

Co-Active Coaching

BACKGROUND: Coaching is an effective tool for personal and professional change. The Coaches Training Institute define coaching as:

"... a powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance the lifelong process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfillment"

By the 1990's it was recommended to managers as a tool for improving performance: *"A manager's task is simple - to get the job done and to grow his staff. Time and cost pressures limit the latter. Coaching is one process with both effects."*

Co-active coaching Some believe that what happens in different areas of a person's life affects all others and therefore do not distinguish between personal and professional development, or career coaching and life coaching. They believe in a holistic approach and may base their coaching style around the co-active coaching model described by Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl.

Co-Active Coaching holds that the client has the answers and the job of the Coach is to listen and empower, rather than inform and advise. Coaches are not experts or consultants. The coach has the questions, rather than the other way around. A coach creates a safe, comfortable, space with time to think, reflect and plan.

The philosophy of co-active coaching is based on the following four cornerstones:

1. "The client is naturally creative, resourceful and whole.
2. Co-active coaching addresses the client's whole life.
3. The agenda comes from the client.
4. The relationship is a designed alliance."

The key modes of Co-Active Coaching focus on creating genuine Fulfillment and Balance



Designed Alliance

for the client, while engaging him/her more fully in the Process of life as it unfolds.

Any action is better than no action
Everybody is leading busier lives these days. The chances are you feel totally overwhelmed at times by the amount of things you need to get done. The Co-Active Coaching model employs techniques and strategies specifically targeted to forward the action (in the specific directions identified by the client), while deepening the life learning and enjoyment for the client.

Working with a coach helps you to prioritize where action will be effective and identify those things you will never do because you simply don't want to. One of the benefits a coach brings to the relationship is the call to action. Any action, no matter how small, to move towards a desired goal or outcome is a step in the right direction. Taking the smallest action toward your goal immediately makes you feel better. It shifts you out of inertia and gets you moving again.

Facilitator's Body of Knowledge Research Project

Co-Navigating Your Journey Co-Active Coaches believe that all parts of people's lives -- their careers, relationships, recreation, personal growth, and finances, for example -- are interrelated and should be addressed as such. In other words, we coach the whole person.

In engaging the whole person the coach will guide and help you co-create your map to the future. As you set out to make it happen you and your coach will deal with obstacles together: pooling ideas until you have found a way for you to get up, over, around, under or through them! You may not get there as fast as you would like to, but one thing is for sure: if you don't begin the journey you will never get there!

Instrumental in this approach is the development of core elements of your map. The coach will guide you to develop your:

- Vision
- Values
- Personal and professional goals

At this stage the coach acts as a partner and may well contribute ideas that perhaps you hadn't thought of. As your coach contributes his or her ideas you will begin to look at the issue from a different perspective. This gives you many more options to choose from and can be especially helpful in situations where you felt your choices were limited.

Client's Strengths A coach helps a client to look inside, to understand themselves - their strengths and limitations – better. When clients find their own answers they become more resourceful and effective, and better equipped for action.

Holistic Approach The truth is that the issues we face may impact all aspects of our lives - family, work and community. Every day people make dozens, even hundreds, of decisions to do or not do certain things. These choices, no matter how trivial, contribute to our overall sense of fulfillment, balance and effectiveness.

'Big A' Agenda, 'little a' agenda The 'Big A' Agenda is that clients want to live more fulfilling lives, to make more effective choices in their lives, and to live in the present. This 'Big A' Agenda is held by the coach, as 'an umbrella' to the whole of the coaching relationship.

The 'little a' agenda is the client's. This is what they bring to the coaching relationship, to the regular meetings between coach and client. This relationship is entirely focused on getting the results that client wants. The coach's job is to make sure that the client's agenda doesn't get lost.

Intentional relationship The intentionality of designing the working style, the Design Alliance, and keeping that in focus throughout the relationship, is a key to the success of co-active coaching.

APPLICATION

The approach and some practices of Co-Active Coaching are consistent with and reflect the work of a facilitator during the intake and follow-up phases of work with the client or sponsor.

RESOURCES



Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H., Sandahl, P.; **Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life**; Davies-Black 1998 288 pp
Hardcover ISBN 0-89106-123-1

<http://www.dreamcoach.co.uk/coaching.html>

<http://www.kahncious.net/rich/coach/faq.htm>

<http://www.coachingnetwork.org.uk/ResourceCentre/Bookshop/BookDetails.asp?bookID=10>