



Coaching FAQ: Is coaching right for you?

Q: What Exactly Is Coaching?

A: The International Coach Federation or ICF defines coaching as follows*:

"Professional coaching focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes and managing personal change. Sometimes it's helpful to understand coaching by distinguishing it from other personal or organizational support professions."

- **Therapy vs Coaching:** "Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways. Coaching, on the other hand, supports personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific actionable outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal or professional success. Coaching is future focused. While positive feelings/emotions may be a natural outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphases in a coaching relationship are on action, accountability, and follow through."
- **Consulting vs Coaching:** "Individuals or organizations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will diagnose problems and prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions. With coaching, the assumption is that individuals or teams are capable of generating their own solutions, with the coach supplying supportive, discovery-based approaches and frameworks."
- **Mentoring vs Coaching:** "A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counseling, and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and reaching their own objectives."
- **Training vs Coaching:** "Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Though objectives are clarified in the coaching process, they are set by the individual or team being coached, with guidance provided by the coach. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum. Coaching is less linear without a set curriculum."
- **Athletic Development:** Though sports metaphors are often used, professional coaching is

different from sports coaching. The athletic coach is often seen as an expert who guides and directs the behavior of individuals or teams based on his or her greater experience and knowledge. Professional coaches possess these qualities, but their experience and knowledge of the individual or team determines the direction. Additionally, professional coaching, unlike athletic development, does not focus on behaviors that are being executed poorly or incorrectly. Instead, the focus is on identifying opportunity for development based on individual strengths and capabilities."

The ICF also states that coaching is "**partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential, which is particularly important in today's uncertain and complex environment.** Coaches honor the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole. Standing on this foundation, the coach's responsibility is to:

- Discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve
- Encourage client self-discovery
- Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies
- Hold the client responsible and accountable

This process helps clients dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while improving their leadership skills and unlocking their potential."

Q: Is this the right time for you to partner with a coach?

A: "An individual or team might choose to work with a coach for many reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Something urgent, compelling or exciting is at stake (a challenge, stretch goal or opportunity)
- A gap exists in knowledge, skills, confidence or resources
- A desire to accelerate results
- A lack of clarity with choices to be made
- Success has started to become problematic
- Work and life are out of balance, creating unwanted consequences
- Core strengths need to be identified, along with how best to leverage them"

REFLECTION:

(1) Does you see yourself in the above situations? Which ones?

(2) If you were to fast forward six months or one year, would you be fine if things are status quo? If not, and you do want to begin making changes now, then I'd encourage you to continue reading. If you can wait, then I invite you to put a reminder on your calendar to come back in six months and see if then is the right time.

Q: Key Roles in the Coaching Partnership: the Coach and You, the client**A: *The Coach's role, as described by the ICF:***

- "Provides objective assessment and observations that foster the individual's or team's self-awareness and awareness of others
- Listens closely to fully understand the individual's or team's circumstances
- Acts as a sounding board in exploring possibilities and implementing thoughtful planning and decision making
- Champions opportunities and potential, encouraging stretch and challenge commensurate with personal strengths and aspirations
- Fosters shifts in thinking that reveal fresh perspectives,
- Challenges blind spots to illuminate new possibilities and support the creation of alternative scenarios
- Maintains professional boundaries in the coaching relationship, including confidentiality, and adheres to the coaching profession's code of ethics."

And what is your role, as client? What does the Client do? According to the ICF:

- "Creates the coaching agenda based on personally meaningful coaching goals
- Uses assessment and observations to enhance self-awareness and awareness of others
- Envisions personal and/or organizational success
- Assumes full responsibility for personal decisions and actions
- Utilizes the coaching process to promote possibility thinking and fresh perspectives
- Takes courageous action in alignment with personal goals and aspirations
- Engages big-picture thinking and problem-solving skills
- Takes the tools, concepts, models and principles provided by the coach and engages in effective forward actions"

Q: What will coaching ask of you, for you to reach successful outcomes?

A: "To be successful, coaching asks certain things, all of which begin with intention. Additionally, clients should:

- Focus on one's self, the tough questions, the hard truths and one's success.
- Observe the behaviors and communications of others.
- Listen to one's intuition, assumptions, judgments, and to the way one sounds when one speaks
- Challenge existing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors and develop new ones that serve one's goals in a superior way
- Leverage personal strengths and overcome limitations to develop a winning style
- Take decisive actions, however uncomfortable and in spite of personal insecurities, to reach for the extraordinary
- Show compassion for one's self while learning new behaviors and experiencing setbacks, and to show that compassion for others as they do the same
- Commit to not take one's self so seriously, using humor to lighten and brighten any situation
- Maintain composure in the face of disappointment and unmet expectations, avoiding emotional reactivity
- Have the courage to reach for more than before while engaging in continual self examination without fear"

Q: How is the coaching partnership structured? What is the format?

A: "Coaching typically begins with a personal interview (either face-to-face or by teleconference call) to assess the individual's or business' current opportunities and challenges, define the scope of the relationship, identify priorities for action and establish specific desired outcomes. Subsequent coaching sessions may be conducted in person or over the telephone, with each session lasting a previously established length of time. Between scheduled coaching sessions, the individual may be asked to complete specific actions that support the achievement of one's personally prioritized goals. The coach may provide additional resources in the form of relevant articles, checklists, assessments or models to support the individual's or

business' thinking and actions. The duration of the coaching relationship varies depending on needs and preferences."

My Unique Approach

I have been trained as a coach in a number of different professional training programs with certifications: Quantum Coaching, Total Leadership, Immersion, Body=Brain, and more. But, I've also brought into the mix my training in many Eastern practices and knowledge from consulting with small entrepreneurial companies and Fortune 500 companies. I'm also endlessly fascinated by how we as human beings can tap into our limitless intelligence and potential. All of my knowledge and experience of working with hundreds of clients from a widely diverse array of cultures and backgrounds, along with my own growth and experience, influences and shapes how I support you, the client.

Q: What should you realistically expect to invest when hiring a coach?

A: Your time. Your energy. Your belief in yourself. Your trust in the coach to guide you through the process. And of course your money.

You can interview a variety of coaches and find one that fits best with your needs and budget. Ultimately it can be a gut decision.

REFLECTION:

When considering what you can and are willing to invest, ask yourself:

"What is the value of my desired outcomes if I achieve them?"

"What would it be worth to me to reach my goals?"

Coaches charge rates ranging from US \$150/hour to over US \$1000/hour. Based on my own informal benchmarking with peers in the coaching field, specifically those who work with leaders and executives like I do, coaches typically charge a flat rate for a six month coaching program, ranging from US \$8,000 to US \$35,000, depending on a variety of factors. In my coaching practice, I offer three primary programs as the starting point, lasting from 5-months to 12-months in length, ranging in price from US \$5,000 to US \$25,000. I also offer an introductory six-step course that has the option to add-on shorter coaching sessions throughout, for a smaller investment of under US \$1,000.

Q: What can you expect as a return on your investment of time,

energy, and money?

A: The coach's role is to maximize the client's potential using coaching techniques. Each client is responsible for his or her own results, and therefore each individual experiences unique results. However, you might find it useful to review the key take-away results of this study conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers on behalf of the International Coach Federation: <http://coachfederation.org/need/landing.cfm?ItemNumber=747&navItemNumber=565>

If you're ready to explore partnering with a coach like me, I invite you to reach out and schedule an initial free call so we can start the process of getting to know one another. Then, we can decide if it makes sense to talk further. I can be reached at 215-771-8698 or by email at Connect@ErinOwen.com.

Erin Owen

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*Citation for all quotes above in this FAQ from the International Coach Federation: <http://coachfederation.org/need/landing.cfm?ItemNumber=978>

Why cite the ICF? Erin is a member of the International Coach Federation. To learn more about the ICF, visit their website: <http://www.coachfederation.org/>.