

Soul support - Kåre Landfald about Zen Coaching

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What is special about Zen Coaching, and what is Zen Coaching compared to other coaching techniques?**

Well, first what is coaching? Coaching for me is, simply said, a way of supporting people by asking powerful questions, and listen to the answers, so people really discover their own wisdom, their own answers, their own direction in life.

And zen, means meditation, means being here now, means being connected in the moment. So Zen Coaching is simply a coaching technique which is very strongly focused on experiencing the present moment, and discovering all the wonderful resources that we have access to when we stay in the present moment.I mean, for instance this book by Eckart Tolle, 'The Power of Now' is all about discovering the power which is already here, and coaching techniques /questions, can really help to open up to discover marvellous resources that we have already - we don't have to wait until tomorrow.

What kind of techniques do you use in Zen Coaching?

The interesting thing about Zen Coaching also is, well, there are so many coaching techniques and therapy techniques but the technique is never more powerful than the person using it. In fact, the technique is not the important thing, it is the connection, the presence in the meeting.

I think that everybody who works with people, they know that the quality of the connection, the quality of empathy, of being really there, with a caring attitude, interested, open, is the power. What we do in Zen Coaching is to give that a great emphasis, so that all the techniques really becomes less important. We can use any technique, but the golden technique is no technique; it is just be, dropping all techniques and just being, innocent, open, trusting in the moment. And in this innocent-open-trustful - there is tremendous power of a kind of simple, humble sort. And it has a strong effect on people. So the technique is to stay in the moment, and we use the question 'what is happening right now?' as a kind of a main technique. Can you say yes to this moment? And then, see what happens. So you can say, the technique is following the unfolding now, and see what happens. And what happens often is magic.

I guess you don't have to be a coach to find this exciting, what people are doing this training? Is it only coaches, or..?

What I have noticed; now I have been doing this training for about 4 years, for about 110 people, and participants are from 20 years old to 70 years old. They are unemployed, and they are business managers. They are chefs in restaurants, and they are therapists.

I think what attracts everybody is that they have discovered that there is a tremendous attraction in being really present to life. And the attraction is both for myself; that I simply relax more, I enjoy life more and I learn more about everything when I really stay in the moment. There are so many benefits, and also, since it is coaching, to support other people. It does not really need to be as a coach, it can be as a husband or a wife or a parent or a colleague or a boss, simply a human being. It is about listening, being there, hearing people. The benefit is in any human interaction, and if you want to work as a coach, of course it is a coach education, so it would give you those skills also.

How many zen coaches are there now?

Now we are about 110, and every year there are about 40 more. Now we are also opening up a coach education in Poland, so in a few years I think we will see this education in several countries.

How is the market for coaching today? Is it easy to get a job as a coach? Do you believe that there is a future for so many zen coaches in Scandinavia and in the rest of the world?

Well you know my vision is: every person, his or her own coach. It is like having a dentist, a haircutter or a doctor. Everybody has a doctor, in fact in Norway everybody has to have a doctor, you own doctor. For me it is, coaching is a basic function, it's like a support for your soul, and for your mind and for your wellbeing, so.. I mean, the market is almost endless.

And it is all about what you can offer, if you can offer quality coaching there is a market. This is what I see because everybody loves to be fully listened to. No matter young or old, weather you have a difficult life or happy life, everybody can benefit. And I see a lot of people, when I speak about it they say, 'yeah I need a coach, I actually need a coach.' So I think the more people are offering this kind of coaching the more people will be attracted to it. So there is no competition really.

So what is important for you in your life and in coaching?

Well in my life it is about learning more about who I am, what life is about, how to

enjoy life, how to connect, how to contribute to people, how to contribute to the wellbeing of myself and of other people. And also to enjoy life as an adventure. I like this saying that 'life is not a problem to be solved but a mystery to be lived'. And for me, I just like to explore this mystery by myself, and also together with people who also have this attitude; we are not here to solve problems, we are here to enjoy this mystery.

So I think right now for me, it is about regaining the innocent joy of a child, but in a mature way; also really see with compassion everything going on in the world and supporting where I can, and in the way I can. And I believe connecting people to meet in the heart, to support each other through listening, being honest from the heart, that is something I enjoy and I see a lot of people enjoy it . So that is my personal joy, and also what I want to contribute, and many more things, there are so many things, we can talk all night...

Is there one important thing that you would like to say as an ending to this?

I would like to say, which is my philosophy of life; whatever I am curious about, I would like to try it. Not just think about it, but try it! The only way to know what something is, is to try it, and experience it.

So I really encourage people to, if you are in anyway curious about this, there are so many people out there who can offer a coaching conversation for an hour, and even for free. There is a whole list of people on the zen coaching web-page, you can just call them up and say 'hey, I am curious, can you give me half an hour/one hour?' And they will say: 'Sure!' And then you will know more. Instead of thinking about it, as with anything - just do it! ...that is my philosophy of life, we know through experience, not through thinking.



The Zen Coaching training starts in October 2009

Part 1: 21-25 October (next chance is 1-5 January 2010).

Part 2: 24-28 February 2010

Part 3: 5-9 May 2010

Part 4: 15-19 September 2010

For more info about the training, see www.angsbacka.se

