

## **How to Choose the Right Coach Training Program for You**

Congratulations on choosing to be trained as a Coach!

With over 275 training programs in the USA alone, there are certainly a wide variety of coach training options available – with vastly different approaches, curricula, and platforms. It can get pretty formidable, even overwhelming, simply to find out how many programs exist, and what each is offering.

How will you ever choose?

Here, we have simplified and clarified some of the steps that our experience shows will support you in choosing the right Coach Training Program for you.

### **Step One: Clarify Your Own Goals.**

First, ask yourself what you want to get out of the training. This may sound simple, “I want to learn to be a coach!” you say. But what do you really want?

Here are some samples to get you started thinking about what you might want

- A new career?
- A certain income from a new part time business?
- A stamp of approval for the knowledge you already have?
- New methods of being effective in a role you already have?
- To make a more powerful or lasting difference with people?
- To use your skills and experience in the service of other?
- To make more money?
- To have a more flexible schedule?

Be honest, and clear with yourself. Then, write it down.

### **Step Two: In What Ways Do I Learn The Best?**

Second, ask yourself what is your best method of learning. Look to your own experience.

What works best for you? Here is a question and some methods to consider:

Do I learn best when:

- In a classroom setting, with didactic training?
- Online, or with the materials at my own pace?
- Given personal guidance and mentorship?
- In a group setting?
- On the computer, on the phone or in person? What platform is best for me?
- NOTE: If I want in-person training, does location matter to me?
- I have a variety of adult learning techniques, or just one?
- Given real world training, or hypothetical situations?

- I practice with real people, or just with my fellow trainees?
- In a structured, professional setting, or on my own?
- Challenged to be my best, or comforted and allowed to go at my own pace?
- With assignments as well as real world experience, or just with studying?
- With models of human behavior, or with real humans?
- With hypothetical situations and clients, or with real situations, and real clients?

Use these answers in evaluating any and every training program you consider.

### **STEP THREE: What Type of Clients Do I Want to Work With?**

Do you have in mind a type of client with whom you want to work? What are the characteristics or important points about those people? Do you have an area of specialization or specialized training or experience already that will support people in a specific situation or position? Creating your niche as a coach can be a powerful marketing tool, as well as supporting you in building a clientele that delights you!

On the other hand, have you envisioned supporting a wide variety of people with a wide variety of goals? Many coaches struggle with creating a niche or specialization, because they do not want to rule out any potential clients. Whichever is true for you, it is possible and valuable to create a simple and clear list of the characteristics, qualities and endeavors of the clients that would be ideal for you. Take a moment now and write whatever you can see about them.

Consider for yourself:

- What qualities or characteristics would be the perfect client for me?
- Do I want to coach professional or personal endeavors?
- If personal, what population will work best with me?
- Professionally, do I prefer working inside an organization or not?
- Do I prefer working with clients in turmoil or in triumph?
- Do I prefer to coach groups or individuals?
- At what level of an organization or leadership will I make an impact?
- In what areas will I be most effective with my clients?
- What are the types of issues that I want to support?
- Based on my income goals, does the population I choose to work with match my income expectation?
- Do I see coaching as something for people in trouble, or for people who are adding power to their success?
- What do I see as the measure of success of my coaching?

Again, writing down your answers will help clarify so much as you sort through training programs.

## **Step FOUR: Is Certification Important?**

In considering this question, you may consider both the TYPE OF CLIENTS that you want to work with, as well as the importance to you of coaching being seen as a PROFESSION. If you are planning on working with professionals, or as a professional, then certification is almost certainly the way to go. This makes your choice simpler, as there are only about 80 programs worldwide which are accredited by the International Coach Federation ( <http://www.coachfederation.org/>) to be able to certify their students. Check that list by going to the ICF's list of Accredited Programs.

## **STEP FIVE: Will I Be 'Doing Coaching', or Being a Coach?**

What do you think is needed to provide coaching?

For many people, coaching is simply a set of skills. These folks are “doing coaching”, and that is the most prevalent approach. Many programs and schools thrive on this approach to training coaches. However, the trend recently in coaching is to developing the person who is coaching, as well as training the skill set necessary. We might call these programs “being based” or “ontological” in their approach. For these training programs, it is as important that the Coach does his/her own work, and is trained not only in the skill set of coaching, but in aspects of emotional intelligence, leadership, relating, motivation, accountability, integrity, and other “soft skills” that allow the coach to be powerful as a reflective support for the client. In this approach, the coach is not giving the client answers, but developing in the client the ability to find or create his/her own answers. If this is not important to you, please narrow your search to simple skill based programs. If this reflection and being-based approach is important to you, please narrow your search to “being-based” or “ontological” coach training programs.

## **Step SIX: What Support Do I Want and Need?**

Two kinds of support are essential for any coach being trained.

**1. Business support** includes marketing, bookkeeping, branding, contracts, presentations, workshops, speaking opportunities, effective networking, effective complimentary sessions, and multiple streams of income. If you are interested in starting your own business as a Coach, what level of support does each program offer in terms of marketing and supporting your new business?

Perhaps most important – When can I begin coaching clients for pay?

Certainly, the best way to become a better coach is to coach more. Therefore, find out when you can begin coaching, and being paid for your coaching?

**2. Having a Coach and Being Coached** is undisputedly a critical support for any coach, and especially any coach in training. Does the program provide you with your own Coach? In order to be an accredited program, each program must require you to be coached yourself for at least ten hours. Does the program provide a coach? Is it included in the tuition? For how long are you coached?

Review both of these in any Coach Training Program that you are considering:

- What Business Support, including marketing support is provided, if any?
- What Coaching is provided, if any?

Where no support or insufficient support is provided, the person who suffers is the coach in training. To make up for what is missing in the program, the coach often has to spend a lot more time and money to find a coach, to get marketing and other business support, and to add additional training to fill in gaps. Make sure that you know the gaps in the training program before you begin.

## **Step Seven: The Quality of the Training, and the Training Program**

Chances are, you will only do one full training program as a coach, in your lifetime. It is important to know what level of quality you want in that education. Consider these questions:

- Do I want the best training available, or the least expensive?
- The fastest training available, or the most thorough training available?
- What Quality Assurance system is in place with this training program?
- Does this training program update its curriculum regularly, or continue with the same one?
- Given what I want to produce, can this program demonstrate ability to produce that?
- Do a lot of people drop out or leave this training program? If so, it could be an indicator of the quality.

## **Step Eight: Community**

Like choosing a high school or college, your choice of coach training program will determine to an extent your community beyond graduation. Consider these questions:

- What is the community support available during the program, and then after graduation?
- What percentage of graduates participate in the community after graduation?
- What services are available to support the community during the training, and after graduation?
- What are the people like in the community? Are they professionals? Are they people I can respect and learn from?
- Is this community filled with people I can learn from, and people I can collaborate with?

This may not seem to be important now, but it is often the major part of the value of any coach training program. We are aware of many large programs that have a very small community after graduation. Likewise, some smaller programs have a small community after graduation. Consider what you want and need as a supportive community for coaching.

## **Step Nine – Business Model and What’s Included**

For many coaches, independence is important. Therefore, make sure that your coach training program provides both the support that you need, and the independence that you want. Certain programs are franchise programs, which have guidelines and conditions that you must meet to continue to have a coaching practice. Other programs are so open that you may experience no support or care at all. For most coaches, the balance is between those two.

Speak to your candidate coach training programs about their Business Model, before you register. Also, find out what is included in your coach training tuition and agreement. For many programs, the program is in modules. Make sure that you know how many modules are required, and suggested. This can be a way for “inexpensive” coach training programs to become very expensive, indeed. Find out if your Coach Training Program includes a coach. If so, find out how many hours of coaching are included in your tuition, and what the arrangement is for those hours.

## **Step Ten – Trust Yourself**

Ultimately, the best measure for any training program is the one that best matches your needs, your style and your intended outcomes. The best and most consistent advice we can give you is this:

- A.) Do your due diligence: Investigate every program that interests you, meet the people, visit the programs and get a real feel for the programs you are considering.
- B.) Trust yourself. Even if the logistics or location is not ideal, go with the program that you see can give you what you need to be truly successful. Do not cut corners.
- C.) If you are still struggling with the choice, try this exercise:

Consider choosing from the future. Once you have researched a number of programs, and narrowed down your list, consider the following exercise: Imagine yourself having fulfilled your goals, dreams and desires as a coach. Imagine the life you are living five years, or even ten years from now – in detail. Feel every bit of that future, including where and how you live, and what it is to be fully successful in your chosen field. Then, ask yourself which Coach Training Program you will want to have participated in.

Now, Coach, which will you choose?

Extra Steps:

Other questions to consider in evaluating Coach Training Programs:

1. Who leads the programs I'm considering?
  - a. What level of experience or certification do they hold?
2. How long is the training program?
  - a. Will I get everything I need in the timeframe offered?
3. Is the training cumulative, or is each module independent, starting at the same level of training?
4. What is the philosophy or approach of the training program?
  - a. Does that mesh with my beliefs?
5. Coaching - beyond the basics - cannot be learned from a book. How does the training program provide more than I could get from reading *about* it?

***Again, congratulations, and good luck!  
Welcome to the amazing world community of professional coaches!***