



## Me as a life advisor - a holistic view of human nature

### Objective

The exercise is designed to help lifestyle change advisors explore their personal conception of human nature. All of us emphasise some aspect of human nature: our views are influenced by our own educational backgrounds, personal interests and world views.

In addition, we are motivated in different ways: some of us rely on expert advice, while others find motivation internally. If the advisor is not aware of his or her conception of human nature, it is easy to slip into thinking that "my way is the only way" and choose motivational methods that aren't necessarily the best for the customer. For example, the advisor may focus on nutrition and a biologically optimised human being, whereas the customer is more interested in good relationships with other people.

### Target group and the group size

The exercise is best done in groups of 6-8 people, who should preferably represent different educational backgrounds and fields in order to highlight different types of views and rationales.

### Time use

The exercise takes approximately 30 minutes, but you may need up to one hour if the group is large and you get lots of different examples for the discussion.

### Preparation, supplies, facilities and equipment

**SWOT exercise:** The instructor prints the words "biophysical being", "psychological being", "social being" and "spiritual-mental being" (see the appendices) on A4 sheets and hangs each sheet on a different wall. The room should have enough space to move around. **Continuum exercise:** this is based on the background "theory" of motivational NLP strategies; if the instructor is not familiar with it, the exercise cannot be led from this approach but it can be applied as appropriate.

### Assignment and work instructions

- **SWOT:** Prepare the participants for the SWOT exercise by describing commonly recognised dimensions of human nature (according to e.g. Lauri Rauhala). Briefly describe how personal views of human nature are influenced by education backgrounds, hobbies, personal interests etc. Ask the participants to go and stand under the A4 sheet that best represents their current personal view of human nature. How does each participant approach the concept of human nature? Each participant should explain why they chose the dimension in question. Discuss.



- **Continuum exercise:** The instructor should first describe how different people are motivated in different ways (in this exercise, the approach is motivational NLP strategies/sorting styles). It is important to recognise that not all people are motivated by the same things and, as advisors, you should try to get a feel for how each customer is naturally motivated. Discuss the themes and, after each theme, ask the participants to take their place in a line in the classroom based on where they see themselves between the two extremes of the theme in question. For example, some people are easily motivated by new things and unable to sustain interest without new stimulus. Others may feel anxious when faced by major changes and prefer to adjust to changes by introducing them gradually. Ask each participant to explain why they chose that particular spot on the continuum. Discuss.

## Debriefing

The participants should try to broaden their understanding of different approaches to reality and how different people focus on different aspects of things. The idea is not to find a "right" way of seeing things but understand that people have different natural approaches. Discuss how these themes should be taken into account in high-quality, dialogue-based lifestyle coaching.

## Notes

In action-based exercises, the idea is to activate the mind through physical movement: in other words, the participants shouldn't just point to the option or spot they would choose. In the continuum exercise, the instructor should recognise his or her orientation and motivation and acknowledge that they are not in any way superior to those of others. This way, the instructor can respect the approaches and rationales of the participants. In this exercise, participants standing at opposite ends of the continuum could get defensive and argumentative about their views. The instructor should point out that these differences are usually caused by biological differences in temperaments, and there is no "superior/inferior" scale, only different ways of reacting to change.

