



## How to choose your Coach

Coaching is one of the fastest growing industries in Australia and New Zealand. There are many forms of coaching; life coaching, business, workplace, executive, etc. Many businesses are reporting tangible improvements as a result of implementing coaching. And many more individuals are enjoying increased confidence, more fulfilling careers and relationships, reduced conflicts, etc. This article helps you to select your coach carefully and to explain why the selection process is so critical for any client considering coaching. All potential coaching clients are advised to consider the points in this article before choosing a coach to work with.

Anyone can say that they are a Coach. And plenty of people do. In fact the truth is that in some way we are all Coaches; to our children, to our friends, in the workplace, etc. So it is acceptable to see Financial Planners using the title 'Wealth Coach' and Naturopaths using the title 'Health Coach', and so the list goes on. So if you are an expert in an area and you want to share the benefit of your skills and expertise with others, by all means go ahead and call yourself a 'something' coach (an expert coach).

Usually an expert coach has to complete formal training and sometimes licensing in their area of expertise. For example a Wealth Coach would need to have financial planning qualifications and a license, and a whole list of things they need to do in order to maintain their financial services license. Whenever a Coach is an expert coach, they usually have to get qualified in their area of expertise before they can coach others.

There is no regulation regarding Coaching. A coach who is a broad based coach or an expert within a coaching field (such as Executive Coaching, Business Coaching, etc) needs no such training or education. Anyone can call themselves a Life Coach, a Business Coach or an Executive Coach. They might use a variation on this title; performance consultant, life strategist, etc, but essentially they are Coaches. They do not need qualifications, experience, insurance, etc. A business card and a mobile phone is all that is needed to set up a coaching business.

Some Coaches have trained hard, studied well, got the coaching qualifications and worked endless hours to build their coaching practices. Some Coaches made a natural progression into Coaching after qualifying in a similar field; Counselling, Management Consultant, etc. Some Coaches haven't done any of these things. If all things were equal, you would be able to question the coach about how and where they trained to be a Coach and you could ask to see their qualifications.

However, all things are not equal and just as there are some great Coaches and some poor Coaches, there are some great Coaching Schools and Coaching qualifications and some poor Coaching Schools and some poor qualifications. Because, as we already stated, there is no regulation. This means that anyone can set up a Coaching school and offer a Coaching certificate.

A good coaching school will align themselves to training standards, and in Australia for example they will register as a Registered Training Organisation ('RTO') and then be able



to offer 'accredited' training. When they say that their training is accredited, what they mean is that their company provides training and assessment in line with the Australian Quality Training Framework. In essence, it is an indication of how good their processes are. There is little examination into the content of the training.

The British Psychological Society advises in its International Coaching Psychology Review (Vol 3, No 1 March 08) that some Australian accredited coaching schools have some way to go when it comes to client wellbeing; "9 of the 14 schools made no explicit distinction between life coaching and treatment for mental health issues, and one school stated that life coaching could be used to deal with anxiety-related problems".

In a coaching demonstration by one accredited school, the client discussed the desire to establish a business. The client was advised by the coach during the live demonstration to sell up their investment portfolio and to create the business they dreamed of. All this within a 45 minute session and without any regard for property investment regulations, financial advice legislation, etc. It is no wonder that some coaches do not understand the boundaries. Some coaches will proudly declare that they can help you to achieve anything you desire and can assist you in any area of your life.

On the flip side, there are some coaching schools that provide exceptional training and do not want to become RTOs. This is often because RTO can be an expensive and time consuming option. Then there are international coaching schools outside of Australia and New Zealand who are unable to become RTOs. So there are some great accredited schools and there are some poor accredited schools.

Then there are organisations that the Coaches can subscribe to. There are some exceptional organisations and there are some poor organisations. Sometimes exceptional Coaches join poorly represented organisations and sometimes poor Coaches are able to join exceptional organisations.

The final piece is that a really great coach can train at a really great coaching school and then they do nothing in the way of professional development thereafter. So although they might be an exceptional coach right now, in reality their skills are slowly deteriorating compared to the new coaches coming through the system.

So you see anyone can become a Coach. And they can walk into your home or workplace and start coaching you today. The following provides some hints and tips to help you select the right Coach for you.

#### **Questions to ask before hiring a Coach**

In the first instance ask around friends and family for a referral for a great Coach or contact any organisation that accredits coaches.

Ask the Coach their credentials, where did they train? What level of qualification do they have?

If the Coach chose to study at a non-accredited school, what was their rationale for doing so?



How long has the Coach been coaching? How many clients do they have? Is it possible to read testimonials from other clients?

What is their coaching development plan? Who do they subscribe to for ongoing professional development? ("I do seminars now and again, or I read books" are not acceptable answers). What does the coach do regularly week in and week out as a commitment to never ending improvement (a philosophy they all preach)?

Which groups and organisations does the Coach belong to? Who are they accredited by and at what level?

What insurance(s) does the Coach have?

#### **Questions to ask before working with a Coach**

What is your policy regarding privacy, confidentiality, etc?

How will we measure the success of the coaching?

What written guidelines/guarantees does the Coach provide regarding their services?

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