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Academic Paper

How do executive coaches understand and engage with their clients' expressiveness?

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Abstract

People rarely talk about expressiveness in coaching. When they do it is generally in relation to non-verbal communication (NVC) or as an 'add-on' to working with emotions, two areas that remain under-researched within coaching literature. The purpose of this study, therefore, was to explore the relationship between expressiveness and coaching. Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA), six coaches were interviewed in order to understand how they engaged with their clients' expressiveness. Findings suggest that coach and client are involved in a co-created and systemic expressive interplay. Very importantly, that expressiveness provides a 'vehicle' or 'ability' by which we're able to engage with the complexity of the 'self'.

Keywords

expressiveness, emotions, coaching, leadership, identity

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Introduction

Since Darwin, social scientists, behaviourists, anthropologists, philosophers, artists, psychologists and more recently neuroscientists, have been trying to capture the essence and meaning of emotional expression (Riggio, 2017). There are many unanswered questions about whether our expressiveness is biologically or chemically driven, unconsciously or consciously created (or both), a social and cultural construction, about self-presentation or impression management (Goffman, 1956), a reflection of our sense of self or multiplicity of selves and/or an integral part of our on-going self-narration (Bachkirova, 2011). What has been surprising, therefore, is to find a dearth of literature relating to expressiveness and coaching. Expressiveness tends to be referenced in relation to non-verbal communication (NVC) or working with emotions, two significant areas which remain under-theorised and under-researched within coaching literature (Cox, 2016; Jackson, 2016). The purpose of the study, therefore, was to start exploring the relationship between expressiveness and coaching, to contribute to an area that is little understood or researched within coaching literature.

I have had a long and intimate relationship with expressiveness, formerly as a professional actress and dancer as well as over the past 15 years within my executive coaching practice. Whatever my clients describe as being the coaching need, some element of it will relate to how people experience them via their expressiveness in its multiple forms – verbal, non-verbal, energy, pace, tone, posture, presence etc. Very importantly, how they express themselves appears to reflect as well as inform their sense of identity both professionally and personally. My background and experience, therefore, have led me to believe that expressiveness plays a fundamental role in terms of how we develop our sense of self, particularly when expressing who we are to another. Within coaching we are engaging with our clients' numerous identities (professional and personal) as well as their sense of self, hence it seems baffling that expressiveness has been overlooked within the literature.

Since I am invested in this area and potentially biased, the study explores how other coaches understand and engage with their clients' expressiveness within the intimacy of the coaching space. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) (Smith, Larkin & Flowers, 2009) became the preferred methodology, in order to prioritise the participants' lived experiences as well as voices. It also led to an exploration of literature in other fields or practices where expressiveness is deemed important – social and clinical psychology, neuroscience, multiplicity and embodiment theory etc. The sourced literature appeared to confirm a correlation between expressiveness and creating human connection (Afifi & Guerrero, 2000) as well as expressiveness being integral to developing a sense of self (Coover & Murphy, 2000).

By learning from other practices and fields about how they understand the expressive interplay between two human beings, hand in hand with the participants' lived experiences, my aim was to contribute insight and knowledge to an area that appears largely ignored by the coaching profession.

Within the following sections a definition of expressiveness is shared before providing an overview of the sourced literature relating specifically to expressiveness and the self. This is followed by a brief explanation of why IPA became the preferred methodology before sharing the findings that grew out of the data analysis. The article ends with a brief discussion and conclusion, outlining implications for coaches as well as potential areas for future research.

Defining expressiveness

One of the early challenges was to define expressiveness within coaching literature as most definitions relate to NVC. For example, Riggio explains that "emotional expressiveness can be defined as individual ability to communicate emotional states through nonverbal movements and gestures, including through the face" (2017, p. 1). However, I was drawn to Collier (2014), as he suggests that emotional expression involves both a messenger and a message (as well as the person receiving it) using 'multiple channels' of communication: use of language and speech, gestures, facial expressions, eye behaviour, spatial behaviour etc. Echoing Collier, it appears that in coaching we are working with a client's expressive 'system' and their words, intonation, breath etc are integral to our expressive experience of them. In many ways it could be argued that this expressive system involves a sophisticated dance between our more rational and conscious linguistic abilities as we are supreme self-narrators (Damasio, 2000), 'tangoing' with our unconscious 'emotional bodies' (Bachkirova, 2011).

Literature Review

With the dearth of coaching literature to draw from, articles and key texts were sourced from clinical and social psychology, neuroscience, embodiment theory, multiplicity theory etc. Within a synthesis of the literature certain key themes appeared to emerge:

- 'Expressiveness' as central to creating human connection (Afifi & Guerrero, 2000).
- Our sense of self emerging via social interaction (Coover & Murphy, 2000).
- Our sense of personal identity "achieved through negotiation with others" (Postmes *et al*., 2006, p. 226).
- The self as multiple and expressing many voices (Bachkirova, 2011).
- The self as being in a constant state of invention, as "we cannot prevent ourselves from 'inventing' ourselves in communication with others" (Dennett, 1991, p. 418).

What was striking were the suggestions that both coach and client are in a constant state of identity emergence, negotiating who they are in communication with one another. Within coaching the suggestion is that it's the client who's in process of 'emergence' within our presence – the transformational change happening within them. The sourced literature, however, appears to challenge this notion indicating that coaches are also negotiating their coach identity via an expressive exchange, both via verbal and non-verbal means, hence who we are or who we become within coaching is open to question.

The work of Bachkirova (2011) was particularly pertinent to the research, in terms of 'who' we meet expressively in the coaching space or which 'selves' get expressed. As Bachkirova (2011) suggests, we have a 'rider' (the rational and conscious part of us), a 'narrator' (a narrating function that the rider uses) as well as an 'elephant' (the emotional powerhouse that drives the organism). The rider and narrator will tend to dominate the coaching conversation, particularly the narrator whose role is to "present a good story about the role of the self in relation to what is happening to the whole organism" (Bachkirova, 2011, p. 69). For Bachkirova (2011), the narratives that clients weave will be expressed in a way that serves the client best and how this is expressed will reflect the client's developmental level as well as the context within which the coaching is taking place. Fingarette (2000) supports Bachkirova, by suggesting that the "narrator cannot relax, it keeps working on the synthesis of stories making up a self and so essentially misrepresenting it" (p.71). To effect any real change within coaching, therefore, involves finding a way to engage with the client's emotional body or elephant (Bachkirova, 2011), which speaks a different language – physical, emotional, sensory etc. As Collier (2014) proposes, expressiveness enables us to both understand and engage with our clients using multiple channels of communication. Expressiveness, therefore, appears to enable us to communicate with the whole person in coaching – the conscious verbal rider, the self-serving narrator and, most importantly, the emotional body or elephant – the real arbiter of change (Bachkirova, 2011).

Literature relating to embodiment theory adds another important element into the mix, suggesting the co-created nature of what happens expressively between coach and client, "how you are when you affect me is already affected by me, and not by me as I usually am, but by me as I occur with you" (Gendlin, 1997, p. 30). Merleau-Ponty (2012) rather beautifully sums up the complexity of our 'embodied' experiences, "one's own body is in the world just as the heart is in the organism: it continuously breathes life into the visible spectacle, animates it and nourishes it from within, and forms a system with it" (p. 207), suggesting that coaches become an integral part of the client's system also breathing life into the shared embodied experience between them.

Methodology

The aim of the study was to gain coaches experiences of expressiveness within their practice, to understand the role that expressiveness plays within the coaching relationship – their lived experience. IPA seemed the most appropriate methodology due to the nature of the research topic as well as from my own ontological and epistemological stance, as an interpretivist and constructivist. IPA acknowledges that human beings are sense-making organisms, who are in a constant state of interpretative endeavour (Smith & Osborn, 2015). With its roots in

phenomenology as "initially articulated by Husserl", it aims to understand "lived experience in its own terms rather than one prescribed by pre-existing theoretical preconceptions" (Smith & Osborn, 2015, p. 41). From an epistemological perspective the research is grounded in constructivism, where "knowledge, truth, reality and theory are considered contingent and based on human perception and experience" (Howell, 2013, p. 16).

IPA also resonated due to the integral role of the researcher, allowing me to have a voice within the interpretation of the participants' data. With its roots in the Heideggerian branch of phenomenology, IPA acknowledges the involved and vital role of the researcher throughout the process as well as being integral to the analysis of the data (Willig, 2013). Very importantly, the researcher and participants are interdependent and mutually interactive (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988), which appears to reflect what I believe about the expressive-interplay between coach and client; that it is co-created.

Participant selection

IPA involves a small number of participants sharing in-depth and first-person accounts of their experiences (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014). As I am an executive coach who works predominantly in business and am aware of the impact of organisational culture on how people express themselves, I decided to interview participants who had business experience involving both internal as well as external coaches. They were a mix of genders, ages as well as with differing levels of experience with the aim of providing rich and varied perspectives with potential transferability to the broader coaching profession (Willig, 2013).

Data collection

In-depth, semi-structured interviews were conducted via Zoom and were recorded with the participants agreement. Each interview started with the question 'what does expressiveness mean to you?', to encourage the participants to talk freely and explore expressiveness in way that was meaningful to them both personally and professionally.

Data analysis

IPA involves transcribing the interviews to accurately capture what has been expressed, working through each transcript in detail and reading them numerous times before allowing broader themes to emerge (Smith *et al.*, 2009). By immersing myself in the data, words, phrases as well as exploratory comments emerged, which were captured on notes as a kind of free textual analysis (Smith & Osborn, 2007). I was also capturing reflections around what I was experiencing, things that struck me or seemed significant, focusing on the participants use of language, metaphor, pauses, contradictions, physical gestures, their emotional state etc (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

The second stage involved working from my notes rather than the transcript, allowing themes to emerge by formulating "a concise phrase at a slightly higher level of abstraction…a more psychological conceptualization" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014, p.12). Willig (2013) describes this second phase as identifying and labelling "emergent themes that characterize each section", suggesting that the themes are trying to capture the experiential nature or quality of what is being described (p. 88). Some of the themes that emerged included 'who I am', 'dance', 'pace and rhythm'.

The third stage involved "looking for connections between emerging themes" (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014), as well as adding structure into the analysis (Willig, 2013, p. 88). I started clustering the themes identified in stage two on a large board, with some of the themes forming "natural clusters of concepts that share meanings or references" (Willig, 2013, p. 88); for example, 'moving in flow', 'hands start moving' and 'moving fast, moving slow' became a cluster. These clusters were given a

label/theme to “capture their essence” (Willig, 2013, p. 88), within the above example the cluster label became ‘on the dance floor’.

The fourth stage involved developing a summary table of structured themes. Via a process of gradual integration, some of the themes were dropped (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014) and a list of Superordinate themes was generated, with cluster themes listed below them (Willig, 2013). The three Superordinate themes that emerged were ‘the giving and receiving self’, ‘the emerging self’ and ‘the dancing self’.

Reflexivity

With my genuine interest in this area reflexivity was vital and involved continually returning to the transcripts to check the original meaning of what was being shared. As Bachkirova, Rose and Noon (2020) suggest, it would be helpful if there was a ‘road-map’ to guide IPA researchers “in terms of their own reflexive stance and approach” (p. 85). Reflexivity is not mentioned in Smith et al.’s (2009) list of required qualities for being an IPA researcher, and, although as Bachkirova et al (2020, p.85) note “transparency of method and plausibility of interpretation” are key, there is less clarity around self-reflection and challenging oneself to seek alternative readings of data.

Findings

Three Superordinate themes emerged which all related to different aspects of the relationship between expressiveness and the self - ‘the giving and receiving self’, ‘the emerging self’ and ‘the dancing self’.

Theme 1: The giving and receiving self

The first theme relates to giving and receiving expressiveness, reflecting a perceived distinction cited by the participants. There appeared to be a clear link or connection between being the ‘expresser’ and expressing identity, with verbal language providing a vehicle for controlling which parts of themselves they shared. Though verbal language was valued as an expresser it was often distrusted from the receiver perspective.

Self as expresser

Chris is a very experienced coach as well as supervisor who initially tied into being the expresser:

> Expressiveness for me is the capacity to be able to say things in a way that gets across what is being intended…in the words that are used, but also in the tone, the pace, the volume, the sense that is in there, the movement, the eye contact, the level of thinking overall, it's all wrapped into that. (Chris)

Chris experiences expressiveness as the capacity or vehicle by which he can be understood, as intended. He references tone, pace, volume etc, almost as supporting players within the overall dynamic. He initially separates or lists the conscious as well unconscious aspects – verbal, physical as well as intuitive – eventually combining them together within his phrase, “it’s all wrapped into that”. There’s a sense of Chris synthesising all the different elements and offering them up as a potential gift for the receiver, with an awareness that the entire expressive system is integral to supporting his intention – enhancing it in some way.

Interestingly, coming across as intended was repeated by several of the participants suggesting a correlation between verbal language and control, as opposed to NVC that they perceived having less conscious control over. Many of the participants listed different expressive elements, almost

compartmentalising them or placing them under different headings – spoken, NVC, 'felt-sense' (Gendlin, 1967). It appears, therefore, that we understand expressiveness via its constituent parts/elements rather than as a dynamic system at play, retrospectively at least.

For Martin, however, expressiveness relates specifically to expressing his truth:

> I think (expressiveness) means the ability to freely tell your truth in all its glory. To tell your truth in a way that is meaningful for you, not only via the words that you use, but the actual style and the way that you explain your truth is freely open to you as well. (Martin)
>
> How often do you express your truth? (researcher)
>
> I think that is a question of personal choice. I choose to express my truth more and more as I get older...I think it's something we choose...it's an interesting position and choice we take and I don't see it as either we do or we don't, I think it's to what level. (Martin)

Martin experiences expressiveness as the ability or vehicle to share his truth or sense of self on his terms, in a way that is meaningful for him, when it suits him. He paints a picture of expressing himself authentically, being true to his principles, values, beliefs etc. It appears that with age, wisdom and experience Martin has the desire as well as the means, to share who he is and what he stands for when he chooses.

It was striking that Martin moved so quickly from freedom to self-censorship, however, indicating that expressing identity via verbal language triggers a conscious inner-critic. Self-censoring was mentioned by several of the participants, suggesting that there was a broader awareness of self-censoring being an integral part of expressing identity as well as reflecting an ongoing negotiation within the coaching space.

Self as receiver

Although the participants had referenced the importance of using verbal language to control what others experienced of them, when in receiving mode other expressive elements were focused upon – 'felt sense' (Gendlin, 1967), intuition, NVC etc. When verbal language was mentioned, it was often cited with scepticism or distrust.

> Then there's another perspective - that's on receiving expressiveness. I'm using capacity words…it's the space within and my take on that...comes down to heart and head...with an intuitive response but with heart and head. (Chris)

Chris mentioned capacity several times, being aware that engaging with clients at a deeper level - accessing the space within – develops over time as a kind of embodied wisdom. The space within appears to involve a combination of intuition, feeling and a more rational perspective working together, an interaction of numerous capacities collaborating

Martin within his receiving role appears sceptical towards his clients' conscious verbal layering, masking the emotional stuff that really drives them:

> We construct these complicated stories and narratives but below that mask if you like, is some fairly basic or pretty simple emotional stuff...and we layer on top of that this human cognitive analytics stuff, but actually what's driving things is what human beings are - we are living an emotive experience. (Martin)

Martin's scepticism towards his clients' highly developed verbal language skills, reflected the views of many of the participants. There was a general distrust of clients' linguistic abilities and

narratives. As expressers we appear to prioritise verbal language and as receivers distrust this, recognising that we need a more embodied way of listening to clients – beyond words.

Theme 2: The emerging self

All the participants referenced expressiveness as being central to their identity or sense of self. As coaches, however, they suggested a need to tone-down or adapt their expressiveness in relation to their clients. The second theme, therefore, relates to how we negotiate who emerges expressively within the coaching space. It's divided into 'who I become with you' and 'who I become within this context', as the organisational culture plays an important part.

Who I become with you

Sasha is relatively new to coaching and is still finding who she is as she flexes her coach identity. She spoke about being very expressive but needing to tone down around certain clients, which felt uncomfortable as her expressiveness was an essential part of her. With a recent client, however, a new way of being began to emerge:

> ... I was very aware that my expressiveness was not going to cut it. I was going to make this person very uncomfortable, so I had to do it differently. I had to lose myself massively. It was just a completely different way to relate to a person, but I felt so connected to her and present with her…in tune with her. (Sasha)

Via the presence of her client Sasha appears to emerge into a version of herself that she likes and feels very comfortable embodying. Although she had referenced expressiveness being integral to her sense of self, with this client she was able to negotiate a different less expressive presence without losing her coach identity. Other coaches also described consciously toning-down their naturally expressive selves. Chris talked about being very still as a coach, to provide "no-interference" allowing his clients' to emerge in the room as freely as possible.

Ellie, on the other hand, describes the benefits of being expressive as a coach. During a recent coaching session, Ellie suggested that something extraordinary emerged between her and her client that grew out of a shared expressive interplay. Although this was initially stimulated via conversation it very quickly became an experience beyond words:

> ...it's a connection that you make with the individual that happens on a different level beyond the physical and the verbal. That's potentially the energy piece and maybe by making that larger connection …(you) create a bodily connection…and the energy moves between us. (Ellie)

For Ellie, her expressiveness helped her create a connection with the client that led to a more embodied experience and touched them both at a profound level.

Who I become within this context

Louise described several expressive identities emerging in her numerous roles – home self, senior leader self and internal coach self. Her home self being naturally very expressive and tactile – "a massive hugger":

> I wouldn't do that at work (hug people) - that's an expression of warmth, an expression of endearment, an expression of trust - that's not an appropriate form of expression in a working environment. (Louise)

When being her coach self, however, Louise is very aware of adapting her expressiveness for the benefit of her clients:

> I would use expression in language and in body language, but only in a way that I felt was helpful to the coachee that would aid the conversation and that would make them feel comfortable. (Louise)

What was striking were the clear distinctions Louise made between each of her expressive identities and the levels of self-censoring involved. The organisational display rules dictating what she deemed acceptable expressive behaviour within her senior leader persona and to lesser extent, coach persona.

As an internal coach Neil also felt that he had to adjust who he was to fulfil organisational expectations:

> The organisational culture probably didn't allow me to (express who I was as coach) - I had to adjust who I was. That meant, in some ways, not being able to express myself in the way that I felt most comfortable or natural. (Neil)

Now that he's an external coach, however, Neil feels able to express himself freely and consequently has a stronger sense of his own coach self.

All the participants were conscious of moving between different parts or facets of themselves within their coaching identity. Most described their expressiveness as being central to their sense of self but needing to tone down or adapt their expressiveness for the benefit of the client. It seems, therefore, that we're more fluid within the coaching space than we may believe and who emerges is constantly being negotiated.

Theme 3: The dancing self

The third theme relates to a perceived co-created 'dance' that takes place within the coaching space.

Several of the participants used dance and music metaphors to capture the expressive interplay that appeared to happen when a session was flying or travelling with pace and momentum. Although they differed in terms of their own expressive role within this, the majority suggested that they were integral to changes in rhythm, pace, energy as well as synchronicity. Very importantly the changing dynamics helped the participants judge how a session was progressing and influenced their interactions:

> When we're flying it could be a really energetic piece - a tango going on between us - we're moving backwards and forwards (tangoing with his shoulders). There's a sense that it's going somewhere and it's quite emotional…we're moving …you're leading and now I'm leading - there is that kind of pattern…If I'm not getting the energy then I'll try and find another way of sparking it. (Neil)

Neil references tangoing, painting a picture of partnering with his client in an intense staccato dance. He used the metaphor to capture the emotional intensity when a client experiences an outpouring or release, appearing to immerse himself in these experiences, enjoying the energy and pace held within them. When he's not receiving energy from his clients he will purposefully change direction to reignite or spark it.

Sasha also used a dance metaphor to help her interpret the shifts that were happening within a tricky client relationship. In the early stages she suggested, ''it was like a dance battle, he was showing me a move and I was showing him a move and another etc'' (Sasha). As the relationship developed, they began to find themselves moving in sync via a perceived tap dance.

> He was tapping away and then I was responding, and the rhythm changed. The rhythm was faster, it was more joyous, and it was in sync between the two of us and relaxed at the same time - flowing. (Sasha)

Both Neil and Sasha interpreted the energy, pace and synchronicity generated within a session as being a positive indicator for how the coaching was progressing. Using metaphor helped them capture sensory or embodied elements that verbal language generally fails to describe. It also encouraged them to tap into a perceived emotional experience that in the moment is sensory, intuitive and rhythmic, and only retrospectively is imbued with storytelling and meaning.

Martin, however, challenges whether we can really understand what is happening expressively in the space between coach and client:

> The interactions we have with our clients are more in flux than we realise…the interplay between a coach and the client, it is the co-creation of something in the middle of that space, and the expressive part of that is a dynamic which is occurring all the time and it's moving. (Martin)

The dance that several of the participants' described was full of energy, dynamic and journey. They appeared to be caught up in the moment responding intuitively, emotionally as well as rhythmically to their clients. The dance we experience or feel in the moment, however, is almost impossible to describe retrospectively and is likely to be imbued with storytelling.

Discussion

What grew out of the findings was a suggestion that expressiveness provides a vehicle or ability that enables us to express identity or our sense of self to another human being, via multiple channels of communication (Collier, 2014). How we understand this ability is also multifaceted, as the participants were conscious of using a variety of expressive mechanisms, both unconscious as well as conscious (Damasio, 2000). Very importantly, that who they became in the presence of their client appeared fluid and flexible, their identity or sense of self emerging via social interaction (Coover & Murphy, 2000). Expressiveness appears, therefore, to facilitate this evolving process providing a vehicle via which both coach and client can communicate using many different languages - verbal, emotional, physical as well as with an embodied response.

The giving and receiving self

How we understand and engage with our clients' expressiveness appears to depend on who we're being in the moment and the roles or selves that emerge within the coaching space. It could be argued that when the rider (Bachkirova, 2011) is holding fort, verbal language is prioritised and other elements are categorised - verbal, NVC, intuition etc. Interestingly when being on the receiving end of expressiveness, the participants were conscious of accessing their emotional bodies or elephants, being able to create a greater synergy between their rider and elephant, (Bachkirova, 2011) or between heart and head. Bachkirova (2011) proposes that coaches should be encouraging '2-way traffic' between rider and elephant so that our clients can listen to these intelligences more effectively - being robust in our verbal challenges with the rider and being softer and more nurturing with the elephant (using metaphor, imagery etc). Engaging with our clients' expressiveness appears to enable this conversation to happen, via using multiple communication channels (Collier, 2014).

The emerging self

The focus within coaching is on the clients' evolution rather than our own. We're conscious that we need to develop as coaches via reflexivity etc, but still consider ourselves as being the arbiters of the clients experiencing a shift within the room. The participants experiences supported by the researched social and clinical psychology literature, however, suggest that both parties (coach and client) are in a constant state of identity emergence negotiated together (Postmes et al., 2006). As Coover and Murphy (2000) argue, "The essence of communication is the formation and expression of an identity. The formation of the self is not an independent event generated by an autonomous actor. Rather, the self emerges through social interaction" (Coover & Murphy, 2000, p. 125). It appears, therefore, that coaches have less control over who they become within the coaching relationship and who emerges within the coaching conversation than they may think.

The dancing self

Using dance and music metaphors appeared to create a freedom for the participants, allowing them to explore what they perceived as co-created expressive moments, where their bodies were using or accessing a different language with their clients. Pace, rhythm, energy, synchronicity gave them a sense of travel and momentum in a shared expressive release of energy as well as a rhythmic response to one another; almost becoming an extension of one another within a flow of experiences (Merleau-Ponty, 1962). Very importantly, the pace and perceived synchronicity appeared to guide them in their actions, giving them a sense of how the session was progressing as well as confidence in their actions. It seems, therefore, that the perceived dance plays an important role in terms of influencing the coaches' judgements, decisions and actions.

Conclusion

The purpose of the study was to explore the relationship between expressiveness and coaching. Using IPA, six coaches were interviewed to understand how they engaged with their clients' expressiveness within their coaching interactions. A broad literature review was conducted, to gain an overview of where expressiveness was deemed important within other disciplines/contexts and what could be learned from this within coaching

By combining the findings with the sourced literature, there is a suggestion that expressiveness provides a vehicle or ability by which we're able to engage with the complexity of the self. It appears that expressiveness enables us to connect with and access the whole organism, providing a mechanism by which we can engage with the rider, narrator and elephant (Bachkirova, 2011).

Implications for coaches and future research

As coaching is a talking interaction, verbal language will dominate and the challenge is to communicate with the client's emotional body or elephant (Bachkirova, 2011). Coaches should be encouraging 2-way traffic between their clients' riders and elephants, their rational and emotional selves (Bachkirova, 2011) but this demands that the coach can also encourage 2-way traffic within themselves. Expressiveness appears to enable our intelligences to communicate more effectively, but it demands an awareness of how our body speaks to us, being conscious of prioritising verbal language as well as our preference for seeing expressiveness in its constituent parts rather than as a dynamic system.

Within coaching the focus is on the client changing or transforming. What grew out of the research, however, was as an awareness that coaches are also in a process of emergence negotiated in relation to the coachee (Postmes et al, 2006). Although coaches are conscious of their ongoing development via reflexivity as well as supervision etc, they seem less aware of the changes taking

place within them as they navigate the coaching relationship. This certainly warrants further investigation as there's a lack of understanding around how our coach identity ebbs and flows or emerges via social interaction (Coover & Murphy, 2000).

The participants were conscious of an expressive dynamic in the coaching space, using dance or music metaphors to capture the essence of their experiences. What was important, however, was the way the perceived dance influenced the participants' judgement as well as interactions. How we reflect on these dynamics is less clear, particularly as we lack the verbal language to describe them retrospectively and a level of narration is likely to kick-in. Coaches are aware of a co-created expressive-interplay influencing their actions, but as so much of this is unconsciously driven it would be valuable to research further.

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