

What is Coaching?



Coaching has been defined in many ways. The essence of coaching is:
To help a person change in the way they wish and helping them go in the direction they want to go. Coaching supports a person at every level in becoming who they want to be and being the best they can be.

Coaching builds awareness
empowers choice and leads to change.
It unlocks a person's potential to maximise their performance.
Coaching helps them learn rather than teaching them

Coaching has traditionally been associated with sports. Every top athlete has a coach. In the last few years, coaching has become applicable in every area, in business and in every aspect of life as well as sport. Now, it is quite normal for someone to see a coach to help them achieve their goals in their life and work.

Coaching is a partnership between coach and client.

The coach helps the client to achieve their personal best and to produce the results they want in their personal and professional lives. Coaching ensures the client can give their best, learn and develop in the way they wish.

The coach need not be an expert in their clients' field of work.

It is useful to distinguish coaching from similar activities.

Mentoring

Mentoring is when a senior colleague, seen as more knowledgeable and worldly wise gives advice and provides a role model. Mentoring involves wide ranging discussions that may not be limited to the work context. A mentor is a sponsor with great professional experience in their client's field of work.

Both mentoring and coaching are concerned mainly with achievements in the present and the future.

Counseling

Counseling is working with a client who feels uncomfortable, or dissatisfied with their life. They are seeking guidance and advice. A counselor works remedially on a client's problem.

Therapy

Therapy is working with the client who seeks relief from psychological or physical symptoms. The client wants emotional healing and relief from mental pain.

Therapy deals with the client's mental *health*.

Coaching deals with the client's mental *growth*.

The client's motive for entering therapy or counseling is usually to get away from pain or discomfort, rather than moving towards desired goals. Coaching is not remedial, it is generative. Both therapy and counseling are more likely to involve understanding and working with past experience than coaching.

Training

Training is the process of getting knowledge skills or abilities by study, experience or teaching. The trainer by definition is the expert, and the training course is likely to be targeted on specific skills for immediate results. Training is also likely to be one to many rather than one to one.

Consultancy

A consultant provides expertise and solves business problems, or develops a business as a whole. A consultant deals with the overall organization or specific parts of it and not individuals within it. Consultants only indirectly affect individuals.

Teaching

Teaching passes knowledge from teacher to student. The teacher knows something the student does not. The opposite is true in coaching. The client is the expert and the client has the answers, not the coach.