

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is coaching?

The International Coach Federation defines coaching as “an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives.” Life coaching is about choice, action and solutions. Your coach will listen, offer observations and ask questions. The coaching relationship will create clarity, help move you into action, provide greater focus and awareness of choice. Every coach has a different approach, but most believe a significant catalyst to achieving one’s full potential is the process of connecting the “heart to the head.” Utilizing active listening skills, a coach will ask empowering questions designed to help the client identify the heart of the matter, or core values, and consequently, his or her core agenda. By honoring a client’s core values, it is possible to experience measurable and lasting change.

2. How is coaching different from psychotherapy?

Coaching and psychotherapy are very different. Psychotherapy is generally long-term and intensive, and deals with healing psychological issues as well as cognitive and behavioral development. The focus is often on past history and how it relates to that individual's development. Coaching does not deal with in-depth psychological issues or focus on the past. Concentrating primarily on the present and future, coaching acknowledges personal issues, but focuses on skill development and implementation of new strategies to benefit the client in achieving their goals, becoming more fulfilled and better equipped to meet life's daily challenges. A coach will help you enhance your skills and will help you build awareness and responsibility toward your endeavors.

3. How does coaching usually work?

Coaching is a partnership between the coach and the client. As a team, the roles of each are clearly defined in the beginning. Trust is built and action plans are developed. The coach always honors the agenda of the client while maintaining a focus on his or her goals. The arrangements for support and financial compensation are usually agreed upon in the initial consultation. Some coaches require signed agreements for a specific coaching term with the number and length of coaching sessions agreed upon in advance and some coaches put together coaching "packages" to meet their client's needs, with flexibility built in. Coaching can be done by appointment in person at the client’s home or workplace, in the office, over the phone, by e-mail, by fax, depending on the agreement.

4. Can a friend or family member be my coach?

Yes. There is nothing unethical about this. However, the important thing is to establish boundaries from the beginning and maintain them so coaching sessions are clearly separated from the personal relationship.