

Choosing Coaching as a Career: A guide to assist your decision

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PREFACE

Welcome!

You have picked up this book for a reason. Perhaps you want to understand what coaching is and what it's all about. Possibly you want to know the differences between coaching, psychotherapy, consulting and mentoring. Perhaps you are thinking of coaching as a new career or as an addition to what you are already doing and want to learn exactly how it is of service to others. Possibly you've heard about coaching and are curious about what it is. Or, perhaps you are looking for something that hasn't been mentioned in this short list. The fact is...you are searching for something. You are not holding this book by accident. You are curious. So, welcome to your search for understanding and clarity.

We have written this book to assist you on your journey of discovery. This book will define coaching and highlight some of the skills and tools necessary. It will distinguish between coaching, psychotherapy, consulting, mentoring and other related careers. We will provide information you can use to more clearly decide whether coaching is a career that you would like to embrace. In the pages of this book you will also discover many other facets of this growing and powerful human service profession that assists individuals and organizations to be authentic; to fully access their skills and talents; to be better leaders; to be better parents; to fully actualize their full potential and be all that they can be.

As a way to assist you on your journey of discovery we will include some questions for you to reflect on and answer. These are not 'test' questions. You don't get graded. You don't even have to answer them. However, it would make your journey more enjoyable if you did. You might even find it useful and fun to have a "discovery" journal to record your responses. So, welcome to coaching! Enjoy your journey into the land of potential and greatness.

Let's begin by taking a look at some real life situations. Some of these situations would be best served by coaching and some would be best served by the mental health profession. Allow yourself to fully engage with each scenario. What do you experience as you read each one? Imagine yourself being professionally involved with each scenario. Which ones do you want more of? Which ones do you want less of? For now, just pay attention to what you are experiencing.

SCENARIO #1

Imagine that you have a comfortable life, yet you yearn for something more. You find yourself asking those really large questions such as, "What is life all about?" "What is my purpose?" "How do I really know who I am and what I enjoy?" "Everyone says they have values and I have some ideas about mine, but I'm not really sure. What are my values?" You would really like to get clear answers for yourself so that you can live a life that is an authentic and fulfilling expression of you.

SCENARIO #2

Imagine that you are weighed down by the recent events of life. The world financial situation has really had an impact on you. The house you bought five years ago has depreciated to the point that your mortgage is more than the current value of your house. Your hours have been cut back at work, which produced a 20% reduction in income. You find that you are staying home more, to the point that even when invited to friends' homes you decline. If you're not at work you are in bed with the covers pulled up and the shades on the windows pulled down. You have lost interest in just about everything. There is no joy in your life. You are consistently pessimistic. You force yourself to do your daily chores and even so, you find that you are letting some of them slip. Life is bleak.

SCENARIO #3

Imagine that you are extremely excited about the possibility of launching a fantastic new business that is completely Internet based. You see it as the next major breakthrough. You believe it will make you the next billionaire. You are completely psyched by it. Nothing can stop you. One idea leads to the next. You are a creative whirlwind. You are so focused and so energized that you forget to eat. Sleep is almost non-existent. You don't allow anyone to intrude.

You are a whirling dervish! Your thinking is rapid. Your actions are large. If anyone gets in your way you get angry. You are really protective of what you are producing since you are convinced someone is really attempting to pirate your ideas.

SCENARIO #4

Imagine that you have a loving relationship with your spouse. You enjoy and support each other and most people would say you have a 'storybook' relationship. However, you have the sense that your relationship could be so much more. You believe that you and your spouse have slipped into a rut...life moves along, you have nice conversations, you really get along with each other and you do plan some lovely vacations. But, something seems to be missing. You both would really like to see how you could take your relationship to the next level...whatever that means.

SCENARIO #5

Imagine that you've been to Iraq twice with the armed forces and you just returned from doing a tour of duty in Afghanistan. You did what you were supposed to and you felt you were upholding the freedom of the United States. Now that you're home, you don't know what to do. Jobs are not easy to come by and your skills are not being used. Besides, since you've gotten home you find that it's difficult to sleep. You keep hearing gun-fire and are constantly on alert. You find you are on edge and snapping at everyone, even those you care about. You don't want to talk about the things you saw on the battlefield, but all the horrible images keep invading your thoughts.

SCENARIO #6

Imagine you are in a thriving company or organization. You are convinced that what you do makes an important contribution to customers, coworkers, and the bottom line. Nevertheless, you see that there is greater potential for fulfilling work, more opportunity for financial reward, and the possibility of increased job security. You want to focus your attention on identifying creative changes that will have a lasting and far-reaching impact. Doing so brings fulfillment and excitement to each day, even the long ones. You feel inspired and energized by these thoughts.

SCENARIO #7

Imagine you have a wonderful life, with a sensible balance between work and play. You feel very satisfied with your life. However, when you look at the bigger picture, you can still see where improvements could be made. You see great possibilities for your hopes and dreams of the future. Although you are at peace in your relationships at work and in your personal life you see room for further growth and satisfaction. You are eager to expand your understanding of the source of fulfillment in your relationships and gain a clearer sense of how to establish and maintain peace with others, even in those relationships you thought were impossible.

SCENARIO #8

Imagine that you are in a relationship that is not at all what you thought it would be. You fight constantly; sometimes it even gets physical. The words that are spoken are demeaning and defeating. You have constant headaches and back pain. You say to yourself, “I made this bed and now I have to sleep in it. I loved this person once, but now the love is gone. I thought I would escape from the ravages of my upbringing, but this relationship is the same, if not worse. I don’t know what to do or where to turn. All I know is that I feel like I can’t face another day.”

You have just read some typical scenarios from coaching and psychotherapy. What did you experience? Which one’s do you believe are coaching examples? Which do you think are psychotherapy examples? Which examples would you like to have more of in your work? Which examples would you like to have less of in your work?

The coaching examples are: Scenarios #1, #4, #6 and #7. The psychotherapy examples are: Scenarios #2, #3, #5 and #8.

What differences do you notice? What similarities do you notice? As you read this book you will more fully understand the similarities and differences between these two marvelous professions. Each offers something unique and yet there are overlaps. As you are able to more clearly discern the similarities and differences you will be able to make a more informed career decision that works best for you. In the end that’s what it’s all about...which career brings out the best in you and offers you the satisfaction and fulfillment you desire?

And now let's begin this journey of discovery!

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