inwardly focussed. By being in presence, client and coach are more able to access their own internal resources, experience moments of insight and feel a sense of well-being. Finally, there is a tacit aspect of presence that makes it difficult to describe in words and which finds expression through metaphor.

Having generated the final concept, it is instructive to use it as a tool to assess how the research gap has been addressed and where a contribution has been made. Figure 7.2 demonstrates a means for accomplishing this.

Figure 7.2 Mapping of Research to Final Concept

			Section I — Coaching Literature							Section II — Models			Section III — Instruments	
			Professional Coaching Bodies - AC, EMCC, ICF (Coaching Competency)	Maltbia et al, 2014 (Coaching competency)	Bluckert 2006 (Gestalt)	Drake, 2007 (Narrative)	O'Neill, 2007 (Agnostic)	Silsbee, 2008 (Agnostic)	Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2006 (Gestalt)	Colosimo and Pos, 2013 (Psychotherapy)	Boeck, 2014 (Nursing)	Ahangar Ahmadi, 2016 (Teaching)	Geller et al, 2010 (Psychotherapy)	Kostovich, 2012 (Nursing)
Nature	General	Way of being			●			●			●	●		
		Multidimensional and holistic										●		●
		Tacit						●	●					
	Modes	Mode 1 – More aware	●	●					●	●		●		
		Mode 2 – More absorbed						●	●			●		
	Internal Dimension	Being in the here-and-now	●	●		●		●	●	●	●		●	
		Somatic experience	●	●				●	●	●		●	●	
		Lack of presence						●	●	●		●		
	Relational Dimension	Being with	●	●				●	●	●	●🟠	●	●	●
		Mutuality						●	●	●	●🟠	●	●	●
		Lack of relational presence							●	●		●		
	External Dimension	Perceiving presence in other			●	●		●	●				●	●
		Perceiving lack in other			●				●				●	
	Dynamics	Moving in and out of presence							●					
		Between client and coach							●					
Conditions	Attitudes	Openness	●						●	●	●		●	●
		Non-judgemental							●		●		●	
		Empathic							●		●		●	●
		Compassionate							●		●		●	●
		Respectful							●		●		●	
	Practice	Practice	●	●					●			●		
	Experience	Experience	●	●					●			●		
	Environment	Conducive environment							●					
	In-Session Interventions	Preparation							●					
		Practicing somatic techniques					●		●					
		Allowing time to arrive							●					
		Eye contact							●		●			
Outcomes	Enabling	Safety and trust	●				●		●		●		●	●
		Feeling connected	●				●		●	●			●	●
		Accessing internal resources	●						●			●	●	
		Enhanced empathy							●		●		●	●
		Enabling well-being									●🟠	●		●
	Utility	Coaching from presence	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
		Developing in Client			●			●	●					

Key:
● = Coach Presence
🟠 = Client Presence

Various sources of practitioner and academic literature are shown across the top of the matrix, under three sections. Section (I) relates to the extant coaching literature, which is informed by different coaching approaches, including Gestalt (Bluckert, 2006; Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2006); and narrative (Drake, 2014). Section (II) includes a sample of one recent study from each of the contexts of psychotherapy, nursing and teaching (Colosimo and Pos, 2015; Boeck, 2014; Ahangar Ahmadi, 2016). Section III comprises the two known instruments for assessing presence, one from psychotherapy (Geller et al., 2010), the other from nursing

(Kostovich, 2012). The descriptions of presence from these sources were mapped onto the thematic model, shown on the left-hand side of the matrix. A green spot denotes where a source maps to an area of the model from the coach/professional practitioner perspective and an orange spot relates to the client perspective.

To illustrate how the mapping was performed, the first column can be taken as an example. Here, the collective professional coaching body definitions of presence have been compared with the model. The green spots show how these definitions can be interpreted with reference to mode one, the internal dimension (being in-the-moment, somatic experience), the relational dimension (presence between) etc. As can be seen, the concept has been extended significantly in comparison with the interpretation of the professional coaching bodies. The exercise illustrates how the model incorporates this body of sample literature and a number of conclusions can be drawn as a result. For instance, being in the here-and-now, safety and trust are commonly referenced in the literature, whilst there is little written about dynamics, eye contact and well-being. In addition, it can be seen that there is a lack of overall knowledge related to the client view. Overall, the mapping demonstrates the multiplicity of views in the existing literature.

In summary, this mapping allows an assessment to be made of the fit between the model and existing knowledge. It shows that the model encompasses the coaching literature and broadens current understanding. It also demonstrates the significant overlap with constructs emerging from other helping professions. Note that with respect to the constructs in these non-coaching contexts the assessment was one-way, so any aspects that did not relate to the concept were not assessed. For example, the confidence of the nurse was cited as an antecedent to nursing presence in one study (Kostovich, 2012), but as confidence was not a key part of the concept in the executive coaching context, it was not included in the mapping exercise. Thus, the overlap between the model and literature is summarised in Figure 7.3.

Figure 7.3 How the Final Concept Encompasses the Literature
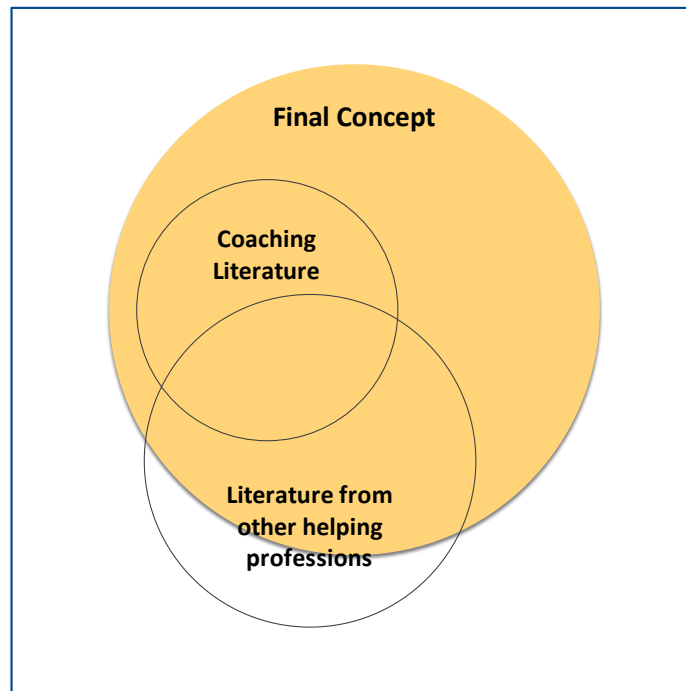
7.1.2 Providing a Common Language

One of the issues with existing concepts of presence in the executive coaching context is that they lack consistency and have been developed experientially rather than with scientific rigour. Current knowledge is derived mostly from practice-based literature and whilst both inspiring and useful to coaching professionals of all persuasions, there has been little formal research specific to the executive coaching context. Since presence is frequently viewed in the literature and by research partners as a somewhat nebulous concept that is difficult to describe, it has been worthwhile to attempt to enrich current understanding by expanding and refining the language used to describe it, differentiating it from other concepts, and exploring richer means of understanding such as through metaphor. By proposing an extended taxonomy and structure, introducing metaphorical expression into the language of presence and clarifying boundaries, there is now a means for the executive coaching profession to debate the concept in a more informed way. This more thorough understanding can be leveraged by executive coaches and their clients during coaching engagements, by the academic community, and by the profession as a whole. Now that a model exists, there is a basis for further additions, clarifications and differentiations to be made in future.

7.1.3 Broadening the Concept

An effort was made to increase the level of conceptual abstraction in order to generate a broader, more universal construct consistent with both the research findings and existing knowledge. The concept therefore encompasses the variety of experiences that might be expected from a phenomenon that, 'turns out to be a devilishly slippery and challenging word to define' (Silsbee, 2008, p.19). The process of abstraction was central to the conceptual encounter method as, by acknowledging and including all existing and emergent knowledge, a broader conceptualisation than previously existed was a natural outcome.

One example of the process of abstracting was accommodating the seemingly conflicting notions of being very aware and very absorbed. Research partners described their experience in terms of awareness of the here-and-now through deep listening and being highly attentive to client and self. They also experienced being highly focused on and absorbed by an internal experience, so that a sense of being in the here-and-now was lost. There needed to be a jump in the level of abstraction in order to see presence as encompassing both of these types of experience and the solution was to conceive them as two modes of the same phenomenon. By doing this, a dynamic relationship between modes could be conceptualised, so that whilst a person was in presence, they may move between being in the here-and-now and being absorbed. At the same time, by creating a different perspective to the three dimensions, each mode could be described in terms of the internal, external and relational.

7.1.4 Client Perspective

The third significant conclusion of the research is that presence is a similar phenomenon experienced by both client and coach. To date, the focus in coaching has only been on the presence of the coach (Stelter, 2014, 2012; Armstrong, 2012; De Quincey, 2000), particularly with respect to presence being viewed as a coaching competency (ICF, 2017; AC, 2017; Sonesh et al., 2015; Maltbia et al., 2014). This lack of consideration of the client voice extends to the other professional contexts that were investigated and is reflected by the lack of client-related mapping in Figure 7.1. From an executive coaching perspective therefore, research into the client perspective has addressed a gap in the literature.

The findings from this study indicated that the concept is experienced by both parties, although at any point in time, the experience may be very different for each. The conceptual encounter approach and the focus groups proved to be a useful means of investigating the experience from both perspectives, as it allowed two parallel paths to develop. Whilst these paths could not be claimed to be truly independent, this approach provided an opportunity for similarities and differences in experience to emerge from the data. The final concept recognises this by incorporating both perspectives and assuming that the entire domain of presence exists for, and is accessible by, both parties. For example, a client may be in a state of presence in mode two, absorbed by an event they are recounting. At the same time, they may perceive the warmth and attentiveness of the coach (the external dimension). The coach, on the other hand, may be present in mode one, noticing a somatic experience (internal dimension), whilst being empathetic towards the client (relational dimension) and aware of the client's attitude of openness (the external dimension).

The claim that effective executive coaching conversations require the presence of both client and coach is lent credence by the findings of other studies in the therapeutic context (Geller et al., 2012; Cooper, 2005; Phelon, 2004). By regarding the client perspective as equally important to the coach's, a more rounded relational concept has emerged. This has implications for the executive coaching profession with respect to coach development, coach supervision and the understanding of the coaching process overall. For example, if the cultivation and encouragement of client presence is seen to be fundamental to successful coaching, then appreciating that the presence of the client is as important as the presence of the coach may have a significant effect on how coaches coach. Whilst more research is required to substantiate such claims, a coaching approach that aims to raise the awareness of the client to their own presence and to their influence on relational presence might be very different from a process that values only the coach's presence (as a competency, for instance). A summary of the contribution to professional practice that includes extending presence beyond the confines of competency view is provided in section 7.1.9.

7.1.5 Articulating a Dynamic Nature

The fourth claim is that presence is experienced in dynamic terms, both individually and relationally. There was a lack of research concerning this across the whole body of the literature review, although Granick (2011) did investigate client perceptions of how therapist presence changed, concluding that its intensity varied. The findings of this study substantiate this conclusion, and further extend the conceptualisation of its dynamic nature. In the final model, both client and coach experience moving toward or away from presence during a coaching conversation. Being fully present is viewed as an inherently unstable state, which is difficult to sustain. Even noticing that one is present may cause a loss of presence to be experienced. Connected to this is the elusive nature of the dynamic interplay between the two parties. Some research partners felt their presence was affected by the other person's, others did not. If one view was that presence was something that can be acquired or lost, another was that it is always there and simply not noticed, as referred to by the 'telegraph cable' metaphor, which emphasised its relational nature. Some research partners experienced conscious and unconscious movement towards or away from presence, whilst others noticed an instantaneous jump.

The mapping in Figure 7.1 demonstrates that the coaching literature does not address these dynamics, although some aspects are implied when viewing presence as a coaching competency, as this assumes it can be measured or assessed, and that people have a greater or lesser ability. There are also numerous references in the literature to the cultivation and practice of presence, which also implies an ability to develop and improve (Ahangar Ahmadi, 2016; Schneider, 2015; Geller et al., 2014; Kennedy, 2012; Granick, 2011; Silsbee, 2008; Reid, 2009). Cultivating presence impacts its dynamic nature, as it contributes to an understanding of how presence can be strengthened or maintained for longer (for instance through long-term practice or in-the-moment techniques), and how a movement away from presence can be noticed and addressed.

7.1.6 Recognising Fuzzy Boundaries

The study has explored the relationship between presence and a number of other related concepts. In doing so, it has attempted to clarify the boundaries with related terms such as mindfulness, trust, empathy, flow, healing, watchfulness and charisma. The overlap between mindfulness and presence was highlighted during the literature review with differing views

as to their relationship. In coaching, this relationship was presented either as synonymous (Collard and Walsh, 2008; Childs, 2007) or as presence as an antecedent for mindfulness (Hall, 2013). This study concluded that mindfulness closely resembled the 'here-and-now' experience of the internal dimension.

A second fuzzy boundary emerged between presence and trust. Rodgers and Raider-Roth (2006), and Gardner (2015) viewed trust as a prerequisite for teaching presence, as does Kostovich (2012) in the nursing context. Conversely, Maltbia et al. (2011) concluded the reverse for executive coaching. The findings from this research support the latter in viewing presence as the underlying condition. In a similar vein, empathy was found to be both a condition and an effect, consistent with the different conclusions of existing research. For instance, from the therapeutic perspective, Geller and Greenberg (2002) and Granick (2011) viewed presence as an enabler for the Rogerian conditions of empathy, congruence and unconditional positive regard. On the other hand, in the teaching context, Gardner (2015) cited empathy as an antecedent to presence. In recognising that empathy could be both a condition and an effect, the findings of this study posited a more systemic and interdependent relationship.

A blurred line was also apparent between the experience of presence and Csikszentmihalyi's (1990) concept of flow. The focus of his work has been on flow arising from a task or activity undertaken by an individual. This concept was explored as a relational phenomenon in coaching by Wesson (2010), who highlighted the lack of research in this context and found that experiences associated with flow are also associated with coaching. This study concluded that flow is very similar to the mode two experience of presence.

The idea of a healing presence emerged from the nursing and psychotherapy literature. I was interested in exploring this area because the holistic, relational nature of presence suggested some emotional benefit to both clients and coaches that could be interpreted as healing in nature. However, there are also implications of this word that don't sit as well in an executive coaching context where a client might not see themselves as in need of healing. It is therefore unsurprising that there is little reference to healing in the coaching literature. This study found that clients were generally of the view that healing was not a term that characterised presence. As a consequence, I concluded that healing was not a strong enough feature in the

executive coaching context to include explicitly in the concept, instead adopting 'a sense of well-being' as a more appropriate outcome.

Watchfulness is a term that was included in the initial concept. It emerged from the psychotherapy literature in relation to attentiveness and listening (Geller, 2013; Anderson et al., 2014). Both clients and coaches challenged it as a characteristic of presence. Client #3 asked *"Is it mindful more than watchful?"*, whilst coach #5 felt that it was, *"a funny word […] like being sort of spied upon."* Likewise, coach #6 commented that, *"watchful implies your eyes […] and without all your senses."* As a result, I chose not to use 'watchful', preferring the more abstract term 'being in the here-and-now' as an aspect of witnessing.

Finally, with respect to charisma, Granick (2011) reported that clients viewed charisma as an outward projection of energy based on attention-seeking, ego or extraversion, whilst therapeutic presence communicated authenticity and engendered a feeling of safety. Similarly, Chidiac and Denham-Vaughan (2007) concluded that people with presence may be charismatic, but that charismatic people may not have presence. Findings from this research echoed these sentiments and indicated that research partners experience the two concepts in distinctly different ways. The conclusion is that presence is perceived as an attractive quality in the other person, which can be associated with a form of charisma.

Addressing these conceptual boundaries has helped to differentiate the concept from other constructs, understand their overlap and situate them within the proposed structure. That said, there is an acknowledgement that the boundaries and inter-relationships are often indistinct and further research in this area is recommended.

7.1.7 Incorporating Metaphors as a Conceptual Aid

The literature and the findings have demonstrated that presence has a tacit nature that makes it challenging to define; yet, experientially, research partners reported with real clarity that they recognised when they were present or when they felt the presence of the other person. They were equally clear when they experienced a lack of presence in themselves or the other. Describing their experience in words often proved challenging and they frequently used metaphor as a means of expression and explanation. Lakoff (2008) argues that metaphors are abstract maps and, as such, conceptual rather than linguistic in nature. Since metaphorical language arises from the conceptual domain, it is the main means of

understanding abstract constructs. He states that metaphors are central to our understanding of experience and that, 'Metaphor allows us to understand relatively abstract or inherently unstructured subject matter in terms of a more concrete, or at least more highly structured subject matter' (p.41). A number of metaphors were evoked during this investigation, and whilst they played a central role in clarifying the concept, no one metaphor had universal meaning. They all offered precise imagery that resonated with some research partners and not with others. This suggests that different people hold different mental models or imagery that reflect their experience of presence and these may contain subtle differences and nuances that make them unique to each person.

The process of conceptual encounter was particularly suitable in helping to pitch the level of concept abstraction at a level that was inclusive of all of the reported experiences, both linguistic and metaphorical. The use of the focus group was also fruitful in allowing further exploration of some of the metaphors through the Q-sort technique and ensuing dialogue. As a result of investigating metaphorical expression, new meanings and nuances have been revealed that might otherwise have remained tacit.

7.1.8 Contribution to Methodology

The research approach involved two innovations that extended the conceptual encounter methodology. Firstly, a parallel conceptual encounter was performed in order to explore both client and coach perspectives involved in a coaching conversation. This allowed the conceptual thinking to develop along broadly independent lines so that similarities and differences emerged from each perspective.

Secondly, a focus group was used to leverage the power of group dynamics to extend the research. To further evolve the concept and ensure consistency with previous findings, the focus group discussion consisted of two stages. The first introduced the Q-sort process using Q-items that had been generated from the previous interview findings; and the second introduced the latest emergent concept of presence that had been generated by the conceptual encounter process as a basis for group discussion. Similar to the one-to-one interviews, the concept this time met the group's experience. The balance between client and coach perspectives was further maintained by using two coach and two client participants.

7.1.9 Summary

The above discussion has shown that whilst presence might be viewed as tacit and nebulous, a concept has been developed that has significant academic and practitioner value. A set of qualities for presence has emerged from the findings and a novel conceptual structure has been proposed that applies to all client and coach research partners. As a consequence, there is now a richer language for presence, whilst boundaries with other related concepts have been identified and clarified. Its tacit nature has also been recognised and explored through the use of metaphor.

In the executive coaching context, the findings have significance for the academic research community, executive coaching practitioners (regardless of experience), educators and coaching supervisors. From a theoretical perspective, the model that has emerged has extended current knowledge and closed the gap highlighted by the research question. Whilst the concept aligns to relational theories of coaching such as person-centred and Gestalt approaches, it can be argued that, as all executive coaching is inherently relational, it has more universal implications regardless of coaching process. The relationship to other concepts such as mindfulness, trust, empathy, flow, healing, watchfulness and charisma also offers new perspectives.

For practitioners, the findings and the final concept offer new insights into the complex nature of presence in executive coaching conversations. Research partners reported experiences of presence irrespective of whether they conducted executive coaching face-to-face, in semi-public spaces, in the workplace, by Skype or by telephone. This suggests that whilst the ease, duration or depth of presence may be influenced by physical proximity and environment, it is a phenomenon that has relevance to a variety of different coaching contexts. It was a common refrain from both client and coach research partners that they had benefited from the development opportunity of the one-to-one interviews and were more aware of the individual and relational sense of presence as a result. This suggests there is value to educators in including presence awareness and practice in their professional development curricula. In particular, it is recommended that coach supervision should incorporate the development of a coach's presence; their awareness of relational presence; and their ability to value and enhance client presence. Coaches should be encouraged to explore presence from the perspective of their clients and their client relationship as part of their reflexive practice and professional development.

By placing the client's perspective on an equal footing to coach's and acknowledging the interplay and interdependency between them, a more holistic, systemic view of presence is advanced. This may impact how coaches are educated and assessed, since it proposes a more contextual, tacit understanding of what makes a coach effective than is currently advanced by a more reductionist competency-based view. One of my personal motivations for the study was to highlight and address this narrow view of presence as a competency currently reflected in the frameworks of the professional coaching bodies. The conceptual model may therefore contribute to the debate of what makes coaching and coaches effective and it is offered as a developmental and supervisory tool.

As a result of proposing this model, participants in executive coaching conversations may now be able to better recognise and have more awareness of the experience of presence in themselves and the other. A map of the territory has been constructed that details the nature of the phenomenon and a set of conditions that affect it have been proposed. For clients and coaches who find the concept to be novel, an argument for its uses and benefits has been set out, which may influence their future dialogue. For those who already coach or are coached with presence at the heart of their process, a broader landscape has been painted that synthesises knowledge emerging from the findings of this study with the outcomes of studies in the wider literature of the helping professions.

7.2 Limitations

The conceptual encounter approach required a concept to be presented during the interviews and this inevitably influenced both research partners and researcher in some manner. This may be a limitation if some aspects of experience were disregarded, downplayed or had not surfaced. A second limitation involves issues of memory. Events were recalled in the interviews that may be weeks or months old, which may call into question their accuracy and completeness. None of the research partners reported memory as an issue at the time of interview, and by reliving their experiences there was a sense that they were bringing their past into the present and then reflecting, interpreting and reporting on that. In line with the constructivist paradigm that assumes multiple realities, there is no conflict here, although there may be a limitation if some aspects of experience were misrepresented or omitted.

The interview content was also shaped to some degree by the questions that were asked, how I asked them and my way of engaging as a researcher. For instance, I may have affected the creative process by closing down or not addressing certain avenues of investigation that were not directly triggered by questions. I may also at times have imposed my own views or feelings onto a research partner. This potential was mitigated by the open-ended nature of the questions and my commitment to active listening by encouraging research partners to freely recount their experiences with as little interruption and direction as possible.

The data collection process was creative by nature and there was uncertainty as to when a point of maturity had been reached, especially due to the small sample size. Whilst the number of research participants was in line with normal practice for this methodology, confidence that the concept could be judged as complete was increased by using a focus group, which drew on a different yet complementary creative dynamic. Consequently, further insights emerged.

Limitations may also have occurred in the data analysis stage, as I may have excluded or misinterpreted potentially useful data. This was a particular concern when extracting data from the interview transcripts to use as quotes during the thematic analysis process, since there is a risk of taking an overly reductionist approach and losing overall meaning. I minimised this by capturing the wider context of quotes when extracting data via NVivo. Further, all data was analysed by me as the sole researcher. A different researcher may have

interpreted the data differently (Creswell, 2013). Both of these issues are mitigated to some degree by the conceptual encounter approach, as the concept is being continuously exposed to the experiences of further research partners.

Finally, my personal views of how presence is conceptualised and its significance in executive coaching will also have influenced the lens through which I viewed the data. I was aware of this and attempted to bracket my own assumptions in the same manner I would as a practicing coach. I also recognised that the research partners may have perceived these assumptions, both consciously and unconsciously, and this may have led them to collude with my perspective. I acknowledged the positional power I held and sought to minimise it through the way I built the relationship with them.

7.3 Recommendations for Further Research

This study represents a first attempt to understand how clients and coaches understand presence in executive coaching conversations. It is recommended that the concept is explored further with a continuing attention to the significance of presence to both coach and client. This might be achieved in a number of ways. For example, through inquiry using a larger sample and a greater diversity of research partners in order to further clarify conceptual boundaries and extend the context into different areas of coaching (such as life coaching and career coaching). The Q-sort technique used here could be expanded to a full Q-methodology (Stainton Rogers, 1995), which might lead to the development of an instrument for presence that could be used by clients, coaches, supervisors, educators and assessors. In particular, further inquiry into the client context and greater understanding of the client contribution in effective conversations might be provided using the complementary approach of Kelly's repertory grid (Kelly, 1963). Based on Kelly's personal construct theory, this method examines the different ways that individuals construe experience. The approach generates a scale which emerges from a person's understanding of their own unique experience, in contrast to the use of a questionnaire-based instrument, which presents an interpretation to a respondent and asks them to score how their experience fits it. Further investigation is also recommended into the metaphorical expression of the experience of presence, with a view to developing a library of expressions, together with more universal metaphors which could be used for education, development and practice purposes.

Extending the research to an understanding of the impact presence has on executive coaching effectiveness would make a further useful contribution to knowledge. At present, the accepted factors involved in effectiveness are: the competency and attitude of the coach; the strength of the coach-client relationship; and the intrinsic motivation of the client. (Sonesh et al., 2015; Smith and Brummel, 2013; Passmore and Fillery-Travis, 2011; McKenna and Davis, 2009). A starting hypothesis might be that presence is foundational to all three of these factors.

Finally, there is scope for undertaking research that aims to synthesise the various concepts of presence across the coaching and helping professions. This study has been informed by psychotherapy, nursing and teaching, and the findings have supported the view that there are many common aspects (such as witnessing and somatic awareness) as well as some differences (such as being watchful and healing). It may be possible to bring together a range of different research contexts under one unified model (for instance any context which emphasises the importance of one-to-one conversations). This would be a challenging study, or series of studies to undertake, especially in view of transferability issues and the need to understand the contextual boundaries and differences. Yet, the continued and expanding interest in this phenomenon and the preponderance of context specific research suggests that there is a potential to understand presence as a more overarching dialogic concept, rather than being constrained by professional and/or disciplinary boundaries.

7.4 Personal Reflections

As a researcher-practitioner, my approach to investigating presence has paralleled my stance as a coach. When I coach, I try to value all perspectives as equally valid and view meaning-making with a client as a mutual process unique to our particular time and place, whilst being informed by our individual histories and the histories we bring into the room with us. My focus is on listening to my client with all my being, to truly hear them and to contribute fully to the meaning-making that happens between us, in the service of their professional development.

Whilst the contexts are different, these values and beliefs have also informed my outlook as a novice researcher. In this role, I was both a facilitator and participant in the research process. By investigating presence through the interviews and focus group, I was in a similar collaborative relationship with my research partners. As in coaching, I aimed to meet the

research participants on equal terms and with equal power through an inductive, dialogic process. Consequently, it was evident that our interpretation of presence changed and was influenced by the way we engaged with each other on both conscious and unconscious levels, and this experience governed how we came to understand the concept.

To conclude, regardless of the perspective of the participants in this research, whether that be coach, client or researcher, my experience has been that insight and learning developed through the alchemy of our subjective standpoints. As Gadamer (1989) observes, 'A genuine conversation is never the one we wanted to conduct […] the partners conversing are far less the leaders of it than the led' (p.385). It was noticeable how lightly I came to hold my own viewpoint as the investigation progressed, although at times, not without a certain resistance to change. It was also evident that the dialogue with each person continued in my mind well beyond the face-to-face contact, as a result of the immersive experience of data analysis. As a result, all research partners have made a lasting impression on me. Whilst the outcome of the research was a concept synthesised from their collective experience, the learning on a personal level has been as much about the practicalities and challenges of collaborative sense-making. This is an area I will continue to develop as a researcher and something that I will draw on in my future practice.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Recruitment Advertisement

Dear Coaches and Coaching Clients,

My name is Roger Noon and I am carrying out research for a Professional Doctorate in Coaching and Mentoring at Oxford Brookes University. You are invited to take part in a research study that aims to explore the concept and experience of presence as a helpful quality in executive coaching conversations. I am interested in interviewing both coaches and clients to learn about your different perspectives.

To help you establish whether or not you relate to this concept, I have summarised in the appendix below some descriptions that have been used to describe presence. These are by no means exhaustive and you may have your own clear views and experience that are different.

The research will take place between February and October 2016. It includes both experienced executive coaches who provide one-to-one coaching and coaching clients who have received one-to-one executive coaching either through their company or privately at some point during the past year. If you are an executive coach (with 5 years' experience and relevant post-graduate qualification) or a coaching client I would like to interview you separately about your experience and practice. The interview will take up to 90 minutes and can be done either face-to-face (in a mutually agreed location), by phone or via Skype. The interviews will be audio recorded with your permission and any subsequent quotes used will be anonymised. I will be conducting a minimum of 12 interviews in total (six with coaches and six with clients). Your participation and the contents of the interview will be kept strictly confidential (within the limitations of the law).

By participating, you can contribute to the coaching profession's understanding and knowledge about presence as a key element of coaching. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on your own experience of coaching using the perspective of presence.

If you are interested, please contact me at **14010582@brookes.ac.uk** for an information sheet that will explain all the details that you need to know in order to make a decision about taking part in the study. With your permission, I would also like to have a brief phone conversation with you to discuss the process in a little more detail, confirm relevance to the project and answer any questions you may have.

Warm regards,
Roger.

Appendix 1: Recruitment Advertisement

Appendix 2: Participant Information Sheet

Researcher: Roger Noon

Title: Exploring presence in executive coaching conversations

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide whether or not you wish to participate, it is important for you to understand why the research is being undertaken and what it involves. Please take time to read the following information carefully.

What is the purpose of the study?

The study will explore the concept and experience of presence as a helpful quality in executive coaching conversations. Presence has been described in various ways (some of which were outlined in the recruitment advertisement you received) and concepts have been developed in healthcare, education and psychotherapy. Little research has been undertaken in the context of executive coaching or to explore its links to similar concepts such as charisma and empathy. This study aims to address this gap.

What is presence?

One of the gaps in the current research is that there isn't a straightforward or agreed explanation or presence in the coaching relationship. One outcome of the research will be to provide this clarity. Currently, it is seen as a key coaching competency and an important factor for effective coaching. For example, the International Coach Federation (ICF) describes it as a competency as follows:

'Being fully conscious and in spontaneous relationship with another - listening with your whole self, at many levels at once. For the words the person uses, what their tone of voice or body language might be conveying, what emotions they might be experiencing, and their self-talk and beliefs about their situation. Behaving and listening with your full senses, including your gut or intuition.' (ICF, 2015).

Two other descriptions that complement and extend the ICF version are provided below. The first is from the coaching literature and the second from psychotherapy.

(1) The process of bringing into the present moment something – a feeling, an idea, an intention, a skill – that prior to you doing this, is tacit, invisible, or temporarily unavailable to you; and which when presenced, allows you to experience and see a situation, an event, or an issue in a changed light enabling you to 'go on' in a different way. (Kinsella, 2012).

(2) A name for the quality of being in a situation or relationship in which one intends at a deep level to participate as fully as she is able. Presence is expressed through mobilisation of one's sensitivity—both inner (to the subjective) and outer (to the situation and the other person[s] in it)—and through bringing into action one's capacity for response. (Bugental, 1992).

Why have I been invited to participate?

You are an experienced coach with a minimum five years' experience and holding a recognised coaching qualification. You have indicated that you experienced Presence in some form during a coaching relationship and you can recall specific instances. We have also had a brief informal phone conversation to confirm that these experiences are broadly relevant to the project. The research aims to explore your experience in order to inform the evolution of richer, more complete concept of Presence than currently exists in the executive coaching literature.

Do I have to participate?

No, you don't. Participation is voluntary and you are free to withdraw from the study at any time.

What does taking part mean?

Participation will involve an interview of around 1.5 hours at a mutually agreed venue where an audio record will be made with your permission. Your involvement will be treated in the strictest confidence, and all information collected will be treated confidentially. Please note that you will be requested to sign a consent form to confirm your voluntary participation and your understanding of the use of the emerging data.

Data Protection

All information collected will be treated confidentially within the legal limitations of the law and stored securely in line with the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Confidentiality and privacy will be ensured during the collection, storage and publication of research by anonymising all data. All research data will be transferred to Oxford Brookes for safe storage for a period of 10 years following completion of the research project, in accordance with University regulations.

What are the benefits of taking part?

You will contribute to the coaching profession's understanding and knowledge of presence as a key element of coaching. You will also have the opportunity to reflect on your own experience and practice using the perspective of presence. Valuable insights might result.

What will happen to the results of the research study?

The results will form part of my thesis for the Doctorate of Coaching and Mentoring. The thesis will be held at Oxford Brookes library. A summary of the research findings will be available on request. Publication of academic articles in coaching-related journals may also result from the research, which will also be available on request by email.

Who is organising and funding the research?

I am conducting this research as a part-time student of the Business School at Oxford Brookes University. This research is supervised by Dr. Tatiana Bachkirova, Co-Director of the International Centre for Coaching and Mentoring Studies, Oxford Brookes University (Tel: +44 (0)1865 488367; Email: *tbachkirova@brookes.ac.uk*) and Dr. Adrian Myers, Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Business, Oxford Brookes University (Tel: +44 (0)1865 485936; Email: *amyers@brookes.ac.uk*).

Who has reviewed the study?

The research has been approved by the University Research Ethics Committee, Oxford Brookes University.

Contact for further information:

Research: Roger Noon (*14010582@brookes.ac.uk*), DCAM Student; Faculty of Business, Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford OX33 1HX

The University also provides advice if there are any concerns regarding the research and the Chair of the University Research Ethics Committee can be contacted at *ethics@brookes.ac.uk*

Thank you.
Roger Noon, 1st January 2016.

Appendix 3: Interview Questions

These questions are designed to provide a framework for a 90-minute conceptual encounter semi-structured interview exploring presence in coaching conversations. The aim of the interview is to explore the research partner's specific, lived experience of presence.

Introduce and explore experience of presence: *The aim is for the research partner to explore their idea and experience of presence.*

- What does presence mean to you?
- Can you tell me about a time during coaching where you were very present/where you noticed your client/coach was very present?
- What was it about this experience that you associated with the idea of presence?
- What did the experience of presence look like/feel like? Where in your body could you feel it? How else might you conceive it?
- May we look at a broader meaning? [Researcher introduces elements emerging from the literature/experience]
- How does this fit with your views? What other experiences can you remember where presence showed up in the coaching conversation?
    - What is it about that experience that makes you connect it to presence?
    - What did the experience look like/feel like?
- What experiences can you remember where presence was absent in the coaching conversation? What did they look like/feel like?
- How does your sense of presence change during a coaching conversation?
    - What specific experiences illustrate this?
    - How would you describe the dynamic?
    - Can you offer a metaphor or analogy?
- How does the other person's presence affect you?
- How helpful is presence in achieving your coaching objectives?

Explore concept through encounter with experience: *The aim is to introduce the researcher's concept and explore how it fits with the research partners' experience.*

- [Researcher introduces an aspect of the concept]
- What resonates/doesn't?
- How does this fit with your experience and our conversation so far?
- [Researcher introduces another aspect of the concept and repeats the above]
- How might the concept be enhanced/modified?
- Are there other concepts/phenomena that you think might be similar to presence? In what way are they similar/different?
- With regard to your experiences, how else might you regard presence?

Appendix 4: Focus Workshop Presentation

'Presence' in Executive Coaching - Focus Workshop

Q-Sorting Guidelines to Participants

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

Background to Q-Sorting technique

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

- This sorting technique is part of an approach in social science called Q-Methodology, developed by William Stephenson

- Q-Methodology is a research approach for studying people's subjective viewpoints to draw out similarities and differences

- For presence, 36 items have been identified from 1:1 interviews that involved both coaches and clients

- They aim to capture the essential elements that have emerged from the interviews

- Items are phrased so that they are relevant to both coach and client. Think of them from your own perspective

- Interpret the meaning as you wish - We may interpret them differently

Page 1

Sorting Process #1

- Sort items into **3 piles** according to how "**characteristic**", "**uncharacteristic**" or "**neutral**" they seem to be of your view of presence

- Go through a second time and aim for 3 roughly equal piles

PILE 1: CHARACTERISTIC
- The phrase resonates with your **experience** or your **interpretation**
- It is characteristic of presence, it is a dominating feature or it is often the case for you

PILE 2: UNCHARACTERISTIC
- The phrase doesn't resonate with your experience or you interpretation
- It is not characteristic, or infrequent or your view is the opposite
- It describes what presence is not

PILE 1: NEUTRAL
- The phrase is neither characteristic nor uncharacteristic

Sorting Process #2

- Pile 1: Some **characteristic** items will be more characteristic than others. Place the most characteristic to the far right of the grid

- Pile 2: Some **uncharacteristic** items will be more uncharacteristic than others. Place the most uncharacteristic to the far left of the grid

- Pile 3: Some **neutral** items will err towards characteristic or uncharacteristic. Place the neutral items in the middle of the grid

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
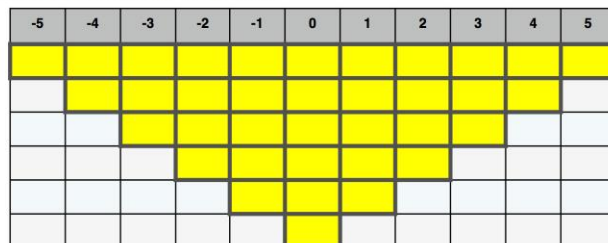
" More Unch   eristic"

Example - Joy

PILE 1: CHARACTERISTIC

1. Joy feels light
2. With joy, I feel full of love for everybody
3. Joy makes me see the world differently
4. The world needs joy

PILE 2: UNCHARACTERISTIC

5. I often literally jump for joy
6. Most people I know have a lot of joy
7. Joy is similar to peace

PILE 3: NEUTRAL

8. Joy makes me feel glad
9. Joy makes me a better person
10. Joy is a pre-requisite of happiness

Example - Joy

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
5. I often literally jump for joy	6. Most people I know have a lot of joy								4. The world needs joy	3. Joy makes me see the world differently
	7. Joy is similar to peace			9. Joy makes me a better person	8. Joy makes me feel glad			1. Joy feels light	2. With joy, I feel full of love for everybody	
				10. Joy is a pre-requisite of happiness						

It doesn't matter which row (8) is placed on - what's important is that I think it's "1" on the scale - slightly more characteristic than

Although (8) and (9) are both neutral, I think (8) is slightly more characteristic than (9)

Next

1. On your own, sort into the three piles

2. See if you can create roughly equal piles

3. Complete the grid

4. Group discussion

Appendix 5: The Focus Group Q-Sort

1. Q-Sort of Final Thirty-Six Q-Items

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
1	The other person takes me out of presence	-2	-3	1	1	-3
2	I readily notice when the other person is present or not	3	2	-3	0	2
3	Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them	-5	1	5	1	2
4	For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence	3	3	2	3	11
5	I only know that I've been present when I stop being	5	0	1	-1	5
6	You can only be authentic if you're present	4	3	-1	-1	5
7	Presence is something I feel in my body	1	0	3	0	4
8	The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's	-2	-4	-5	-3	-14
9	I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session	2	-2	-2	-2	-4
10	Presence helps insights to come	1	2	1	4	8
11	I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face	-3	-2	2	-5	-8
12	Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it	0	-1	-3	-2	-6
13	I can empathise with someone without being present	0	-4	-1	0	-5
14	It is important to practice presence	1	0	0	-2	-1
15	It's easy to stay present	-1	-3	-1	-2	-7
16	Being present and having presence are the same thing	-4	-2	-1	-4	-11
17	I know I'm not present when I start judging the other	-2	0	0	-3	-5
18	Presence is the same as charisma	-4	-1	-4	-4	-13
19	I can be present without tuning into the other person	1	0	0	-1	0
20	Being present means I feel connected to my intuition	1	4	3	1	9
21	When I'm present, I feel able to take risks	0	-5	1	0	-4
22	Presence helps me have perspective	-1	2	1	4	6

Ref	Q-Item	Coach #A	Coach #B	Client #C	Client #D	Total
23	Presence involves the intellect	-1	-1	-3	-1	-6
24	Being present engenders trust	3	3	2	3	11
25	The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt	-3	2	3	4	6
26	Eye contact brings me into presence	0	1	-2	0	-1
27	I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time	0	-1	-2	1	-2
28	It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore	2	1	0	2	5
29	It's hard to be present when the other person isn't	4	-2	0	0	2
30	There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's	-1	0	0	-3	-4
31	Being present makes me feel energised and alive	2	5	4	1	12
32	I am present when my mind is uncluttered	2	1	-1	2	4
33	There is an absorbed quality to presence - like being in flow	0	4	2	-1	5
34	Without presence, I feel boredom	-1	-1	-2	3	-1
35	When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside	-3	-3	-4	2	-8
36	There is something about presence that can't be put into words	-1	1	4	2	6

2. Initial Sample of 70 Q-Items

Ref	Q-Item
1	The other person takes me out of presence
2	I readily notice when the other person is present or not
3	Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them
4	For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence
5	I only know that I've been present when I stop being
6	You can only be authentic if you're present
7	Presence is something I feel in my body
8	The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's
9	I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session
10	Presence helps insights to come
11	I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face
12	Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it
13	I can empathise with someone without being present
14	It is important to practice presence
15	It's easy to stay present
16	Being present and having presence are the same thing
17	I know I'm not present when I start judging the other
18	Presence is the same as charisma
19	I can be present without tuning into the other person
20	Being present means I feel connected to my intuition
21	When I'm present, I feel able to take risks
22	Presence helps me have perspective
23	Presence involves the intellect
24	Being present engenders trust
25	The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt
26	Eye contact brings me into presence
27	I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time
28	It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore
29	It's hard to be present when the other person isn't
30	There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's
31	Being present makes me feel energised and alive
32	I am present when my mind is uncluttered
33	There is an absorbed quality to presence - like being in flow
34	Without presence, I feel boredom
35	When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside

Ref	Q-Item
36	There is something about presence that can't be put into words
37	There is a dynamic quality to presence
38	Presence is concerned with noticing my inner feelings
39	I need presence to feel connected to the other person
40	When we're both fully present, it feels like we are equal partners
41	I need to be present to discriminate between my stuff and the other person's stuff
42	It's like a pinprick of light in a dark room, so all you can focus your attention on is just the pinprick of light
43	Having presence is like slowing down whilst driving - you can enjoy the scenery, enjoy the road, it's safer and you can see more depth
44	Committing to being present should part of the coaching contract
45	Presence brings stillness
46	Being in presence is about having an open heart
47	Presence is knowing that I am here, now
48	It's hard to be present in my job
49	Presence means being totally absorbed in the coaching process
50	My state of consciousness changes when I feel in presence
51	Presence is something that develops with experience
52	Describing presence is difficult
53	Presence is like on Star Trek when they go into warp drive and suddenly the there's a 'whush' as all the stars accelerate past you
54	Helping a client develop presence is part of coaching
55	If the environment isn't right, it's hard to be present
56	Presence means caring about the other person
57	It would be good to trained in presence
58	Presence is relevant to life in general
59	Being present helps my awareness of the other person
60	Modelling presence is an important competency in a coach
61	Saying goodbye to a coach or client takes me out of presence
62	I feel I can bring the other person into presence
63	I'm not generally aware that I have presence
64	The most insightful moments in coaching happen when I feel present
65	When we're both present, coaching seems fun
66	I need to be present to act in accordance with my values
67	The presence I sense in the other person makes feel safe
68	Resolution to issues happens when I'm in presence
69	I use my presence during the coaching engagement
70	The coach is like a sherpa guide roped to a client. Presence is the confidence, understanding and empathy between them

Appendix 6: Individual Q-Sort Arrays

1. Coach #A

2. Coach #B

3. Client #C

-5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
8. The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's	35. When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside	12. Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it	34. Without presence, I feel boredom	15. It's easy to stay present	30. There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's	5. I only know that I've been present when I stop being	24. Being present helps engenders trust	20. Being present means I feel connected to my intuition	31. Being present makes me feel energised and alive	3. Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them
	18. Presence is the same as charisma	2. I readily notice when the other person is present or not	27. I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time	6. You can only be authentic if you're present	29. It's hard to be present when the other person isn't	10. Presence helps insights to come	4. For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence	7. Presence is something I feel in my body	36. There is something about presence that can't be put into words	
	23. Presence involves the intellect	9. I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session	13. I can empathise with someone without being present	17. I know I'm not present when I start judging other	22. Presence helps me have perspective	11. I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face	25. The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt			
		26. Eye contact brings me into presence	32. I am present when my mind is uncluttered	28. It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore	1. Presence in coaching is an individual experience	33. There is an absorbed quality to presence - like being in flow				
			16. Being present and having presence are the same thing	19. I experience different degrees or levels of presence	21. When I'm present, I feel able to take risks					
				14. It is important to practice presence						

4. Client #D

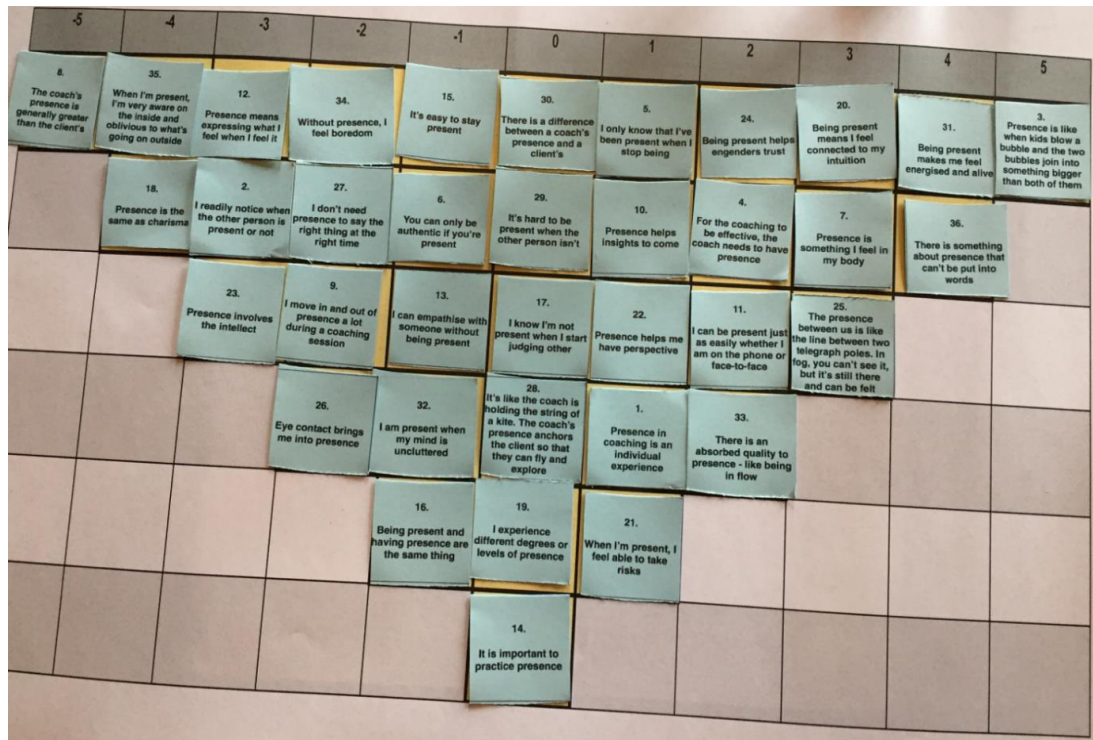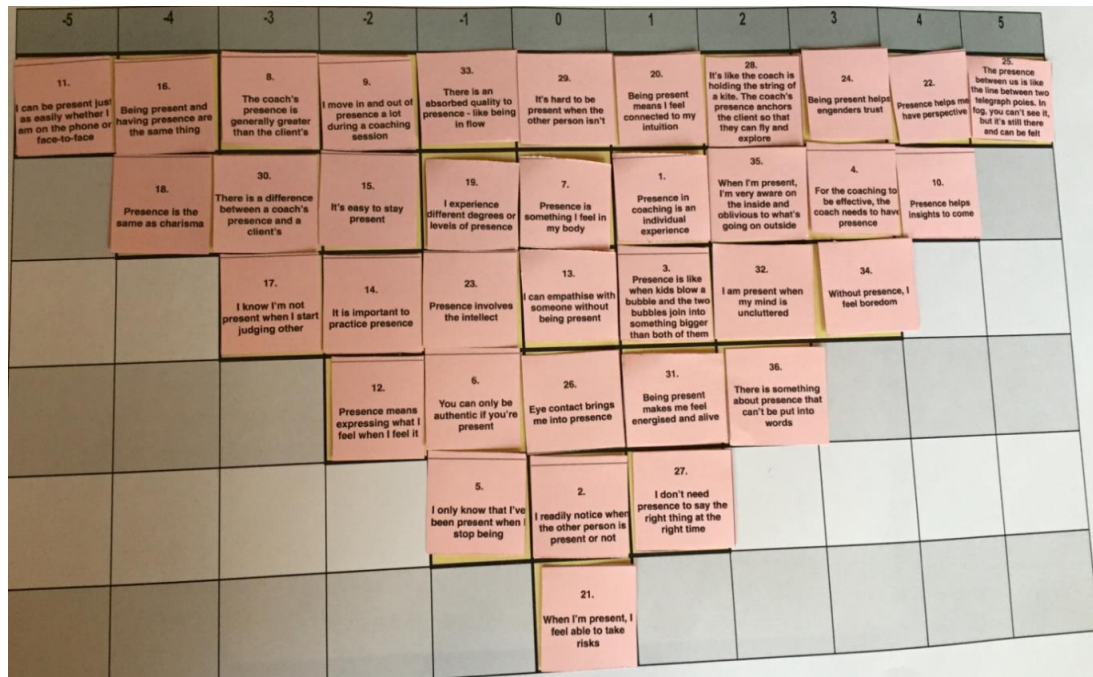| -5	-4	-3	-2	-1	0	1	2	3	4	5
11. I can be present just as easily whether I am on the phone or face-to-face	16. Being present and having presence are the same thing	8. The coach's presence is generally greater than the client's	9. I move in and out of presence a lot during a coaching session	33. There is an absorbed quality to presence - like being in flow	29. It's hard to be present when the other person isn't	20. Being present means I feel connected to my intuition	28. It's like the coach is holding the string of a kite. The coach's presence anchors the client so that they can fly and explore	24. Being present helps engenders trust	22. Presence helps me have perspective	25. The presence between us is like the line between two telegraph poles. In fog, you can't see it, but it's still there and can be felt
	18. Presence is the same as charisma	30. There is a difference between a coach's presence and a client's	15. It's easy to stay present	19. I experience different degrees or levels of presence	7. Presence is something I feel in my body	1. Presence in coaching is an individual experience	35. When I'm present, I'm very aware on the inside and oblivious to what's going on outside	4. For the coaching to be effective, the coach needs to have presence	10. Presence helps insights to come	
		17. I know I'm not present when I start judging other	14. It is important to practice presence	23. Presence involves the intellect	13. I can empathise with someone without being present	3. Presence is like when kids blow a bubble and the two bubbles join into something bigger than both of them	32. I am present when my mind is uncluttered	34. Without presence, I feel boredom		
			12. Presence means expressing what I feel when I feel it	6. You can only be authentic if you're present	26. Eye contact brings me into presence	31. Being present makes me feel energised and alive	36. There is something about presence that can't be put into words			
				5. I only know that I've been present when I stop being	2. I readily notice when the other person is present or not	27. I don't need presence to say the right thing at the right time				
					21. When I'm present, I feel able to take risks					

Appendix 7: NVivo Node Trees

1. Client Perspective

- About Presence
  - Contribution to practice
  - Description
    - A state of being
    - Differences
      - Between–Around
      - Calmness
      - Healing
      - Helpful
      - Less present
      - Something going on
      - usefulness
      - Watchful
    - Nature–nurture
    - Somatic
  - Layers
  - Me as interviewer
  - Metaphors
  - Relational distance
  - Wider Context
- Aspects of Relation
  - Being With
  - Connected to coach
  - Move toward
  - Mutuality
    - Affecting each other
    - Both present
      - Common space – Holding space
      - Responsibility
      - Uncluttered
      - Unconcscious creativity
    - Not equal
    - Present to the relation
    - Safety and Trust
  - Being in presence
    - Aware of own presence
    - Being in the moment
    - Calm–Slowing down–Still
    - Connected to values
    - Different perspective
    - Enabling Creation – Learning
    - Feeling grounded
    - Feeling of Being Engaged
    - Feeling safe
    - Fluctuating
    - Fully trusting
    - Having Choice
    - Having insights–shifting
    - Internal–external
    - Letting come
    - Letting Go
    - Present to limit – boundary
    - Sense of contentment–fulfillment
    - Sense of Timelessness (Flow)
    - Somatic – Feeling

- Uncluttered
- Watching from outside
- Conditions
  - Attitude of Client
    - Being Mindful
    - Being Open and willing
    - Committed
    - Knowing what you want
    - Not judging – Unconditional
    - Present to process
  - Creating the space
    - Clearing – Decluttering
    - For Flow
  - Environment
    - phone vs face–to–face
    - Physical Distance
    - Safe
- Dynamics
  - Coming into presence
    - Eye contact
    - Guided by coach
    - Letting go
    - Noticing
    - Practice
    - Sense of Deepening – Layers
    - Somatic Focus
  - During Engagement
    - Deepening
      - Straight to depth
    - Moving in and out of presence
      - Choice
      - Constant vs fluctuating
      - Leakage
    - Power
  - Effect
    - Appropriate response – trust of process
    - Awareness of Coach Presence
      - Comfort–Discomfort
      - First Impressions
        - Appearance
        - Rapport
      - in balance–control
      - Insighfulness
      - Listening
      - Sense of support
      - Sense that they are there
    - Beyond the engagement
    - Coaching Outcomes
    - Effect of coach's presence
      - Being In the moment
      - Bringing me to presence
      - Connection
      - Enables creation
      - Feeling seen and heard
        - Feeling supported
        - Sense of being listened to

- Guided (not steered)
- Room to grow
- Strength–awareness to pull back
- With, not in my story
- Flow
- Insight and change
  - Growth
  - Intuition
  - On others
  - Resolution
- Expectations of Coach
  - Professional quality of presence
    - Authentic
      - Congruence
    - Being there–on my agenda
      - Self–Management
    - Capability
    - In service of client
    - Listening, Attention and focus
      - Said–not said
      - Not Judging – Unconditional
    - Quality of presence
      - Calmness
    - Responsibility
      - Responsibility to be present
      - Sorting their stuff from mine
  - Use of presence
    - Challenging
    - Helping to be present–in flow
    - Insightfulness–Perceptiveness
    - Require from coach
- Lack of Presence
  - Awareness from Coach
    - Lost
  - Awareness in Self
    - Boredom
    - Not aware of presence
    - Preoccupied
      - Cluttered
      - Forcing
      - Lack of clarity
      - Lack of focus
    - Somatic
      - Lack of alignment
    - Want to be not present
  - In the coach
    - Fake
  - Relational
    - Issues Focussed
- Virtual Reality
- z. Neighbouroughing Concepts
  - Charisma
  - Enables–Supports
    - Attunement
    - Authenticity
    - Empathy
    - Flow
    - Insight
    - Intuition
    - Listening
  - Friendship
  - Mindfulness

2. Coach Perspective

- ▼ About Presence
  - Contribution to Practice
  - ▼ Description
    - An Entity
    - Being – not process-intellect
    - ▼ Differences
      - Calm-relaxing-soulagement
      - Drone
      - Healing
      - Necessity for client presence
      - Watchful
    - Elusive
    - First Impression
  - Me as interviewer
  - Metaphors
- ▼ Aspects of relation
  - ▼ 1. Conditions for RP
    - ▼ Client's Presence
      - Remembering
      - To body and emotions
    - ▼ Coach Presence
      - ▶ Being on their agenda
      - ▼ Being With
        - ▶ Focussing on client
        - in the moment
        - Non-Judgmental Uncond..
      - Coach's responsibility
      - Creating a Relational Space
      - ▶ Deep Listening
      - Discriminating own stuff
      - Watchful
    - Contracting for presence
    - Deeper Connection
    - ▼ Environment
      - Context
      - ▶ Safety and support
    - Regulation
  - ▼ 2. Using Presence
    - ▶ Appropriate Response
    - ▼ As Feedback
      - Emotional-physical
      - Naming
      - ▶ Right here, right now
    - ▼ Developing in client
      - Contrast
      - Discussing Presence
      - ▶ Modelling-Influencing
      - Practice – with client
      - Raising awareness
    - Expressing empathy
    - Reflection – post session
    - Working at the edge
  - ▼ 3. Dynamics
    - Across Engagement
    - Endings
    - Frequency

- ▼ Moving in and out of presence
  - ▶ Becoming Present
  - Bringing each other into pr...
  - Client
  - ▶ In Presence
  - Moments
  - ▼ Not Present-Barriers-Distra..
    - Client not committed
    - Conversation affected
    - Disservice
    - Fragility
    - Helpful
    - Intellect-Head
    - Judging-Being judged
    - Preoccupied
  - ▶ Staying Present
  - Power
  - With Experience
- ▼ 4. Effect between
  - ▼ 1. Mutuality – relational
    - ▶ Appropriate Response
    - both present
    - Chemistry
    - Closeness
    - ▼ Communication – High Qua..
      - Extrasensory
      - Eye Contact
      - ▶ Non-Verbal
    - ▼ Connection
      - Empathy
      - Inner wisdom
      - Recognition
      - Together in-the-moment
    - Emotion
    - Flow
    - In tune
    - Recognition of values
    - Relational space
    - Respect
    - ▶ Creation
    - Flow and timelessness
    - Fun-humour
    - Healing
    - ▶ Insight
    - Openness
    - Trust
  - ▼ 5. Outcome
    - ▼ For client
      - Effective coaching
      - Feeling of being listened to
      - Feeling of resourcefulness
      - ▶ Resolving issues
      - Security- safety
      - Well being
- ▼ Being in Presence
  - ▼ A state of being

- ▼ Expression of Authenticity
  - Congruence
  - Recognition-acceptance of...
  - Vulnerable
  - Present to what is
  - Remembering
  - Self-Respecting
- ▼ Attitude
  - Calmness and stillness
  - Compassion
  - Complete respect
  - Empathetic
  - ▶ Open and Non-Judgemental
  - Trusting
- ▼ Aware of being present
  - ▶ Awakeness
  - Energy
  - Flow
  - ▼ Not present
    - Distracted
    - Preoccupied
    - Takes away from presence
  - Resilient to distractions
  - ▼ Being here, now
    - Choosing in the moment
    - in the moment
  - ▼ Connecting to inner
    - ▼ Becoming Present
      - ▶ Preparation
      - Working on self
    - Grace
    - Intuition-gut
    - Making judgements-decisions
    - Somatic
  - Having presence vs Being present
  - Meta view – Perspective
  - Reflection
  - Uncluttered-Clear Mind
- ▼ Client's Level of Presence
  - Affecting Coach's presence
  - Awareness of
  - Caught up in it
  - Client not present
  - Compared to Coach's Level
  - Raising Awareness
  - Recognition of what is
  - ▼ Using Coach's Presence
    - Conscious
    - Unconscious
- ▼ z. Neighbouring Concepts
  - Association – NLP
  - Charisma
  - Co Creation
  - Empathy
  - Felt Sense
  - Flow
  - Grace
  - Hakalau
  - Intuition
  - Mindfulness
  - Relational Attunement
  - Signature presence
  - State Change – NLP

Appendix 8: Descriptions/Definitions of Presence in Coaching

Source	Context	Description / Definition
Armstrong, 2012	Coaching	Presence occurs when "a coach is *in* the conversation as well as *monitoring* the conversation." The coach-custodian focuses less on knowing, managing, method and structure and more on presence, acting "into" opportunities (by asking questions and responding to answers).
Bluckert, 2006	Executive Coaching	Presence is denoted in a multitude of ways from the loud, gregarious, outgoing, and cheerful to the quiet, thoughtful and considered. It is less about how you look or what you dress and sound like, although these do play a part. It's far more about the extent to which how you are and who you are is in accord with what you are trying to be and do. In other words it's about the degree of integration between what you say you are about and how you act in the world. **The use of presence:** Coaching presence is not a neutral presence. You are there to affect things and have impact. Nevis (1987) describes presence as the 'living embodiment of knowledge: the theories and practices believed to be essential to bring about change in people are manifested, symbolized, or implied in the presence of the consultant.' What he is referring to is the notion of coach as a learning model and this implies standing for something.
Drake, 2007	Coaching	One of the core skills [in narrative coaching] is deep and generative listening based in a commitment to presence, mindfulness, and attention.
Maltbia et al., 2014	Executive Coaching	Accessing one's coaching presence by being conscious of one's own thinking and effectively managing emotions (self and others).
O'Neill, 2007	Coaching	Presence means bringing your self when you coach: your values, passion, creativity, emotion, and discerning judgment to any given moment.
Silsbee, 2008	Coaching	Presence is a state of awareness, in the moment, characterised by the felt experience of timelessness, connectedness and a larger truth. - Presence is a state, not a verb. It's subjective, personal, internal - It's in-the-moment, meaning right now. This moment. And this one. - Our felt experience of time changes radically. Future concerns and past memories drop away, and there is only this moment. - We experience ourselves as connected to others, to ourselves, to our environments and circumstances. - Presence brings us into direct experience of a larger truth. This

Source	Context	Description / Definition
		might mean seeing clearly and directly who we are, who another person is, how we fit into a bigger picture, what the situation really is, what is possible for us, or what choices are available to us.
Siminovitch and Van Eron, 2006	Coaching	The primary gift a Gestalt coach brings to the coaching encounter is an integrated presence, wherein behaviour and use of self are aligned with core values and full access to emotional life. A central teaching in Gestalt coaching is the "use of oneself as a coaching instrument" in the role of intervener. Through such use of self, the Gestalt coach establishes a "presence" that supports client awareness. This use of self cannot be taught in a prescriptive or normative manner, since each coach will draw on unique personal experiences and knowledge, and each coaching encounter will present unique constellations of opportunity for the coach's use of self.
Professional Coaching Body - Association for Coaching (AC) website, 2017	Coaching	**Managing self and maintaining coaching presence - Indicators of competence:** - Pays close attention to the client, staying fully present and engaged - Remains focused on the agreed client agenda and outcomes - Acts flexibly whilst staying aligned to own coaching approach - Stays aligned to personal values whilst respecting the values of the client - Works to ensure interventions get the best outcome for the client
Professional Coaching Body - European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) website, 2017	Coaching	**Co-Creating the Relationship:** 4. Coaching Presence - Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident a. Is present and flexible during the coaching process, dancing in the moment, b. Accesses own intuition and trusts one's inner knowing - "goes with the gut", c. Is open to not knowing and takes risks, d. Sees many ways to work with the client, and chooses in the moment what is most effective, e. Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy, f. Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities for own action, g. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions, and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by client's emotions.

Source	Context	Description / Definition
Professional Coaching Body - The International Coach Federation (ICF) website, 2017	Coaching	The core competency of coaching presence is the bridge between coach and the client because it's about being fully present, fully conscious and in spontaneous relationship with the client. It takes practice to be fully present with your clients; i.e., to listen with your whole self to how they speak about their successes as well as their challenges. You are listening at many levels at once—for the words clients use, what their tone of voice or body language might be conveying, what emotions they might be experiencing, and their self-talk and beliefs about their situation. You must pay attention to patterns of thinking and behaving and listen with your full senses, including your gut or intuition. Then you need to discern if what you are sensing is a bias you have, or whether it's something you can share with the client. If you do have a bias, and you still feel it would serve the client to hear what you are sensing or observing, then you must own your bias with the client.

Appendix 9: Consent Pro-Forma

OXFORD BROOKES UNIVERSITY

CONSENT FORM

Full title of Project: An evaluation of the role of presence in executive coaching

Name, position and contact address of Researcher:

Roger Noon, Student (DCAM),

Email: 14010582@brookes.ac.uk

Address: DCAM Student; Faculty of Business, Wheatley Campus, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford OX33 1HX.

Please initial box

	Yes	No
1. I confirm that I have read and understand the information sheet for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions.	☐	☐
2. I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving reason.	☐	☐
3. I agree to take part in the above study.	☐	☐
4. I agree to the interview being audio recorded.	☐	☐
5. I agree to the use of anonymised quotes in publications.	☐	☐
6. I agree that my data gathered in this study may be stored (after it has been anonymised) in a specialist data centre and may be used for future research.	☐	☐

Please note the following:

• All information collected will be treated confidentially and stored securely in line with the legal requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Confidentiality and privacy will be ensured during the collection, storage and publication of research by anonymising all data. All research data will be transferred to Oxford Brookes for safe storage for a period of 10 years following completion of the research project, in accordance with University regulations.

• Over and above point (1), please do not volunteer to participate if further permissions are required from your organisation for you to take part in this study (for instance from an ethics standpoint or due to the potential disclosure of sensitive information).

_____   _____   _____

Name of Participant   Date   Signature

_____   _____   _____

Name of Researcher   Date   Signature