



**Ontological  
Coaching Institute**

Observing *differently*

# **Certified Ontological Coaching and Leadership Program**

## **South Africa**

## **2023 - 2024**

**Additional notes to accompany  
the program brochure**

## Dates, pre-requisite and nature of participation

The Certified Ontological Coaching Program is an 18-month program consisting of three semesters.

Semester 1	31 January – 8 July 2023
Semester 2	31 July – 25 November 2023
Semester 3	24 January – 27 July 2024

Each semester is referred to as a Level in the program, with participants progressing through Levels 1, 2 and 3 to be assessed as being competent as an Ontological Coach.

The program is fully accredited as a Level 2 (previously named ACTP) course by the International Coach Federation.

### Pre-requisite for participation:

Ontological Coaching Institute's 3-day *Ontological Coaching and Leadership in Action* workshop (either prior to 31 January or 31 January – 3 February 2023).

### Participation involves the following:

- attendance and full participation at 9 in-person conferences: three each in Levels 1, 2 and 3;
- constructive engagement in learning/study group meetings with fellow participants (which can be in-person and/or phone and/or Zoom) every 2-3 weeks;
- regular conversations with program leaders by phone and/or Zoom;
- successful completion of all assignment work;

A more detailed appreciation of the nature of participation can be gained from reading *Participating in Level 1*.

## Participating in Level 1

The methodology and practice of Ontological Coaching is based on a robust and coherent body of knowledge. Like any profession, developing competence as an Ontological Coach requires a sound conceptual and practical understanding of the underlying theoretical body of knowledge.

The essence of Level 1 is gaining a solid working familiarity with an ontological approach to language and its application in coaching and everyday conversations. This enables the coach to clearly and succinctly introduce ontological distinctions on language into the conversation.

While the emphasis in Level 1 is on moving towards competence in the application of distinctions in the domain of language, the domains of emotions and the body are not neglected and are constantly referred to.

Through assignments and discussions with fellow participants and program leaders, participants gradually develop a deeper theoretical and practical familiarity with the application of an ontological approach to language in a variety of ways.

*Reading, discussing, and reporting on specific papers on language which involves:*

- reading each paper twice;
- discussing and listening to others' responses and perspectives each the paper
- in learning / study group conversations; and
- reporting on your response to the paper as part of assignment work.

#### *Conducting three mini-seminars on different aspects of language*

- Leading and reporting on sessions of approximately 90 minutes on specific ontological distinctions on language.
- This is done with a small group of participants outside the course (eg, work colleagues, friends, family), seeking to engage them in the practical everyday relevance of these distinctions.
- Support from course leaders is available in the design of these sessions.

#### *Group project to conduct a one-day public workshop on the theme of "Using Language to Generate More Constructive Realities"*

- The rationale of the three mini-seminars and the one-day workshop is that doing is learning.
- Leading the mini-seminars and the workshop means that participants need to "be across" the distinctions to be able to explain them clearly and constructively engage participants in the practical relevance of ontological distinctions on language.
- Participants also use ontological distinctions on language in working collaboratively to organise workshop logistics and their respective roles in the workshop.

#### *Keeping a Linguistic Diary*

#### *Continual coaching practice throughout the semester to integrate an ontological approach to language into coaching*

\*\* An average of 7 hours per week throughout the semester is required \*\*

## **Dates and locations of in-person Conferences**

Materials to commence assignment work are provided at the Opening Conference for the course.

### **Whole group conferences**

All participants will be required to be together at 7 of the 9 conferences, which will be held in Cape Town and Johannesburg. Apart from the Level 1 Opening Conference and the Closing Conferences for Levels 1 and 2, the location of each conference will be decided when the proportion of participants from each city is known. The 7 conferences, their dates and locations are:

- Level 1 Opening Conference (4 days) – 31 January – 3 February 2023
- Mid-Level 1 Conference (2 days) – 24 - 25 April 2023
- Opening Level 2 Conference (4 days) – 31 July – 3 August 2023
- Mid-Level 2 Conference (2 days) – 20 - 21 October 2023
- Opening Level 3 Conference (4 days) – 24 - 27 January 2024
- Mid-Level 3 Conference – 19 - 20 April 2024
- Closing Level 3 Conference – 25 – 27 July 2024

### **Smaller group conferences**

These are the Closing Conferences for Levels 1 and 2 (4 days for each conference).

The Closing Level 1 and Level 2 Conferences will be held locally because they require course participants to collaborate in small groups (of up to 4 people) on a project to

jointly present a one-day “public” workshop for people not in the course. This means finding interested personnel to attend and working together to coordinate marketing, logistics and presentation. Full support from program leaders is provided, including sessions during The Mid-Level 1 and Mid-Level 2 Conferences.

Dates for the Closing Level 1 and Level 2 Conferences are:

- Closing Level 1 Conference (4 days) – 27 June – 1 July 2023 (Joburg) 4 – 8 July, 2023 (CT);
- Closing Level 2 Conference (4 days) – 21 – 25 November 2023 (two conferences to run concurrently in CT and JBG).

## Overview of the Different Components of Level 1

In this section we want to provide you with an overview of the various dimensions of your participation in Level 1. These have been designed to provide a variety of contexts and experiences in which learning can occur, seeking to engage you in your preferred ways of learning, and also to extend you beyond those.

### 1. Reading articles in a text

For the first four assignments we would like you to explore the notion of the post-modern world through a series of short articles. These are contained in the book *The Truth About The Truth*, edited by Walter Truett Anderson.

In asking you to read the articles we want to provide you a brief glimpse of some of the key writings which have (i) been an important part of the recognition that we are coming to the close of a major historical era and (ii) played a major role in the emergence of a different mindset and worldview of the times in which we are living.

### 2. The papers

All the papers have been especially written for this program. They are central to the course, and the focal point for learning / study group meetings. Each paper deals with a different aspect of the ontological work within the overall theme for the level. Thus, in Level 1 the focus is on different aspects of the linguistic nature of human existence and how these relate to both everyday living and to *Ontological Coaching*.

We ask you to read each paper twice. This is important, for much more can become apparent on the second reading when there is a basis of familiarity to read from.

We assess that your learning / study group discussions are a vital part of gaining the most from the papers and seeing how the distinctions apply in everyday living. Much can be gained from conversing with others about their understanding of the key distinctions within each paper.

### 3. Audience sessions

This is where we ask you to conduct mini-seminars with people not in the course. An important underlying premise of the course is that learning and knowing is action based. Conducting audience sessions is an essential feature of this, for to “teach” something requires a deeper level of understanding that conversing about it in a learning/ study group and writing up an assignment response.

We suggest you design your sessions to be up to two hours, in order to allow plenty of time for engagement by your participants. In your sessions we want you to do more than simply tell people about the distinctions you have been working with. We want you to “show” them by designing contexts in which they can come to not only have an intellectual understanding of the distinctions, but also how they relate to their everyday living. In other words, we want your sessions to be of practical benefit and value to your audience members.

In this level we want you to conduct sessions that explore the following themes:

- listening,
- the specific linguistic acts of declarations, requests, promises and offers, and assertions and assessments, and grounding assessments.

Working through these sessions is an important prelude to conducting a one-day public workshop as part of the Closing Conference.

### 4. Mid-Level Conference

This is a three-day conference that occurs about 10 weeks into the first semester. The conference is designed to:

- review in detail the material covered in the Ontological Coaching in Action workshop and address questions,
- discuss questions and provide clarifications arising from Assignment 1-4,
- introduce the body learning practice that is an integral part of assignment work and course participation,
- prepare for the public workshop that comprises a central component of the Closing Conference,
- review the basic coaching structure and related set of questions,
- engage in extensive coaching practice, and
- become familiar with the guidelines for observing and providing feedback on coaching conversations.

### 5. Linguistic diary

Towards the end of this level (Assignments 6 and 7) we ask you to deepen your awareness of the operation of the linguistic acts in everyday life. We want you to systematically observe and record how you and others use these acts in everyday conversations, and what is generated from this use. As a result of your assignment work, audience sessions and regional conference experience we assess that you will be well-placed to be an acute observer of these facets of language and their impact of conversations and relationships.

## 6. Body learning

Whilst the focus of this level is on the language domains, we will not be neglecting the other two ontological domains - emotions and the body - which are an integral part of the program. In each assignment we ask you to engage in the regular practice of postural movement.

Elsewhere in the binder we have outlined the rationale behind the particular body practice we want you to be involved in. We cannot stress enough the importance of body learning in the process of becoming an ontological coach. The world we observe, including how we observe ourselves, is always done from the body we live in. This especially includes how we hold our body. Profoundly different, and more beneficial ways, of learning can occur from making gradual discoveries and shifts in the very embodiment of our being, which is reflected in our posture and the way we have habitually come to hold our body.

## 7. Coaching conversations

Throughout the course we require you to continually participate in conversations as a coach, coachee and observer. By the end of the course you will have participated in about fifty-five such conversations in these roles. In this level we want you to begin coaching, paying attention to what we regard as minimal and indispensable fundamentals.

By the time you do the Closing Conference you will have some important linguistic distinctions you can be utilising in your coaching conversations. At the end of the level (Assignments 7-8) we ask you to have at least one coaching conversations with a study group partner in which you take it in turn to be a coach and coachee to each other. These can be a longer duration than the conversations in the conferences.

## 8. Closing Conference

We have provided details elsewhere of the nature of this conference. At this point we want to emphasise that it is an indispensable part of your learning in the program, in which you are able to explore and discover in greater depth the relevance of the ontological distinctions to your personal and professional living, as well as their coaching applications.

## 9. Course support

Your Program Leader is a key support person for your learning. In addition to providing ongoing support through responding in written detail to your assignments, he or she is available for conversations throughout the course.

### ICF ACCREDITATION

This program has been granted Level 2, previously ACTP (Accredited Coach Training Program) status by the ICF (International Coach Federation).