

Ontological Coaching and the Wisdom of the Body

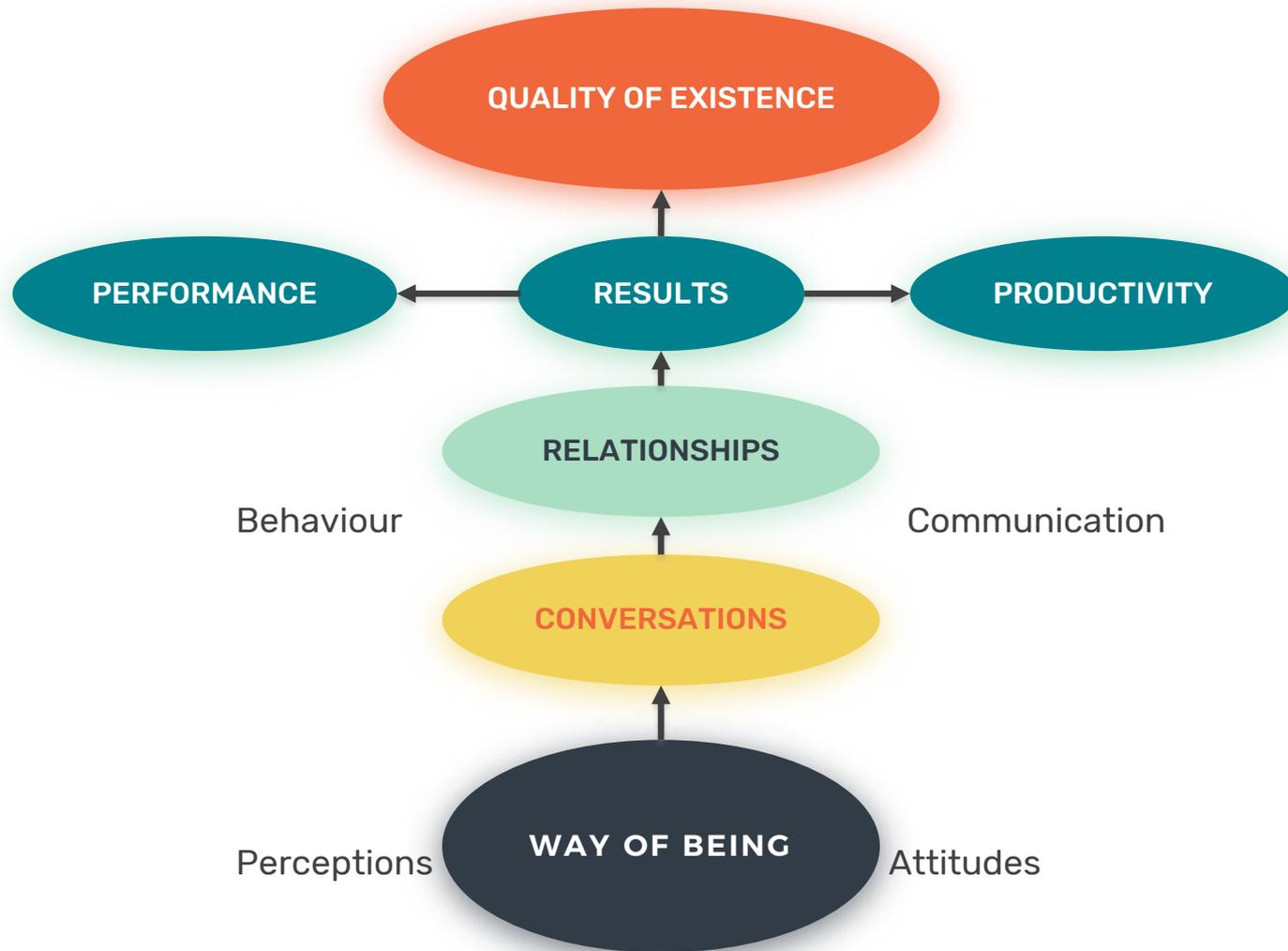
with **ALAN SIELER**



Ontological Coaching

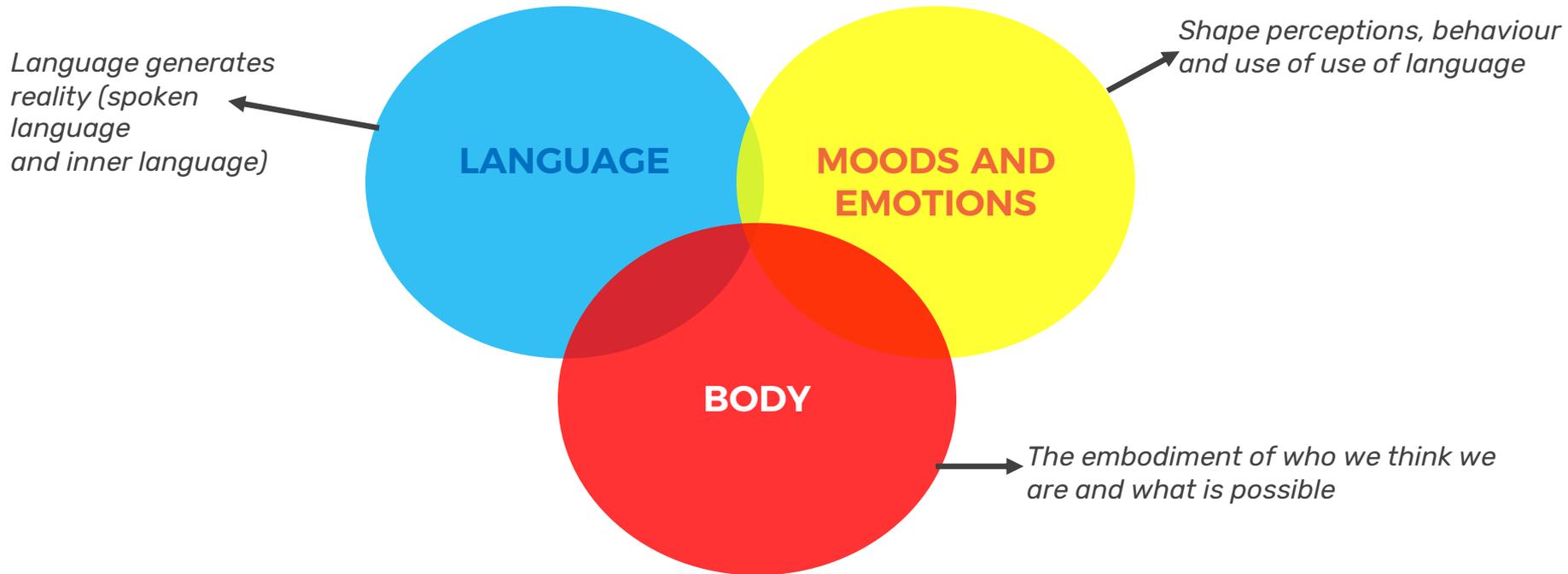
- **Ontology** – the study of being or existence, in particular the nature of human existence
- What is it to be a human being?
- **Ontological Coaching** – coaching to Way of Being
- **Way of Being** is regarded as the underlying driver of human communication and behaviour

Coaching to Way of Being



Way of Being

Location of deep-seated perceptions and attitudes
Underlying driver of behaviour and communication

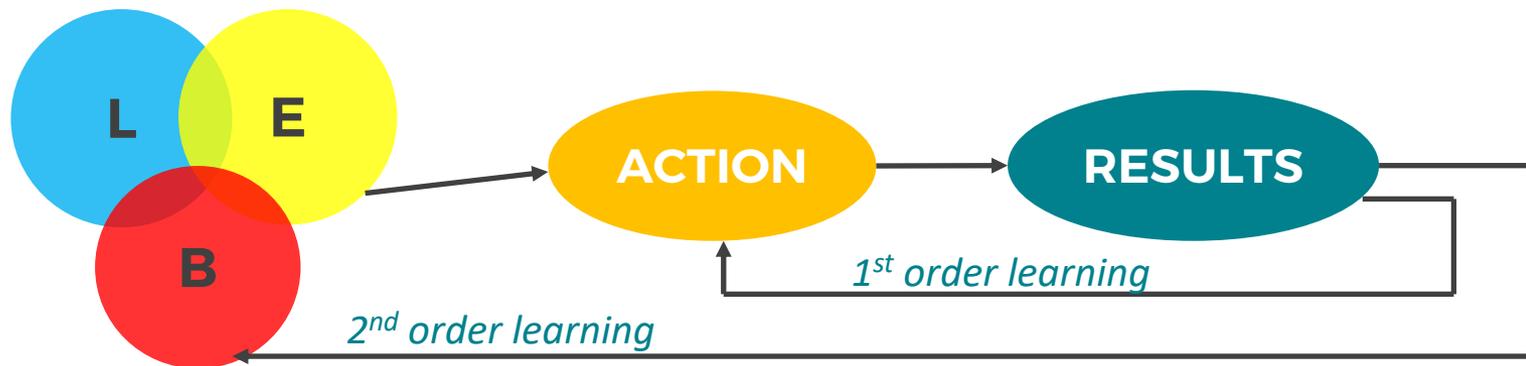


The world “shows up” to us
according to our Way of Being

Second-Order Learning

- We cannot change what we do not notice
- Ontological noticing is observing specifics of our Way of Being, how they shape our perceptions and behaviour and shifting Way of Being to take more effective action. This is second-order learning.

OBSERVER



Observer observing and shifting
own Way of Being

Transformational Learning

“Real learning gets to the heart of what it means to be human. Through learning we-recreate ourselves.”

Peter Senge, *The Fifth Discipline*

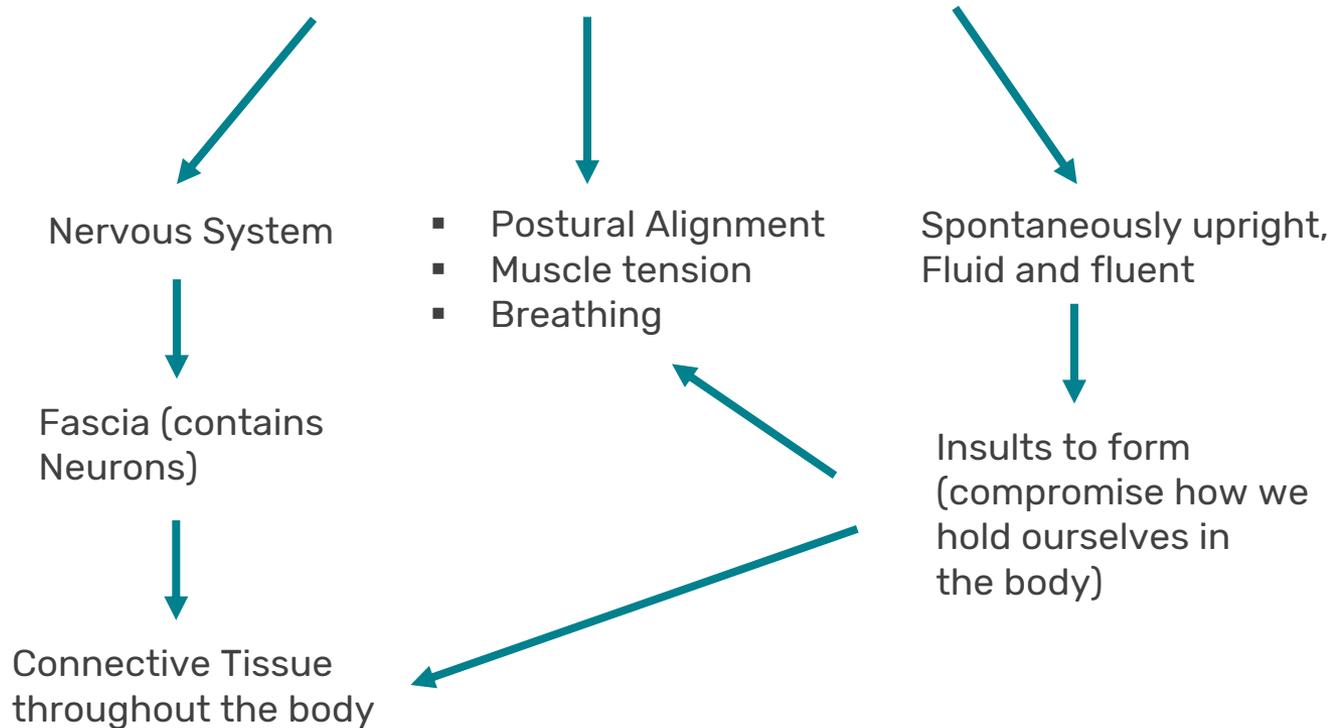
“It gives me great pleasure ... to be allowed to play host to you ... You know, of course, where this other world lies hidden, the world you are seeking is that of your own soul, and that the different reality you are longing for is only to be found deep in your own self. I can give you nothing that doesn't already exist in you. ... All I can give you is the opportunity, the stimulus, the key. I am going to help you make your own world visible, that is all.”

Herman Hesse, *The Seasons of the Soul* (?)

The Domain of the Body

Rationale for the crucial importance of the body

Slowest and yet has the most profound affect for change.



A Basic Somatic Framework

... for developing body awareness & making gradual adjustments

- **Feet** – connection to the ground/floor and weight distribution.
- **Knees** – locked or relaxed.
- **Pelvis** – position under the shoulders
- **Lower back** – imagine is like jelly: firm and pliable
- **Torso** – stomach and chest; expanding across top of chest
- **Shoulders and shoulder blades** – hanging loose (coat hanger); blades support
- **Position of neck and head** – forward, back, up, down; head as floating ballon
- **Arms, hands and fingers** – hanging loose.
- **Facial muscles** – forehead; muscles either side of the eyes; jaw muscles – upper and lower jaw; muscles of the cheek bones; muscles around the mouth. Placing the tip of your tongue behind your top front teeth.

Experiencing Body Coaching

- Identify and issue you would like to explore – something you would like to be going better
- Tune in to what you are **saying to yourself** about the issue and **notice the specifics of how you are in your body** (feet, knees, pelvis, chest, shoulders, etc); also notice your breathing
- **Shake off** – wiggle and move all parts of your body and breathe deeper
- Make **small shifts with different parts of your body** (feet, knees, pelvis, chest, shoulders, etc); also notice your breathing
- Settle in to **a different Way of Being in your body** and think about the issue from this body – what is different for you?

Experiencing Body Coaching

Identify and issue you would like to explore – something you would like to be going better

Tune in to what are **saying to yourself** and **specifics of how you are in your body** (feet, knees, pelvis, chest, etc). Also, notice your breathing.

Shake off
– wiggle
and shrug
off tension

Make **small shifts** in specifics of how you are in different parts of your body (feet, knees, pelvis, chest, etc). Also, notice your breathing

Settle in to a **different Way of Being in your body** and think about the issue from this body – what is different for you?

Essence of Coaching Methodology

OVERARCHING CONSIDERATIONS

- Coach being an ontological learner about their own Way of Being
- Coach being in their most resourceful Way of Being for the coachee
- Coaching as inquiry, exploration and experimenting to help reveal new possibilities
- Legitimising the coachee as a learner and a fellow human being
- Permission, permission, permission
- Shared understanding of breakdown(s) and the “coaching agenda”
- Making offers and ensuring acceptance to share perspective and assessments
- Coach continually expanding and refining their observations of the Way of Being of coachees

LANGUAGE

- Coaching listening to their listening
- Coachee’s individual words and phrases – how creating reality?
- Concerns and core concerns
- Basic Linguistic Acts – present and absent; negative self-assessments
- Type of conversations – present and absent
- Cultural-historical narratives – helpful and unhelpful
- Declarations/commitments to action

Essence of Coaching Methodology

MOODS AND EMOTIONS

- Coach managing their own moods and emotions
- Emotional space of the coachee – moods and emotions
- Unhelpful moods and possible learning from these
- Linguistic interpretation of moods and emotions
- Utilising a structural interpretation of moods
- Facilitating the coachee shift to more helpful moods
- Checking for Resignation in relation to commitment(s) to action

BODY

- Coaching managing own “somatic arrangement” – posture, muscle tension and breathing
- Observing somatic specifics of coachee’s posture, muscle tension and breathing
- Working with embodiment of moods
- Facilitating somatic shift from less resourceful to more resourceful “somatic arrangement”

BIOLOGY

- Appreciating the biological essence of coaching – *perturbance* of the coachee’s bodyhood and coachee *triggering* structural change of their nervous system

Further resources

- Articles on Ontological Coaching Institute website - <http://www.ontologicalcoaching.com.au/html/articles.html>
- Volumes I, II, III and IV of Coaching to the Human Soul – descriptions and order forms at <http://www.ontologicalcoaching.com.au/html/books.html>

