



**Coaching Dissected, Explored, and Explained**  
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**February 2020**

While the field of coaching has gotten both oversaturated and confusing, it also has good news. There's a lot for you, the consumer, to know and it can be complicated. I'll dissect coaching a bit and then provide a few examples to help you understand if, why and when to work with a professional coach.

Coaching has become oversaturated because it's not regulated. Anyone can tell you that they are a coach. Not knowing any better you believe them. They can get a fancy website and mislead the public, irrespective of having no formal credentials, education or experience in the field. I've heard horror stories about this, don't let that be you.

Coaching has also become confusing for anyone considering hiring a coach as there are so many specialties. For example, there are financial coaches, career coaches, relationship coaches, spiritual coaches, life coaches, health coaches, and my specialty, which is executive and leadership coaching. In addition to each specialty focus, your coach will look at your overall life. It's rare for one coach to have the expertise to explore all the other specialties. Beware of a 'life coach' who claims to have this expertise.

Entering my 22<sup>nd</sup> year in this ever-evolving field, I am passionate about the amazing results it can bring about for the client. I believe each client has their answers already inside. It is through providing a safe, nonjudgmental space to explore that coaches can help clients become clear and act toward their goals.

To better explain coaching, I'll share some examples of former clients who may not have known 100% what they wanted in the beginning. Yet over time, it became crystal clear and they attained their goals. Names have been changed.

Attorney Peter had just been elected president of his board when he first called me. He was an excellent attorney, proven in all ways imaginable. He had a happy home life, a long list of thrilled clients yet had never been in a leadership position. Having been a member of his board of directors for years he witnessed first-hand how previous presidents made costly mistakes. Relationships suffered; egos were crushed while then presidents' egos expanded. Peter and I worked to bring out his natural leadership skills, which he was unaware of and enhanced his communication, listening, and strategizing skills. We added leadership tools and techniques that were relatable to his specific situation. He excelled.

Julie had been overlooked for a promotion seven times in the past two years when we met. The first few times she thought it was prejudice against women at the top and then other women were promoted. She realized that her lack of being promoted had more to do with *her* than with her company. We went to work - initially eliminating her resentment and feelings of rejection, focusing instead on what she wanted. And on exactly what was holding her back. We uncovered two things she was not aware of that were affecting her so deeply. 1) while she was excellent in her profession, proven again and again over the years, she did not have a college degree. 2) listening to the news each morning before work put her

in a foul mood, which she dragged into the office with her. These two things, which were entirely within her control, affected her so deeply that it exuded in her behavior and the way she treated others. No one else cared that she didn't have a college degree. Julie had the choice to either go back and get it or let it go. She chose the latter, along with choosing to listen to upbeat music rather than the news each morning. In changing her thinking and habits, Julie has been promoted twice in the few years since we've worked together.

James was beyond an excellent surgeon. His patients loved him. In addition to his surgical practice, he published papers and taught courses. He had a beautiful family and home, was physically fit, healthy, and on paper had a very good life. Yet he was unhappy. He wanted to feel more accomplished at the end of the day, to relax on days off and vacation, not to be on call during family time, to enjoy his life and not be so busy. He wanted to be able to let go of things that irritated him, to be a better communicator, and not to have to deal with office politics.

Does this sound familiar to you? Many of these are common goals for coaching clients. Over time we tackled each of these goals. That's the thing with coaching, it is not a magical overnight fix. It took time to realize what wasn't working and it takes time to methodically pull apart and work through each item and to make the necessary changes to create what James really wanted.

In the end, James made critical tough decisions. He became more discerning in making professional commitments, dropped off a few boards, set time limits in other areas, took shorter vacations to clear his head, identified one-to-one time with each member of his family while learning to be more present all around. Today he is admittedly a very happy man.

As we see with Peter, Julie, and James, life can be overwhelming with professional and personal commitments. As such, it can seem impossible to find the time to figure out what's working, what is not working or what we really want. We get daily reminders that life is short, that we thought we had more time.

I urge and challenge you to learn from these three scenarios. If you're not thrilled with any aspect of your life, change it. It sounds simpler than it is. Find the resources to support you in defining and making your changes. In many cases hiring a coach can be the key. If this is your choice, interview a few, find a chemistry connection, ask about references, education, certifications, and specific experience in what you desire. I wish you the absolute best in pursuing your goals. Get out there and make it happen.

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