

What is 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.”

Coaches honor the client as the expert in their 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 self-discovery, elicit client-generated solutions and strategies, and hold the client responsible and accountable. Coaching is about creating positive change.

In comparison:

Coaching	Mentoring	Consulting	Therapy
Focuses on creating new thinking to support the future.	Focuses on skill development and knowledge sharing.	Focuses on issues of capacity and provides strategy, structure, and methods to solve them.	Focuses on healing trauma from the past.
Equal partnership where the coach supports and challenges thinking and actions. The client is responsible for their own answers and solutions.	A teaching-oriented relationship where the mentor is responsible for providing guidance and advice.	An expert service provider relationship where the consultant is responsible for providing recommended solutions.	A mental health professional (therapist) provides both thought provoking questions and recommended solutions.
Value is in the coach' expertise in the process of inquiry and listening and in their skills to facilitate awareness and change.	Value is in the mentor's experience and their ability to transfer knowledge to others.	Value is in the consultant's ability to evaluate a problem, design a viable solution and guide others in implementing the solution.	Value is in the therapist's ability to diagnose and treat therapeutic issues and emotional blocks.

