

COACHING – OLD WINE IN NEW SKINS?

Attempt of a distinction

Coaching is an inflationary term; a definition must necessarily be subjective. I define the term in distinction to two related offers: counselling and therapy. (Expert) consulting lives from the consultant's knowledge advantage over his clients. He/she passes this knowledge on for a fee. What is the difference to coaching? For me, consulting can be part of coaching. As a career coach, I pass on my knowledge of career design, job search and application to my coachee. But they remain in responsibility. They decide what they want to implement and they take full responsibility for the result. The reason for this is that they also have a knowledge advantage which is essential for coaching success: Coaches are the specialists for their lives. They know which behaviour has led to success in the past and what to avoid. The question arises, however, whether human-oriented consulting without a coaching approach is at all justifiable.

Coaching and therapy

The distinction between coaching and therapy is less clear. Some coaches try a thematic differentiation. However, the idea that professional topics belong in coaching and private topics in therapy does not help. Professional and private life, and thus also corresponding topics, overlap. A clear dividing line is that people with psychological impairments clearly belong in therapy, as coaches are usually not trained for this. In borderline situations, such as mild cases of exhaustion, both coaching and therapy can make offers as they work with similar instruments. For me, therapy is indicated where help for self-help is no longer possible. In such situations, more intensive care is needed, possibly with medical support. Coaches and therapists have a common field of activity when it comes to issues of improving quality of life. In terms of positive psychology, this involves maintaining and promoting health and well-being through appropriate measures.