

Personal Coaching: A Force of the Future? By Roberta G. Pickett

What is this thing called personal coaching that keeps appearing in the media the last few years, from Oprah to Fortune Magazine, to the Sacramento Bee, to KMAX Channel 31's "Good Day Sacramento"? Coaching is a support structure that has been around for thousands of years, and that now, in the last decade, has become a profession: a recognized, value-added service for motivated individuals who are serious about making positive changes in their lives and who believe it is a strength rather than a weakness to have support along the way. Coaching is based on the premise that we humans are capable of designing and implementing our dreams into reality. The goal of personal coaching is to deepen the client's learning about him or herself, and to forward their action toward their specific life goals.

Coaching begins with another concept that the client is creative, resourceful, and whole. The coach will lead the client to look deep within themselves for their own answers and solutions or to peel back the layers of their current belief systems toward their own core truths and knowing. So the coach is not necessarily an "expert" on the issue the client brings to the table; rather, the coach should be an expert at the technique of coaching, the process. Coaching deals with the whole person. Sometimes it is like looking in a mirror and seeing a tarnished image. Perhaps the client thinks the mirror is tarnished, when the coach holds up another mirror to allow the client to see where she has been deceiving herself. Like in a 12-step process, once the truth is seen and accepted as part of herself, she can begin to change, to make choices that reflect who she really wants to be, how she wants to act, and what she wants to see materialize in her life. Or, it might be that the mirror itself - the lens through which she judges herself - is tarnished, and the client needs to see past the tarnish to her real beauty and magnificence. Marianne Williamson has said, "our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate; our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure." Often, coaching will bring a client's bigness, talent, and light into the open, so that it can shine.

Coaching is not therapy. Its intention is not to analyze the past or draw conclusions about the origin of current behavior or to heal severe emotional wounds. There is a place for therapy and a place for coaching. If a person is not able to move into action, this may not be the right time for coaching. Coaching stays focused on the present and the future, moving the client from where he is to where he wants to be. Do emotions come up in coaching?

Absolutely. They are a large part of who we are. Coaching is about our emotions, our belief systems, our perspectives, AND our actions.

Like the athletic coach who helps the athlete to understand his strengths and weaknesses and to make sometimes infinitesimally small adjustments, day after day, to improve his or her game or sport, the personal coach asks questions, reflects his or her impressions, suggests a topic for contemplation, or challenges the client to an action. It is the client's option to choose a response. The coach helps the client create a plan and stick to it, towards more satisfying and fulfilling accomplishments. Having a coach is not seen as a sign of weakness for an athlete – just the opposite. Likewise, the benefit of the personal coach is having someone stay absolutely focused on the client's dreams in a relationship of trust, respect, and confidentiality.

Is coaching a force for the future? Yes, at the 6th Annual Coaching Conference of the International Coaching Federation in Chicago this past summer, the thematic definition of coaching was “the global business of human development”. A dedicated coach working with a motivated client will be involved in meaningful, life-changing soul work. As we open to the possibilities of our brains and our bodies, we begin to dream the dream of a better world, starting with ourselves, moving into our circle of influence, then expanding beyond to the bigger universe, one person at a time. Looking for growth, expansion, or possibilities? Find a personal coach to guide you on your journey.