

A University Course *Philosophy and Arts* for the students of *Philosophical Coaching*

(University of Opole, Institute of Philosophy 2017-2018, 2018-2019)

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INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

**I. The main idea of the lectures**

- Coaching Client's story-telling is hugely important for his/her identity narrative, for his/her worldview narrative, and the way she describes her problems and deficiencies. The ability to create stories (plot) about oneself and to describe and redescribe the world around resembles, at some points, the ability to create literary work, cinematic work, fairy tales, and the narrative arts in general. Recognition of these methods (e.g. persuasive techniques) can be instrumental in the coaching process, especially when the so-called narrative coaching methods are at stake

**II. My basic inspirations and experience as regards the lectured material**

- Theoretical inspirations as to my own view about life coaching and philosophical coaching: J. Lachs's idea of *stoic pragmatism*, the idea of redescription (R. Rorty's neopragmatism), W. Gombrowicz's idea of narrative self-creation
- My practical experience: *life coaching online*
- Similar experience: e-teaching (University of Illinois, Springfield), webinars (Berlin Practical Philosophy International Forum e.V), university courses on *Rhetoric and Persuasion* (for the students of English in Public Communication), life coaching blog (*Digital Time Coaching*)

**III. The lectures material**

- Inter- and trans-disciplinary: includes philosophy, life coaching, philosophical coaching, arts and aesthetics. It is inter-disciplinary when shows the interrelationship among these disciplines; it is trans-disciplinary when gets out of these particular disciplines and wants to offer a holistic approach towards coaching

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**LECTURES - main points**

**1. Interconnections between the narrative arts and coaching**

Narrative (story-telling) is an integral part of coaching process in many variants, definitely in life coaching and philosophical coaching

- Every Client presents (can present) a narrative world picture as a sort of framework for his/her activities, decisions, and interpretations of events
- Story telling as a useful 'tool' in a 'biographical narrative interview', various narrative strategies, and redescription
- Aesthetic values as applicable in: Coach's *inspirational* talk with the Client, the *clarity* of communication between the Client and the Coach, and similar. In other words,

more *attractive* and *clearer* and more *inspirational* narratives that are used in the coaching process make for more efficient and effective realization of its aims.

- *Persuasive* character of metaphors used in description, self-description, and redescription. I generally follow *New Rhetoric's* claim that communication is hardly ever persuasion-free. Hence, the Client's any story-telling includes some persuasive and self-persuasive potential that can have an ameliorative character

## **2. Autobiographical narrative interview (F. Schutz), its aims and its connections with the narrative arts**

- Creation of the plot (Client's own creation, imitation)
- Narrative technique (screenplay, literary-type of biography)
- Identity narrative strategies ('victim', 'leader', 'outsider')
- Self-creation (self-image)
- Interpretation (of events from the past and expected events in the future)
- Emotional/irrational attitude towards definite persons and events
- Rhetorical and persuasive repertoire (selection of a specific type of words, figures of speech, comparisons, references, etc)
- Reference (direct or indirect) to authority figures, celebrities, favourite characters in the artworld (film, music, etc)

## **3. Selected identity narrative strategies**

- 'victim'
- 'leader'
- 'outsider'
- 'creator'

## **4. The idea of redescription (R. Rorty's neopragmatism) in the context of life coaching**

- Redescription as an effort to "recontextualize much of what you previously thought you knew"
- Redescription is not argumentation in logical sense (true vs. false)
- Social aspects of redescription

## **5. The persuasive character of rhetorical devices; hidden persuasion**

- Rhetorical devices, more often than not, include persuasive factor (*New Rhetoric*)

## **6. Film screenplay technique.** Asking your Client to write a screenplay about herself can stimulate her agency in the issues like:

- Character and internal conflict
- Plot (struggle to aim the goal)
- Relationship (hierarchy of relations)
- Priorities in life

## **7. Selected aesthetic phenomena to be found in the coaching process**

- Taste
- Aesthetic sensitivity
- Client's own history of aesthetic experience
- The type of narrative that the Client is vulnerable to and sees as cognitively privileged
- Dreams and imagination that are convertible into figures and images of aesthetic/artistic type

## 8. The problem of 'quality of life', 'the good life,' and the 'meaningful life' in the context of the definitions of coaching in ICF

An ongoing relationship, which focuses on client taking action towards the realization of their visions, goals, or desires. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the client's level of awareness and responsibility, and provides the client with structure, support, and feedback. The coaching process helps clients both define and achieve professional and personal goals faster and with more ease than would be possible otherwise

and in *Life Coaching Handbook*

Life Coaching is a professional partnership between coach and individual focused on the discovery of one's life direction, and is based on a holistic and action based approach that promotes the process of understanding overall life purpose

J. Lachs's idea of *stoic pragmatism* can be a useful framework for some developments ('quality of life', 'the good life,' and the 'meaningful life') in life coaching, philosophical coaching and in education in general. Stoic pragmatism, despite it comes out of philosophical sources (American pragmatism, Santayana, the Stoics) abandons the research/discovery paradigm and focuses on the ways in which the individuals will be able to recognize their agency in a more effective way so as to increase their sense of meaningful and happy lives, which is also the best way to ameliorate the social life in general.

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*International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring* Vol. 10, No. 1,

February 2012