



## Certificate in Psychosynthesis Leadership Coaching Programme for the Istituto Internazionale Psicointesi Educativa

### Unit 3: Workshops 4 & 5 Study Guide: *Coaching Interventions*

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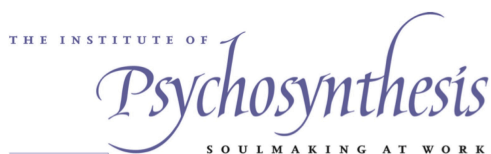
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## Weekend Three: Psychosynthesis Coaching Interventions

### Context

**Weekend (3)** builds upon the core model of Trifocal Vision with different ways of intervening and working in coaching, which the psychosynthesis practitioner coach can draw upon effectively when and where applicable. We focus on three approaches; Heron's six-category intervention model, Mindsets and Subpersonalities. We approach subpersonalities assuming an existing depth of knowledge of participants and explore the use of subpersonalities in organisations. We draw together the threads of the 6 days and agree future actions and support to help students practice and develop their learned skills.

### Key Outcomes

- ❖ Increased ability to work **psychologically** as a coach and a deeper understanding of **human behaviour and development**
- ❖ Confidence in using coaching **models, strategies and tools** that support being an effective leadership coach

### Key Topics

Heron's Six Category Interventional Analysis

Working with Mindsets

Working with subpersonalities in leadership development

Psychosynthesis as an integrative psychology for leadership coaching

## Workshop Outline

	Day One	Day Two
<b>Check-in/review</b> 10:00 Day 1 09:00 Day 2	Reflection and check-in. Weekend overview.	Reflection and check-in Working with subpersonalities plenary
<b>Session 1</b>	Introduction to Heron's Six Category Interventional Analysis	Introduction to Mindsets
<b>Break</b>		
<b>Session 2</b>	Heron's Six Category Interventional Analysis - triads practical work	Working with Mindsets - practice
<b>Lunch</b> e.g. 12:30-13:30		
<b>Session 3</b>	Heron's Six Category Interventional Analysis - plenary	Working with Mindsets - plenary
<b>Break</b>		
<b>Session 4</b>	Working with subpersonalities in coaching - large and small group discussion	Psychosynthesis as an integrative psychology for leadership coaching
<b>Break</b>		
<b>Session 5</b>	Working with subpersonalities in coaching - pairs practical work	
<b>Check-out/ completion</b> End 18:00 Day 1 End 16:00 Day 2	Reflection and check-out.	Homework and ongoing practice Reflection and check-out.

## Heron's Six Category Interventional Analysis Model

### Overview

By intervention we mean an identifiable piece of verbal and/or non verbal behaviour that is part of the practitioners service to the client.

The model describes the intention of the facilitator in their intervention. There is no implication that any one category is more or less important than any other nor are they totally exclusive of one another. An effective intervention is only of real value when it is rooted in care and concern for the client. Interventions may 'degenerate' when the practitioner is motivated by self interest or has unresolved psychological issues which they unconsciously project onto the client. Degenerate interventions may also result from a lack of competence. 'Perverted' interventions take place when the practitioner is deliberately malicious and seeks to leave the client disabled to the advantage of the practitioner.

Below is a summary of the facilitative category options. On the following pages we provide a description of some of the 'sorts' of intervention within each category. However, to fully appreciate the model you are recommended to read John Heron's "Helping the Client" (1990).

Heron - six category intervention model	
<b>Authoritative</b>	<b>Prescriptive</b> A prescriptive intervention seeks to direct the behaviour of the person, usually behaviour that is outside the practitioner-client relationship.
	<b>Informative</b> An informative intervention seeks to impart knowledge, information or meaning to the person.
	<b>Confronting</b> A confronting intervention seeks to raise the person's consciousness about some limiting attitude or behaviour of which they are relatively unaware.
<b>Facilitative</b>	<b>Cathartic</b> A cathartic intervention seeks to enable the person to discharge or release painful emotion, primary grief, fear and anger.
	<b>Catalytic</b> A catalytic intervention seeks to elicit self-discovery, self-directed living, learning and problem solving in the client.
	<b>Supportive</b> A supportive intervention seeks to affirm the worth and value of the client's person, qualities, attitudes or actions.

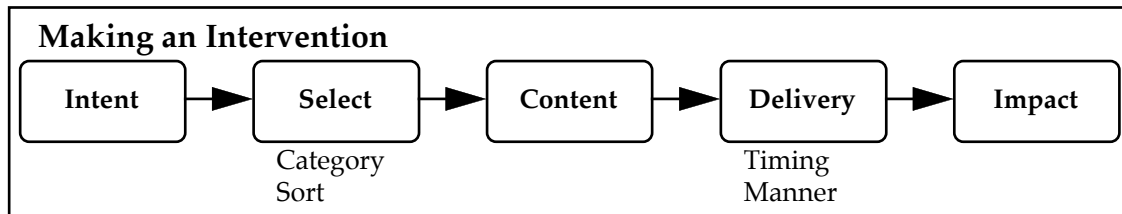
Heron (1990) 64

Authoritative interventions are used when you decided that it is important that the other person is directed towards a particular new piece of information, an understanding or insight.

Facilitative interventions are used when you decide that it is important for the other person to decide what is best for them and you support their positive qualities, allow them to express whatever they are feeling and value their abilities to be self directed.

All the interventions are done within the philosophy of empowerment and from a place of respect, genuineness and congruence in the client-practitioner relationship.

Making a successful intervention involves a number of elements or steps:



In assessing an intervention we can ask (a) was it the right category for what was going on in the interaction with the client? (b) And if the category was right, was it the right intervention within that category? And if so, was (c) the content appropriate, (d) the manner appropriate and (e) the timing good?

### Types of degenerate intervention

- Unsolicited interventions - eg one person appoints himself as practitioner to another
- Manipulative interventions - motivated by self-interest
- Compulsive interventions - projecting unawarely, lack of emotional competence
- Unskilled interventions - simply incompetent

### Objectives for developing skilled interventions

- To learn a comprehensive repertoire of interventions, so that you can identify them when others are producing them and produce them at will in your own behaviour
- To assess, with the help of feedback from others, your own strengths and weaknesses across the total repertoire
- To practice, with the help of feedback from others, those interventions in which you are weak
- To have some model of what it is to do the interventions well

### Issues to be aware of during a session

- The practitioner can lead or can follow the client
- The client will produce content cues and the client will produce process cues
- The client can work in the domain of feeling or the client can work in the domain of thought

The next six pages provide more detail on each of the types of intervention:

## **Prescriptive interventions**

### ***Guidelines***

- Don't encroach on the self-determining competence of the client.
- The client is free to take or leave the advice.

### ***Main sorts of intervention***

Prescriptive-catalytic gradient: there is a gradient from the prescriptive to the catalytic.

#### **1**     *Commanding prescription*

You use the full authority of your role and in a commanding manner direct the client to do something, with no consultation before or after the command.

#### **2**     *Benevolent directive prescription*

This is a benign and respectful proposal that the consultant do something, but still with no consultation before or after it. There is a continuum here from mild to strong; you can (a) suggest, (b) propose, (c) advise, (d) persuade

#### **3**     *Consultative prescription*

You propose some behaviour, and also consult the client, eliciting his or her views - which you carefully consider. But you are responsible for the final prescription, which may or may not take account of these views.

#### **4**     *Negotiation*

From the outset you work in a collaborative way with the client on the decision, sharing and comparing views on the issues and the options. Together you work to agree on a final decision.

#### *Facilitation of self-direction*

At this, the fully catalytic end of the gradient, you are concerned only to facilitate the client in making up his or her mind in his or her own way in the direction that the client thinks best.

## **Informative interventions**

### ***Guidelines***

- Relevant to the needs and interests of the client.
- The client is encouraged to be active in the learning process.

### ***Main sorts of intervention***

#### **1**     *Practitioner rationale*

You explain to the client what you the practitioner are doing or going to do or have done in relation to him or her and explain why.

#### **2**     *Personal interpretation*

You interpret - that is, give a meaning to - the client's behaviour or experience or situation. The opposite to individuals finding their own meaning. Informative interpretations are interesting, illuminating and enhance awareness for the client who is not defensive about their content (as opposed to confronting interpretations, about which clients are defensively unaware).

#### **3**     *Presenting relevant information*

You may give information, verbally in the session, that is relevant to but not about the client. It may have a practical bearing on the client's situation, needs or interests.

#### **4**     *Feedback*

You give clients informative, no-evaluative feedback on their performance in, for example, a role-play or skills-training exercise.



## Confronting interventions

### Guidelines

- Highlight rigidities for insight to occur.
- Always supportive of the person.

### Main sorts of intervention

- 1 Raising the client's consciousness about the agenda  
  
"There's something going on here I'm not quite clear about"
- 2 *Giving feedback*  
  
Impressions about what the client is saying, or how the client is saying something non-verbally where these are impressions of something denied, defensive, unaware or maladaptive, e.g. client gives a little dismissive laugh after everything you say or always dropping their eyes before responding
- 3 *Asking a direct question*  
  
When you sense that the client is concealing, denying, unaware of or avoiding an issue.  
"When did you last attend one of the meetings".
- 4 *Rattle and shake*  
  
Challenging a clients denials or disavowals by questioning the evidence or contrary evidence from the client's point of view.
- 5 *Changing the words*  
  
From "I can't" to "I choose not to".
- 6 *Going from there and then to here and now*  
  
For example, inviting the client to switch from a preoccupation with the past or future to what he is experiencing in the here and now.
- 7 *Holding up a mirror*  
  
Mimicking a piece of behaviour back to the client, but supportively done, e.g. if a client, whenever he says "I don't know what to do", puts his head in his hands, a counsellor may gently mimic this and ask "what are your hands doing? What is going on for you when you do that?"
- 8 *Interrupting the record*  
  
Stopping the wallowing in congealed distress by changing the topic, or drawing the client's attention to something else.
- 9 *Disarming the body*  
  
Ask the client to move his or her position in order to contradict her psychological rigidities, eg asking her to sit up taller and take a few deep breaths

## **Cathartic interventions**

### ***Guidelines***

- At a level the client is ready to handle.
- Following through afterwards to enable integration and insight.

### ***Main sorts of intervention***

1 *What's on top*

2 *Repetition of words or phrases*

Picking up on distress charged words and movements and inviting the client to repeat them. It's important for the gap between cue and intervention to be pretty small, if not spontaneous. Can be further enhanced by using in conjunction with amplification and contradiction.

3 *Amplification*

You invite the client to amplify their tone, posture or movement, getting energy into it, then finding out what it seems to be saying. Once amplified it can be contradicted, which in turn can be amplified.

4 *Contradiction*

The client is invited to use statements and a non-verbal manner that contradict without qualification their self-deprecating, self-denigrating statements and manner. Contradiction challenges head on external invalidation and oppression of the self.

5 *Self role play*

6 *Literal description*

Detailed, present tense description of sensory, emotional aspect of an issue

7 *Acting into*

Pretending to discharge emotions to precipitate genuine cathartic episode

8 *Mobilisation of body energy*

Deep breathing, running, jumping, shouting etc.

## Catalytic interventions

### Guidelines

- Facilitates client-centred change.
- Active empathy but not intrusive.

### Main sorts of intervention

#### 1 *Simple reflection*

Or echoing - a simple echo back to the client of the last sentence or few words he said. This keeps the client on track without interfering.

#### 2 *Selective reflection*

A reflecting back of something said in the middle of the client's talk, especially something which carried and emotional charge or seems to have some significance.

#### 3 *Checking understanding*

When the practitioner hasn't heard or understood what the client is saying. It may be that the client is confused or incoherent, or contradictory.

#### 4 *Open/closed questioning*

Open questions give space for the client to come up with several possible answers, closed questions only permit one answer or a yes or no. Questions beginning with "what" and "how" are more likely to avoid open type answers. Try and avoid "why" as this leads into the analytical and away from the person.

#### 5 *Logical building*

Summarising, when after some time, the practitioner feels the need to sum up what the client has been talking about. This helps the client sieve through the content and to see where the talk is leading, or what themes are coming up.

#### 6 *Empathetic building*

"What's lurking between the lines". The practitioner offers the client their sense of an implicit thought or feeling that's not fully tested. "It sounds as if...."

#### 7 *Discreet practitioner self-disclosure*

Practitioner appropriately shares their own experience in an area being addressed by the client. Disclosure begets disclosure, intimacy, trust, openness and risk-taking.

## **Supportive interventions**

### ***Guidelines***

- Unqualified acceptance of the person.
- Authentic and caring whilst not colluding with the persons rigidities.

### ***Main sorts of intervention***

1 *Free attention*

Being expectantly present for the client.

2 *Touching*

3 *Expression of positive feelings*

of love, fondness for the client

4 *Validation*

Verbal affirmation of client's self-worth, and unconditional positive regard

5 *Express care and concern*

Including a wish to reach out, relate, give support as well as silence

6 *Sharing of good things*

In the practitioners experience with the client.

7 *Self-disclosure/celebration*

Of your own joys and difficulties, past and present with the client

8 *Greeting/welcoming*

You affirm the worth of the person, the pleasure in his or her presence, in the simple act of greeting. You extend the act of greeting into receiving and welcoming the client into your place of work.

## Working with subpersonalities in leadership development

One of the delusions about our existence and our being is that we are a solid and unified personality. In reality we all live a multiplicity of lives.

In 'What We May Be' Piero Ferrucci says:

One of the most harmful illusions that can beguile us is probably the belief that we are an indivisible, immutable, totally consistent being. And finding out that the contrary is true is among the first tasks -and possible surprises -that confronts us in the adventure of our psychosynthesis.<sup>1</sup>

"There are times," said Somerset Maugham, "when I look over the various parts of my character with perplexity. I recognise that I am made up of several persons and that the person that has the upper hand will inevitably give place to another"<sup>2</sup>

During the last one hundred years, this inner complexity has been a major theme of psychology. From the time of William James (who according to Assagioli called subpersonalities "the various selves"), psychologists have recognised the importance of the divisions within our psyche and the corresponding psychological formation that results from them.

Once we turn our attention to them we find many subpersonalities in each of us. Some are common to many of us (father, mother, son, daughter, teacher, manager, critic, coach, rebel, pleaser etc.) but others are more unique -the more so by our identifying and recognising them and naming them (The naming is very important because it identifies the subpersonality in relation to our own particular psyche).

Subpersonalities exist within a multiplex of other subpersonalities perhaps working in harmony with others, but often in opposing pairs or in complex patterns of inter relationship.

An example from a therapeutic case study quoted from "Foundation in Psychosynthesis" shows how subpersonalities can operate in opposition.

"A client in her early forties....had long identified with being a 'good daughter, wife and mother.' She had centred her life on pleasing first her father, then her husband and finally her three children, doing all the 'right things'. Just after her fortieth birthday she discovered women's lib, started a career, got a divorce and became in her words a 'new person'. But now she had difficulty in relating to her teenage children. She wasn't experiencing any feelings of love or caring for them which distressed and confused her very much. In one period she had become depressed and had 'fallen back into the old me' and was unable to feel love and closeness to her children. Her question was, should she be the 'old self' or the 'new self'?"

This woman had begun to integrate many parts of herself which she had previously disowned (need for independence, a good intellect, competitiveness, ambition etc.) around a new personality of being a strong, independent intelligent woman. Yet the 'old self' contained many important and valuable qualities, such as emotional sensitivity and the ability to give and receive love. She was subsequently

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<sup>1</sup> What We May Be – Piero Ferrucci P47 GP Putnams 1982

<sup>2</sup> Quoted in TA Harris' I'm OK, You're OK P1 Harper and Row 19691

able to see that she did not need to choose between them, but to form a broader identity which could include aspects of both. The solution lay not on disowning but in including”<sup>3</sup>

Subpersonalities form as a synthesis of habit patterns, traits, complexes and other psychological elements. But in order to have a synthesis, there has to be a centre around which the synthesis occurs. In a subpersonality, this centre is an inner drive or urge that strives to be realised. It is this centre that attracted and synthesised various personality elements to create what can be considered as its own body or its own mean of expression.

As we gradually recognise and harmonise them, they in turn become organised and synthesised around a higher order centre which is the ‘I’ – the personal centre of identity.

This higher order synthesis becomes the integrated personality-The harmonious and effective means of expression of the self-actualised human being. As we move towards this goal, we become increasingly able to choose at any moment which subpersonality we wish to express. *Until then we are controlled by whichever subpersonality that we are identified with in the moment and thus limited by its particular attributes.*

Often subpersonalities form at a young age as a survival mechanism to gain acceptance and love in our family of origin. So, for example, a pleaser subpersonality could develop as a child experiences that he/she does not receive unconditional from their parents but can get love by adapting their behaviour. What starts as an essential survival mechanism becomes an unconscious default mode which may severely limit the adult. Taking the example further, as the child moves to adolescence and starts to individuate then a rebel subpersonality will develop and then there will be two opposing subpersonalities.

In coaching, working with a coachee’s subpersonalities can be an extremely useful way of helping them develop their self- awareness and therefore find where their will is caught. In doing so the client and the coach can potentially identify more clearly where the coachee’s will is available to make changes to their personal and professional lives.

The key point is that subpersonalities of which we are not aware can control us and take away our capacity to choose. What we are unconscious of controls us. This is also the core learning about identification and disidentification. In order to disidentify we must first identify –bring to consciousness, then we have the power to choose.

### **Process of Harmonisation of Subpersonalities -5 stage model**

1. **Recognition:** subpersonalities develop unconsciously. Initially during this stage we develop awareness as to how they operate and see how they shape our view of ourselves and the world. The more the individual becomes conscious of the parts, the more the sense of ‘I-ness’ - the one who choses – develops. Within the complexity of ‘I am this , that and the other’ comes ‘I am all this –I am me’
2. **Acceptance:** this stage is devoted to seeing ‘what is’ without value judgement. This is often difficult as the subpersonality maybe an aspect of the person which they don’t like and have repressed. The

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<sup>3</sup> Foundation in Psychosynthesis P76 Institute of Psychosynthesis 2003

more it is repressed the more it asserts itself and acceptance can be a journey of understanding its likely origins and also the way that it has served in the past and the qualities that it includes that may serve the present and future. When working with subpersonalities at this acceptance stage (and also at the next coordination stage), it is useful in turn describe its behaviour, identify its wants and its needs and finally to recognise its qualities

3. **Coordination:** whenever we go deep enough towards the core of a subpersonality, we find that the core – which is some basic urge or need – is good. For practical purposes this can be considered an absolute. No matter how many layers of distortion surround it, the basic need, the basic motivation is a good one – and if it becomes twisted it is because of not being able to express itself directly. The real core – not what the subpersonality wants but what it needs -is good. A basic purpose of the coordination stage is to discover this central urge or need to make it conscious and to find acceptable ways it can be satisfied and fulfilled.
4. **Integration:** while coordination deals with the development and improvement within each subpersonality, integration is concerned with the relationship with other subpersonalities and with each one's place and activity within the personality as a whole. The process of integration leads from a general state of isolation, conflict, competition and repression of the weaker elements by the strong ones, to a state of harmonious cooperation in which the effectiveness of the personality is greatly enhanced.

It's useful then when working as a coach to look at a coachee's subpersonalities' relationship with each other. In particular, which qualities of one subpersonality are suppressed by the dominance of a number or others or one specific directly opposite subpersonality? This could be a helpful route to identifying available will

One common analogy of subpersonalities is to consider the "I" as the conductor of an orchestra. The orchestra is made up of a collection of different subpersonalities. If the players of the individual instruments play their own music then the result is a discordant noise. If they are all playing the same music but not in harmony the result will be similar. When they play the same music at the same time and each subpersonality (or group of subpersonalities in for example the various sections –violins, woodwind etc.) plays a lead when the conductor directs, then the music becomes beautiful and harmonious. We see then the potential full expression of the Self.

5. **Synthesis:** this final stage represents a potential move from intrapersonal development as represented by integration to interpersonal and transpersonal development. Synthesis is an outcome of a growing interplay of the personality with the superconscious and the Transpersonal Self.

As a result of this interplay, the life of the individual and his interaction with other human beings becomes increasingly characterised by a sense of responsibility, caring, harmonious cooperation, altruistic love and transpersonal objectives. It leads to the harmonious integration of the human being with others, with mankind and with the world<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> IBID P.85

## Working with Mindsets

Extract from blog post: Transformational change - the holy grail of coaching and consulting  
Aubyn Howard, 17 May 2017

I work with a model of **mindset change**, adapted from one I first learnt about on the *MA in Psychosynthesis Psychology* and later used as a coach working with Roger Evans in *Creative Leadership Consultants* (and the basics of which can be found in Roger's book, *The Creative Manager*, 1989). There are similarities with the competing commitments model, in that our focus is to identify and become more conscious of limiting mindsets before seeking to reframe or transform them and change associated behaviour. Crucially, I now incorporate systemic and somatic perspectives as part of exploring and releasing the mindset, which I believe increases our chances of success.

The language of **Mindsets** is becoming increasingly familiar within the organisational world, at both individual and collective levels. It is important to realise that we always have mindsets (beliefs, thought patterns, unconscious assumptions, etc.) and that it is our awareness and relationship with them that we work on, with a view to giving ourselves more choice. The same mindset can be both empowering and limiting, healthy and dysfunctional in different contexts or periods of our lives. As we grow and develop, the mindsets that helped us survive or succeed in the past may no longer serve us, (e.g. 'don't rely upon others, I can do this on my own!'). The same is true for collective mindsets, (e.g. 'we are the best in the business!') may serve the sales team at one point in time, but can become limiting when the organisation needs to open up to collaborative innovation partnerships. Having said that, some mindsets may point towards deeper psychological issues in our individual or collective psyches, and this is a theme which I will explore more fully in a follow up post.

For now, here is the approach referred to above, involving three parts and ten steps

### Part One: identifying the mindset

1. What is the goal, purpose or issue you want to work on? What are you experiencing in relationship to this? Specific blocks, barriers, failures? What are your observations? What are your feelings, thoughts and wants? Is this an issue that warrants deeper work to bring about change or transformation?
2. Explore limiting mindsets which you associate with this goal/commitment/issue. These might be thought patterns or voices in your mind. Which of these feels the most significant? Which do you want to work with? Write down the mindset, being as specific as possible and using language which is familiar to you.
3. How does this mindset affect your behaviour and feelings? What behaviours do you associate with this mindset? What feelings do you associate with it?

### Part Two: unpacking the mindset

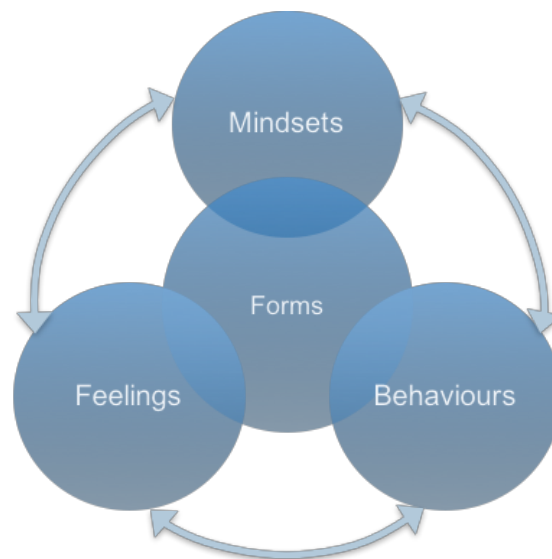
4. How strong is this mind set? In other words, how much does it control you, how automatic is it? How much choice do you have around it? (10 = completely automatic with no choice).
5. How long have you had this mind set? When and how did it first get started? Is there a time before that you can remember?
6. How does the mind set serve you? What do you get from it? What quality of value does it represent for you?
7. How does the mind set limit you? What does the mind set stop you from seeing or doing about yourself or about others?



### Part Three: reframing the mindset

8. How or where might this mindset be held in your body? Can you put your hand there? Is there a shape or pattern to this mindset? Breathe into that place... and release.
9. In what ways is this mindset held in place, supported or perpetuated by the wider system of which you are part (e.g. family, organisation, society). Which part of you is identified with this mindset? Which part(s) of you are not identified with the mindset and have choice in relationship to it?
10. As you step back from the mindset, what new space opens up within you? What new prospects does this open up for you? What freedom or choice do you have in terms of your behaviour? In what other ways might you meet the needs or commitment this mindset represented for you? Which empowering mindsets or affirmations could you draw upon in place of this mindset?

I am not going to promise that this is a failsafe formula to achieving desirable change – real work has to be done by both coach and client for this to make a difference. Working at depth as well as on the surface; work at mental, emotional, behavioural and somatic levels. Work involving the unfolding of self, as well as activating or releasing the will.



The relationship between our mindsets, feelings (or emotional charge) and our behaviours that are associated with them, are depicted in the graphic above – which also shows how these are held in place through *form* – with individual mindsets this means the **body** and related **somatic** patterns, and with collective or organisational mindsets this can be many different things, e.g. the formal and informal **shapes** and **patterns** of the organisational system and its culture.

A word of warning about this kind of work: mindsets are slippery, and finding the mindset that needs working on in relation to a purpose, goal or issue is a serious challenge in itself. The coach's task is to help the client **self-reflect** and increase their self-awareness in ways that they would not otherwise. Finding an important mindset to work with may take time, more than one session. It may help to suggest that the client keeps a journal and records *thought patterns* between sessions, as close in real time as possible to significant events or behaviours they want to change. You are trying to help the client catch their inner negative or critical voices and externalise them by putting them into words. By the way, I am amazed at how often these turn out to be the words used by a critical parent or authority figure.

## Reflective questions

- *How does Heron's model help you to become more conscious of the intention behind the interventions you make?*
- *What biases do you notice in your own coaching intervention style? What changes or shifts do you want to make in your overall mix of interventions?*
- *When and how and why might you work with both mindsets and subpersonalities in coaching?*
- *In what ways do you think Psychosynthesis is a useful and relevant psychology for addressing the emerging challenges within organisations today?*

## Recommended Reading

### Core texts

Assagioli, Roberto (1974), 'The Act of Will' - *all of Part 1*, p3-131

### Further references

Assagioli, Roberto (1991), 'Transpersonal Development'

Evans, Roger and Russell, Peter, (1989), 'The Creative Manager'

Ferrucci, Piero (1982), "What We May Be: The Vision and Techniques of Psychosynthesis"

Heron, J. (1990) "Helping the client"