



coaching  
PARTNERS IP

# A brief look at Coaching

what it is and what it is not

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# WHAT IS COACHING?

Coaching is a buzz word with a relatively new profession emerging. In conversation with colleagues and friends you've probably heard the terms *Life Coaching*, *Business Coaching*, *Executive Coaching*, *Performance Coaching*, *Health Coaching* or *Financial Coaching* float around. Different definitions float around along with those terms.

## A look at:

- what Coaching is **not**,
- misconceptions about Coaching,
- the philosophies that inform the field and
- the benefits that you might expect from Coaching

will inform your understanding.

# WHAT COACHING IS NOT

It'll be easier to start with what Coaching is **not**. It is not Psychotherapy, Mentoring or Counseling.

This statement can be confusing as many people that have experienced Coaching report that it is highly therapeutic. Let's look at the overlap that Coaching shares with these models together with the distinct differences:

# SIMILARITIES

- Coaching, Psychotherapy, Counseling and Mentoring all involve a client-practitioner model that focuses on the performance and functioning of the individual.
- These modalities all share the practice of rapport-building, advanced listening, questioning and reflection skills and they all use goal setting and action planning.
- Many of the techniques and models researched in Psychotherapy are valid for Coaching - specifically the new field of Positive Psychology that speaks directly into the space of personal strengths, flow, resilience, creativity, mindfulness, empathy, gratitude and authenticity.

# DIFFERENCES

- Psychotherapy and Counseling generally focus on remedial work or treating pathologies while Coaching holds as an intrinsic focus the individual's inherent potential and strengths and seeks to grow and develop those towards transformation and meaningful change.
- There is a greater power differential in Counseling, Psychotherapy and Mentoring between the client and practitioner where the client has the problem and looks to the practitioner to guide, advise or 'fix'. Coaching intrinsically assumes a 'partnership' between client and Coach – where the Coach works towards the development of the client's own capabilities, learning and insight without imposition, providing resources when required.
- Mentoring, like Sports Coaching, means that the Coach or Mentor is an expert in a particular field and can offer advice and solutions.

# MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT COACHING

- The Coach is an expert in business or whatever area the client wants to develop.
  - While most coaches may hold a repertoire of expertise in any given field, it is not what defines their skill set. Coaches are trained in the use of behavioural change tools and techniques. Their expertise contain their ability to assess, listen, understand and facilitate towards sustainable growth and change for their clients.
- Coaching doesn't require specialist training.
  - Coaching involves bringing about profound changes in thinking and behaviour. It cannot just be 'added on' to any practitioner's existing services. Coaching training involves a great deal of self-awareness development and training and practice in working with various psychology-based coaching techniques.

# PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

Coaching as a profession has integrated many psychological, systemic, sports and organizational models that were in turn shaped by certain philosophies and influences. The first four influences that I note below are from Perry Zeus' and Suzanne Skiffington's book *The Coaching at Work Toolkit* whilst the last is my own take on current influences in the Coaching profession.

# PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

- Humanism (Abraham Maslow & Carl Rogers)
  - Dignity & value of the individual reigns over material things
  - Self-Actualization, Growth
- Existentialism (Sartre)
  - We are free & responsible for finding out who we are & what to do with our lives
  - Behaviour is always a choice & we can choose to change



# PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

- Eastern Influences (Zen Thought)
  - Samurai metaphor
  - Mindfulness
  - Belief that you already possess all you need to know
- Constructionism (Recent)
  - No single true interpreter of reality
  - Discover & make explicit the ‘Structure of interpretation’ through dialogue to develop new understanding that translates to new behaviour
  - Always multiple perspectives
  - Works towards new, empowering reality

# PHILOSOPHICAL FOUNDATIONS OF COACHING

- Positive Psychology

(Martin Seligman – emerging field)

- Moves focus of growth and healing away from what's wrong to what is right that can be used?
- Develops strengths and works towards positive prevention helping individuals not just to endure and survive, but flourish
- Works with attention to courage, interpersonal skill, insight, optimism, perseverance, capacity for pleasure, multiple perspectives and finding purpose

# WHAT COACHING CAN DO FOR YOU

- Raise your self-awareness and help you figure out what's really important to you.
- Build your emotional intelligence – helping to strengthen and deepen your relationships at home and work.
- Help you figure out what you really want in life, relationships, work.
- Make you aware of your limiting beliefs and help you to replace them with more empowering ones.
- Help you face challenges like divorce, retrenchment, marriage, new ventures, retirement, parenthood and take on new ones.
- Get you unstuck.
- Bring you fulfillment.

# NOW THAT YOU'VE READ THE MORE FORMAL DESCRIPTION ...

Go here to decide if you're ready for coaching.

[www.futureflow.co.za](http://www.futureflow.co.za)

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The logo for Futureflow Coaching features the word "futureflow" in a dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The letter "o" in "flow" is replaced by a colorful, multi-layered swirl icon that transitions through a spectrum of colors including red, orange, yellow, green, and blue. Below "futureflow" is the word "coaching" in a smaller, dark blue, lowercase, sans-serif font. The background of the logo area is white, with decorative, flowing, translucent shapes in shades of green, yellow, and purple at the bottom.