

## COACHING

### WHAT IS A COACH?

A coach is a professional who works with individual clients to help them achieve results and sustain life-changing behavior in their lives and careers.

Coaches address the whole person—with an emphasis on uncovering blind spots and producing right action that leads to more fulfillment, more balance, and more effective processes for living.

Consultants have been around a long time. Coaches are relatively new. The 2 professions take very different approaches.

Coach	Consultant
<p><b>Coaches</b> are people developers. They don't tell their clients what to do; they ask questions. Their message is, "You're smart. I'll be a mirror to help you look inside yourself, so you can not only solve this problem, but maximize your potential in all areas of your life."</p>	<p><b>Consultants</b> are problem solvers. Their underlying message is, "I'm smarter than you are. I'll tell you what's wrong and how to fix it."</p>
<p>The goal of coaching is to maximize potential.</p>	<p>The goal of consulting is typically to maximize profits.</p>

Coaches also operate differently from trainers and group facilitators.

Coach	Trainer
<p>Coaches work with individuals, primarily by listening and asking questions over an extended, open-ended time period.</p>	<p>Trainers work with groups of people, primarily by teaching in a classroom setting within a short, predetermined time frame.</p>
<p>The goal of coaching is to elicit action. The key ingredient is relationship.</p>	<p>The goal of training is to impart information. The key ingredient is knowledge.</p>

Coaching is a powerful relationship that enables people to make important changes in their lives. The primary benefits begin after clients hang up the phone. That's when they begin the real work of redirecting their lives.

## **WHO CAN BENEFIT FROM HAVING A COACH?**

You probably know what it's like to navigate through your professional life alone. If you're like most people, you've been doing it for years. And the higher up in management you go, the harder it gets. "It's lonely at the top."

Coaches fill a vital need that no one else can meet.

- ◆ Spouses can be good listeners, but it's problematic to bring in-depth counseling into the middle of a marriage.
- ◆ Friends will listen and give help when they can, but they're not trained to identify the most significant issues. And they won't have the time or the commitment to be there for you consistently. When they have needs of their own, they want to receive help, not give it.
- ◆ Business associates have limited time, and their values and goals may sometimes be in conflict with yours. Understandably, they are more committed to their own success. Besides, many issues are too sensitive to discuss with peers, bosses, and subordinates.

Think of someone—perhaps a family member or a close friend—who is going through change. Imagine what a gift it would be for him/her to have a coach in his/her life—a trained professional who really cares about him/her.

All of us have meaningful conversations about our lives and careers once in a while, but a coach is available regularly and consistently, to support and guide one through trials and triumphs.

The impact of coaching increases with time. As coach and client get to know each other better, the coach becomes more familiar with the client's strengths and weaknesses, aspirations and dreams—and the acts of sabotage that jeopardize those dreams.

So, who can benefit from having a coach—anyone who's going through change. And that includes just about all of us!

## WHAT'S IT LIKE TO HAVE A COACH?

Having a coach is like having your own personal navigator for your life's journey. The coach helps you chart your course and reach your destination.

Imagine having someone in your corner who is totally committed to your success. Someone who always encourages the powerful part of you; who sees how big you can be and constantly holds up that big image for you—even when you can't hold it up for yourself.

Imagine a relationship that places the total focus on you. A relationship with someone who helps you clarify your dreams, aspirations, passions, and values, helps you celebrate your victories, and learn from your setbacks as you press on toward achieving your goals ... together.

Imagine the benefit of having regular conversations with a skilled, trained professional who really listens to you ... not just to your words, but to your emotions, your energy, and even the spaces between your words. A coach is a professional who provides a "safe" place for you to move beyond superficial, inhibited, self-limiting conversations, so that you have the confidence to express even your doubts and fears ... someone who helps you gain the tools and strength you need to defeat the attitudes and behaviors that have sabotaged your past success and created stress in your life.

Imagine having a trustworthy, confidential relationship with someone who will absolutely tell you the truth—the truth about where you are strong, and where you sell yourself short. Someone who knows your values and your life purpose, and will help you hold yourself true to them. Someone who will accept everything you communicate without judgment, always seeking to draw out the very best in you.

From the above you can begin to get an idea of the value of having a coach. Now, let's talk about what you should do if you're interested in becoming a coach.

Good coaches come in all shapes and sizes, but here are some characteristics that most good coaches seem to share:

- ◆ They are excellent listeners. They'd rather ask good questions than give good advice.
- ◆ They are curious about people. They love to dig beneath the surface to uncover a person's dreams, values, and passions.
- ◆ They are self-assured. They rejoice when others succeed.
- ◆ They believe in relationships. They enjoy working one-on-one with people over an extended period of time.

- ◆ They are encouragers. They get a thrill out of helping others achieve their dreams.
  - ◆ They have positive attitudes. They look for, affirm, and expect the best in others.
  - ◆ They are honest. They are not afraid to challenge others when that's the best way to help them.
  - ◆ They are unselfish. They are willing to get out of the way, so others can grow.
  - ◆ They are respectful. They do not attempt to manipulate or control others.
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