

Coaching , counselling, therapy and mentoring

Coaching draws its influences from and stands on the shoulders of a wide range of disciplines, including, counselling, management consultancy, personal development, and psychology. However, there are a number of core differences which distinguish coaching from its related fields and these are most easily highlighted through the metaphor of driving a car:

- A therapist will explore what is stopping you driving your car
- A counsellor will listen to your anxieties about the car
- A mentor will share tips from the experience of driving cars
- A consultant will advise you on how to drive the car
- A coach will encourage and support you in driving the car

1. Coaching is forward focused

Coaching always focuses on moving the coachee forward. Counselling may be more appropriate than coaching for, say, the newly bereaved who need to explore their grief over a period of time before moving on. Psychotherapy is a broad field and is usually sought in order to fix a particular problem arising from past trauma. Although the overall effect of both of these disciplines is sometimes to move the client forward, it is not their primary focus as is the case with coaching. While therapy may be about damage and counselling about distress, coaching is about desire.

2. Coaching is coachee led

Psychotherapists sometimes use techniques which lead and influence the patient and which could cause damage to the psyche if applied by an insufficiently experienced practitioner. However, coaches should be trained not to lead, judge, advise or influence their coachees. Their role is to respond to the desires and expressed needs of their coachees, and to operate with the belief that the coachee has all the required knowledge to solve his or her own problem. The role of the coach is thus limited to one of a facilitator, unleashing the coachee's potential.

3. Coaching is about improving performance

The focus of coaching is about enhancing performance. . In this sense, executive and life coaching are similar to sports coaching,. As a result, a key feature of coaching is behaviour, supported by cognition and motivation.

4. Coaching is not Mentoring

Mentoring, while having similarities to coaching, is fundamentally different.. A mentor has experience in a particular field and imparts specific knowledge, acting as advisor, counsellor, guide, tutor, or teacher. In contrast, the coach's role is not to advise but to assist coachees in uncovering their own knowledge and skills and to facilitate coachees in becoming their own advisors.

If you have found this article helpful and would like further information on any aspect of coaching, please contact www.associationforcoaching.com

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