

Research Title:

**Lived Experience of the Developmental Journey for a
Coaching Practitioner training as a Coach Supervisor: An
interpretative phenomenological analysis**

Ursula Clidière, Martine George

ORCID Ursula Clidière: <https://orcid.org/0009-0002-4999-3034>

Ursula Clidière, Ph.D. (Corresponding Author)
clidiere@fastmail.fm
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/drursulaclidiere>
Clidiere Consult
Hergiswil, NW, Switzerland

ORCID Martine George: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8591-7763>

Martine George, Ph.D.
martine.george@ulb.be
<https://www.linkedin.com/in/martine-george-14b7b31/>
Solvay Brussels School of Economics and Management
Université Libre de Bruxelles, Belgium



Nice Meeting You!



Ursula Clidiere
I/O Psychologist, Coach
Supervisor, Leadership
Coach, Faculty



Martine George
Executive Coach , Team
Coach, Coach Supervisor,
Uni Faculty



Brief Opening Reflection



In your own supervision journey, especially at the onset,
have you ever felt stretched beyond your capabilities,
both in a positively stretching sense and/or in a disorienting way?

*Please take a brief moment to reflect ... for the online audience,
feel free to share in the chat*



Why this Research Project?

- An exchange between us two researchers revealed shared experiences during coach supervision training
 - Profound **growth & expansion** and **disequilibrium & disorientation**
- In exploring this further, we had even more questions:
 - What causes this?
 - How to recognize these states?
 - How to consciously work with them?
 - Were growth experiences “planned” or “by-products”?
 - Can these experiences - or even: should they - be intentionally pursued?
 - ...
- This made us launch our research project in 2024
- We reached out to peers and network and got started!



Context for Coach Supervision



- Evolved from clinical roots into a distinct coaching practice
- Early focus: ethics, skills, competences practitioner support
- Formalized in early 2000s with diverse influences (psychology, HR, therapy, ...)
 - Supervision as a learning partnership and reflective dialogue
 - Supervision is qualitative, developmental, resourcing

Today:

- **Growing complexity** in coaching practice calls for deeper developmental support
- Coach supervision is further **emerging** as a distinct and essential practice
- **Shift** in the coaching field from performance, competences and skills to reflection, ethical approaches, and growth necessitates for coach supervision's '**container**' (capability, capacity) to **grow as well**
- **Limited research** on the lived experience of 'BEcoming' a coach supervisor (capabilities, capacities)



Research Question

“What is the lived experience of the developmental journey for coaches undergoing coach supervision training?”

How about you? What
invited your deeper growth?



Theoretical Framework

Adult Development Theory and how it informs coach supervision

- **Evolving cognitive and social-emotional capacities** influence practitioner's awareness, decision-making, and behavior in supervision (→ Kegan, Laske, Bluckert)
- Contextual influences, such as socio-cultural environments and life transitions, are integral to **developmental trajectories** and readiness for growth
- **Reflective practice** emphasizes the importance of ongoing self-inquiry and meaning-making for a practitioner's maturation and relational depth (→ King and Kitchener, Lucas and Turner)
- The supervisor as a **developmental instrument** reflects the emphasis on self-as-subject, and where supervisors must engage with their own development to effectively support others (→ Bachirova, Jackson)



Theoretical Framework

The intersection of Adult Development Theory and Adult Learning and Growth

- Learning and development are **interdependent** (→ Lawrence)
- **Developmental stages** shape learning capacity, relational maturity and ability for dealing with complexity (→ Bachirova)
- Adult learning is not just about acquiring knowledge, but **transforming** how one understands and integrates that knowledge (→ Kolb, Kohlberg)
- **Relational mindfulness** can establish an emotional climate that is conducive to the emergence of a compassionate dialogical process that, if mutual, creates the freedom to learn (→ Adamson and Brengden)

Higher consciousness allows better navigation of ambiguity, multiple perspectives and adaptive challenges → Petrie

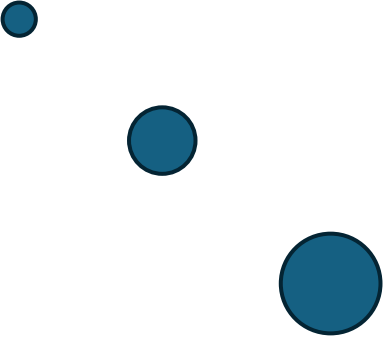


Methodology

- Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used to **explore participant's lived experiences**, focusing on their meaning-making, sense-making, and underlying emotional and psychological processes
- The methodology aligns with phenomenological inquiry, viewing participants' accounts as interpretations of their experience, not just descriptions
- A double hermeneutic process is central, where both participants and researchers engage in interpretation



Lived Experience



How does hearing someone's
lived experience offer more than
behavioral observation?



Data Collection

- Participants were recruited through **researchers' networks**
 - Two training organizations (CSA and Oxford Brookes)
 - Informed consent, ethics review, demographic data, and confidentiality protocols established prior to 60-90-minute video interviews
- Semi-structured interviews
 - Zoom or Microsoft Teams in May-June 2024, used open-ended questions to explore participants' lived experiences and developmental meaning-making, in alignment with IPA methodology
- Data Collection tapped into **lived experience and inner dialogue**
 - Identity shifts - emotional transformation, and developmental dilemmas
 - Internal shifts - participants shared experiences and discomfort with ambiguity, metacognitive leaps, or inner confidence building



Design and Questionnaire

- In-depth exploration of participants' **developmental journeys** and meaning-making during and after supervision training
- Selection criteria correspond to IPA principles and researchers ontological and epistemological stances
- Five coaching practitioners (three females, two males) with over five years of coaching practice experience and recent completion (< 12-15mo) of coach supervision training
- **Semi-structured interviews**
 - Exploring Social-Emotional and Cognitive Development
 - Illuminating Transformative Learning
 - Future Learning Design



Data Analysis

- **IPA methodology** guided a structured six-step analysis process, including repeated reading, initial noting, theme development, and cross-case pattern identification (→ Smith, Flower, & Larkin, 2009)
- **Meta themes and subthemes** were identified, reflecting participants' developmental experiences across developmental lines (cognitive, emotional, and spiritual)
- An integrated developmental lens allowed for examining how adult learning and development intersect, especially in **transitioning from coach to supervisor and navigating complexity**



Key Findings Summary

Meta Themes	Sub-Themes
Personal Growth, Awareness	• Engage in and deepening of Reflective Capacity • Developing Self-awareness • Emotional Regulation
Interpersonal Dynamics, presence and embodiment	• Interpersonal Dynamics (boundaries and will in Relationships) • Developing Presence and Embodiment (incl. sensitivity to others)
Adaptability, dealing with Ambiguity	• Dealing with Uncertainty & Ambiguity • Adaptability



Meta 1- Personal Growth, Awareness

1- Engage in and deepening of Reflective Capacity

- Diverse Reflective Practices
- Deep Self-Exploration
- Embracing Mindfulness and Uncertainty
- Commitment to Ongoing Reflection

2- Developing Self-awareness

- Metacognition and Self-Compassion
- Redefining Success and Identity
- Application in Professional Contexts
- Joy and Discovery in Introspection

3- Emotional Regulation

- Curiosity and Awareness toward Emotions
- Increased Courage and Emotional Expression
- Development of Inner Calm and Balance
- Reflective Emotional Processing



Meta 1- Personal Growth, Awareness



What's your relationship
with emotional
regulation in your own
development?



Meta 2- Interpersonal Dynamics, Presence and Embodiment

4 - Interpersonal Dynamics (boundaries and will in relationships)

- Expanded Empathy and Sensitivity
- Recognition of Non-Cognitive Needs
- Enhanced Emotional Intelligence
- Attunement and Relational Boundaries

5- Developing Presence and Embodiment (including sensitivity to others)

- Authenticity and Value Alignment
- Relational Equality and Connection
- Embodied Communication
- Heightened Sensitivity to Others



Meta 3- Adaptability, Dealing with Ambiguity

6 - Dealing with Uncertainty & Ambiguity

- Letting Go of Control
- Embracing Vulnerability
- Increased Comfort with the Unknown
- Psychological Flexibility and Openness

7- Adaptability

- Letting Go of Control
- Expanding Comfort Zones
- Context-Sensitive Communication
- Growth-Oriented Mindset

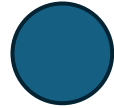


Summary

Meta Themes	Sub-Themes
Personal Growth, Awareness	• Engage in and deepening of Reflective Capacity • Developing Self-awareness • Emotional Regulation
Interpersonal Dynamics, presence and embodiment	• Interpersonal Dynamics (boundaries and will in Relationships) • Developing Presence and Embodiment (incl. sensitivity to others)
Adaptability, dealing with Ambiguity	• Dealing with Uncertainty & Ambiguity • Adaptability



Key Findings



Which of the findings
most align - or misalign -
with your own journey?
What's missing?

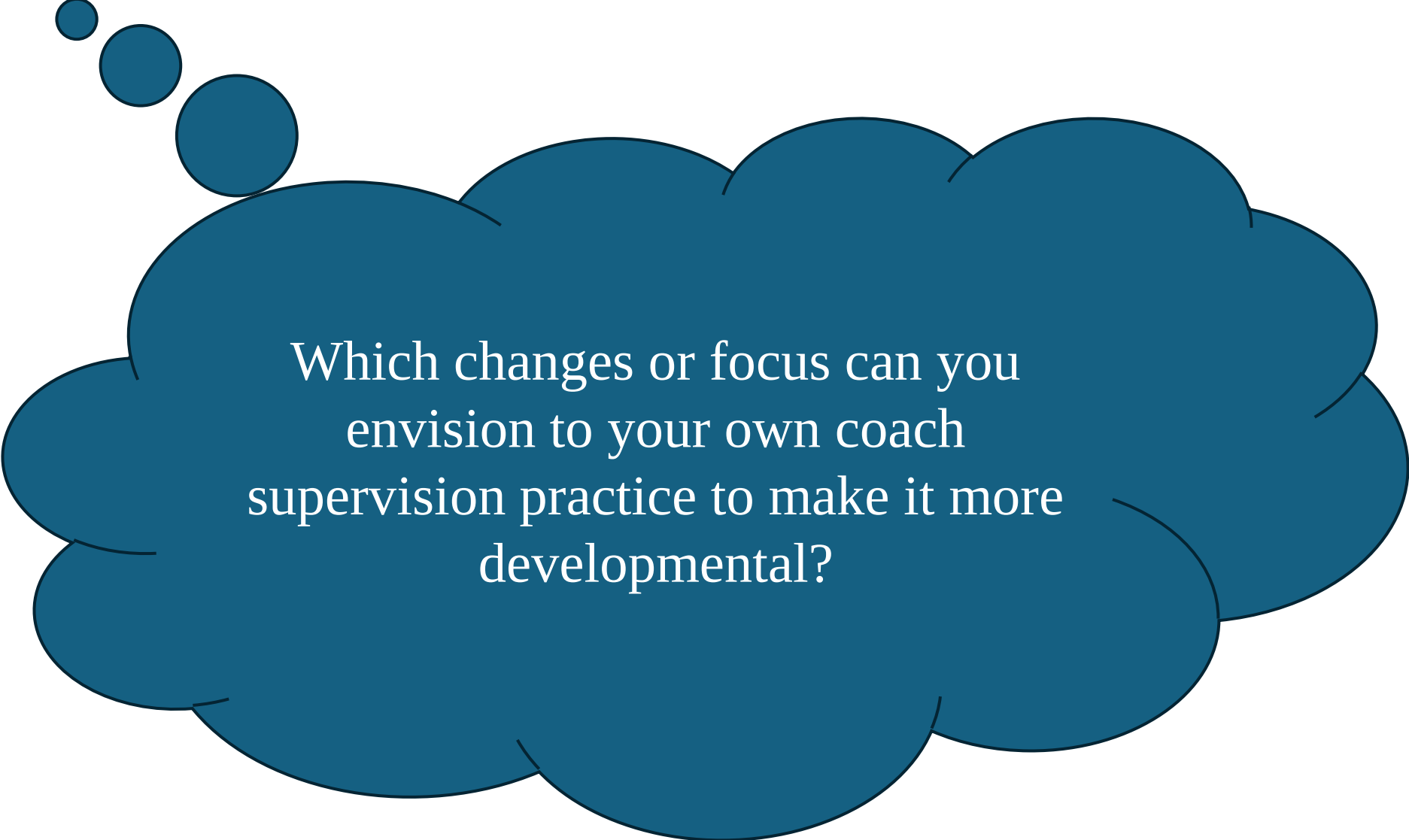


Practical Implications

- **‘Holistic’ Development in Training:** Coach supervision training fosters both horizontal (skills and knowledge) and vertical (cognitive and developmental maturity) growth
- **Reflective Practice:** Reflective Practice is essential for developing coach supervisors' self-awareness, critical thinking, and emotional intelligence
- **Learning Environment Matters:** Supportive, experiential, and emotionally safe learning environments are critical
- **Broader Impact Beyond Coaching:** These insights apply to adult education and professional development in general, especially in the helping professions
- **Designing for Developmental Potential:** Training programs should intentionally incorporate elements like embodiment, psychological mindedness, and meta-awareness to scaffold developmental progress and promote lifelong learning and intercultural competence



Practical Implications



Which changes or focus can you envision to your own coach supervision practice to make it more developmental?



Conclusions

- **Coach Supervision as Adult Development:** The study positions coach supervision training as a transformative adult developmental process, integrating both adult learning and development theories to shape professional identity and practice
- **Horizontal and Vertical Growth:** Training fosters both horizontal (skills, knowledge) and vertical (cognitive complexity, perspective-taking) development, **cultivating capacities like reflective judgment, embodiment, and psychological mindedness**
- **Intentional Program Design Needed:** To activate developmental potential, training programs should intentionally incorporate reflective practice, psychological mindedness, and embodiment through well-structured activities and supportive scaffolding
- **Call for Broader Research:** While focused on internal experiences, the study highlights the need for future research on relational practices, emphasizing their foundational role in developing meta-awareness and relational mindfulness in coach supervisors



Recommendations

Sub-Themes	Suggested Training Foci and Training Elements/Activities
- Engage in and deepening of Reflective Capacity - Developing Self-awareness - Dealing with Uncertainty & Ambiguity	Reflective Practice - Structured journaling exercises - Case study analysis: Present complex coaching scenarios for group reflection and dialogue - Peer reflection groups - Mindfulness meditation sessions
- Emotional Regulation - Interpersonal Dynamics (boundaries and will in Relationships) - Dealing with Uncertainty & Ambiguity	Psychological Mindedness - Role plays with scenarios involving interpersonal dynamics “Heat experiments” with scenarios that challenge coaches to navigate complex interpersonal dynamics - Individual supervision and peer reflection - Mindfulness practices to enhance present-moment awareness and reflective capacity - Psycho education modules addressing key psychological concepts
- Developing Presence and Embodiment (incl. sensitivity to others) - Adaptability - Emotional Regulation	Embodiment - Somatic awareness exercises - Reading and using body language effectively - Experiential learning activities (indoors and outdoors) - Breathing and centring techniques
Across all subthemes	- Reflective practice logs - Multi-modal feedback sessions - Personal development plans - Experiential workshops - Live demonstrations

Table 2: Coach Supervision training program design considerations



Limitations

- **Limited Scope and Perspective:** The small, Western-centric sample and focus on individual internal experiences may have excluded diverse cultural and interpersonal dimensions of developmental processes
- **Self-Reporting and Short Observation Window:** Reliance on participants' self-reported data and a relatively short post-training timeframe (12-18 months) may have introduced bias and missed longer-term developmental changes
- **Measurement Challenges:** Difficulties in quantifying vertical development limited the ability to objectively assess the depth and progression of emerging capacities
- **Theoretical Integration Complexity:** Combining multiple adult development theories and the Reflective Judgment Model posed challenges for maintaining a coherent and unified analytical framework



References

- Adamson, F. & Brendgen, J. (2022). *Mindfulness-based relational supervision*. Routledge.
- Bachkirova, T. (2008). The role of coaching psychology in defining boundaries between counselling and coaching. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *Handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp. 351-366). Routledge.
- Bachkirova, T., & Smith, C. (2015). From competencies to capabilities in the assessment and accreditation of coaches. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 13(2), 123-140.
- Bachkirova, T. (2016). The self of the coach: Conceptualization, issues, and opportunities for practitioner development. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 68(2), 143-156. <https://doi.org/10.1037/cpb0000055>
- Bachkirova, T., & Baker, S. (2018). Developmental coaching: Transforming adults, enabling growth. *Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice*, 11(1), 1-14.
- Bachkirova, T., Jackson, P., Gannon, J., Iordanou, I., & Myers, A. (2020). Philosophy of coaching: An emerging landscape. *Philosophy of Coaching: An International Journal*, 5(1), 30-50.
- Birch, J., & Welch, P. (Eds.). (2019). *Coaching supervision: Advancing practice, changing landscapes*. Routledge.
- Carroll, M. (2010). Supervision: Critical reflection for transformational learning (Part 2). *The Clinical Supervisor*, 29(1), 1-19.
- Carroll, M. (2014). *Effective supervision for helping professions*. Sage.
- Hawkins, P., Turner, E., & Passmore, J. (2019). *The manifesto for supervision*. Association for Coaching and Henley Business School.
- Hawkins, P., & Schwenk, G. (2006). *Coaching supervision: Maximising the potential of coaching*. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development.



- Hawkins, P. and Smith, N. (2006). *Coaching, mentoring and organizational consultancy: supervision and development*. Maidenhead: Open University Press.
- Jackson, P. (2023). Theorising embodied interaction in coaching: A Merleau-Pontian perspective on embodied practice. *Theory & Psychology*, 33(1), 78-98. <https://doi.org/10.1177/09593543221123970>
- Kegan, R. (1994). *In over our heads*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- King, P. M., & Kitchener, K. S. (2004). Reflective judgment: Theory and research on the development of epistemic assumptions through adulthood. *Educational Psychologist*, 39(1), 5-18.
- Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential learning: Experience as the source of learning and development*. Prentice Hall.
- Laske, O. (2023). *Measuring hidden dimensions: The art and science of fully engaging adults*. Pabst Publications.
- Laske, O. (2006). From coach training to coach education: Teaching coaching within a comprehensively evidence-based framework. *International Journal of Evidence-Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 4(1), 45-57.
- Lawrence, P. (2017). Coaching and adult development. In T. Bachkirova, G. Spence, & D. Drake (Eds.), *The SAGE handbook of coaching* (pp. 121–138). Sage Publications, Inc.
- Lucas, M., & Turner, T. (2023). Spiralling the field: A dynamic model exploring reflective maturity, reflective capacity and the expanding reflective field. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring*, 21(1), 211–221. <https://doi.org/10.24384/csqw-1210>
- Lucas, M. (2015). From coach to coach supervisor – a shift in mind-set. Greenfields Consultancy Limited. Retrieved from michelle@greenfieldsconsultancy.co.uk
- Turner, E., & Palmer, S. (2018). Reflective practice. In S. Palmer & A. Whybrow (Eds.), *The handbook of coaching psychology: A guide for practitioners* (pp. 483-495). Routledge.
- Wright, C. A., Lee, C. D., & Bachkirova, T. (2019). Developing effective supervision for coaches. *Journal of Coaching in Organizations*, 2(1), 1-17.





Q&A



Thank you!