

“I’m still practising too!”

I always dread that stunned silence – it usually comes with a faint whiff of imposter syndrome in the air. What had happened? I had just used one of my most successful coaching interventions.

Peter Näf

Zurich, August 2026

A bit of background: Marjana (name changed) was an outplacement client of mine. After several successful years with the same company, she was forced to rethink her career for economic reasons. I was impressed by what she had already achieved at such a young age. She was ambitious, highly driven and – as our conversations revealed – somewhat merciless towards herself.

Career: a marathon, not a sprint

She spoke about her achievements as if they were nothing special. At one point, I said to her: “Marjana, I wish you were only half as big a fan of yourself as I am.” The absent look that drifted past me reflected her confusion. Many of my clients initially mistake genuine recognition for coaching flattery.

As we explored her personality in more depth, it became clear that despite her confident appearance, she lacked self-confidence. We worked intensively on the issue, and she gradually became aware of how much personal development still lay ahead of her. For self-critical people, healthy self-confidence is not a trait – it is a lifelong training programme.

Then I said the sentence that triggered the discomfort described in the introduction: “Don’t worry about it. I’m almost twice your age, and I’m still

practising too.”

The illusion of having arrived

Although I have built up a healthy level of self-confidence over the years, it still fluctuates from time to time. I could easily imagine what was going through her mind: “So now I hire a coach to help me, and even he isn’t finished yet.”

What followed was an interesting discussion about growth and the idea of “having arrived”. I, too, sometimes fall for the illusion that after a particular milestone – graduating from university, starting my own business – I will finally have arrived. Only to realise that behind every hill I climb, another one is already waiting. More and more, I am learning to let go of this illusion and to enjoy simply being on the journey.

In the end, after their initial surprise, my clients are always grateful when I take off the costume of the supposedly perfect coach and show them that I struggle with the same issues as everyone else – because they are human issues. I, too, appreciate it when people around me occasionally allow a glimpse behind their confident façade.

By the end of the session, Marjana was laughing at the enormous expectations she placed on herself. She seemed willing to embrace the idea that personal growth never really ends. And yet, at the same time, I sensed a quiet hope that perhaps things might be different for her.

That’s okay. That is one of the privileges of youth.

[#career](#) [#careerdesign](#) [#personalitydevelopment](#)

Please find further articles on career topics on my homepage

<https://karrierecoaching.ch/en/articles/>

