

Whatever your goal, there's a **COACH** for you



By Nicole Relyea

We've all reached a point in life when there was something we wanted to do and just didn't know how. At those times, friends and family members always have words of advice, but maybe not an unbiased opinion or a well-trained ear. The next time you reach that point, consider hiring a coach to help you out.

"There's one really big sign" that it's time to hire a coach, says **Pat Barone, Catalyst Coaching, LLC**: "when you're frustrated or when you're stuck. When you want to do something, and it just doesn't seem to be happening — that's when a coach can help you get really clear about what you want and how to create it."



Pat Barone
Catalyst
Coaching, LLC

The purpose of coaching is to "empower people to set their best goals and reach them more quickly with clarity, action and results," says **Michelle Sugerman, My Living Balance, LLC**. As a coach, Sugerman says her role "is to challenge the client, offer other perspectives and options. I try to help them envision situations without obstacles so that they can move forward and bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be."



Michelle Sugerman
My Living
Balance, LLC

Whether you want to change jobs, lose weight or create a great relationship, there's a coach out there for you. Some coaches, like **Karen Ostrov, Ph.D., Konect Consulting, LLC**, specialize in specific areas. Ostrov's coaching focuses on



Karen Ostrov, Ph.D.
Konect
Consulting, LLC

leadership development and communication skills for executives and people in management positions. Others, such as Sugerman will coach you on any area of your life that needs work.

When it comes down to it, all coaches end up working with many aspects of their clients' lives. Barone, who focuses primarily on health, fitness and weight loss as well as business coaching, says that, for example, "if you want to create a romantic relationship, other areas of your life have to change too, coaching addresses all of you."

Coaching **VS** therapy

Some people aren't sure when to hire a coach versus when to go to a therapist. According to Pat Barone of Catalyst Coaching, LLC, the big difference between coaching and therapy is that "therapy tends to look backward. Coaching tends to look forward. If you feel that there is something in your past that you are holding on to that hasn't been absolved, that's when you need therapy. You need coaching when you know it's time to move on."

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This is true for any change you want to make; Ostrov points out that even though her practice is very specialized, "if you're having trouble communicating at work and it's creating a problem, it can affect your life at home, your relationship with a significant other, all sorts of things. So if you can fix that issue at work, you're going to fix a lot of the other problems in the process, too."

Dee Relyea, Career Life Coaching, LLC echoes these sentiments. While her specialty is working with people in career transitions, "it's really about the greater goal of life fulfillment. It's more about helping people find ways to express their natural talents and abilities through their work and life, to feel good about who they are and the unique gifts they bring to the world." To her, coaching around work is just one angle from which to approach this broader goal.



Dee Relyea
Career Life
Coaching, LLC

Coaching techniques

Coaches use a variety of techniques to help their clients figure out exactly what is keeping them from achieving (or sometimes even setting) their goals, and how to move past those stumbling blocks. Many use assessments, which can provide an "opportunity for someone to answer the questions in a way that's easier to be completely honest," says Sugerman. Assessments help the coach get a better idea of what their client needs and how to best work with them, as well as providing great insight for the client about herself.

Relyea, certified in both the Meyers-Briggs Type Indicator® and the STRONG Interest Inventory®, says "a lot of people discount all the great things that they have inside of them. They look at the results and say 'Wow, I never knew this part of me was important or special' and that's a tremendous realization."

During a coaching session, the coach typically asks a lot of questions to help the client come to her own realizations and answers. *The coach will help the client to set goals and decide on actions to be taken. Often there is "homework" to be done, which can take the form of setting a goal, making an important phone call, journaling or even creative projects such as crafting a collage around the idea of what you're working on.*

"Accountability is another great thing that coaches provide — it's someone to keep you

Finding a coach

Some things to consider when looking for a coach:

- Ask yourself what you want to work on and what kind of coach you think you need.
- Interview several coaches — many offer a free 30- or 60-minute introductory session.
- Ask about their background, expertise, training and certifications.
- Get all of the necessary information — how much do they charge? How frequently will they meet with you? Do they coach in person? Over the phone? Via e-mail?
- Make sure you "click" with them. Your coach needs to be someone with whom you feel very comfortable talking.

moving in the direction you've said you want to move," says Sugerman, who also emphasizes that the coaching process is "very individual — everyone is unique in what they need."

Going through the coaching process does require some preparedness and commitment. While the frequency and number of meetings between coach and client varies, it usually takes a few months to work through a particular issue and create change. But it's time well spent.

"Hiring a coach is a way of making a commitment to yourself to make change for the better," says Relyea.

Adds Barone, "If you're getting a coach on your team, you have to expect to be challenged, to grow and learn, to understand yourself better. Coaching is always about movement and change — the natural forces of life. Instead of fearing them, if you're in the coaching process, you're learning to embrace them and bring them into your life in a joyful way. It's a proactive process."

And from Sugerman, "There's a lot of empowerment and self-acceptance — you can pursue what you want with more fervor now that you understand more about yourself."



As the daughter of Dee Relyea, Madison writer Nicole Relyea has been around coaching for several years and has seen firsthand the great things that can be achieved with the help of a coach.



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