

Move forward...

Hire a coach

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Debra Illingworth Greene

Thinking about changing careers? Need to lose weight? Craving more balance in your life? Hoping to climb the corporate ladder? The goals might sound vastly different, but the means to reaching those goals could be the same: Hiring a coach.

First, some clarification: Coaching and therapy are very different. "Therapy looks back and assumes there is a diagnosis," says Pat Barone, CPCC, of Catalyst Coaching LLC. "Coaching assumes that you are perfect, have all the answers and moves you forward ... Just like in sports, if you want to perform at a high level, you need a coach."

Mary Kay Aide, M.A., of This is Your Life Coaching LLC has a 20-year background in counseling, which she says is helpful, "but coaching doesn't really get into the emotional piece. I don't deal with analysis—you are who you are."

So, if you are who you are—and you're perfect—how can a coach help?

Career coaching

"I help people find the work they love," says Keri Coffman-Thiede of Amaze Yourself Coaching, who has a psychology degree and worked in the fields of counseling and recruitment before receiving her coaching training. "Some of my clients have gotten disconnected with how they came to their field. I get them re-connected to their passion. It's mostly about clarity about what matters, then taking action on that."

With each new client, Coffman-Thiede holds a face-to-face "discovery session," which may last up to two hours. Typically, the coaching continues for three months with weekly coaching sessions of 30-45 minutes. "We end each session with an assignment to take action, and an inquiry—a question for them to ponder throughout the week." Coffman-Thiede and her clients often exchange e-mails between coaching sessions.

"It's not the same process for everyone, because you use what the person brings," she says of her clients. "We go underneath the surface questions and trust that the client really knows what they want. I'm always listening for when they light up, get enthusiastic or their voice changes. You take them to their experiences and help them become conscious of it. You do that by asking lots of questions."

"It's so important, I think, that people do what matters to them," Coffman-Thiede continues. "When you're ready to be doing more than just getting by, just making a living, it's time to see a coach."

Finding balance

Mary Kay Aide's coaching niche is in helping clients—mostly women—find balance between their professional and personal lives. "I work with men, but they have different issues," she explains. "They don't feel responsible for both work and home, plus ownership of the kids' schedule. Women have a harder time because we're caretakers. We're good multi-taskers, but it's hard."

Like Coffman-Thiede, Aide has a basic coaching process that is flexible to fit each client. The five-step process is fluid, says Aide. "We touch on each stage then go back and go through them again more deeply." Those steps are:

1. Finding vision. What would life be like if it was perfect?
2. Looking at values and priorities. Do the client's priorities match her behavior?

3. Letting go of the guilt. Clients have to believe that they deserve balance and that they're worthy of this process.
4. Taking action. A client may need to learn to say "no," practice what she wants, de-clutter her life and let go of what's not important.
5. Being nice to oneself. Sometimes clients need to delegate more at work and ask for more help at home from family.

Aide says that, ideally, this process takes a year. During the first weeks of coaching, she may meet with a client weekly but by the end of the process a monthly phone call or e-mail check-in is all that's needed.

"My favorite part is that people feel so good about changing," Aide says. "It's nice to see the growth and the changes. It happens so much faster than in therapy and it's not as painful. It's a lot more fun and playful; you're always moving forward."

Moving up

The coaching provided by [Karen Ostrov, Ph.D.](#), of [Konect Consulting, LLC](#), is geared for the workplace. In fact, about half of her clients are referred to her by their bosses or human resource departments.

"I help people working in some capacity of leadership – at the top, or a level down," she says. "I help people run a meeting better, speak more succinctly. My real forte is in interpersonal communication."

Because of Ostrov's 25 years experience as a practicing psychologist (she closed her private practice one year ago) she has an extensive background in assessment tools. She may use a number of these tools on a client, "then we look at the results. I interpret the numbers and help people really understand them," she says. "Then we go on to the implementation phase—an action plan."

Unlike Aide, Ostrov works with an even number of men and women. "Some of the men I work with wouldn't go to therapy...but there's no stigma to talking to an executive coach, especially when the company has hired me."

Ostrov works with her clients for six to 12 months and starts to see changes in three to four months.

Along with helping people at the top, she also coaches those who are being groomed for their next big transition. For example, she may help with leadership transition, getting information from a retiring CEO and passing it on to the incoming CEO.

"Executive coaching can really shorten the learning curve," Ostrov said.

A mental approach to weight loss

Pat Barone meets with clients who want to lose weight. She also offers corporate wellness programs, presents seminars and leads women's retreats.

Her path to coaching started with her own weight loss—80 pounds that she lost five years ago and has kept off. "People started asking for advice," she says. First she became a certified weight management consultant, then a certified personal trainer. "I just kept adding to my skills. When I heard about coaching and knew it would work between the ears, that was the final piece of the puzzle. I had a mental approach and my clients really started making big changes."

Although her focus is on weight loss, Barone sees more than physical change in her clients. "When you're working on yourself, you see other personal changes for the good—it's very organic," she says. "People start to think differently about themselves. It just naturally leads to a better place in life."

Debra Illingworth Greene is editor of *Wisconsin Woman*.

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The growth of coaching in Madison

"Coaching has grown exponentially in South Central Wisconsin in the past four years," says Pat Barone, program chair for the [International Coach Federation-Greater Madison Chapter](#). "When I joined ICF in

2001, there were six or seven of us. Now the local organization has more than 35 members, all of whom are bringing excellent coaching to their clients throughout the region.”

ICF is the largest worldwide professional association of personal and business coaches, with more than 8,000 members and 132 chapters in 34 countries. The association regulates and governs the coaching industry and accredits coaching schools. Barone said that soon the ICF will require coaches to meet ICF standards of accreditation in order to call themselves “coaches.”

If you’re thinking about hiring a coach, Barone suggests:

*Ask about the coach’s training, their experience in the area of expertise, their length of time as a coach, and if they are credentialed or certified through ICF or through their training school.

*Ask how many clients they serve, and ask specifics about how the coach works (weekly versus monthly, phone or in person, 1/2 hour appointments or 3/4 hour, etc.)

She also said that no coach should ever work based on performance—for example, if you boost your sales by X amount, you pay your coach X amount or a percentage.

To learn more about the International Coach Federation visit www.coachfederation.org.

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