My story:
from grey mouse to elephant?

How did I become a powerful female elephant (my power animal)? If you know me now, you probably think.... what? Grey mouse?

Yes, I didn't learn to stand out or be rebellious. Was an easy child and I never rocked the boat, I didn't really dare to. I didn't really speak out and adapted to others easily. Just did what was expected and took a lot of account of others. Too much, I learned later.

From about the age of 18, I learned to decide more for myself. In the years that followed, I did several courses and applied for nice jobs or projects when an opportunity was there. I wanted to get more out of myself but I didn't really know what and how. I had no direction-defining education (Mavo 4) and I don't come from 'studying environment' that I could take as example. So I developed myself step by step and let me 'guide' by what my work offered me. Without a career planning, I did know I wanted to work with people, have personal contact. And that's what I've been working towards in my jobs.
Due to a long list of courses and workshops I became more all-round. Nice, but I didn't have any recognizable expertise to stand out.
Except.... in being the person I was, in my work. A real team player, always willing and helpful, always present, enthusiastic and positive. And that brought me where I am now, along a happy life path, a good career and with a nice job with a lot of human contact.

But... something gnawed deep inside. I was limiting myself mentally at work. I made things difficult for me because I looked up too much to the (in my opinion) impressive expertise (which I didn't have) of many colleagues. Most of them being highly educated in a 'real' profession, daring to stand for their opinions and output. I could often feel insignificant than (in terms of knowledge, not as a human being). I obviously found imposing diplomas, professional knowledge and courage to speak up greatly important.

Amongst all this 'smart minds' I often pushed my personal, emotional, social and warm skills (soft skills) under water. Trying to prevent looking ignorant, a softy or dull and that felt increasingly bad. No one knew this about me or noticed it (I think). On the contrary, I have always felt and received appreciation for me as a human being and as a colleague / employee!
Besides showing myself only 'half', I didn't use what else I have to give. In my job I was somewhat limited in this (being a payed professional). As a result, I really missed a wów feeling, felt often tired and sometimes experienced boredom.

I was DONE with my limiting mindset. By aligning too much with my surroundings, I didn't pay enough attention to my own qualities and wishes.

Don't get me wrong, I had a more than good time, with nice colleagues with even some good friends amongst them. But I just KNEW I had more to offer than "just my functional, responsible self." I wanted to use my warm, social, connecting skills, invest in them and let them grow. I needed to activate that hidden, valuable side of me and was done not listening to myself!

What's different now?

I searched and found what really makes me happy: COACHING, in a way that suits me.
I do this beside my job, because I still like my work. I got a first taste of coaching through a basic coaching training. I got inspired and then dove head over heels into the whole training. I wanted even more after that and opted for an intensive international certification training. At the same time I also started my coaching practise. And all this I had **not** planned in advance, I chose step by step and just went for it.
Sure, this was exciting, took a lot of energy, time, self-management and dedication but also gave me a lot of energy, fun and inspiration! And still.
I feel great, being a coach feels like coming home to myself. And Yes! I have that wów feeling now.
I'm about to crown myself a daring queen because it took quite courage to take on all this at the same time!

What did it bring me?

And I dare to show myself now and let my heart and intuition speak much more, **and** I found my expertise that I longed for, **and** my exterior now fits my insides, my feelings. *And* I've met a lot of new nice people, besides my existing social circles. Choosing to take that big leap (in my case to start with coaching) was a super cool gift to myself. I now make powerful choices from within and care less for what others might think:
I Feel Good, I radiate and wag my tail! And that's what I want for everyone, dare to put yourself first. There's nothing ego about it, nothing arrogant, it just makes *me* a better, nicer version of myself