

Lykke Mose on Growth Edge: The Growth Edge framework is efficient to support personal and organizational development.

Growth Edge interviewing and coaching has a lot of qualities. In the following I'll explain my personal and theoretical view on what makes it such a great framework.

The framework helps us understand how differently people make sense in the world and navigate in complexity. And it develops our ability to come to terms with complexity.

One of the big challenges in life today is how to find a way in complexity. How to analyze, navigate, plan and develop relations and businesses in good ways, when we cannot secure and control, as we are used to believe possible?

If you need to find a new promising way in complexity and learn how to come to terms with, it is useful to understand *how* you- at the moment - make sense in your life and find your way in work life. Where are your strengths and your edges? Edges are a kind of boundaries.

You are not embedded in uncertain complexity. There are structures to help you find a promising way.

When getting to know these structures you get a better understanding of yourself – and how you relate to your surroundings.

This insight about yourself stimulates your development: Meanwhile working with Growth Edge, your own “edge” grows. You get better to navigate and strive in complexity.

In the aim of developing self-managing organizations, we may become insecure and paralyzed if we simply remove the hierarchical structure and rules. Growth Edge supports the individual's ability to find a workable way into the new management paradigms characterized by complexity.

As the world becomes more complex, many companies realize that new work roles are needed –if the managers can't predict and control, they have to manage in new ways. And many structures in business (agreements and rules) are made to ensure that everyone can trust each other, having different interests (Principal agent theory). But this assumption – that everyone (employees, managers, stakeholders e.g.) has different interests - often doesn't fit anymore. Being a purpose driven company this kind of agreements and rules are mostly in the way. Therefore many companies aim to liberate themselves from bureaucracy and hierarchy, by introducing self-management and distributed leadership. When removing the old structures, you also remove the clear rules of right and wrong. Your responsibility is not just to do what's in your job description. You are always responsible for the whole: To take care of the company's purpose, rather than following the rules. This leads to a greater uncertainty. How can you be sure, what's the best thing to do? Maybe you can't be sure? This underlines the importance of being able to find comfort in a complex business - a kind of comfort sufficient to make you feel motivated most of the time.

Managers and employees can become insecure and paralyzed simply by the removal of the traditional control systems and rules, they used to lean on, without supporting them in finding out how to do in the new practice. This emphasizes the importance of supporting the individual's ability to find their way into the new management paradigms that are high in complexity. Working with Growth Edge is very helpful in this regard. It offers this kind of important support.

Growth Edge is about how you make sense of knowledge. In that way it's a framework above others, because it will tell you, how you might make sense of all other theories.

Growth Edge is based on the research on human development and sensemaking. Our assumptions about “how to be right and wrong...” and so on, are assumptions formed by the way we make sense. Therefore understanding your own sensemaking informs you, how you make sense of knowledge. It's about how you

understand yourself in the world, how you relate to other people, how you form your values in life. And about how you understand - and are affected by your surroundings - such as rules, cultures, and communities e.g. Theories and models can be useful to understand ourselves in new ways. Personality tests, help people understand their own personality. Change theories can help us understand processes of change. As Growth Edge theory is about sense making, it shows how you make sense in life. In that way it is a framework, for all the other theories.

As a research based theory it applies a great value, because it gives you a very precise picture on how grown-ups grow. As a psychologist it's the most precise, comprehensive and helpful theory I have met on adult development. Because it helps us understand how we navigate and make sense in our lives. This kind of insight is essential in the eternal endeavor to get along with the world around us.

Growth Edge coaching helps you discover the assumptions that guide you – in particular the hidden ones are inspiring to spot.

Growth Edge coaching can uncover which ambitions and values you are striving for and how they guide you - consciously or unconsciously.

Sometimes coaching is about finding out what you believe in and what you want to do, - becoming aware of your own ambitions. For example, "*I want to be better at listen and giving space*".

At other times you are fully aware of your ambitions, but experience that you find it hard to succeed: "*How come I always end up speaking throughout the whole meeting, when I know I should listen more?*" In this context, Growth Edge coaching can be helpful by uncovering the other ambitions – called the "hidden commitments" that you might also have. It is often a "hidden commitment" that keeps you from fulfilling your ambitions. This work of discovery often leads to a self-understanding that can be very valuable in a work of change.

Growth Edge helps you understand other people.

The precise and nuanced description of adult development refines both your self-understanding and your ability to notice and understand how others are guided by different assumptions and logics. We tend to expect that other people make sense the same way as we do, and therefore we may ignore, that the meaning behind one single sentence can be very different. The adult development theory introduces how our differences can be discovered and understood. How people benefit from different approaches. It's not a matter of personal style, but about how to interpret your senses.

The theory gives a better understanding of how different people are and thus you improve your ability to connect with people and to meet them where they are, rather than where you would like them to be. As a leader or consultant this is a central skill – because it helps you read a group of people, notice the differences among them, and find out how you can make yourself helpful.

There are some relevant precautions.

I do believe it's a really complex and cognitive theory and method, which is really good when you have the time and the mental capacity to play with it.

But it can be tricky: At a first glance the different stages of sensemaking seems quite straightforward. But if the framework is introduced and used too fast, there is a risk that it gets simplified and then isn't beneficial: You risk reducing the knowledge about human growth to a developmental staircase - a theory about "*the truth*" of the human mind, putting people into different certain boxes.

This is paradoxical because a central idea in Growth Edge is to introduce accept of uncertainty and complexity – realizing that life, people e.g. often doesn't fit into boxes. Instead of trying to "nail the truth", is often more helpful to maintain an ongoing curiosity - asking yourself: How could I be wrong?

I find it very useful and important to combine Growth Edge with other approaches and methods. I believe is important to have a basically openminded attitude toward other people. This is essential because there is a risk that the knowledge about the different stages of sensemaking gets associated with "a need" for

growth, -as a kind of “pressure” from theory and the new insight. That is (off course) not the intention. It is to help the client focus on her own perceived needs.

Therefore I believe it’s crucial as a coach, to acknowledge your client and be able to leave the theory and the stages out of focus. In this regard I’m inspired by Existentialism: First of all we are humans finding our ways in life. Each person is capable of making informed decisions, when met with an attitude of openness, a sense of humility and respect.