

## Getting the Most Out of Your Coaching Experience

Just by having a coach and chatting with him/her on a regular basis, you will get plenty of value – you don't have to work especially hard for the benefits of coaching to occur. This is because the synergy that occurs as a result of the coach-client relationship is what makes the biggest difference to any well-motivated client. If you want to maximize the value of the coaching relationship, here are some ways that work very, very well. If some of the ideas are new to you, we can talk about them as part of our first several sessions.

1. **Focus on what matters most to you.** Ignore what you are *supposed* to want/do as well as other peoples' agendas for you. Include your goals, your life, your needs, what you want to improve, what's bothering you, an idea you have, a problem you are dealing with, even stuff that may not appear to be all that 'useful' to talk about. During your coaching session is one time when it's OK to be incredibly selfish.
2. **Focus on how you feel (or want to feel), not just on the results you want to produce.** Avoid the mistake of assuming that coaching time need only focus on achieving tangible or financial results; you need to take into account the intangibles, too. Results are important, but the feelings you experience during your day are equally important to your well-being and success.
3. **Be open to seeing things from a different perspective.** A flexible frame of mind is essential to exploring possibilities and methods for moving outside your normal approach to your career and your life. You will receive more from your coaching experience if you are willing to examine your assumptions, ways of thinking, expectations, beliefs, reactions and approaches to success. There are always newly developed concepts, principles, distinctions and evolutionary steps to learn. You won't be forced or even encouraged to make such changes (they are very personal), but you will be asked to at least consider different approaches and ways of thinking and try them out to see if they work for you.
4. **Sensitize yourself to what is going on around you and within you.** That is, expand your powers of observation and intuition by adopting different perspectives and managing potentially negative influences such as stress, caffeine, television, drugs, and alcohol. As a result, you will be more aware of subtle influences as well as new opportunities.
5. **Reduce that which drains your energy and strains your resources.** Coaching works because it focuses you in two areas:
  - You'll be helped to stretch yourself further, take more actions than you would on your own, and devise/implement effective strategies to get what you want; and

- You'll be identifying and reducing things that drain your energy and strain your personal resources, such as toleration of negative life/work factors, stressful situations, difficult relationships, pressured environments, and recurring problems.
6. **Give yourself more space – not just more time.** A successful coaching experience requires room in which to work. If you are too busy, rushed, stressed, or burdened, you'll be using coaching to push yourself harder, instead of using coaching to become more effective. Before (or immediately after) engaging a coach, seriously consider some life/work changes, including placing some projects on hold, reducing your roles, simplifying your day, reducing your goals, streamlining your work, installing personal management systems, etc. Simplification gets you the space needed to learn and evolve yourself beyond where you are today.
  7. **Allow yourself to be coached 24/7.** There are 10,080 minutes in a 7-day week. Coaching is occurring all during your week, not just during your coaching session -- such is the power of coaching and the coaching relationship. What you and you coach talk about during your sessions will resonate with you during your week, and some of the seeds or ideas that have been discussed will grow between sessions. All you have to do is to fully live your life between coaching sessions and be open to seeing what you and your coach talked about.
  8. **Think in terms of personal evolution, not just personal development.** You will be learning how to accomplish more with less effort (personal development). You will also be thinking differently and expanding yourself and your world (personal evolution). Perhaps surprisingly, evolving is a **skill** and it's worth learning because life itself is evolving, not just developing.
  9. **Be willing to invest in both your personal and business environments.** The value of coaching can be extended if you use part of your coaching time to envision the ideal environment in which to live and work. Where you live and how you live are key to your success. Who you spend time with and are inspired by can make the difference between success and failure. Be willing to invest some time, effort, and money in improving your environment so that you feel supported to be your best.