



Just What Is Coaching Exactly? Distinguishing Consulting, Therapy & Coaching Vol 5, No 1 eZine

How many times have you been asked, "What is it that you do"? What do you say? How do you answer that question? It's such a simple question AND it can open the door to many possibilities – new clients, serving your community, and just being a contribution to another.

Now I'll turn the question back on myself, "Hey Preston, what is coaching"? Ugh, that's a great question...and one that doesn't always have a very specific and clear answer.

Now the thing is there are a great number of fantastic coaches out there who are providing huge value to human beings in the areas of business, sales/marketing, relationships, money, communication and leadership. And, there are plenty more waiting to provide that service but just seem to get stuck in describing what they do and the value they can provide specifically and clearly.

What would be available if coaching was clearly understood? If the differences between coaching, consulting and therapy were accurately described? What if you knew exactly what coaching is and isn't? What value would that provide you? You might just consider hiring a coach.

So just what is coaching?

Let's start with the International Coach Federation's (ICF) definition:

"Professional coaches provide an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. Coaches help people improve their performances and enhance the quality of their lives.

Coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approach to individual client needs. They seek to elicit solutions and strategies from the client; they believe the client is naturally creative and resourceful. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has."

So what do you hear in that definition? Take moment to stop reading this article and consider what you hear inside this definition.

Now let's make some comparisons to consulting and therapy (the two most commonly confused complimentary professions).

How are coaching and consulting similar?

- There is a situation in which there is a "lack" of some result or accomplishment (i.e. something is missing)
- The intention of both coaching and consulting is to "put in" what's missing



Now, how do they differ?

- Coaches are experts in the coaching process so as to facilitate the client discovering their own actions and results (i.e. the client is not "broken", but whole and complete); consultants use "expertise" to diagnose, direct or design solutions for the client (i.e. the client or situation is "broken")
- Relationship is the foundation of coaching; expertise and industry or situation knowledge is the foundation of consulting
- In coaching, information drawn from the client is used to support the client's awareness and choice of action; in consulting, information is often used to evaluate performance and to produce reports
- Coaching addresses the "entire spectrum" of a human being; consulting addresses a specific aspect or issue
- Coaching is designed to provide clients with a greater capacity to produce ongoing results and confidence in themselves; consulting is often designed to require reliance on the consultant's ongoing involvement to produce the same results

How are coaching and therapy similar?

- The client and coach or therapist are not restricted by the type of professional relationship they can create; whatever works for both parties is what will work
- Coaching can be used concurrently with therapy and it is not a substitute for therapy

Now, how do they differ?

- Clients seek coaches because they want to reach a higher level of performance, learning or satisfaction; clients seek out therapists for emotional healing or relief from psychological pain
- A coach relates to a client as a partner or equal; a therapy client relates to the therapist as the expert, authority and healer
- Coaching concentrates primarily on the present and future, and uses the past to clarify where a client is today; therapy focuses on the past and the impact of the past on the client's present
- Coaching assumes that there will be emotional reaction to life's events and that clients are capable of handling such; therapy is focused on helping a client manage emotions and psychological pain
- Coaches make requests for clients to promote action toward the client's desired goals; therapy makes recommendations to fix a client's problem or understand the client's past



So now what does that all mean?

Consultants, therapists and coaches are all extremely effective professionals that can help you in a myriad of ways. We all have training, knowledge and expertise in our professions and are all committed to producing results for our clients.

What's most important and effective for anyone considering hiring a consultant, therapist or coach is to be very clear on what each is and isn't. For example:

- Hire a consultant if you're seeking high-level expertise in a very specific situation (i.e. repairing information retrieval and data management with Structured Query Language)
- Hire a therapist if you're seeking to relieve emotional or psychological pain (i.e. managing a failed relationship, death or violent experience)
- Hire a coach if you're seeking ongoing, consistent breakthrough results in your professional or personal life (i.e. being more comfortable with selling leading to higher revenues; managing colleagues more effectively leading to projects completing more quickly and with less effort and customers begging to do business with you; taking responsibility for personal relationships leading to more freedom, joy and love)

These are three professionals who can support you in solving problems, breaking through emotional challenges and allow you to be your personal best.

Feel free to contact me with specific questions or situations; I have terrific relationships with consultants and therapists if either are the best fit for you.

Happy Growth and Inspiration,
-Preston

Would you like to get this eZine delivered each month to your inbox? You can register by clicking here and signing up in the left column of our home page at <http://www.breakyoursilence.com>.

Using this material:

© 2007 The True Group LLC d/b/a Accomplishment Coaching, all rights reserved. You are free to use material from Break Your Silence eZine in whole or in part, as long as you include complete attribution, including live web links to our site. Please notify us where the material will appear. The attribution should read:

"Preston True is a leadership and life coach who supports individuals and organizations in creating powerful and profitable businesses and lives. He coaches, writes and speaks on leadership, marketing and career transition projects. He can be reached at 248-219-9435 or preston.true@accomplishmentcoaching.com. Please visit <http://www.breakyoursilence.com> and <http://www.accomplishmentcoaching.com> to learn more."

© 2007 Accomplishment Coaching LP
29488 Woodward Ave, Suite 230, Royal Oak, MI 48073
Phone 248-219-9435 • Fax 866-412-9666 • preston.true@accomplishmentcoaching.com •
www.breakyoursilence.com