

How personal systems coaching increases self-efficacy and well-being for Israeli single mothers

Sunny Gordon Bar, Dragot St. Rosh-Ha'Ayin, Israel

Contact email sunny@coachme.co.il

Abstract

This study explores the influence of personal systems coaching on self-efficacy and goals achievement. A mixed-methods quasi-experimental research compared single mother degree students, and included interviews and focus groups with coaches and clients. Findings showed increased self-efficacy, goal achievements and well-being and a decrease in self-handicapping thoughts following intervention. The central themes that emerged are the broad and in-depth outcomes of personal systems coaching and the effectiveness and influence of future desired imagery. Both are unique to systems coaching as factors that contribute to change. The importance of readiness for coaching is also discussed.

Key words: Personal systems coaching, self-leadership, motivation theories, systems thinking, positive psychology.

Introduction

This research examines the influence of personal systems coaching on self-efficacy and goals achievement among single mother undergraduate students from Israeli peripheral areas. The intervention was part of a Katzir Foundation project. The Katzir Foundation is a non-profit organization that helps to empower low socio-economic populations in Israel by supporting them entering and finishing study in higher education.

Personal systems coaching is a life coaching approach, directed at people who seek to reach personal and/or professional goals. The short term personal systems coaching intervention process seeks to sustain cognitive, emotional and behavioral changes that facilitate goals achievement in the long term. The intervention relates systematically to personal and environmental aspects.

Since personal systems coaching has not yet been researched in Israel or elsewhere in the world, and only a few controlled research studies have been done that studied life coaching efficacy, this study is pioneering. The mixed-methods design and the findings from the data can shed new light that broaden and deepen the understanding of the influences of personal systems coaching on the participants.

The present study examined the effectiveness of personal systems coaching interventions using mixed methods qualitative and quantitative approaches. The quantitative section examined the effectiveness of short-term interventions among a population that was identified by the Katzir Foundation as suitable for coaching. The Katzir Foundation's working assumption is that higher education will give to weaker parts of the population in general, a chance to exit the cycle of poverty and increase the next generation's chances for higher education, as was found previously (Rozov, Klimmor-Mamam, 2009; Jackson & Schemes, 2003; Filsinger, 2012).

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at
<http://business.brookes.ac.uk/ijebcm>

The qualitative research created sub-groups that enabled an understanding of the influencing factors of systems coaching and the opportunity to interview, for the first time, coachees who had completed the coaching process more than five years before as well as a comparison between novice and expert coaches.

Personal systems coaching has not yet been researched, so the research is built on literature that has been written about life or personal coaching and theoretically on systems thinking theories in general. Personal coaching is synonymous with life or individual coaching that can be carried out within or outside of an organization. Personal coaching was found to reduce anxieties, tension and depression, increase hope, life quality and resilience, and enhance goals promotion (Grant, 2003; Green, Oades & Grant, 2006; Green, Grant & Rynsaardt, 2007; Grant & Cavanagh, 2011). Educational research found that personal coaching promoted effective learning capabilities and skills with students, promoted setting long-term goals and coping abilities (Green *et al.*, 2006, 2007; Libri & Kemp, 2006). A few controlled research studies on personal coaching efficacy found better goal achievements, enhanced meta-cognition and decreased anxiety and depression (Grant, 2003; Grant, Curtayne & Burton, 2009). Two studies on coaching with an empirical design have been carried out in Israel. One examined achievements and satisfaction at work following a cognitive behavioural coaching intervention in organizations (Bozer & Sarros, 2012), the second examined personal coaching on promoting academic achievements and preventing dropout in the framework of a college of technology (Donner, Shacham & Herscovitz, 2009). Thus the empirical evidence of the efficacy of personal coaching in the region is still limited.

Literature

The personal systems coaching model is based on an integration of theories. The first stage in coaching, the stage of creating the goal is based on motivation theory and positive psychology. It is a stage in which the goal is deeply and significantly anchored. The second stage focuses on building an action plan and a follow up. This is the stage when advancement is accomplished and achievement is maintained while coping with obstacles along the way. Throughout the process the model focuses on developing the coachee's self-efficacy and self-management that create self-leadership. The concept of self-leadership is recognized in literature (Manz, 1986) but has been developed by the author to express the coachee's building ability to progress towards a goal in the long run.

The combination of theories in the personal systems coaching model resembles the approach of Schwarzer (2008) and Baban (2007) with a model of focused intervention for changing health endangering behavior. They believe that in order to explain the gap between intentions and behavior, a combination of theories better explains the complex behavior rather than just a single theory.

The two assumptions underpinning personal systems coaching are first that coaching directed towards strengths and development of self-leadership can contribute to participants' enhanced faith in their capabilities and in learning to assimilate strategies for attaining goals in life. The second basic assumption is that personal goals are achieved inside and in relation to environments that cannot be ignored. Based on the systems thinking model that was developed for organizations (Haines, 2007) the personal systems coaching model was created (Gordon, 2002).

Systems Thinking Theories: Meta Cognitive Spiral Approach

Systems thinking theories regard a system as a whole, looking at where the entire system wishes to be in the future, identifies the components of future systems and how they are to operate, envisions the future environment. Only then does it turn to the present, identifying the current situation and what it already includes that is part of the future, and from there an action plan is constructed. Personal systems coaching derived from the organizational focus of systems theories and was altered

in order to be suitable for individuals. Individuals are perceived as a system that has mutual influence on their environment systems and in order to achieve goals they need to integrate all aspects in the direction of this goal. The main principles of systems thinking are that the whole is greater than its parts, and for a system to head in the desired direction, all sub-systems need to head in the same direction. Therefore, this type of thinking looks at first at the desired future, identifies future components and envisions the future environment, and only then does it turn to what already exists in the present and what is needed. The action plan is constructed as a bridge for that future (Haines, 1998, 2007; Von Bertalanffy, 1998).

Motivation Theories and Positive Psychology: from Strengths and Deep Core Values to Passionate Goals

Motivation theories have been found to be central to the goal setting stage. Because personal coaching is directed at ordinary people who choose the goal of their coaching, self-determination theories and goal achievement theory directed at approaching goals were chosen for the context of the personal systems coaching world. As much as a person is deeply connected to a significant motive, out of intrinsic choice and approach goals, that person's ability to cope with barriers and challenges would be better than acting upon extrinsic motivation or alternatively – avoidance goals. So with respect to the beginning of the personal systems coaching process, in the goal setting stage, the emphasis is on self-determination and goal achievement theories directed at approaching goals. Self-Determination Theory claims that to persevere in an activity, one has to acknowledge one's autonomic, deep values regarding the activity and even derive some enjoyment from it (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 2008; Ryan, 2011). Additionally, goal achievement theories found that adaptive behavior applies more to approach goals compared to avoidance goals. Avoidance goals are associated with non-adaptive outcomes and behavior (Dweck, 1986; Midgley, Kaplan, & Middleton, 2001). These theories concerning the source and orientation of motivation join positive psychology in focusing on one's strengths more than on problems and weaknesses. Research has found that use of strengths corresponds to higher achievements, a sense of well-being, better coping with stress and resilience (Linley, Nielsen, Wood, Gillett & Biswas-Diener, 2010; Govindji & Linley, 2007; Deci & Ryan, 1985). So, approach goals based on strengths deriving from deep intrinsic autonomic needs and values, are the preferred base for promoting achievements (Deci & Ryan, 1985, Seligman, 2002).

Self-Efficacy: Transitions of SE from Specific Task to Specific Phase

Self-efficacy was the central dependent variable of the present research, because of its dominance and importance in specific and general goal achievements. It is also the base construct that creates self-leadership ability.

Self-efficacy beliefs determine how people feel, think, motivate themselves and behave. They include cognitive, motivational, affective and selection processes (Bandura, 1977). A self-efficacy scale has been found to be the most effective predictor of behavioral outcomes of any other belief-related indices (Graham & Weiner, 1996). Research indicates that a high sense of self-efficacy regarding a task enhances the person's chance of opting for it, increases the task's significance as important and enjoyable, and enhances the person's ability to persevere despite setbacks. Schwarzer (2008) breaks the self-efficacy concept into sub-constructs suited to the different stages in the process of changing health goals, distinguishing between self-efficacy goals that have to do with setting goals, the "motivation stage", and choosing the course of action, planning and maintenance pertaining to coping with the tasks and the individual beliefs regarding recovery and action in case of failure, the "volition stage".

The personal systems coaching model is a multi-theoretical and multi-stage model and attempts to build a large base for better achievements by enhancing general self-efficacy and adding the practice of self-management discussed by Baban (2007) and Manz (1986).

Personal Systems Coaching Model

Personal coaching was defined by Grant (2001, p. 73) as “*a collaboration solution - focused, result oriented systematic process, which is provided to nonclinical population, in which the coach facilitates self-learning, personal growth and goal achievement of the client*”. A definition of personal systems coaching is “*a learning process, which empowers individuals to maximize their potential to achieve goals and to improve personal performance, quality of life on an ongoing basis*” (Gordon, 2002).

In the first stage, the systems coaching process engages in connecting with clients’ signature strengths, while creating a close and challenging relationship (Seligman, 2002; Bandura, 1997). Then a desired future picture is created through guided imagery. The vision is phrased in terms of approaching goals via vivid and passionate mental imagery (Deci & Ryan, 1985; Dweck, 1986 Midgley *et al.*, 2001; Haines, 2007; Gordon, 2002). The mental imagery is a strong progress anchor for the coachee long after the intervention is completed (Ahsen, 1984; Polanyi, 1981). The possibilities model of consciousness (O'Connor & Aardema, 2005) emphasizes the contribution of imagination to the creative aspects of solving problems and future development. Using mental imagery also acts as future self-efficacy, anchoring power and creating positive conditioning, which may attract a positive and powerful energy, through exciting and pleasant feelings when coping toward the future goal. The systems coaching process is described in Figure 1. The action plan acts as a bridge translating the future picture into reality. It requires cognitive and emotional ability to convert the picture into something tangible and measurable.

In the course of systems coaching the coachees develop their self-leadership, which enables them to direct themselves toward their vision and desired future, in a long term voyage beyond obstacles. Self-leadership is a dynamic developing concept created from self-efficacy and self-management. At the beginning, the self-leadership concept was related to self-management in organizations (Manz, 1986; D'Intino, 2007). The systems coaching model enlarges that concept to contain self-efficacy and self-management. Self-efficacy is enhancing as it is recognized by the coachees from their past accomplishments, ongoing achievements in the coaching process and from the future desired picture of their imagined self- efficacy (Gordon Bar, 2011).

Only two controlled studies have been conducted in Israel (Bozer & Sarros, 2012; Donner, *et al.*, 2009), and a few in the world (Grant, 2006; Grant *et al.*, 2009) that examined the effectiveness of coaching. To date systems coaching has not been researched, thus this is an innovative research that examines its efficacy on self-efficacy and goal achievements (ACH) quantitatively and qualitatively. Meta- analysis on the effectiveness of personal coaching in organizations has shown its value for well-being and goal achievements and invites us to move from the question of “is it effective” to “how does it affect”. The present study, by its design, relates to the two questions (Theebom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2013).

Method

The mixed-methods design used both quantitative/positivist/experimental and qualitative/constructivist/narrative methods for the best benefit of this research (Hanson, Creswell, Creswell, Plano, & Petska, 2005; Shkedi, 2010, 2011). The quantitative part was quasi-experimental designed containing matched groups: research and control. The influences of the coaching process were measured via closed- ended questionnaires that were given at three time points, at the beginning of the

intervention, its end and 3 month after termination. The qualitative part comprised of 16 interviews and 2 focus groups in order to increase understanding of the influence of systems coaching's as it emerged from the research.



Figure 1: Systems coaching simultaneous process (Gordon Bar & Gordon Bar, 2012)

Participants

The participants in the quantitative part of the study were 24 single mother degree students, who constituted the research group that participated in the initial systems coaching programme and matched the participants on the waiting list (n=28) who constituted the control group.

All were second and third year students in colleges located in the periphery that were identified as appropriate and who had agreed to go through personal coaching. Israel is a small country, with most of its population concentrated in the center around Tel-Aviv. The colleges in the periphery are located in the southern and northern regions of Israel. Participants were promised to get tools that would help them attain their life goals, and they received an explanation of what was expected of

them to get the most out of the personal coaching program. Two research groups (those who underwent coaching and those who were on the waiting list) knew that they were taking part in a study to examine the effect of coaching. All participants signed an informed consent form that was given them by the Katzir coordinators. Anonymity and discretion were guaranteed. The research was conducted according to the academic ethical code.

The coaches (n=18) were graduates of CoachMe College for training coaches in Israel. They were mostly engaged in their internship process and participated in the research on a voluntary basis. The coaching process proceeded according to protocol and included 10 sessions, two of which were face-to-face encounters and 8 distance-coaching sessions by phone or Skype.

There were 25 participants in the qualitative research: 16 coaches and 9 coachees and 4 sub-groups as described in the table below. The qualitative part of the research expands the range of interviewees to coaches and more and different coachees than those who participated in the quantitative section, which enabled observation of rich comprehensive material with different viewpoints regarding the coaching intervention, and perceptions of coaches and coachees regarding the influence of coaching and its causes.

Table 1: Qualitative Study Participants (n=25)

Coaches		Clients	
Beginners (Interviews)	Experts (2 Focus Groups: 4; 3) + 4 coaches of interviewed clients.	Years ago completed systems coaching (Interviews)	Lately completed systems coaching (Interviews)
N = 5	N = 7+4	N = 5	N = 4
Total = 16 coaches		Total = 9 clients	

Measurement Tools

Table 2 presents the measurement tools and data collection methods at the two research parts.

Results

It was hypothesized that:

1. In the research group self-efficacy (New General Self Efficacy), well-being {Self Health Rated (SHR) & Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)} and goal achievements (ACH) would increase and Self-Handicapping Thoughts Scale (SHS) will decrease, at time points 2 and/or 3 more significantly amongst the participants in the research group than those in the control group.
2. NGSE, SWLS, SHR, and ACH would be enhanced (pre-post; inside subject), and SHS will decrease among the participants in the research group after systems coaching compared to time point 1, but not in the control group.
3. The qualitative findings would strengthen the quantitative ones and
4. The qualitative results would increase understanding of the influence of the systems coaching model and its components

Table 2: Quantitative & Qualitative Research Tools

Qualitative Tools	Questionnaire	
In depth interview: N=18	Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener <i>et al.</i> , 1985) Well-Being measure	Self-Efficacy and Well-Being
Focus Groups: N=7 Semi- structured questions	Self-Rated Health (SRH) (DeSalvo <i>et al.</i> , 2006; Shirom, <i>et al.</i> , 2008) Well-Being measure	
	New General Self-efficacy (NGSE) (Chen, Gully& Eden, 2001)	Results and Change Evaluation
	Self-Handicapping Thoughts Scale (SHS) (Zuckerman <i>et al.</i> , 1998; Rhodewalt, 2005).	
	Present and Future results expectation	
	Evaluation of Achievements Questionnaire (ACH-developed for this research)	
	Demographic information	

Analysis and discussion of the quantitative results

It was predicted that all dependent variables would change significantly in the research group in the hypothesis direction in comparison to the control group.

A t-test for independent groups was conducted for differences between the control and research groups: SRH mean scores at time point 3, and NGSE mean scores at time point 2 ($p < 0.01$). All the other variables behaved as hypothesized but did not differ significantly.

A paired-sample t-test for dependent groups (within subjects, 3 time points) was conducted for analyzing inside groups changes. This two t-tests took into account unexpected changes in the numbers of participants. The paired-sample t test also considered the process of reduction in the number of participants and their relatively small number.

SWLS: the difference between time point 1 and time point 2 was statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). SHR: the increase from time point 2 to time point 3 ($p < 0.01$) was statically significant. The difference between time point 1 and time point 2 did not reach statistical significance. NGSE: the difference between time point 1 and time point 2 was statically significant ($p < 0.05$). SHS: From time point 1 to time point 2 ($p < 0.05$) the decrease was statically significant.

As seen in Figure 6, the changes in most of the measures were as hypothesized: as a result of systems coaching, there is an improvement either immediately after coaching or three months later. Three months after SC, the improvement persevered despite a slight insignificant decrease. The difference in ACH between time points 2 and 3 did not reach statistical significance; there was a high evaluation of progress at time point 2 (4.59). In the control group, there were small differences between the 3 time points which did not reach statistical significance.

Strong correlations were found among all the dependent variables (Pearson analysis; $p < 0.05$)

Figures 2-5 show differences between control group and research group depended variables (means).

Figure 2: Increase in measures of self-efficacy in control and research group after SC-time 2

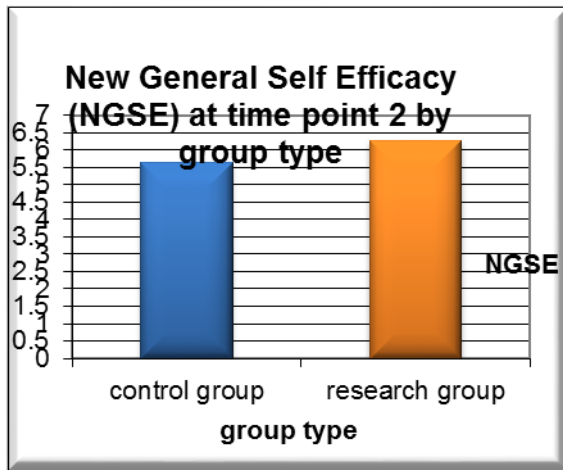


Figure 3: Decrease in measures of self-handicapping thoughts in control and research group after SC- time 2

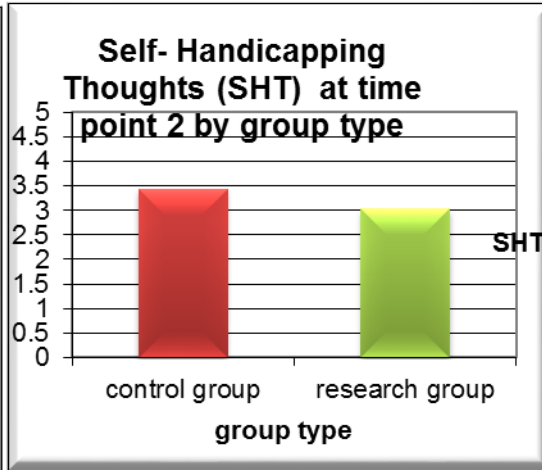


Figure 4: Increase in self-rated measures in control and research groups after SC- time 3

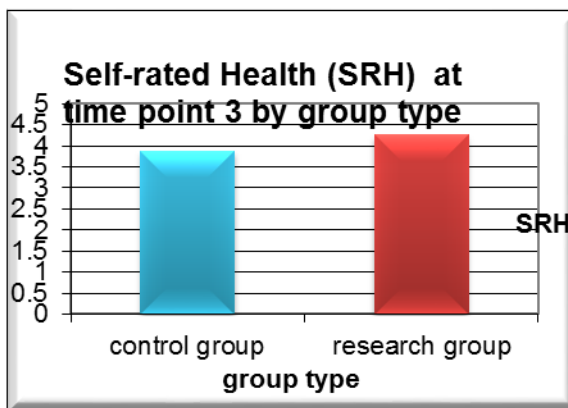


Figure 5: Increase in satisfaction of life measures in control and research groups after SC-time 2.

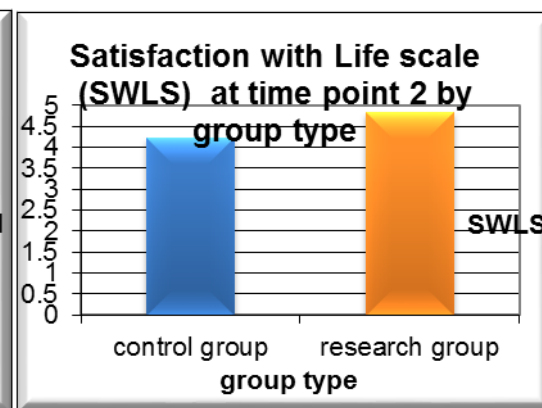
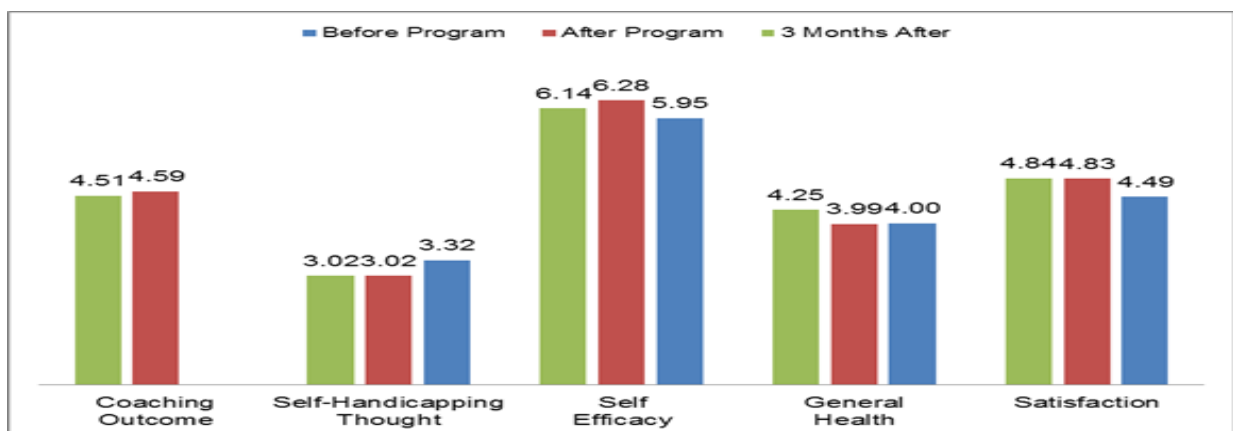


Figure 6: Differences within Research Group Variables (Means)



The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at <http://business.brookes.ac.uk/ijebcm>

The results reveal that self-efficacy and self-rated health between groups and self-efficacy and Self-Handicapping Scale within groups changed significantly in the direction of the hypothesis, as a result of personal systems coaching. All the other variables also changed in the hypothesized direction but not all were significant. We can conclude that systems coaching enhanced self-efficacy and that wellbeing is influential and preserved. The qualitative results revealed support these results as perceived by the coachees and the coaches. Most of them reported on goal achievements and enhanced well-being and that the coaching had a valuable influence on a broad spectrum of their lives, including motherhood. Coaches and coachees refer to an increase in self-efficacy and coping capabilities as a strong feeling of resilience: "*find my path*" or an "*internal home*". The deeper the change the more influential it was, as one of the expert coaches put it:

"It is a continuum, internal change is the most important, an emotional change in our inner world...the more a change comes from above, the stronger and irreversible it is... even before reaching results"

The delay in the increase of self rated health can be attributed to the added duties, such as writing reports and taking on tasks that the coaching process placed on the mothers during the intervention. The clients knew all this in advance, but it takes time before feeling the benefits and influence of the process and wellbeing to be sustained.

The decrease after 3 months in part of the variables is minor and still high in relation to the situation before systems coaching. The decrease may be explained as the response to the termination of the process. The changes were across all the variables and indicate the significant influence of the intervention. As stated by one of the coaches: "*There is something about coaching that pushes you up. Afterwards the coach's support is missing.*"

The findings of this research reaffirm previous research findings indicating the influence of personal coaching on goal promotion and satisfaction measures emerging from the main quantitative findings (Grant, 2006; Grant *et al.*, 2009; Green *et al.*, 2006, 2007; Spence & Oades, 2011). Effectiveness of personal coaching in organizational settings was found in meta-analysis in performance and skills, wellbeing, coping and goal attainment (Theebom *et al.*, 2013).

In contrast to previous research where the Self Handicapping Thoughts Scale decreased after only a few months (Kearns, Forbes & Gardiner, 2007), in the research group in this study, it decreased immediately as a result of the intervention. This can be explained by the systems coaching model's focus on strengths and the desired future that enhanced self-efficacy and self-leadership, and influenced and decreased the self handicapping thoughts with no need to deal with them. This result can encourage future research especially in life coaching and coaching in education focusing on strengths and future intentions instead of problem solving.

The number of quantitative participants was smaller than planned and unique in terms of gender, age, location and economic status. Therefore, for more generalization, it is important to conduct and repeat such studies with larger samples and diverse groups of populations such as different gender and status, different ages with assimilation for younger ages because of the need for meta-cognition ability that is age-dependent (Coutinho, & Neuman, 2008).

Analysis and discussion of the qualitative results

Table 3 presents the themes and sub- themes that were found in interviews and focus groups. The highlighted sub-themes will be discussed as significant contributions to knowledge.

Table 3: Themes and sub- themes from qualitative data

	Coaching Outcomes	Influencing Factors Process	Coaching Methodological Considerations
1	Ripple Effect- assimilation & generalization	Coach-coachee relationship	Readiness for coaching
2	Deep change	Designing future picture via imagination	Coaching duration and follow up
3	Enhanced self-efficacy	Thinking & action framework	Quality monitoring
4	Actual results	Broadening awareness	

Coaching Outcomes

Systems coaching outcomes included the assimilation of systems thinking and influence on other life domains- referred to as "ripple effect" as several participants confirmed:

"Today I can testify that there is some inner home where I am safe and can understand myself. I do not leave things open in my actions or in relationships..."

"I set goals. I set goals for my family unit, to manage a normal home, and I expanded planning and decision-making to other domains."

One of the coaches stated, *"That is something she turned into a habit and helped build her self-confidence. It gave her strength to influence herself, instilled motivation, developed insights and created commitment to her tasks."*

Feedback from the Katzir Foundation revealed that most mothers in the research group reported improved relationships with their children. One of the mothers in the research group explained: *"All of my relationships have changed. I placed myself in the center."*

Actual measurable results were expressed in changes in the coachees' lives, or in other domains including changes in their attitudes to the environment or the environment's attitude to them. A coachee who was interviewed for a new job he got right after the coaching started said: *"Now, when I am thinking about it, I probably got the job because my spark was shining."*

It is important to note that even though systems coaching focused only on one life domain; interviews pertained to its broad influence. A coachee said about using her strengths: *"It is not that I did not have assets: after the army I put them in the attic. Now I got them from the attic and put them in the closet. Every day when I open the closet, I have something to wear."* This means that beside her chosen goal she used her strengths in everyday life and it contributes to her well-being. Another coachee shared, *"While coaching, I accomplished what I had wanted, one step at a time. Embarrassingly, I started working just like I had imagined, and it is clear to me it was the result of coaching";* and a coachee that completed coaching 5 years ago said in retrospect: *"It makes me feel*

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at
<http://business.brookes.ac.uk/ijebcm>

good that out of 9 goals I set, all were accomplished, the money not all the way yet. Seeing it in black and white, I could not predict it."

It can be seen that personal systems coaching does not focus on current pressing dilemmas, but has broader implications in the recipients' lives. The research group selected from an extensive range of goals, while most of the participants in the control group chose the successful completion of that study year as their goal.

The coaching profession influences the coaches' lives as well. One of the senior coaches said, *"It is a part of me, etched in my personality and my behavior with my children and grandchildren...I want coaches to take it into their lives like I have."*

The broad, deep and genuine influence of coaching on the lives of the coachees when the coaching process focuses on one central issue in their lives expresses the strength of systems coaching and requires research that will reaffirm these findings. The tendency to focus on pressing issues as happens in many coaching approaches, compared to focusing on an issue deriving from the optimal future requires further research,

The Factors of Influence in the Process

The results and influence of personal systems coaching were mostly attributed to a deep connection with a meaningful goal through the future picture created by the use of mental imagery as one coachee confirmed: *"Thanks to imagination, you can set goals and your thoughts will take you there...imagination is above thinking, it is the farthest place you can reach."* Another coachee related to the vision creation: *"This white figure we have shaped, on which we have worked a lot, has given me some inner resilience. We made plans, short-term and long-term...with the long-term plans, the vision pulled everything up."*

The innovation of the personal systems coaching Model is that the stage of creating the desired future is a combination of creativity and mental imagery as an anchor and a lighthouse for the future. The ability to imagine a precise future makes it accessible and possible in the coachee's experience. *"Heading to the future and the imagination was the first time I dared to admit out loud, that I want a leadership role in this state..."* A future connected to core values and intrinsic, autonomous choices empower and enhance the ability to believe in the possibility to achieve, thus contributing to a sense of mastery and wellbeing (Deci & Ryan, 2008; Ryan *et. al.*, 2011; Seligman, 2002).

Systems coaching is constructed as a way of bonding securely and creating a challenging, respectful relationship. Seligman (2002) emphasized the significance of a positive relationship as a key component in the creation of wellbeing. Autonomy, belongingness and competence (Deci & Ryan, 2008) are expressed in this relationship. Some of the coaching relationship's influence was the result of the ability to seriously listen for fantasy and create a permanent working framework with clear demands of keeping to set rules.

Readiness for coaching

Out of 40 mothers that were referred to the intervention, 16 (40%) dropped out before and at the beginning of the process, claiming they did not understand what was required. The mothers that remained said: *"Coaching came just in time. Before that I was not emotionally available,"* or *"She was the right person at the right time,"* and *"Coaching really suits me as I give myself."* But also: *"I did not feel good refusing the same people who gave me a scholarship"*. In another example of the question about readiness for coaching a coachee said, *"Sometimes people come with such a negative attitude that there is a need to help them mature to coaching, guided imagery and other creative techniques may help"*. The findings from past studies suggest that clients who are ready for coaching

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at
<http://business.brookes.ac.uk/ijebcm>

have the desire and positive energy to engage in a process of change, and must be informed correctly about the process (Kretzschmar, 2010).

Although the future coachees received detailed explanations from the Katzir Foundation coordinator and from the coach, it appears that genuine understanding of the essence of coaching and its requirements only develops after the process starts. A certain level of dropout is to be expected, as happens in any other framework. Programme managers must aspire to improve preparation on both the level of general information and the media, while taking into account the culture within which the coachee lives; for instance, the type of language and goals will be different in a society that emphasizes individuality than in a society emphasizing family values and commitment to the community (Szamosközi, 2010). Future theoretical thinking and research ought to develop the questions which help identify readiness for coaching and consider postponing coaching for those who are not ready, or alternately, create a stage of preparation and familiarity with the coaching process, as expressed by one of the veteran coaches, *"sometimes a person comes with such a negative attitude for self and future, that I must engage in connecting to that person's strength and the language of coaching"*, as expressed in models of change with regard to resistance which emerges in people as a response to change, even it is voluntary (Prochaska, Norcross, & DiClemente, 2002; Salerno, & Brock, 2008).

Comparison between expert and novice coaches

Responses to the interviews reveal that the ability to rely on the model as a whole and the confidence regarding its effectiveness is greater in expert coaches. The responsibility for results and success is higher among novice coaches. The novice coaches' evaluation of their influence and effectiveness was lower than the evaluation attributed to it by their coachees (as were measured in parallel interviews with coach-coachee pairs). This could explain why the need for follow-up was mostly expressed by novice coaches who needed the feedback on the influence of their work in order to enhance their sense of self-efficacy and identity as coaches. These findings show the need for training programs and supervision, to increase awareness of the need for results and success, and to create follow up for learning about their effectiveness as a way to build self-efficacy as coaches.

Conclusion

The research reveals that the researched personal systems coaching model is effective both in the short and long term. The systems coaching outcomes, factors of change and its methodology interact and are simultaneous and interdependent. The more the coaches feel accomplishments and connection to intrinsic meaningful goals the higher their self-efficacy and sense of well-being. The self-leadership concept as the integration of self-efficacy and self-management was found to act as a strong feature of progress (D'Intino *et al.*, 2007).

Personal systems coaching creates a unique integrative thinking framework enabling (1) constant association with personal strengths and work on intensive, autonomous intrinsic motivations; (2) eliciting goals from an ultimate future via (3) imagination tools while creating strong and exciting mental imagery; (4) systematic translation into action towards outcome management with maintenance via self-regulation and using cycles of feedback, but also (5) managing contacts with the external environment. In this way, the model considers more variables than previous models regarding goal directed behavior.

This research also contributes to the field of coaching research. The research design met the high standards of academic research and the mixed-method design allowed for profound insights and thus contributed to our understanding of this neglected area of coaching. Data was collected using a number of methods with sub-groups of coaches and coachees, but all data was obtained via self-report

measures, which have limitations of desirability and narrow points of view. Ely & Zaccaro (2011) suggest the evaluation of coaching in organizations by all interested parties. It is recommended in future research to use other coach-coachee measures in order to increase ways of measuring coaching effectiveness. Also, longitudinal studies on coaching effectiveness, readiness assessment and readiness development should be devised and researched in the future.

References

- Ahsen A. (1984). ISM: The triple code model for imagery and psychophysiology. *Journal of Mental Imagery*, 8, 15-42.
- Baban, A. (2007). Changing health-risk behaviors: a review of theory and evidence-based interventions in health psychology. *Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies*, 7(1), 45 – 66.
- Bandura, A. (1977). Self - efficacy: toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-Efficacy: the Exercise of Control*, NY, Freeman.
- Bozer, G. & Sarros, G. C. (2012). Examining the effectiveness of executive coaching on coaches' performance in the Israeli context. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 10(1) pp.14-31.
- Chen, G., Gully, S. M. & Eden, D. (2001). Validation of a new general self-efficacy scale. *Organizational Research Methods*, 4(1), 62-83.
- Coutinho, S. A., & Neuman, G. (2008). A Model of metacognition, achievement goal orientation, learning style and Self-Efficacy. *Learning Environment Research*, 11, 131-151
- Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. New York: Plenum Press.
- Deci, E. L. & Ryan, R. M. (2008). Self-determination theory: A macro theory of human motivation, development, and health. *Canadian Psychology*, 49(3), 182-185.
- DeSalvo, K. B., Fisher, W. P., Bloser, N., Merrill, W. & Peabody, J. (2006). Assessing measurement properties of two single-item general health measures. *Quality of Life Research*, 15(2), 191-201.
- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J. & Griffin, S. (1985). The satisfaction with life scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.
- D'Intino, R. S., Goldsby, M. G., Houghton, J. D., & Neck, C. P. (2007). Self-Leadership: A Process for Entrepreneurial Success. *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, 13(4), 105-120.
- Donner, I., Shacham, M., Herscovitz, O. (2009). The process of personal coaching as a tool for promoting learning skills in an academic college of engineering. Retrieved 14th July 2014 from: <http://meamnim.co.il/articles/177>
- Dweck, C. S. (1986). Motivational processes affecting learning. *American Psychologist*, 41, 1040-1048.
- Ely, K. & Zaccaro, S. J. (2011). Evaluating the effectiveness of coaching: A focus on stakeholders, criteria, and data collection methods. In G. Hernez-Broome & L. A. Boyce (Eds.), *Advancing executive coaching: Setting the course for successful leadership coaching*, 319-351, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Filsinger, C. (2012). How can maternity coaching influence women's re-engagement with their career development: a case study of a maternity coaching programme in UK-based private law firms? *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, Special Issue No.6, 46-56.

- Gordon, Y. (2002). *Systems thinking coaching model*. CoachMe College Ltd. Israel, Unpublished.
- Gordon Bar, S. (2011). The mental imagery of desired future picture as attribute of self-efficacy and achievements through systems coaching. *Articles, Creative Research and Art*, 2(2), 20-22.
- Gordon Bar, Y. & Gordon Bar, S. (2012). Systems coaching. Poster session & case study, presented at the 4th ESMT *Coaching Colloquium*, Berlin, Germany, November 30-December 1st
- Govindji, R., & Linley, P. A. (2007). Strengths use, self-concordance and well-being: Implications for strengths coaching and coaching psychologists. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 2, 1-11.
- Graham, S., & Weiner, B. (1996). Theories and principles of motivation. In D.C. Berliner & R.C. Calfee (Eds.), *Handbook of Educational Psychology*, 63-84, New York: Simon & Schuster Macmillan.
- Grant, A. M. (2001). Toward a psychology of coaching: The impact of coaching on metacognition, mental health and goal attainment. *Doctoral dissertation*. Dep. of Psychology, Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia.
- Grant, A. M. (2003). The impact of life coaching on goal attainment, metacognition and mental health. *Social Behavior and Personality: An International Journal*, 31(3), 253-263.
- Grant, A. M. (2006). A personal perspective on professional coaching and development of coaching. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 1(1), 12-22.
- Grant, A. M. & Cavanagh, M. J. (2011). Coaching and positive psychology. In: K. Sheldon, T. Kashdan & M. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Grant, A. M., Curtayne, L., & Burton, G. (2009). Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomised controlled study. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, 396 – 407.
- Green, L. S., Grant A.M. & Rynsaardt, J. (2007). Evidence-based life coaching for senior high school students: Building hardiness and hope. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 2(1), 24-32.
- Green, L. S., Oades, L. G. & Grant, A. M. (2006). Cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused life coaching: Enhancing goal striving, well-being and hope. *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(3), 142-149.
- Haines, S. G. (2007) *Strategic and systems thinking: The winning formula*. San Diego, CA: Systems Thinking Press.
- Hanson, W. E., Creswell, J. W., Creswell, J. D., Plano Clark, V. L. & Petska, K. S. (2005). Mixed methods research in counseling psychology. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 52(2), 224-235.
- Jackson, A. P. & Schemes, R. (2005). Single mothers' self-efficacy, parenting in the home environment, and children's development in a two-wave study. *Social Work Research*, 29(1), 7-20.
- Kearns, H., Forbes, A. & Gardiner, M. (2007). A cognitive behavioral coaching intervention for treatment of perfectionism and self-handicapping in nonclinical population, *Behavior Change*, 24(3), 157-172.
- Klimor-Maman, S. & Rozov, T. N. (2009). *Katzir program for single-mother student evaluation report*. Development & Evaluation Unit, Rashi Foundation.
- Kretzschmar, I. (2010). Exploring clients' readiness for coaching. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* Special Issue No.4, 1-20.
- Libri, V., & Kemp, T. (2006). Assessing the efficacy of cognitive behavioural executive coaching programme. *International Coaching and Review*, 1(2), 9-20.

- Linley, P. A., Nielsen, K. M., Wood, A. M., Gillett, R. & Biswas-Diener, R. (2010). Using signature strengths in pursuit of goals: Effects on goal progress need satisfaction, and wellbeing, and implications for coaching psychology. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1), 8-17.
- Manz, C. C. (1986). Self-leadership: toward an expanded theory of self-influence processes in organizations. *Academy of Management Review*, 11, 585-600.
- Midgley, C., Kaplan, A. & Middleton, M. (2001). Performance approach goals: Good for what, for whom, under what circumstances and at what cost? *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 93, 77–86.
- O'Connor, K. P., Aardema, F. (2005). The imagination: cognitive, pre-cognitive, and meta-cognitive aspects. *Consciousness and Cognition*, 14, 233-256.
- Polanyi, M. (1981). The creative imagination, In D. Dutton & K. Krausz (Eds.). *The concept of creativity in science and art*. The Hague, Netherlands: Martinus Nijhoff.
- Prochaska, J. O., Norcross, J. C., & DiClemente, C. C. (2002). *Changing for good: A revolutionary six-stage program for overcoming bad habits and moving your life positively forward*. New York: Quill.
- Rhodewalt, F. (2005). *Defensive strategies, motivation, and the self: A self-regulatory process view*. New York: Guilford.
- Ryan, R. M., Lynch, M. F., Vansteenkiste, M., & Deci, E. L. (2011). Motivation and autonomy in counseling, psychotherapy, and behavior change: A look at theory and practice. *The Counseling Psychologist*, 39(2), 193-260.
- Salerno, A. & Brock, L. (2008). *The change cycle: How people can survive and thrive in organizational change. A practical guide to navigating the 6 stages of change*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler.
- Schwarzer, R. (2008). Modeling health behavior change: how to predict and modify the adoption and maintenance of health behaviors. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 57, 1-29
- Seligman, M. E. P. (2002). *Authentic Happiness*. Free Press, New York.
- Shirom, A., Toker, S., Shapira, I., Shlomo, B. & Melamed, M. (2008). Exposure to and fear of terror as predictors of self-rated health among apparently healthy employees, *British Journal of Health Psychology*, 13, 257–271.
- Shkedi, A. (2010). *Qualitative research-theory and practice*. Ramot, University Tel-Aviv.
- Shkedi, A. (2011). *The meaning behind the words: Methodologies of qualitative research: theory and practice*. Ramot, University Tel-Aviv.
- Spence, G. B. & Oades, L. G. (2011). Coaching with self-determination in mind: Using theory to advance evidence-based coaching practice. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 9(2), 37-54.
- Szamosközi, S. (2010). *Positive Illusions or Illusory mental health? A Theoretical Model*. Dissertation abstract, Babes-Bolyai University, Cluj- Napoca, Romania: Faculty of Psychology and Education Sciences.
- Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & van Vianen, A. E. (2013). Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context, *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9(1), 1-18.
- Von Bertalanffy, (1998) *General systems theory: Foundation, development, application*. New York: George Braziller.
- Zuckerman, M. & Kieffer, S. C. (1998). Consequences of self-handicapping: effects on coping, academic performance and adjustment. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 74(6), 1619-1628.

Dr. Sunny Gordon Bar has a doctorate in psychology and is a Senior Clinical Psychologist. Dr. Gordon Bar is a senior coach and supervisor, PCC-ICF. Together with her husband she manages an Accredited Coaches Training Program (ACTP) - System Coaching at CoachMe College, Israel.

A version of this paper was presented in "*Education, Reflection and Development*" an International conference of the Department of Educational Sciences, May 2013, 17-18, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

The current issue and full text archive of this journal is available at
<http://business.brookes.ac.uk/ijebcm>

[International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring](#)

Vol. 12, No. 2, August 2014

Page 74