



IN SIGHT

Helping you improve the quality of your personal & professional life.

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IMPROVE YOUR LIFE WITH PERSONAL COACHING

Jack's law office should have been a venue of great comfort to him: he had all the work he wanted, a competent and experienced secretary, and a ten minute drive to work. His leap from a large firm and overcontrolling senior partner into a smaller office closer to home had left him with a lot more sanity – for a while.

But slowly Jack began to feel less enthusiastic about going into the office. He gradually felt more and more drained and even resentful toward his demanding clients. He lost his sense of fulfillment and wondered if he was in the right profession. On more mornings than not, when he walked into his office and saw the stacks of files piled up on his desk and floor, his spirits sank. Although he sometimes had a “to do” list, the usual pressing phone calls, faxes, and mail overwhelmed him. He began to miss deadlines and found himself asking for more continuances. Trivial issues made him angry and unusually demanding of his secretary and his wife. His dream of someday learning to play the cello seemed more distant than ever. He began to consider leaving the practice of law.

Then Jack followed a friend's suggestion to hire a coach. The coach helped Jack prioritize and take action. They collaborated on a plan for Jack's better self-care and office management. Jack valued the coach's provocative questions and willingness to listen. The coach helped Jack regain his self-confidence and Jack felt comforted by his realization that he didn't have to “do it all” or by himself. The coach listened to Jack and supported him in implementing productive ideas.

Within four months, Jack regained much of his former satisfaction at work. He developed ways to handle the interruptions that used to plague him and he was successful at completing tasks. He became

more productive and eager to tackle challenges. Best of all, his attitude towards himself and others improved greatly. He even began looking into taking cello lessons.

Jack's experience is not unlike that of over 200,000 Americans who choose to use the services of a coach.

WHAT IT IS AND HOW IT WORKS

Coaching is a collaboration in which a commitment to create a higher quality of life is achieved by personal discovery, direct advice, and a focus on action. Once a client and coach formulate a desired goal, the job of the personal coach is to provide support, structure, and feedback. The coach ensures that the client does not forget the promises he or she made. While coaching in the work place is relatively new, the value of coaching has been known for centuries.

Important qualities of a coach include: great listening skills, a commitment to inquiry, “walking the talk,” challenging the client, and reminding the client of his or her vision. According to Robert Hargrove, an organizational coach and the author of the book *Masterful Coaching*, the best coaches have a passion to help others learn and are effective because they inspire, set high standards, model integrity, and foster an atmosphere of disciplined intensity aimed at producing action. Coaches vary in style and the kinds of clients they serve. But most are mindful of a core set of principles. Coach and author Cheryl Richardson offers these principles for attaining a higher quality of life: clarify priorities, identify what drains and what fuels you, build a soulful community, and honor your spiritual being. She encourages you to be in touch with the amazing moments in life when you take risks and do things that you love that go beyond your usual comfort zone.

Is coaching therapy or consulting? It is neither. Although it may share some features with therapy – such as trust-building and confidentiality – coaching

does not focus on a person's emotional history or diagnose and treat mental disorders. Coaching differs from consulting also – consultants offer clients a range of suggestions that may or may not be implemented. Coaches help a client decide what they want to implement and then help to ensure that the client takes action on his or her choices. Coaches also keep the client thinking about what the client feels is most important in life.

Coaches typically work with their clients during weekly half-hour or hour-long telephone sessions, face-to-face meetings, or by e-mail. Fees range from \$200 to \$800 for three to four sessions per month.

Some coaches are members of the International Coach Federation (ICF), a non-profit organization dedicated to building awareness of the coaching profession. The ICF has over 2,000 members in 134 chapters in the United States and ten in other countries. The ICF certifies coaches and establishes minimum standards for professional coaches and coach training institutes. There are many kinds of coaches, including personal, business, executive, entrepreneur, and spiritual coaches. Experienced coaches often serve a targeted market.

WHERE TO FIND A COACH

If you are interested in an objective support system, a coach offers a new way of ensuring that you achieve your goals. To locate a coach, check out any of the following resources:

- The Yellow Pages under “coaching”
- www.portlandcoaches.com
- www.coachu.com
- www.coachfederation.org
- People you know that use a coach
- The Oregon Attorney Assistance Program (OAAP)

Before choosing a coach, you should interview (preferably in person) at least three coaches.

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