Dear X

You may recall that we met briefly on the IEP in 2009 when I took care of the leadership development module and presented the group-coaching process to you in the amphitheatre.

I am currently in the final stages of a PhD program. My dissertation is an attempt to understand group-coaching as an effective leadership intervention and to develop a theory based upon that. In particular my interests center around the group process and its dynamics, the role of unconscious processes in this work and whether or not participants were able to make change and sustain it. Therefore I am interested in studying your experience of going through this intervention and that is why I am seeking the opportunity of involving you in my research. Your participation in my research would contribute to a better understanding of the various aspects of group-coaching process, improvement to the executive education programs, provide further information to leadership consultants and finally aid my academic success.

For my research I would like to conduct a structured interview with you comprising about 15 questions by phone, which cover your thoughts and impressions of going through the LDP process. Obviously all responses will be treated in strictest confidentiality. Any data used in my dissertation will be stripped of identifying information. Upon completion of my research I will be glad to provide you with the overall analysis of the data that you may find useful in your own organizations. With your permission I would also like to share the data with Kevin Kaiser, the program director, again anonymously.

Obviously participation in this research is voluntary although getting as full coverage of program participants as possible is important for the quality of the final outcome of the research. I also understand that you have a busy schedule. If you agree to participate I will try to make as little disruption to your schedule as possible and the interview will be at your convenience.

I do hope you will agree to participate in this study; thereby contributing to management science but also may gain new insights for yourself and your organization. Please reply to this mail with a short note of your availability and a contact telephone number and I will set up an appointment. I would think the interview will last around 20 minutes and I have set aside the week of the 23rd May to do the interviews.

I look forward to hearing from you and hope you will help to further our work in leadership development.

Yours sincerely

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Fig. 1 Invitation to participate in the research
Interview Protocol: IEP Participant

Date: 
Time: 

Psychodynamics
1. What role did the self-portrait play in your learning?
2. Can you describe your feelings when you were asked to relate your past?
3. What did you take away from listening to other people’s stories?
4. What aspects of the process helped you to learn about yourself?
5. Listening to other participants did you associate with your own life?
6. In looking for answers from others did you find answers to your own dilemmas?

Groups
1. How did you feel about doing 360 feedback in a group setting? Was it difficult to talk about personal things?
2. What value did the group add in facilitating your learning?
3. How would you evaluate the usefulness of a group intervention versus a one to one?
4. Did you follow up with your learning partner? If so was it useful?
5. Listening to other participants did you experience a sense of not being alone with your issues?

Coaching
1. Was the coach able to create a safe environment and if so how?
2. Were you able to make professional and personal changes as a result of the coaching session?
3. Would you have made these changes anyway? What role did the coaching play in accelerating the change if at all?
4. Have you sustained any of the changes you made?
5. What effect did the conference call have in ensuring follow through on your goals?

What lessons did you learn from the coaching exercise?

Fig. 2 Questionnaire for participants