

Horrible Coaches or Not

This is in response to Ryan Underwood's comments on the Fast Company Blog about looking for "horrible" coaching stories. About a dozen people responded, mostly feeling attacked. I decided on a different approach, and educational approach.

Ryan,

Interesting discussion here. There are those offended, those who feel attacked, and those who want to further the discussion. I think I would fall into the last category.

I have been coaching for a dozen years or so and in private practice for about three years. I serve on the Ethics and Standards Committee of the International Coach Federation and I am the incoming president of the Minnesota Coaches Association. The industry is still young and finding its way. There have been some great success and some disturbing trends. We are on path of self regulation with two organizations the ICF (International Coach Federation) and IAC(International Association of Coaches) leading the charge.

It is generally felt by the coaching community that the fly-by-night coaching & fly-by-night coach certification programs are dangerous to the profession and community and we are concerned by their proliferation.

The ICF and IAC establish high credibility standards both in member coaches and the institutions that instruct their coaches. Both organization websites have links to accredited coaching programs that usually involve 1-2 years of training. Both organizations have a Code of Ethics and Standards that their coaches must abide by to retain membership, accreditation, and certification. (Codes:ICF IAC) Both have stringent certification processes. The ICF Ethics Committee has a yearly review of the code to strengthen the coaching industry and has a coach and has the ability to revoke credentials. Our goal however is to educate rather than punish such an offender and thereby educate the community. It is a process that works.

Onto your questions

You have a preponderance of positive comments about coaches by coaches. That is understandable since any coach worth their salt has been coached and/or is being coached - just like any other service industry, we use our own kind to get better. A coach is more likely to have better understanding and a relationship with the coaching process and is willing to share it with a reporter than a client (see early issues of privacy).

If you find a bad coach - FIRE THEM! And tell them why so they can learn. Same holds true for coaches - Coaches, if you find a bad client FIRE THEM and tell them why so they can learn and get the help or resources they need.

Are their bad coaches - Yes! Have I hired any - Yes! Did I do my due diligence before I hired them - No!. Was I ready for that coaches style - Perhaps Not. Does that make them bad coaches - Perhaps, as they did not let me know I might not be a good client for them. Does that make me a bad client - ABSOLUTELY, sometimes

(Side note with respect the TV show - there have been members of the house "clients" who have been asked to leave as they were not ready to take on the responsibility of changing their own lives. That is what is at the core of all coaching, especially life coaching - Taking responsibility for your life)

One of the things I emphasize with all perspective clients is to interview and get sample of coaching from at least three different coaches before choosing one or me. The magic of coaching is not in the coach or the client or in what is said. The magic lies in the relationship between the client and the coach. Who do you want to be in relationship with? Who do you want to grow with?

If you want a successful coaching relationship Find a coach -

- a) That you feel comfortable with
- b) That you feel wants to be in relationship with you (not needs to be)
- c) That really gets you to think and reflect in new directions
- d) That stretches the heck out of you.
- e) That has a track record or credentials that mean something to you (testimonials, training, certification, experience, whatever matters to you)
- f) That you can say NO to and that can say NO to you.
- g) That has a coach of their own and/or has been coached recently - nothing like walking the talk.

Lastly I would extend the same offer of James - Take on a coach yourself to work on your life for 3-6 months and blog on it if you like. Give me a call and see if we would make a good match if not, I can suggest a few more.

Matthew Rochte

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