

What Is Personal Coaching and Why You Need a Coach

Jorge Fusaro, M.A.

In this article, I define what is coaching, how it differs from other disciplines, and how it can change your life. These are my views which I hope will give you a better understanding on the value of coaching, how my sessions look like, and what you can expect when working with me. Doing your research is important before embarking on a life-improving process.

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What Is Coaching?

Coaching is an active and ongoing life-improving partnership between a coach and a "coachee" (the client). It is a highly focused process which unlocks potential and maximizes performance. The coach works with the individual and assists him/her in discovering, creating, and implementing smart, achievable, and effective goals and desired outcomes. Coaches are trained to listen and observe beyond what is being said or portrayed, and to adapt their techniques to the client's individual needs.

The goal of the coaching partnership is to guide the client in a self-discovery process, create solutions, remove barriers, and execute strategies to succeed personally and professionally in life and work. Life coaching is a collaborative and confidential human development process that focuses on the client's future!

The International Coaching Federation defines coaching as: "Professional Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses or organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life."

Life coaching draws its techniques from a variety of disciplines such as leadership training, organizational theory, management consulting, sociology, psychology, career counseling, mentoring, counseling, and neuro-linguistic programming. Life coaches assist clients in goal-setting, creating and executing strategy, create a balanced living, journey in self-discovery, assess their values, play to their strengths, and change or modify their behavior; develop

client-generated solutions and strategies; be accountable to their coaches and support system; and responsible to their actions, among other areas of personal growth and development.

Life coaching has become the second largest profession in the United States, second to Information Technology. Despite its current and recent popularity, life coaching finds its roots thousands of years back when kings and rulers sought advice and/or solutions to lead their people and make wise decisions. Athletes have been using sports coaches and personal trainers for years to improve their performance, achieve goals, and become winners. Michael Jordan had many simultaneous coaches to assist him winning six championship rings and numerous MVP's. Tiger Woods also enlists several coaches for his own personal development and career, thus becoming a positive icon in society. Coaches help you to sharpen your talents and become extraordinary at what you do best.

What Life Coaching Is Not?

Psychotherapy - Coaching is not therapy or counseling. Therapy is past-oriented, coaching is action-oriented. Therapists revisit the past to reconcile issues that affect day to day behavior and well being, and/or overcome past problems and pathologies. It looks for the causal factors that occurred in the past to explain a person's current behaviors or blockages. Coaching does not focus on examining nor diagnosing the past life therapy, coaching is action and achievement-oriented, and focuses on the present and the future. Coaching asks **WHAT** you are willing to do, **WHEN** will you do it, and **HOW** will you get it done. Your coach will hold you accountable and will help you create the future you want.

Mentoring - Mentoring involves an older and often wiser expert in the subject area who "passes down" knowledge to a less experienced (and usually younger) protégé. Coaches do not need any specialist experience within the area in which their client requires support, and as such do not offer 'advice'. They are skilled in questioning and listening (as are many mentors) but it is the coach's role to enable the individual to find answers within themselves. Coaches are oriented towards action and performance, therefore concentrating on specific issues which are identified as goals with clear outcomes.

Consulting - Consultants provide the skills to solve problems the client cannot solve on his/her own. Typically, they are not involved in the personal aspects of their clients. Consultants solve problems, not necessarily offer solutions. There is not much control over the results, whereas in coaching you have complete control. Life coaches are not consultants with expertise on a specific industry or professional role, but rather partners who support you to reach your goals. Consultants are experts on their fields; you are an expert on your life!

Career Counseling - Career Counselors help you find the job you want by retouching your resume and adding the right key words and statements. Once you get the job their job is done. In contrast, a coach will assist an individual in discovering their strengths and the vocation they were created to undertake. The axiom, "once you find the job you love, you never work a day in your life" is real. Coaches help you find your passion (change careers if desired) and support you in becoming the best in your chosen vocation. Whether, it is becoming an

entrepreneur, changing careers, considering degree or continuing education, etc.

All of the above service professions are helpful depending on your personal and professional needs. They can be used independently or in combination with coaching. When combined with coaching, the results can be extraordinary.

Who Hires A Coach?

People hire a coach because:

- They want to improve their lives and make it less complex.
- They want to grow or change
- They want to get out of their comfort zone.
- They want more (or less) of something that they've decided is important in their life.
- They are ready for more fulfillment and significance in life, work, and play.

If you ready to play your own best game, then you are ready for coaching. Roger Federer, #1 tennis player in the world, uses a coach for support, feedback, and for drawing out his best mental and physical game. In fact, Federer has a whole team of people supporting him in being the best in the world - coach, physiotherapist, massage therapist, sponsors, fans, and girlfriend who provides emotional support as well as organizes his public appearances. Additionally, Federer and Woods began a mutual coaching relationship several years back and on numerous occasions shared how this friendship and partnership has helped them both to be better at what they do.

A Biblical example. Regardless of your religious background, you are most likely familiar with the story of Noah and the Ark. God chose Noah to preserve the entire animal kingdom before the flood. God coached Noah how to go about saving the world from death and extinction.

Coaching is for everyone. Oprah Winfrey-without a doubt one of the most acclaimed TV personalities in history-also uses coaches in both her personal and professional life. Other successful and popular figures such as Madonna, Anthony Robbins, Bob Nardelli, Brad Pitt and Halle Berry use the support of coaches. Even Warren Buffett hired Bill Gates to coach him through a corporate transition. All these champions have something in common, they have an innate talent, but became exceptionally good with coaching.

What Makes An Exceptional Coach?

"A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, who has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you could be." -Tom Landry

These words from Tom Landry, one of the greatest coaches in NFL history (Dallas, Cowboys), capture the essence of what makes an exceptional coach. There are many attributes; below are my top five, in no particular order:

1. First, the coach must be genuinely committed to the client's success and assist them to create the life they want.
2. Second, the coach must be an excellent listener, patient and skilled to provide feedback and coach the client to find clarity.
3. Third, because every individual is different; the coach must be discerning in order to partner with the client wherever he/she is in life.
4. Fourth, the coach must be sensitive and empathetic to encourage forward action at the client's own pace.
5. Fifth, coaches are committed to inspire and empower individuals for success.

Overall, coaches live to witness personal breakthroughs in people's lives. At know I do!

How Can A Coach Support Me In Reaching My Goals?

The potential of coaching is extensive. Below are some areas in which I assist my clients:

- Self-Awareness and Self-Discovery - Know Yourself Better
- Gain Clarity in Life and Fresh Perspective
- Helps you Break through Limiting Fears and Beliefs
- Increase Self-Confidence
- Maintain a Healthy and Balanced Lifestyle - Now Is The Time to Improve Your Quality of Life
- Keep You Focused - Start and Complete Personal and Professional Goals.
- Reduce Stress
- Open Your Eyes to Possibilities and Perspectives
- Set Strategic Goals and Maintain Momentum
- Process Ideas
- Live With Integrity
- Career Direction - Stay, Improve, or Change
- Work Smarter
- Find Significance in Life and Discover Your True Passion
- Navigate Life transitions
- Assess Your Emotional IQ
- Keep You Accountable - Stay on Track and Keep Priorities in Check
- Inspire You to Lead Wisely, Courageously, and Increase Your Level of Influence
- Improve Relationships with Your Spouse, Family, Children, Coworkers, and Friends.
- Capitalize on your Strengths
- Quit a Bad Habit, i.e. Smoking, Lying, Procrastinating, etc.
- Obtain Powerful and Effective Feedback
- Improve Efficiency and Effectiveness
- Enhance Your Communication Skills
- Supports You in All You Do!

Because coaching is tailored to your specific issues, your own list of outcomes may include all of these and more. It is very likely to include at least some. Help you achieve your dreams

without losing steam wherever you want to go faster and further, without wearing out.

What Goes On During The 45-min Coaching Session?

The main purpose of a coaching interaction is to provide clarity and create action strategies. The client chooses the focus of the conversation, what does he/she wants to discuss that day. The coach listens and contributes with feedback and questioning. The coaching dynamic focuses on where the client is now, where does he/she want to go in the future, and the necessary action steps needed to reach the desired destination. The coach also provides solutions, encourages positive action, and inspires the client to live a more meaningful and fulfilling life.

I observe and listen to help you discover more about yourself and the life you want. By means of tested feedback principles I will provide you with insight, open thought, expanded vision. Together we will create an action plan that will help you focus and create a road map to get where you want to go. I will be like your co-pilot, reminding you where you want to go, how to get there, when to slow down or increase the pace, how and when to turn, when to shift gears, how close you are to the finish line, etc. The structure that you create and feel comfortable with, will serve as a road map and accountability credo between you, your goals, and your coach.

Client-initiated and coach-supported partnerships are a critical factor in the sustainable and significant success of every leader, regardless of gender, age, ethnicity, or social background.

How Does The Coaching Process Look Like?

Coaching usually happens over the phone, although it can also occur in person. it can be an advantage as it is more convenient for both client and coach, does not involve travel time or costs, offers clients more anonymity, and encourages coaches to develop exceptional listening skills.

When a client first me to enlist in a coaching program, we schedule a free 30-min consultation to discuss coaching in more depth and determine if we are a good fit for each other. Prior to this initial meeting you will have filled my Life Discovery Form so I can get a quick snapshot of where they are in life. If we agree to work together, we will schedule our first meeting dates and times and will send you an intake package (electronically or via mail) to be completed prior to our next session. This package includes a contract to be signed, several forms (i.e. questions about life goals and plans) and (sometimes) assessments and tests to be completed (to assess values, behaviors, personality styles, etc.)

In addition to this, clients often send their coach a weekly prep form prior to each session which focuses on accomplishments in the previous week, challenges they are currently experiencing and what they want to accomplish with their coach in the upcoming session. During the coaching call, the coach will ask what the client wants, listen to the answer and ask

questions that assist clients to clarify, envision what they want, address limits or blocks, identify gaps, and help them move towards taking action. Typically, by the end of the session, the Coach will want to know three things from his client:

- 1) What did you get out of today's session?
- 2) What are the action items you will do during the next week?
- 2) When will you complete them by?

On the next session, the coach will begin the session asking if you completed all goals set for the week. In keeping you accountable, the coach measures your performance to determine if you (the client), have been successful at achieving your goal(s).

Why Hire The Support Of A Coach?

"I absolutely believe, that people, unless coached, never reach their maximum capabilities."
- Bob Nardelli, CEO Home Depot

People from all walks of life are now hiring coaches to bridge the gap between reality and their dreams. Clients hire coaches for an array of reasons, such as: start a new business, assess their strengths and weaknesses, manage time better, set better goals, make a career transition, balance their lifestyle, explore spiritual and personal fulfillment, improve relationships, further financial independence, get physically fit, brainstorm ideas, improve performance, make better decisions, maximize effectiveness, gain assistance in decision-making, or reevaluate their life choices. This is not a comprehensive list, but some of the more common needs and desires I have come across in my practice. In a nutshell, whenever they are ready to experience personal or professional breakthrough!

"In an ideal world we wouldn't need coaches to help us, as individuals, understand ourselves and those around us. But we don't live in an ideal world." (Sourced from Management Today, Jan/Feb 2005, page 32.)

You have untapped potential, unimaginable degrees of creativity, and vast personal resources to live a fully purposeful life today. A coach assists you to gain clarity and find solutions to the many challenges and road blocks you face everyday. Not only will your life be more meaningful, balanced, and exciting, but you will taste success without sacrificing your life or your values on the field (curbside). Additionally, your life will create a positive influence in people around you-making the world a better place. Do not think of this as a cliché, but an opportunity to make a difference in the world, one life at a time.

Is My Coach An Expert In My Field?

I am aware and do not pretend to know more about life or your situation than yourself. You are a master of your own domain.

Let me use the following analogy to illustrate my point. Phil Jackson, the super star coach for the Chicago Bulls, who led the team to more consecutive championships than any other team in history, did not play better ball than Jordan- most likely the greatest basketball player in history. Coach Jackson did not need to play basketball better, his job was to inspire, empower, train, and coach his team members to shoot more effectively, play better as a team, perfect plays, etc. His job was primarily to observe objectively and provide the necessary feedback and push each player to develop their skills and achieve their maximum potential by playing to their strengths. During pre-season, Jackson's role was to develop champions to win when it was time to play competitively.

In the same way, I will coach you to be successful on and off the court, while maintaining a healthy and balance lifestyle. Phil coached Jordan, in how to improve his skills, when to pass, when to take the last shot before the clock ran out, when to consume the clock, and when to rest by simply seating on the bench--something Jordan did not do much-thanks to his endurance coach.

A coach is an accountability partner, a thinking buddy, a dream-weaver, a catalyst for your personal growth and development.

Will My Coach Tell Me What To Do?

As a coach I do not have the answers to everything or will I tell you what to do or how to live your life. I offer solutions and ask powerful questions that will trigger you to think better and deeper and to look at life's situations from a different perspective. Often, as your coach, I will ask questions you may have never been asked nor thought about before.

You are a master of your own domain; an expert in your own personal and professional life and you hold the absolute power to make the decisions you feel more comfortable with. I will not tell you what to do, instead I will coach you to dig deeper, know yourself better, explore an issue or the situation from a different perspectives, make wiser choices, and ultimately, keep you accountable to fulfill your goals. You hold the power to do whatever you wish with the information I provide.

What Can I Expect From Coaching?

The International Coaching Federation responds to this question beautifully. "Individuals and organizations who engage in a professional coaching relationship will experience fresh perspectives on personal challenges and opportunities, enhanced decision-making skills, greater interpersonal effectiveness, and increased confidence in carrying out their chosen work and life roles. Consistent with a commitment to enhancing their personal effectiveness, they can also expect to see appreciable results in the areas of productivity, personal satisfaction with life and work, and the achievement of personally relevant goals." -ICF

How Do I Get Started With Coaching?

"Do not wait; the time will never be 'just right'. Start where you stand, and work with whatever tools you may have at your command, and better tools will be found as you go along." - Napoleon Hill

Contact us at freeconsult@leadershipfuel.com to setup a convenient time for your **free 30-min consultation**.

Leadership Fuel offers several coaching packages. Email us at engage@leadershipfuel.com for more information and get started today!

We look forward to partner with you in creating the life you were meant to live!

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About the Author:

Jorge Fusaro is President and Founder of Leadership Fuel Coaching and Consulting (www.leadershipfuel.com), a firm committed to empower individuals and organizations towards: strategic, sustainable, and significance success in life and at work. As a leadership life coach, Jorge works with individuals, wanting to develop their full potential and achieve their dreams and goals. For more information, visit his blog at: jorgefusaro.wordpress.com. He may be contacted at: jorgefusaro@leadershipfuel.com