

How a Peer Coach Can Positively Guide You on Your Well Being Journey

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Coaching is an increasingly popular form of support for those interested in personal development, fulfilling their greatest potential and exploring new outlooks on life. The International Coaching Federation shared, “there were approximately 71,000 coach practitioners [globally] in 2019, an increase of 33% on the last estimate calculated in 20151.”

While the field grows in popularity and positive impact, it may feel overwhelming to navigate. “Professional coach,” “executive coach,” and “health coach” are among the many descriptors utilized in the coaching field, and technically anyone can advertise themselves as a coaching professional. Because of this, it is even more important (and valuable) to understand how to use coaching and what to expect if you bring on the support of a coach yourself.



How to Use Coaching

Unlike other helping fields such as consulting, mentoring, therapy, or counseling*, coaching fosters a learning process in which you are the co-facilitator of your learning and growth. In contrast to consulting or counseling, wherein the consultant or therapist is seen as the expert, coaching considers *you* as the expert and your coach as the expert *guide*.

Coaching helps you to unveil your own wisdom, values, and beliefs as you work through your unique goals, action steps, and roadblocks. VITAL Work Life knows coaching is an excellent fit if you’re seeking development and support in the areas of career decisions, skill building, goal setting and achievement2. Some objectives for coaching can include:

- Increasing self-awareness and unleashing your potential
- Creating or maintaining motivation for change
- Setting and meeting goals
- Exploring obstacles to change

Most coaches specialize in one area of support. As an example, I support clients who are in the midst of a life change (career move, divorce, becoming an empty nester) to clarify what they want in their new season, build self trust and make a confident, authentic and value-based decision.

What to Expect

Because guidance, rather than advice, is the foundation of coaching, expect your coaching session to be full of powerful questions.

Solution-focused questions, specifically, are most effective for goal attainment because they invite goal-identification and action pathways2. Coaching techniques incorporate positive attitudes to support progress and development toward your coaching goals. In other words, coaching maintains an environment of positivity and progression.

Your coach may ask you questions such as:

- “What does fulfillment mean to you?”
- “What excites you about this?”

- “What else could be true?”
- “If you could talk to your future self, what might she or he tell you?”
- “What are you learning through this experience?”
- “What option have you not yet considered?”

Your coach will also enact a variety of important principles including self-responsibility, respect, acceptance, confidentiality, integrity, creativity, powerful observation, and neutrality³. Although many of these principles are self-explanatory, neutrality and creativity are particularly unique to the coaching experience.

Neutrality represents your coach’s intentional refrain from giving advice or sharing personal opinions. Again, you are recognized as the expert in your own life; your coach serves as a professionally trained guide to support self-discovery, self-trust and authentic decision making.

Your coach is also creative and open to broad possibilities that expand your perspectives and encourage “out of the box” thinking.

Why to Explore Coaching

This article spoke to three main reasons you may want to give coaching a try. Let’s summarize:

1. **If you are wanting to make a change** in your career, relationships, or lifestyle, try working with a coach to clarify what you want and why. Working with a coach for this reason will also give you the tools to realize and overcome obstacles that prevented you from making a change in the past (e.g., limiting beliefs or habits), expand your mind about what’s possible for your next steps and future direction, and provide you with accountability to make your decision and enact real change.
2. **If you wish to unleash your greatest potential** personally or professionally, coaching is an excellent avenue to facilitate and expedite your growth. Working with a coach creates a dedicated space for you to set goals, co-create an exciting and personalized plan to accomplish them, and celebrate your achievements along the way.
3. **If you’re interested in personal development**, coaching is your playground to explore and discover. Coaching increases your self-awareness and associated skills, such as greater communication, emotional intelligence and leadership.

We Can Help

Are you ready to start positively impacting your life? For members, contact us at **800.383.1908** or through your **VITAL WorkLife App** to schedule an appointment with a coach. New to us? **Start** with an introduction session to discover solutions.

**Of important note, coaching is not intended to be used as a substitute for professional advice by legal, mental, medical, financial, or other qualified professionals. A healthy coaching relationship includes your ability and/or your coach’s recommendation to seek additional support simultaneously to or in replacement of coaching if needed.*

Sources:

3. Grant, A. and O’Connor, S. (2018) Broadening and building solution-focused coaching: feeling good is not enough. Coaching: An International Journal of Theory, Research and Practice, 11:2, 165-185