

How to Get Into Coaching

Nine Questions to Ask Yourself to Determine If Coaching Is For You

Compiled by Jackie sloane, MMC

- ONE Coaching is about creating the future and about learning. Coaching others through powerful, life-altering inquiries is a privilege. Before you “get into coaching,” ask yourself: Do you have the patience, skills, expertise, knowledge and training to be an unbiased clearing and facilitator for another human being’s inquiry, growth and evolution—as he or she explores something of vital importance?
- TWO The best way to “get into coaching” is to learn about coaching and hire a coach for yourself. In order to support others in making significant changes, you must understand this process on a personal level. While the process can be fun and exhilarating, it is also hard work, and you *must* have personal experience of the frustration and disappointment that is part of producing change and new learning in order to be effective, yet compassionate with your clients. Are you working with a coach?
- THREE Perhaps the most important skill a coach must have is the ability to create a safe “space” for learning for your clients. Without this, limited learning is possible. What experiences have you had that have indicated that you create a safe space for learning?
- FOUR You may be extremely accomplished, well-educated and have much valuable knowledge to impart. However, as a coach, your job is to ask the questions, and make the distinctions and observations that evoke new ways of seeing things, so clients take new actions. Have you experienced the ability to do this?
- FIVE The tools of coaches are questions, observations, distinctions, and support for clients in taking new actions. This support may include guiding clients to develop plans and strategies, or providing exercises and practices to expand self-knowledge, flexibility, and ability to create new conversations or make new requests. Have you been in a program, or otherwise learned to develop these skills and resources ?
- SIX Not every challenge, issue or problem is best suited to coaching. Do you know the difference between coaching, consulting, mentoring and psychotherapy?
- SEVEN Coaching someone with grief, anxiety, codependence, marital issues or depression can be problematic, wasteful for your client, and potentially damaging to your reputation, unless the client is also under the care of a licensed psychotherapist. Are you able to identify the client issues that are more appropriate for working with a licensed psychotherapist?
- EIGHT Succeeding as a coach in private practice requires that you know how to set up, run and market a professional practice. The most successful coaches are often seasoned speakers, skilled in selling, marketing and networking. You may need to know how to create programs as part of developing and marketing your practice. Do you have these skills? Are you willing to invest in developing these skills?
- NINE As a result of reflecting on these questions, is coaching for you?

Some Recommendations

- • • Talk to experienced coaches. Ask them about their practices, their training. Ask what special skills, knowledge or experience they have had that has been instrumental to their success. Ask how they distinguish their practices. Ask about their biggest challenges.
- • • To be successful, you will need to know what clients you work best with and to distinguish yourself in the marketplace. People don't invest in coaching—they invest in what they will get out of the coaching—the result they want to produce. After you have worked with a client for a period of time, interview that person to find out what was valuable, what was useful, and what might have been missing for the client. Ask how the coaching helped them to produce something important to them. Learn from this process, and implement any changes in how you work, so you continuously improve. This process will help you learn useful information about the value you provide that will help you to speak about and grow your practice. Established coaches continue to seek feedback from their clients in this way.
- • • Learn the core coaching competencies established by the ICF:
http://www.coachfederation.org/credentialing/en/ICF_Core_Competerencies.pdf
- • • Learn the ICF Code of Ethics:
http://www.coachfederation.org/ethics/ICF_Code_of_Ethics_03-31-2003_rev.pdf
- • • Learn more by attending ICF meetings and exploring professional coach training with an ICF- accredited school.
- • • As long as you are a coach, secure coaching for yourself.

Recommended Reading

Beginning, Building and Managing Your Practice

- • • *Getting Started in Personal and Executive Coaching: How to Create a Thriving Coaching Practice*
by Stephen S. Fairley and Chris E. Stout
- • • *Secrets of Self-Employment: Surviving and Thriving on the Ups and Downs of Being Your Own Boss*
by Sarah and Paul Edwards

Marketing and Selling Books

- • • *The “I Hate Selling” Book: Business-Building Advice for Consultants, Attorneys, Accountants, Engineers, Architects and Other Professionals*
by Allan S. Boress
Note: Uses example conversations; invites you to think about "conversations about the possibility of doing business" versus selling. Based on case studies and interviews with 1000 top business producers in all the professions.
- • • *Getting Into Your Customer’s Head: 8 Secret Roles of Selling Your Competitors Don’t Know*
by Kevin Davis
Note: This book was written for traditional sales people, but it is great at helping you think through what is going on for your client—which I think most people need support with.
- • • *Get Clients Now! A 28-Day Marketing Program for Professionals and Consultants*
by C.J. Hayden
- • • *Attracting Perfect Customers: The Power of Strategic Synchronicity*
by Stacey Hall and Jan Brogniez
- • • *SPIN Selling*
by Neil Rackham
Note: Written especially for larger, more complex sales, this book helps you think about questions and categories of questions: situation, problem, implication, need-payoff questions. It is based on an analysis of 35,000 sales calls. The book can seem overwhelming, but I recommend thinking about implication and needs-payoff questions. The idea behind the book is to ask questions that really engage your client in embracing the real cost of whatever challenge they are facing, and the cost of not doing anything about it.

Resources for Coaches and Their Clients

- • • *The Path: Creating Your Mission Statement for Work and Life*
by Laurie Beth Jones

- • • *Take Time for Your Life: A Personal Coach's 7-Step Program for Creating the Life You Want*
by Cheryl Richardson

- • • *Coaching for Leadership: How the World's Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn*
by Marshall Goldsmith, Laurence Lyons and Alyssa Freas

- • • *Coaching: Evoking Excellence in Others*
by James Flaherty

- • • *The Four Agreements: A Practical Guide to Personal Freedom*
by Don Miguel Ruiz

- • • *Retooling on the Run: Real Change for Leaders With No Time*
by Stuart Heller and David Sheppard Surrenda

- • • *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*
by Stephen R. Covey

- • • *The Power of Now*
by Eckhart Tolle

- • • *When I Say No, I Feel Guilty*
by Manuel J. Smith, Ph.D.