

## **Growth Edge reflection by Nicolai Tillisch**

Adult development theory is the basis of much of my current practice as a leadership coach and facilitator. I believe that the theory helps explain the inner struggles and strengths that you must face, as a leader and human being, if you are to become the greatest version of yourself. If you do not do so, you will find that external circumstances dictate your path in life more than you would wish. You can find your own path and evolve your ability to deal with uncertainty and complexity.

The thorough foundation of empirical research comforts me when I employ adult development theory with my clients. I believe that there is a beautiful match with the philosophical schools that mean the most to me, such as existentialism and Daoism. The research and methods to which I am most attached are those of Jennifer Garvey Berger, Bob Kegan, and Bob Anderson. The fundamental simplicity of the key models suits my temperament, as it allows my clients and me to concentrate on the exploration of their growth edge, and how they may reach beyond it.

I see developmental coaching as a complement, not a substitute, to more tactical or skill-oriented forms of coaching. Yet my belief is that the development approach enables my clients to make better sense of things while on their own, and thereby helps them evolve their repertoire as leaders continuously. In essence, only my clients can grow themselves, and I'm committed to supporting them in that endeavor.

I work with both individuals and leadership teams. In the former, my preference is to start the engagement with a Growth Edge Interview, a Leadership Circle Profile 360-degree assessment, stakeholder interviews, or a combination thereof. The typical length of an agreement to work together is six months, during which the client and I will spend approximately four hours per month together. Occasionally I will spend an entire day with a client, to observe him or her in meetings and to have plenty of time for conversation. My clients can always contact me between our scheduled sessions.

My work with executive teams and boards differs from individual coaching due to the group dynamics and the presence of joint objectives. Each engagement requires its own unique design.

But before I start anything with anybody, I like to have an open-minded conversation about aspirations and trust.