



Ontological Coaching Method of Self-Knowledge and as a Strategy to Promote Mental Health at Work

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Summary

The objective of this document is to present the basic elements of ontological coaching proposed by Rafael Echeverría, as a process of personal and professional transformation based on self-knowledge. In addition, this practice serves as a strategy to promote mental health in work environments.

Key words: Ontological Coaching; Self-knowledge; Mental health; Personal transformation

Introduction

“Coaching is a way of being and being” Whitmore [1]. In my experience as a work psychologist, I have had the opportunity to learn about and apply different methods and techniques for human development in organizations [2-7]. This means that I can appreciate and value contributions from other disciplines.

In this sense, and for the main purposes of this article, I want to begin this writing by taking up some of the words of John Whitmore that appear in his classic book entitled “Coaching”, in which he maintains that coaching is not a mere technique that must be dust and apply rigidly in certain specific circumstances. According to this author, coaching is a way of managing, of treating people, of thinking, of being and being [1]. In this same line of thought, [8] state that happiness at work implies more than a pleasant state, the encounter of a sense of social utility and personal transcendence.

More recently, [9] raises the need to work on oneself as an ethical practice of self-care. In addition, according to [10], work has a spiritual dimension that allows, under certain conditions, the enjoyment of a full and productive life. [11], found that among the psychosocial risk factors that affect the mental health of workers

are the demands of work and the lack of autonomy. A more clinical approach in relation to mental health can be found in [12].

Now, to understand the fundamental principles of coaching, it is necessary to take a historical tour in order to familiarize ourselves with this practice and gradually incorporate this learning into our way of being.

Brief History of Coaching

In order to locate the distinctive coordinates that this practice acquires from the perspective and principles of the ontology of language, it is necessary to take a historical tour of the origins of coaching as a modern practice of self-knowledge based on philosophical and psychological principles according to [13].

According to [14] and [15] it is not clear what the origin of coaching or its founders is, since there are as many explanations as there are authors. Consequently, it can be said that in all philosophical reflections throughout the history of humanity there are elements of the nature of coaching. Ultimately, as Ravier points out: “since everything is coaching, it ends up being nothing” (p. 2). In

this context, “the difficulty in establishing the origin of coaching lies precisely in this approach from everything to nothing in an endless number of theories of human development. This occurs because coaching, as a fundamental axiom, is based on the observation and subjectivity of human action for development, from a personal and private perspective” (p. 2)

The influence of existential philosophy and the phenomenological method in the coaching methodology can be seen in its central axis: individual existence. Where it is recognized that human beings have the ability to realize or become aware of ourselves to rethink our own life project. The passage from action to reflection should lead him to perceive himself as he is, finding himself. That is, with their purest consciences [16, 17].

More recently, [18] points out that: “curiously, in the mid-1980s, when humanistic psychology began to be devalued, coaching as we know it today began to take shape. Coaching speaks the same language as humanistic psychology with concepts such as: conscience, freedom, will, self-realization and release of potential” (p. 5). In this way, the contributions of psychology to this practice of personal and professional education and training emerge [19-22].

For [23], coaching is, “at the same time, a practice, an art, a discipline and a methodology that makes use of a set of linguistic, emotional and physical tools to unlock a scheme of due congruence in a person in order to help him see beyond what the schema allows him” (p. 5). In short, coaching is a practice that provides a different way of interpreting human beings, their way of relating, acting and achieving the goals they set for themselves, for their companies and for society [24, 25] (Whitmore, 2003).

Coaching is also a process of personal transformation, it is a learning process, through which people and organizations review with a coach the way they have been doing things and the possibility of designing other ways to obtain what they want. It is a challenge to our habitual way of thinking, acting and relating to the people around us. The coach does not give recipes or tell people or businessmen what to do, nor does he advise or recommend, but rather explores, asks questions, offers different generative interpretations, new perspectives that open development possibilities and enable the desired results [26, 6, 27].

In summary, based on the approaches of [23] it can be stated that: “coaching goes beyond a conversational intervention with another: it is a particular vision of life, a special way of relating to others.” others” (p. 7). In this sense, coaching has to do with the study of leadership and with a methodological strategy or an act that seeks to understand the human soul to help live and work more fully. In addition, they maintain that: “although coaching helps personal and professional growth, it is not a therapy or advice” (p. 15). In similar terms, coaching is proposed and assumed in the most recent works by [28] and by [29].

Ontological Coaching

On the other hand, and according to [30], ontological coaching is a discipline that provides a different way of interpreting human beings, their way of relating, acting and achieving the objectives they

set for themselves, for their companies and for society. One of the postulates that characterize it is that language not only describes reality, but that reality is generated through it. For this author, in an ontological coaching process, growth occurs in the domain of Being, through transformational learning that respectfully questions traditional ways of perceiving and interpreting, where people and teams interrupt their patterns of conduct and behavior: habitual, to start operating with greater creativity, leadership and proactivity; generating emotional, doing, thinking and communication skills. Literally, ontological coaching means training in being [31, 32].

Until now it is clear that ontological coaching is a practice based on the premises, assumptions and principles of the ontology of language. For [33] the three basic postulates of the ontology of language are the following:

1. We interpret human beings as linguistic beings.
2. We interpret language as generative.
3. We interpret that human beings create themselves in and through language. (p.20)

Let us see below the proposal of [33] on these three postulates, briefly, but illustrative. The first postulate states that: “language is, above all, what makes human beings the particular type of beings that they are. Human beings are linguistic beings, beings that live in language. Language is the key to understanding human phenomena. (p.21). The second postulate recognizes that language not only allows us to talk “about” things: “language makes things happen. He maintains that language is generative. Language, therefore, not only allows us to describe reality, language creates realities. Reality does not always precede language; language also precedes reality. Language, we postulate, generates being” [33]. The third postulate maintains that: “life is, on the contrary, the space in which individuals invent themselves”. In addition, he states that: “the human being is not a way of being determined, nor permanent.” In short, it is through conversations that we are able to display our true being [34].

In other words, language is a space of possibility towards its own creation. And what makes it possible is precisely the generative capacity of language. From the aforementioned conditioning bases, individuals have the ability to create themselves through language. No one is of a determined, given and immutable way of being, which does not allow infinite modifications” [33]. This process, according to [35], allows us to connect with our internal resources and with our ability to intervene, achieving greater well-being and effectiveness in achieving the results that matter to us; developing in us the attitude and aptitude to generate new ideas, to create new possibilities, to discover new meanings, to invent new paths, to find new connections, be it at the individual, group, organizational and community level [36, 37].

Conclusion

Ontological coaching consists of a process of transformation of the human being, from a relationship of affective and effective help. This process helps us connect with our psychological resources and with our ability to intervene, achieving greater well-being and

effectiveness in achieving the results that matter to us; developing in us the attitude and aptitude to generate new ideas, to create new possibilities, to discover new meanings, to invent new paths, to find new connections, either at the individual or social level [7, 38].

Coaching is more than a technique to achieve objectives, it is above all a way of being and being in the world. It is also a way of conversing and interacting whose objective is to enhance the person's self-confidence through self-knowledge of their strengths and possibilities for action [39].

Finally, ontological coaching is a fundamentally liberating process from suffering and conditioning beliefs that limit us, based on the recognition of our strengths and capacity for action, creation and transformation of mental reality, based on self-knowledge [40-45].

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Competing Interest

None.

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