

What Is the Distinction Between Coaching and Mentoring?

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—*Confused in Recruiting, consulting, Southwest U.S.*

It is easy to become confused about coaching and mentoring. To add to the confusion, it is important to distinguish between coaching as a management skill set and professional coaching performed by a professional outside your company.

The similarities have more to do with the required skill sets that mentoring and coaching share. Both the mentor and coach use strong interpersonal and communication skills as well as intentional coaching skills. The objectives of the mentor and coach can be similar--to increase personal work-related effectiveness within the work/organizational culture. Both are organizational resources that can greatly enhance one's professional and personal learning and development and achievement of goals.

Characteristic	Mentoring	Coaching
1. Primary location	Internal	Internal or external
2. Primary role	Senior-level in authority or expertise within the company Longer-than-average tenure in company Can be on technical track with an interest in coaching or a management track with an interest in helping develop talent for his/her organization.	Professional coach with specific training applicable to professional coaching Certified in the use of work-related personal assessment tools
3. Experience and knowledge required	Broad organizational perspective around the company's structure, policies, processes, politics Similar future career direction Has broad, multiple work experiences related to person's interests	Past successful business experience Formal education/experience in organizational psychology and coaching Certified in the use of personal work-related assessments (behavioral, personal values, soft skills, job competencies, etc.)
4. Goals	Support success and advancement Support and advise	Support success and advancement Create greater self-

	<p>on career development</p> <p>Serve as a personal advocate</p> <p>Advise the person on best ways to maneuver the political waters of an organization and open doors</p> <p>Provide advice about strategies for best way to accomplish work goals</p>	<p>awareness around strengths and weaknesses and opportunities for learning and development</p> <p>Help people identify personal goals that support work goals</p> <p>Maintain focus on desired areas/objectives</p> <p>Help people accomplish personal development faster than if left on their own</p>
5. Methods	<p>One-on-one face-to-face meetings, lunch or dinners</p> <p>Casual setting</p> <p>Knowledge sharing</p> <p>Tells, advises, suggests, instructs</p>	<p>One-on-one phone or face-to-face meetings</p> <p>More formal structure with informal conversational tone</p> <p>Measurable goals established</p> <p>Personal talent/personality/soft-skill assessments</p> <p>Periodic meetings with boss</p> <p>Use of provocative questions to expand the person's universe</p>
6. Involvement of others	<p>May be directed to others to accomplish work</p>	<p>Typically includes boss of person being coached to articulate work-related goals and key accountabilities</p>
7. Scope	<p>Organizational and career maneuvering within context of current job and future potential</p>	<p>Personal and professional development within context of current job and future potential</p>

Using a combination of mentoring and coaching can be exponentially more rewarding to both the individual and to the organization over using just one or the other strategy. For more on reasons for employing a coach, please read [Why Employ a Personal Coach](#).

For more on mentoring, please see [Mentoring Matters](#).

SOURCE: Carl Nielson, principal, [the Nielson Group](#), Dallas, April 24, 2006.

LEARN MORE: An outline of eight steps in the coaching process is found [here](#). Also, some companies are finding that [group mentoring](#) can be a cost-effective alternative to the old one-on-one style.

Why Employ a Personal Coach?

Based on the writings of Thomas J. Leonard

1. A coach can help you increase your awareness.

- Self-awareness is your ability to feel, see and understand who you are, where you are coming from, what you are doing, why you are doing it, how you come across and what your body, spirit and mind are experiencing and telling you.
- Through self-awareness you come to know yourself and understand why things happen the way they do, including your own reactions, and you tend to make better choices.
- Without self-awareness, you tend to repeat patterns, ignore intuition and miss out on the rich subtleties that life provides.

2. A coach helps clients increase perspective by asking challenging questions, introducing paradoxes, distinguishing distinctions and co-creating stimulating environments that expand thinking.

- Perspective is both the angle at which you see yourself and life and the viewing height.
- "The higher the perspective, the clearer the view.
- Narrow perspective results in lack of context, single paradigm, self-referencing, minimal understanding, small choices, destructive reactions

3. A coach can help you discover and orient yourself and your life around your personal values.

- Values are personal priorities - that which is most important to you, for whatever reason.
- There are hundreds of values; each is valid.

- Values are thought to be genetically 'wired in' and thus virtually impossible to change during one's lifetime.
- Values are sometimes hidden by unmet needs.
- Discovering one's values affords alignment and integration and reduces life stress.
- When values are clear, fulfillment occurs.

4. A coach helps you identify and satisfy your needs.

- Unmet needs cause a person to spend up to 95% of their time/life expensively chasing people and events to get those needs met.
- Personal problems and delayed development occur when needs are treated like options, instead of like true needs.
- Needs are not personal; they are just needs.
- Needs are satisfiable once they are discovered.
- There are hundreds of needs; pick 3 or 4.
- When you satisfy needs, you have more time and more space to enjoy your life.

5. Coaching works because it creates a wide enough gap so that the person has a reason to change, to go for something or to evolve.

- Humans default to the familiar, even if ineffective or proven not to work.
- If you want to change, make the need, cost or opportunity for the change compelling, really compelling.
- Changing your environment can quickly give you something worth doing.

6. A coach helps you release restricting roles, integrate larger/evocative roles and operate independently from roles.

- Many people define themselves by roles.
- Roles then dictate thinking, priorities and behavior, sometimes at great cost/loss.

- Roles are tribal in origin and thus survival-based.
- You are more than your roles in life.
- You can become role-free and yet fulfill your obligations.

7. A coach can help you see where you are being driven/controlled; a counselor or therapist provides recovery assistance.

- Addictions and compulsions eliminate or significantly reduce your ability to choose.
- Addictions/compulsions choose for you.
- There are **many** more addictions than "just" alcohol and drugs.
- As life becomes more complex and stressed, addictions and compulsions provide welcome numbing and diversion but at a high price.

8. A coach can help you resolve emotional damage and/or assist you in putting yourself in situations and relationships with others who don't trigger you emotionally; a counselor or therapist provides methods and expertise for healing emotional scars.

- Past events leave permanent memories and scars, both of which dictate future behavior.
- People, situations and events trigger us emotionally.
- People 'close down' or have 'open wounds' as a result of past events.
- Terrific opportunities are missed/avoided because of fear of potential pain or failure.

9. A coach helps a person to develop their own traditions and replace tribe with community.

- People do things the 'old way' because they get a sense of identity and inclusion from those who also operate this way.
- If one goes against tradition, the "tribe" rallies to convince or exclude them as a perceived threat.
- Rituals and traditions work better as choices, not self-defining requirements.

10. A coach helps you make the most of your personality type.

- Personality type is genetically 'wired in', culturally reinforced and difficult to change.
- There are many ways to measure and describe personality types.
- Usually, it's best to fully accept your natural tendencies and leverage them to your advantage rather than trying to fight yourself.
- The more you know about how you operate, the easier it is to accept yourself and others.

11. A counselor or therapist provides methods and expertise to help you accept and integrate upbringing/family influence; a coach can leverage integration.

- First 2 years of life dictate a lot of your way of thinking, perceiving, relating.
- How you were brought up reinforces certain tendencies, both good and bad.
- Familial expectations and rules become deeply imbedded and can take years/decades to release.
- Rejecting your upbringing/family usually doesn't release their effects on you; better to accept and integrate all that occurred and then evolve.

12. A coach can help you reorient around values.

- Assumptions save us time and filter information, so they come in handy...to a point.
- Beliefs are assumptions we've internalized.
- Problems occur when we:
 - Accept other people's assumptions without thinking.
 - Hold on tightly to our assumptions; they don't evolve.
 - Base our life on our assumptions; we don't evolve.

13. A coach has scores of life models that expand a client's thinking and awareness and thus their choice of goals and approach to reaching those goals.

- We tend to do what we do because we've seen other people do it and it worked for them.
- And as life becomes more complex, we tend to rely on models and real-life examples to provide the picture we need to get from A to B.

14. A coach can help you channel your desires in a direction that is advantageous to you and helps you meet your unmet needs.

- Healthy desires are genetically 'wired in' and attempts to suppress them can be personally expensive.
- Wants usually come from unmet needs.
- It is important to understand the source and nature of your desires (intellectual, physical, emotional and/or sexual).
- Desire is energy and can be channeled to your advantage.
- Desire is a wonderful thing, not a bad thing.
- If desires become unmanageable, then they have become compulsions.

15. A coach provides the proper amount of support and structure that empowers vs. restricts or overwhelms.

- The more personal and professional support we have, the more we can achieve with less stress.
- In an increasingly chaotic world, structure provides a necessary framework, personal attention and a system to get things done.
- As humans become more creative and experiment more in new areas, endorsement, encouragement and collaboration provide a baseline of support.

16. Coaches can help you clean up your motivators so they are healthful, natural and good for you.

- Humans are easily motivated with the most fitting carrot or stick; if in doubt, ask the person.
- Your carrot is not my carrot; your stick is not my stick.
- The more evolved a person is, the better inspiration works as a motivator.

- We are subject to subliminal and primal messages via advertising, all of which reduce our ability to choose freely.

17. A coach can help you see your vision and express it.

- The clearer the vision, the more focused a person can be.
- To have a vision, one needs to have a sense of possibility far beyond reasonable thinking.
- A vision is one of the most powerful motivators and evolvers.

18. A coach can help you make the most of what you have.

- If people have the necessary money, time, space, network, style, knowledge, access, technology and/or experience, they can accomplish almost anything.
- Without a critical resource or tool, people fail or don't even start.
- We all have hidden talents and resources we don't know we have; these can be leveraged.

19. A coach can help you simplify, customize or expand your lifestyle.

- Having a lifestyle is something that people are either striving for or are eager to protect.
- The process of designing and choosing a lifestyle is a new experience for most people.
- Lifestyle has a life of its own. Sometimes, lifestyles limit our evolution; sometimes, they accelerate our evolution.
- The people your lifestyle attracts to you will affect who you are becoming and what you choose.

20. A coach can help you craft and build the perfect personal environment for you.

- Where you live, who you live with and how you live affect your goals, personal direction, assumptions, expectations, dreams, desires and rate of personal development.

- Improve or personalize the environment and different priorities naturally emerge.
- People have far more choice and permission today to live exactly where and how they wish.

21. A coach can help you design the perfect work environment for you.

- Where you work, who you work for, the industry in which you work, who you work with, your career/job function, physical work place/office, how much support you receive at work and your compensation/incentive plan greatly affect your quality of life and what becomes most important to you, both professionally and personally.
- Improve or change your work environment and you evolve professionally and personally.

22. A coach helps a client to integrate and use fear instead of being used by fear.

- Fear examples: emotional loss, spiritual deprivation, success or physical harm.
- If fear of failure is stronger than fear of not succeeding, you take fewer risks than you can actually afford; humans tend to be "loss averse."
- Fear can be a good thing, not a bad thing. The trick is to use your fears to advance yourself.
- Sometimes it is best to give into fears rather than trying to overcome them.

23. A therapist helps a person identify issues around unclear identity that may originate from a psychological problem or source. A coach can help a person clarify their attitudes, values and interests and apply those toward activities that bring meaning and fulfillment.

- Symptom: One is overly influenced by external events or influential people, a.k.a. 'anchoring.'
- Synonyms: Doormat, low self-esteem, chameleon, co-dependent, low self-worth, spineless.

- It's not unusual - or necessarily bad -- for people to not know who they are; you can still be happy.

24. A coach helps a client think "bigger picture." Left to think about experiences alone, most people tend to focus on a single fact, element or event rather than the bigger picture.

- People do this because the fact, element or event is clearer, more understandable or fresher in their mind, thus they have their arms around it.
- The bigger picture requires contextual thinking, an embracing of uncertainty and additional personal RAM.

25. A coach can help to fill in the pockets of ignorance that we all have.

- Ignorance is the state of being uninformed, unaware or uneducated.
- We're all ignorant to a degree, especially in a highly creative and specialized world.
- To keep up with new information, concepts, technologies and strategies, you have to be highly connected with others who are well-connected.
- A strong, diverse network = reduced ignorance.
- Ignorance = missed opportunities.

26. A coach helps a client to get clearer on what they most want, not what they should want, could want or used to want.

- Preferences usually come from a combination of influences.
 - People are more willing to trust their preferences, even if not logical, over someone else's perspective of what they should do.
 - Influence-based choosing is a skill set that includes intuition, inklings, wants and whims.
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Mentoring Matters

Corporations are ramping up formal programs that pair seasoned managers with up-and-comers. **By Ed Frauenheim**

Among the latest trends in leadership development is a tactic as old as Socrates and Plato: mentoring.

Corporations are ramping up formal programs that pair seasoned managers with up-and-comers, experts in the field say. Such programs are among the tools companies are using as they strengthen succession-planning efforts and transform them into broader talent development programs.

Fostering one-on-one relationships in effect replaces how it was done a few decades ago, when bosses informally took rising stars under their wing. It's a practice that declined in the go-go 1990s, but has ancient roots, says Wayne Hart, a senior faculty member at the Center for Creative Leadership training facility in San Diego. "It's a return to the wisdom of apprenticing," he says.

Hart says key benefits to mentoring include company-specific guidance and having a supporter who can open internal doors, "kind of like an advocate."

Preliminary data in a study on succession planning by Aberdeen Group researcher Katherine Jones show that 41 percent of firms have mentoring programs with higher-level executives or emeritus employees.

Companies can go too far in structuring mentor programs, says Jerry Hunt, management professor at Texas Tech University. In particular, he warns against top-down pairings. "Programs seem to work better if the protégés pick the mentor or have something to say about who the mentor will be," he says.

About two and a half years ago, apparel firm Kellwood launched a succession-planning program in which five senior executives serve as mentors to high-potential managers. About 30 promising junior executives have been placed in the "talent pool" at the firm in Chesterfield, Missouri. It employs about 30,000 people worldwide and owns brands including Phat Farm and Sag Harbor.

Every quarter, mentors spend two to three hours with each of their five or so charges. A mentor might sponsor the junior executives for senior positions, talk with them about how to handle current business issues and discuss what they've learned in training sessions.

John Short, Kellwood's director of organization development and employment, says the mentoring relationships, along with quarterly conversations among top executives dedicated to talent issues, have helped lift the company's internal hiring rate for vice president positions and above from 10 percent to about 30 percent last year.

It also is triggering a cultural shift at Kellwood.

"It's begun to sow the seeds for more of a coaching-mentoring approach to talent development," Short says. "Typically, our industry is pretty impatient, and expects people to come to positions fully developed."

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