



## What is Coaching?

Over recent years, coaching has become more important and widely used to help people reach their life or business goals. However, it is still a widely misunderstood technique, and this article, and the others which will follow, will attempt to shed some light on this extremely useful tool, and why it is of such great benefit.

### Definition of Coaching

When I started to write this article about coaching, I thought a useful place to begin would be with a definition. Not that hard, surely. So, I turned to the usual resources – books and internet. And found these ten definitions (thanks to [Karen Wise Consulting, the Blog](#)):

- “Unlocking a person’s potential to maximize their own performance. It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them” (Whitmore 2003);
- “A collaborative, solution focused, result-orientated and systematic process in which the coach facilitates the enhancement of work performance, life experience, self-directed learning and person growth of the coachee” (Grant 1999, basic definition also referred to by the Association for Coaching, 2005);



- “A professional partnership between a qualified coach and an individual or team that support the achievement of extra-ordinary results, based on goals set by the individual or team “(ICF, 2005);
- “The art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another” (Downey, 2003);
- “Coaching is directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction” (Parsloe, 1995);
- “Coaching psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult and child learning or psychological approaches” (Special Group of Coaching Psychologists, part of the British Psychological Society);
- “Coaching is about developing a person’s skills and knowledge so that their job performance improves, hopefully leading to the achievement of organisational objectives. It targets high performance and improvement at work, although it may also have an impact on an individual’s private life. It usually lasts for a short period and focuses on specific skills and goals.” (CIPD 2009);
- “Psychological skills and methods are employed in a one-on-one relationship to help someone become a more effective manager or leader. These skills are typically applied to a specific present-moment work-related issues...in a way that enable this client to incorporate them into his or her permanent management or leadership repertoire” (Peltier 2010);
- [Co-active] coaching is “a powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance a life-long process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfilment” Whitworth et al (2007); and
- “Coaching is about enabling individuals to make conscious decisions and empowering them to become leaders in their own lives” (Wise 2010).

Doubtless, there are a number of other definitions, but what is clear from those set out above is that coaching is all about:



1. Unlocking a person's potential to maximize their own performance;
2. A collaborative approach;
3. Individual or team goals and decisions;
4. Enabling an individual or team; and
5. Helping rather than teaching.

Point number 5 is what truly differentiates coaching from pure consultancy. Coaching is all about facilitating coachees to identify and adopt solutions, rather than having solutions given to them!

## **Types of Coaching**

There are three main areas of coaching.

### Life Coaching

This is an individual relationship between coach and coachee with the aim of bringing about life transformation. It is about clarifying values and visions, setting goals and new actions to help the coachee lead a more satisfying, successful and fulfilling life.

### Business Coaching

Business coaching ranges from individual to team coaching, covering all sizes and types of organisation. Examples of areas which fall within this area include:

- Strategic thinking and business planning;
- Time management;
- Interpersonal and communication skills;
- Balancing work and personal life;
- Staff development and conflict;
- Identifying gaps and obstacles to efficiency;
- Increasing productivity.



## Executive Coaching

This differs from the above two areas as it can prove to be a combination of both. This type of coaching aims to bring about sustained behavioural change and transform the quality of the coachee's working and personal life. As such, sessions can focus on both working life as well as interpersonal development, personal change and transformation.

## **Aims of Coaching**

Help the coachee. A simple aim, which encapsulates the whole purpose of coaching, which is to assist the coachee in achieving their goal. (Obviously, this includes helping them to identify their goal!)

## **Conclusion**

Coaching is a very powerful technique when employed appropriately. It can open up the coachee to powerful results, through identifying solutions from within.

Further articles will discuss other aspects of coaching.

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