

"The Coach's Wave": Emotional Coaching with Wingwave

People in demanding performance situations need a supporting emotional balance for the optimal use of their cognitive and professional abilities in order to have these resources available "precisely". Often this goal seems to have been achieved in coaching. But then the coachee enters a demanding live situation and, despite the best preparation, is still not satisfied with his behaviour and his emotional reactions.

"State Control Management"

For example, a board member complains after a tense staff meeting: "I got irritated by a few boos and forgot my well-prepared arguments! This is where Wingwave Coaching comes in. The prerequisite is always the optimal professional and personal preparation of the respective coaching client. The method then focuses specifically on the coachee's "State Control Management" in the concrete performance situation. Wingwave is not seen as a stand-alone method, but as a coaching module in a coaching system.

a multi-layered, performance-related development process. Coaches use the method for different topics:

- in career planning,
- in coping with leadership tasks,
- in supporting the coachee in dealing with social or economic areas of tension and
- in performance preparation.

For example, Wingwave has been used regularly for four years in the Volkswagen Group's "Group Executive Programme" (GJEP) as a method for performance preparation (see box).

Assignment in the "Group Executive Programme" (GJEP) of the Volkswagen Group

This development programme is carried out together with an internationally renowned business school. Since 1993, around 30 of the best managers with top management potential from all brands, regions and companies have taken part in the programme every year. In addition to four attendance phases lasting four to eight days spread over a period of nine months, project teams of four to six members work on concrete, Group-relevant projects alongside their day-to-day business. An outstanding event for the participants is the final attendance phase in Germany, where the teams present their projects in English to a high-calibre audience within the group, which includes members of the board and often also the chairman of the board. On the one hand, many presenters see these important people here for the first time.

"live", for some English is not their mother tongue. These factors and the special nature of the setting of the event cause some participants to have reactions ranging from slight to obvious stage fright. For this reason, all speakers receive two days of preparation and performance-related coaching before this important performance, as well as the opportunity to achieve optimal emotional stability during the "final presentation" through Wingwave coaching.



*Dipl.-Psych. Cora Besser-Siegmund, coach and teaching trainer, Besser-Siegmund-Institut, Hamburg
info@besser-siegmund.de*



*Dipl.-Psych. Harry Siegmund, coach and teaching trainer, Besser-Siegmund-Institut, Hamburg
info@besser-siegmund.de*

The Wingwave Method

Wingwave is an emotion coaching method that leads to a noticeable and rapid reduction of performance stress for the coachee and to an increase in creativity, mental fitness and conflict stability. This resource effect is achieved through a seemingly simple basic intervention: The coachee follows the rapid finger movements of the coach with his eyes: from left to right - from right to left. These rapid eye movements can be used as The intervention is described as "awake" REM phases (Rapid Eye Movement), which we humans normally only go through during nighttime dream sleep, when we integrate the experiences of the day into our psyche. The intervention takes place while the coachee is thinking about a stressful, annoying or important experience in performance.

The person thinks about the context, which causes a restriction of the subjective sense of well-being. During the REM phases, the restrictive feeling gives way surprisingly quickly and clearly to the subjective experience of relief, strengthening and the ability to act in the face of the demanding tasks.

Explanatory models for the mode of action

There are currently various explanatory models for the scientifically recognised positive effects of the awake REM phases. The main assumption, based on neurological research results from psychotrauma research, is that the rapid eye movements coordinate optimal cooperation between the two hemispheres of the brain, which reactivates the subject's own mental regulation. Similar good results of "bilateral hemisphere stimulation" are also achieved by tactile and auditory "left-right stimuli". Wingwave coaching also works with a corresponding training CD.

The new mental and cognitive resources released by self-regulation now reorganise the stressful or complex event into the previous experience.

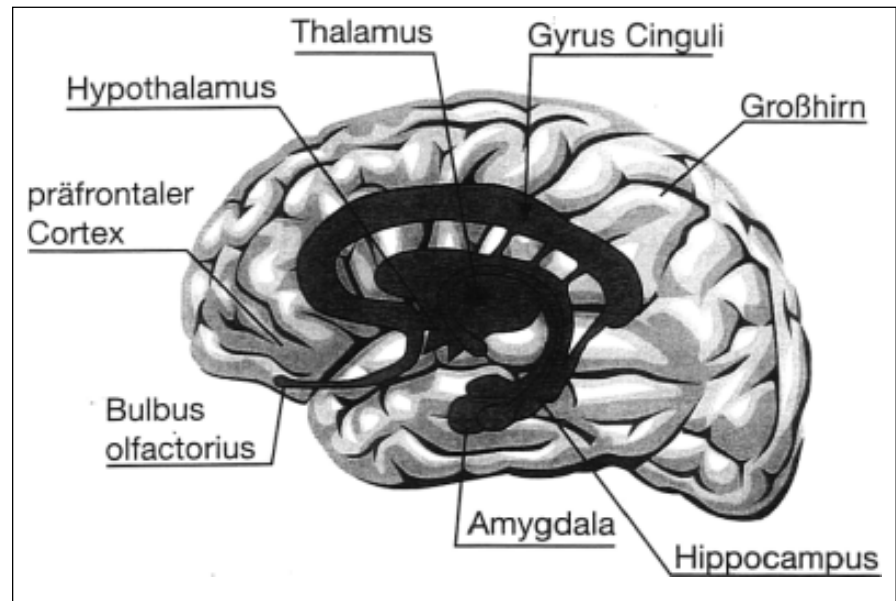


Fig. 1: The limbic system: All sensory perceptions are first evaluated "limbically".

The coachee's world view and familiarity with the world of concepts. Brain research has shown that rapid eye movement is closely related to our ability to learn and retain. Learned content is stored significantly longer in memory if test persons get enough sleep after learning. Based on these findings, the Wingwave coach also "weaves" resources, positive states, thoughts and images about desired goals into the client's world of experience.

With Wingwave, it is above all the emotions that do what their name promises: they get moving, they flow again. The root word "motio" also means "movement". The coaching intervention means that the fright is no longer hidden. "in the bones" and the "anger fades". In addition, the method specifically addresses issues, behaviours and inner state of mind that are important for the performance context with powerful emotions. "charged".

The emotions that are extraordinarily important for our performance behaviour are organised in the brain by the limbic system. This "emotion brain" lies below the cortex - our "thinking brain" with the two hemispheres of the brain (see Fig. 1).

Today we know that all sensory perceptions entering our nervous system are first evaluated by the limbic system, i.e. emotionally. This is where we decide whether a sensory stimulus has subjectively uplifting, neutral or stressful consequences for us. Only after this limbic preliminary decision is the information passed on to the cortex, the brain.

"thinking brain", passed on. This can lead to state control problems: If self-management is to take place via thinking and speech, this is only sparsely successful in the case of "lim- bic alarm".

Difference to "speaking" coaching procedures

For this reason, non-linguistic interventions such as the Wingwave method seem to be superior to linguistic methods in emotion coaching. The attempt to change behaviour and state of mind through language and cognition - as in cognitive behaviour modification - all too often comes up against neurobiological limits. Brain researcher Manfred Spitzer describes this dilemma with the following analogy: "It's just like typing into your PC: >Please don't crash!<" [5].

In coaching, one must therefore have a stabilising effect on this mechanism.

which is actually neurobiologically responsible for the emotional balance. The coaching goal in Wingwave is not to fight "limbic alarm" through self-control, but to prevent it from arising in the first place with incoming sensory impressions! In a successful coaching session, the effect is self-evident: The coachee reacts calmly and serenely in the performance context without conscious behaviour or thought management. "The inner security is suddenly there as a matter of course," is how one coaching client describes it. Wingwave coaches also call their work "limbic coaching" because of its importance for emotional balance.

From psychotrauma therapy to the coaching method

Among other things, wingwave coaching uses discoveries from psychotrauma theory, which were made at the end of the 1980s by the American psychotherapist Francine Shapiro [3; 4] and the NLP teacher Robert Dilts. Both of them guided their clients' lines of sight with hand movements in front of their eyes to help them psychologically overcome catastrophic experiences such as earthquakes, violent crimes or accidents. Ten years ago, the news magazine "Der Spiegel" gave Francine Shapiro's new method the critical name "wink-wink therapy". People were alarmed and concerned about the possibility of simply removing psychological blockages.

to be able to "wave it away". Today, this now scientifically recognised method EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing) is one of the best researched methods worldwide for the effective treatment of post-trauma stress. If people were psychologically stable before an upsetting event, often only two to five sessions are sufficient for them to feel mentally and physically free from the "burden of memory".

With Wingwave, we developed the EMDR approach into a coaching method for the performance context at the end of the 1990s (see box). The stressors for people in these fields are largely social, economic and socially

and often also health-related. In addition to the increasing flood of information, managers today have to deal with a large number of impressive experiences within a very short period of time - be they successes or setbacks. In changing times, managers have to develop new resources more and more quickly. Therefore, they need particularly effective strategies to maintain a healthy performance-regeneration rhythm. Although outwardly there are no catastrophes such as an earthquake, internally "a world can collapse" or a "shock" can occur. In this way, events begin to "offend" or "worm" and the performance foundation gets a new lease on life.

"a crack". Wingwave coaching provides a targeted and rapid emotional recovery.

What does the name mean "Wingwave"?

The word component "wing" is reminiscent of the beat of the butterfly's wings, which can change the whole climate, which at the same time means that the "wing" has to start in exactly the right place for this great effect. This exact starting point is guaranteed by the myostatic test. In addition, the wing metaphor illustrates the great importance of optimal cooperation between the two halves of the brain for "supporting" high-altitude flights and successful landings.

The word "wave" is associated with the English term "brainwave", which means "great idea" or "flash of inspiration". And it is precisely these brainwaves that are specifically evoked by Wingwave Coaching.

Belief coaching" is also of particular importance here in order to support the coachees in changing their values. If, for example, a committed person works according to the belief: "The company will thank me one day", a disappointing experience is as good as preprogrammed in many modern companies. However, a new motivating belief cannot be achieved through cognitive insight alone, but only in combination with

emotional depth can be established. Effective emotion coaching is also needed here.

Wingwave as a combination of methods

The elements of "bi-lateral hemispheric stimulation" are combined with two other methodological building blocks in Wingwave:

- With coaching methods from New Linguistic Programming (NLP), such as the Timeline Work.
- With the myostatic or O-ring test from kinesiology. This muscle test applies as well researched and reliable. The coachee forms a ring - i.e. an "O" - with his thumb and index finger and the coach briefly tests the response of the motor force to the muscle fibre. The coaching process then develops along this muscle response (see box overleaf): The goal is a continuous force response in all the experiential factors associated with the coaching topic.

After the myostatic test, the coach has the impairment assessed on the "subjective experience scale". With the "Bodyscan method", the coachee researches where exactly in the body experience the emotional focus of the emotion is: a queasy stomach, a tightness in the throat, a pressure on the chest, a tense neck and so on.

Now the intervention kicks in: A "waving sequence" of approximately 24 back and forth movements is called a "Set". The coachee focuses on both the idea and the subjectively unpleasant "body echo". After only six to eight sets, the client feels free of the unpleasant emotional reaction, even if he is now asked to think specifically about the previously stressful scene again: The shoulder muscles relax, the neck feels free, the stomach is pleasantly warm, the muscle test is powerful. Now the coachee uses the body scan technique to concentrate on the most powerful, pleasant body sensation when thinking about the speech.

Raising individual stress profiles with Wingwave

For example, the myostatic test is used to test all external and internal experience factors of the GJEP coachees in terms of their effect on the individual emotional balance:

- *Keywords like "Final Presentation" or "Electronical Devices";*
- *Names and - if available - also photos of important audience members;*
- *Speaking English (this is tested "in vivo" while the coachee is speaking English. speaks);*
- *The most important lecture charts;*
- *The idea of the filled room;*
- *Number of expected listeners: "Talking to 20, to 50, to 100 people...";*
- *"Disaster fantasies": forgetting the text, dropping a leaf;*
- *Problematic audience reactions: Someone reacts pejoratively, provocatively or apathetic (falls asleep);*
- *Stressful reference memories from professional life, from school days (pre-gymnastics, reciting a poem, reciting on the blackboard...).*

Interestingly, this individual testing results in completely different stress profiles among the coachees. For example, one person seems to welcome the important audience, but is annoyed by a weak point in the presentation.

take place on half days. If the coachee does not experience a perceptible improvement in his/her performance experience within this time frame, Wingwave is not the method of choice.

A survey of 897 coached clients showed that over 70 percent achieved their desired coaching result with the method. For 71 percent of these clients, the result lasted longer than half a year. Wingwave can also be learned as part of coaching as self-management - for example, with the use of the specially developed CD for "bilateral hemisphere stimulation".

- [1] *Besser-Siegmund, C.; Siegmund, H.: EMDR im Coaching. wingwave - wie der Flügelschlag eines Schmetterlings; Paderborn: Junfermann; 2001.*
- [2] *Besser-Siegmund, C.; Siegmund, H.: Moving success - emotion and performance coaching with the wingwave method; Paderborn: Junfermann; 2003.*
- [3] *Shapiro, F.: EMDR (Eye Movement Desensitization and Reprocessing). Fundamentals and Practice. Manual for the treatment of traumatised people; Paderborn: Junfermann; 1998.*
- [4] *Shapiro, F.; Forrest, S.: EMDR in Aktion; Paderborn: Junfermann; 1998.*
- [5] *Spitzer, M.: Lernen. Brain research and the school of life; Heidelberg: Spektrum; 2006.*

The following sets intensify this feeling of resourcefulness. Such a process takes one to two hours per coachee and usually leads to the desired result.

Coaches with the appropriate basic qualification, Wingwave is only an additional training module. Wingwave is not only used in business, but also by athletes and artists.

Who uses Wingwave, what is the time frame, where are the limits?

There are now about 400 Wingwave coaches in German-speaking countries. The users are professional trainers and

The method is always to be understood as a module in a coaching process; it finds its limits when used as a mono-method, as Wingwave does not impart knowledge or skills. For each coaching topic, two to five coaching hours are needed, which can be held either weekly, in double sessions or also in a double session.