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What *is* coaching?

(... and what *isn't* coaching!)

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So, what *is* coaching?

*"Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance.
It is helping them to learn rather than teaching them."
(John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance)*

You might know the term 'coach' from the world of sports, whilst different kinds of coaches may work in different ways, in the context of my work, I think of coaching as a *forward looking, solutions focussed process* that begins in the here and now and builds better futures.

Coaching is a temporary relationship, which ends when the client's goals have been achieved.

Coaching can address specific personal projects, professional aspirations, or general conditions in your life.

Coaching takes place in a confidential environment and an atmosphere of openness and acceptance.

Coaching requires commitment from the coach and the client.

Coaching is all about the coachee - you do almost all of the talking. It's about you figuring out WHAT you WANT to do, and HOW you can do it.

Coaching is actions driven.

A coach brings out the coachee's knowledge, beliefs and abilities to improve the coachees own situation.

A coach listens, observes, questions and provides feedback.

A coach works holistically with the client.

So, what *isn't* coaching?

"The coachee does acquire the facts, not from the coach but from within himself, stimulated by the coach."

(John Whitmore, Coaching for Performance)

Coaching is not the coach 'fixing' the coachee. Coaches believe that no one is 'broken', and in this process the coachee is the one discovering and implementing their own solutions to challenges, supported and facilitated by the coach.

Coaching is NOT advice.

Coaching is different to mentoring. Mentoring is a relationship with an expert in a particular field where specific *advice* is given, the mentor has most often achieved the specific goal the mentee seeks.

Coaching is different to counselling. Counselling is finding a way to cope with a specific trauma that took place in the past.

Structure in coaching - how it works

A coaching process or relationship has a beginning, middle, and an end.

In the beginning of a coaching relationship, any themes for the work to be done are discussed, and in the first session the coach and coachee will also work on a specific goal, concluding with some action points (which are agreed by the coach and coachee) these will be completed within an agreed time frame.

In the middle sessions, previous action steps will be reviewed and, if required, revisited to make sure they are appropriate, and new goals tackled.

The coach will employ a variety of models and techniques to aid the coachee in achieving their goals, and making the changes they wish to make.

In most circumstances, the end of the coaching relationship will take place on the date agreed in the initial session, after a successful, productive and enjoyable period of working together.