Goal and Implementation Intentions and their Complex Transfer into Practice
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1 Goals and plans, self-regulation, and self-reflection in the process of coaching

1.1 Self-regulation and self-monitoring
According to Grant (2006, pp. 153 f.), coaching means facilitating the coachees to set goals, develop plans of action, begin to act, monitor their performance, evaluate the results, and eventually modify their actions to better reach their goals. Grant refers to the self-regulation theory of Carver and Scheier (1998), who regard cycles of such processes as the core of all goal-directed actions. The essence of people’s conscious self-regulation is “a process of monitoring their present actions and comparing the qualities that they perceive therein with the reference values that presently are salient, making adjustments as necessary to render discrepancies minimal” (Carver & Scheier, 1990, p. 22). Accordingly, the coach helps the coachees to define observable reference criteria or examples that can be applied in the comparison of their actions while progressing towards goal attainment.

Consider the example of a key account with a scientific education whose goal is to improve the comprehensibility of his communication when presenting his company's products to customers. In order to clarify his goals and develop reference values, the coach stimulates him to define concrete goal criteria and reference examples (e.g. how to explain all of the products' features to the customer by means of illustrative examples and without technical terms). He learns to monitor improvements in his performance during role-playing exercises with feedback from the coach. Later, he applies and monitors his communication behaviour in his presentations to customers and reports his trials back to the coach.

However, it is not always as easy as in the example of the key account to define goals and reference examples or criteria for desired improvements. In their self-regulation model, in addition to monitoring concrete goals and reference values in action processes, Carver and Scheier (1990, p. 32) analyse how more abstract goals and reference values are regulated, e.g. by comparison of the ideal self (from the individual's perspective) and the perceived real self or one’s 'ought' self (duty or obligation, according to the expectations of external standards or relevant people) with the real self. Examples of this are the enhancement of interpersonal skills or long-term self-development goals, such as discovery and improvement of one’s potential. Grant (2006, pp. 154 ff.) classifies such meta-cognitive processes as self-awareness and self-reflections. He assumes that the frequency of engaging with such cognitions correlates with the development of leadership skills and high-performance for managers.

1.2 Result-oriented problem- and self-reflection
Our theory of result-oriented coaching (Greif, 2008) integrates these basic assumptions by Grant (2006) on the function of goal clarification, planning, goal-oriented actions and self-reflection in the process of coaching. Complementarily, we assume that self-reflection processes are associative and transient processes associated with implicit self-monitoring processes that are not fully conscious. They refer to the experiences of an individual with him- or herself, which are accompanied by emotions and driven by needs that are intuitively perceived to be important or central to the person. For most people it is difficult to explicate
these implicit and often inconsistent experiences systematically. Coaches are able to facilitate intensive systematic self-reflection for their coachees in a systematic way. For example, they use series of reflexive questions (“How did you behave in that situation? – What behaviour in your personal view would have been ideal?”). Further examples are role-playing exercises with self-monitoring and switching between the roles and perspectives of the actors in role-playing exercises and testing different behaviours. It is demanding supporting the systematic and intensive self-reflection of the coachees. It is regarded as one of the core functions and competencies of coaching and distinguishes coaching from types of counselling that are less invasive. In this respect, coaching has some similarity to psychotherapy.

Result-oriented self-reflection

Self-reflection is not always beneficial. It can bring forth circular sequences of self-destructive rumination. In a manner similar to Grant (2006), we distinguish in our coaching theory (Greif, 2008) between aimless rumination and result-oriented self-reflection. Merely the facilitation of the latter by the coach contributes to the success of coaching. The quality of the support of result-oriented self-reflection can be assessed by the rating of the coach's behaviour by trained observers (Greif, 2010). We have also developed self-report scales for measuring the result-oriented reflection of goals, self-management, and behaviour changes (Greif & Berg, in prep.). As expected, these scales correlate negatively with depression or rumination scales. They have been used as effect criteria in randomly controlled outcome studies of coaching (Röhrs, in prep.; Schmidt & Thamm, 2008). The results show that coaching has an impact on result-oriented self-reflection.

Result-oriented problem reflection

Self-monitoring and self-reflection of goal-oriented behaviour that does not take into account the interaction between the acting individual and his or her environment would be solipsistic. Therefore, the monitoring of processes in the environmental situation, especially the actions and reactions of other people, have to be incorporated into the reflections. Such monitoring of external processes (e.g. communications between other people or interactions amongst team members), but also the analysis of the characteristics of the environmental situation (e.g. technology, complexity or hierarchical structure) is often called “Analysis as-is” or “problem reflection”.

Professional consultants often avoid the term “problem”, since it has the negative association of failure or ruminating about problems. They prefer to substitute it with “challenge”. For scientists, “problems” are challenges and they love to develop and publish their solutions. They use the term implicitly in a solution-oriented sense. Dörner (1979) in his studies on problem-solving defines a “problem” by means of three components (a) a process's given, undesired starting state or a situation's as-is state, (b) a desired target state or goal, and (c) the unknown means as to how to reach the goal. Based on this definition, result-oriented problem reflection would be a positive and solution- and goal-oriented process. It implies putting an end to ruminating about problems and fixating on negative thoughts or feelings and instead developing an optimistic problem-solving attitude. Goal-oriented analyses of problems are the runways of solutions. The facilitation of result-oriented problem reflection is seen as one of the basic success factors in the coaching process (Greif, 2010). Techniques include asking the coachee to describe and analyse the problem-situation in a solution-focused manner and to explore possible approaches or brainstorm on creative solutions.

Problem- and self-reflection, goal clarification and planning, are not restricted to the initial coaching sessions. As Grant 2006 (2006, pp. 153 ff.) asserts, such processes are activated repeatedly in a cyclical form throughout the whole process of coaching. In a study of coach behaviour Schmidt and Thamm (2008) found that goal clarification and self-reflection are activated throughout all of the coaching phases. As Clutterbuck (see chapter xxx in this book)
points out, the first goals mentioned at the beginning of the coaching by the coachee may even be unimportant. Coaches should be careful not to stick to them. The more the coachee trusts the coach, the more open she or he will be to self-reflection and talking frankly about important personal needs, wishes and goals.

2 The rubicon theory of motivation and coaching – The relevance of implementation intentions

Why don’t people carry out what they have planned to do? Why do coachees not start to act immediately after having reflected on and decided which goals they want to pursue and having developed a plan of action? Gollwitzer’s (1999) explanation is that these people did not form a definite implementation intention. The concept has often been illustrated by the following historical example:

2.1 The history of the crossing of the Rubicon

Motivation theories that integrate implementation intentions in their explanation are called Rubicon models. The name of these models refers to an action intention expressed by the Roman Julius Caesar in a famous speech to his legion. In 49 BC, supposedly on January 10th, at the river Rubicon, he said that he intended to cross the river with his troops and march towards Rome. The small river marked the boundary between the Roman province of Cisalpine Gaul and the region controlled directly by Rome. Any general was strictly forbidden by a traditional law to cross the river with his legions and thereby threaten the independence of the Roman senate. A general and soldier who violated this law automatically became an outlaw and was condemned to death. In his speech to the legion, according to the historian Suetorius, Caesar uttered the famous phrase *alea iacta est* (“The dies are cast”) to express his definite intention to march to Rome with his legion. Until today “crossing the Rubicon” serves as a metaphor for irrevocable decisions that have passed “the point of no return”. Later, we will come back to this story and tell how it went on after the crossing of the Rubicon.

2.2 Rubicon model of motivation

The Rubicon model of motivation (Gollwitzer, 1999; Heckhausen, 1991) assumes that the realization of an action phase is prepared by two phases. Figure 1 shows a summary of the Rubicon model of action phases. In the first, predecisional and deliberative phase, the person reflects on the costs and benefits of different possible goals. The phase is ended by a decision on the goal, the so-called goal intention (Heckhausen, 1991). An example of a team leader's goal intention would be: “In the future, I intend to give my team members more credit for good performance”. Goal intentions resemble the behavioural intentions in the Fishbein and Ajzen prediction model of behaviour (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1972; Fishbein & Ajzen, 2010). Results of empirical studies show that behaviour intentions account for only 20% to 30% of the variance in future behaviour (Ajzen, 1991). If we want to find higher percentages, it is necessary to analyse the phase following the formation of the goal intention.

The second phase ties in with Ach’s classical Volition Psychology (1905) and his assumption that the human volition or will activates “determining tendencies” that are necessary to prompt actions. Lewin (1926) also analyses the volitive processes that give rise to subjective states of tension after the individual has decided to carry out an action and is looking for opportunities for transferring the planned actions into practice (Lewin, 1926, pp. 57 ff.). Gollwitzer (1999) calls the volitional acts that precede and facilitate the execution of actions implementation intentions. Empirical studies support his assumption that the transfer of goal intentions into practice depends on the development of very precise anticipatory “If-then plans” as well as the development of firm intentions of where, when, and how to implement the actions. Examples are “Tomorrow morning, I will go to meet John in his office and give him credit for the perfect report that he has accomplished”. Or “If I meet John on the job
tomorrow, then I will tell him that I appreciate his report.” The important point is to specify at which time and location and in which manner he or she intends to act, or to which situational cues he or she is determined to respond according to the plan.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Basic constructs</th>
<th>Phases</th>
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<td>(A) Motivation</td>
<td>Predecisional deliberation</td>
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<td>and goal intention</td>
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<td>(B) Volition</td>
<td>Preactional planning</td>
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<td>Action</td>
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<td>(C) Motivation</td>
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Figure 1: The Rubicon model of action phases

2.3 Outcome studies and the practical application of implementation intentions

The results of a meta-analysis of 94 studies (Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006) show that activation of implementation intentions has a positive effect on a variety of desired outcomes, e.g. academic, personal and health goals. Grant (2001, p. 31) in his review of theories related to goal-oriented coaching refers to the Rubicon model and accentuates the need for a facilitation of the coachee’s transition from a deliberative mindset to an implementational mindset. He emphasizes that this transition implies a shift of the individual towards positive and optimistic views of the chances of success, associated with higher levels of self-regulation and goal attainment.

Storch (2004) describes what we can do to cross our own psychological Rubicon and how we are able by means of goal and implementation intentions to succeed in realizing the goal that we always wanted to reach wholeheartedly. In her example she describes a female teacher who fears burnout. In her New Year’s resolution she plans to reduce her workload, but after several unsuccessful trials in the weeks following she consults her friendly school principal and complains: “Well, I know I should cut down on work, but somehow I don't want to. I'm not that old! I keep telling myself that I should say ‘no’ when the next project comes up…” Obviously, as Storch accentuates, she has not yet crossed her Rubicon and is still is captive to ruminations about her situation and to her fruitless self-reflections. The comments in this example case could have originated from a coaching session.

Storch (2004) continues with her example and observes that when the teacher starts to talk about a plan for going on a school trip and a seminar on new pedagogic concepts, her face brightens and her enthusiasm is high: “You know, this trip is led by a young colleague; he is such a talented teacher…” The emotional reactions show that her motivation to participate in the trip is intensive. She decides to register for the trip and thereby starts to cross her Rubicon. In addition she would be well-advised to monitor her weekly time schedule and identify all those tasks that are dispensable, since they are a waste of time or could be delegated, and develop a complementary plan to use the time saved for her recreation. An example of her resulting implementation intention might be: “If my colleagues ask me to accept an additional task, I will definitely say no.” She would also do well to choose the next possible day for
starting her planned new task reduction and recreation plan. Storch (2004) mentions the difficulty of changing habituated routine behaviour. If even after self-contained efforts it is still impossible to put our New Year resolutions into action or reach our personal goals, she advocates seeking coaching. She recommends using visualization techniques that facilitate memorizing intentions and support the development of a clear mental image of the situational cues that are intended to activate the intended new behaviour. Adriaanse et al. (2010) provide evidence from two studies that implementation intentions combined with imagining positive consequences of the intended behaviour in difference to the outcome of unchanged behaviour by mental contrasting techniques. The combination is more effective in diminishing unhealthy snacking habits. Additional mental contrasting helps the subjects to clarify critical cues for stopping the unwanted habitual behaviour.

2.4 Intention memory

Planned actions are performed only if the individual remembers his or her implementation intentions in the transfer situation. Kuhl (1984) assumes that humans possess a special intention memory that helps them to achieve long-term goals. Its function is similar to that of the working memory (Baddeley, 1997), except that it represents action-related rather than sensory information. It specializes in implementation intentions, which are difficult motivationally to transfer into practice (for example because they require a high level of energy or many action steps). Experimental studies by Goschke and Kuhl (1993) show that a heightened level of activation increases the probability that intentions will be retrieved. This activation, according to their assumption, is a means of inhibiting distractions and competing intentions originating from the memory system. Similar inhibitory processes have been demonstrated in two further experimental studies (Kazén & Kuhl, 2005; Kuhl & Kazén, 1999).

In everyday behaviour, we can observe many practical examples of how people use external aids to activate their intention memory. People use a shopping list when they plan to buy many goods in a supermarket and don’t want to forget any single item. Coloured Post-its® are popular modern memory tools and can be stuck to nearly every object in order to make a note. Washing bag systems are simple but ingenious devices for if-then reminders of action intentions. They tell us: “If the bag for white/coloured laundry is full, wash white/coloured laundry!” And last but not least we should mention calendar systems (paper, computer or PDA) and clocks that ring and remind us when to start a planned action. In coaching, inspired by these external intention memories, we can recommend our coachees to apply similar reminders or to be creative and invent new ones that can be used in the transfer situation. For example, an inexperienced presenter who tends to rush his slides too quickly without eye contact with the audience might put a nice little symbol on every third power point slide. The audience may interpret the symbol as an ornament. But the presenter knows that it reminds him, “At this moment, please grab eye contact with the audience, and if you are talking too quickly, take a deep breath and slow down.” People are very different in their preferences regarding external intention memories. Some people cannot live without their PDA-calendar whereas others hate such technical devices. Some like and others reject Post-its and call them childish kindergarten tools.

2.5 Why do implementation intentions work?

Many studies show that implementation intentions increase the probability of transfer of planned actions into practice. But a question that is still open for discussion is why and by what processes implementation intentions have an effect on goal attainment. Are the effects found caused simply by a strengthening of goal intentions through an intensive preoccupation with the intentions? Or do implementation intentions work because they increase self-efficacy? Webb and Sheeran (2008) performed two studies that try to answer these questions. They performed a meta-analysis of a total of 34 existing studies which included measures of
goal intentions or self-efficacy. The findings provided evidence that forming implementation intentions on average had only very small effects on goal intention strength. Similarly, the mean influence of implementation intentions on self-efficacy remains very small. The authors therefore conclude that it is unlikely that the effects of implementation intentions on goal attainment can be explained by changes in goal intentions or self-efficacy.

Looking for an alternative explanation for the effects, Webb and Sheeran (2008) refer to an assumption of Gollwitzer's (1999) that implementation intentions raise the mental accessibility of the cues of the anticipated situational opportunities for performing the intended behaviour in the real transfer situation and therefore have an influence on goal oriented behaviour. If the mental association between the opportunities is strengthened, the influence is expected to be stronger. In a refined randomly controlled study Aarts, Dijksterhuis and Midden (1999) tested the hypothesis that cue accessibility mediates the effects of implementation intentions. They told participants in an experiment that they would need to collect a coupon after the experiment (goal behaviour) at another location that was difficult to find. Half of the participants where instructed to form an adequate implementation intention (where, when and how to collect the coupon) and the other half were asked to form an irrelevant one (where, when and how to spend the coupon). Before the coupon collection the participants were asked to perform a task on the computer and check a series of text strings as quickly as possible as to whether they were words or non-words. Among the strings were verbal cues to the location of the coupon (e.g. left, corridor, swing door). The latencies of the reactions to the cue words were used as measures of the strength of their accessibility. The results support the assumptions. Only 50% of the participants with the irrelevant intentions but 80% of the group with the adequate instructions collected the coupons. Furthermore, the effects were mediated by heightened cue accessibility.

What practical conclusions can be derived for practical coaching interventions from these studies on the processes behind implementation intentions? The coach is well advised to support the coachee in analysing and reflecting on the concrete transfer situation, and anticipating and repeating the cues that guide the sequence of planned actions. This is a good transition to the next question, which is: what happens in the real transfer situation after crossing the Rubicon?

3 What follows the crossing of the Rubicon? – Complex and unpredictable problem situations and transfer process coaching

3.1 An unpredicted situation after crossing the Rubicon
The phases of the Rubicon models of motivation do not tell the full story. For Caesar it was easy to cross the Rubicon as intended and announced. No one hindered him and his legion in their march towards and into the city of Rome as intended. However, the difficult part of the story began afterwards. Caesar had not foreseen that his adversary, the general and consul Gnaeus Pompeius Magnus, would meanwhile have convinced the senate not to fight against Caesar straight away, but rather to leave Rome with all the rich Romans and to take all food and valuable goods with them. His plan was to organise a large army against Caesar in Greece. Therefore Caesar found an almost empty city. His soldiers were deeply disappointed, because they were hungry and were waiting for the pay that Caesar had promised them in Rome, and Caesar himself did not immediately reach his goal of winning power over the Roman Empire. Instead he had to cope with many conflicts in his own legion and to develop a completely different strategy and action plan. He won several battles against the legions of Pompeius in Spain and lost one in Dyrrachium. He adapted to new problem situations flexibly and nearly overstrained his military resources. Ultimately, he won the war and power over the Roman Empire in the battle of Pharsalos on August 9th 48 BC against Pompey’s, who commanded twice the number of soldiers, by means of a superior strategy and his charismatic
leadership.
The decision to cross the Rubicon is a good example of a long and difficult process of goal-oriented and flexible actions that demand strategic management of many unpredictable problem situations and many more than just one implementation intention, continuous resource activation, and creative solutions after the failure of these actions.

3.2 Phases after crossing the Rubicon
The Rubicon Phase Model presented in figure 1 above has to be extended to include the specific processes of preparation for and coping with difficult transfer problems. Figure 2 gives an overview of the extended phase model. A list of corresponding coaching methods has been added next to each phase. Several of these have been mentioned in the presentation above. Those remaining will be described below. The back bent arrows between the phases in the figure indicate that the phases do not necessarily follow in a sequence. People often seesaw between adjacent or earlier phases or skip phases. People who endlessly ruminate about problems or themselves without acting are fixated on problem- or self-reflection in the first Phase A.

Phase A: Transition from need to motive
A good headline for Phase A (Motivation) of the Rubicon model according to Storch and Krause (2002) is “Transition from need to motive”. Basic coaching methods that can be applied here are facilitation of problem- and self-reflection and goal clarification. As Storch (2004) points out, a first step in psychotherapy or coaching towards clarifying motives and initial goals is exploring the feelings of the client that are associated with the goals. Self-congruent goals are often associated with positive bodily feelings, so-called somatic markers. They help to find out how strong wishes are and motivate or energize goal intentions.

Storch (2004) in addition recommends applying resource activation methods in Phase A. In general, two classes of resources are distinguished: (1) an individual's internal or personal resources (e.g., motivation and energy, traits, abilities, competencies, knowledge and potentials) and (2) external resources (e.g. support from people in the occupational or private environment and technical support or knowledge systems). Studies show that resource activation assessed by the behaviour observation of therapists (Gassmann & Grawe, 2006) as well as those of coaches (Behrendt, 2006; Greif, 2010) predicts outcome and is therefore assumed to be a general success factor in both psychotherapy and coaching, and one that can be trained systematically (Storch & Krause, 2002).

Phase B1 “Crossing the Rubicon” and B2 “We shall overcome”
Another recommended extension of the Rubicon phase model by Storch (2004) is a differentiation of the preactional preparation Phase B into two phases: the classical phase of crossing the Rubicon, Phase B1 (Volition, i.e. forming of implementation intentions), and Phase B2 (Planning of a Resource Pool supporting self-management of the clients in the transfer situation). As will be outlined in the description of the next phase, transfer-coaching methods can support the transfer of the intended action into practice. We therefore add here the planning of transfer coaching. Examples of methods in Phase B2 are a reflection of internal and external transfer obstacles or barriers (e.g. internal and external change resistance), resource activation (recalled from Phase A) and development of a plan as to how to apply the resources and transfer coaching in the action Phase C. Since the coachee is not left alone while trying to transfer the intended actions or changes into practice, “We shall overcome!” might be an apposite headline for Phase B2.
**Basic processes**

**Phases**

**Coaching methods**

(A) Motivation and resource activation  
Predecisional deliberation and goal intention. “Transition from need to motive” (Storch & Krause, 2002)  
Problem- and self-reflection, goal clarification, identification of somatic markers, resource activation

(B1) Preactional Preparation (Volition)  
Goal attainment planning and forming of implementation intentions “Crossing the Rubicon”  
Preliminary planning, forming of implementation intentions

(B2) Preactional Preparation (Planning of resources and transfer)  
Planning of resource activation, implementation and transfer “We shall overcome!”  
Reflection of transfer barriers, planning of the resource pool, planning of the transfer coaching

(C) Transfer Process Coping (Action, evaluation and re-motivation)  
Power- and resourceful result-oriented transfer coping “If it doesn’t work I will try again in a different way!”  
Postactional evaluation & process reflection, shadowing, coping with failure, goal redefinition, encouragement

(D) Postprocess Evaluation and Future Planning  
Future oriented development of a sense of achievement and realistic self efficacy “Lessons learned for my future”  
Result-oriented problem and self-reflection, realistic goal and self concept development

| Figure 2: Extended Rubicon and transfer model of action phases |

**Phase C: “If it doesn’t work, I will try again in a different way!”**

This phase, to which not enough attention has been paid in the standard Rubicon Phase Model, is the action phase after crossing the Rubicon: the *transfer* of difficult action intentions into practice or Real-World Practice. Studies show that rigid implementation intentions may be problematic in transfer situations that require flexibility (Gollwitzer, Fujita, & Oettingen, 2004). Perfectionists, who try to control reality completely, should not be encouraged to do so by forming implementation intentions. This will backfire on their actions in a negative way (Powers, Koestner, & Topciu, 2005). Additionally, high occupational stress diminishes the effects of implementation intentions (Budden & Sagarin, 2007).

Stewart et al. (2008) propose a coaching transfer model that distinguishes between motivational, work environment and situational factors that facilitate or hinder the transfer. They see a need more research examining the complex interplay of factors beyond the coachee-coach relationship.

Coaches, who accompany their coachees in complex transfer situations, know that unexpected
difficulties and obstacles – as in the example of Caesar after the transition of the Rubicon – may hinder the performance of the intended actions, or that the actions after their execution do not lead to the expected outcome. Let us start with seemingly simple examples of coaching, where the coachees know what they have to do and where the outcome is predictable. Later, in an extra subchapter we will focus on actions and changes with unpredictable outcome and low agreement on what to do.

3.3 Transfer process coaching in predictable outcome situations

Sometimes coaching is simple. The coachee knows what she or he wants and what to do to reach the goal. One or two coaching sessions allow sufficient time to concentrate on what to do and to form an action intention. The coachee succeeds in performing the action in the transfer situation and the outcome of the action is as positive as expected. But practical experience tells us that such simple coaching tasks are rare. Very often, coachees underestimate the difficulties involved in changing their habitual behaviour. The self-efficacy expectations of many people often are very optimistic and few are prepared for the realisation that in the transfer situation diffuse inner resistances may come up or external obstacles hinder the execution of planned behaviour. It is so easy to find good reasons why today we will postpone an intended promotion of our health by regular jogging after work. There is an urgent telephone call or the day was too hard and we need a rest...

Peterson (2010) points out that changing habits and displaying new behaviour is not always successful at first. It requires conscious effort and self-monitoring of Real-World Practice. Sometimes it is necessary to train a behaviour in a safe environment (e.g. by role-playing in the coaching session or with friends). Coaches are able to stimulate their coachees to evaluate and reflect on the internal and external obstacles in the transfer situation in a systematic way through process reflection methods and encouragement in overcoming internal or external barriers more persistently or differently and more adequately. Such support of transfer into practice is an important success factor in the process of coaching (Greif, 2010). However, standard books of coaching techniques (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2005, 2009; Rauen, 2004, 2007) do not contain methods that specifically address how to overcome difficulties in the transfer of intended actions into practice. Peterson (2010), as mentioned above, incorporated this “missing piece” in her analysis of coaching conversations as described above. Another approach is the telephone transfer coaching of Geißler (2011). It is similar to the Telephone Shadowing technique that will be explained in the following sections.

**Shadowing**

Shadowing is attendance to and observation of a person performing actions. Different types of professional shadowing in learning settings can be distinguished. Job or work shadowing is a technique of observational learning, where a learner accompanies an experienced practitioner in his or her daily routines and observes their performance (e.g. in an externship); but also, vice-versa, an experienced person may shadow a person who is trying to implement new or difficult actions in a real-life situation.

In the following we will focus on the latter version, which is sometimes called Shadow Consultation (Resnick & King, 1985) or Solution Monitoring (Mumford & Connelly, 1991). A survey shows that it is rated amongst the most effective of different personnel development interventions (Jarvis, Lane, & Filler-Travis, 2006, p. 28). By the presence of the consultant or coach the coachee is reminded “not to forget“ and to try hard to execute the implementations. In the case of failure or unpredicted problems and outcome, result-oriented process-reflection can be started directly while the situation is still mentally present. Psychologically important is an amelioration of possible negative emotions (see below) and feelings of helplessness by means of re-motivation and encouragement of the client to try again directly after the situation, perhaps in a different, more adaptive way. Practical observation shows that clients
tend to give up quickly after a failure. If several days pass before the coach is able to intervene, the coachee becomes resigned and re-motivation can become very difficult. However, since a possible danger of Shadowing is that clients may depend too much on the presence of the consultant or coach, it is necessary to support the client in learning how to monitor and reflect on their transfer trials in a result-oriented and autonomous way and use self-motivation techniques without assistance.

Kilburg (2002, p. 92) concludes that „when done well, shadow consultation creates a safe, interpersonal containment in which a consultant and a colleague can reflect carefully on any and all dimensions that may be creating impacts on a project. It can lead to dramatic improvements in the ability to be self-aware and therefore self-managing and self-confident in consulting assignments. It also creates a safety net through which a mature practitioner is unlikely to fall when the inevitable problems occur in our very difficult work. For new or less experienced practitioners, it is a wonderful way to stretch the learning curve and to do so quickly with live material that has immediate impact on performance.“

Kilburg (2002) found that the technique is widely practiced in the field of organizational development, however, research on the technique is scanty. In the field of coaching even less studies on the effects of shadowing can be found. Karboul (2009) mentions that he has used it in an international coaching project. The perhaps most systematic application study has been published by Kaufel et al. (2006). They studied the outcome of voluntary coachings of German Military officers following 360°-Feedback. After goal clarification in the preliminary coaching sessions, shadowing was offered to 160 officers (they called it „Führungsbegleitung“, leadership accompaniment). The trained coaches accompanied up to ten officers on the job for several days, observed their behaviour and reflected on their observed goal-oriented actions in closely following coaching sessions. The combination of 360°-feedback and coaching with shadowing resulted in strong pre-post-effects (.14 < d > .50), measured by improvements of their 360°-ratings. The increases were higher than those in groups without shadowing. There is evidence from evaluation interviews that the coaches in this study had been accepted as a feedback source and improved the feedback orientation of the coachees as demanded by Gregory, Levy and Jeffers (2008).

Telephone Shadowing
In the field of sport coaching, nobody would consider monitoring of the coachee by the coach in the transfer situation not to be absolutely normal. In business coaching shadowing can be pejorative for the coachee. The coach is therefore sometimes introduced as an expert or consultant who is participating in the situation. Where face-to-face presence of the coach in the transfer situation is not acceptable or too expensive, Telephone Shadowing is an alternative (see box). In coaching organizational change processes, continuous Telephone Shadowing is often the only possible coaching intervention, since processes are dynamic and quick, with many critical situations and decisions that have to follow directly after unexpected situations and outcomes.

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**Box – Telephone Shadowing**

**Telephone appointments**
Coach and coachee plan telephone coaching sessions at appointed times or when considered necessary by the coachee. Normally, it is recommended that Telephone Shadowing be carried out as shortly as possible after the transfer situation.

**Internal and external barriers**
If internal or external barriers are strong, a short encouraging telephone call can be arranged in addition shortly before the situation. In the telephone call after the transfer trial coachee and coach reflect on the performance of the coachee in the situation, on
possible internal and external difficulties and barriers that may have hindered the coachee in acting as intended, and on how she or he can overcome these obstacles next time.

**Psychological essentials**

Since the coach is not present in the situation itself, the process-reflection and feedback depends on the observations of the situation and self-monitoring of the coachee. If the coachee failed to execute the intended actions, encouragement and re-motivation directly after the experiences of frustration or helplessness are psychologically essential. If in particular the inner barriers or external obstacles were unexpected or if the outcome of the actions was not as positive as predicted, the coachee might redefine the goals and adapt the planned actions and implementation intentions on the basis of positive result-oriented problem- and self-reflection, and is encouraged to retry in the next possible situation.

We have optimized the Telephone Shadowing technique, and developed a short guideline and training for coaches. The following example illustrates how to apply the technique. We start with a seemingly simple case with high agreement about what to do and high predictability of outcome. Later we will come back to complex situations with unpredictable outcome and low agreement.

*Case example: one year of procrastination in writing the master thesis*

The coachee was a postgraduate psychology student in a coaching seminar focusing on procrastination. He was a member of one of the triads that had the task of practicing coaching sequences. The group came to me and told me that they did not know how to coach one of their members with a severe procrastination problem. For a whole year he had postponed starting to write the master thesis that he had agreed upon with his professor. He had collected and read a lot of literature, completed his study, and analysed the data statistically, but again and again his attempts to start writing petered out. Whenever he formed the firm intention of starting to work on his thesis, at the moment of truth he found good reasons for why he now had to postpone the start or to reduce the start to a hasty, ineffective and frustrating trial.

In a short coaching session I found out that his ability to write short scientific texts seemed to be good. He had a student assistant job in a scientific project and had written several reports without problems. One external barrier to finding time for the thesis was that he had assumed too many responsibilities in this and additional jobs. His major inner resistance seemed to be his ambitious achievement motive. He wanted to write an excellent thesis that qualified him for a scientific career. Whenever he tried to start, he brooded about how to write an exceptional text. He did not find a solution that satisfied his aspirations and, frustrated, developed a routine as to how to suppress his brooding and frustrating attempts by procrastinating and taking on more and more seemingly urgent jobs.

I asked him when he would be able to organise a free day for the next trial. He said that this would be possible on the following Monday. I asked him if we could have a telephone call in the early afternoon after he had tried to start. He accepted unhesitatingly. We then talked about what could be an easy start for next Monday. We came to the conclusion that he should avoid the ambitious parts and start with a description of the sample and realisation of his study. „Keep your ambition, but great projects often start with a small step.“

In the Telephone Shadowing session on Monday, he was emotionally completely down. He told me that when he wanted to get started, his Personal Computer did not start correctly and showed a blue screen. He tried to fix the problem, but did not succeed and feared that his hard disk had crashed. I showed much understanding and helped him to reflect on his external resources, i.e. who could help him diagnose and repair the technical problem. He formed a
new intention and plan to restart his writing directly after the repair. He started to write on the next day but one. In the telephone call after the start he told me that he was much relieved that he had started well, but still very unsecure about whether he would be able to work persistently and asked me to support him by further telephone calls. I reinforced his successful first trial intensively and we agreed on several calls after the next trials.

To cut it short, we needed only five calls for him to develop the routine and self-motivation techniques necessary for him to write continuously. After the third, the calls became very short, since he reported no problems and his self-efficacy was growing. In the last call we reflected on the process and techniques that he can use autonomously in order to surmount possible barriers and to motivate and remind himself to execute his action intentions in the future. He sent me the completed chapters per email to show me that his thesis was progressing. In the end I got a copy of his thesis with a grateful dedication. He earned a top grade and his professor offered him the position of a research assistant.

Practical experience gained by Telephone Shadowing shows that very often it is a quick and efficient intervention. In some cases it is necessary to agree on Telephone Shadowing over a long period of time. My longest case was a student who failed his master examination at a London University and had only one more chance to repeat it one year later. His goals were to improving his learning and memorizing techniques, reading and memorizing the recommended very comprehensive literature and improving his written English for the answers to the open examination questions. In addition, he wanted to stop his nearly permanent rumination on his failure and to learn how to control his examination anxiety before and in the examination. We worked successfully on each of these goals and he received a “merit”. Telephone Shadowing was used to re-motivate him continuously and to support his persistency in keeping up his voluminous and long-term reading and learning demands. Most of the telephone sessions were between ten and twenty minutes.

As the examples demonstrate, Telephone Shadowing is a technique that supports the goal-oriented self-regulation of the coachee performing difficult transfer tasks in executing their action intentions on time and achieving concrete results. On the basis of practical evidence we assume that it is a powerful technique that can be recommended for testing by professional coaches. Kreggenfeld and Reckert (2008) applied a similar telephone coaching developed by Geißler (2011) supporting the transfer. They found that the goal attainment rate rose above 80%. However, until additional case studies and randomly controlled outcome studies are published, it will remain a promising methodology with very limited scientific evidence. Having said that, if we screen the literature on coaching outcome research (Grant, 2008), this is still true for other intervention methods too. The number of overall coaching outcome studies with random control group design is in the meantime growing, but we lack studies analysing the specific effects of special coaching techniques. In the last subchapter we will come back and discuss necessary future research.

3.3 Unpredictable outcome of actions

Professional coaches know from their experience that their coachees, not unlike Caesar, often face unpredicted turbulent situations while trying to implement their planned actions. In such cases the coaching job is not as simple as in the cases above. For the coaching of high stress leaders Cavanagh (2010) refers to complexity science (Zimmerman, Lindberg, & Plsek, 1998) and a matrix of situations developed by Stacey (1996). As Figure 3 shows, it is possible to differ between situations with low and high (1) agreement between experienced people about what to do and (2) predictability of the outcome of planned actions. Only in the small zone, where both agreement and predictability are high because the consequences of actions follow a linear model, do rational, knowledge-based decisions lead to the expected goals. The two case examples above belong in this zone. If the predictability of action outcomes remains high but agreement or knowledge about what to do is lacking, decisions are based on opinion-
based preferences. A situation in which both predictability and agreement are low is a zone of chaos. Approaching such situations at the “edge of chaos”, people feel more and more uncertain. The zone between chaos and linear relations between actions and outcome, according to Cavanagh (2010) is characterized by mainly self-organizing processes. Here solutions emerge by evolutionary selection amongst trials. Since this between-zone demands heretofore unconventional or unexpected solutions, it can be perceived as a zone of creative and innovative solutions. Such complex and non-linear outcome situations, following complexity science, should not be avoided, but accepted as chances for innovation.

Cavanagh (2010) challenges coaching theory and the profession, and criticises that we focus too much on the field of linear processes and high predictive outcome. He demands that the non-linear and unpredictable, even chaotic environments of the coachee be taken into consideration in coaching. But how can we support our coachees in coping with situations where the outcome of their actions is non-linear or unpredictable? In order to answer this challenging question in the following we will go back to the general knowledge that chaos and self-organisation theories and research on successful goal-oriented problem solving behaviour in unpredictable situations provide. Later, a case example will be used to illustrate the practical implications for coaching.

Chaos and self-organisation theories and their practical implications

One of the fathers of modern chaos theory is the French mathematician Henri Poincaré (1890). He detected that simple systems can produce complex and unpredictable dynamic processes. Since then, unpredictability has been seen as a core characteristic of chaotic processes in systems. Popular chaos theories (Gleick, 1987; Kauffman, 1991) also look for general answers to the question of how transitions from states of chaos to stable order with predictable outcome emerge in physical, chemical, biological or social systems. A central assumption is that they are able to develop order through self-organisation (spontaneous semi-autonomous organised processes). A simple example is the rolling around of a marble in a basin. All processes, including chaos, are influenced by the surrounding conditions and so-called attractors. In this simple example, the form of the basin is an important surrounding condition and the attractor is the lowest point of the basin, where the marble comes to rest after it has lost momentum. If a person throws the marble into the basin, the precise rolling process is not predictable, since it depends on the force of the throw and the exact point at which it hits the basin. Due to the attractor, the end point of the movement is predictable. But if several attractors exist and if the surrounding conditions change dynamically, as can be true for more complex systems, the end state is at least partially unpredictable. Haken (1988) developed Synergetics, an interdisciplinary general self-organisation theory of micro and macro systems. It analyses states of chaos, order, stable and unstable phases, and transitional processes precisely by means of control- and order-parameters and mathematical functions. The basic concepts and assumptions of Synergetics have been generalized to processes of human perception and cognition (Haken & Stadler, 1990; Kriz, 2009).

Self-organisation theory applied to organisational change processes (Greif, Runde, & Seeberg, 2004), follows the basic assumptions of synergetic chaos theory. It explains why crisis or the demands of radical changes often result in complex chaotic conflicts and much informal change resistance. This happens if the control- and order-parameters of the organisation processes have changed radically (e.g. by a critical decrease in economic return after a strong decline in the market demand for the products of a company) and if there is much disagreement between and among management and employees about possible solutions. Especially when uncertainty is high and formal and informal evaluations of solutions are very controversial and if opinions change quickly, the heterogeneous communications of the formal and informal opinion leaders operate like multiple dynamic and unpredictably changing attractors. The result is chaos.
Far from agreement about what to do

High agreement

Political decision, negotiation; compromise,

Self-Organising (zone of innovation creativity)

Disintegration, chaos

High predictability of outcome

Low predictability of outcome

Figure 3 – The Stacey Agreement/Certainty Matrix (modified from Stacey, 1996, p. 47)

Self-organisation theory also gives a general explanation for how new orders emerge after phases of chaos or instability. For example, if accepted transformational leaders communicate the necessity of changes credibly and convincingly to all levels of the organisation and explain concrete models that are understood, the communication functions like an attractor to the organisation members. If in addition realistic goals are implemented as control- and order-parameters, and if individuals and groups are encouraged and empowered to develop and test creative solutions for urgent problems against the given control- and goal-parameters and improve them adaptively, they will use their expertise and problem solving capacities together with their self-organisation abilities and generate new goal-oriented solutions together.

A background element of Synergetics is the theory of evolution. Solutions that are more adaptive and effective according to the assumptions made are selected after trial and error in an evolutionary way. The best solutions will tend to be imitated, copied and spread within the organisation. Their diffusion generates changes in the ordering processes within the organisation. It is therefore conductive for the evolution of and transition to a new and effective order in the organisation to quickly communicate the solutions that perform best as best practice models within the organisation, as it is if local solutions are linked amongst themselves in an evolutionary process too. If the new order results with a high level of probability in the intended outcomes, the organisation has succeeded in again transforming its processes so that they are orderly and predictive and it can start to work on optimizing and stabilising the new system.

Uncertainty and problem solving

An experienced coach, when supporting a manager coping with organisational changes, needs to understand the general dynamics of managing complex and unpredictable processes. She or he should be aware of concrete examples of successful innovative changes that – when adapted to the concrete situation of the coachee – can be used as possible mental models, showing the coachee how it is possible to influence the transformation of chaotic phases and facilitate processes that move towards new states of effective order.

Dörner (1990) studied human problem solving actions in interaction with computer-simulated complex systems in numerous experiments (e.g. management of the simulated system of a company or small town, a Third World country or an ecological system). Major individual performance differences in the success of managing complex systems were observed. Dörner
(1990) proposed that successful system management depends on special types of problem solving abilities that are independent of intelligence test measures. However, evidence shows that there is a special intelligence factor that measures the capacity for processing complex information (e.g. understanding complex texts, tables and figures) and predicts performance (Otto, Döring-Seipel, & Lantermann, 2002).

Dörner (1990) assumes that humans are able to adapt to uncertainty by forming hypotheses about situations marked by uncertainty, expecting the unexpected and taking precautions against it by repeated monitoring of the action-outcome relations and adapting their actions in the processes according to their hypotheses and continuous observations. Human failure in particular is probable in the management of non-linear processes with time-delayed exponential outcome functions. Examples are epidemics that start slowly and need early provision to avoid unmanageable catastrophic growth. It is therefore important to convey the risks of such non-linear outcome functions and to train leaders how to intervene very quickly, if they are to be expected.

Osman (2010) has reviewed theories and research on human regulation of complex dynamic control tasks. She proposes that complex tasks generate psychological uncertainty, which in turn depends on (a) the amount of individual different subjective confidence in predicting outcomes (predictability of the environment) and (b) the level of expectation that a specific action will achieve a specific outcome (predictability of control). Successful adaptation to uncertain environments requires flexible goal-directed decisions and actions and accurate estimations of uncertainty. She refers to Brunswik's (1955) classical lens model and explains how people utilize qualitative cues to predict future outcomes (so-called „clinical judgment“ in contrast to statistical prediction models). Typical examples of cues that have been studied are observations from videos of employment interviews, e.g. subjective ratings of pleasant appearance and professional expertise, inferred from the good answers given to the interviewer's questions. Brunswik’s idea was to analyse empirically how people weigh up such cues in their decisions (e.g. whether to employ an applicant) and to analyse whether they are able to use them successfully to predict uncertain future outcome criteria (e.g. the occupational success of the applicant).

The results of Osman's (2010) meta-analysis show that the observed accuracy of human judgement as assumed in the model depends (1) on the predictability of an outcome on the basis of multiple cues, and (2) on how well the individual's judgment matches the ecological environment. If the relations between cues and outcome are nonlinear and exponential, people try to compensate this by giving the cues more weight in their predictions.

The multiple-cue-model has been applied in many fields. One field is the study of multiple cue probability learning. Here, a meta-analysis by Karelaia and Hogarth (2008) of a number of experimental studies shows that even if uncertainty is high individuals are able to learn low probabilistic relationships between cues and outcomes through a series of trials and feedback. They utilize the limited information available both from observed and unobserved or inferred cues.

In her extension of the model, Osman (2010, p. 73 f.) proposes that a high level of uncertainty leads to continuous task- and self-monitoring behaviours and more goal-directed actions, whereas low uncertainty results in less frequent, periodic monitoring and actions. Raising the frequency of monitoring is an intelligent reaction to uncertain outcome. In addition, she assumes that uncertain relationships generate more control actions and that feedback is necessary in order to update the knowledge of the task situation and information concerning the status of the relationship between desired and achieved outcomes.

*Intuition and emotion coping with complexity*

The cognitive theories and research presented above focus on rational aspects of problem
solving. However, this might be just one possible approach. Kriz (2008, pp. 133 ff.) proposes that in complex situations it is impossible to process all relevant information completely in a rational-analytical way. He assumes that the self-organising human brain is able to compensate missing information adequately (by so-called cognitive completion dynamics) and to abbreviate long deliberative phases by quick so-called intuitive insight and to discover even minimal regularities in complex systems. Intuitive insights are holistic (more right-hemispherical) problem solving processes and often occur unintentionally and suddenly. An example is the “aha!-effect” investigated by Gestalt psychology (Kriz, 2008, p. 154). Using their intuition, the therapist or coach and client open up a playful and creative space of possible future actions (Kriz, 2008, p. 155). Coachees often highlight that they have developed new insights through coaching. This is certainly true for coaches too.

Unexpectedly missing or negative outcomes after planned actions that have been well thought out and are associated with many hopes for achievement cause negative affect and feelings of stress. If trials don’t work, like in a Sisyphean struggle, alternative trials have to be planned and implemented again and again. As an emotional precondition of the persistent repetition of the trials, it is necessary to wind down negative affect and to build up enough motivational energy. In their theory of Emotional Intelligence, Salovey, Mayer and Caruso (2004) call this self-calming ability and downwinding of negative affect figuratively Emotional Repair. In our process-theory of coaching (Greif, 2008), we have integrated the assumption that an important task of coaches is to help their coachees sustain and develop self-calming and self-re-motivating abilities.

The development of self-calming abilities for dealing with emotions requires reflection. Otto et al. (2002) assume that the reflection of one’s emotions is important for successful coping with complex problem solving tasks and refer to a second important factor of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer, et al., 2004) measured by an Emotional clarity scale. The results of their study show that the scale predicts successful performance in complex simulated system management tasks just as well as the intellectual capacity for processing complex information. Grant et al. (2002) developed a scale with similar self-report items called Emotional Insight. Construct validation studies (Greif & Berg, in prep.) support the assumption that this scale correlates with measures of basic competences and psychological prerequisites of self-regulation and can be recommended as a measure in coaching outcome studies.

Summary of implications for coaching

What are the implications of the theoretical assumptions and research presented above for managing complex systems and low or unpredictable outcomes after interventions? The following points summarise the essentials:

• Expectation of the unexpected
• Knowledge of how stable and chaotic states of systems differ and how transitions between these states are possible by means of self-organization
• Repeated analysis of task and system or environment characteristics
• Continuous monitoring of informal evaluations by opinion leaders and observable data (e.g. economic criteria)
• Using multiple cues and learning how they relate to outcome criteria, even if the relations are minimal
• Attention to time-lagged influences with non-linear growth
• Use of rational and intuitive information processing
• Drawing upon intellectual resources to process complex information and develop
flexible problem solving abilities

- Clarification of emotions and unwinding of negative feelings after experiences of failure

The points in the list above can be translated directly into heuristics in coaching. A summary of an illustrative case example of coaching organisational changes is presented below.

**Case: Coaching and shadowing a project manager**

The following case refers to a company that belongs to the supply industry. It provides a diversity of services (energy, logistics, maintenance, facility management, supply) to chemical and pharmaceutical plants in one of the largest locations in Germany (4.6 km² and about 30,000 employees). The vision of the CEO and project manager was a radical customer-oriented reorganization of the core processes and structures and a substantial cost reduction in all services and subcompanies in comparison to the competitors.

I was asked to coach the CEO, the project manager and the core team for about one and a half years in all phases of the project. I accompanied the selection of the consultancy, development of different optional concepts, presentations to the heads of the firms that owned the company, negotiations with the powerful shop stewards, communications to the employees, starting sessions of the core team, analysis of the processes, customer interviews, planning and presentation of the complete reorganisation concept to the owners, implementation and last but not least evaluation of the planned changes. From the beginning the project was accompanied by many hidden pitfalls, conflicts and powerplays between and amongst the top levels. A possible strike announced by the powerful union threatened to stop the whole project.

In my coaching, I combined standard individual problem-solving coaching sessions with Shadowing (starting with face-to-face and later by telephone). For example, in the session the coachee analysed the momentary as-is-state and developed a plan of action and its implementation. In the sessions we talked a lot about the dynamics of complex organisational changes, informal change resistance and conflicts and how to manage uncertainty according to points mentioned in the summary above. Shadowing meant here that I accompanied the coachee in anticipated critical situations (e.g. start session of the core team, presentations to the owners, heads or lower leadership levels of the subcompanies and bargaining with the shop stewards), and observed the process and behaviour. In an evaluation session that followed on directly we reflected the process and analysed the results. I facilitated problem- and self-reflection and eventually a goal redefinition, and the development of action plans and implementation intentions. The whole coaching process can be summarised by cycles of (1) preparatory sessions, (2) implementation situations with or without shadowing and (3) evaluation sessions. As the coaching process advanced I reflected with the coachees on how they could replace the shadowing with self-monitoring and self-feedback. As a consequence, as the coaching progressed the number of shadowing situations was reduced and it was possible to make myself redundant as an observer and coach. It is interesting to note that both the CEO and the project manager had no problem with introducing me to their environment and also in the Shadowing situations frankly as their coach and an experienced consultant concerning difficult changes.

How is it possible for a coachee to define intermediate organisational and personal goals and reference values for self-regulation as demanded by self-regulation theory (see introduction above) in complex and dynamic organizational change processes and to support him- or herself in managing uncertainty successfully? The answer to this question is a big and ongoing challenge for both the coachee and any coach who tries to support them. The monitoring task of the coachee, supported by the coach, is twofold. Before monitoring his own actions and development in the process by means of self-observation and result-oriented
self-reflection (and improving his behaviour and potential), she or he has to monitor the advancement of the overall organizational change processes (and manage predicted and unpredicted changes, guided by the goals and reference values of the planned changes).

Self-regulation theory focuses more on self-monitoring and not primarily on monitoring of external processes and system or task characteristics. In accordance with research on successful problem solving (see above), we assume that in coaching sessions result-oriented problem-reflection has to be activated more frequently than self-reflection (Greif, 2010). The special learning demand in managing uncertainty is to expect the unexpected and continuously monitor a dynamically changing external situation, within which the coachee is an active agent. Since it is impossible to analyse and predict uncertain future changes and the consequences of all possible interventions fully, problem reflection and reference values that are based on holistic and intuitive practical knowledge and inference are necessary for process-monitoring. In order to manage organisational change processes, information on quantitative economic data changes and the observance of the time schedule of the planned changes are very important, but they render only an incomplete picture of the various situations. Even more important is an exploration and monitoring of the different perspectives and reactions of the organization members, especially their informal evaluations of the changes, positive commitment and cooperation, or hidden change resistance. Improving the Perspective Taking Capacity, according to Cavanagh (2011), is essential in coaching leaders to cope with stress-inducing changes. A useful goal for the project manager is to explore the different perspectives and evaluations of the formal and informal opinion leaders in the changes, and identify and manage emerging conflicts and change resistance as early as possible before they become too difficult to handle. A practical technique is “management by walking around”, talking informally to all influential key persons and opinion leaders in the change processes (on the lower levels of the formal hierarchy as well) and listening attentively to their observations and evaluations of the on-going change processes. If they mention problems, the change manager should ask them to explain as concretely as possible what the problem is, what in their opinion the causes of the problem are, and how the problem can be solved. It is important not to decide prematurely what to do after one single talk.

The job of managing uncertain organisational changes is strenuous, not only for the coachee, but also for the coach in the background. As coach in the example above, I too wished for encouragement in supporting the coachees in coping with many unexpected and seemingly unsolvable problem situations and the frustrating new conflicts that arose permanently. My question was how could I keep my professional distance in the demanding coaching process and have enough time for reflection independently from my coachees? I therefore asked the company to pay for a coach for myself and they accepted. This coaching of the coach was very supportive, both for me directly and, I suspect, indirectly for the company as well. The goal attainment rates of the changes after the reorganisation of the subcompanies (based on economic criteria and expert ratings) ranged between 85 and 100%.

4 Result-oriented coaching and continuous reflective practice
What are the functions of coaching in a world of unpredicted turbulence in the economic world and an accelerated innovation tempo in markets and in organisations? Two core functions of coaches are (1) to support continuous goal-oriented monitoring and reflective practice and (2) provide a persistent collaborative social construction of concrete positive results. Political and organisational leaders have made too many premature or false decisions based on one-sided perspectives and opinions without intensive result-oriented reflection. And too many positive future outcomes have been promised that have never occurred. Too often they have sold their goals as if they are attainable without any uncertainty. We therefore prefer, in addition to correcting unrealistic goals, to focus more on concrete positive results and develop process-theories for result-oriented coaching (Greif, 2008; 2010). In
unpredictable change processes, continuous reflective practice is an indispensable precondition for achieving concrete positive results.

Coaching should help transformational leaders to expect the unexpected and continuously explore, monitor and reflect before deciding what to do, and to decide about and persistently manage uncertainty flexibly and innovatively. The credibility of the leader for his followers is an essential basic attribute. The coach has to support him or her as to how she might communicate frankly about as yet unsolved problems and explain convincingly how the open problems can be managed and solved. The significance of the coach in the background depends on the outcome of the changes that have been supported. We will never know definitely whether and how many positive outcomes in a world of change can be attributed to coaching, but we should reflect on our function and hypothetical contribution towards the enhancement of result-oriented reflective practice and towards generating innovative solutions and concrete positive results. Double loop reflective learning (Argyris, 2002) for the coach, who stimulates continuous reflective and result-oriented practice in the coachee and reflects the coaching process in the long run, is proposed in order to lead to better theories of coaching and more positive results, even where the processes are not predictable.

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