



Art coaching in support of career development
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ART COACHING IN SUPPORT OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Practicing of particular skills conveys the power of their benefits to areas which the personality doesn't recognize as safe for change in position or reactions. To help the deficits felt by the Ego comes the art coaching which covers the following categories: motivation, confidence, satisfaction, as it models them in a constructive direction for the personality.

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Career coaching is an activity which comes in help of the process of self-knowledge and the finding of the most suitable professional role. The process is executed by discovering the most suitable professional options, helping in the choice of direction and a preparation for passing through the stages of searching and finding a professional vocation or a new and better profession for the personality.

The benefits for the client are in several aspects. The most important one is linked to the formulating and the realizing of the personal values and the corporate culture which best suits them. Professional and individual competencies, as well as the client's motivators are defined. A career map is strategically prepared, which contains eventual suitable positions and sectors as opportunities for career change or development. During individual or group meeting, interview simulations are executed, which aim to prepare the candidates for the real meeting with the company that is about to happen. The main advantage of such consultations is the feeling of support that the participants receive as well as the play of supposed scenarios of how the meeting with the company's representatives would go. At the beginning this practice is started with the idea of exposition of the personality, this is the first step of the process and the art therapy is a suitable methodology for this task. Both main functions of the art therapy could be used in career development: corrective (diagnostic) and developing (creative). Its applications in developed corporate practices are presented in this article and the methodologies are specific and thematic. The purpose of the art therapy is to develop a visual metaphor, to give a new point of view, new sensitivity and idea for the correction of a realized problem or behavior which have a priority in the motivation of the personality's behavior. The art is a mean to take the participant from one space to another and it connects feelings, thoughts and insights. The role of the art in this dynamic could be either a correcting therapy for weaknesses and deficits in personal skills – social, professional or emotional, or it could also be used as stimulating, developing therapy, which develops the personality and reminds the participant of his abilities for self-actualization, which are usually marginalized by the everyday routines. The power of art as a knowledge integrator in ourselves, which is often times not accessible for our words and cannot be formulated in other ways except through images, is an important opportunity which could be used in career development. The understanding and the knowing of our own personality takes the person one step closer to integrity. The realization of the inner connection to the world brings harmony and creates a stronger feeling of

satisfaction. The art therapy reaches the unconscious things through art which allows the unknown to become a knowledge, a consciousness. The road to this knowledge could be achieved through different forms of art – painting, music, movement, theatre, photography and many others.

Need for art therapy in corporate practice

The corporative Person today is in isolation from himself, a phenomenon which has been observed for many years, he is melted into the corporate identity and often times it defines himself. The multifunctional complex corporative environment, the lack of focus and realization of our own emotions and not knowing our own personal needs are the main reasons for this analysis and research, which aims to adapt the art therapy to the contemporary business. The associative connection between the personality and the work in its main appearance in this moment is related to the idea of boredom and exhaustion. In his book “Potok”, Mihai Csikszentmihalyi uses an extreme category to describe the idea of the modern working man in this same activity as a “curse”.¹ The employees are often repressed by the structures and the functions of the contemporary business. The people are forced to follow rules and behavior which are not always in harmony with their inner necessities. This creates the need of a care, of additional turning to our own personality in search of integrity and harmony. In order for this to be achieved, it is hugely important that the profession brings enjoyment and satisfaction to the person. Having in mind the diverse world of possibilities, finding a suitable profession is a matter of activity, a decision and realization from the person, rather than chance, luck, talent or any other external independent conditionality. The achieving of this “bliss”, as the pioneer in the scientific research of happiness Mihai Csikszentmihalyi states is a matter of searching, an active searching. And when a man finds this bliss of the vocation “he shall not seek another bliss”, the author advises.² The time and the energy of those who have found the vocation and the most suitable profession for them should go into development and enjoyment of doing this activity. The functioning of the social person has been changed because of the material prioritizing, which takes a lot of energy to meet the basic needs. They are also significantly changed and spread their perimeter in a way in which they require all the energy and activity of the working man. From basic needs they turn into ones that service the modern whim of the person’s attitude which becomes more and more commercial. The more and more expensive

¹ Csikszentmihalyi, M. Potok, Hermes, 2018 page 189

² Csikszentmihalyi, M. Potok, Hermes, 2018 page 189

technologies, the more and more new and convenient automobiles, the better furnished houses have become the new “basic” needs. This already broadened category has become one of the main priorities of humankind, living in the definition civilization. Their growth is so rapid that it consumes the all the resources of humankind – time, financial and emotional. If a person is not overwhelmed by the idea of “success” in these criterions, he wouldn’t feel such a strong pressure to have a profession, which he doesn’t like, but which is profitable enough to ensure the ability to buy all the extras which give the feeling of achievement and success. The more mental energy is involved in achieving this the more this process becomes at any price and a stage is reached where compromises with the true value and person’s necessities are required. Being hidden, these authentic values and motivators are becoming less and less realized by the personality and a feeling of discomfort starts to emerge, which cannot be explained by the person. At first sight this is entirely out of logic, given the fact that the particular employee has reached quite good corporate results and is already entirely materially secured. Deceived by the feeling of secureness in this way, the personality is stuck in this status quo without being able to dive deep into himself to search for the reasons and the decisions for this depression, meaninglessness and lack of satisfaction. The enjoyment of life slowly but firmly makes is being replaced by the mechanical following of goals, satisfying the always-growing material expectations of the urban technological world. States such as depression, apathy and dissatisfaction are serious prerequisites for denying goals and wishes for achievements in any perspective – personal or professional.

As an offer for solving this problem, during the first stage of the methodology, the method of art-therapeutic work is used. The purpose of the first couple of sessions in this practice is to create a new focus, to turn the personality towards its own feelings and personal value, towards the possibilities to find happiness not outside but inside itself. Understanding our own personality takes us closer to integrity. Realizing our inner connection to the world brings harmony and creates the feeling of satisfaction. The realization of the inner connection to the world brings harmony and creates a stronger feeling of satisfaction. The art therapy reaches the unconscious things through art which allows the unknown to become a knowledge, a consciousness. The art integrates knowledge in ourselves, which is often times not accessible for our words and cannot be formulated in other ways except through images. This step takes us

closer to exiting the social “weightlessness”, which Viktor Frankl defines as a main problem of our times.³

The activeness and the interest for development is a main, pretty basic and inseparable part of the development and the success at all. Humankind needs to compensate the lag in its evolutionary pace which refers to self-knowledge and realization of the personality, while catching up with the technological progress. According to the writer Howard Garner, the most organizations have developed functional blindness for their own disadvantages. The organizations suffer not because of they cannot solve their problems, but because they cannot see them. The problems we have cannot be solved with the same way of thinking as the one which was present at the time of their occurrences. A different reaction is needed in order to find a solution, a reaction which leads to different results that see the problem in its dynamic in their integrity in the context of reality. The pattern which isolates the person from the desire, the natural strive for self-actualization is similar, it changes those with unified criterion for achievements and measurable results, used in mass structures – schools, universities and organizations. The authenticity is lost in this pyramid of our social organization. Another thing is also late – the feeling that the learning, the improvement, the actualization, the happiness, the success is a process, not a state which once reached, remains constant. The idea of personal development, revising and improving of our own attitude, position, point of view, as well as learning through our whole life is part of the character of those type of programs. Even the most serious academic communities with representatives of the Oxford University pay strong attention to planning and goals-setting in the process of development of the personality. Manuel London describes the importance of the individual and group education as a mechanism for development of the personality, which he measures in substantially large scale on a corporate level. Inside and outside the context of organizational representation, benefits of personal improvements are observed greatly in coaching practice, where eloquent indicators are not only productivity measured in numbers, but also the feelings of the people in the corporations, measured by a comparison methodology. It defines what is their emotional map before and after the training. The attitude itself for the ability of the personality to undergo a change and to improve itself and thus to change its life and environment, results in pacifying and calming the personality and ensuring it that everything could be achieved in the near future and most of all it shows that this process is

³ Frankl, V. *The Will to Meaning*, Lege Artus, 2019, page 58

completely natural. Moreover, the step to this process creates the feeling of sense, hope and opportunity to achieve peace in its own emotional deficits and crises. Despite the huge popularity and diversity of personal development programs, the global researches on the effect of such trainings of the personality are quite scarce. Part of them are focused on measuring the benefits in business precisely, and the put their accent mainly on who are the most suitable employees for such investment of time and resources. Studies show that the energetic and active individuals are more prone to improvement and affect the productivity to a greater extent. The same study proves that the quality executed work is more related to consciousness and personal satisfaction, rather than with the hard working.⁴ This correlation is valid in its essential connection also for the training programs outside business organizations. Such training programs are suitable for people who want to work on themselves. This is a key element in organizing the group and the individual work. The current program is a catalyst, a mediator between the desired state of the participants and their current achievements as professionals. In a supporting environment, by including all the essential elements of self-knowledge – emotionality, sociality and body, an attempt is made to normalize the participants and bring them back to their most natural state – their role of Homo Faber – to create and grow in the activity they are attracted to. The difficultness to examine the effectivity of such training program is objective, due to the fact the achieving of a particular personal improvement is a result not only by the working methodology, but also by the requirements and the conditions of the surrounding environment and the personal characteristics of the participants. At the beginning of the training it is necessary to pay special attention to the individual, the personal characteristics of the participants, having in mind that in order for the methodology to work effectively, participants must have inner motivation to work with their emotional world and a desire for proactivity in particular in particular actions throughout the whole process. In order for them to feel the new feelings they have to try and in order for them to try they have to act, to come out of the social incubator of pre-made wishes and pre-set artificial values, the implied social and fashion trends, related to success, wealth, beauty, popularity. The paradox is that the more people approach those desired concepts, the more dissatisfied they become. The reason for this is that in fact, these are not their authentic searches and beliefs, they are implied by the pressure of the social relevance. The change

⁴ George Halkos, Dimitrios Bousinakis, (2010) "The effect of stress and satisfaction on productivity", International Journal of Productivity and Performance Management, Vol. 59 Issue: 5, pp.415-431

of authentic values and desires with “modern” ones is the result of the weakened connection of the personality with its own inner world and necessities. In his paradigm of the whole personality, Stephen Covey explains why in the era of unlimited possibilities, many people are still dissatisfied with their jobs?⁵ This is the lack of creative and supportive environment which should stimulate the individuality, the authentic personality. This is also the reason why most companies cannot maximize the potential of their employees and to extract the maximum effectivity of their work. When it comes to talented and skilled employees, this loss is expressed in ideas that have not been developed, creativity and ingenuity, which remain unfolded in a corporate culture environment which doesn't tolerate development and personal focus. The main source of inspiration for this paradigm is the statement that people are not objects that could be exploited and controlled, but they are a unity of four levels – body, mind, heart and spirit. The work on all these levels is the way to a real support and a reminder that the most essential characteristic of humankind is to create, to build, to make sense, all this together with other people. The irreversibility from the social characteristic that the person has is an important part of the fact that his way of unfolding is possible in social environment.

The adaptation of these theoretical ideals to a corporate environment has to be done in accordance with its specifics and needs. In order for the art-therapeutic practices to be adapted successfully, we have to make a deep research of the company's profile. Even if this doesn't include detailed organizational analysis, the essential part is knowing the company, the terminological apparatus inside it, its goals and organizational structure. The observation of the environment and the personal contact with at least 5 – 10 employees is a sanitary minimum which could ensure a good approach and design of the future empirical corporate practice, which is about to take place in this environment. This is a fundament that will help us to build a report with the future participants.⁶ Through the use of specific corporate terms and work with real-work cases, the facilitator shows a closer connection to the client's nature. This knowing of the environment helps to create trust among the participants in the reliability of the training, This, on the other hand, could help the participants to dive into the offered experience, maximizing the benefits from it in a greater extent, compared to the scenario which shows denying the idea from the very start of the activity.

⁵ Covey, S., *The 8th Habit. From effectiveness to Greatness*, Kibea 2011, page 33

⁶ O'Conner, J. and Lages A., *Coaching with NLP*, IK Kolibri, 2012, page 25

The report is a matter of trust, which has a clear structure of achievement and involves the flowing several components. In order for this trust to be reached, the facilitator should:

- Listen actively, paying attention to the particular words and phrases that the client uses. The literally repetition of some of the words that the client has used, in the summary which the facilitator gives back to client, help the participant feel understood and accepted.
- The type of the representative system the client uses, in order to formulate his speeches with the help of its means of expression.
- Use a place for executing the training, which is different from the workspace, especially when it comes to a person from the management level, who connects this working area and environment as his zone of comfort and with this to manage the process and to give instructions, ideas tasks.

All of this is of great importance, because the art therapy gives the client an overall, unknown possibility for work and exploration. If the activities or the leader are too far from the client, and the employee doesn't relate to them by any means, probably the ideas of the therapy would be rejected from the very beginning of the process. In order for the practice to be developed in way which benefits the participant and to be fully consumed by him, the participant has to trust the opportunity and to realize the benefits from working with art from the very beginning.

Art therapy in career development has a broad application, in this current thesis its application is examined on two different levels. One of them is the individual work with people, who initiate the change by themselves and look for new opportunities for their own realization. They are usually prone to self-reflection and awareness of their inner world. This group represents proactive people who have affinity to examining their own borders and a desire for personal improvement. In this case the work is first directed towards revising of the inner world, extracting the priority dynamics and their realization from the client. This process is reached through coaching methodology, which represents leading an inner dialogue in the client. With the help of directing questions, the method reaches to attitudes or behavioral characteristics that are important for the personality and affect the realization of the client. In its first steps, the art training is based on drawing, which is an easy way to make contact between art and grown-up individuals. Acting, dancing improvisation and photography are

included in the following sessions, when the participants have already warmed up their artistic apparatus and feel much more relaxed and comfortable to experiment with new formats. The method's aim is to develop the confidence level, to increase motivation and as a result to improve the expertise in particular professional skills of the participants.

The corporate practice shows its actual problems with acute symptoms of several very important phenomena. Terms such as "Job Hopper"⁷ (people changing their job every few months) show the constant search for change and inability to reach harmony in the inner world of the personality. The reason this occurs is not always the business environment and its conditions, but deficits in the personality itself. This is also one of the reasons why it is much needed to put efforts in searching of methods and practices that could help the modern corporate personality, depressed by the burden and the requirements of the dynamic, severe and competitive business.

The first direction in which art therapy is applied in corporate practice is the directing of the people in a particular company in a course which is beneficial for their professional purposes and their personal satisfaction. This training is usually initiated by the management of the company and the participants are invited to this format by their mentors. The main training conduction here is related to ensuring the ability of each participant to receive his time and attention, to be listened to and heard, to share his opinion and to state his position through one extraordinary experience. The routine in business corporations doesn't allow such practice to be tolerated for many reasons. A part of them is the unconditional following of the corporate tone and often times the one-direction stream of information. One of Google's researches, called "Aristotel"⁸, tries to find the reasons which make the teams truly successful. In this research the number one result is the importance of the corporate equality. It represents a group habit in which every team members speaks and gets heard on a daily basis. This is taught and encouraged. The secret lies in the work culture, which is created in the team and it comes from the managers and the good practices which integrate the suitable knowledge and skills for team management. According to the needs of the business structure the purposes of the art therapy could be adapted. They are formulated together with the

⁷ Job-Hopping, Harvard Business Review

<https://hbr.org/podcast/2018/12/job-hopping>

⁸ What Google Learned From Its Quest to Build the Perfect Team, The New York Times Magazine

<https://www.nytimes.com/2016/02/28/magazine/what-google-learned-from-its-quest-to-build-the-perfect-team.html?smid=pl-share>

company and ideas are discussed for what the participating groups will be, will they be homogeneous by gender, education, status, age and others. The homogeneity in the corporate practices is most often applicable by the participants' level in the company or by their age group.

The good knowing of the company is a priority in the preparation of the art therapeutic training. It is obligatory to meet people from the company in person. This improves the possibility that the formulated purposes of the training will match the organizational expectations. This could also affect the efficiency of the practices, because the sessions are specific and oriented to specific purposes. The work with the terminology apparatus of the organization is also of great importance. Speaking the same way as the employees allows the therapist to earn their trust and to show that the job of the art in the particular practice is adapted to their situationality and it's not self-serving abstract task and experience.

In the examination of the group with which we are going to work, it is recommended to follow the next prerequisites:

- ✓ Participation in the training has to be desired by the employees, in no cases this should be forced;
- ✓ The art therapeutic practices have to be in compliance with the presence or the absence of homogeneity of the group by gender, age, education, status, interests. Because of the social desirability which is possible when conducting trainings by people who are acquaintances and are in formal relationships, it is recommended that the participants in the group are not in direct subordination and if this is possible they have to be at the same hierarch level in the company;
- ✓ The trainings are conducted in groups of 6 – 12 people;

The formats in this application of the training may have different team goals. The focus of the practice also defines the subject, the structure and the design of the whole event. The most applicable subjects to work on in organizations, in the context of similar experience are:

- ✓ Improvement of the team efficiency;
- ✓ Stimulating creativity;
- ✓ Improving communication;
- ✓ Developing assertiveness;

- ✓ Conflict resolving;
- ✓ Developing specific skills – public speaking, effective listening, sharing, communicating and others;
- ✓ Discovering informal leaders;
- ✓ Managing working stress;

The group usually simulates the dynamic of the work community or the social group. The trainings help the participants to see themselves and to get to know themselves in their relations with the others and the way they cope with this result. Do they accept it? Are they comfortable with it? Do they want to change something and what? Do they distance themselves from the process? Do they deny to take part in it? James Gibson describes a similar thing, he says that very contextual information exists, which affects our vision for certain definitions, thus the “real life” and the Self-image that we have may turn out to not be so objective. In the routine as a constant context, it is much likely that the personality doesn't really see a very large part of its true essence and the world. By determining this whole information, we aim to achieve the therapeutic effect, influence, unlocking the thoughts, feelings and emotions, releasing of the energy. The search for specific memories with relations is tendentious and of key importance in the practice, because it is them that structure our actual relations and alarm for dynamics which is reflected as an unconscious reflection with the primary memory. The personality forms experiences on the basic levels:

- ✓ My position / drawing (as a feeling, self-estimation, a memory which I recreate);
- ✓ The position others in my opinion (usually expressed in free text, interpretation of the drawing);
- ✓ What does the other reaction provoke in me (the grade that is given to me or a comment), what does someone else's drawing provoke in me?

Prior to the formation of the group, an individual interview is held with each of the participants, so that we can find out why they want to take part and what are they looking for and what are their expectations from the experience. The building of a preliminary view of the attitude and the expectations helps to make the practice more effective. The participation must be by will, if it is forced under the pressure of corporate requirements could negatively affect the whole group, and it also would hinder the participant to feel the benefits of the process for himself. The participants have to understand that in such practice they would

go through reactions, memories and emotions which are refracted through the prism of the new situation and the current moment.

The role of the facilitator

Two main things have a leading role in the practice – the humanistic attitude of the facilitator towards the participants and the creating of unconditionally supportive environment, which would strengthen the feelings of the personality's own value. The facilitator, just like the humanist, deals with the fullest growth of the individual in areas such as love, performance, value and independence. The process in the humanistic attitude emphasizes on the studying of the whole psychic structure of the person. This scholarship deals with human behavior, which is directly linked to his inner feelings and self-esteem. The approach examines how people are affected by their perception and their own value, related to their life experiences. It is considered that the conscious choice, the answers to the inner needs and the current circumstances, which are important for the formation of the human behavior are determinants for the unfolding of the personality's potential. This highly empathic attitude is based on the personality-centered approach of Karl Rogers. Its application is popular in its broadened scope, outside the boundaries of the psychotherapy. The method of the art coaching practice resembles Roger's philosophy for "therapy through attitude" or "therapy through presence" a lot. Without claiming to be a psychotherapeutic method, the art coaching gives support and motivation for healing autoreflexion and overcoming the stress, by which the participants rediscover their own possibilities and change their evaluation for life as an open horizon as well as for their own essence, unfolded in it. The methodology focuses on this practical orienting towards the personality and the creating of a supportive environment in which we tolerate intuition, spontaneity, humanity. As a main healing tool we determine the intuitive behavior towards the participant's self-healing. It is only him who knows inside himself what he needs in order to heal and to fill his inner emotional pains and empties. The task of the group, executed by the facilitator's approach is to set the correct horizon in which the personality could unfold in order to achieve its healing and development.

The role of the facilitator is to bring the therapeutic security and the art inspiration at the same time. The combination of therapeutic and artistic skills as commented by ass. prof. Romyana Pankova in her book "History and theory of art therapy" is of great importance for the outcome of the therapeutic process

or the group. The group has one more extra power, which affects the healing. The idea of the art coaching that “it is the group that affects the axiological parameters, the goals and the values and helps their changing in a direction which is beneficial for the personality” is examined in the same conduction.⁹ Besides, the unconditional support of the group and the facilitator grant space for training of the personality in which it could safely unfold, hang and overcome its weaknesses. All these attitudes refer to highly ethical and healthy boundaries, encouraging the good and humanistic attitude of the participants towards themselves and the others.

The second group which is quite proper for applying those methodologies in the art coaching practice are the women who are seeking to continue their professional development after they have paused it, due to maternity leave. In order to examine the actual situation in this group, a research was conducted online among mother communities. 165 mothers took part in the research. The data shows that around 53 % of the mothers plan to use their 2-years maternity leave. This is a period when they will be away from the lifestyle they had before having their child. This social group undergoes a full change in their everyday life, values and priorities. This, on the one hand, makes them more insecure and vulnerable, especially first-time mothers. On the other hand, this makes them emotionally stronger, awakening their interest for new activities, experiences and experiments with their own boundaries – things which they get from their new everyday routine.

⁹ Pankova, R., 2012 History and Theory of art therapy, Sofia, NHA, page 101

Table 1. The results from the poll “Career development after maternity leave” showing the answers to the question “How long do you plan to use your maternity leave?”

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Up to 3 months	2.42%	4
Up to 6 months	4.24%	7
12 months	22.42%	37
24 months	53.33%	88
36 months	9.70%	16
More than 36 months	7.88%	13
TOTAL		165

One of the first changes in the personality during the motherhood is the appearance of new interests. Often times, these interests are in contrast of the previous status quo. The changes that the woman experiences on physical, psychic and emotional level are driven not only by the new situation, but also from the biological response of the body with entirely changed hormonal status. In this new situation, rich of new feelings, mothers often feel driven by a new kind of energy, they become more conscious and more intuitive. This automatically turns them back to nature and they feel the need to create. This creativity develops step by step in the period of the maternity leave, starting with the need of a creative idea of how to organize their day so that they can cope with their new tasks and responsibilities and later on how to keep the child’s attention with activity, going through telling fairytales, stories, singing songs, reaching more advanced games and drawing. Usually the women who have taken high corporate position before having children, discover a more creative side of themselves after the birth. The dynamics and the desire of the people to combine all their activities often take them to new challenges which they have to find solutions for, awakening, for example, their entrepreneur spirit. The motherhood changes the interests and the priorities which results in a change of the career path. According to the leading psychologist in emotions, Carroll Izard, the change is a pretty good way to reach a state where there is an active interest. It is this process that generates energy and activates the person. When the interest is real and thorough it creates focus of the attention and mobilizes the body and the mind. During this state important things happen on physical and emotional level and they change the feeling of the body and the

emotional apparatus. Following the routine and the everyday steps of monotony and inertia, a person is likely to lose interest not only in his job but also in his personal life. The interest itself is a way to move – on emotional, intellectual and physical level. It is the interest that is involved in the foundation, development and changing of habits, the skills and the intellect of the personality.¹⁰ The art coaching has the responsible task to pour energy and to sustain the motivation and the interest of the participants by the gradual acquisition of new skills in the art area. This constant dynamic aims first at acquiring some new specific ideas or techniques that will develop the participants' skills after each group meeting and second at having something new practically made by the participants which would help them experience the feeling of overcoming the auto-correction related to making their first steps in this area. Along with this technical improvement, a process of sharing is executed, where group reflection is made on subjects that are currently actual for the group.

The interest usually comes either in combination or in conflict with one or several other emotions, and it is in constant interaction with the perceptual-cognitive processes. The interest is the only motivation which ensures workability of the person and motivates him in his activity. It is also quite necessary for the art processes which are not only provoked by the art coaching but are also necessary for every professional environment in order to develop and achieve more.

The readiness for change and the interest in the participants of the research related to their professional horizons show certain activity in this direction. The abovementioned research shows that 74 % of the respondents to the question "How has maternity leave affected your opinion on the profession you previously had?" share that this period has dramatically change their vision, priorities and goals related to their professional path and development. Hardly 26 % of the respondents didn't register any change in their professional role and the steps that follow. This status is also confirmed by the answers given to the question "Do you plan to change your career after your maternity leave is over?", where 58 % declare that they want to change their profession right after their maternity leave is over. A little bit more – 62 % state that they plan to change their career, but not immediately after they come back from maternity leave, but in a later period of time. This statistic proves the idea that the different environment, context of the tasks and usual habits lead to change in general

¹⁰ Izard C., Psychology of Emotions, Health and Happiness, 2017, Sofia, page 137

status, role and priorities. In this context, the art coaching program offers support and challenges that can strengthen the confidence and aspiration of those people for change and most importantly - to help them keep the inertia of the motivation for change and improvements, which the personality manages purposefully and consciously during the period of work in the group.

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
I will change my profession	19.08%	21
It has changed my priorities	54.84%	57
It didn't affect it	26.36%	29
It made it difficult / It distanced me	2.72%	3

Table 2. The results from the poll “Career development after maternity leave”, processes by quality, summarizing the free-text answers to the question “How has maternity leave affected your opinion on the profession you previously had?”

Another important part of the work of the art coaching program is to help the personality turn to its instincts, authentic values and interests, which could show the direction of the necessary change that is desired according to the feelings of the personality. In the process of developing new interests, the main helpers are the new things, they are an obligatory factor in this process. In the process of creation or building new skills this is the fundament that keeps the activity inertia and stimulates the process. In order to keep the motivation of the personality to continue with a certain process, it is important that it upgrades the activity, develops it, manages it and becomes better and better. The group power and the supportive environment of the humanistic approach of the art coaching practice possess this particular function. Keeping track of the participants’ progress, showing and encouraging their efforts and activity gives them the feeling of importance and esteem, which are motivators for people who seek growth and development of their own potential. This process provokes excitement which bring an avalanche of new impressions and self-reflections. They are the emotional food which is often a deficit of the times we live in. These new emotions and the unconditional support which the group and the facilitator offer create a behavior which is active and more complete than the passive, inert and deprived of interests behavior. It is proved that in a state of strong excitement we percept the surrounding world totally differently, compared to when we are in our usual state. This changes the perceptions and could be surprisingly pleasant, like the feeling when we travel to a new place or go to a

vacation. The emotion we feel when we are interested in something plays an important role in the stimulation of the human ability to percept and process the incoming information. The interest provokes the person to explore and to want to learn more. This is one of the ways in which the personality gets closer to a sense of self-actualization, completeness and going out of the existential vacuum of a life deprived of sense. The acquisition of a new skill in the art coaching practice is a similar way to activate the potential and the feelings. These skills are planned as an integration in the scope of the hobby, as a safe place to train and experiment with our own boundaries and flexibilities. Conducting an act which is unusual for the personality and has some level of risk is interpreted by the Self as a manifestation of braveness and the feeling is satisfactory. In case we have a new skill or a hobby, the risk is connected to the self-censorship which the person is prone to make. Our own restricted beliefs are the main barriers, which our personality agrees to jump over, and they could be really convincing and integrated in the feelings of the personality. The practice introduces the participants to different forms of art, so that they could recognize the area they desire and want to get new skills in. The art coaching helps them touch photography, painting, dance therapy, acting and creative writing in a very light and pleasant manner. The experience that the art coaching offers happens in a capsulated group, which as the time passes builds a strong connection and trust, it helps us take the needed and measured risks to achieve what we want. The values of this methodology are dignity, meeting, respect, empathy, creativity, spontaneity, tolerance, authenticity, openness and braveness to share feelings and experiences. After the end of the experience the group is overwhelmed with excitement and amusement from the overcoming of the fear of realizing, sharing, presenting with the help of the brush or on the improvised "stage", the pleasure and the sharing of creativity and inspiration with the rest of the participants.

The main barrier in this practice, like in most of the trainings, working on personal development is a nature if this state and it is the short term in which it could live in the personality. If it is kept for too long, the interest becomes a part of the status quo and merges in the everyday routines and states. Human nature is not able to keep the state of interest for a long time, because this is a state of excitement and the physiology tries to exit it by reducing the energy it spends as well as the emotional resource. Yet, the regularity, the periodical appearance of this emotion – the interest lead to sense of satisfaction and joy that something has been experienced. The state of interest is combined with parallel emotions.

One of them is the anxiety. It is a defense reaction, natural mechanism restricting the person from new and unknown activities. It is the overcoming of these that later brings the satisfaction, supporting and strengthening the power of the adventurous spirit within a person and his ability to create, to build and to overcome his own boundaries.

In order to keep the motivation of the participants in the most efficient way the practice requires certain intensity and work between the sessions. The group sessions take place every other week. This stimulates the anticipation and doesn't saturate the personality too fast with too much emotions that pile up and are not consumed and processed thoroughly and in the way that the participant wants. The practice, similar to the behavior therapy, includes homework which is given between two sessions and aims couple of things. First, this activity keeps the focus which the personality has set in the last session, second, this helps anchoring the beliefs and the attitudes which the participant has created in the experience, and third, it eases the creation of useful habits by training the sustainability. The character of the tasks between the sessions is one that offers wide range of capacity and unfolding, according to the needs of the participant. An example for such task is to draw the two strongest emotions they have felt during this period, giving those drawings a heading made from a word, a sentence or a story. In order to keep some fairness in their performance in the next group session each participant has 5 minutes to share and speak. In this way we leave space for putting the emotions on the sheet of paper or the canvas, according to the needs of the participants. Technically, a time is spent in each session in which the participants learn new practical things which could improve the specific skills in the area with which the group works at the moment and to be used as a tool for formulating and recognizing the feelings inside ourselves. They could be related to any art area the group works with.

Another issue in the period of the maternity leave which helps to succeed in personal growth is the awakening and the development of responsibility in the personality. Having in mind the fact that the child is entirely dependent on his parents for his needs, the parents intensify the training of these skills and qualities. Usually the mother who has gone back to work after this period shows higher levels of productivity and efficiency at the workplace. She is put in a situation in which she intentionally uses her deficit time and uses her improved organizational skills. The stimulus is the time which is divided between family and career, but also the financial responsibility which grows along with the needs of the new member of the family. The analysis of this situation aims to show

what is the propensity of the mothers in terms of devotion and mobilization at the work place and outside it. In the research that was conducted in support of this analysis, the data shows the readiness of the participants from the target group to enroll actively in such practice. Over 80 % of the respondents confirm their wish to improve their skills and their interest in experimenting with different forms of art.

Table 3. The results from the poll “Career development after maternity leave”, processes by quality, summarizing the free-text answers to the question “Would you use art to work on your personal development and the improving of different skills?”

ANSWER CHOICES	RESPONSES	
Yes	82.42%	136
No	17.58%	29
TOTAL		165

It turns out that motherhood motivates and activates. The stronger motivation at the work place leads the mother to new career opportunities, which before that have seemed hard to achieve. Opposite the popular belief that a mother would be more cautious, she would take a new path exactly because she is more motivated and has a higher self-esteem. When the levels of self-esteem are low, the art coaching practice is a tool which in an extremely supportive and delicate way helps a mother to overcome this feeling and to build self-esteem and a clear vision for her mission and professional vocation.

A deep analysis of the poll, attached to this article, shows some statistically important data. In order for the aims of the research to be achieved, 165 people were included in it. A poll with free-text and test answers was used for collecting the data. For the processing of the received data, Pearson’s chi-square test was used in SPSS v.19 for the test questions and a quality analysis of the free-text answers. The data shows significant connection between the willingness to use career consultation and interest in art as a relaxing and developing method. The correlation shows that the participants who accept the opportunity for career consultation are more prone to integrate art-related practices into their lives.

Table 4. Differences in the intention to use art to work on one's personal development and to improve skills of people who need or don't need career consultation after maternity leave

			„Would you use art to work on your personal development and the improvement of different skills?“	
			No	Yes
$\chi^2_{(1)}=6,152; p=0,013; \phi= 0,193$				
Do you need a career consultation in order to continue your professional path after maternity leave?	No	Number %	21 24,7%	64 75,3%
	Yes	Number %	8 10,0%	72 90,0%

The results shown in Table 4 show that there are statistically significant differences in the intention to use art in order to work on the personal development and to improve different skills of people who need or don't need career consultations so that they could continue their professional path after their maternity leave. The respondents who need career consultation in order to continue their professional path and would use art for personal improvement and developing certain skills are 90 % and the ones who wouldn't use art for such purposes are 10 %. Meanwhile there is a different proportion of the people who don't need career consultation in order to continue their professional path – the percentage of the people who would use art for personal development and improving skills is 75.3 % while those who wouldn't use art for such purposes is 24.7 %. (Figure 3)

The drawn data let us resume that we could find a relation between the need of career consultation after maternity leave and the intention to use art for personal development and skills improvement. The strength of this connection is weak, according to the indicators of the software procession: $\chi^2(1)=6,152; p=0,013; \phi= 0,193$. The indicator of the level of statistical significance show the tendencies in the respondent's attitude.

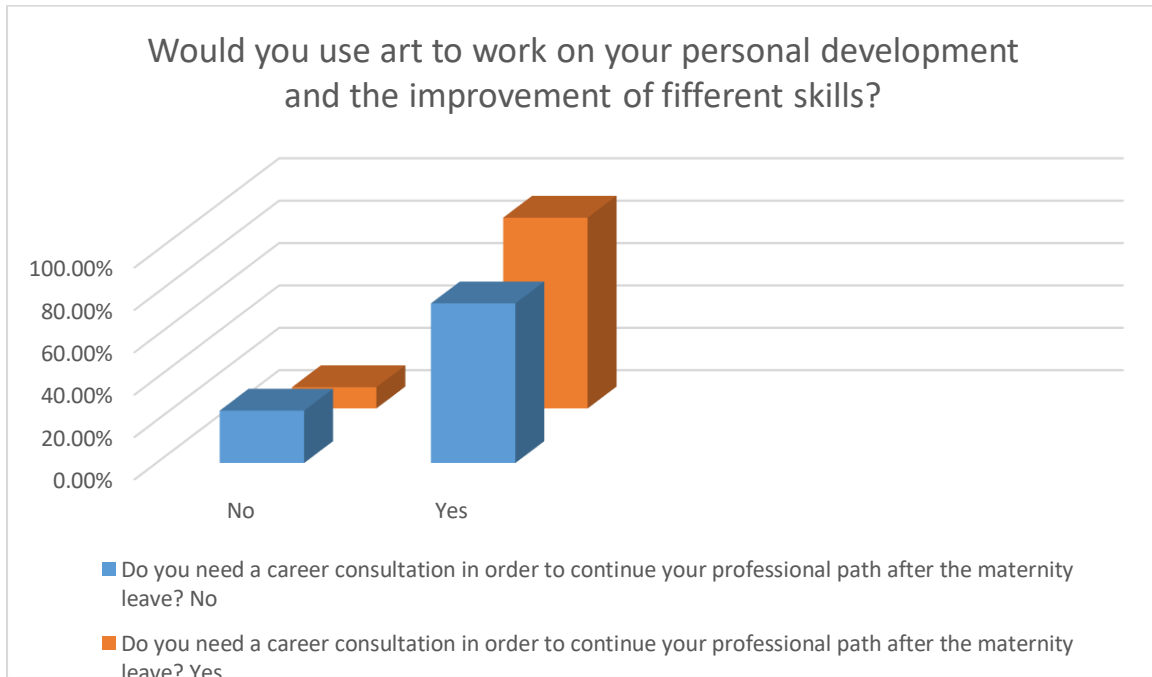


Figure 1. Differences in the intention to use art to work on personal development and skills improving according to the need of career consultation after maternity leave.

In the analytical assumptions that explain the results from the research we could find the assumption that the people who have declared a need of career consultation are in a stage of active seek of change which setting of the personality gets them closer to the idea of experimenting with art that could benefit the searched change and the desired results. This open state of searching tolerates different forms of challenges which could include art. Respectively the opposite state is closed, one which doesn't make you go out of your comfort zone and finds it enough, considering that all the necessary opportunities needed for career development and personal growth could be found within that zone.

New skills are inseparable part of the change of everyday life and the new responsibilities. Entering this track of constant change, the women who are in maternity leave become more adaptive and more prone to seek new challenges. The period of the maternity leave and the period right after that is often times a time to acquire new skills and reconsider priorities, values and interests. Such improvements could be in different professional areas, or language courses, professional qualifications, etc. During this period, it is common to gain interest in a new hobby or an activity. Usually these skills help the mothers find a more

highly qualified job after the maternity leave. These skills help them take new professional roles. Some mothers even take two jobs at a time, exactly because of the good organization of their time that they manage to make.

The bigger conscious responsibility, which the personality develops is another prerequisite, which helps this group during the maternity leave and after it in the taking of the new professional steps. This feature helps in the orientation to new opportunities and the making of a conscious choice. Thus, for example, the mothers who successfully manage family arrangements are much likely to also master the leading and organizational skills. The bigger responsibility they feel towards their children makes them think about their responsibilities towards the society as a whole which makes them consider the sense of what they are doing. This often involves them in the participation or even the creation of activities and social initiatives. The new priorities are responsible for the new goals which the women in maternity leave consider as their own. For example, many mothers become active in nature preservation and consider a new profession in this area. This is due to the fact that considering the future of their children many mothers also think about what planet they would leave to them and in what environment would their kids live in the future. Another main priority for many mothers becomes education, that their kids will receive. This is why some of them become active in non-governmental organizations that operate directly in the educational area or parent communities in the educational institutions of their children.

All these new personal features could be useful for the future career opportunities or they could be slowly muted by the everyday routine. This depends on their realization and management. The art coaching program aims at channeling a healthy change and new skills that benefit the personality. This is achieved by the building of several basic work mechanisms¹¹ which help the accumulation and the use of the new habits and qualities, acquired during the maternity leave period, so that they could become a foundation to the building of a successful, conscious, non-inert, satisfied and up-to-date person.

The first mechanism which is developed in the group practice is working in a network of partners. Each participant finds a “Friend for a purpose” who is different at each session. The aim of this communication is to nourish the inertia,

¹¹ The mechanisms system is copied from Hewlett-Packard's practice, which is described in Harvard Business Review, Leadership in a changed world, Classics and style Ltd, 2007, page 18

to help the participants work in a socially active environment and to support each other. In the strong partnerships network that could emerge in a capsulated group, especially when they are actively tolerated and linked to the values of the group, we could find help and motivation for the solving of many problems.

The practical direction of the art coaching program is made such by the usage of deadlines. The timing of the purposes and the goals that the participants have is way for them to feel and visualize that these goals could be accomplished. In the corporate practice this is a highly valuable way to optimize and accomplish better results. In the current practice, defining deadlines is a confirmation that the participants are serious about their participation. The setting of deadlines has two main effects on the process. First, this makes us take particular actions. Second, it sets a focus that we have to reach our goal and the deviations from the topics are self-regulated by the end goal of the clearly set task.

It is the first time in human history, that we have so much digitalization and automation which frees such an impressive amount of time. But this time is freed not only by something but also for something. The modern person today is in a really intimidating situation. He is stretched between the madness of the working pace and what to do in his free time. In the first situation he is busy to an extreme extent, inert in the high formalization of the corporate processes. In the second situation he is in a blind meeting with the responsibility and the challenge of the proactivity and his own motivation. Unfortunately, the most common answer in the space of free choice and time is apathy and inactiveness. The main form in which every second person I Bulgaria would recognize this conflict is the “Sunday stress”¹² – a depression which comes at the end of the weekend. It is a time when a deceiving feeling occurs, which is at first sight connected to the upcoming – Monday and the working week after it. The problem actually is not about what is about to come, it is in what people have done or actually what they haven’t done. The lack of feelings full of sense is the main reason for states such as depression, anxiety, incompleteness. If the existentially frustrated person has felt a feeling of sense during the weekend, it’s quite probable, it’s even sure that this feeling will transfer to the working process. The problem is not the work itself, it’s what we do when we are not working. This is why changing our job doesn’t solve our problems, the situation repeats itself in every new company and position. After some period of time the

¹² Frankl V., Man’s search for meaning, Hermes, 2019, page 141

old problems occur at the new working place. Viktor Frankl discusses the illness of the managers which represents a constant struggle to stay occupied. It is an illusion that this is required by the situation, the circumstances, etc. The rational mind doesn't consider the opportunity that it is him, the person, who unconsciously designs everything. This is actually a very comfortable excuse that the person "doesn't have" the time to think about his own life and in detail, about his interests outside his job. The search of a sense in life is more like a prerequisite for the person to feel inner tension, rather than inner comfort and balance. Frankl discovers the opportunity for mental health exactly in this tension which generates direction and energy. The feeling that a person's life has sense, specific and authentic, according to the author, is one of the strongest conditions for the surviving in every kind of situation, conditions, and crises. Fundamental for the "Psychic hygiene"¹³ is not the incorrectly considered idea of homeostasis, balance, calmness, it's just the opposite. The personality needs a strive, a fight for a sensible goal and a path to a freely chosen task, called by Viktor Frankl "noodynamic"¹⁴, combining the sense that has to be made and the person as the active executor of this making.

One of the reasons for many corporate and personal problems is the lack of interests. Being boring in the eyes of the other people is not a particular social bonus for our status in the community, but being boring for ourselves is unhealthy in every line of the feeling for our own value. The interest towards something, towards ourselves, the search and the development - consistently and purposefully in something gives the energy which is required in order for a person to be in a state in which everything is utilized – thought, feelings, creativity, metabolism, immune system, charisma. The problem of the everyday routine is not only in the conditions, in that which happens at work, it is in the reaction of the personality. It is mostly in the lack of reaction and the blind following of this dynamic.

In the search of "Happy life" Martin Seligman states that this is not always a matter of removing the things which make us unhappy, but encouraging those that make us happy, but our first task is to discover what are they and this could be done by self-knowledge.¹⁵ The art therapeutic practices that are adapted to the corporate world, could have a highly positive effect on the overall working

¹³ Frankl V., Man's search for meaning, Hermes, 2019, page 138

¹⁴ Frankl V., Man's search for meaning, Hermes, 2019, page 139

¹⁵ The Book for Psychology, Knigomaniya Ltd 2015, Sofia, page 201

environment, on the feeling of the groups within the organization, as well as to set a new starting point for corporate care towards the employees.

A person needs to do things which he finds reasonable and which are led by free will, but they are not easy to find and the way to them is only through experience. One thing is for sure – inactivity doesn't help finding them. Every conscious experience is a step towards this and the art is an absolute supporter in this exciting endeavor.

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