**Guidance Notes for a Coaching Debrief of the LDP**

***Learn your theories as well as you can, but put them aside when you touch the miracle of the living soul.***

Carl Jung

## 1. Before the debrief

As coach you should know:

* Who you are to debrief, their contact details and contact arrangements.
* Why the person is being debriefed (for example part of a leadership programme, entirely personal, is it part of a team or organisational process etc.), and should have received relevant information from the Harthill office in terms of course objectives etc.
* What information additional to the profile has been sent to the client, such as articles, books and questions to think about? In Harthill we often provide the HBR article ‘Seven Transformations of Leadership’.
* You should have arranged with the Harthill office, a pdf of their profile and sentence completion form for yourself and hardcopy and softcopy for the client.
* Your preparation should include reading the profilee’s sentence completions carefully and noting any individual sentences or themes which have attracted your interest. Typically about 20-30 minutes provides sufficient time to read and assimilate the form. It is important that you have an initial sense of the profilee as revealed through their completions. This sense should be ‘held lightly’ as the coaching debrief starts. In reading their completions you should:
  + Mark the Action Logic of each sentence onto their sentence completion form
  + Note sentence completions of particular interest to you
  + Identify any themes you see (nb – if there is a commentary you should still ask yourself what you see emerging).
* We have found telephone, Skype and face-to-face debriefs to be successful. Typically an initial coaching debrief takes between 50 and 75 minutes.

## 2. At the coaching debrief

* We believe the process can only be effective if it is an inquiry with the client. The profile should be seen as one data point only. The client’s self-perception is another, and the view you have of them either from previous knowledge or their presence and language in the debrief are further sources.
* Whilst the profilees are in charge of what they wish to discuss at all times in the process it is generally helpful to provide an overall structure for the debrief (see table below).
* It is important to keep in mind that the profile is a **snapshot** of the client; evidence of behaviour at a specific time in his or her life in a particular context. It is a robust ‘way in’ to development work. At its best, developmental feedback with a client is a dynamic and supportive exploration of his or her meaning making and coping strategies. Questions such as “Where do you feel you fit within this Framework?” or “Do you have an affinity for Achiever frame in most of your interactions?” readily tell the client it is their own perception guiding the inquiry process.

## There are four key chunks in the process of a debrief:

1. Introduction and orientation to the call
2. Discussion on their professional and personal development journey
3. Relating the above to their Profile (Primary Action Logic, Profile of Action Logics and any themes/strands identified) and its significance for their development
4. The “So what?” question – what they take away to work on, and practices to use

## A typical process

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| minutes |  |  |
| **Part 1 – introduction and orientation (5-10 mins)** | | |
| 1 | Introduce yourself |  |
| 1-3 | Explain the purpose of the coaching debrief and check this meets expectations | * Check they have read the profile document and have it (and their SCF) with them) * Clarify the confidential nature of the conversation and your relationship to their organization * Ensure they are in a private space (to speak freely) |
| 2-3 | Explain the structure of the conversation | ***This includes:***   1. *“Tell me about yourself”* 2. Explore their perception of the accuracy of their profile   Consider the meaning and implications of their profile (including their own self-assessment) for their leadership/development   1. Explore what the developmental consequences of their profile are   Explore what actions they might take to support future development (either vertical or horizontal) |
| 0-3 | *“Is there anything else you would like to explore?”* | * Ask – is there anything else the client would like to explore during this coaching debrief? |
| **Part 2 – Discussion on their professional and personal development journey** | | |
| 10-20 | *“Tell me about yourself”*  Gathering context and data on the client. | * Ask the client to describe ‘how they got to here’ in terms of their career, what the challenges of their current role are and a little about themselves.   This not only provides context but also gives some data about the accuracy of the profile. |
| **Part 3 – Relating the above to their LDP Profile (10-35 mins)** | | |
| 5-20 | To what extent does your profile seem to represent you? | * *“You profiled at Late Achiever”* (maybe explain what ‘Late’ means). *“To what extent does this*….? *Does this seem like an accurate description of yourself?”* |
| 5-15 | *“What interested me in your completions was…”* | * Focus on themes that emerged * Focus on specific sentences of interest * *“As you re-read your form, does anything strike you as interesting?”* |
| **Part 4 – Developmental implications and ‘So what?’ (12-30 mins)** | | |
| 10-25 | *“What are the developmental implications of your profile?”* | * This question explores the consequences of their profile and the sense they have made of it in the debrief. Do refer to their profile, which has details on ‘consolidation’ and ‘transition’. We have received feedback that this section is sometimes felt to be under emphasised and so making the question and the follow up clear is important. |
| 3-5 | Summary | * Ask if there are any other questions or areas for exploration. * Summarise what you have understood to have been the main topic of exploration and the developmental consequences, or ask the client to summarise. * Next actions – if any |
|  | Close | * The experience of this conversation for them? * Key ‘take home’ items. |

Issues that may need managing or engagement with

* Rejection of the methodology. Below are some of the concerns or objections raised:
  + The process of sentence response analysis is unreliable – “a bit like an astrological chart”
  + Reliability is impacted by the conditions in which the sentences are written
  + Reliability is impacted by fluency in English for second language speakers
  + Only four main Action Logics is a crude measure of human complexity
* Resistance to what the profile says about ‘me’ is a tricky issue in the context of a collaborative inquiry. How do you respond to this early conversation? The profilee says “I’ve scored at Early Achiever, but having read the material I’m certain I’m a Strategist”. The coach will, of course, use their coaching skills to open up an exploration. The key point here is to not dismiss the profile but to use it as a basis for inquiry. Questions like “Are there any situations which make you feel or operate like an Achiever?” are useful in introducing the idea that one is never always one Action Logic. A further useful questioning route is to explore the profilee’s understanding of what ‘Strategist’ means – there are often misconceptions because of the problem of single word labels for each Action Logic. (See the notes below for more on resistance / rejection.)
* Profilees often want to look at individual sentences and understand why they have been allocated specific Action Logics. Often looking in detail at a few sentences can surface a deeper understanding of the nature of meaning making.
* The profilee may want to understand why the final Action Logic is not either an average of the distribution of sentences between Action Logics or the Action Logic which scores the highest number of sentences.

## Some additional notes on coaching debriefs

## How is the feedback usually received?

The Action Logic of the person who receives the feedback has a profound effect on how that feedback is likely received. For example an Achiever may be looking for the rational logic of the Framework and seeking to understand how they might learn to be more effective from the insights provided. Someone receiving the feedback from a post-conventional perspective may be amused and interested in the wider transformational consequences of the model without worrying so much where they fit.

## How a Diplomat is likely to view the LDF

Any test and feedback is a threat to fitting in and pleasing. Being singled out is in itself a cause of embarrassment. Diplomats may thus try to be good-natured about the authority’s input, changing the subject quickly and avoiding going below the surface. They may also be content with being Diplomats, especially if the consultant is appreciative of the obviously positive qualities Diplomats often bring to working environments.

## How an Expert is likely to view the LDF

Experts feel labelled and judged. They may respond with disapproval that they are being 'defined' by someone else's theory. Research indicates that Experts reject strongly what doesn’t fit their current view of reality. If the Framework makes logical sense to them, they will likely use it to assess others in their orbit using it as an additional tool to manipulate others rather than in a developmental spirit. Experts may also be interested in the technical detail and validity of the model. In general, they are less likely to apply the Framework to themselves and to explore how their own actions may contribute to conflictual relationships and work-related problems.

## How an Achiever is likely to view the LDF

Most Achievers find this an intriguing model because “this may help me to be more effective”. The Achiever will scrutinise the Framework for its underlying rational logic and seek to understand how they can learn from the insights it provides. They may reject the Framework because they are product-oriented rather than process-minded. Especially if they interpret the Framework as challenging the superiority of the rational, action-oriented Achiever worldview, they may reject and actively try to discredit it.

## How an Individualist is likely to view the LDF

Many Individualists will be interested in any model that supports their own inquiry into meaning making and assumptions. This Framework may explain to them why they feel separated from the main stream and interested in ideas most of their colleagues are not. They may embrace the theory as a revealing way to look at the world, especially if it provided them with a model to look at their own meaning making and experience. They may be cynical about any framework, or more intrigued by other models and explanations of life.

## How a Strategist is likely to view the LDF

Strategists will most likely be fascinated by the Framework and their own stage of development. They may be relieved that they have freed themselves from the conventional mind-set, yet dismayed that they are not deemed 'Alchemists'. Interested as they are in self-actualisation and optimising others’ experience, they will seek to understand their own and others’ shadow or blind sides.

## How an Alchemist is likely to view the LDF

Alchemists may be intrigued by a model that makes explicit its own partiality and non-comprehensiveness while being comprehensive. They may explore the LDF’s special strengths as well as its limitations as another potentially useful way of describing experience without making it ultimate. Its worth to them will be the extent to which it is useful in helping themselves, people and organisations to transform.

## What can a recipient hope to gain from the feedback?

Only if the whole spiral of development is healthy is society healthy. Each stage has its own strength and beauty. Thus, it is important to stress the value and positive achievements of every stage and affirm what the client has already mastered and overcome in his or her development. For example, a supervisor at the Diplomat Action Logic may be the one who tries to keep everybody happy, looks at the bright side, muffles controversy and admonishes difficult individuals. They are likely to protect their subordinates, expecting loyalty and support from them as they are willing to give it in return. For each of us, it is important to learn to value our current stage of meaning making, become fully at home in it, so to speak, before we can move forward to integrate more complex understandings and behaviours.

It helps to emphasise the importance of flexibility of style. A Diplomat Action Logic may well be appropriate in talking with a neighbour over the garden fence, while an Expert logic is well suited to mastering a new skill. Pointing out to a client how a person at the next stage might respond to a similar task or difficulty, often helps clients to experiment with different, novel behaviours.

There are wonderful people, and not so wonderful ones, throughout the spiral. Pathology is not excluded at the higher stages, nor is there a guarantee for greater happiness. Greater flexibility, access to more varied sources of information (body-mind integration), the capacity to pay attention to both the here and now and long-term effects of one’s own behaviour and business practices as well as greater emotional presence, tolerance of ambiguity and greater compassion for all people are achievements of the more mature stages of development.

## What if the feedback is rejected?

Occasionally, clients find they cannot identify with the profile or it does not seem to fit them from our perspective as debriefers when we encounter them in person or on the phone. Sometimes people choose to respond mechanically or superficially to the test rather than from the more thoughtful, complex way they use in more demanding situations. Addressing that choice and the underlying assumptions they made about the form is one way of using this information productively. Collaborative exploration of their concrete behaviour in the feedback session may also help to clarify where they are on the scale. Ultimately, the client may have a different view of his or her stage to that identified in the profile. Developmental work takes the client’s identification and works from that. The consultant’s insight into the theory and the client’s self-perception serve to optimise the interaction.