

So You Want To Be Coached? FAQs

What is professional coaching?

The International Coach Federation (ICF) defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential, which is particularly important in today's uncertain and complex environment.

At Hayden Lee Coaching (HLC) International, we want to do more than *maximize* client potential; we want to empower clients to actualize their *unlimited* potential. All HLC coaches are trained, certified, mentored and abide by the ICF guidelines, the highest standards of professional coaching.

Coaches honor the client as the expert in his or her life and work and believe every client is creative, resourceful and whole. Standing on this foundation, the coach's responsibility is to:

- Discover, clarify, and align with what the client wants to achieve
- Encourage client self-discovery and increase self-awareness
- Elicit client-generated solutions and strategies
- Hold the client responsible and accountable

This process helps clients dramatically improve their outlook on work and life, while improving their leadership skills and unlocking their true potential.

How can you determine if coaching is right for you?

To determine whether you or your company could benefit from coaching, start by summarizing what you would expect to accomplish in coaching. When an individual or business has a fairly clear idea of the desired outcome, a coaching partnership can be a useful tool for developing a strategy for how to achieve that outcome with greater ease.

Since coaching is a partnership, ask yourself whether collaboration, other viewpoints, and new perspectives are valued. Also, ask yourself whether you or your business is ready to devote the time and the energy to making real changes. If the answer is yes, then coaching may be a beneficial way to grow and develop.

How is coaching distinct from other service professions?

Professional coaching focuses on setting goals, creating outcomes and managing personal change. Sometimes it's helpful to understand coaching by distinguishing it from other personal or organizational support professions.

Therapy: Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict within an individual or in relationships. The focus is often on resolving difficulties arising from the past that hamper an individual's emotional functioning in the present, improving overall psychological functioning, and dealing with the present in more emotionally healthy ways.

Coaching, on the other hand, supports personal and professional growth based on self-initiated change in pursuit of specific actionable outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal or professional success.

Coaching is future focused. While positive feelings/emotions may be a natural outcome of coaching, the primary focus is on creating actionable strategies for achieving specific goals in one's work or personal life. The emphases in a coaching relationship are on action, accountability, and follow through.

Consulting: Individuals or organizations retain consultants for their expertise. While consulting approaches vary widely, the assumption is the consultant will regularly give advice, diagnose problems, prescribe and, sometimes, implement solutions. With coaching, the assumption is that individuals or teams are capable of generating their own solutions, with the coach supplying supportive, discovery-based approaches and frameworks.

Mentoring: A mentor is an expert who provides wisdom and guidance based on his or her own experience. Mentoring may include advising, counseling and coaching. The coaching process does not include advising or counseling, and focuses instead on individuals or groups setting and reaching their own objectives.

Training: Training programs are based on objectives set out by the trainer or instructor. Though objectives are clarified in the coaching process, they are set by the individual or team being coached, with guidance provided by the coach. Training also assumes a linear learning path that coincides with an established curriculum. Coaching is less linear without a set curriculum.

What are some typical reasons someone might work with a coach?

An individual or team might choose to work with a coach for many reasons, including but not limited to the following:

- Something urgent, compelling or exciting is at stake (a challenge, stretch goal or opportunity)
- A gap exists in knowledge, skills, confidence or resources
- A desire to accelerate results
- A lack of clarity with choices to be made
- Success has started to become problematic
- Work and life are out of balance, creating unwanted consequences
- Core strengths need to be identified, along with how best to leverage them
- A yearning for more purpose, meaning, and fulfillment

Within the partnership, what does the coach do? The client?

The coach:

- Provides objective assessment and observations that foster the individual's or team's self-awareness and awareness of others
- Listens closely to fully understand the individual's or team's circumstances
- Acts as a sounding board in exploring possibilities and implementing thoughtful planning and decision making
- Champions opportunities and potential, encouraging stretch and challenge commensurate with personal strengths and aspirations
- Fosters shifts in thinking that reveal fresh perspectives
- Challenges blind spots to illuminate new possibilities and support the creation of alternative scenarios
- Maintains professional boundaries in the coaching relationship, including confidentiality, and adheres to the coaching profession's code of ethics

The client:

- Creates the coaching agenda based on personally meaningful coaching goals
- Uses assessment and observations to enhance self-awareness and awareness of others
- Envisions personal and/or organizational success
- Assumes full responsibility for personal decisions and actions

- Utilizes the coaching process to promote possibility thinking and fresh perspectives
- Takes courageous action in alignment with personal goals and aspirations
- Engages big-picture thinking and problem-solving skills
- Takes the tools, concepts, models and principles provided by the coach and engages in effective forward actions

What does coaching ask of an individual?

- To be successful, coaching asks certain things, all of which begin with intention. Additionally, clients should:
- Focus on one's self, the tough questions, the hard truths and one's success.
- Observe the behaviors and communications of others.
- Listen to one's intuition, assumptions, judgments, and to the way one sounds when one speaks
- Challenge existing attitudes, beliefs and behaviors and develop new ones that serve one's goals in a superior way
- Leverage personal strengths and overcome limitations to develop a winning style
- Take decisive actions, however uncomfortable and in spite of personal insecurities, to reach for the extraordinary
- Show compassion for one's self while learning new behaviors and experiencing setbacks, and to show that compassion for others as they do the same
- Commit to not take one's self so seriously, using humor to lighten and brighten any situation
- Maintain composure in the face of disappointment and unmet expectations, avoiding emotional reactivity
- Have the courage to reach for more than before while engaging in continual self examination without fear