



# What is **coaching**?

It is the drop  
whose ripple  
is felt around  
the world...

As we embark on this journey, we are mindful and appreciative of the ripple of excitement that has been created by all who have contributed and have brought us to this point. The drop that starts the ripple is what we sincerely hope *choice* becomes for you, the coach, the client, the human resources practitioner and anyone else who embraces coaching as a means of initiating a new way of traveling, growing and being in the world.

**S**o, what is coaching? Coaching is . . . well, different things to different people. It can, among other things, empower us to take risks, jump-start our careers, clarify and attain our goals, or improve our relationships — personally and professionally. As one of our feature authors puts it, “Coaching helps us catch what we need, deflect the unnecessary, and totally disregard the irrelevant.” And this is true not only at the personal level, but in the corporate world, as well. “Coaching creates a context for decision-making in an organization where efficiency is the goal.”

And is it only the client who benefits? Since coaching is about mutuality, apparently not. Coaching is also about “respect, unconditional support and bringing nothing but your very best to the table.”

Are you ready for this voyage? Read on and find out . . .

— **Maureen A. Ford** and **Marguerite Martindale**

● What is Coaching? For **Phil Sandahl**, “coaching is the process of imagining, clarifying and choosing. It helps you draw the map, select the mode of transportation and, in the process, learn a new way to “travel.”



## An Empowering Choice

Imagine this scenario: One morning you decide that this is the day to leave home. You want to be someplace else. You walk out the front door, go down to the street and, at your front door, you make your first choice: do you go left or right? Actually, it's your second choice — your first was to decide to leave home. However, you really don't need a coach to help you decide whether to turn right or left; you could just as easily flip a coin, follow a hunch or ask a passing stranger.

So what's coaching and why is it becoming part of the mainstream? In its simplest form, coaching has emerged over the last 15 years or so because it assists people in getting where they want to go more efficiently and effectively and, in the process, they learn a new way to “travel.” It's important to note that nobody needs a coach; not the way one needs food, clothing, shelter or healing from injury or pain. Coaching is an additive that:

- **Clarifies** direction and destination
- **Unleashes** potential and resources
- **Accelerates** progress
- **Removes** obstacles
- **Builds** bridges

Coaching could help you decide where you specifically wanted to get to when you leave home. While “anywhere” may qualify, you'd no doubt have to make quite a few trials before you find the destination that fits.

Coaching is the process of imagining, clarifying and choosing. Coaching helps you draw the map and select the mode of transportation. And the “you” could be an individual, a team or an organization.

Let's take organizations as an example. These days, people in an organization can connect via cell phone and share information just about anywhere in the world, any time of the day or night. Imagine for a moment that we were suddenly transported back to the days of the pony express.

Decision-making could only move as fast as the average palomino over rough terrain. All right, the analogy is extreme, but the notion is that coaching creates a context for decision-making in an organization where efficiency is the goal. It promotes clarity while reducing backtracking, second-guessing or wandering aimlessly in dead-end canyons. Coaching individuals within an organization has a similar impact — people can become focused, energized and effective.

The same applies for individuals and teams. Coaching helps people determine their destination and gives them an incentive to stay on course to get there.

In today's business world, organizations need every advantage they can find to be more adept, more agile, more focused in order to achieve the results they need to survive and thrive. For individuals, the desire may be to live life more fully by their own unique definition. It might be a more satisfying career, material well-being, stronger relationships — the goals may vary, but the underlying process is essentially the same. Coaching helps leverage time, talent and resources to make the most of this day, this opportunity, this life.

The process of coaching involves an ongoing relationship where coach and client/coachee are companions and partners assisting the client in the client's journey. Clients determine the goals; coaches bring the tools of their trade. The tools come in a variety of shapes and sizes, different names and applications, but in one way or another the appropriate application can help people find and stay the course.

“Coaching helps  
make the most of  
this life.”

What makes coaching unique is the nature of the conversation between coach and client. In most other professional relationships there is power or authority given to the provider. Coaching facilitates a peer relationship where both client and coach can give 100 percent to the work for the sake of the client, while being equal in power and authority and working together to get the client to the desired destination. At its best, this approach changes the nature of the conversation: coach and client create a new form of open, engaged, truth telling. The result is empowering and authentic.

Coaching works. A decade or more of evidence supports that. It works because individuals, teams and organizations are able clarify choices, become aware when they are off track, and move forward effectively. It works because coaching creates empowered relationships and the ability to improve connections and achieve potential.

Coaching is an energetic profession that seems to release energy in others as a byproduct of the work. These days, coaches are helping clients draw extraordinary maps and build the bridges necessary to make their vision come alive. Nice work if you can get it. ●

Phil Sandahl, CPCC, is an international coach and coaching trainer with The Coaches Training Institute. He is also co-author of *Co-Active Coaching* (Davies-Black Publishing).

## What to Look For In a Coach

Coaching is a relatively young profession compared to say, the legal one. Even so, there is a strong international association that upholds the ethics and standards in the coaching arena — the International Coach Federation (ICF). As such, it has established core competencies for coaches, and a certification process to ensure that the required criteria are met. ICF certified coaches have fulfilled rigorous standards for education and experience, and have agreed to maintain the ethics of the profession.

Because anyone can be called a coach and have all the relevant trappings such as business cards and stationery in a day, it's always best to interview a potential coach before beginning a professional relationship. Ask where training was received and whether the school is accredited with the ICF. Ask, also, if the prospective coach would be willing to give a sample coaching session. In most cases, coaches who work one on one with clients will agree to offer a sample coaching session as a way of determining whether or not client and coach will make a good match. Beyond the resume that details education and experience, look for a person who is able to listen deeply, and ask the kinds of questions that open new vistas for you.

Coaching is an ongoing relationship designed to help you find answers and move forward. This is different from a mentor or consultant who has answers for hire. It is also different from counseling or therapy, which is designed to heal, often by conversations about the past.

Coaching is fundamentally about vision, goals, moving forward, learning from the action taken and being true to oneself. Coaching has the quality of peer relationship, similar to two companions walking side by side. A coaching relationship might last a few months, two years or more, as long as the client continues to get value from the relationship.



# Coaching:

Photo by Peter Johnson

## A Two-Way Street to Growth

A few years ago, there were a handful of professionals calling themselves coaches; now, they number in the thousands. It must be an easy way to make a living, you might think. It isn't really, because it is still prone to eliciting skepticism. So why are people so interested in joining the ranks? Perhaps it's because coaching may be the only helping profession wherein the mutually beneficial outcome of personal growth is obvious and recognized.

It may sound odd to imagine a business relationship where there is a personal growth opportunity for all involved. Does this mean coaches rely on their clients for help with their lives too? Absolutely not! Coaching is very much designed for coaches to support their clients' success but, unlike therapy or counseling, coaches are free to bring their personal experiences to the relationship. In fact, it is the degree of coaches' self-development that determines their levels of success.

The most successful coaches are those who truly practice what they preach. They walk their talk. Though human, they constantly strive to be responsible for the circumstances of their lives, and do their best to be authentic and maintain high levels of integrity. It takes a keen self-awareness to do this. The pay-off is a great sense of vitality, clarity and sense of purpose that becomes one of the main reasons why clients are interested in working with such coaches. At first it may not be apparent to clients, but they often find themselves excited to work with those who are an example of what's possible. Anyone interested in personal growth can see how making a living "growing" can be an exciting prospect.

“Coaching is about **mutuality**.”

One of the best things about being a coach is that after training, you can start coaching regardless of your level of experience. There will always be a client ready for what you have to offer. True to the law of attraction, coaches seem to draw people to them who are at similar levels in their development. Successful coaches realize and seize the opportunity to grow along with the people they support.

For those who want to push the envelope, coaching offers a tremendous opportunity to experience a scope of different industries and disciplines. Some coaches are shy about stretching outside of their comfort zone. They may feel too inexperienced to work with senior people in an intimidating profession such as investment banking, for example. However, having risen to the

● That the coaching profession is growing by leaps and bounds is obvious. **Laura Berman Fortgang** deconstructs the whys and the wherefores.

challenge, there is a tremendous sense of satisfaction in being able to make a difference in areas they never imagined they'd be exposed to much less collaborate on.

“Coaching offers a tremendous **opportunity** to push the envelope.”

Since coaching works through process and is not driven by an expertise peculiar to any one industry, it can be cross-referenced into many areas without misrepresentation. Also, having this level of exposure to different people and situations is in itself a tremendous opportunity for growth.

So, why is coaching one of the fastest growing professions at this time? It's a two-way street to growth in a relationship that relies on mutual respect, unconditional support and bringing nothing but your very best to the table. As this profession continues to grow and touch millions of lives, it's potential for being the model on which open and honest communication is fashioned is astronomical. ●

Laura Berman Fortgang, MCC, is the author of *Living Your Best Life* (Tarcher/Penguin).

● **Will Craig** believes our attempt at partial restoration of the comparatively safe environment we once enjoyed as an interdependent family unit may be an answer to the question ...



Photo by Dana Wirtzfeld

**C**oaching is the equivalent of attending a motivational seminar where the speaker talks only about you and how to make the most of your gifts and talents. Coaching creates an environment where you stay positive and charged up — not for a day or two — but week after week. Life coaching might be most easily described as customized self-help books and tapes brought to life.

Ask 10 different coaches why this burgeoning profession is coming into prominence and you're likely to get 10 different answers. If we take a long view of where society has taken us individually and collectively over the past century, the need for and benefits of personal coaching start to become apparent.

In America, at the turn of the nineteenth century, we were dependent upon one another for our very existence. In spite of our pioneering spirit — or maybe because of the enormous risks we were taking in blazing trails across this new country — we needed each other for our most basic needs.

As we skip through the subsequent decades and observe the morphic changes of society, we notice a gradual disconnection of the tight bonds previously necessary to survive. The traditional family unit shrinks from the often-supportive environment of multigenerational sharing to the so-called

self-contained reality of the nuclear family unit, and, increasingly, the stressful single-parenting household where resources — both financial and emotional — are stretched to breaking point.

Even if multigenerational family dwellings are not the answer to the ills of today's society, you'd have to agree that the pendulum certainly has swung just a little too far in the opposite direction. We interact with bank tellers and convenience store clerks without so much as looking them in the eye. We see neighbors who have lived near us for months or even years and we don't even know their names. This conscious disconnect is often justified by the pace of our lives and, ironically, the needs of our family. This fast food with fries on the side equivalent of modern day family and community living is not nourishing to our bodies and minds, much less our soul.

## “Coaches **unleash** the power of partnership.”

We have read the self-help books and listened to the self-help tapes. Unfortunately, they have been of marginal assistance or, at best, less than we had hoped for. We can pat ourselves on the back at our efforts to improve ourselves and admire those titles stacked in our bookcase. If we are honest, however, we must admit they are now more “shelf help” than self-help. In the dark recesses of our mind we recognize that we cannot do this alone.

For years, serious athletes, actors and politicians have all used personal coaches to help maximize their skills and abilities. These professionals are often at the top of their game, yet wouldn't think of “going it alone.” Many of us are now recognizing the value of this unique relationship and are adapting it to a personal level.

**L**ife coaches are more than friends with whom to share problems. They are sounding boards for solutions to the challenges we face on a daily basis. They are mentors in some cases, cheerleaders in others. Part consultant, part family. Coaches unleash the power of partnership.

With a coach, we do more than we would do on our own, go further and faster toward our goals, and take ourselves more seriously. We have an accountability partner who shares our best interest and keeps us moving forward. Life coaching is about taking action and making things happen. Left to our own devices, we can often justify our average existence with the thought that we are coping well, considering all that the world is throwing at us. A life coach helps us catch what we need, deflect the unnecessary, and totally disregard the irrelevant.

While we don't have to do it alone, we are challenged to take responsibility for ourselves and to take action on our own behalf. Former Dallas Cowboys' coach, Tom Landry, sums it up this way, “A coach is someone who gets you to do what you don't want to do, so you can be who you want to be.”

The time for life coaching is now. The reasons are the ones bouncing around in your head at this very moment. The question now becomes, are you ready for the rewards that come with taking the game of life to the next level? ●

Will Craig is president of the Coach Training Alliance. He is the author of the “*Fill Your Coaching Practice*” and co-author of the popular “*Coach Training Accelerator*,” software packages.

### Dear *choice* readers:



I'd like to offer my personal congratulations, including those of the International Coach Federation's (ICF) Board of Directors, management and staff, to the brilliant team that put together the first-ever magazine devoted to the coaching profession — *choice*!

The timing is perfect for this exciting new initiative! With ICF members in more than 33 countries, we face the challenge of creating flexible models that support and nurture members and chapters around the world. More and more, coaches and their clients are seeking to communicate, collaborate, share best practices, and explore new and innovative methodologies, ideas and directions in the enhancement of excellence in coaching. The initiative at *choice* fills this need. ICF is proud to be allied with this high-quality publication that also supports our goals:

*Our mission is to be the global forum for the art and science of coaching, where we inspire transformational conversations, advocate excellence, and expand awareness of the contribution that coaching is to the future of humankind.*

The magazine of professional coaching, *choice* stands with us in these important conversations, and in expanding awareness in support of the gold standard of ethics for coaches.

The appearance on the coaching scene of *choice* magazine has a very direct and positive effect on the ICF's most important initiatives, and helps us move forward with ever-increasing credibility, respect and support for our high standards.

Some of the areas we will be addressing in coming months include:

- **The perception and awareness of coaching.** This speaks to regaining employees' loyalty and trust in the workplace, and the public's in the corporate boardrooms. Coaching is gaining ground in holding the leaders in both arenas to higher standards of competency and ethics.
- **Credentials and ethical standards.** ICF credentials and the ICF Standards of Ethical Conduct are becoming the gold standard for public trust, and a model for our goal of becoming a self-regulating profession.
- **Research and statistics.** There are many important questions about professional specialties, niches, client types, situations, numbers of coaches, income, education and the like. Since professional coaching is an ever-changing universe, research must be ongoing.

The ICF is pleased to welcome *choice* to our Annual Conference, "Model of Excellence" to be held in Denver, Colorado from **November 13 – 15, 2003**.

I thank you all for your contributions to our ongoing efforts, and your valuable resources in support of the coaching profession.

We, at ICF, are pleased to choose *choice* as our magazine alliance!

Best regards,

Judith F. Feld, MCC  
ICF President

### Welcome *choice*!

On behalf of the International Coach Federation, Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Chapter, we would like to congratulate you on your premier edition of *choice*, the magazine of professional coaching.

To have a resource such as this magazine not only symbolizes the status of our profession, but also gives us a visual place to play and present a diversity of opinions, opportunities, challenges and insights. Thank you for creating this space for coaching to have a powerful voice. We wish you all the success in becoming everyone's new choice.

Cassandra L. Gierden  
President,  
International Coach Federation,  
GTA Chapter

● In their teaching experiences, **Neil Stroul**, Ph.D. and **Chris Wahl**, M.A., discover that, when all is going well, **synchronicity** and **creativity** permeate coaching.

# Being, Doing, Using

## A Way to Understanding Coaching

**A**s faculty members in the Leadership Coaching Certificate Program at Georgetown University, Washington, DC, we are master coaches dedicated to “double-loop” learning. We also learn from our work, our interactions with other faculty members and our students. In fact, one of the great benefits of teaching coaching is that it is a superb vehicle for deepening clarity regarding your own practice, and drawing a clearer connection between theory and practice. As a result, our thinking about coaching, and our practice, are constantly evolving.

We are on an ongoing quest to seek frameworks for making a wide variety of ideas accessible. In our most recent thinking, we are focusing on the distinctions between “being,” “doing,” and “using.” We have begun to think of coaching in these three parallel streams.

**T**he first — *being* — comes from the grounding many of us have in ontological coaching and eastern philosophies — the ideas of “being,” “authenticity,” “being present to” and “being with” our clients. We encourage our students to “be” and to learn to be comfortable with just “being.” It’s very hard for most to do that!

The second stream, *doing*, has to do with the actual work of coaching. While, initially, we emphasize the *being* idea with our students, something has to happen in the coaching for organizations to pay us and for clients to begin to experiment with new ideas or behaviors and feel like they are getting somewhere.

The third stream actually supports the first two; we are calling it the *using* stream. Whatever beliefs a coach has, whatever experiences a coach has, and whatever models or tools inform a coach, at some point in the coaching some or all of these will converge to afford one or several approaches or structures for a coach to work with. Students in our program work on all three streams, with particular emphasis, at least initially, on *being* — which is enough to drive most new coaches crazy.

**D**evelopment for coaches precedes development for their clients. Because we believe that coaches help clients “step up and into” their development, we also believe that for them to be able to help a client, coaches need to develop themselves. Assisting others in their

development generates an imperative for coaches to continually work on their own development. Spiritually, psychologically, emotionally, intellectually, physically — coaches must work on their own “fitness to coach.” We encourage Georgetown students to expand their body of distinctions, and to continually pursue their own growth. We are staunchly eclectic, offering students myriad concepts, ways of thinking, and ways to “be” a coach, so that they can shape their own transformation towards the future they desire.

A working definition for development is that it involves learning whatever needs to be learned, so that over time, a person can create the future she or he desires. Learning, in the coaching context, emphasizes double-loop learning, or noticing the feedback that comes from engaging in a certain activity a certain way, and shifting your approach based on that feedback. When coaches are successful, clients become more skilled at double looping: noticing the feedback. They detect errors and notice when results do not match intentions, they become curious about their own role in generating the outcome, and they shift their approach, or “self-correct” based on the feedback. Now they can pursue learning or actions that increase the probability of the desired outcome “the next time.”

Coaching is a craft, involving both discipline and art. The principle, “help clients become more effective at error detecting and self-correcting,” represents an example of the “discipline” aspect of coaching. It represents a generic goal to which all coaches should aspire.

The “art” aspect of coaching reflects how every coach brings his or her unique “body of distinctions” to the coaching relationship, and leverages these distinctions to help clients engage in developmental work. Thus, two coaches with two distinctively different personalities and educations can both successfully help clients become better at self-correcting and error detecting, without being compelled to fit a constrained style. A coach’s entire spectrum of knowledge and experience can be offered in service to a client. Coaches deploy their “entire self” to help clients develop. And that is why *being* is a critical foundation to a coach’s self-knowledge and self-development.

“Coaching involves both **discipline** and **art**.”

Our students, already successful leaders, human resources managers, organizational development consultants and educators, bring a wealth of experience to a coaching relationship. Yet, at first, one of their biggest hurdles is “getting” the client’s story so quickly that they discover themselves drowning in it.

Initially, we find them giving advice and imagining that they have provided the magic “fix” that the client has been struggling to find all along. Not only have they not understood the client in any marginally deep way, they have applied their own fix and called it a success. Meanwhile, the client thinks, “Gee, I must really be stupid if this thing is that easy to fix.” What’s missing? Lots. New coaches often get caught in *doing* before they are *being* — adopting a hero role, which means that the coaching really is all about them, not their client. How is this being of service?

“**Being** is crucial; it’s about knowing yourself.”

We often say at Georgetown, “who you *be*” is just as important, if not more important, than “what you *do*.” *Being* is about knowing yourself, knowing that your experience is *yours* alone, noticing your thinking and feeling patterns, and being competent at staying present. This is important for all coaches, because they need to know where they start and stop, and where their clients begin. This involves stepping personally into their own development first before they begin the *doing* of coaching.

A coach needs to show results; being with a client is not enough. What’s needed are purpose, goals, intention and structures to support the client’s desired future, as well as some great, purposeful conversation. We teach our students two distinctions that support the *doing* of coaching. One is the difference between “interesting” and “purposeful” conversations. Part of being a great coach is to know where you are in the conversation, and to be sure that you are co-creating a purposeful one aimed at the client’s desires and goals.

A second distinction, working “tactically” and “strategically,” allows coaches to work in real time on pressing issues as well as on longer-term issues that, overall, will make a difference in the leader’s life. Based on the goals a client has set, the coach has a general roadmap of the client’s desired future. Yet every client we’ve ever worked with has pressing issues, something that “just happened.” A coach needs to be able to find the gem in the pressing issue that can help the client get an early success as well as ground the client for future, strategic work.

“**Doing** requires strategic interaction with the client now and in the future.”

We offer several models distilled from many years of coaching experience, and we practice the *doing* of coaching repeatedly in class, in smaller learning groups, and with live clients with real leadership issues. This practice work culminates in two days of observations in which our students get to show us all that they have learned by coaching a client whom they’ve never met, and doing this in front of peers and master coaches.

When coaching is moving along, the coach is not only being present to the client, the coach is also working with the client, and they are engaged in activity together. This activity is typically conversation about what the client is facing; what the client wants; what keeps the client stuck or fearful; and what experiments or reflections the client can engage in to begin to see his or her world in a new light.

“**Using** engages the client to think and feel in a new way.”

At this point the coach is *using* his or her “whole” self to bring new lenses to the client, to engage the client in new thinking and feeling, which ultimately result in new behaviors and desired outcomes. The coach is also *using* a number of tools and ways of being: listening, thinking, reflecting, inquiry, assessments, humor, presence, models, books, resources, charts, movies, music, drawings — anything necessary and available — to help the client step into his or her own development.

To further illustrate the framework *being, doing, using* (BDU™), we have taken one coaching concept, *curiosity*, and threaded it through the framework. Here, “curiosity,” means a way of *being* with clients, intimating a caring kind of inquisitiveness, the gentle pursuit of the client’s story in a spirit of inquiry. To be curious, the coach needs to stand in a kind of openness and flexibility that suggests, “I don’t know; I’d like to learn as much as I can.” This brings us back to that hurdle, which looks more like, “*I* know, and *you* need to learn as much as you can from *me*.” Curiosity in a coach is a lovely quality!

To be curious, coaches need to be aware of their own “structural determinism,” their own filters, predispositions and preferences for scanning the environment and processing information. A coach needs to know what triggers and interpretations constitute his or her personal conditioning, and fundamentally needs to be curious about these, to make them transparent, and to be able to see these as distinct from others’ interpretations.

**S**tructural determinism refers to the idea that all of us are reflections of our personal conditioning histories. A very basic example is this: If your family always ate at a round table and argued during meals, you may associate the round table with argument; but if your family ate at a round table and had fun together, you may associate the round table with good feelings. In the end, it’s just a round table! But each interpretation is a result of our personal conditioning.

Throughout our lives, we formulate our own unique way of “being in the world.” Prior experience becomes a container shaping what we notice, how we decide and act. To the extent we are ignorant of our own structural determinism, we are at risk for assuming that our personal truths are actually “the truth” that is applicable to everyone. Structural determinism constrains our capacity for curiosity. Thus, becoming curious as a way of *being* extends into curiosity about the terrain of the inner landscape, as well as *being* curious about how clients construct their realities.

Curiosity rests on adopting a beginner’s mindset. When *being* truly curious, “not knowing” — ignorance — is not problematic. In fact, the opposite is true. Being truly curious allows us to *be* with someone, as if for the first time. We assume novelty. There is an inherent fascination with the process of exploring, of not knowing in advance the endpoint, destination or outcome.

While there are many ways of expressing curiosity, the most prominent involves how coaches listen. How can they expand their capacity for “listening with curiosity?” We illustrate the capacity for curiosity by comparing it to the idea of the competency model in Figure 1.

You know that you know	3	2	You know that you don't know
You don't know that you know	4	1	You don't know that you don't know

Figure 1: A competency model

The underlying reasoning of the competency model is that in the beginning, we are not aware of our lack of competence in a particular domain (1). Building competence begins with the awareness of not knowing (2), which will often initiate learning activity (3). With sufficient application of the new knowledge, the knowledge becomes tacit: We don’t know that we know (4). We can use the competency model as a template for understanding how one might cultivate “listening with curiosity.”

A comparable cycle to becoming curious resembles building competence. Often, in everyday discourse, we are not sufficiently aware that the person with whom we’re conversing has led a life different from ours. We listen out of our own habits — *habitual listening*. However, we can at least choose to become *mindful* that the other person’s life is different; but that does not necessarily translate into being curious about the life they’ve led. That would be *mindful listening*. Nonetheless, becoming intentionally curious about the nature of the differences and asking questions might reveal to us what the other person notices and how they look at life. That is *distinctive listening*.

Practicing intentional curiosity develops a secondary capacity — based upon our personal and different distinctions, we might come to appreciate that, in the other person’s current frame of reference, there are possi-

bilities that they might not perceive. This is *appreciative listening*, the highest form of listening with curiosity. We urge the coaches we train to strive to operate in the distinctive and appreciative (curious) modes of listening when coaching clients. (See Figure 2.)

Curious	Not Curious
<b>Distinctive.</b> We’re actively curious and listen for how the other person’s story differs from our own. We are able to detect the differences and seek to confirm how we are similar or different.	<b>Mindful.</b> We recognize that the other person is different from us. We are able to appreciate that their perspectives and concerns may be different from our own.
<b>Appreciative.</b> We actively listen "into" the other person’s story. We are able to detect the underlying mental modes, and are able to listen for new possibilities.	<b>Habitual.</b> We listen from "inside" our own story. There is little or no awareness that the other’s story may be different from our own.

Figure 2: A listening model

Finally, how might a coach use curiosity as a tool for working with clients? Consider this example: A client wanted to be seen as “more of a leader.” Curious, we asked her to talk about herself as a leader. Her ways of thinking and speaking about leadership were, in our assessment, limited, and confused with basic management. She disagreed with that assessment, but was willing to get curious, because she actually didn’t know what she did to show up as a leader.

As a practice, we asked her to notice how much time, over a two-week period, she spent doing “management” activities versus “leadership” ones. Was she in the details or was she focusing on the future and inspiring her team to do the same? She returned to our session with some real data that proved to herself that she was not only caught in management mode, she would end up doing some of her subordinates’ work. While we could have said to her, “as a leader you need to focus more on what is possible than on what needs doing right now,” and have her respond, “I already do that,” instead, we asked her to get curious.

Her foray into curiosity led to double looping and blossomed into something bigger. She got curious about numerous aspects of leadership: how to set a vision and talk about it; how other leaders do that; how to coach and teach subordinates versus doing their work for them; how to allow herself time to think bigger thoughts and generate opportunities and possibilities, to name a few. She stepped into her own development.

Our focus on *being, doing, using* is an accessible model for new coaches to begin their own fitness regime for coaching. When all is going well, all three of these paradigms are working in synchronous and creative ways, depending on who the coach is. And the “who” is where we start in our work with students at Georgetown. ●

Neil Stroul, Ph.D., is a senior faculty member at Georgetown University. Chris Wahl, M.A., is the Director of the Leadership Coaching Program.

- For **Leza Danly**, coaching means reaching up and in to touch the numinous in her clients, to experience the divine.

# Coaching, the Sacred Journey

**W**hat is the essence of a coach? Throughout your coaching career, you've likely found yourself asking this question repeatedly. As your answers to this ongoing inquiry deepen and evolve, perhaps you've discovered what I have about the essence of a coach.

I believe the coach is the one who helps their clients see the difference between what is real and what is illusion. If you can't distinguish the real from the illusion in your clients' lives, you will get caught up in coaching their circumstances. If you think your clients' deepest motivations are to lose weight, make more money or create a tangible accomplishment, you're likely missing the point. In effect, you have stopped seeing their "realness," and have joined them in a futile attempt to change their illusions without changing themselves.

I define the "real" in my clients as their internal landscapes — emotions, beliefs, attitudes, their inner child and adolescent, the light and the dark of who they are, and other aspects of the multidimensional Self. The illusion is all the external circumstances.

Yes, our clients want to create the things they desire, but not just to have them. They want to experience themselves as powerfully able to create anything they want. It's the power, the freedom, the love, the joy, the grace and the triumph of changing that we all deeply crave.

“**Power** is more real than **victimhood**.”

Once you and your clients find the place of realness, your coaching becomes more powerful and grounded. You can then move beyond the gross distinction between real and illusion and into the finer distinctions between the real and the "More Real." For example, ease is more real than struggle. Power is more real than victimhood. Love is more real than apathy or fear. Gratitude is more real than guilt. Receiving is more real than control. Anger is more real than blame. Connection is more real than separation.



Photo by Jan Tyler

The ability to see and understand these finer distinctions allows our clients to connect with those brilliant aspects of Self as described in the often-quoted passage in one of Marianne Williamson's books: "Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness, that most frightens us." Our clients need our support to see and embrace their own divinity, to know the More Real within and claim the courage to live it.

If I had to name the biggest hurdle all my clients face, it would be giving themselves permission to live this More Real life. "Can I really let it be that easy? Can I receive for no reason? What is my value if I'm not struggling to earn it?" Accompanying our clients through the terrain of these questions becomes the sacred work of pioneering a whole new world.

In the bigger picture, our planet is going through a thrilling evolution from a paradigm of Domination to one of Dominion. We all know and see the reality of Domination all around us, marked by fear, scarcity, control, struggle, competition, vindication, blame and the loneliness of believing we are separate from the Source of our spirituality. The world of Dominion is less visible, yet we all have times when we feel "in the flow," connected to everything, when everything is fun, when we feel the universe loving us very personally.

The role of the coach is to hold the space for this sacred journey, to be the ally and loyal champion as the client crosses the bridge from Domination to Dominion in his or her own life. As we each face and move beyond the lies of Domination to found a world of Dominion within, based on the More Real of who we are, the illusion will reflect that new reality personally and globally.

As you embrace the commitment to remember who you really are — which requires the courage to keep on owning the parts of yourself you want to deny and loving them into wholeness — you will begin to live in the world of Dominion. Once you know something of this world, you can stand in that wisdom and invite others to cross the bridge, to share this sacred journey together.

This has been the ecstatic reality of my coaching practice for the last nine years, and I see more of my fellow coaches doing the same. It is the most fun and fulfilling work I can imagine. It continuously stretches me to receive the beauty and bounty of the Divine within my clients. This is the sacred privilege of the coach — to be both witness to and pioneer of the birth of Dominion in our precious world. ●

Leza Danly is the founder of Lucid Living, a spiritually based coach training company.

- A successful coach is, among other things, an informed coach. So we, at choice, plan on being the means of informing the coaching community about opportunities to learn and sharpen our coaching skills at events, conferences and seminars.

## Conferences

- The International Coach Federation's eight annual international conference, "A Model of Excellence," is being held in Denver, Colorado, USA, on **November 13 – 15, 2003**. For details, visit [www.coach-federation.org/conference/international/index.asp](http://www.coach-federation.org/conference/international/index.asp).
- The Tenth Annual European Mentoring and Coaching Conference is to be held on **November 18 – 20, 2003** at the Robinson Executive Coach Centre, St. Noets, near Cambridge, England. For conference information, contact: David Megginson, Co-chair, European Mentoring and Coaching Council. Phone: +44 (0) 114 225 5210; Fax: +44 (0) 114 289 5268; E-mail: [d.f.megginson@shu.ac.uk](mailto:d.f.megginson@shu.ac.uk).

## Therapists looking for coach training

- If you are interested in adding coaching to your practice, consider the Institute for Life Coach Training, specifically training therapists and aligned helping professionals only, at [www.lifecoachtraining.com](http://www.lifecoachtraining.com)

## General information on coaching

- For those looking for more information about coaching in general, for training options and professional life coaches, contact the International Coach Federation. Phone: 888-423-3131, e-mail: [icfoffice@coachfederation.org](mailto:icfoffice@coachfederation.org) or visit their website at [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org).
- We want to hear about ways in which we can invest in our community, for example, non-profit coaching, prison coaching, coaching youth and all the ways coaching is showing up in the world. So let us hear from you, our readers, about anything that will help us keep on top of our "A" game — sharpening our edge, so to speak!

Send your edge-sharpening information to:

[editor@choice-online.com](mailto:editor@choice-online.com).

We'd love to hear from you!



● According to coaches **Marita Fridjhon** and **Faith Fuller**, Ph.D. “It is imperative to focus not only on the individual, but also on the family, organization, community, town or country the individual is embedded in.”

# Relationship Coaching: The New Frontier

**D**o you have what it takes to be a relationship coach? Can you hold two or more clients at the same time in their own experience of “the truth” without voting? Will you sit in the fire with a CEO and her team doing relationship work in the reality of downsizing? Are you ready to coach relationships rather than have your clients just talk about it?

Co-active relationship coaching is an umbrella containing principles of relationship work applicable to organizations, teams, groups and partnerships — intimate as well as social and professional. Whether a coach specializes in corporate work, partnerships or social relationships, the principles and skills of relationship coaching are foundational. While the use of jargon and language may differ depending on the setting it occurs in, the principles and tools remain the same.

While the traditional professions specializing in serving individuals and groups in society (such as therapy, mediation, consulting) will no doubt remain viable, a new breed of professional is called forth in response to the needs of the current market place. Increasingly, clients who have experienced the empowerment of individual coaching are asking for the same forward-looking approach to their relationships. There is now a need for relationship coaches!

A co-active relationship coach is a professional, not only highly skilled in several of the above-mentioned areas, including individual coaching, but having sound academic/clinical training as well. Indeed, this area of coaching seems to have populated itself with such professionals. Relatively new, it integrates the best of consulting, therapy, the human potential movement, and sports coaching in response to the desire for individual evolution. A similar movement is afoot for relationship

coaching. It is as if society were demanding that relationship coaching move beyond diagnosis, needs assessments, and “fixing,” to the commitment and discovery of what individuals, organizations and communities are trying to give birth to.

While the individual coaching paradigm is cutting edge work in a one-on-one setting, it is not particularly responsive to the system that the individual, team, or community is a part of. Co-active relationship coaching is responding to this need. The time has come to apply systems thinking to coaching, whether the recipient is an individual or a group. It is imperative to focus not only on the individual, but also on the family, organization, community, town or country the individual is embedded in.

“Individual coaching leaves out critical connections.”

No individual, organization or group ever exists in isolation, but is always part of a larger whole. To engage with the individual alone leaves out or ignores critical connections and interactions. To do individual work within groups and teams deprives everyone concerned of information and creativity residing in the matrix. Admittedly, the art of relationship coaching is in the ability to hold the relationship as the client, rather than as the sum of its individuals! And, yes, relationships can and should be addressed in individual work! However, by not considering all the significant players, the result will be one-dimensional only, based on “hearsay.”

Co-active relationship coaching is the emergence of a unified field theory derived from systems theory, process work, quantum physics, psychology, Taoism, mediation and co-active coaching. Its development points to a paradigm shift that combines these modalities to form an integrative model for relationship coaching.

What sets this type of coach apart is her or his familiarity with the principles imbedded in the unified field theory of relationship work. To be sure, relationship coaching is not for the faint of heart; it is “world” work. It represents the next level of “stepping out of the box” in service to our clients, for *all* coaches, regardless of niche definition. ●

Marita Fridjhon, MSW, CPCC, PCC, is a founding partner of The Center for Right Relationship. She and Faith Fuller, Ph.D., CPCC, are the co-creators of the graduate training program in Co-Active Relationship Coaching offered by The Coaches Training Institute.

● As coaching goes mainstream, its various niches become less amorphous and more defined. **Wendy Johnson** examines two areas of coaching, and pares down definitions to their bare necessities.

## Business Coaching, Life Coaching... What's the Difference?

**A**ctually, there's quite a difference. Think of a parallel question: What's the difference between an English teacher and a science teacher? They both hold teaching degrees, they both work with students, and they both follow lesson plans. The difference is, they meet different needs.

Personal coaches hold one agenda — the client's. When contracting with a client for personal coaching, it is typically the client who pays the bill and the client who signs the contract. In contrast, when a coach is hired by a “business” and the business pays the bill, the coach now holds a second agenda. Like it or not, when it's a business expense, there needs to be an expected return on investment. And, depending upon the sponsoring department, the expectations may vary.

Human Resource professionals who hire external coaches are concerned primarily with turnover, employee satisfaction, and work and life balance initiatives. Executives who hire coaches for their leaders expect increased productivity, results and performance improvement.

Entrepreneurs who hire coaches to help them with their business expect growth, increased profits and small business expertise. While these may sound like consulting goals, they are the closest understandable expectations that a business leader has to “justifying” an expense. Business financial records, especially over the last 24 months, are being closely scrutinized. Auditors, accountants, bankers and shareholders require financial accountability and question “soft” spending. Businesses need to know “where to code” your services and how to “back it up.”

### “Like seeks like.”

How does this emphasis on accountability change the face of traditional coaching models? It involves three skills not typically taught in coaching programs:

**Measurement:** Some coaching programs teach that “the client does all the work.” In Business Coaching, the coach needs documentation. The coach must be able to:

- Establish a method by which to measure progress (as defined by both the client and the business)
- Track that progress
- Report that progress

**Expertise:** Other coaching programs teach that “the client is the expert.” While business coaches hold this to be true when exploring personal effectiveness issues, they must also be able to provide some expertise as it relates to business. Claiming to be an “expert coach” tends to be more credible only if you have credentials, testimonials, publications and referrals.

**Experience:** And yet other coaching programs teach that “anybody can be a coach.” Businesses don't buy that. If you are an ex-sailor turned business coach, you'd better have a strong “in” and a great elevator pitch. Like seeks like; businesses tend to hire their own — entrepreneurs seek entrepreneurial experience, Fortune 500 seek Fortune 500 experience. Businesses tend to look for coaches who know their language and political structures.

While some progressive businesses have hired personal coaches, and most business coaches integrate personal coaching into their work, positioning yourself as a “business coach” requires careful consideration and a clear understanding of expectations. As the field of coaching, in general, is placed under further examination, it is critical that these distinctions be recognized. ●

Wendy Johnson, MA, CEC, CMC, is President and CEO of the Worldwide Association of Business Coaches.

● Not just for executives anymore, **Patricia Overland** and **Linda Miller** look at the various ways coaching is making its presence felt at all levels in organizations.

# Coaching

## and the **Corporate Client**

**C**orporations are looking for innovative ways to retain talent, sustain learning, develop individuals and manage change from a whole new perspective. How do you keep a fast track leader from moving to the competition? How do you ensure that your significant training investment doesn't collect dust on a shelf? How can you help individuals chart a realistic career path? How do you collapse the cycle of change? To find solutions to these perplexing questions, more and more corporations are turning to coaching as a solution.

Patricia Overland, of The Overland Group, works with client organizations that are focused on retaining their key people. "We can't afford to lose our top talent," commented one of her clients, a vice president of human resources in a Silicon Valley company. "We could replace him, but at what cost?"

As well as replacement value, organizations are looking at what else is lost when a top performer leaves. "Innovation and creativity reside in individuals, and they go with me when I go," commented one of Patricia's clients.

How can you put a dollar amount on that? His corporation did. He was offered coaching as a perk. In this case, while no guarantee was made that coaching would keep the individual in the corporation, he felt acknowledged and valued enough to take a second look at his career, and he decided to stay. When asked about his decision, he commented that anyone willing to offer him individualized attention must care enough to keep him.

“Coaching can improve  
the bottom line.”

**T**he Ken Blanchard Companies and Coaching.com offer coaching as a solution to sustain learning. Studies have shown that a training event alone does not change behavior and that adding coaching to training leverages the training dollar. Blanchard is seeing amazing results. The combination encourages clients to apply skills and concepts in their everyday work life. Clients are finding that coaching is a safe way to try out new skills, draft plans and test new behaviors in privacy and with confidentiality. Even better, this type of coaching can be short term, which is cost effective for the organization.

Okay. Corporations are interested in coaching, but let's face it, spending big bucks with no measurable return doesn't always fly in the boardroom. Tying coaching to bottom line results has long been a challenge when working in corporations. The more you can link the impact of coaching to profitability, the more corporate ears "perk up." Measurable results count. The question is: How do you go about it?

The Ken Blanchard Companies use two ways. First, they partner with an outside company to complete impact studies. Through intensive interviews conducted after the completion of coaching, participants look at the impact coaching has had on them personally and on their ability to meet goals, deadlines, sales quotas or other internal measures of success. Sales organizations reported that *all* of the individuals who received coaching made their sales quotas. Coaching was cited most often as the reason for meeting the goals. In that organization, the vice president of sales stated, "This has been the most effective learning initiative I have experienced in my career."

Impact studies are also used to measure coaching's impact on individuals facing "burn out" or having unclear expectations about their roles within the company. About 25 percent of The Overland Group's clients find ways to reinvent themselves, stay on with companies and contribute in new and innovative ways. Considering the cost of recruiting, hiring and training new employees can put an astonishing dollar amount, or return on investment (ROI), on the bottom line.

In one case, the client was a hi-tech company in Silicon Valley that offered coaching to three senior leaders considered to be “at risk” for leaving the company. All three remained with the company and are thriving five years later. Measured in dollars, this equaled a savings of hundreds of thousands of dollars. Factored in were front-end costs of re-hiring to fill the slots if the executives left the company, and the back-end costs of fulfilling contract bonuses and other benefits.

## “Clients find ways to **reinvent** themselves.”

The second way to measure ROI is through surveys. A well-designed survey collaboratively created between the client and the coach can drill down into what individuals experience and how those experiences impact on the company. Blanchard uses anonymous surveys where groups of individuals are receiving coaching. The Overland Group uses both anonymous and direct surveys. Results provide real numbers for clients.

**A** word of caution. When designing surveys, be clear about what information you are looking for, and use care with wording. Setting expectations about what will happen with the collected results is imperative. For example, it is very different to ask, “Without coaching would you leave the company?” than “What impact has coaching had on your future with the company?” Both get at the central issue of “stay, don’t stay,” but from very different perspectives. We’ve also found that individuals are more likely to answer the latter question.

Understanding the corporate culture and structuring the language used in surveys are critical factors when collecting data. Clear and effective communication between the client and the coaching organization is also paramount. Consider the following when designing your survey: Who will see this data? How will it be used? What results will be reported back to individuals? What action will the client organization take based on the results?

Coaching is no longer in its infancy. With more and more organizations trusting it, and with studies being generated to prove ROI, coaching is becoming a recognized standard in a variety of organizational settings. Just ask a few of your colleagues if they’ve heard about it and see what they say! ●

Patricia Overland is a principal in The Overland Group and is a senior coach for The Ken Blanchard Companies. Linda Miller, MCC, is the director of Coaching Services for The Ken Blanchard Companies.

# Do you believe in **Ghosts** ?



## You should.

You want to raise your professional profile, promote your business and take part in the discussions that affect your work. To do that you need to be heard. You need to be published. Articles in trade journals or magazines, speeches, seminars, and especially books are powerful ways to make your voice heard. But if you don't have the time, the motivation or the skill to capture your thoughts on paper you're missing out on this opportunity.

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416 825 3210  
www.sparkcreative.ca  
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