

Gone off the Rails? Coaching Can Help You Get Back on Track

By Gord Brown

What can you do if you feel like you are stuck in a rut and can't move forward? Or if your work is conflicting with your own personal values? Do you feel in control for your career path, or does your work control you? These are some of the issues that personal coaching can help you to address.

To an athlete, a coach is someone who instructs and motivates individuals to do the things they need to do to win their event, in other words, to succeed. To an actor or singer, their coach is someone who provides feedback on their performance and creates a personal plan to help them improve. Executives use coaches to refine their goals or vision and hold them accountable for implementing that vision or reaching their goals.

But what does a personal coach do and how can a personal coach help you?

Like other coaches, a personal coach both teaches and motivates. What they teach and how they motivate, however, depends on the needs and challenges facing the individual. A personal coach uses a set of inter-related skills and techniques and can help you to:

- Become more effective in your work.
- Deal with personal stress.
- Discover life values.
- Find the things that motivate you.
- Identify and address obstacles that block your path.
- Better control the circumstances of your life that hold you back
- Stretch yourself by drawing on those elements of your personality that are underdeveloped.
- Develop a personal vision as well as long-term goals.
- Create a plan to achieve your goals.
- Walk with you through your personal journey.

The most popular personal coaching models are derived from management consulting, but also draw from the worlds of education and training, therapy, counselling, spiritual discipline and mentoring.

Coaching differs from counselling or psychotherapy in that it assumes that people are naturally healthy, whole and capable of finding their

own solutions. At the same time, however, everybody has elements in their life where they can stretch, grow and improve.

As someone who is naturally whole, healthy and capable, anyone can find their own answers if given infinite time and resources. Unfortunately, in our day and age, personal time is at a premium and few people have a forum where they can dedicate themselves to growth and improvement. Having a coach can help you to achieve the results you want faster and more effectively. The integration of learning and motivation is also extremely effective in reinforcing change and locking in the learning.

In selecting the right coach for you, the most important element is to feel comfortable confiding in this person. The right coach should strive to create an environment where you feel comfortable and can be honest with yourself. The coach should also be attuned to your needs and should allow you the most input in setting the agenda for the coaching sessions.

Coaching typically takes place in person or over the phone and requires regular and ongoing interaction. Most coaches try to schedule two hours per month (although sometimes more) with the client, typically but not always, a half-hour session each week. Consequently, coaches generally quote fees on a monthly basis.

Personal coaching is a profession that has been growing dramatically in recent years. Coaching is no longer just for athletes, divas and CEOs. In fact, everybody can benefit from coaching if they are willing to commit to the process and willing to find the right coach for them.

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