

## Chapter 2: What Is Coaching?

### Learning Objectives

The following questions are addressed in this chapter:

- What is coaching?
- In what ways is coaching used as an intervention?
- How is coaching distinct from, yet related to, other professional helping relationships?
- How has coaching evolved as a discipline?
- How is coaching evolving as a profession?

### Chapter Summary

Coaching is a helping relationship, distinct from consulting, counseling/therapy, facilitation, mentoring, and training. Grounded in numerous disciplines, coaching is an applied behavioral science, e.g., education/learning leadership, philosophy, psychology, sociology, and systems. Coaching is an emerging and evolving discipline and profession that focuses on the individual and group levels, and may impact organizational system changes. One can use the skills and tools of coaching whether in a formal, professional coaching role or in another role, such as manager, peer, or parent. Coaching involves cognitive, emotional, behavioral, and spiritual components.

Coaching can be used by leaders at all levels, with a focus on helping individuals, groups, and organizations prepare for, excel through, and improve from change. Coaching can be taught and the core competencies developed. While there are varied approaches to the practice of coaching, all coaching is client centered, action oriented, results focused, and supportive of behavioral change. Self-awareness on the part of the client and the coach is required to achieve mastery.

### Chapter Outline

- I. What Is Coaching?
  - A. Benefits of Coaching

- B. Characteristics of Coaching
- II. Coaching: A Growth Industry
- III. What Is Coaching Used For?
- IV. Helping Relationships
- V. The Nature of Coaching
  - A. Coaching: A Competence and a Role
  - B. Coaching Activity
  - C. Coaching: Profession or Professional?
  - D. Criteria for a Profession
  - E. Current State
  - F. What Is the Future?
- VI. Chapter Summary

### **Teaching Assistance**

A PowerPoint slide deck is available to support presentation and discussion of key components of this chapter. “Knowledge Checks” and “Learning Activities” are located at the end of this chapter. Consider using the “Knowledge Checks” to guide a class discussion and the “Learning Activities” as ways to support learning and skill development. Responses to each “Knowledge Check” are included in this *Instructor Guide*.

The brief video “It’s Not About the Nail” ([http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg&feature=em-share\\_video\\_user](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-4EDhdAHrOg&feature=em-share_video_user)) can be accessed through YouTube, shown to introduce a discussion related to empathy and listening.

### **Key Terms, Concepts, and Models**

The following key terms, concepts, and models are explained and used in this chapter. Selected terms can also be found in the glossary at the end of the book.

- Advocate
- Behaviors
- Behavioral Change
- Coaching

- Coaching Service Provider
- Competence
- Competency
- Confidentiality
- Counseling
- Credibility
- Empathy
- Ethics
- Feedback
- Forms of Coaching
- Helping Relationship
- Listening
- Mentoring
- Organizational Culture
- Person Being Coached
- Process Consultant
- Professionally
- Relationship
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Transference

### **Knowledge Checks**

#### **1. What is coaching? Define coaching based on the information in this chapter.**

Wilkins (2000) defined coaching as “an interaction between coach and client, where the coaching Purpose, Process, and Relationship interdependently function: seeking to develop the client to their fullest potential” (p. 153).

Witherspoon (2000) defined executive coaching as:

an action-learning process to enhance effective action and learning agility. It involves a professional relationship and a deliberate, personalized process to provide an executive

client with valid information, free and informed choices based on that information, and internal commitment to those choices. (p. 167)

The British Psychological Society (BPS) has adapted the following definition from Grant and Palmer (2003): “Coaching Psychology is for enhancing well-being and performance in personal life and work domains, underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches” (British Psychological Society, 2009).

“Coaching is helping another person figure out the best way to achieve his or her goals, build skill sets or expertise, and produce the results the organization needs” (BlessingWhite, 2008).

#### Executive Coaching Forum

Coaching is a helping relationship built on trust that employs a discovery process intended to help the person being coached to discover his focus, identify actions to be taken, and assume responsibility for the outcomes. In other words, it is an action-oriented, results-focused conversation between a coach and a person or group being coached.

#### International Coach Federation (ICF)

Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential (ICF, 2008, ICF Code of Ethics, retrieved 12/28/11, [www.coachfederation.org/ethics/](http://www.coachfederation.org/ethics/)).

Coaching is “a development process that builds a leader’s capabilities to achieve professional and organizational goals” (Graduate School Alliance for Executive Coaching, 2012).

Schein (2000) described coaching in this way:

Coaching is a subset of consultation. Clearly, it can then be thought of as one kind of intervention that may be helpful to clients under certain circumstances. In this context I think of coaching as establishing a set of behaviors that helps the client to develop a new way of seeing, feeling about, and behaving in problematic situations. (p. 71)

## **2. What are the three focus areas of coaching?**

1. **Performing.** Coaching focuses on refining skills and actions for performance in a particular context.
2. **Developing.** Coaching focuses on changing thinking, feelings, and actions as well as learning (gaining knowledge in one or more contexts) to improve experience and success in a variety of contexts.
3. **Transforming.** Coaching focuses on the whole person in a wide range of contexts.

## **3. How is coaching similar to and different from three other helping relationships?**

Many helping relationships support using the following characteristics:

- Engaging in a discovery process
- Establishing an environment where individuals and groups can learn and develop
- Using a repeatable process
- Investing in behavioral change that is sustainable and can evolve
- Developing potential/growth

However, coaching is also distinct because:

- There is not the implication of content knowledge or expertise (such as in consulting), nor is coaching defined by a pre-existing relationship (as in parent, friend or peer). There is no suggestion of a moral ground or path, as might be the case with a parent or minister, and there is no implication of guidance or supervision, as with a parent or manager.

Also, see Table 2.2 for further distinctions.

## **4. What traps have you experienced as a helper? How have these traps impacted your work as a helper?**

Traps can include:

- Dispensing wisdom prematurely
- Meeting defensiveness with more pressure
- Accepting the problem and overreacting to the dependence
- Giving support and reassurance
- Resisting taking on the helper role
- Attempting to rescue the person being helped
- Attempting to fix the person or the person's problem

## 5. What are three of the hallmarks of a “helping” relationship?

Hallmarks include:

- Being concrete;
- Being willing and able to confront the person being coached;
- Empathy for the situation and person;
- Genuineness in care and concern;
- Immediacy of availability, presence, and action;
- Potency of the help provided; respect by the person being coached;
- A well-developed sense of oneself and ability to use oneself as an instrument in the coaching relationship;
- Appropriate levels of self-disclosure in service of the person being coached; and
- General sense of warmth

## 6. What is the current state of coaching?

While coaching is currently not a profession, coaching may be considered a continuum of skills and abilities applied in a variety of relationships, with the overarching intent of *helping* (Bennett, 2006; Lane, Stelter, & Rostron, 2010).

Bennett (2006) posited that coaching was not a profession, but an emerging profession for which having a defined body of knowledge and barriers to entry were among the key remaining requirements, and Jarvis, Lane, and Fillery-Travis (2006) confirmed this lack of status as a profession.

The estimates of the number of coaches in the world vary. According to a report by the International Coach Federation (ICF) (2012), there were approximately 47,500 people who identify themselves as coaches. A 2012 IBISWorld industry research report estimates 75,000 employees of more than 46,000 coaching businesses, with annual revenues of \$9 billion. These estimates do not include those who use coaching skills as part of their roles as a managers or consultants.

In a 2011 study conducted by the International Coach Federation (ICF), 12,111 individuals from around the world responded, including both ICF members and non-members. Fifty-nine percent held a graduate degree (masters or doctorate) and 32 percent had earned an undergraduate degree (baccalaureate). This number is up from a 2007 study in which 53 percent reported having advanced degrees. Of those surveyed, 20 percent reported

having 10 or more years of coaching experience. Coaches worldwide predominantly view coaching as a profession (69 percent). However, the only significant variance appears in Asia, where 45 percent view coaching as profession. The remaining coaches from Asia view coaching as either a skillset (40 percent) or an industry (15 percent). A slight majority of coaches (53 percent) believed that coaching should become regulated, while nearly one in four (23 percent) coaches disagreed. The remaining coaches (24 percent) indicated that they were still unsure on the subject of regulation. Among those who believed coaching should be regulated, or who claimed to be unsure, the overwhelming majority (84 percent) felt that professional coaching associations were best placed to handle this responsibility.

**7. What are the factors that affect the designation of coaching as a profession?**

- Identifiable and distinct skills
- Education and training required to acquire proficiency
- Recognition outside the community as a profession
- A developed, monitored, and enforced code of ethics by a governing body to make the profession a self-disciplined group
- Public service that is motivated by altruism rather than financial gain
- Formalized organization
- Evaluation of merit (credentialing) and self-regulation, encouraging diversity of thought, evaluation, and practice
- An established community of practitioners
- A status or state of recognition associated with membership in the profession
- Public recognition from outside the practicing community that the profession is distinct and actually exists
- Practice founded in theoretical and factual research and knowledge

**8. What are the primary differences between coaching and therapy, mentoring, training, and consulting?**

Refer to Table 2.2

**9. What are the characteristics of a good coach?**

In addition to the characteristics of helpers listed above, being an objective observer and process counselor in a non-directive, client-centered, process-oriented manner. The focus of the coach is to listen and be present.