



**TECHNIUM**  
**SOCIAL SCIENCES JOURNAL**

**Vol. 32, 2022**

**A new decade  
for social changes**

[www.techniumscience.com](http://www.techniumscience.com)

ISSN 2668-7798



9 772668 779000

## **The Technique of Frame Coaching – A Brief Life Coaching Goal-Directed Method**

**Bruce D. LeBlanc**

Professor Emeritus, Psychology, and Sociology, Black Hawk College, United States

[leblancb@bhc.edu](mailto:leblancb@bhc.edu) or [leblancb@myblackhawk.bhc.edu](mailto:leblancb@myblackhawk.bhc.edu)

**Abstract.** Frame Coaching is an efficacious brief life coaching method. Drawing upon Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis, Frame Coaching adapts its application through the utilization of a literal framing process. Through framing, individuals visualize an orientation that facilitates the articulation of a goal and then undertake goal action steps toward goal achievement. Goal articulation is for an autonomously generated and self-articulated life issue. Frame Coaching also draws upon the psychological orientations of humanistic, cognitive, and solution-focused psychology, allowing for a life-coach strengths-based approach within the existential nature of life coaching.

**Keywords.** Frame Coaching, Life Coaching, Brief Coaching, Goals

### **1. Introduction:**

The quantitative and qualitative efficacy of Frame Coaching was experimentally researched and found by LeBlanc (2021). Quantitative efficacy was found when compared to the mean of the Session Rating Scale (Duncan et al., 2003) for four variables, demonstrating a positive effect for: relationship, goals and topics, approach or method, and overall, for the Self-Selected Frame Experimental Group. Quantitative efficacy was also found when compared to the Session Rating Scale cut-off score of concern (i.e., 9 cm), a score determined within clinical practice, for three variables: relationship, goals and topics, and overall, but not for approach or method. Yet, regarding the highest score of "true concern" (i.e., 8 cm), examined in light of the clinical anecdotal criteria of 9 cm, there was a statistically significant difference for the Experimental Group for the first session for approach or method.

There was no statistical significance between the Experimental and Control Group regarding relationship, goals and topics, approach or methods, and overall. The Control Group had their frame orientation imposed by the life coach. For subjects who completed all three sessions, there was a statistically significant difference between the Control Group and Experimental Group. Additionally, qualitative efficacy for the Self-Selected Frame Experimental Group was found when compared to the Control Group (LeBlanc, 2021).

## **2. Goal Articulation**

A focus on goals is a primary outcome of life coaching (Grant and Cavanaugh, 2014). Consequently, within Frame Coaching, the articulation of a goal, and if possible, a refined or clarified goal, was the first session's primary objective. While a primary objective, the movement toward setting a goal was not rushed during the life coaching process. For the first session, once the subject was given the informed consent form, a timer was set for seventy-five minutes. This process allowed fifteen minutes to go over and complete the informed consent and explain the research study, and then one hour for the life coaching session. Within the Experimental Group, all subjects were able to articulate a goal by the end of the first session, with three subjects writing only an original goal. Within the Control Group, all subjects were also able to articulate a goal by the end of the first session, with two subjects writing only an original goal.

In addition to goal articulation, the ability to clarify one's goal was incorporated into the first session. Within the Experimental Group, nineteen subjects revised their original goal during the first session. One subject did so in the second session. In the Control Group, eighteen subjects revised their original goal during the first session.

Regarding the process utilized to clarify one's goal, individuals could use a S.M.A.R.T. Goal Work Sheet (LeBlanc, 2021, Appendix B, p. 470) or engage in a life coach facilitated discussion of their goal refinement for their initial goal. Within the Experimental Group, ten individuals, or thirty-eight percent, utilized the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Work Sheet goal worksheet. In contrast, seven individuals, or twenty-eight percent, of the Control Group individuals used the S.M.A.R.T. Goal Work Sheet. Thus, most individuals chose to engage in a life coach facilitated discussion regarding goal refinement.

For some subjects, additional goal revisions were articulated. Within the Experimental Group, four subjects re-revised their goal within the first session. In the Control Group, three individuals re-revised their goal in the first session. In the Control Group, two subjects revised their goal in the second session. Only one individual in the Control Group added a goal beyond their original goal.

## **3. Subjects – Session Completion**

Fifty-one subjects received life coaching sessions. Twenty-six individuals were assigned to the Experimental Group and twenty-five to the Control Group. All subjects completed the first session. Then within the Experimental Group, nineteen subjects (73%) concluded life coaching after three sessions. Seven subjects (27%) in this group failed to return after completing the first session. Within the Control Group, fourteen subjects (56%) concluded life coaching after three sessions. One subject (4%) concluded after two sessions. Eight subjects (32%) failed to return after completing one session, and two subjects (8%) failed to return after completing two sessions. A t-test for Independent Samples was computed regarding the number of sessions completed. There was no statistically significant difference between the Experimental and Control Group regarding sessions completed ( $p = .19$ ).

These attrition rates are consistent with the research of Talmon (1990) for clinical therapeutic endeavors with a modal time of attendance of one session, as well as Green, Oades, & Grant (2006) with a 38% attrition rate, and Merrill, Bowden & Idana (2010) with a 36% attrition rate at twelve months, regarding life coaching endeavors. Therefore, it is asserted that Frame Coaching as a method is efficacious regarding the participation and retention of individuals.

Considering the quantitative efficacy, goal articulation findings, and the session completion statistics; the three-session protocols and method/technique of Frame Coaching are presented.

#### **4. Session Frame Coaching Protocols and Method:**

##### **4.1 Session One:**

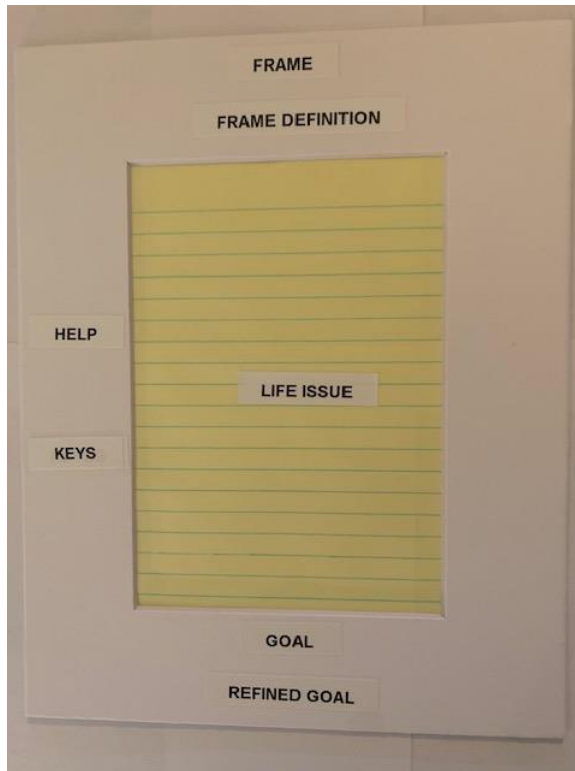
Individuals were greeted with a brief socialization exchange. The nature of the experimental research design and random assignment was explained, with subjects not knowing their group assignment. They were assessed regarding initial questions and questions were answered. The informed consent was completed, assessed for voluntariness, and validated by the life coach.

An explanation of life coaching was presented, highlighting differences between clinical and counseling psychology, noting that life coaching and the research study do not address psychiatric disorders or mental health issues but rather goal establishment and attainment regarding a life issue. Their understanding was assessed and confirmed.

Subjects next brainstormed life issues they wanted to address. These issues were processed, and a single life issue was identified. Subjects then articulated their issue in a narrative form on a piece of paper. Next, subjects were informed about Erving Goffman's Frame Analysis, a process that has individuals viewing life through cognitive frames or ways of viewing the world (i.e., religious, parental, gender, etc.) (Goffman, 1974). Again, their understanding was assessed, and questions were answered.

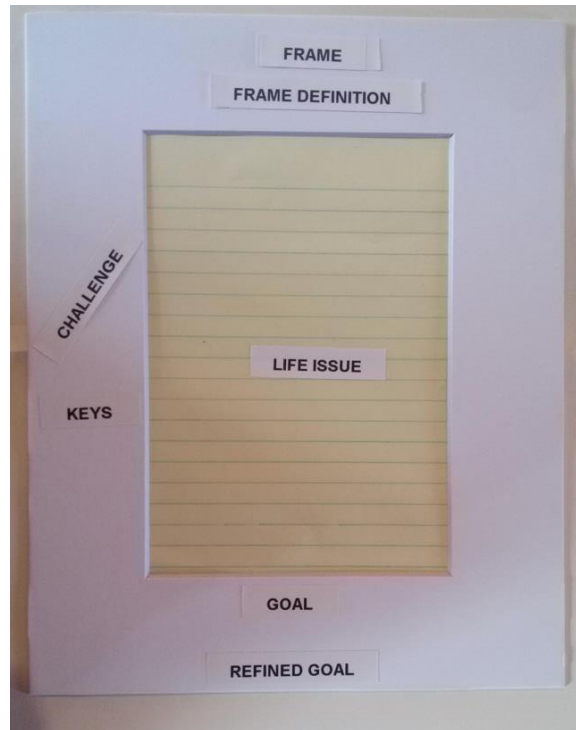
Subjects in the Experimental Group were guided through a range of possible frames through which they could view their issue. Subjects were informed that these were representative and that they could create their own frame from which to view their issue. Once the frame view was identified, the subjects took a paper matte frame and identified their frame at the top. Subjects then operationally defined their frame view on the frame. Next, they were asked to visualize working on their issue through that frame, having placed the paper matte frame over the articulated life issue. On the front of the frame on the side, the subjects wrote how that frame would help them work on their articulated issue (LeBlanc, 2021, Appendix E, p. 476). Within Frame Analysis these words are part of the keying process. Subjects then verbally articulated what they had written, and that reflection was processed. This was referred to as the facilitative frame.

**Figure 1: Facilitative Frame**



The paper mat frame was turned over, and the subjects wrote the frame view at the top. They would then re-write their definition or would visualize their definition as written on the front, as chosen by each individual. They were then asked to visualize what challenges they would face using that frame view and definition, as they worked on their life issue. On this side of the frame, the subjects wrote how they would be challenged if they used that frame through the use of words as part of the keying process. This was referred to as the challenging frame. Subjects then verbally articulated what they had written, and that reflection was processed (LeBlanc, 2021, Appendix F, p. 477). This was referred to as the challenging frame.

**Figure 2: Challenging Frame**



Subjects next selected to establish a goal based on either how the frame would help them to work on the life issue or if they wanted to work on the life issue by overcoming the challenges. Once their frame orientation was selected, the subject wrote a goal at the bottom of the paper mat frame. Subjects were then asked to reflect on refining their goal using a S.M.A.R.T. Goal Worksheet or a life coach discussion that incorporated S.M.A.R.T. goal concepts. Their goal was rearticulated and rewritten on the frame if desired, again based on subject choice. Subjects were informed that we would review their progress on their goal at the second session. A Session Rating Scale was anonymously completed. A second life coaching session was scheduled, as chosen by the subject. This ended the first session. [Session Notation: Regarding the Session Rating Scale it was not processed in the manner described by Duncan et al. after each session so as not to bias the analysis of Frame Coaching as a method. Rather, the Session Rating Scales were used as a cumulative analytical reflection on the completed Frame Coaching process to maintain research objectivity regarding the designed method. Within clinical settings the Session Rating Scale is used within each session to solicit feedback to improve subsequent sessions].

#### **4.2 Session Two:**

The second session began with a review of their chosen frame view and orientation, the words written on the side of the frame, their original goal, and any refined goal. Next, there was a review of their progress on their goal through their goal action steps undertaken. The initial goal action steps were independently identified and undertaken by each subject outside of the first life coaching sessions. Successes and challenges were processed with an orientation to facilitating their successes and overcoming their challenges. After this processing, subjects articulated what goal actions they would undertake between the second and third sessions. The

Session Rating Scale was anonymously completed. The third session was scheduled, as chosen by the subject. This ended the second session.

#### **4.3 Session Three:**

The third session began with a review of their chosen frame view and orientation, the words written on the side of the frame, their original goal, and any refined goal. Next, there was a review of their progress on their goal through their goal action steps identified and undertaken since their second session. Successes and challenges were processed with an orientation to facilitating their successes and overcoming their challenges. The Session Rating Scale was anonymously completed. A narrative evaluation was anonymously completed. The narrative evaluation assessed the facilitativeness and efficacy of Frame Coaching regarding topics and goals, working alliance, approach or method, and overall (LeBlanc, 2021, Appendix C, p. 471). Subjects were asked if they had any questions. Questions were answered, as appropriate. This ended the third session.

#### **4.4 Control Group:**

The only change in the treatment protocol was the frame view given to the Control Group subjects during Session One. These subjects were given the frame view of soul/psyche. The psychological definition of this view was provided, operationalize as “relating to ‘breath, principle of life, life, soul’” (Merriam Webster, 2017), but subjects operationally defined soul/psyche for themselves.

#### **4.5 Post Third Session Closure Research Study Protocols:**

A post third session research processing was undertaken, which informed subjects of their group assignment, undertook a review of the Session Rating Scale assessment for low ratings per instrument protocols, and answered any questions the subjects had. Finally, continuing life coaching options were presented (LeBlanc, 2021).

### **5. Session Life Coaching Approaches**

While recognizing that each life coaching is an existential dyadic encounter, various coaching orientations were incorporated into each life coaching session. The sessions' philosophical orientation drew upon the humanistic psychology client-centered principles, but not techniques, of Rogers. These included a psychological interaction between two people, an incongruent individual, a congruent therapist (life coach in this context), unconditional positive regard for the individual by the therapist (life coach), and empathetic understanding by the therapist (life coach), achieved to at least a minimal degree (Joseph, 2014). Additionally, the principles of Reality Therapy emerged within the existential interactions within Sessions Two and Three. The Reality Therapy principles integrated included: that there is not the acceptance of mental illness; that the individual is working within the present as they move toward the future; that the therapist (life coach), relates and interacts with the patient (coachee) as themselves; that there is no focus on unconscious conflicts; that the morality of behavior is emphasized; and finally that therapists (coaches) teach patients (coachees) "...better ways to fulfill their needs..." (Glasser, 1975, p. 54). The morality of their behavior was not explicitly addressed within the sessions, with the possible exception of redirecting failed goal action steps toward a more positive orientation. The teaching of the coachee was accomplished through the life coach sharing limited personal stories and examples. Additionally, as existentially manifested, based on the life coach and coachee interaction, cognitive-behavioral and

motivational interviewing approaches were incorporated. Each of these approaches allowed for a life coach strengths-based fluid interaction within the Frame Coaching method.

## **6. Conclusion:**

The foundational constructs of Frame Coaching as a method of goal establishment and goal achievement are supported not only by the fact that all subjects established goals within the first session, but Self-Selected Frame Coaching established itself as quantitatively efficacious when compared to the Session Rating Scale (SRS) mean and the true score of concern; and was qualitatively efficacious when compared to the Control Group. This establishes Frame Coaching as a life coaching method within the realm of humanistic coaching psychology, and potentially in other counseling and therapeutic contexts, to work with individuals from a self-actualizing orientation as undertaken through a subject identified life issue, a self-articulated goal, and self-identified and undertaken goal actions.

Regarding either the Self-Chosen Frame Orientation (Experimental Group) or Life Coach Imposed Frame Orientation (Control Group), it appears a life coach could utilize either approach within Frame Coaching. This is supported by the findings regarding no statistical difference between the Experimental and Control Group, as well as the three-session statistically significant difference between the Control and Experimental Group. Additionally, Frame Coaching's humanistic theoretical orientations allow for a life coach strengths-based approach within the Frame Coaching method.

## **References**

- [1] LeBlanc, B. (2021). *An Examination of the Efficacy of Frame Coaching – A Life Coaching Method*. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Central Nicaragua] Academia. [https://www.academia.edu/53270602/UCN\\_Dissertation\\_An\\_Examination\\_of\\_the\\_Efficacy\\_of\\_Frame\\_Coaching\\_A\\_Life\\_Coaching\\_Method](https://www.academia.edu/53270602/UCN_Dissertation_An_Examination_of_the_Efficacy_of_Frame_Coaching_A_Life_Coaching_Method)
- [2] Duncan, B., Miller, S., Sparks, J., Claud, D., Reynolds, L., Brown, J., & Johnson, L. (2003). The Session Rating Scale: Preliminary Psychometric Properties of a "Working" Alliance Measure. *Journal of Brief Therapy*, 3(1), 3-12.
- [3] Grant, A., & Cavanagh, M. (2014). Life Coaching. In Elaine Cox, Tatiana Bachkirova, & David Clutterbuck (Eds.), *The Complete Handbook of Coaching, Second Edition* (pp. 298-312). Los Angeles: Sage.
- [4] Talmon, M. (1990). *Single-Session Therapy*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.
- [5] Green, L., Oades, L., & Grant, A. (2006). Cognitive-behavioral, solution-focused life coaching: Enhancing goal striving, well-being and hope. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1(3): 142-149.
- [6] Merrill, R., Dowden, D., & Idana, S. (2010). Factors Associated with Attrition and Success in a Worksite Wellness Telephonic Health Coaching Program. *Education for Health*, Vol. 23, Issue 3.
- [7] Goffman, E. (1974). *Frame Analysis*. New York, NY: Harper and Row.
- [8] Merriam Webster, 2017. Definition. Retrieved from <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/psychology>
- [9] Joseph, S. (2014). The Person-centered Approach to Coaching. In Elaine Cox, Tatiana Bachkirova, & David Clutterbuck (Eds.), *The Complete Handbook of Coaching* (2nd ed., pp. 65-76). Sage.
- [10] Glasser, W. (1975). *Reality Therapy A New Approach to Psychiatry*. Harper and Row.