

*An exploration into using LEGO®  
SERIOUS PLAY® (LSP) within a positive  
psychology framework in individual  
coaching: an interpretative  
phenomenological analysis (IPA)*

Article

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# LEGO Serious Play within a Positive Psychology Framework in Individual Coaching: An Interpretative Phenomenological study



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## Abstract

LEGO SERIOUS PLAY (LSP) within a positive psychology (PP) framework is an under researched, creative group-work tool that aims to develop positive qualities through the creation of Lego models, metaphors and storytelling. The paper's purpose is to explore the potential use with individual coaching clients as a means to opening up coaching conversations. A qualitative research study was conducted using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) as its methodology with the aim to explore individuals' experiences of using LSP in coaching sessions to determine its value within a PP framework. Five participants took part in the coaching sessions, followed by semi-structured interviews where they were invited to reflect on their experience of the sessions. Three superordinate themes were identified with participants experiencing the creation of greater awareness and insights, having the time to think and a sense of emotional security. Lego was an enabler for creating new awareness and insights within the individual, by creating a psychologically safe environment, where ideas emerge in a way that allows more time to think, being in flow and a further opening of the coaching conversation.

**Keywords:** Coaching, Lego Serious Play, Positive Psychology, Psychological Safety

## Practice Points

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This contribution has direct relevance for coaching practitioners and those interested in positive psychology coaching (PPC) and organisations looking to establish a coaching culture. It allows practitioners the opportunity to explore more in-depth conversations in an intrinsically motivating and psychologically safe way.

***Tangible implications:***

- The importance of using physical objects in coaching to make it easier to externalise internal processes
- The movement back to play enhances psychological safety so coaches can look to find opportunities for bringing playfulness into their practice
- Enables greater creativity by breaking the normal patterns of thinking and work based conversation
- Embeds PPC in to the coaching practice

**Introduction**

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In a coaching partnership coaches can be inspired to maximise the personal and professional potential of their coachees through thought provoking and creative processes. The purpose of coaching is to provide a systematic process, enabled by the coach, of raising awareness and creating opportunities for new insights to facilitate goal setting (Grant, 2003, 2012; Green & Grant, 2006; International Coaching Federation (ICF), 2020). Coaching often involves the use of different tools and approaches. One such approach is Positive Psychology Coaching (PPC), which focuses on using evidence-based Positive Psychology (PP) (Peterson, 2006) in a coaching framework to improve wellbeing and optimal functioning (Biswas-Diener, 2009; Passmore & Oades, 2014). Individuals flourish when attention is paid to all areas of wellbeing as in Seligman's PERMA model (Seligman, 2011) and when operating in flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Bringing a creative approach, such as PPC, to coaching allows exploration that can assist flow, create new awareness, notice connections and threads, allows insights to be reached more quickly, and provides coachees with more time to think (Gash, 2018; ICF, 2020; Jagiello, 2006; Kline, 1999; Whitaker, 2009). Exploring LSP in a PPC framework could create a new way to embed it in coaching practice to enhance the coaching conversation.

## **Literature Review**

### ***Play, Psychological Safety and Flow***

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Identifying opportunities to bring play into the coaching session can facilitate the creative process and enable coachees to be more open to change (Lockwood & O'Connor, 2017; Tschannen-Moran & Tschannen-Moran, 2010). However, play is often dismissed as unimportant by adults despite it being beneficial to growth and learning (Brown, 2010; Gauntlett, 2015). It has been argued that adult play is essential for optimal functioning, sustaining positive relationships and developing creativity, and innovation (Brown, 2010). Being different to child's play it is considered as goal-orientated, 'hard fun' (Papert & Harel, 1991), and important not just to learning, but to flourishing too. Brown (2010) suggests 'play is like fertiliser to the brain' and argues that we are 'designed to find fulfilment and creative growth through play.' If adults stop playing growth is inhibited; 'When we stop playing we start dying' (Brown, 2010, p.13). Literature in adult play (Lockwood & O'Connor, 2017; Magnuson & Barnett, 2013; Proyer, 2013) distinguishes between play and playfulness. Play is defined as the 'behavioural manifestation' and playfulness the 'framing of a situation in such a way as to bring humour and entertainment' (Magnuson & Barnett, 2013, p.129). This playfulness is seen as a personality trait that people have a predisposition to (Barnett, 2012; Magnuson & Barnett, 2013) enabling an 'individual to take risks with ideas and allow creative thoughts to emerge' (Youell, 2008, p.122).

The movement back to play and playfulness may enable coaches to provide enhanced psychological safety. Key organisational research explains the importance of psychological safety, a shared belief that team members are part of a safe environment

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that allows them as individuals to take risks enabling new learning, growth and change, free from negative consequences (Edmondson, 1999; Edmondson & Lei, 2014; Kahn, 1990). According to ICF competencies, a coach is required to provide 'a safe and supportive environment that produces an ongoing mutual trust and respect' emphasising aspects of psychological safety at the individual level.

Lucardie (2014) argues that play enables the eight characteristics of flow (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). Flow is defined as total absorption in an activity where attention is 'fully invested' in a task and the person engaged in the task is 'functioning at his/her fullest capacity' (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992, p.394). A person experiences flow when engaged in a challenging task that stretches the limits of their skills whilst being intrinsically motivated towards it and when the balance between skill and challenge is neither too easy nor boring, or so hard it causes anxiety. Being in flow impacts on successful learning and self-perception of increased wellbeing, intrinsic motivation and goal achievement (Lucardie, 2014; Wesson & Boniwell, 2007). Recent research suggests LSP can provide both psychological safety and flow (Roos, Victor & Statler, 2004; Wheeler, Passmore & Gold, 2020).

### ***The Emergence of Constructionism and its link to Lego Serious Play (LSP)***

Piaget's Theory of Constructivism (Piaget, 1969) argues that knowledge is a personal experience constructed over time whereby knowledge structures are built through a progressive internalisation of actions acquired by doing (Ackermann, 2001; Papert &

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Harel, 1991). Constructionism extends this theory, emphasising knowledge is created faster and more thoroughly when the learner is consciously engaged in constructing an external product (Papert & Harel, 1991). Projecting our inner feelings and expressing ideas in a concrete format makes them tangible and shareable, which in turn allows a further sharpening of ideas. The construction of new knowledge comes from this self-directed learning cycle. The idea of Constructionism that ‘when you build in the world you build in the mind’ is the premise for the LSP method (Rasmussen, 2006).

LSP was developed as a concept in the 1990’s, shaped by the psychological theories of learning, play, constructionism, flow, hand-mind connection, and use of metaphor (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014; McCusker, 2014; Roos et al 2004). Originally developed by LEGO to facilitate innovative thinking and harness creative problem solving within companies, it was seen as having the potential to be an empowering tool for idea creation within teams and making companies stronger (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). The idea was developed and has evolved into today’s LSP (Frick et al., 2013; Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014; Nerantzi & McCusker, 2014). In LSP Lego bricks are used to create visible and tangible 3D models. Participants build their models in response to a facilitator’s open questions, representing their thoughts, feelings and ideas. These models are then shared, reflected on and decisions taken on the emerging strategies (Gauntlett, 2015). This process moves from visualisation to in-depth thinking around abstract concepts, that otherwise may not have occurred (Donaldson, 2001; Gauntlett, 2015; Michalko, 2011; Kristiansen &

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Rasmussen, 2014). LSP has been explored in other contexts, particularly as a reflective tool in education (Montesa-Andres, Garrigós-Simón, & Narangajavana, 2014; Nerantzi, 2018; Nerantzi & Despard, 2015), play therapy (Peabody, 2014), emotional regulation (Harn, 2018), and within a positive psychology framework (Bab & Boniwell, 2016).

### ***Lego Serious Play for Positive Psychology (LSP4PP)***

Developed by Bab and Boniwell (2016), LSP4PP is a methodology that applies LSP in a positive psychology framework. At its core is the concept of 'Hands on Thinking' where 'Thinkering', defined as 'the creation and understanding of concepts in the mind whilst tinkering with the hands', extends LSP by taking 'a more holistic approach with a defined framework taking the focus beyond the Lego bricks and into the meaning and the purpose of the workshop' (Bab & Boniwell, 2016, p.8). Combining the two, aims to develop positive qualities through the creation of models, metaphors and telling stories creating a 'positive impact' on the following outcome variables: 'Intrinsic motivation, confidence, creativity, strengths' use, teamwork and metaperspectives' (Bab & Boniwell, 2016, pp.28-29; Bab & Erikson, 2014). A range of workshops looking at various aspects of PP were developed such as 'Strong Strengths, Powerful Purpose and Fabulous Flourishing' (Bab & Boniwell, 2016, p.5). LSP4PP is a group-work tool used in workshop

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situations, following the same structure as an LSP workshop which starts with individual model making (Bab & Boniwell, 2016; Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014).

This research explores the use of the LSP4PP individual model making applied to 1-1 coaching and the contribution it may have on the coaching process, helping to address the current lack of academic research in this area.

## **Methodology**

### ***Design***

A qualitative research methodology using an IPA approach was chosen because this provides rich, in-depth data and interpretation of individuals' lived experiences and their involvement in the process of LSP4PP coaching sessions (Smith, 2017; Smith, Flowers, & Larkin, 2009).

### ***Participants***

IPA is an idiographic approach that looks in detail at the lived experience for each participant, therefore only a small sample size is required (Reid, Flowers, & Larkin, 2005; Smith et al., 2009). As the researcher wanted a comparison between coaching with and without Lego, participants were purposefully recruited with the following selection criteria: previous coaching clients, received coaching around meaning and purpose and physically able to attend sessions to use Lego. Having taken these pragmatic considerations into account, 8 clients were contacted via email. 5 clients

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responded with interest and following a face to face meeting all 5 were recruited. The sample were all females aged between 30 and 55 from South East England, thus meeting the heterogeneous sample that IPA requires. This heterogeneity means the study can lead to a shared understanding of common themes (Hefferon, Ashfield, Waters & Synard, 2017; Smith et al., 2009). Knowing the participants helped the researcher to build trust and rapport and may have resulted in more detailed reflections from participants (Pietkiewicz & Smith, 2014).

### ***Procedure and data collection***

The coaching session was based on the LSP4PP “Powerful Purpose – building your ‘why’” workshop questions (Bab & Boniwell, 2016), chosen as the most appropriate for coaching around visualising and aligning participants around their purpose. After a Lego build warm up which enabled the participants to feel comfortable with the build process, the build questions were asked in relation to work, with the definition of work being what the participants spent the majority of their day doing, e.g. paid employment, raising a family or looking after elderly relatives. Sessions were recorded and transcribed verbatim giving further evidence and context to the research.

The data collection immediately followed the coaching in a one hour, recorded, semi-structured interview. The schedule consisted of key questions allowing the interview to be primarily participant-led with the flexibility for the researcher to be critical and questioning of unexpected themes (Breakwell, Smith & Wright, 2012; Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011). These questions were open and exploratory using clean language

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which allowed participants to reflect freely on their lived experience and to prevent the researcher imposing their understanding or expected outcome on the participants (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith et al., 2009; Willig, 2013).

### **Data Analysis**

The participant interviews were transcribed verbatim, reviewed and edited several times to ensure accuracy, allowing the researcher to be fully immersed in the data (Smith et al., 2009). Each transcript was individually analysed with initial noting considering both the semantic content and the use of language and identification of emergent themes. This process was repeated across all the participants and examined for patterns occurring across cases moving from a descriptive to an interpretative perspective (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011; Smith, 2017; Smith et al., 2009). Cross-referencing and examining clusters of themes resulted in the emergence of 3 core themes. The analysis considered the reflective diary of the researcher and notes of the actual coaching session, because this reflexivity alongside in-depth analysis enhances the validity of the research (Yardley, 2017). The coaching and interview were conducted by the researcher.

### **Results**

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The analysis revealed recurrent themes across all participants of which 3 strong, core and most relevant themes are discussed here: creating awareness and new insights, time to think, and emotional security.

### ***Creating awareness and new insights***

All participants acknowledged that the Lego changed their thinking process, described as 'deeper', 'harder', 'different' and 'new' thinking, which opened participants to new learning. Lego released thoughts and feelings, exposing what was being ignored and acting as a buffer between those thoughts and the reality of discussing them. It took participants beyond surface thoughts allowing the coaching conversation to go deeper into meaning.

“You actually had to think a little bit more about actually, what did that mean? How did it feel? What was it like? Um [sic], you weren't just giving the surface.” P1

The Lego also increased the number of insights and answers participants found. P4 commented that when she heard the question initially she had one answer but spending time building the Lego model meant that she actually ended up with 6 responses, 'it gave a totally different perspective of the way in which you presented the question and then how I came to have that one versus six conclusions.'

The experiences suggest that this thought change was influenced by visual representation and the cognitive associations that arose. For example, participants chose brick colours that appealed, disregarded un-liked colours, used colours as representations, whilst also letting go of colour when time or ability didn't allow building

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a perfect model. Colour represented people, emotions and abstract concepts whereas brick type represented events. Visualisation and representation, key parts of the process brought the conversations to life, allowing interpretations, understanding and clarifying meaning. This visual representation was also apparent in the number of bricks chosen and how much the simplicity of a model can represent. The pieces of Lego chosen and why they were chosen influenced the direction of thinking.

“There are times when colour’s important and I think times when it’s the right brick.” P3

Discussion of Lego models was also perceived by the participants as allowing greater reflection within the coaching process, allowing otherwise missed connections to be made. Reflection took participants back to ‘happy places’ making it easier to talk about unexpected thoughts and focus on specifics in a situation and the otherwise unrealised impact.

“So actually having the opportunity to, to, to [sic] think back and see how you did that and, and how and how [sic] the events link together. I think this was useful.” P2

### ***Time to think***

Introducing Lego enabled more time to think by slowing down the coaching process and allowing participants to let go of preconceived ideas. This opened up changes in thought patterns for participants bringing a deeper understanding to the thought process.

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“Actually clarify in your own mind what you’re thinking because you can have a thought but then to represent it visually, you have to understand what it means.” P3

Having time to think took away the ‘panic mode’ of having to answer questions immediately. It enabled participants to focus on themselves and give themselves the time needed to enable more in-depth thinking.

“It’s been really nice to have some time for me.....to have a bit of thinking time.”

P4

When reflecting on their experience, participants unconsciously reported experiencing characteristics of flow which appeared to emerge from the slowing down of the thinking process.

*Level of perceived challenge and own skills; complete concentration*

Participants reported that whilst building felt hard it was within their capabilities and were surprised at how they became immersed in the building and the emergence of new ideas.

“That was quite hard but I think once I'd started and I thought, oh yes, once I put one thing in and then I thought I'd got the idea of using the different bricks, the versatility of it. That's how you made me think deeper. You put something down and you're able to refine it and then refine it a bit more.” P2

Having the time to build practice models and become used to building metaphors allowed most participants to trust and appreciate the process, reaching a balance between the challenge and their skill. The extract below illustrates that as the participant

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became used to using the Lego, the thought process and building became merged allowing thought change to flow.

“So it actually made you think and probably delve a little bit deeper because you’re thinking right can’t do that, so you’re bringing more things up because you’re trying to think of something to build.” P1

*Actions and awareness merging; being in control*

The timed building framework allowed for complete concentration on the task and a merging of action and awareness which increased creativity as the focus moved away from creating the perfect model to focus on representing thoughts and feelings. P5 acknowledged ‘am I going to spend 5 minutes rummaging at the bottom of this to find something? Is that one thing actually important enough just to spend the time on? Or actually is it better to move on and do this?’ This creativity gave a greater sense of personal control of the coaching conversation for the participant. Having time to enable deeper thinking brought thoughts from the subconscious to the conscious level. Being able to voice those thoughts that came to mind brought a new awareness for the participants as P4 noted, “Yeah, I think it’s a really effective way of, uh huh [sic], looking deeper into some things which you either might have been ignoring or wanting to work on but were not sure how to....it covered quite a lot of things which I wouldn’t normally talk to anyone about.”

Playing with Lego and being creative allowed participants to really be in the moment during coaching, experiencing the merging of action and awareness, enabling

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a 'letting go' experienced by most of the participants. When immersed in building, participants talked about 'absentmindedly' building and both building and thinking at a subconscious level. In the participants' experience, focussing on building 'distracted' from and 'switched off the chatter in the head' allowing more focused thinking suggesting the possibility that it brings mindfulness to the coaching conversation.

"The Lego enables you to switch off the part of the brain that kind of wants to fiddle with something or chew your nails or whatever and then it allows you to think a bit more deeper [sic]." P4

#### *Intrinsically rewarding; clarity of goals*

Participants also reported building Lego metaphors as intrinsically motivating because the focus was on building models and not on a specific external goal or reward. As P2 commented,

"Looked at Lego in a different way to maybe before and I think it's intrinsically motivating because you just want to get in and do, and actually having been focussed on how you use it."

The conversations around the Lego models allowed participants to set goals and reach realisations quicker, acknowledging this felt less intrusive than answering direct verbal questions. P1 felt fewer questions needed to be asked because 'with the model you're already there, it feels less intrusive because you are answering less'.

#### ***Emotional Security:***

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Participants experienced a level of emotional security from using Lego, with play being a contributing factor. The sense of safety came from linking play to childhood experiences for themselves and with their own children, two participants even spoke in a childlike voice. Playing and childhood memories created an emotionally secure environment allowing expressions of thoughts and feelings that might not have surfaced. By using Lego to objectify the meaning behind memories it made them tangible and the tangibility of using Lego as a representational token made it easier to connect to memories.

“I suppose because you’re recognising the fun memories with the Lego it makes talking about things easier because you’re feeling the safeness of like when you was [sic] a kid and you used to play with toys, at least I hope you would, so it gives you that protected safe space type feeling you have, you can talk and you can [sic], Lego can almost protect you.” P1

Lego connected the senses. By touching the Lego participants could see what they needed to build to give meaning to their thoughts and project this into what they were building. Using the sense of touch and making those emotions tangible enables the thought change to occur as summarised by P4 below.

“It’s just thinking outside of what you would normally, how you’d normally respond by using something that’s tactile ..... the having to touch and feel and work out what you’re going to be using I suppose.” P4

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Participants' perceptions of emotions and current emotional state gave different perspectives on the session. For some, Lego released emotions that they hadn't realised they were holding on to, whilst for others expressing emotions with Lego was difficult. However, there was consensus that having the model to talk about made talking about emotions easier, it took the focus away from the participant and painful discussions and focussed on talking about the model rather than the emotions directly. Having the safety and tangibility of the Lego model was key to opening up to new and unexpected thinking. 'Playing' with Lego removed the seriousness of the coaching conversation without diminishing it.

"It feels easier, lighter, almost that it's not so heavy, it's not so intrusive. Even though you were probably thinking deeper about doing the model than you would if it's done with direct answers but you're not feeling as heavy or as emotionally wrecked."

P1.

## **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to explore the use of LSP4PP in individual coaching. From the lived experience of participants, LSP4PP was perceived as an enabler for the creation of new insights and awareness, allowing more time to think and providing emotional security.

### ***Creating Awareness and New Insights***

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As previously discussed, research on constructionism and hand-mind connection (Ackerman, 2001; Frick et al, 2013; Papert & Harel, 1991; Kristiansen & Rasmussen 2014) illustrates how thinking can be altered by representing abstract thoughts in a concrete way. The participants' experiences suggested that using Lego helped them to visualise their thoughts externally and allowed subconscious thoughts to emerge, giving rise to new cognitive associations which enabled them to build meaning and understanding (Gauntlett 2015; Michlko, 2011).

Furthermore, using Lego enabled participants' metaphorical thinking to tell their stories using creative reflection to gain deeper insights into themselves (Nerantzi, Moravej & Johnson, 2015). Using metaphorical thinking can disrupt common sense thinking by rearranging the abstract and concrete into providing previously unthought-of combinations (Geary, 2011). Reflection was widely discussed amongst participants as being key in both building and interpreting their models, aligning to the research that greater insights are reached when using Lego (Nerantzi & Despard, 2015; Nerantzi, et al, 2015). It also enabled the participants to see missed connections that would have been difficult to notice in a traditional coaching conversation, as noticed by P2: 'it's only when you've done those two bits do you see how they are actually connected, those random thoughts become connected once you start representing visually.'

It appears that 'Hands on Thinking' (Bab & Boniwell, 2016) used in LSP4PP is experienced by participants, as taking the focus away from just building with Lego to an approach that allows more in-depth exploration into meaning and purpose. This 'in-

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depth' was perceived as creating new insights and awareness, as being selective and focussed, and included the emergence of subconscious thoughts.

### ***Time to Think***

Findings also suggested that participants experienced more time to think when using Lego than in a traditional coaching session because using Lego slowed the coaching process down, reducing the pressure to answer coaching questions immediately and giving the participants more time to think. Kline (1999, p35) proposes 'Ten Components of a Thinking Environment' which are all reflected in the LSP framework (Kristiansen & Rasmussen, 2014). These conditions created by 'playing with Lego' appeared to allow the participants to experience flow. Csikszentmihalyi (2014) explains that the experience of flow comes from the engagement with a flow activity. In this study, play was the flow experience and Lego building the activity. Play itself doesn't necessarily provide the conditions for flow. Having more thinking time allowed participants to 'let go', become fully engaged and enter a state of flow, thus enabling them to create new insights.

For participants to be in flow the challenge should be high and within their capabilities (Csikszentmihalyi, 1992). Participants reported the session was hard but motivating, illustrating 'Serious Play' can enable flow, allowing participants to evaluate or reset goals (Roos, Victor & Statler, 2004). Using warm-up building exercises ensured that the task was within the participants' capabilities before responding to the specific coaching questions. The intrinsic nature of playfulness makes flow experiences more

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likely for playful people who are more aware of their potential for creating new ideas (Proyer, 2013). Although having a predisposition to play (Magnuson & Barret, 2013) may have increased intrinsic motivation, the use of Lego still created an environment of flow for all participants.

Using Lego enabled the conditions for a flow enhancing model of coaching (Wesson & Boniwell, 2007), particularly helpful in identifying additional issues relevant to goal setting that may otherwise have been left unnoticed. Lego enabled flow in the coaching process by extending the thinking time needed for it to occur, which in turn meant the need for fewer coaching questions, reducing the time taken to reach a deeper understanding than would have occurred in traditional coaching conversations.

An unexpected observation in the results reported by participants was that the 'internal chatter' in their heads 'switched off' during the model building much in the way mindfulness can. Future research could explore whether Lego could assist mindfulness in coaching (Passmore, 2017; Virgili, 2013).

### ***Psychological Safety***

Participants collectively reported a sense of safety and emotional security from recalling positive memories of childhood and safe places evoked by the Lego building suggesting it helped to provide a psychologically safe environment for coaching. Psychological safety, a team concept, suggests that individuals feel safe when they are able to take risks without fear of negative consequences (Edmondson 1999; Kahn, 1990).

Participants reported familiarisation with the available Lego and how to use it reduced

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feelings of fear of failure and overwhelm allowing the majority of participants to feel comfortable and confident in expressing thoughts and feelings with Lego. It reassured, motivated and excited participants to the potential of the Lego coaching session. The association with childhood, playing with their own children, positive memories and safe places allowed participants to be more playful and as a result gave them the security to take risks and use the Lego to go further in the coaching session (Youell, 2008). Play was a factor in ensuring emotional security as Lego provided a link to the security of past memories and being in a safe and protected space with no judgement. The Lego helped protect against emotions that arose and was a safe tool for expression, acknowledged by P4 when she said “just having the time to work through things and think about it without any judgement or fear of what anyone might say, it’s like a safe environment isn’t it?”

It appears that using Lego gave tangibility to emotional experiences, giving them meaning. Playing with thoughts and crafting them into something more tangible gives greater insight than the unaided brain could achieve on its own (Gauntlett, 2014). Participants perceived Lego as a tangible token for projecting and representing meaning of thoughts enabling connections to be made more easily. The Lego didn’t just represent what existed but made tangible what didn’t, making it easier to talk about difficult emotions. The creative process enabled meaning and coherence (Ackerman, 2004; Ackerman, Gauntlett & Weckstrom, 2009). By using Lego to build tangible visualisations it gave the participants an expressive freedom which enabled them to see

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their visual constructs develop during the building process allowing new insights to emerge (Huron, Jansen & Carpendale, 2014). Providing a psychological safe environment allows trust to develop, an important factor in a coaching relationship (Baer & Colquitt, 2018; deHaan, Duckworth, Birch & Jones, 2012; Gyllensten & Palmer, 2007) which supports intuitive and almost automatic building. This allows 'letting go', triggers emotions and goes beyond thinking, enabling an openness to behavioural change goals.

## **Limitations**

The researcher was both the coach and the interviewer raising the potential for bias in the reflective interpretation of the researcher. A different researcher would have a different analytical interpretation of the results (Smith, 2009). As participants were chosen from the researcher's previous coaching clients and the practical nature of the session, selection was restricted to those who were available. The data from this sample cannot be generalised to other populations. Whilst benefits were seen from the participants' perspectives it is yet to be determined if coaches would see the same benefits.

Future questions to explore could include:

- Is LSP4PP universally recognised across cultures?
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- Are the findings unique to Lego or would another constructive tool work just as well?
- What practical limitations does LSP4PP have in 1-1 coaching?

## **Conclusion**

The conclusion from this exploratory study of using LSP in a positive psychology framework in 1-1 coaching suggests that the method enables the creation of new awareness and insights within the individual. It creates a psychologically safe environment where play and playfulness can emerge in a way that allows the coachee more time to think which in turn allows the coaching process to flow providing the ideal environment to open up the coaching conversation further.

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