

# What Coaching IS and IS NOT

By: Dr. Brian P. Simon

Coaching is not Mentoring, Consulting, Counseling, Discipleship nor Management although it does have some similarities to each of these fields.

Coaching is a relationship by which a client has opportunity to clarify values, make life changes, take action, overcome obstacles, gain perspective, achieve goals, develop skills, experience encouragement and accountability and rekindle and/or channel their life passions through concrete steps which walk a client toward their life purpose.

**Mentoring:** A mentor is an authority in his or her field, generally a type of bridge from where you are to where you are going; an expert who helps the protégé grow in maturity in one area or sometimes in many areas of their lives. The protégé generally sees attributes, qualities or abilities in the mentor that he/she wishes to learn from or emulate. There is certainly short term mentoring relationships as well as lifelong mentoring relationships. Bob Biehl states "Mentoring is a lifelong relationship, in which a mentor helps a protégé reach her or his God-given potential." He also states that mentoring is connected to "practical life experience relevant to protégé."

**Coaching:** A coach does not need to be an authority in his or her field nor an expert in the clients' field. A coach is a change expert and an expert in the coaching process. Instead, powerful, incisive coaching questions stimulate the client to examine the things in life that matter most from new angles.

**Consulting:** Generally Consultants are paid to analyze a situation and give answers and advice. The consultant holds the agenda, imparts knowledge and offers suggestions to improve effectiveness and make recommendations regarding a decision or course of conduct.

**Coaching:** Coaching is client led and though sometimes qualified, coaches rarely give advice and impart knowledge. Instead, coaches provide ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their lives from a holistic standpoint.

**Counseling/Psychotherapy:** Psychotherapy can generally be said to place "more emphasis on the past than on the present." The purpose of the work is to address past traumas, painful relationships, unconscious motivations, faulty beliefs, psychiatric illness, and to help a person move from a place of crisis to a more acceptable level of daily functioning.

**Coaching:** A Coach sees the client as healthy, creative, capable, intelligent, and having answers within themselves or the resources to find them. A coach is a friend and confidant, your greatest supporter, and someone who knows you well enough to call out the best in you. Unlike a counselor or psychotherapist there is no quality of "doctor-to-patient" in their interactions. Coaching, on the other hand, looks to the future in order to make a good life even better. A transparent relationship with your coach frees you to go to places you've never gone before.

**Discipleship:** Discipleship, though being tremendously important, is different than coaching. Discipleship is relationally as well as instructionally based and is generally teaching new believers spiritual truths and helping them develop spiritual disciplines. Discipleship often involves a set course of study, a limited time frame and imparts knowledge of how to grow in a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

**Coaching:** Coaching is relationally based and the coach does relatively little teaching and much more asking, listening and challenging. Coaches don't give solutions: they help you solve your own problems. Coaching is helping you learn instead of telling you what to do. By leveraging every situation to build your capacity as a leader and a person, coaching prepares you to conquer much bigger challenges in the future.

**Management:** Management is defined as "The attainment of organizational goals in an effective and efficient manner through planning, organizing, leading, and controlling organizational resources." Gary Collins states that "people are paid for what they produce, not for the time they spend developing others." The challenge, therefore, which managers many times face is that their role is for the purpose of "measuring the level of performance that was attained, as well as for the productivity of your organization." The bottom line is that a manager can and should act as a coach at times, but a manager must hold the organizations goals as primary.

**Coaching:** Coaching is 100% client focused. It is about the clients' balance of life and fulfillment of their personal and professional hopes and dreams. It is about the success of the individual as well as the organization. Coaching has proven time and time again to provide support, enhance skills, resources, and creativity as well as significantly increase job satisfaction, teamwork and longevity. Therefore coaching results clearly carry over into the organization, but the organization is not the primary objective, unless the client wants it to be so, or if the coach is hired by the organization for a clearly defined task.

### **Why Hesitate?**

Many of us were raised with the understanding that "hard work and doing it on your own" are the keys to finding the life, relationships, success, money and completeness of life that we all desire. The saddest part is that, even though this effort may result in more of something, it is often not the something you had in mind, and you are back where you started, or worse, further from your real passions.

**YOU ARE** the most important asset you will ever have? Hiring a coach is one of the greatest ways to invest in YOU. Coaches are no longer exclusively for high paid actors, musicians and competitive athletes! You can work on just about anything with your coach. Increase performance, discovering your destiny, getting organized, grow and develop your company, regular exercise, slowing down, turning a dream into a reality; whatever you want to accomplish, Life Coaching helps get your life running at peak performance and helps keep your life skills sharp.

Remember, "No man is an island"! We don't really experience personal growth alone. Growth comes only when we involve others in the process. Go ahead and invest in YOU and discover what thousands of others around the world are discovering: Coaching = More Growth, Clearer Sense of Life Purpose, Maximum Life Performance!