

What is Leadership Coaching...

...and How to Get the Most from Working with a Coach



Introduction

The field of coaching has blossomed significantly over the last decade and continues to be recognized as the “**secret sauce**” for success-driven people.

There seems to be a coach for just about **every market sector**, be it baby boomers who want to reinvent themselves, entrepreneurs suffering from too much to do and too little time to get it done, high-potential Millennials, or high-performing executives in large companies that want to protect and grow their human capital investment. **Coaching has become the go-to solution** for those who want an **objective “ear,” someone to challenge their interpretations, and to hold them accountable.**



Still, there is a lot of misunderstanding around what is a professional coach, and moreover, how to engage with one, and get the most from the relationship.

To help you **sort through the confusion**, this eBook will explain **what is coaching (and what it is not)**, and specifically, **focuses on leadership coaching**. It will outline **why people invest in leadership coaches**, and lastly, how to ensure a **positive and productive coaching partnership**.

Of course, **I welcome your questions**, should you be interested in taking the next step to learn more about how coaching can **help you accelerate your professional (and personal) growth**.



What is coaching?

Let's begin with what coaching is not:

- **Therapy** tends to be grounded in the past and focused on mental health concerns. Oftentimes, therapy focuses on the “why?” of behavior.
- **Mentoring** focuses mostly on career development when a more-experienced person serves as a role model and offers input and advice to another less-experienced person.
- **Consulting** services are extended when a person or company is hired for particular subject matter expertise (competency) and/or to bring additional arms and legs to help complete a task or project (capacity). Consulting assignments tend to have a start and a finish.
- **Sports coaching**, while bringing in aspects of leadership and teamwork, is largely about the win.
- **Friends and family** are often supportive listeners, and while well intentioned, readily offer their two cents on what they perceive is best for you. Typically, friends and family do not take on a role of ensuring accountability.



Coaching, on the other hand:

- Focuses on the **present challenge** and assumes you are **mentally healthy** and functioning reasonably well.
- Centers around **goals and accountability**.
- Explores alternatives to **minimize limiting beliefs**, and banishing **pesky “gremlins”** that sit on your shoulder to remind you *“you’re not good enough.”*
- Is action-oriented, and concentrates largely on how to accomplish goals and/or remove **obstacles**.



- Is a partnership focused on your **agenda**.
- Holds the fundamental principle that, ultimately, you **know what’s best for you**.
- Connects your **purpose and passion to goals and strategies** for sustainable results.

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What is leadership coaching?



There is a lot written about leadership. I mean A LOT! If you search for leadership books on Amazon, over twenty-one thousand hardback books come up. Must be a pretty important topic, or a lot of trees are sacrificing their lives for nothing.

And, yet, **leadership can be an amorphous topic.** Like the famous Supreme Court justice Potter Stewart said in describing pornography, most of us just “...**know it when you see it.**”

It's not one attribute or skill that defines leadership, it's a **combination of personal qualities that you call upon each day to make decisions and get things done**, whether it's in your business, for your employer, or in your household.

A Leadership Coach is one that partners with you to **help you lead your life in a way that is aligned with your goals and values.**



Why do people hire leadership coaches?

People invest in leadership coaching for a variety of reasons, most of which revolve around **ways to improve performance and communication skills**. Leadership coaches are also hired to help high-potential employees to:

- Increase **time management** skills
- Take their game up another level for a **new role with more responsibility**
- Connect with a stronger **sense of purpose**
- Increase **self-confidence**
- Improve **work/life balance**
- Acquire tools to help **gain perspective** and shift a point of view
- Conquer limiting beliefs and “**gremlins**”



How to get the most from a leadership coach

Once you're ready to invest in advancing your leadership skills with a coach, keep in mind the following to maximize a positive experience:

① First of all, look for a coach who has invested in a **professional certification program** credentialed by the **International Coaching Federation (ICF)**. The mission of the ICF is to ensure that the **highest standards of professionalism and ethics** are applied to the field of coaching. Professionally certified coaches spend significant hours on training and development, as well as learn how to apply practical tools to help their clients.



② **Then, try before you buy:** always ask for a **complementary session to test out the fit** between you and your prospective coach. An effective coach will:

- Ask you empowering questions vs. telling you the answers.
- Bring professional **assessment tools** to the equation to invite reflection and get better acquainted.



When you've selected a coach that suits you:

- ③ Make sure that you understand fully the **terms of your engagement** and **contribute to its structure** to meet your needs.
- Most coaching engagements include **weekly or bi-weekly calls of 45-60 minutes in length** and may be augmented by face-to-face sessions. Some engagements include Mastermind groups, workshops and/or VIP intensives.
 - Understand what happens if you have a **schedule conflict**.
 - Decide on your **preferred method of communication between sessions**. Most coaches offer email and some coaches offer *Laser Coaching sessions* over the phone to address a specific matter relatively quickly.
 - Decide on what **type of follow-up** will be most effective for you **after each session**. Some coaches will type and send a summary of their notes and to what you agreed to be accountable. Some clients prefer to take this on themselves to help cement their commitments.
 - Coaching engagements often run from **six to twelve months**, allowing time to see significant change.



When you've selected a coach that suits you (continued):

- 4 Once you've settled on how your coaching engagement is structured, the next step is to establish **baseline goals** and milestones along the way.
- 5 Finally, **come prepared** to engage at each session. In other words, "**Show up.**"
 - **Set an intention** for the entire engagement and for each call. Something like, *"I am here to learn more about myself and how to become a more effective leader, so I will give this call (or meeting) my utmost attention."*
 - Remember, coaching is driven by **your agenda**. Decide before the call/meeting what specific situation or challenge you want to address today. Resist sharing too much back-story if it is not pertinent to the matter at hand.



Thank you for reading this eBook.

I hope that it has helped **bring clarity** about the coaching profession, particularly leadership coaching, and given you **food for thought** regarding how to most **effectively engage** with a coach.

Whether your journey inspires you to work with a professional coach now or sometime in the future, **I welcome your input and questions**. Please feel free to reach out to me directly at: Jacqueline@Coach2Growth.com, or 617-966-4416.

Coach2Growth helps Executives and Corporate Leaders, Business Leaders, and Leaders in Transition grow by capitalizing on their strengths and innate ability to lead and partner. With our guidance, business people succeed, achieve more, gain recognition, and grow and prosper fearlessly.



About Jacqueline:



Jacqueline has years of experience helping organizations, teams and individuals **realize their full potential by partnering for growth**. She has worked with company leaders to help them identify new markets and channels to grow revenue.

She has been a **natural and compassionate champion, mentor and coach to women throughout her career**. She sat on the board of Girls Inc. of Lynn for six years, and is a member of The Boston Club (one of the largest communities of women executives and professional leaders in the Northeast).

She is a **Certified Professional Coach (CPC)**, having completed her training in the premier accredited International Coaching Federation (ICF) certification program through the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching (IPEC). She is also **certified as an Energy Leadership Index-Master Practitioner (ELI-MP)**.

Learn more at coach2growth.com/about-me.

