

Many Aspects and Benefits of Coaching

by Lee Bruder

A relatively new profession, coaching, is an on-going, confidential relationship with a professional who has specific expertise. A good coach has the ability to help you:

- Discover hidden knowledge about your self and your life
- Define your dream and goals
- Make desired changes
- Achieve your goals through focused action.

Coaching is outcome based.

Each day, we juggle multiple priorities at a fast pace. We are frequently making decisions that have significant impact on our life, relationships and career. At times, we must negotiate significant and even life altering change. Yet, few people face these situations with clarity because they are not anchored by a solid sense of their values, goals and direction. In my experience this is true for both individuals and organizations. The decisions we make when we're not well anchored generally yield unsatisfying results; our actions are not as effective or efficient as hoped and the quality we achieve is compromised.

The coaching profession emerged as a means to assist people in getting and staying focused without giving up balance and without losing sight of the goal. Coaching is a professional relationship based on the client's desire to change aspects of his or her life or organization. The individual coaching client wants to reach a higher level of performance, learning and/or satisfaction.

Coaching begins with an initial contact during which your coach will seek to gain a full sense of who you are and of your situation. This may include such areas as your goals, your learning style, your experience with changes, and your attitude toward learning.

Options for appointments include in-person, telephone, and e-mail.

I believe strongly in the power of self-leadership and personal responsibility. For coaching, I translate this into several basic guiding principles.

- The client is willing to learn and to apply this knowledge in the pursuit of desired outcomes.
- As partners, the client and coach will choose the focus, format and specific goals to be achieved.
- The client and coach will identify obstacles to reaching the goals and any approaches that have not worked in the past.
- The client is willing to develop enhanced awareness of his or her assumptions and behaviors.
- The coach is focused on the well-being and progress of the client.
- The coaching relationship is individual, personal and confidential.

There is no limit to the number of goals or the variety of topic areas. However, if your coach feels you may obtain better results with a different coach or service, he should state this clearly.

The length of the coaching relationship is determined by several factors including:

- The difficulty of the goals
- The number of goals
- The amount of personal resources (time, energy, etc.) the client is able to dedicate to the process

At the end of a successful course of coaching you may feel energized and more in control of your life direction. You may also have an increased awareness of your strengths, talents and abilities and an increased clarity about your actions. You will feel more at peace with the process of change and invigorated by the possibilities in your life. Positive results emerge from the client's inten-



A life coach will assist you in defining and achieving your goals.

Differences Between Coaching and Therapy

Goals and methods of therapy include diagnosing a problem, developing and pursuing a plan for treatment. The therapy session may focus on disorders, dysfunctions, symptoms, pathology, episodes, behaviors, family history, or trauma. Therapy may look to heal emotional or psychic wounds.

In coaching, your coach may assist you to focus, prioritize, be proactive, clarify, brainstorm and accomplish. Coaching may emphasize outcome, balance, purpose, options, actions, requests, strategies, money management and/or time management.

tions, choices and actions, supported by the coach's knowledge, experience and efforts.

Life Coaching

An individual's primary and most important area of responsibility is that of self. If you aspire to be a true leader of others, as a parent, a friend, in business, or in your community, then you must demonstrate leadership of self. A principle aspect of providing responsible leadership to your self is to articulate, in writing:

- Your personal vision or dream
- Your mission or purpose
- Your values or principles that guide your actions, and goals that define your efforts

Life coaching is first and foremost about the quality and substance of your life – about making changes that will create a life that is satisfying. A life coach will assist you in defining and achieving your goals. Life coaching is not therapy. There are many differences and it is not uncommon for a person

to be working with both a coach and a therapist and his dual approach can maximize the benefits of each.

Executive/Management Coaching

Our work environments are riddled with pressure to perform, produce and constantly compete with both known and unknown challenges. Many companies are devoting resources to help employees develop professionally including coaching. Corporations are coming to experience the benefits of coaching for executives and managers including:

- Decreasing the effects of stress
- Increasing people and/or presentation skills
- Broadening management style to increase team loyalty and commitment
- Learning the skill of managing collaborative, not only competitive, projects

Individuals are promoted based on success in current and past positions. Research shows that up to 60% of managers assumed their position without any training in how to manage people. Thus, a promotion can lead to a sense of being in unfamiliar territory. The skills one used to attain mastery in a previous position may not be sufficient at this new level. A promotion usually calls upon a manager to develop new skill areas that involve a certain amount of personal development, such as increasing self awareness, responding with forethought rather than

emotion, becoming part of a larger whole and letting go of a strong advocacy role, learning how to motivate others – just to name a few. However, without guidance most managers end up pushing themselves to work faster and longer, rather than working smarter.

In the not-for-profit world, a common organizational culture is for employees to be commitment rich and the organization to be resource poor. Senior and Executive Managers are usually consumed with survival, particularly serious, on-going financial challenges. Thus, important management development often go unaddressed. In the pressure of daily operations, promoted employees can be left to their own devices and often find themselves redefining their new position based on their existing skills and comfort zone.

In most organizations, senior management will identify developmental needs of the organization's middle and line managers and the usual response is to purchase training. Training can be a valuable service when the issues at hand can be addressed by an increase in concrete knowledge. Studies in the private sector reveal that training increased productivity by 22.4%. However, training is very different than coaching. That same private sector study shows that training along with follow-up coaching improves productivity by 88%.

Training Versus Coaching

Training is designed for group learning. It seldom leads to changes in thinking and attitude which are earmarks of long-lasting learning. Learning that occurs through coaching takes into account the individual's learning style and knowledge gaps, and focuses on persistent changes in behavior and attitude.



Know your vision and purpose.



Coaching is outcome based.

Coaching and Supervision

Organizations of all sizes are learning the importance of developing employees as valuable resources. For that reason, businesses are beginning to incorporate coaching methods into supervision.

Supervision and coaching are very different and the skill of joining the two is not simple. Supervision and coaching can have different goals and benefits. The former is organization focused and the latter is employee focused. However, in the organization that values employee growth, combining the two can create meaningful and lasting, positive change for both employers and employees.

Coaching is not a substitute for work place counseling. Work place counseling is defined as working with an employee to improve substandard or deficient performance. This type of counseling should be hierarchical and clearly driven by the needs of the organization.

Under the right conditions, coaching can increase staff longevity, resulting in tangible cost savings. Incorporating aspects of coaching with supervision for executives and managers can significantly improve the overall communication and functioning of the management team. As the supervisor is ready, a coach can teach him or her various tech-

Coaching Versus Supervision

Supervision is hierarchical in nature. Meeting agendas are driven by the immediate needs of the organization and the supervisor.

Coaching is collaborative and non-hierarchical. The overriding goal of coaching is to assist the coachee in identifying personal/professional goals and staying motivated to achieve those goals. Agendas are driven by the employee's professional developmental needs and a specific plan is developed.

niques of coaching to add to their supervision. With this approach, the organization builds the strengths of both its supervisors and its supervisees. •



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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

A therapist for 13 years and then 17 years as a coach/supervisor, Lee Bruder is uniquely qualified to know the differences between coaching and supervision. Lee is a highly skilled management advisor and life coach. He has extensive experience in assisting people in creating and actively pursuing meaningful goals. Lee offers individualized consultation with the overarching goal of assisting senior staff and managers in identifying and achieving professional goals. These goals are often directly related to organizational goals, but will also advance the professional growth of the individual. Lee is a member of the International Coach Federation.