



Finding a Coach

Questions to consider before engaging a Coach

Pam Richardson, Principal of Coaching and Mentoring International and best selling author of "The Life Coach; be the person you have always wanted to be", recommends that before engaging a Life or Business Coach, the following issues need to be considered.

How long was the period of study that they undertook?

Pam recommends:

- A minimum of sixteen weeks is essential. This can be a combination of weekend seminars and home-based study. However it is essential that they have undergone a practical aspect of their training supported by experienced Coaches acting as mentors.
- Did they have to give a practical demonstration to an experienced Coach of their ability to Coach in order to qualify?
- How much written evidence did they have to produce of their understanding of the Coaching philosophy and process?

Is the training course externally accredited by the British Education System?

Pam recommends:

Qualifications can include:

- Open College Network (OCN) - Level Three (A Level equivalent)
- National Vocational Qualification (NVQ) – Level Three (A level equivalent)
- University Degree or Masters Degree

How long have they been practising?

Pam recommends:

- Newly qualified Coaches from an authentic training provider should be able to Coach competently. However, if you want a Coach with a specific area of expertise, then requesting a complimentary session is the best way to assess their ability.

Which coaching organisation are they a member of?

Pam recommends

- Leaders in the field are Coaching and Mentoring International

Does this organization operate with a Code of Practice and Ethics Committee?

Pam recommends

- It is important that you are able to see a copy of the Coaches code of Conduct and are able to see the detail of what they are asked to adhere to
- Check what access the Coach has to an Ethics committee, and what kind of issues the committee will deal with.

What Continuous Professional Development (CPD) do they have to undertake on an annual basis to continue to have the authority to practice? How is their CPD portfolio verified?

Pam recommends:

- CPD is on-going learning that is self-generated. A minimum of 30 hours annually is normal consisting of further courses attended, conference calls, case studies, books or research papers reviewed and a Coaching log etc. CPD is usually collected in a portfolio, which can be requested by the Coach's membership organisation for checking at any time.

What type of support is available from their organisation for Continuous Professional Development?

Pam recommends

- A Coaching organisation can provide regional support groups, co-Coaching, qualified mentors and qualified

supervisors to ensure the continued ability of a Coach to practice effectively.

What coaching philosophy does the Coach adhere to?

Pam recommends:

- Non Directive Coaching - a Coach will not advise, suggest or tell you what to do, but will work with you to achieve your own individual solutions.
- The Spectrum of Coaching can go from non-directive to directive. A directive Coach will act more as a mentor, and offer advice from their own experience.

What do you - the client - want to gain from this process?

Pam recommends that you think about the following points:

- Am I ready and wanting to move on in my life? Am I prepared to make changes in my life? Am I committed to taking action?
- If you are considering training as a Coach - do I have the time, energy and commitment to train as a Coach? Don't let funding hold you back necessarily as good courses can access Career Development Loans.
- Which style of Coaching would I prefer? You are in control - tell your Coach how you want to be supported to achieve your goals. Some people want gentle encouragement and others want to be challenged to keep on track.
- What am I looking to achieve from Coaching? - What type of Coaching do I want - telephone, face-to-face, email, a combination?
- What am I prepared to pay for Coaching? Fees can vary enormously. Anything from £30 - £120 per session lasting from 45 minutes to one hour.
- For a properly qualified, experienced Coach expect to pay around £250 for 4 X 40 minutes sessions
- How often do I want to be Coached? Weekly is usual to start with, but every 10 days or fortnight works too. What suits you?
- How long do I want the session to last? A session can range from 30 minutes to an hour or more. Again what suits you? Experience helps you to work out what is best for you.
- How long do I want to be Coached for? You may not know the answer to this initially, but the point here is that the Coaching relationship lasts as long as you want it to. If you are asked to sign on for a certain period of time before you start, decide whether this is what you want to do, otherwise take it session by session.

What should you do if I have concerns about the coach or coaching I choose?

Pam recommends:

- Speak to your Coach and invite them to receive your feedback. A good Coach is always keen to understand how best to serve you.
- If you are still concerned, suspend the Coaching relationship while you contact the organisation that they belong to and ask to speak to an Ethics Committee member.
- There are no standards for training, regulations or governing body for Coaching yet, although Coaching and Mentoring International are working hard to establish minimum standards and further regulation.