



Instead of getting on the couch – go to a coach

A new consulting method helps overworked managers and burned out athletes

Overworked, burnt out, and stuck: Many executives reach their limit after working 12-hour days for months in a row. Their nerves are frayed, their work efficiency has decreased and their personal lives are practically nonexistent. Top athletes and creative people in advertising and editorial work may also experience similar syndromes: After a long, strenuous training session or after working on difficult projects, exhaustion sets in.

When no other options are available, more and more people decide to get professional assistance – but they don't lie down on a couch. They consult a coach. Coaching, as it's called, is a form of consulting for executives and self-employed people and is rooted in the sports world. Just as sports coaches supervise an athlete or athletic team, a business coach help clients focus on clarifying and meeting the demands of the job. Coaching can also address personal issues.

“Wingwave,” a new coaching method developed by psychologist and management trainer Cora Besser-Siegmund and her husband Harry Siegmund from Hamburg, can deliver significant success within just one or two sessions. (For more information see the box below).

Christian Schilgen, a manager for Volkswagen, swears by Wingwave. An experienced business coach himself, he's been using the unique Wingwave method for two years, and says it gives him quick access to his own power resources.

During a typical session, Schilgen portrays his current issue to the coach, who then starts the “waving.”

“Initially I looked at the procedure with a mixture of skepticism, curiosity and amusement”, says Schilgen. “At the beginning, it is difficult to believe that a technique as unspectacular as fast eye movements can actually have fast and enduring results.” But he gave it a try – and was surprised. This method is also an intensive form of self-coaching that offers self-help techniques.

“The coach assists me in solving my problems myself and I get a considerable boost of energy in each session. I have not experienced that with any other method so far,” says Schilgen. A typical coaching topic for the VW manager was a conflict involving younger coworkers who attempted to introduce new procedures without consulting the experienced executives. Schilgen was irritated and offended by his coworkers' tactics. “We addressed this situation in a coaching session and worked on it. It is



incredible how a feeling of helplessness and speechlessness disappears within minutes. At the same time I sense an abundance of pictures, thoughts and associations that not only contain new perspectives but also solutions. The result was that we, the senior executives, could understand and accept the youngsters' behavior, which in return, led to much better cooperation among all the coworkers."

"In coaching you also discover that there is no separation between work and personal life – contrary to what they always describe in management literature – because the emotional conflicts and problems of your personal life naturally influence your job and vice versa," Schilgen says. Since his introduction to wingwave, Schilgen now attends a coaching session only twice per year. The new method of problem-solving has a self-activating effect and, Schilgen says, "my tolerance for stress has increased."

The "Wingwave" method

Psychologists Cora Besser-Siegmund and Harry Siegmund from Hamburg, Germany, developed "wingwave" coaching within the last four years. It is particularly suitable for executives, creative people and athletes, or anyone who wants to prepare for an important event like an exam, public speech, athletic competition or TV appearance. During a "Wingwave" coaching session, the coach rapidly waves his or her hand horizontally in front of the client's eyes. The client follows those movements with his eyes. This technique simulates the rapid eye movement experienced in REM sleep, a normal stage of sleep during which dreaming often takes place and when important events and experiences of the day are processed. In addition to the simulation of an "awake" REM phase, the coaching includes a type of mental training and a muscle response test to control the success of the intervention.

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