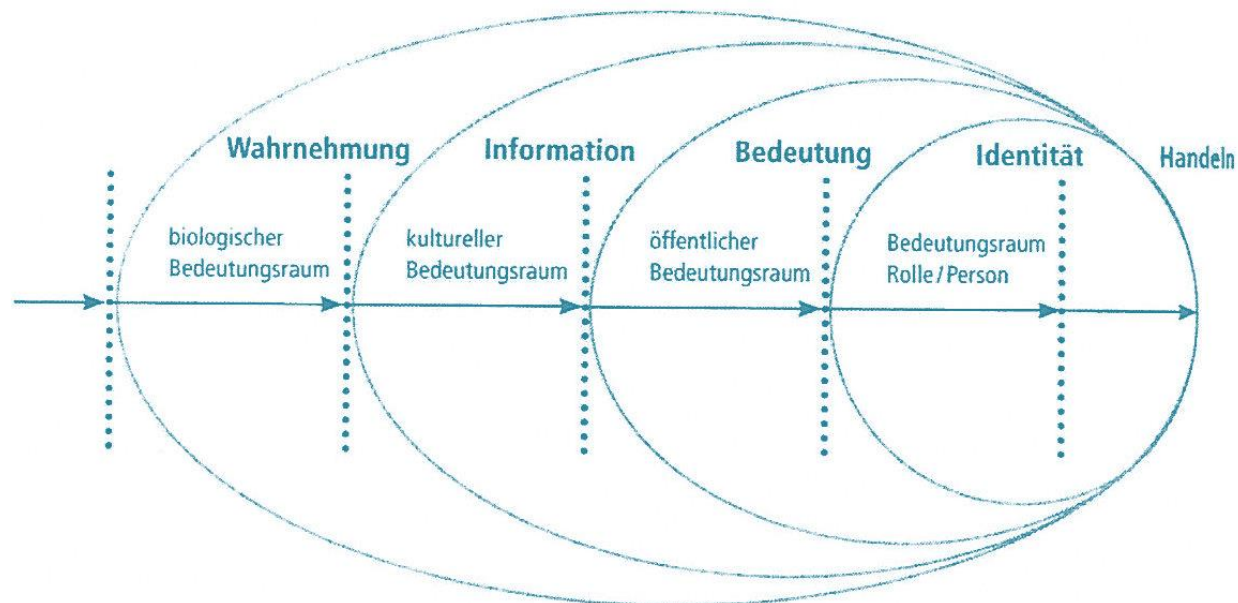


5-thresholds-process model

The **5-thresholds-process model** by **Rainer Molzahn and Elke Schlehuber** is a central basis in my coachings. The model describes the process that a person – but also groups and organisations go through – when it is necessary to come up with a **creative answer to a challenge posed by an outside source**. The answer needs to be creative when there are no role models, no schemata and no precedent solutions to offer guidance. In short: whenever the old recipes do not work anymore.

The 5-thresholds-process model suggests that every human (and every organisation) **has to overcome 5 thresholds** to pass through a transformative situation successfully. Every threshold is challenging in its own way. The coach accompanies the coachee (or the company) while **pausing at every threshold, understanding its full meaning and implications**. From there, the coach assists in **building resources** and **crossing the threshold at the right time**.



From: Schlehuber & Molzahn: Die heiligen Kühe und die Wölfe des Wandels, p. 308

5-thresholds-process model

1. Threshold	Threshold of perception	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ Signals indicating a need for change are overlooked and suppressed in the daily routine. We act as if nothing is wrong and are not looking very closely at what is knocking on our door and asking for transformation. Our threshold of perception increases, which makes it difficult to perceive the signals calling for change. This is true for humans as well as companies. ⦿ This mechanism helps us to follow our current aims and intentions as well as function in our daily life. ⦿ After a certain time, people often develop signs of crisis if they ignore the signals of change too long (e.g. sicknesses). ⦿ The first step is always to acknowledge the signals of change and perceive them consciously. With this, the first threshold is crossed.
2. Threshold	Threshold of information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ At this threshold the focus is naming the signals of change. What is the actual topic in the transformative process? ⦿ The word <i>actual</i> is very important in this context. Often, the first term for the problem does not truly find the core of the actual topic. Therefore, the coachee and the coach have to investigate the disturbance a bit longer to identify all its different aspects. ⦿ The act of naming is a central step because the name that is given to the disturbance decides about its „destiny“ – and about the next steps during the coaching. ⦿ The aim at this threshold is to dwell and investigate the signals of the disturbance. This threshold can only be crossed, when the coachee has the feeling that the core of his current transformative situation is correctly named.

5-thresholds-process model

3. Threshold	Threshold of meaning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ This threshold is all about the meaning that the previously named information has for the coachee. Depending on the significance, the next steps and actions are decided. ⦿ The meaning or significance of the information is negotiated between the personality aspects which we have inside our inner arena (“Inner team” – a term coined by Friedemann Schulz von Thun). Furthermore, the voices of our public shareholders can be heard who are influencing us in everyday life. ⦿ Most important at this edge is to listen to all inner team members and let them give their perspective on the topic– which includes also the quiet voices and the sub-conscious ones. Only if an open and honest dispute between every perspective has happened, if relationships to each other are reflected and conflicts resolved, the appropriate follow-up action can be found. ⦿ Therefore, this threshold can only be crossed if the meaning of the information with all its aspects, backgrounds and involvements is honestly comprehended.
4. Threshold	Threshold of transformation of identity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ The threshold of transformation of identity is the deepest and hence the most difficult to pass. Depending on the coaching topic, it might not be necessary to pass it. ⦿ At this threshold, the core belief with which the system identifies itself is challenged. Since people do not constantly change their identity, it is possible that this edge is not in focus for a coaching topic. However, if you find yourself in a crisis of transformation then working this threshold might become necessary. ⦿ At this threshold you meet the „final boss” – the strong inner forces of resistance that want everything to stay as it is and are trying to prevent that we become somebody else than the person we are today. ⦿ These forces protect us from painful memories and feelings, from loss of social connectivity and status – this part of us is ruled by fear. In a transformative crisis we have to deal with these forces and confront them. ⦿ Transformative learning at this threshold can happen in two ways: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. By way of reconnection with our beginning, our source. From our current perspective we go on a journey into the past, following the aim to understand how everything began and developed the way it is now.

5-thresholds-process model

		<p>2. Through confrontation with our inner critic. The challenge here is to deal with our inner observer who represents our ancestors (parents and other authority figures) and suppresses all our feelings, impulses and thoughts that are questioning their values and beliefs. By moving away from this inner critic, by confronting and dealing with him, this inner figure transforms and changes the meaning that our current topic has.</p>
5. Threshold	Threshold of change of action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ⦿ When you have reached the threshold of change of action, you have already accomplished a lot. Yet, the journey is not quite at its end – one last route waits for you. The challenge of this step is to act and work in the real world according to the new insights and values. ⦿ This threshold is challenging because our social system generally is not very happy that we suddenly behave differently. Change always confronts other people, irritates and upsets them and may also challenge them to change themselves as well. ⦿ Furthermore, this threshold is challenging because we will be criticised. The critic is also present in the outer world and can speak through a lot of people in our social system. ⦿ Last but not least, this threshold is challenging because through our transformation we break free from the trance of community and might be regarded as representing “the other”, the unknown or the outsider. In crossing this threshold, we risk the affiliation and membership to our social group. ⦿ This threshold can be crossed as soon as we are totally clear about how we would like to act in the real world – with all ensuing consequences.

References:

Elke Schlehner und Rainer Molzahn: Die heiligen Kühe und die Wölfe des Wandels. Warum wir ohne kulturelle Kompetenz nicht mit Veränderungen klarkommen (Gabal), 2007