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Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis as a Life Coaching Theoretical Orientation as Implemented through Frame Coaching

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Abstract. Within the field of coaching psychology and life coaching tension exists regarding the use of proprietary psychological methods with clinical and counseling psychologists. Such tensions can result in charges of practicing psychology without a license. Consequently, appropriate alternative methods need to be explored and developed. When developing these methods, alternative theoretical orientations should be utilized. One such theoretical orientation is Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis, a social psychological approach to examining human behavior. This article proposes Goffman's Frame Analysis as an alternative theoretical orientation for undertaking life coaching within coaching psychology. Frame Coaching is utilized as the life coaching method to support Frame Analysis.

Keywords. Erving Goffman, Frame Analysis, Frame Coaching, Life Coaching

Introduction

Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis (1974) is used to analyze a variety of social phenomena. Database searches for articles written over the last forty-seven years conducted via EBSCO Academic Search Ultimate show a number of studies that have applied Goffmanian Framing to a variety of social issues, generally as a secondary research methodology (LeBlanc, 2017 & 2020). While most studies use Goffman's Frame Analysis as a secondary research methodology, LeBlanc (2006) utilized a specific "literal" framing analysis in a study of numinous experiences as a primary research methodology. The methodology employed by LeBlanc involved the use of a "paper frame" to literally frame the numinous experience. Subjects in the study "framed" their numinous experience from a religious, spiritual, and social frame and then described how the numinous experience impacted each respective primary frame directly on the "paper frame." LeBlanc's study provided the impetus for investigating the use of Goffman's Frame Analysis within the field of life coaching. Furthermore, no research studies were found that have investigated the use of Goffmanian Framing or Frame Analysis regarding individual life coaching.

The above foundation resulted in a research study that investigated the use of Frame Coaching as an original life coaching method and upon which this theoretical article regarding the use of Goffman's Frame Analysis is premised. The Frame Coaching study compared an Experimental Group that experienced Client-selected Frame Coaching with a Control Group

that experienced Coach-selected Frame Coaching. For the Experimental Group, at the first session, they described in writing the issue that they wish to work on through life coaching. Next, they were instructed in the nature of “frame coaching” and the various types of primary frames with which they can analyze, work with, and establish goals for resolving the identified issue during the life coaching session(s). The individual then selected one “primary frame” and operationally defined the frame. They then analyzed, worked with, and established goals for resolving their identified life issue during the Frame Coaching sessions. For the Control Group the individuals described in writing the issue that they wish to work on through life coaching. Next, they were instructed in the nature of “frame coaching.” The “selected frame” for this group of subjects utilized a soul/ psyche frame. The individual then defined, analyzed, worked with, and established goals for resolving the identified issue utilizing this frame during the Frame Coaching sessions. Sessions Two and Three involved reviewing goal progress between sessions within a context that utilized and reviewed the articulated frame. The study involved fifty-one randomly assigned subjects, with the Experiment Group having twenty-six subjects. Subjects were offered a three-session protocol of Frame Coaching. The relevant findings used as examples within the article come from the research study (LeBlanc, 2020).

Frame Analysis and Frame Coaching Analysis

This paper proposes the use of Goffman’s Frame Analysis (1974) as seen in Frame Coaching, as a holistic life coaching theoretical orientation that is a distinct social psychological approach that does not infringe on the proprietary realms of clinical and counseling psychology. This advocacy is undertaken in light of the tensions that exist between these psychological practices and coaching (Buckley, 1974) and the proprietary scope of practices such as are articulated in the State of Colorado in the United States (Hart, Blattner, and Leipsic, 2001). Consequently, this analysis focuses on a number of principles and dynamics of Frame Analysis as articulated in Goffman’s work regarding the dynamics that manifested during the life coaching sessions with the coachees in the Experimental Group. Ideally, if Frame Coaching is efficacious, few of the non-facilitative principles of Goffman’s Frame Analysis should be manifested by coachees/subjects during the life coaching sessions. Consequently, this analysis highlights key principles of Goffman’s approach to examining human behavior and interaction through the complete presentation of Frame Analysis, followed by the applicational analysis of Frame Coaching, based on the life coaching sessions, to the concepts of Frame Analysis.

For Goffman (1974) what is happening or going on is a meaningful part of an individual’s world. Each individual will have unique experiences that are often related to their particular motivations. These experiences are “strips” of ongoing activity that allow the individual to initiate an analysis. This often occurs through the use of a frame, which is defined as “...definitions of a situation...in accordance with principles of organization which govern events.....and our subjective involvement in them” (p.10-11) which then uses frame analysis to examine the organizational dimensions of these experiences. What can result from this process, the awakening of the individual’s true interests. Thus, the first question is, does Frame Coaching allow for these principles to be activated? Certainly, Frame Coaching meets the criteria of the individualistic orientation and their unique experiences, as each individual identified and articulated a personal issue. Then coachees/subjects in the Client-Selected Frame Coaching Experimental Group chose the frame from which they wanted to view their articulated life issue. In addition to the chosen frame, for which they provided a personalized operational definition, they articulated how using that frame would either facilitate or challenge their working on their issue. They were then allowed to choose if they wanted to articulate a goal

that used how the frame would facilitate working on or establishing the goal or they could choose to use how the frame would challenge them with establishing or working on the goal.

Goffman (1974) continues his conceptualization of Frame Analysis by noting that some frames can be primary frames. Primary frames make sense and provide meaning to perceptually meaningless dimensions of a scene (the life coaching process). This is so since primary frames "...allow the user to locate, perceive, identify and label a seemingly infinite number of concrete occurrences defined in its terms..." (p. 21). And while primary frames can be natural or social, in the context of this research study they are socially orientated. The social aspects of the primary frame incorporate the intelligence, agency, will, and aims of the individual. There are rules (methodology) to the social frames that guide the process as the frame "...provides a way of describing the event to which it is applied..." (p. 24). This perspective then allows individuals to respond to meaningful or impossible tasks because the primary frame emerges from the life experience. These primary frames are then used but may need to be in a cautionary manner, especially if they are merely confirmatory in nature. As such individuals may have to examine the frames, especially the primary frames that they are using. So how does Frame Coaching enact these Frame Analysis principles? Again, the individuals in the Client-Selected Frame Coaching Experimental Group chose their primary frame from which to view their articulated issue. Additionally, the context for choosing a frame, and the primary frame, was the social interaction of a life coaching session. The social dimensions of Frame Coaching certainly drew upon the will, aims, intelligence, and agency of the coachees/subjects. Thus, the Frame Coaching methodology provided meaning to a life event for each individual. While the life issue might not be meaningless, in a manner noted by Goffman, the life issue for the subjects remained unresolved and thus did not rise to the status of full meaning and resolution. Furthermore, the Frame Coaching methodology provides the rules to structurally allow for the describing of the event through which the application of a goal, and actions to complete the goal, were undertaken.

Another Frame Analysis principle or dynamic are keys. Keys are defined asthe set of conventions by which a given activity, one already meaningful in terms of some primary framework, is transformed into something patterned on this activity but seen by participants to be something quite else..." (Goffman, 1974, p. 44). There are five constructs associated with keys and the process of keying. First, systematic transformations occur where meanings manifest within the schema or pattern of interpretation. Second, each individual recognizes the transformation and reconceptualization that is occurring for them. Third, the individual has an awareness of the beginning and end of the transformative cues both within a time frame and spatially. Forth, that keying is not limited to particular perspectives. Finally, keying involves the individual in determining what is going on. Frame Coaching directly incorporates the use of keys and the process of keying. The chosen and operationally defined frame provides the foundational meaningful process needed for keys and keying. The keys were the words used to articulate how the frame would facilitate or challenge their working on their articulated issues. Once each coachee/subject wrote the words (i.e., keys) on the frame, they were asked to reflect upon which they wanted to utilize. This reflection would meet criteria two of these keying principles, as they became aware of the transformative process that was occurring. The third keying principle of having an awareness of the beginning and end of these cues occurred after they articulated their goal. At that point in the Frame Coaching methodology, the keys or words were no longer directly referenced, as the individual transitioned to articulating a goal. The Fourth keying principle was met as the coachee/subject was not limited to articulating any particular keys. The fifth keying principle was also met as the individual was in complete control of determining the keying process that resulted in the articulation of a goal. It can also

be asserted that keying applies to the articulation of a goal, clarifying that goal, sometimes changing that goal, and then taking steps to accomplish the goal. Consequently, Frame Coaching incorporates the use of keys and the process of keying, including meeting the five principles of keying.

Goffman (1974) expands his look at Frame Analysis to include a number of issues that can be non-facilitative of the frame process. One of these is fabrications, which can involve frame tensions that are manifested as stories or jokes that are used as a distraction or deception. Other discrediting actions include attempts at re-containment. A re-containment can occur after one undertakes a performance and then counters that performance within a later performance, but in a manner that is not consistent with the first. Additionally, if keying is not sufficiently embraced, Goffman postulates that fabricated theatrical framing may occur wherein there is a play within a play. An additional concern is disqualifications, a process where the individual attempts to not remain within the frame process. This might be seen by a lack of attention or the feigning of a mental issue, both of which are categorized as exploitative fabrications. Regarding these Frame Analysis dynamics, a review of the life coaching interactions with the Client-Selected Frame Coaching Experimental Group coachees/subjects shows a few examples of these non-facilitative interactions. For example, Subjects 10, 12, 37, 41, and 43 engaged in distractions. Subject 10 consistently had difficulty focusing on what they wanted to work on. They vacillated between wanting to work on internal issues, to working on family dynamics and then to their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Subject 12 after attending the first session failed to schedule or attend the second session. The distraction, in this case, was the multiple email exchanges regarding rescheduling and then failing to follow through with attending. There was something that always came up. For Subject 37 they stopped coming because she needed tutoring until the end of the semester. Subject 41 left their job at the college but said she would make contact after the first of the year. She never made contact. Finally, regarding distractions, Subject 43 was going to reach out to a Doula group for support. She did not reach out. Why? I've been "too busy." While these subjects engaged in what are viewed as distractions, the following subjects are viewed as engaging in re-containments: Subjects 9, 23, 28, 34, and 45. Subject 9 initially planned to hold a larger family event to promote family harmony. At the second session, the focus turned to a larger event in 2020 (the session was pre-Covid). The event also was going to be smaller. In the interim, the subject focused on particular interactions with family members at smaller family and community (i.e., sporting events of the grandchildren) events. Subject 23 did not complete the journaling she wanted to do. Why? She forgot. She also did not talk to other parents about the parent group she wanted to form. She just did not get it done, but she said she still wants to do it. Subject 28 had a goal of exercising after work for 20-40 minutes. She did not do this. Why? She lost her motivation. She also wanted to attend the county fair. She was going to substitute yoga for exercise, but that did not occur. Why? She was not "feeling it" on the indicated day. She then eliminated the yoga goal and merely focused on walking. For Subject 34, they were going to journal as part of their goals. This included writing down what she wants. She did not journal. Instead, she indicated she chose to simply be more reflective. Finally, Subject 45 discussed making jewelry for a competition. She simply concluded that she was not ready to compete at this time (i.e., Riversance 2021 Art Fair). With these examples, it can be asserted that Frame Coaching is as natural as real life in that individuals materialize the fabrications of distractions or re-containment. Essentially, Frame Coaching allows for the manifestation of behaviors that are not facilitative of the frame process. Upon review of those who completed three sessions from these subjects who displayed either distractions or re-containments, seventy percent of them completed all three sessions.

Goffman (1974) also comments on other out of frame behaviors such as “the removal of failures” or the suppression of behaviors, and physiological movements to distract or hide their actions. Regarding these dynamics, Subject 43’s behavior of not reaching out to the Doula group by stating they were too busy could also be seen as a removal of a failure. Also, Subject 28 had a goal of incorporating yoga into her life, but then abandoned that activity because of other interests, and substituted additional walking, thus removing that failure.

Goffman (1974) recounts the nature of anchoring, a process that moves individuals away from the social institutional realms to that of activities within reality. Within anchoring, there are also markers that show what is inside and outside of the frame, in a process that may bracket what is happening. Goffman believes that initiating bracketing is more important than necessarily terminating the bracketing behavior. It is the internal or non-social brackets that are more important, so much so that there can be a change in frame that may occur. These internal processes involve goals and then enactments associated with those goals. Yet, external brackets can end the activities within frame analysis. Within the methodology of Frame Coaching, the written description of a chosen issue is one anchor. The use of a literal picture frame is a second anchor, that allowed subjects to bracket what was happened from either a facilitative or non-facilitative orientation. Furthermore, the attrition rate that was experienced reinforces the essential function of the first session of Frame Coaching, the articulation and refinement of a goal specific to their life issue. Each subject was able to accomplish that objective. Thus, those subjects that did not return at least reached that significant step in the Frame Coaching method, thus meeting the criteria that initiating the bracketing. The goal objective is more important than terminating the bracketing behavior, which can be viewed as completing the second and third life coaching sessions.

The application of Goffman’s (1974), resource continuity, style, unconnectedness, and role enactment are relevant to Frame Coaching and its analysis. Resource continuity involves style or an identifiability that is displayed and may involve a transformation. Style is a marker that is a trait of an activity that is enacted. Unconnectedness generally occurs between activities. Finally, role enactment involves the expression of the individual to reveal a self that lies behind the role being enacted. Each of these will be discussed as contextualized for all Client-Selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects. Resource continuity within Frame Coaching can be seen in the goal efforts undertaken by the coachees/subjects that led to a transformation which was articulated through the recognition of the efficacy of the Frame Coaching method experienced. Style is viewed as the particular frame and articulated comments regarding how the frame would facilitate as well as challenge their use of their chosen frame. It would also be reflected in their articulated goal. Role enactment is perceived to occur more in the second and third sessions, as the subjects had to reveal their progress on the actions they took regarding their goal. Unconnectedness occurs when the individual does not complete their goal actions. Again with Subject 28, when she did not integrate yoga into her exercise routines as articulated it is a demonstration of unconnectedness.

Goffman’s (1974) use of misframings, which may involve framing failures or differences in definitions of frames are two additional points of comparison. There can also be frame disputes that occur during social interactions. A more specific quality is breeding, wherein an individual attempts to explain their behavior but that behavior is questioned by others. Regarding these elements, Frame Coaching avoided misframings, framing failures, and differences in frame definitions as each coachee/subject generated the frame used to work on their issue, none chose to change their frame, and in their quantitative and narrative analysis of the method reported affirmative outcomes. Additionally, there were no differences in frame definitions, as the coachees/subjects provided those definitions. Since they operationally

defined the frame, there were no frame disputes as well. Breeding did occur during the life coaching sessions when the life coach/researcher would review the actions undertaken by each coachee/subject. The interaction involved direct questions about the successes and challenges that were experienced by each coachee/subject regarding their goal actions.

Goffman (1974) expand frame disputes to include “compromising circumstances” (p. 327), wherein there are impressions that may be inaccurate regarding the frame dynamics. This can lead to misunderstandings. This should be addressed by how one approaches the frame and through the perceptions or methods enacted within social interactions. Within the Frame Coaching session, it would have been the first session that included a comparative discussion of the differences between clinical psychology, counseling psychology, and coaching psychology that would minimize any misunderstandings. Essentially, it is the method of Frame Coaching that minimized or eliminated any compromising circumstances and misunderstandings.

Three additional dynamics that are discussed by Goffman (1974) include claims of innocence, that may be related to unconnectedness or inadvertent behavior; disputes regarding keying for responsibility relief, which is used to avoid social consequences; and retrospective reflection to reconstitute the meanings associated with behavior. Regarding the Client-selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects, there were no asserted claims of innocence, as each articulated responsibility for what occurred. Again, Subject 28 explained that she did not incorporate exercise to the degree that she desired, as she simply wanted to attend the county fair. She took responsibility for her actions. There were no disputes regarding the keying. The conceptualized words articulated on the frame that would facilitate or challenge their working on the goal from their articulated frame were written by each coachee/subject. None challenged their written words.

Two additional dynamics noted by Goffman (1974) involve retrospective reflection, or an attempt to reconstitute meanings, and the clearing of frames that attempt to establish the correct frame application for all involved. Regarding these dynamics, Frame Coaching did have the individuals who re-contained their actions, as noted above, and thus there would a limited reconstituting of meanings. Regarding clearing a frame, or correcting the frame, no Client-Selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects chose to change their original frame as selected and operationally defined.

The next comparative analysis to Goffman’s(1974) dynamics of frame analysis involves breaking frames. Breaking frames is premised on frames that have organized meanings, movement, and involvement that pertains to the attention of the individual and for which the individual is cognitively aware. The involvement is attentive, that is on behaviorally appropriate conduct, in an interactional environment. Non-normative behaviors may be enacted that challenge the frame analysis. A person may “misframe” an issue thus breaking frame from the original frame. Other frame breaks include fabrications. Not maintaining a frame, for an internal reason or because of some frame dynamic, would also be considered breaking frame. The breaking of frame could involve the defining of a situation wherein someone takes a time out or shares a facial expression that breaks the frame. If they fail to negotiate coming back to the frame, they may flood out, a more emotionally based response. Flooding out seems related to a lack of a connection to the requisite roles involved. Within the Client-Selected Experimental Group Frame Coaching the most notable breaking frame activity involves subjects not returning to their scheduled subsequent sessions. Clearly, such actions are non-normative, at least from an interpersonal perspective since individuals agreed to a subsequent session and to an agreed-upon time. The why for this breaking of frame remains unknown since the individuals also broke frame with regarding completing the emailed narrative evaluation.

Thus, there is no knowledge as to the internal, psychological, or frame dynamics that resulted in this breaking of frame. Since fabrications are also considered breaking frame, the previously noted distractions and re-containment actions by coachees/subjects represent this endeavor as well. The Client-Selected Experimental Group Frame subjects did not display any frame breaks regarding the frames chosen or the operational definition of those frames. Again, while not generally included, the Coach imposed Frame Coaching coachees/subjects did experience momentary frame breaks regarding the operational definition of soul/psyche. Most of these Control Group subjects had a “pregnant pause” when asked to operationally define soul/psych, thus a brief break within the flow of the life coaching experience.

An additional type of frame break involves keying, in particular downkeying and upkeying. Goffman (1974) conceptualizes downkeying as a more direct-action breaking frame seen when there may be direct comments about actions within the frame. In contrast, upkeying is a shift in distance within the frame that is behavioral and not literal. What needs to occur regarding these keying dynamics is their management within the frame. Within the Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects, Subject 9’s switching from a large family event to a smaller event in the future could be viewed as a downkeying. This dynamic was processed with the subject as they then realigned their actions to involve more direct interactions with family members at community-based events (i.e. sports practice of a grandchild). The acts of distraction, such as Subject 43’s not contacting the Doula group could be viewed as an upkeying, as it created a distance from the subject’s intended goal of interaction more within the Doula community. In this instance, the distancing was not processed with the subject.

The next area of reflection involves the manufacturing of negative experiences. Goffman (1974) sees negative experiences as they involve a break in frame or an act of re-framing. It is within the context of social interaction of two or more people where these occur. Some individuals may “flood out” to project themselves. Yet, flooding out may signal a greater involvement by the individual. If the negative experience is really problematic, it can result in dramatic changes. While these more major manifestations may occur, minor breaks in frame may also happen. Finally, what may occur if someone is recovering and returning to the original frame dynamics is a concern. These negative experiences can occur within verbal interactions and stressful persuasion, the latter sometimes occurring in psychotherapy where the client can’t control information or are self-exposed in that setting. Remaining within the therapeutic setting, Goffman comments on six ways a client can be breached. Clients can be penetrated beyond desired levels. Second, all behavioral interactions are “fair game.” Third, clients can “act out” more in a therapeutic setting, without reprisal. Fourth, clients share a range of information up to and including taboos. Fifth, clients deal with intimate and personal thoughts freely. And sixth, any negative responses to these other breaches are merely incorporated into the therapeutic process. Finally, Goffman comments that individuals can give mixed messages that are oppositional, like being at “face value” or of some aspect of keying. Within the Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects, Subject 10 with their lack of focus is an example of flooding out, as they repetitively vacillated between a focus on internal work, family issues, or their relationship with the Roman Catholic Church. Regarding the nature of breaches, the life coach did ask depth questions regarding the progress being made by the coachees/subjects. In Frame Coaching, all interactions with the coachees/subjects were “fair game.” For example, probing why Subject 45 did not want to raise her jewelry making business to the competition level was examined. No Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects acted out. For Subject 43 the abuse they felt as a Doula in the community surfaced emotions on more than one occasion. Returning to Subject 10, her lack of focus was merely incorporated into the life coaching sessions with her taking steps in subsequent sessions to address the identified issues. While ten subjects

displayed those behaviors noted by Goffman, those that returned and completed three sessions were able to recover. This shows that an oppositional process can be dealt with within Frame Coaching.

Goffman (1974) continues by discussing “pure performances,” or the dramatic scripts that emerge within interactions, including psychotherapy. What the therapist does is uses a frame process that is more self-referencing and reflective, including the use of brackets, with the objective of keeping clients within the brackets and not allowing for the exploitation of “the character-audience line.” Another concern is the manifestation of a “role character formula” wherein there is a mixing of interacting social levels, that might involve the “spectacle-game,” a time when there is a violation of the social and conventional agreements for interaction. Regarding these Frame Analysis dynamics, Frame Coaching clearly used a frame process that was self-referencing and reflective. It is the use of the literal frame to encase a chosen and articulated issue that each coachee/subject operationally defined, that maintained the self-referencing and reflective process. Additionally, bracketing was accentuated through the use of the front of the frame as facilitative and the back of the frame as recognizing challenges. Additional bracketing was utilized by having coachees/subject write words on the respective side of the frame to articulate how looking at their issue through that frame would be facilitated or challenged. Within the Client-Selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects Subject 12’s repeated emails regarding rescheduling, as well as the subjects who agreed to a second meeting and to completing a narrative evaluation, but did not, could be view as “spectacle-games,” as each action was a violation of the social and conventional agreements for the life coaching interaction.

Tracking is another negative experience noted by Goffman (1974). Tracking can involve concealment or direction. Concealment is an attempt at hiding something, while a directional track may involve a misdirected comment. Finally, directional tracks can overuse connectives, wherein connectives relate concepts and constructs of the social interaction. Within Frame Coaching the use of the frame orientation used by the coachees/subjects is viewed as a connective but it was used sparingly in sessions two and three. In these two sessions, the frame was put over the issue, the issue was identified, their articulated frame was noted, the facilitative/challenging comments were noted, and their goal was briefly reviewed. Concealment was only initially seen with some coachees/subjects when they were reluctant to admit they had not worked on their goal and action plan as intended. No misdirection comments are noted from a review of life coaching session notes.

The final negative experiences noted by Goffman (1974) are false interactions, thus not being genuine; where power is held within the interaction and non-disruption is the norm regarding sabotaging the social interaction. With the Client-Selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects, the false interactions would be those individuals who committed to returning for a second session and did not, as they were perceptually not genuine about scheduling the second session. This could also be extended to their failure to return the narrative evaluation. Regarding the power dynamic noted, within the humanistic orientation the coachee/subject really had the power, yet some would defer to the life coach/researcher by asking “What would you do? The life coach/researcher would refocus the coachee/subject regarding the process, noting it is about them and not the life coach/researcher.

The next Frame Analysis dynamic reviewed and compared involves the vulnerabilities of experience. The first vulnerability is a weakness in the framing process, which often creates cognitive vulnerabilities. Goffman’s (1974) belief is that a period of time must be allowed to deal with any vulnerabilities. He also believes that most interpretative frames are adequate, and if not, individuals will provide a correct interpretation. Within the Client-Selected Frame

Coaching subjects, Subject 15 noted that they did not understand how they would get to the outcome of the process until after the first session. Subject 9 also noted that they were confused as to how the process would work at the beginning, but later saw their progress. These were viewed as cognitive vulnerabilities in that they did not clearly grasp the Frame Coaching methodology at first. Regarding the dimension of time to allow for a corrected interpretation, both subjects 15 and 9 noted the correction occurred with the three sessions. Additionally, it is asserted that Frame Coaching allowed for the correction of any other vulnerabilities as there were no negative comments in the narrative evaluation by the Client-Selected Frame Experimental Group coachees/subjects.

Wordplay is the next Frame Analysis referent for Goffman (1974) as words have meaning. Individuals bring to their frames their past and current contexts, particularly the words they use. For Goffman, words are not as vulnerable to frame analysis issues because they are contextual. Within Frame Coaching the subjects chose and operational defined, with words, their frame to use for working on their articulated, and written, issue. Written words were used to articulate a goal and any refined goal. All of these words were contextualized within Frame Coaching but would originate in the individual's past and current contexts. Additionally, since the life coaching sessions involved an interpersonal verbal exchange between the coachee/subject and life coach/researcher, words were also used. Additionally, the narrative evaluations contained affirmative comments. Consequently, Frame Coaching shows it is less vulnerable to these frame analysis issues while incorporating the wordplay past and present contextualizations of the coachees/subjects.

Goffman (1974) notes the relevance of facts; essentially that they are not opinion because of their connection to experiences. Thus, he believes frame errors are not long-lasting. While not lasting, there are the vulnerabilities of ambiguities but also suspicions that may result in misframings. Deception, delusions, or doctoring may also occur. Each of these concerns can be undertaken by an individual who is resourceful, intent, and maybe immoral. Within Frame Coaching deception could be viewed as the life coaching appointments that were not kept. Subjects 9 and 15 as noted above had some ambiguities regarding the process of Frame Coaching. Yet, any frame errors were not long-lasting as after three sessions the Client-Selected Frame Coaching coachees/subjects dealt with any frame errors, again assessed by their affirmative narrative evaluations.

Some general vulnerabilities, delusion, and deception were not seen while undertaking Frame Coaching. The frames were not misguided as the focus was on the present and future and not the "distant past" thus not facilitating these general vulnerabilities. Relaying messages with delusion or deception was not detected, yet it cannot be completely assessed for those who failed to return for their second or third sessions. Editing of the material was not part of the Frame Coaching methodology so again delusion or deception did not emerge (Goffman, 1974). Additional vulnerabilities not detected were marketable information, although coachees/subjects were informed, via the informed consent, that research articles may be published. Chance outcomes were not seen, and the Frame Coaching method was methodical. A zero-sum game could be present as the coachees/subjects knew that the life coach/researcher was completing a dissertation, thus deriving a personal benefit. Coachees/subjects could have attended the first session merely to experience participating in a research study wherein the zero-sum game was perceived as the life coach's personal benefit and not their participation benefit. Thus, for some of the non-returnees, it was a "non-real" encounter. For these individuals, their scheduling a return appointment but not returning could be perceived as bluffing, another vulnerability. Yet Goffman sees these vulnerabilities as occurring less commonly in formal encounters, which would be defined the nature of the Frame Coaching life

coaching sessions in this study. The reason for this is the bonding that occurs within the social interaction, in this instance the bonding during the life coaching session and reflected in the Session Rating Scale relationship scores and the narrative comments regarding the relationship.

Goffman (1974) continues his discussion regarding deceptions, as vulnerabilities, by discussing backup designs, brackets, manipulation, tracking deceptions, folly, a play within a play, a swindle, or a false connective. Backup designs involve a questioning of the frame or keys. Brackets in this context involve issues with pre-bracketing, before the activity, where an individual can prepare; and post-bracketing, which occurs after the activity. Bracketing can also involve misdirection or deception, essentially a manipulation. Tracking deceptions involve a manipulation of the activity. Folly involves controlling subtly bracketed manifestations. A play within a play occurs when multiple actors are present, and some engage in a scene within the more general scene. A swindle involves the use of a mark that is deceived. Finally, a false connective is when someone presents themselves in a manner that violates the norm that words or actions are genuine. Within Frame Coaching, no Client-Selected Experimental Group subjects questioned their chosen frame or the keys, words written on the frame. Certainly, there was pre-bracketing activity that would occur before the coachees/subjects arrived for the second and third sessions and post-bracketing activity after the sessions. Pre-bracketing, or preparation issues, would involve those individuals who returned for session two or three and presented distractions or re-containments as noted above. Post-bracketing in this context would be the work that the coachees/subject completed between sessions one and two, and session two and three. Subject 10's lack of focus could be viewed as a tracking deception, as they continually moved from internal work, family work, or their relationship to the Roman Catholic Church, thus presenting three tracks that were intertwined. Some of the distractions again noted above, could also be viewed as folly, in that they were subtly shared within the life coaching session. There were no viewed plays within a play, nor swindles since the only other actor was the life coach/researcher and thus no marks as well. Finally, false connectives would apply to those coachees/subjects that did not return to the second or third session after committing to do so.

Goffman (1974) also recounts frame tricks, or gimmicks, that are a concern if repeated. Fleeting expressions may be expressed, such as laughter or signs of guilt. What needs to occur is an assessment of the naturalness of these manifestations. True Facts can emerge, but one needs to be aware of hints or screens that may be revealing dual meanings. The viewer of such actions needs to be aware of the vulnerability of these dualistic potentialities. Misaligned framing can also occur, especially concerning managing the frame. Within Frame Coaching, Subjects 23 and 28, while forthcoming regarding their not completing their goal tasks, were not bold and forthright at first regarding their non-completion. This lack of forthrightness is viewed as a potential sign of guilt. Yet, there was a natural transition for Subject 23 as she substituted a different activity. Thus, it appears that her first response was relatively natural. Regarding True Facts, it appears that the setting of the second or third life coaching sessions but not returning reveals that the commitments made were not true. The life coach/researcher had to be aware of their vulnerability but did have a few moments where they questioned the nature of the study based on these non-returns. The life coach/researcher was hoping to have a complete subject retention study. Finally, misaligned framing was not seen within the Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects, as none had challenges managing their frame.

Goffman (1974) concludes his section on vulnerabilities of experience by first discussing transformations. Transformation attempts to alter the activities occurring within frames. To facilitate transformations there is the use of structural formulas and design repetition wherein there is a systematic and sequential transposition of the ordinary "strips" of activity. A final notation by Goffman concerns behavioral presentations within interpersonal interactions,

whereby he views most interactions as normatively natural, especially when there is verbal communication. Yet, if there are violations of norms, one might question the entire interaction that has occurred. Here it is the methodology of Frame Coaching that would represent these noted dynamics. Frame Coaching is a structural process that allows for the facilitation of transformations. There was a structured design, and a formula, that included the repetitive use of the frame during Sessions Two and Three that allowed for the sequential movement from the issue to the frame and keys, then to a goal, a goal refinement, as well as action steps undertaken to work on the goal. This process deals with the ordinary “strips” of activity for each coachee/subject. Regarding the concern if norms are violated, that cannot be completely assessed as coachees/subjects who failed to return for sessions, also did not complete the emailed narrative evaluation. So, from a Goffmanian normative point of view, since the life coaching sessions involved verbal communication, these behavioral dynamics could be viewed as true experiences for these individuals (i.e., a simple choice to not continue within the study as noted within the Informed Consent form). Yet, if the individuals were violating the norms, which one can assert they did by committing to additional sessions and not returning, there is the ability to question the entire interaction with these individuals. Within this study, the acceptance of the normative orientation is operationalized as the individuals completed the Session Rating Scale before they were offered the opportunity to schedule a second, or subsequent session.

Another comparative referent using Goffman’s (1974) Frame Analysis centers on the issue of talk within frame analysis. Talk, within Frame Analysis, must be interpreted and examined within the context in which it occurs, to look for misframings and misunderstandings. Essentially, talk manifests the complexity of the frame. Therefore, the more structured the social interactions are, the more palpable they are because they are anchored in real life. It is the close proximity of the verbal interaction, along with the rules of language, and indexical expressions as to a place and time that are specific to a frame that is important. Frame Coaching incorporates each of these frame analysis dimensions of talk. There was the close proximity of in-person only life coaching sessions. The methodology had rules of language, specifically the frame chosen, how each coachee/subject defined the frame, the words articulated that would facilitate or challenge the use of that frame, and the articulated goal, as all were verbally stated in the life coaching session. Frame Coaching was also a structured social interaction that occurred in a particular context and a specific time. It was also anchored in the real world as the coachee/subject identified a personal life issue and provided each of the Frame Coaching components first in writing and then through specific verbal articulation.

Informal talk is also a dimension of talk within Frame Analysis. For Goffman (1974) informal talk is less structured, remaining looser, which does provide meaning. It functions to provide alignment for actions within the frame, as the individuals work toward a better or best answer. This process may include breaking frame by reflecting on what was said. While there are these affirmative aspects of informal talk; keying, fabrications, and less meaningful statements can be manifested as well. One type of communication of concern is when individuals spend time sharing evidence about what is fair or unfair about their current situation. A straightforward approach would use single word affirmations, while a behavioral approach would involve a long narrative. Beyond the methodological structure, there was a degree of less structured or formal talk, as each individual responded to the humanistic and reality therapy orientation of Frame Coaching. Certainly, subjects broke frame by reflecting on their goal actions, as well as reflecting on the life coaching reality therapy interaction. Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects did not make comments regarding what was fair or unfair about what was happening in Frame Coaching regarding their processing of the issue. The only general

comments of time spent processing any dysfunctions regarding their current situation would be those subjects who displayed distractions or re-containments as they processed not achieving what they indicated.

Goffman (1974) moves on to the role of the listener, who while not aware of what the speaker will say must desire to hear what will be shared. The listener should also suspend their beliefs about what the speaker may say, placing trust in not only what the speaker may say but also their actions. Within these parameters, what is heard first matters, the “first hearing” (p. 508) as noted by Goffman. As speakers articulate their messages, they may seek the permission of the listener to continue the interaction. Others may process facts through storytelling that goes from the origin of the issue to the present time. Speakers may also engage in preformulations that are about known events that have been enacted. Finally, there are prefabrications, which are longer strips of action and stories for which there needs to be a determination of how they all relate to one another. The humanistic psychological orientation of Frame Coaching, particularly the client-centered approach, affirms the orientation of the listener as described by Goffman. Regarding speakers asking permission, Subject 4 engaged in this behavior as they vacillated between their three issues. They sought the life coach’s/researcher’s advice on which they should work on. Subject 43 engaged in this behavior by recounting the history and treatment she experienced as a Doula. This historical perspective had the subject engaging in goals directed at addressing some of the knowns and in a manner that could address them, such as revising her Doula training courses and seeking assistance to process the trauma received within the health care community and in particular from one nurse-midwife. What each subject did outside of the Frame Coaching session would be examples of preformulations as they reported on their goal action steps between sessions, thus know events that were enacted. Regarding prefabrications, Frame Coaching addresses the nature of the connections by having the coachee/subject not only articulate on the physical frame. It also has coaches/subjects articulate those written words and the nature and affirmation of any connections. This was accomplished by having the coachee/subject affirm the frame, definition, restate the words of facilitation or challenge, and then their articulated goal. In the subsequent sessions, a brief review was undertaken of these Frame coaching dynamics, after which the coachees/subjects articulated the work they had completed as they worked on their goal. This made direct connections to the issue and goal statements.

Goffman (1974) transitions to replayings of talk, a process that occurs within the context of the frame whereby the individual is interacted with through questions, requests, etc. The individual can respond in an open manner or may conceal information. Thus, the nature of how messages are bracketed, whether the communication is genuine or not, and if the speaker is attempting to conceal information needs to be assessed by the listener. Goffman views this process as a dynamic internal and external process and not something transpiring in a “black box.” Within Frame Coaching there was an interactive dialogue where the life coach/researcher asked questions and made requests. It is perceived that most individuals communicated openly and did not attempt to conceal information, at least for those who returned for their second and third sessions. The interaction was bracketed by the Frame Coaching methodology, which limited frame breaks and facilitated more genuine communication for most coachees/subjects. The only perceived concealment was when individuals did not openly and boldly admit their lack of some goal actions between sessions. Yet, once recognized the coachees/subjects moved forward with regard to continuing to work on their issue and goal.

Goffman (1974) continues with connectives which are strips, that is activities, that have already been discussed. Some dynamics involved are keying and transformations, which can be seen in the tone or inflections used by individuals, as well as animation, but it is the

meaning that is more important than the animation. The use of I's is also a factor, as that is a self-referent that can be protagonistic, often used by the middle-class in Western societies where a more group referent is used in "folk" communities. Another concern is the continuum of interaction that may be a single statement or complex stories that are transformative to the listener. An additional refinement is that the speaker is the originator of their actions and thus are responsible for any positions they have taken. The connective dimensions of Frame Coaching occurred in Sessions Two and Three. This is where the strips of articulation were reviewed and their goal actions were reviewed, noting the keys written on the frame and by discussing their transformations, again their goal actions. For the Client-Selected Frame Coaching subjects, subtle intonations were noticed such as general conversational inflections. Regarding the use of "I" within Frame Coaching, that was incorporated as needed, not as a Western construct but rather as a construct of the humanistic psychological focus of Frame Coaching. When coachees/subjects would drift toward referents of other people, there would be a return to the emphasis on the self. Again Subject 10 would be an example of this process as there was the referent of "you," referring to the life coach/researcher when asking for guidance. The life coach/researcher reframed the focus to the individual and thus the "I" referent. Additionally, within Frame Coaching there was the telling of stories about the individual's progress on their goal actions thus creating a period of time when the life coach was a listener. This occurred before processing the story and returning to a co-active participant in the life coaching session. As a co-active participant, the life coach resumed discussing the stories shared and worked with the coachee/subject on refining their goal actions to work on before the subsequent session. Finally, each coachee/subject was responsible for the position that took, especially their articulate goal and action take to reach that goal, within the second and third life coaching sessions. In these sessions, their accomplishments and challenges were reviewed, and subsequent action plans developed, thus holding them accountable for their desired outcomes.

The next comparative reflection to Goffman (1974) examines natural figures, staged figures, printed figures, and cited figures. Staged (i.e., fictive) figures and printed (i.e., biographical) figures are not relevant to the dynamics of social interaction and thus not relevant to this comparative analysis. Natural figures have a physical presence, an identity, and are capable of competent conversations. Connectives are used by such individuals, such as lip movements and the directions of hearing. Cited figures share contextual happenings through interactive discourse, and such figures may recite the words or actions of others. Another dimension is that of an autobiographical address where the individual makes a self-referring phrase, with the latter potentially being a distancing technique. Yet, the in print could be part of a social interaction depending on the context. What is in print may involve written quotes, but it is the verbal communication associated with that process that is more meaningful as this form of communication can contain more nuances. Mockeries and say-fors are also noted as communication processes where words are put "in the mouth" of others. Stating the obvious, Frame Coaching involves coachees/subjects that were natural figures that had a physical presence, a unique personality, and engaged in interpersonal communication. The connectives of lip movements naturally occurred, and coachees/subjects were orientated in their chairs in a direction facing the life coach/researcher. The coachees/subjects were also cited figures since they were interactive within the life coaching session. The narrative evaluation comments contained self-referent notations thus manifesting an autobiographical quality. Then while Frame Coaching uses written communication, especially on the literal frame, it was the verbal communication exchanged as part of the life coaching dialogue that provided not only a depth of information but nuanced communication.

Another dimension of connectives is speakers who repeat something in a mimicking manner, which may involve censorship. Speakers may also use jokes or puns to move out of a frame. Regarding frames in this context, there are four specific problems noted. One is the length of the replaying of any experiences, the nature of the depth of the material used from others; then the degree of emotions and expressive behaviors used, and finally if the words of another are used (Goffman, 1974). Regarding the Client-Selected Frame Coaching, coachees/subjects mimicking was not recalled being used after a review of session notations. Jokes or joking was present as part of the general interactional banter within some life coaching sessions, more when individuals were recognizing when they had not worked on their articulated goal actions. This could be considered a movement out of frame. Regarding the four problems, within Frame Coaching, there was not material of another user nor the words of another, as the methodology and focus were maintained on the coachee/subject. While the actions or behaviors of others were noted within life coaching sessions, the interaction reorientated the coachee to their life issue, goal, and goal actions. A few subjects had lengthy replays of experiences, specifically Subjects 10, 12, and 43. Subject 10's replaying was the cyclical nature of a less focused life coaching interaction. Subject 12 replaying of actions was the continual emailing that never resulted in a successfully scheduled second appointment. For Subject 43 the replaying involved the nature of the abuse she felt from the local medical community regarding her work as a Doula. Finally, the life coaching sessions were natural human interactions and thus emotions and expressive behaviors were manifested.

Goffman (1974) then recounts the need for an audience. Within interpersonal communication, the listener is more obligated to be attending to not only what is heard but the meaning of what is said and heard. The listener in such interactions needs to be receptive to what is said. Yet, they must also utilize murmurings to show their attentiveness. This is in contrast to theater presentations that require less attentive interactions. Within Frame Coaching the life coach/researcher was obligated to be attentive, as the context was facilitative interactions that required paraphrasing or reflecting what had been said by the coachee/subject. The attentiveness of the life coach/researcher was affirmed by the ratings received on the Session Rating Scale as well as within the narrative evaluations. This paraphrasing or reflecting is an operationalizing of the humanistic psychology and client-centered orientation of Frame Coaching. When there was no direct verbal interaction with the coachees/subjects, the life coach/researcher would use both non-verbal gestures as well as a variety of affirmations, but not processing comments, when interacting with the coachees/subjects.

Goffman's (1974) next concern is the distancing that an individual may do to deal with any imperfections or perfections occurring within any role for a frame. He reflects that in interactions where an individual is portraying the words of another, more distancing can occur, than when one is protecting themselves from their statements or actions. Suppressible diversions, such as facial gestures, laughter, or shifting in one's chair could be frame breaks of distraction. Another distraction is the use of apologies or excuses that may be offered to be "polite," and to seek acceptance from the listener. Yet, if there is prospective or retrospective reframing, Goffman is not as concerned. Even with this mitigation, Goffman sees any of these actions as representing significant issues. Within Frame Coaching since the focus of the method was on the coachee/subject's issue, frame, keys, goal, and goal actions, there was no real distancing through the portrayal of another's words. Thus, as Goffman noted, there was little distancing that occurred during the life coaching sessions. Some suppressible diversions did occur for some coachees/subjects as they would shift in their chair as they dealt with the challenge of reporting and reflection on their goal actions. Yet, these breaks in frame actions were brief, as they would be within most interpersonal interactions. Finally, regarding the use

of apologies, again coachees/subjects who enacted re-containments or distractions expressed apologies or excuses. While expressed, they were noted within a reality therapy context while addressing how the coachee/subject would move forward regarding working on their goal and goal actions. Such would have been the actions of Subject 28 who when asked about their intended exercise routine indicated that they went to the county fair instead, thus an excuse for the non-completed intended goal actions.

As we approach the conclusion of Goffman's (1974) discussion of Frame Analysis he reviews a few terms upon which we can reflect and compare to Frame Coaching. Regarding talk, he highlights a number of concepts already discussed including frame strips, transformations, variations, bracketing, and distancing, but adds keyed strips. Keyed strips as they can be connected with transformations, test the recipient's knowledge. Utterances, such as saying three clubs out loud in bridge, are often not appreciated. Additionally, if a speaker knows the listener, they make undertake actions to present a particular view and from a principal frame with particular beliefs and feelings. Yet, Goffman does not view these expressed states as necessarily representing specific inner states. Rather a concern is if the speaker is not acting within the principal frame, the listener may not remain within the frame dynamics that are present and operational. Regarding these additional terms, keyed strips within Frame Coaching would be the methodology used. In particular, this would include the sequenced utilization of the frame process; as well as the systematic, while humanistic and dynamic, structure of the second and third sessions. Utterances, beyond the natural verbal interchange of the life coaching session, were not displayed by the coachees/subjects. Finally, a number of the coachees/subjects knew the life coach/researcher because of their affiliation with the college that was a source of coachee/subject recruitment. Thus, a more favorable biased interaction within the life coaching session may have occurred. This may also have occurred within the evaluations of the Session Rating Scale and the narrative evaluations. Yet, regarding the articulated issue, the frame chosen and defined, the keys, and the goal with any refinements knowing the life coach/researcher did not appear to influence these Frame Coaching dynamics. Each of these Frame Coaching components was reflected upon and articulated by the coachee/subject and was focused on their personal dynamics.

In the final section of Frame Analysis before his conclusions, Goffman's (1974) returns to the comparison of the theater and the structure of talking. The theater is not "real" and thus he wonders how real talk is within everyday life. He recognizes that individuals are real but questions the internal dynamics of an individual's talking and social interaction that may result in more of a performance. If a performance, the individual is not being straightforward. A second issue noted is the nature of reality/unreality in theater. In theater, a cigarette is real but within an unreal scene. Additionally, in theater some events are not possibly realistic, such as the physical maturation of a character within a play. Prologues or epilogues are used to address such issues. While using this theater construct, he is concerned about these dynamics occurring in real life and human interactions. Thus, he advocates seeking direct occurrences. Even though there is an offstage or out of frame dimension to life when interacting he perceives natural speakers as presenting with integrity. This is because these dynamics can reach a level of "general import" and be "central features" to human interactions. What the listener needs to do is be vigilant about looking for interplays, resources, and then outcome, along with any interdependency of the entirety of actions and interactions. These dynamics of Frame Analysis are not applicable to Frame Coaching as a life coaching method.

Conclusion

This extensive and holistic review of Goffman's Frame Analysis as analyzed from the Frame Coaching perspective is believed to show that Frame Coaching is an applied example of Goffman's social-psychological orientation to life and human interaction. What is seen throughout this analysis is that Frame Coaching incorporates or allows to be manifested not only the foundational and functioning principles of Frame Analysis but also reveals some of the behavioral concerns as noted by Goffman. These dynamics were seen and operational without referencing traditional psychological constructs, all while allowing an analysis of how a client was proceeding functionally or non-functionally as they worked on a life issue.

At the onset of this analysis, it was asserted that support for Frame Coaching as a representational method for Goffman's Frame Analysis would be supported if there was a diminished representation of Frame Analysis concerns manifested by coachees/subject within the life coaching sessions. The review of the literal frames, narrative evaluations, and life coaching sessions found fifteen of twenty-five, or sixty percent, of the Client-selected Frame Coaching Experimental Group subjects interacted in a manner that was consistent with the foundationally functional principles of Frame Analysis. This is reflected through the general commentary found after the respective Frame Analysis principles. Yet, Frame Coaching had the manifestation of Frame Analysis concerns. This was seen in ten of twenty-six, or thirty-eight percent, of the Client-selected Frame Coaching Experimental Group subjects. These manifestations of Frame Analysis concerns were highlighted throughout this applicational analysis, referencing specific subjects, and the relevant concern manifested in relation to the specific Frame Analysis principle. Therefore, it is asserted that Frame Coaching is a Frame Analysis supported coaching and life coaching method. As such it is asserted that Frame Analysis is thereby an appropriate theoretical framework for conducting coaching in general and life coaching in particular. Thus Frame Analysis is a social psychological theoretical orientation that can be used by life coaches and coaching psychologists that does not infringe on the proprietary realms of clinical and counseling psychologists while allowing clients to work on a goal within life coaching.

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