

Conscious Connection

The Power Of Life Coaching- Invest In Yourself To Make The Most Of Your Life!

Have you ever wanted to stretch yourself to the next level in a certain aspect of your life yet you're not sure how to go about doing it? Have you ever felt stuck or unsatisfied in a particular area and you can't seem to get out of that rut?

I was that stuck person 5 years ago. I had been working as a salesman in the municipal bond industry for 20 years and was married with 2 children. Things at work were going well. I was making good money, was achieving professional goals and was the first female partner. Yet, something was missing.... something was not quite right. It finally dawned on me; I was experiencing an imbalance in my personal life. By focusing most of my time and energy on work, I had disconnected from myself and my family. Easy to do in the world of work. So to resolve this imbalance, I decided to retire from my 20-year career and hire a professional life coach. Working with a coach helped me reconnect with myself and family, create a healthier work/life balance and guide me through a difficult professional transition. I found the coaching process so beneficial and inspiring that I enrolled in a coach certification program and became a coach. I am a personal development coach passionate about helping individuals overcome life's challenges and operate at their best. Coaching is a great investment to achieve more in your life personally and professionally. And having experienced this transformative process first hand, I would like to share my insights.

What is coaching?

Coaching is a supportive relationship between a trained professional and client to help the client maximize his or her potential. Coaches help individuals see beyond where they are today and help them become more of what they've always wanted to be. Through an "inside out" process, coaches help clients connect with their true self and inner purpose in order to achieve their desired goals. It provides the client a safe, objective, confidential arena essential for solutions and a successful coaching relationship.

The coach's role is to support, inspire, challenge and keep the client accountable to what they want to accomplish. They can be motivators, sounding boards and guides.

The sessions are done individually or in groups, held face to face or by telephone and are typically in a series of scheduled sessions.

How coaching differs from therapy, consulting and friends/family?

- Therapy involves analyzing past events, understanding emotions involved and determining the cause of a client's behavior. Sessions are designed to heal or find resolution. Coaching is present and future focused. Sessions involve observing the present conditions of the client, identifying future goals and determining actions steps to achieve the goals. It is positive and solutions focused.
- Coaching differs from consulting in that a consultant, an expert in a particular field, comes into a situation with an agenda, answers and solutions in order to solve a problem. Coaching differs in that the coach's primary role is not to be the expert giving advice or designing solutions for the client. They ask questions guiding the client to discover his or her own unique answers knowing that the client is the expert in his or her own life.
- We all know the value of a best friend or family member but is your friend a trained professional who is truly objective, non-judgmental and keeps only your agenda at the forefront? Friends may resist challenging you for fear of hurting your feelings. They may be tempted to give you well meaning advice

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instead of helping you find your own solutions. Coaching is a collaborative effort solely based on the client and the client's agenda. It is a synergistic partnership designed to help the client arrive at his or her own perfect decisions or actions.

What do people get out of working with a coach?

Coaching clients experience a sense of alliance and support in achieving their personal and professional goals often not available to them elsewhere. Regularly scheduled coaching sessions provide clients with dedicated time to focus on what they truly want and what must happen to create it. Coaches help clients design action steps to meet their goals and hold them accountable to their own stated desires. They provide perspective, feedback and smart questions along the way. As a result, clients stay motivated, make significant changes and achieve more than they may have thought possible.

How do you know you are ready to work with a coach?

You know you are ready to work with a coach if you're feeling stuck, unsatisfied or want to be stretched in a particular area of your life and committed to investing in yourself. You seek out a coach because you are not sure how to go about accomplishing your goals or going alone seems daunting. You know you would benefit by having someone support you, inspire you and keep you accountable.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "Our chief want in life is somebody who will make us do what we can."

What kinds of people use coaches?

A typical client is someone who wants to make changes in his or her life and is ready to take action. You might hire a coach when:

- Looking for a new job
- Building a cohesive business team
- Developing leadership skills
- Increasing sales and revenue
- Improving time management
- Creating better work/ life balance
- Enhancing both personal and professional relationships
- Planning retirement
- Going through transition

Coaching clients comprise men and women of all ages, professions and income brackets. What they have in common is a desire for partnership, support and guidance in solving problems, moving forward and accomplishing goals.

"A coach may be the guardian angel you need to rev up your career." Money Magazine

The 8 main areas individuals seek out a coach for are:

- Career/Profession
- Personal Finance
- Relationships & Family
- Personal development
- Health & Aging
- Spirituality
- Fun & Enjoyment
- Work /Life Balance

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How to select a qualified coach?

The best coaches are those that excel at listening, communicating, gently challenging, action planning and accountability. They are able to hold the client's agenda and establish a deep bond of trust. Coaches come from a wide variety of backgrounds, including business, counseling, consulting and training. There are no standard educational or licensing requirements for coaching, yet many coaches have completed formal training programs accredited by governing bodies such as the International Coach Federation.

In addition, ask the coach about his or her background and get past client references. Satisfied clients are often the best measure of a how well qualified a coach is for a successful coaching relationship.

Choosing the right coach for your needs:

Most coaches specialize in a particular kind of coaching such as small business, career transition, personal development, or relationships. To get started, first determine what you want to accomplish, and then look for a coach specializing in that area.

Interview several coaches for comparison keeping in mind the coach's background, past clients' results, and personal fit. Some coaches offer complimentary consultations for prospective clients to see what it would be like to work with them and to see if there is a good connection.

Benefits of working with a coach:

The International Coaching Federation, the international organization that oversees the coaching industry, did a survey on the benefits of coaching and determined most clients experience:

- Higher levels of self-awareness
- Greater self-confidence
- Healthier work/life balance
- More effective goal setting
- Lower stress levels

In business, companies experience:

- Improved interpersonal skills
- Greater employee retention
- Decrease in turnover and expenses involved in hiring and training new employees
- Improved productivity
- More effective leadership

Real life example of the benefits of coaching:

I was working with a client named, Todd, who was dissatisfied with his career. He had been working for the past 12 years in a Wall Street Firm as a fixed income manager and was ready for change however, he was not sure what that changed looked like or how to go about it.

We talked about why he was unhappy: He no longer felt challenged in his position, there was limited financial upside, he had an unpredictable boss and he was doing the job of three people due to downsizing. In others words, he felt stuck and unsatisfied.

I recommended he complete my Values Assessment exercise to identify the 5 most important values for him at this time in his life. His top 5 core values were accomplishment, environment, family, friendship, and self-expression.

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We discussed each value making him realize his current job was compromising several of his core values. He had accomplished all he could in his current role with no room for advancement or financial growth. Feeling his work environment was unhealthy; Todd was void of passion and self-expression. And when he got home each night, he was so drained he was not fully engaged with his family.

From this exercise, he gained greater clarity around what he wanted for his next position. He was ready for a new area in finance that would be challenging and offer him the opportunity to take risks and be well compensated. He wanted an environment with hard working, intelligent individuals who appreciated his work. He wanted to feel energized at the end of his day so he could spend quality time with his family in the evenings.

It didn't take long for Todd to determine his next position. He wanted to work at a hedge fund company and run a fund. His first step towards this goal was to enroll in night classes to become proficient in this area. After 8 months, Todd found a position at a hedge fund company as an assistant buyer achieving his goal and aligning with his core values.

Other real life examples:

- A budding artist achieves her lifelong dream of showing her paintings in an art gallery
- An executive improves job satisfaction and productivity by learning to communicate better with his boss and colleagues.
- By overcoming a deep-seated fear of cold calling, a financial broker doubles his sales.
- A real estate agency owner fulfills her goal of expanding her boutique firm from 15 to 40 agents in 4 months.
- A father improves his relationship with teenage daughter through communication, trust and mutual respect.
- By rediscovering and relying on personal values, strengths and passions, an executive experiences more fulfillment and success personally and professionally.

Coaching is a transformational process helping individuals overcome obstacles, solve problems, make significant changes and accomplish lofty goals. If you are ready to make improvements in your life and want support, guidance and accountability, consider investing in a life coach and make the most of your life!

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