

Top 10 ways to get the most from your coaching

Thomas Leonard, founder of Coach University and the International Coaching Federation is rightly considered one of the major contributors to the understanding and the development of Professional Coaching.

His hints on how to get the most from your coaching also provide those a little unsure about taking the first step with a clear understanding of what coaching can do for them:

In summary: just by having a coach and chatting with him or her on a regular basis, you will get plenty of value; you don't have to work hard at it for the benefits of coaching to occur. This is because the synergy that occurs as a result of the coach and client relationship is what makes the biggest difference to any well-motivated client.

But if you want to maximise the value of the coaching relationship, here are 10 ways that I have seen work very well. If some of the ideas are new to you, we can talk about them during our first sessions.

1) Focus on how you feel and want to feel, not just on what you want to produce

Sometimes clients feel the need to focus the coaching time on how to produce more tangible or financial results. But don't forget the intangibles, such as feeling happier, more peaceful and more inspired. Results are very important, but the feelings you experience during the day are equally important. Think of a brick wall - the bricks are the results, the mortar is the feelings - enjoy having both.

2) Talk about what matters most to you

You may talk about anything you want to during the coaching sessions. This includes your goals, your life, your needs, what you want to improve, what's bothering you, an idea you have, a problem you are dealing with, even stuff that may not appear to be all that 'useful' to talk about. Its surprising what a difference it makes in the long run when you focus on what you most selfishly want to talk about during coaching, not what you feel you 'should' talk about during the session in order to get the most value from your session.

3) Sensitise yourself so that you see and experience things earlier than before

As you know, time is collapsing, meaning that things are happening faster and faster and the pace of change continues to increase. For some, this causes stress because they feel both the pressure to keep up and the fear of getting left behind. But for others, they recognise this phenomena as a chance to recognise opportunities as they occur, instead of seeing them too late. How does one do this? By reducing whatever is clouding your ability to see or numbing your ability to sense: we call this process 'sensitising yourself'. The more you feel, the faster you can respond to events and opportunities. You sensitise yourself by reducing or eliminating alcohol, television, adrenaline, stress and caffeine.

4) Feel coached during the 10,000 minutes of your week, not just the coaching session

There are 10,080 minutes in a 7-day week. Coaching is accruing all during your week, not just during your coaching session - such is the power of coaching and the coaching relationship. What you and your coach talk about during your sessions will resonate with you during your week, and some of the seeds and ideas that have been discussed will grow between your sessions. All you have to do is to fully live your life between coaching sessions and be open to seeing what you and your coach have talked about.

5) Reduce the drain and strain in your life



Coaching works because it focuses you in two areas. First you'll be helped to stretch yourself further, take more actions than you would on your own, and devise/implement effective strategies to get what you want. At the same time, you will also be identifying and reducing things that drain and strain you, such as tolerations, stressful situations, difficult relationships, pressured environments, and recurring problems. So, don't just hoist a bigger sail, make sure there are no cracks or barnacles on your hull!

6) Get more space, not just time, in your life

Coaching needs room in order to work. If you're too busy, rushed, adrenalined or burdened, you may be using coaching to push yourself harder, instead of using coaching to become more effective. It is strongly suggested that you put some projects on hold, reduce your roles, simplify your day, reduce your goals, streamline your work and install personal management systems before or immediately after starting with your coach. Simplification gets you space. Space is needed to learn and evolve yourself beyond where you are today.

7) Become incredibly selfish

Coaching is about you and what you most want. As such you will probably need to start putting yourself first if you haven't done so already. At the very least, you will want to become selfish, in the sense that you are what matters most. When you are happy and doing well, others will benefit as well.

8) Be open to seeing things differently

In coaching you will be working with your goals (called 'Outcomes') and your strategies for reaching those goals. But you will also be working on you. In other words, you will get more from coaching if you are willing to re-look at some of your assumptions, ways of thinking, expectations, beliefs, reactions and approaches to success. There are always newly-developed concepts, principles, distinctions, and evolutionary steps to learn. You won't be forced or even encouraged to make these changes given they are so personal; but we do ask that you at least consider different approaches and ways of thinking and try them out to see if they work for you.

9) Be willing to evolve yourself, not just develop yourself

Coaching is both a developmental process as well as an evolutionary one. In other words, you will be learning how to accomplish more with less effort – let's call this the developmental side of coaching. But you will also be thinking differently and expanding yourself and your world, which we call evolving. Perhaps surprisingly, evolving is a skill and it's worth learning because life itself is evolving, not just developing.

10) Design and strengthen your personal and business environments

The value of coaching can be extended if you use part of your coaching time to design the perfect environment in which to live and work. Where you live and how you live are key to your success. Who you spend your time with and are inspired by can make a difference between success and failure. Be willing to invest some time -and money?- in improving your environment so that you feel fully supported to be your best.

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