THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS IN THE COACHING PROCESS

A guide on how to unlock the potential of emotions

"Our raw feelings can be the messengers we need to teach us things about ourselves and can prompt insights into important life directions."

Emotional Agility
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Agenda

1. Introduction

Emotions are complex. They shape the way we learn, the decisions we make, the relationships we build, and how we show up in the workplace. Emotions are tied to our cognitive faculties and manifested in each of our interactions with ourselves and others (Brackett et al., 2020). They also play a fundamental part in the reasoning process and memory formation (Taylor, 2001). Therefore, it is no surprise that emotions play a central role in the coaching process. Historically, the field of emotion was treated with caution in the coaching field (Duffell et al., 2015). Bachkirova and Cox (2007) highlight a view from the International Coaching Federation in 2002: "Coaching assumes the presence of emotional reactions to life events and clients are capable of expressing and handling their emotions. Coaching is not psychotherapy". Since then, various scientific domains have done a large amount of research has been done around this topic. In the field of coaching, the importance of emotions has also gained greater acknowledgment. Bachkirova and Cox (2007) explain that by working with emotions the coach and the client can gain an understanding of the underlying behavioral strategies associated with these emotions. Duffell et al. (2015) add that emotions can provide an indication to core principles or values that the client has not acknowledged or is unaware of. In fact, many individuals are not able to identify the causes of their emotions and how to regulate them. In a study by Brené Brown (2021), participants were asked to list all the emotions that they could recognize and name as they were experiencing them. Over a timeframe of five years, over seven thousand surveys were collected. The average number of emotions named was three, namely happy, sad and angry. When we do not have the ability to understand and express our emotions accurately, we cannot regulate or move through them and our experiences productively. This is one of the reasons why emotions tend to come up in a coaching session. They are a much-needed instrument to make sense of our surroundings, to manage ourselves and to respond effectively to others (Brown, 2021). In the past years, the International Coaching Federation has changed its position towards emotions and now advises that coaches should be able to work with strong emotions (ICF, 2013). Even though, past research has examined the role of emotions in the coaching process, there is no framework available that describes how a client's emotions can be used effectively in the coaching process.

Hence, this paper aims at providing a guide to systemic coaches on what methods and tools to use in the coaching intervention to unlock the information underlying client emotions. First, the term emotion is defined, and the underlying neurophysiological mechanisms are described. Second, prior research on how coaches see the role of emotions in the coaching process is reviewed. Then, the importance of Emotional Intelligence and its attributes Empathy and Emotion regulation are discussed. In the fourth section, several systemic methods and tools are described to effectively use

emotion in the coaching process. Afterwards, the paper draws attention to the challenges when working with emotions in the coaching process. To avoid the pitfalls of these challenges, two additional coaching methods are presented. Finally, the paper concludes with a summary.

2. What are emotions?

The topic emotion is studied from different perspectives including psychology, philosophy, sociology, neuroscience, and medicine. The approaches to understanding the term are nearly endless and there is no universal definition. During the 20th century there have been over 90 definitions proposed by scientific research (Plutchik, 2001). In 2010, Carroll Izard asked 35 expert scientists to define the term emotion and then analyzed those conceptualizations in terms of similarities and differences. The study found that many participants gave a definition that recognized neural circuits and neurobiological process, phenomenal experience or feeling and perceptual-cognitive processes as aspects of emotions. More recent research supports this view. Tyng et al. (2017) point out, numerous studies have reported that cognitive processes are influenced by emotion, these include attention, learning and memory, reasoning and problem-solving. To understand how emotions are linked to these processes, it is important to look at the functions of the limbic system.

2.1. The limbic system

Neuroscientific research has shown that emotions, memory and behavior are closely linked to coordinated activities in the regions of the limbic system (Tyng et al., 2017). The structures of the limbic system are located underneath the cerebral cortex and above the brainstem. Figure 1 shows the different components of the limbic system. The hypothalamus produces important hormones and regulates important needs like thirst and hunger, while the basal ganglia is responsible for reward processing, habit formation, movement, and learning (Queensland Brain Institute, n.d.). Two of the major structures in terms of emotions are the hippocampus and the amygdala. In the hippocampus, episodic memories are formed, categorized, and then filed away in long-term storage across other parts in the cerebral cortex (Queensland Brain Institute, n.d.). Located right next to the hippocampus, the amygdala in conjunction with the prefrontal cortex and the medial temporal lobe, is involved in consolidation and retrieval of emotional memories. By attaching emotional content to our memories, the amygdala also has an impact on the storage of those memories, as emotional events are remembered more accurately and for longer periods of time (Tyng et al, 2017).
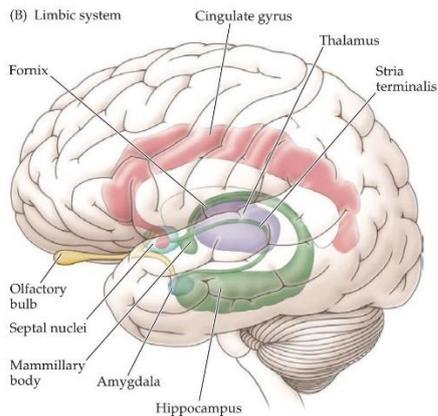
Figure 1: The limbic system (Breedlove et al., 2017, Chapter 2,p.46)

Furthermore, fear and rage responses are mediated by the limbic system, which puts the nervous system under stress, activating the so-called "Fight-or-flight response". This response is an evolutionary phenomenon. In early human life, it was vital to recognize immediate danger and to reach safety and security quickly. Today, the flight or fight response is more likely to be triggered by stress, anxiety, anger or aggression in everyday life situations (Gepp, 2021).

Everything we perceive in our environment is represented by concepts in our brain. Concepts define the relationships between similar objects; they find similarities and highlight differences across a set of related experiences to build organized knowledge (Zeithamova et al., 2019b). Therefore, they organize our experiences and give us meaning when entering new situations. Concepts are not static but remarkably flexible and context dependent. They go beyond physical appearance, smell, or sound. In fact, when the brain needs a concept, it constructs one from a population of instances from past experience to best fit the goal of the current situation. Conceptual learning already starts in early childhood. In fact, the brain bootstraps a conceptual system into its wiring within the first year of a child's life (Barrett, 2017).

2.2. Neural networks

At birth, every neuron in the cerebral cortex has an estimated 2,500 synapses. By the age of three, this number has grown to about 15,000 synapses per neuron (Verywell mind, 2022). The average adult, however, has only half that number of synapses. The process behind that phenomenon is called synaptic pruning. As we gain new experiences, some of the connections are strengthened, while others are eliminated. Repetition of a specific pattern of neural firing leads to a neural network

forming and strengthening (Paust, 2018). However, if we change something, the old network will slowly disintegrate, and new connections are formed. Research suggests that selective attention is a key mechanism in concept learning. Representations are shaped during learning by biasing encoding to concept or pattern-relevant features and ignoring irrelevant dimensions (Mack et al., 2018). This has an important implication, as it means emotions and behavior can be changed. They are patterns of neural firing that have been formed through repetition over time, if we start repeating different patterns the structure of the brain will slowly change (Paust, 2018). Furthermore, by focusing our attention on the new pattern, we enforce neural network change.

Why is it important for a coach to understand these neurological processes? Using this knowledge, the coach can help the client to interrupt his/her current "unhelpful" pattern, to focus his/her attention towards a different "helpful" pattern and to activate this network, with the thoughts, images and emotions that go with it. Section 5 of this paper describes the methods coaches can use to support this pattern interruption.

3. Emotions and Coaching

Working with emotion in the coaching process is unavoidable. Emotions play a significant role in every person's life. They are an essential part of who we are and how we survive. Therefore, it is inevitable that coaches and clients experience emotions during coaching sessions. Very few researchers have examined aspects of emotion and the motivations and drivers associated with them in a coaching context. Nevertheless, researchers in other fields explain emotions as having an important role in formulating ethical judgments, as creating meaning, and as playing a role in organizational behavior and organizational compassion (Cox, 2016).

3.1. How coaches see the role of emotion in the coaching process

In a study by Bachkirova and Cox (2007), personal theories of emotions that organizational coaches hold were examined. The findings report three different ways in which emotions are perceived by coaches. First, emotions signify a client problem that needs intervention from the coach to resolve the problem. Second, emotions are normal and inevitable. Coach and client need to pay attention to these emotions to make sense of the situation, but they do not need to be controlled. The third perception describes emotions as positive signs, which indicate important developments in the coaching process. The coach supports exploration, staying with the emotion to allow full expression. Bachkirova and Cox's findings suggest a mixed pattern of how coaches perceive a client's emotions in the coaching

process. They view them either as a useful source of motivation or as contributing to difficulties in the workplace.

In a different paper by Cox and Bachkirova (2007), the authors report that coaches often experience uneasiness when confronted with a strong display of emotions by clients. Certain emotions identified to be more difficult to work with, namely anger, apathy and resignation, lack of drive, despair, and hopelessness. However, Cox and Bachkirova also mention, what is described as a difficult emotion varies between coaches and is dependent on several internal and external factors. These findings show that there seemed to be a range of emotions expressed by clients that affected a coach's own emotions resulting in a difficult coaching process (Cox, 2016). Cox and Bachkirova reported how coaches solve these difficulties in one of three ways:

1.) They either see the emotion as their own problem, which they may take to supervision, or viewing it as belonging to the client.
2.) They actively use the energy and explore the emotion with the client in the coaching session.
3.) They refer the client to another professional or terminate the process.

These strategies support the notion that coaches view the role of emotion in the coaching process very differently. However, more recent studies strengthen the position of understanding emotions through coaching. Cox and Patrick (2012) find, in an organizational setting where the coach supports his/her clients in understanding their emotions, those clients are more likely to experience significant growth. Furthermore, the field of parental emotion coaching points out that acknowledging and validating a child's emotions and guiding them on how to manage their feelings, is important for their emotional development and growth (Ellis et al.,2013; Wilson et al.,2014).

3.2. Emotional Intelligence

During the past years, the concept of Emotional Intelligence has gained popularity. Emotional Intelligence (EI) is defined as "the ability to monitor one's own and others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use this information to guide one's thinking and actions" (Salovey et al., 1990). It is considered a key driver in areas including "self-awareness, motivation, self-regulation, empathy and adeptness in relationships" (Goleman, 1998, p.28). Due to the close link to empathy and emotional regulation, EI is thought to be a beneficial attribute for a coach.

3.2.1. Emotion regulation

Effective emotion regulation is important for coaches in order to preserve their relationships with clients and to safeguard their own well-being (Jowett et al., 2012). As previously described, coaches can be triggered by strong client emotions. Therefore, it is necessary to preserve an emotional distance and to differentiate between the client's and one's own feelings.

The client often comes to the coach with a specific problem, something that weighs on him/her or puts emotional stress on him/her. In those situations, the client has a strong focus on the problem and tends to victimize him-/herself. In the role of the coach, you want to help, but if you identify too strongly with the client's situation, the relationship with the client can become dysfunctional. This dynamic is best explained by the Drama Triangle, which was developed by Steven Karpman. The concept is derived from Transactional Analysis and is often used to identify dysfunctions in relationships (Lancer, 2018). In the triangle, people tend to take on one of three roles:

1.) The Persecutor: Someone who attacks aggressively or in a wider context, someone who innovates or disturbs the equilibrium
2.) The Victim: Someone who feels the persecutor is targeting them, feels hopeless and powerless and is unable to make decisions or to solve problems.
3.) The Rescuer: A protector, who feels responsible to help the victim, often identifies strongly with the victim's problem, tends to overlook his/her own needs

We are neurologically wired to play all three roles and the roles are not static, people can move from one role to another rapidly. In coaching, it is common that the client takes on the role of the victim. If the coach identifies strongly with the victim's problem, he/she is tempted to take on the rescuer role. This relationship is destructive to the coaching process because the client stays in his/her problem state, while the coach tries to find solutions for the client, which he/she is not supposed to do. By monitoring his/her own feelings and regularly reviewing the relationship state, a coach can avoid entering the drama triangle.

3.2.2. Empathy

One of the ways coaches work with emotion is through empathy, which is described as "the ability to project oneself into another person's point of view, so as to experience the other's thoughts and feelings" (Adler et al., 1990). The main requirement for a productive coaching process is a good connection between the coach and the client. Empathic listening is useful especially during the initial exploration phase. The coach can use the method Mirroring and Doubling" to quickly develop a connection to the client (Inkonstellation Script, p.44). When the coach repeats the client's narrative in his/her own words, the client feels validated. When using Doubling, the coach speaks out the presumed inner thoughts or feelings of the client. The coach usually asks the question "May I say something for you, and you tell me whether it is right or wrong?" to initiate the doubling. In this way, unexpressed feelings often come to the surface and the client regards the coach as competent. Furthermore, the coaches own emotions can provide valuable information for the coaching process. If a coach feels angry or sad during a conversation, it is important to communicate this to the client in

a respectful manner. In most cases, these emotions have something to do with the client's problem and can offer valuable insights about possible solutions.

4. Methods & Tools to use emotion in coaching

There are different ways, in which coaches work with emotion in a systemic coaching intervention: They acknowledge or play back the emotion verbally, they link the emotion to thoughts and subsequent action or ask explicitly what clients are feeling during a session. When working with systemic coaching tools, emotion is often included. First of all, when entering a coaching session, it is important to ask the client about his/her current emotional state. In this way, the coach can identify potential roadblocks, formulate strategies to bypass them or even use these obstacles in the intervention. In systemic coaching, the focus lies on strengthening the self-efficacy of the client and supporting the development of learning and performance processes (Inkonstellation Script, p.17). Therefore, as a coach, it is important to draw attention to the client's resources and motivate him/her to develop a solution-focused perspective.

4.1. Reframing and Dissociation questions

One method that is frequently used to help the client move from a problem-orientation to a solution-focus is Reframing. It involves changing the frame or context in which a statement is made (Inkonstellation Script, p.51). Reframing is often used to take the client's problem out of its original context. In this way, the perspective of the client changes and the associated negative feelings and thoughts are reduced. During the initial exploration phase, it can happen that the client falls into a problem trance. He/She describes the problem excessively, uses a lot of repetitions and gets emotionally worked up. By asking "Let's assume you would tell a colleague about this situation, what would he/she advise you to do?", a coach can lower emotional intensity and encourage a perspective change. Furthermore, the coach initiates a pattern-interruption. In the problem description, the client is activating the neuronal network associated with the problem. Therefore, fostering the pattern and associated emotions further. When answering a dissociation question, the client has to active different neurons, the pattern will be disrupted and the associated emotions and thoughts change.

4.2. Elements of positive psychology

A series of studies have shown that positive emotions support the access to personal competencies (Fredrickson et al., 2005). Using one's own resources and competencies lies at the heart of the systemic coaching work. Therefore, Kauffman (2006) suggests that a positive psychology framework builds the foundation of coaching work, as it uses a language of strength and vision, rather than

weakness and pain. A study by Jack et al. (2013) supports this notion. In a target group of 31 undergraduate students, two types of coaching were used as a methodology to examine the activation of a positive emotional attractor and a negative emotional attractor. The results show that a future focused coaching approach has more positive and beneficial results in the brain compared to the problem-focused approach, which activated feelings of guilt and self-consciousness. This does not imply that the coach should engage in excessive optimism or completely ignore the problem. It is valuable to help the client move subtly between attention to vision and values, and attention to problems and improvement needs (Howard, 2015).

The idea of using positive emotions in the coaching or therapy process is not new. In 1982, the psychotherapists Steve de Shazer and Insoo Kim Berg introduced a form of therapy called Solution-Focused Brief Therapy. It is based on the assumption that it is more valuable to focus on your goals and what resources can be used to reach them, than to analyze the roots of the problem. The question about exceptions of the problem plays a central role in this approach, for example "Have you been in a similar situation, where the problem was not present? What was different?". In this way, the client simplifies complex connections and memories are activated, where the problem was not present, or a quick solution was found. These proposals can then be used to derive new solutions for the present problem. The solution-focused approach also assumes that positive change comes in small increments. Due to its simplicity and quick results, the approach found approval in the Coaching, Education, Psychology and Management domains.

4.3. The hypno-systemic approach

Another concept which draws on therapeutic techniques is the hypno-systemic approach. This approach was defined by Gunther Schmidt, a German specialist for psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy. The hypno-systemic approach is based on the hypno-therapeutic work of Milton Erickson and the systemic-constructivist concepts of the "Heidelberger Schule" (Milton-Erickson-Institut Heidelberg, n.d.). Including results of latest neuroscientific research and the concept of Autopoiesis, the approach assumes that a living individual system determines its experiences completely autonomously based on its structured self-organization. More specifically, the reality we experience is the result of an emotional construction process (Inkonstellation Script, p. 128). Our experiences are subject to a complex coupling of individual, biological and psychological perception processes as well as social interaction processes. These processes create neural networks or so-called patterns, as described in Section 2.2. Based on this assumption, change can only happen, if we introduce a difference to the experience of the pattern. By creating a change in the pattern, new association-networks are activated, which in turn change the experience. The hypno-systemic approach focuses on the involuntary/automatic processes that are activated during an experience. By

including concepts from Body Therapy methods, such as Psychodrama, Transaction analysis (e.g., Drama Triangle), Gestalt-Interventions and Behavior-Therapy, a coach can derive helpful strategies for the description of internal psycho-physiological patterns (Milton-Erickson-Institut Heidelberg, n.d.). The goal is to achieve a cooperation between the voluntary and conscious experience processes and the involuntary and automatic processes, to create a positive change in the pattern. This cooperation can be initiated by using trance inductions and imagination, metaphors, anecdotes, symbols, or rituals as well as, sound or rhythm, dance, and movement. Throughout the past 25 years, the hypno-systemic approach has gained popularity within the psycho-therapeutic field, but is also used in coaching, team, and organizational development as well as mediation and supervision.

5. Challenges when working with emotion

As previously identified, emotions can be a valuable source of information to both the coach and the client and there are different ways to use emotion in the coaching process. Nevertheless, working with these emotions presents several challenges.

5.1. The definition problem

Even though different disciplines have recognized the importance of emotions, there is no universal definition of the term. This poses a challenge in the coaching process because coach and client might have a different understanding. In fact, emotions are deeply personal with multiple emotions often experienced at the same time (Duffell et al., 2015). Furthermore, emotion is a construct for neurological, physiological, and chemical processes in the brain. Therefore, it is difficult to measure, especially in other people. To help clients gain a better understanding of their emotions, the coach can focus on the following aspects: the degree to which the client reaction is conscious or unconscious, the physical reactions and behavior cycle after the brain has labeled the event as positive or negative, as well as the degree to which emotions are the result of fast (automatic) or slow thinking. Next to approaches borrowed from body therapy methods as used in hypno-systemic coaching, there is a simple concept, which can help the client to gain a better understanding of his inner emotional workings. In his book "The Happiness Hypothesis", the psychologist Jonathan Haidt introduces the metaphor of the Elephant and the rider. The analogy suggests that everyone has two sides: A rational (Rider) and an emotional one (Elephant). The Elephant represents our automatic processing system (fast thinking), which we use 75% of the time (Inkonstellation Fotoprotokoll Modul 4, 2022, p.25). It has preferences which are put into action directly and it is influenced by emotions and unconscious biases. The rider represents our controlled processing system (slow thinking), which we use 25% of the time. It involves conscious thinking, reflection, impulse control. When the rider engages in tasks

or specific behavior regularly, the process will be carried over to the elephant (Inkonstellation Fotoprotokoll Modul 4, 2022, p.25). Although the rider seems to lead the elephant, he has no real control over him. The six-ton elephant can overpower the rider any time. Therefore, it is important to appeal to the Elephant's motivation, which means tapping into emotions (Barile, 2019). To keep the elephant on course, it is helpful to allow for small progress and to eliminate obstacles towards the goal.

5.2. The memory problem

Research has suggested that strong emotional regulation results in poorer recall of an emotional event (Richards and Gross, 2000). This means, that a client wanting to discuss a past event with a coach may have difficulties in remembering the situation fully. When the most stressful or emotionally draining events, are the ones remembered with the least saliency, they may not be brought to the coaching space, as they are not considered critical for the coaching process. The coach will then receive only an incomplete picture of the event, which limits the deconstruction and analysis that is possible in the subsequent coaching interaction (Duffell et al., 2015). Furthermore, when we remember past episodes, we tend to recall some elements easily while others need to be reconstructed. This reconstruction often relies on autobiographical self-knowledge, which leads to plausible but inaccurate description of past experiences (Koriat et al., 2000). When an event does not come back to the client as it was experienced originally, it may be constructed with new meaning that was not evident at the time. This can have positive or negative implications for the coaching process. On the one hand, the reconstruction might not be reflective of the event at the time. On the other hand, it can bring new insights to the client (Duffell et al., 2015). To take these limitations into account, coaches can consider several events over a period of time to help the client gain a clearer picture of the underlying patterns.

5.3. The language problem

When describing an emotional event, the client's construction will not only be affected by memory, but also by the client's ability to express his/her experience in words. In "Atlas of the Heart", Brené Brown describes that "our understanding of our own and others' emotions is shaped by how we perceive, categorize, and describe emotional experiences - and these interpretations rely heavily on language" (Brown, 2021). Both the coach and the client have their own frames that encode a feeling into language, which creates the potential for misunderstanding. Therefore, the coach needs to be mindful about his/her choice of words when talking about the client's emotions. For example, the tendency to put emotions in one of two categories, either positive or negative, can be an unjustified automatic response (Duffell et al., 2015). Furthermore, the coach's language can influence the client and the intervention process. The Principle of Consistency suggests, when people hear someone

describing them in a certain way, they may unconsciously seek ways to behave consistently with this description (Duffell et al., 2015.). Therefore, using paraphrasing or repeating the client's description in new words, might not be helpful to the coaching process. Self-confident clients might be able to clarify the coach's understanding, but there is a possibility that clients adopt the coach's label. One method, which can help the coach and the client to develop a mutual language for emotions, is the graphic representation of the emotion wheel defined by Dr. Robert Plutchik, as seen in Picture 2. There are eight basic emotions – namely joy, trust, fear, surprise, sadness, disgust, anger, and anticipation (Six Seconds, 2022). These emotions are grouped into polar opposites: joy and sadness, fear and anger, anticipation and surprise and trust and disgust. As previously described, we often experience multiple emotions at the same time. Those combinations of two primary emotions, are shown by the emotion description with no color. Additionally, emotions can intensify. The further you move towards the inside of the wheel, the more intense the emotion. For example, on the lowest intensity level sadness turns into pensiveness, while on the highest intensity level it turns into grief. It is important to note that if emotions are left unchecked, they can intensify. As Brené Brown (2021) points out, "having the correct words to describe specific emotions makes us better able to identify those emotions in others, as well as recognize and manage the emotional experiences when we feel them ourselves". In a coaching session, the coach can ask the client to use the emotion wheel to describe his/her feelings in a specific situation. The emotions are not limited to the ones represented in the wheel. It is encouraged to adapt and personalize the wheel toward the understanding of the client. Using this method, can help the client to explore his/her emotions more deeply and establish a language around emotions that is equally understood by the coach and the client.
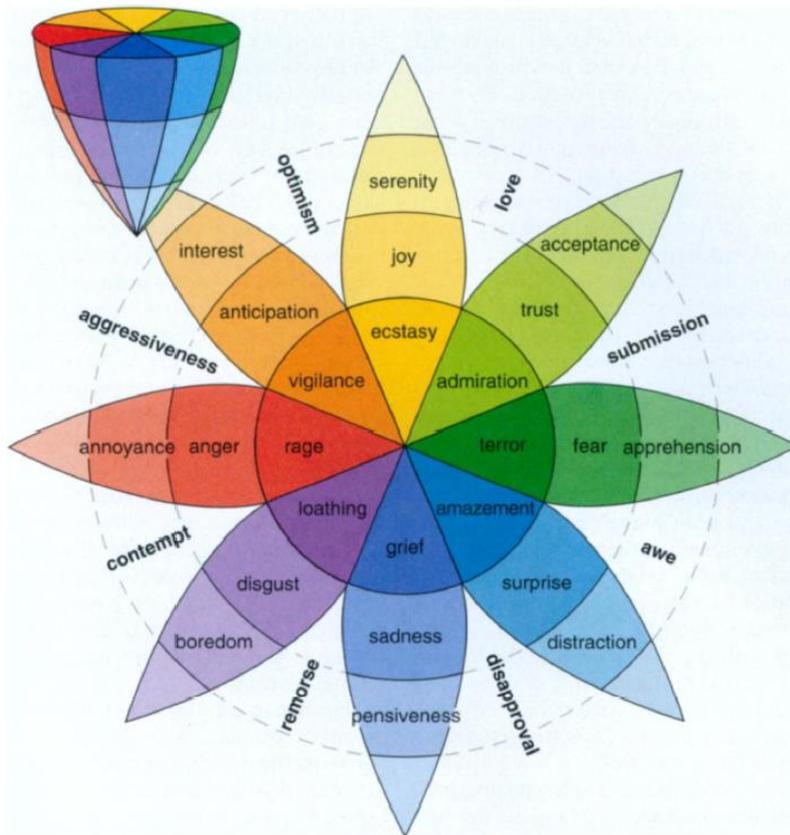
Figure 2: Plutchik's wheel of emotion (Retrieved from: Plutchik, R. (2001) The nature of emotions)

6. Conclusion

Recent research has identified the importance of working with emotions in the coaching process. This paper provides a guide for coaches on how to use different systemic coaching methods to effectively work with client emotions. Using an empathic listening approach and valuing the experiences of the client is essential to establish a good connection throughout the coaching process. In systemic coaching, the focus lies on strengthening the client's self-efficacy, identifying his/her resources, and motivating the client to move toward a solution-focused perspective. The coaching process is often very emotional, especially during the problem exploration phase. Many clients tend to go round in circles, unable to make decisions, while getting emotionally worked up. They are activating the neuronal network associated with the problem and its underlying negative emotions and therefore foster this pattern even further. The coach needs to disrupt this negative emotion-associated pattern. He/She can use different methods to help the client move from a problem-focus to a solution-orientation. Borrowed from the solution-focused brief therapy, he/she can ask about similar situations where the problem was not present, or a quick solution was found. By resorting back to the client's past solutions and resources, new connections are formed, which can then be used to develop a

solution for the present problem. In the hypno-systemic approach, the coach tries to create a change in the pattern, which activates new association networks and therefore, changes the experience of the situation. The coach can include concepts from body therapy or use methods stimulating different senses, for example, trance inductions, metaphors, symbols, rhythm/sound or movement. When working with emotions in coaching it is important that the coach and the client have a mutual understanding of the term. The coach can help the client to make sense of his/her emotions by asking the client to what degree his/her reaction is conscious or unconscious, what physical reactions he/she notices and to which degree the emotions are the result of fast (automatic) or slow thinking. Here, the analogy of the rider and elephant by Jonathan Haidt can be a helpful tool. As emotions influence our memory recollection, hypotheses should not be built solely on one event, the coach should rather consider several events over a period of time to help the client gain a clearer picture of the underlying patterns. There is no universal definition of the term emotion and research has shown that many people have difficulties expressing their emotions in accurate words. Therefore, it can be useful to introduce the emotion wheel by Dr. Robert Plutchik to the client. This method provides a frame for the term emotion, which allows the client to explore his emotions more deeply, while the coach gains an understanding of which emotions the client really feels. All these methods can be used to work effectively with the client's emotions in the coaching process. This collection is not exhaustive and future research should focus on defining additional helpful methods.

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