

How To Know If You Need A Coach

(and the results you should expect)

Steve Konig

Who Needs A Coach?

On a scale from one to ten, if you bolt out of bed each day feeling like an *eleven*, anxious to pour yourself into your day because you know where it's all headed - you may not need or want a coach.

On the other hand, if you...

...are already pleased with your progress and excited about the future but believe that you have more potential and simply want to access and apply more of it – you may want to consider a coach.

...are not achieving the results you seek as quickly as you would like, or have lost the zest for a career you once found invigorating... *you would probably benefit from a coach.*

...are so caught up in your day-to-day actions, obligations, and routines, so focused on your daily to-do's that you've lost sight of the big picture.... *then you probably need a coach.*

...are feeling overwhelmed by continuous stress and tension to the point where you are immobilized by the pressure, *then you definitely need a coach, (and perhaps a doctor).*

Coaching is appropriate - and often times, necessary, when the tension for change is great enough that you know you have to do something – you may not know quite what, or you may know exactly what, but you are ready for a change.

Coaching is About Change

The first and most important consideration before entering into a coaching relationship is whether or not you are willing or able to commit to the process for change. Some people can't. No matter how intolerable things become, they would rather continue *getting what they're getting* as long as they can keep on *doing what they're doing*; In other words - change *nothing*. Unless you can commit to the process of change, a coaching relationship is not for you. Once you can open yourself to change, however, I would say you are already half-way there.

Coaching is About Sorting It All Out

If you know the area that you most want to improve you can begin to look for help in that specific area. For example, you may recognize you need help in marketing. *There are many ways to get to Kansas.* What type of marketing are you primarily interested in? It could be direct mail, telemarketing, seminars, referral marketing, etc. One resource may help you determine the marketing strategy - while another may be required to help you master and implement it.

If you aren't sure what area has the greatest benefit for you - an effective coach will help you to narrow your focus by examining your responsibilities and what you feel you can or can't control. Together you will recognize recurring patterns that led to similar outcomes and talk about why that is. With help from your coach you will then separate the things you want from the things you don't want, an exercise that, in itself, contributes greatly to a clearer understanding of who you really are. *And it's within that awareness that your passion, motivation, and desire for change are ignited.*

Important: You must be *excited* about where you are going; if you depend solely on discipline you will find the journey difficult and your accomplishments less fulfilling. Remember, most everything we do is a means to an end. Make yours a compelling one - one that you are personally passionate about achieving. Make it a point to spend more time thinking about a compelling future *and act on that thought in the present.*

Coaching is About Commitment

Making a commitment to coaching is no different than a decision to take other classes. Why am I taking the class? What do I believe the benefit to be? Is it important enough to invest the necessary time, energy and money required to enjoy the benefit? Will it be a lot of work or something I can naturally integrate into my habits and routine? How much of it will be work vs. fun?

Once you have the answers to these questions you are better equipped to make an informed decision. In fact, you should answer these questions about most of the activities you perform.

A Coach is Not a Mentor. A mentor is someone who shares his or her expertise in a particular area for the purpose of teaching something they already know. The relationship is generally not a formal one, whereas in coaching - it always is. In fact, it's mandatory for success. What I mean by formal is making the commitment to create the time to be fully with the coaching process where there are no interruptions or distractions, and to follow-through on all assignments. Tennis pros don't haphazardly train when they can *fit it in* to their busy schedules and still expect to make it to the finals. If you are paying your coach to help you obtain predictable results - you will need to be predictably responsible and committed to the process.

A Coach Does Not Have to Be an Expert in Your Field

A good coach needs to be an expert at *coaching you* toward the specific end you seek. Coaching is about sharing repeatable steps to accomplish something you want sooner, whether it is physical, mental, instinctual, financial, relationships, better health, etc.

The majority of our clients are already successful. They are very good at what they do and want to spend more time doing what they enjoy and what makes them money when they are working. Yet, many spend the bulk of their time on tasks that are not profitable or enjoyable. That means less time is available for those areas that are profitable and enjoyable, (i.e. high pay-off areas). A coach can help you spend more time on what really matters by providing the necessary tools to reduce, eliminate, or delegate the things that need to get done - but are not your highest and best use or critical to your success.

An Aside: I have been playing music my whole life and I am pretty proficient at it, but still use music teachers to improve. In some situations I can play better than my instructor, but she knows things that I don't, which accelerates my journey toward the end I seek. Could I learn it on my own? Of course, but I don't have the time or the energy right now to pursue the long path of trial and error. *Most of you, if you are committed and focused are going to arrive at a preferred*

destination. How long do you want to spend in pursuit of it, and what are the benefits of getting there sooner?

Simply put, good coaches help people to do things differently or better than they normally would on their own, in order to get something they want. They provide objective feedback to aid in the necessary clarity of thought that must precede appropriate and effective implementation, teach strategies to improve effectiveness, and are a supportive partner on the path to greater accomplishment.

First Things First

Once you commit to working with a coach, the first thing you will need to do is take a long hard look at where you are and what you did to get here. You and your coach will examine prior cause. You arrived where you are based on past experience and beliefs that you adopted as a result of those experiences. Your belief system determines everything you do. It determines who you become. You must learn to re-create your beliefs, not run unconscious programs generated from a past that is gone forever.

“Our past holds our future hostage“---Stephen Covey

Example: Many organizations like to hire successful athletes. Does a history of great tennis or basketball have a direct relationship with the job? Probably not, but it is an indicator of past success. People who have regularly experienced success have an expectant attitude about future success. It is a belief about your self that is worth more than almost any skill. How would you feel if your surgeon, even though the best trained in the world, began your operation doubtful in her ability to successfully complete it?

What you need is a *recent history of wins*. They don't have to be big - but they need to be steady and aimed toward a compelling end. Every time you attempt something that you have not done in the past there is a leap of faith, so it is crucial that you have the confidence that you can accomplish something that you have not done before.

Not all coaches start with a sorting process, but I believe the good ones do. Once the sorting is done, goals are set, and you can begin to confidently focus on the high payoff improvements for your better future.

Coaches can help in many areas of life and business. Some are specialists and some are more general. Regardless, a few things that a *good coach* can offer you are as follows:

Provide the exercises and dialogue that help you to understand yourself and what you seek to accomplish. Even though you may be focusing on a specific area of interest, a coach can help you tie the work you are doing to a greater purpose in your life. When people can clearly connect the two, the work becomes more meaningful and enjoyable.

Help you to focus and hold you accountable for doing what you say you will do. Many people know what to do, but are having difficulty managing the distractions and finishing what they start. The process must help you learn to set and consistently achieve goals and objectives.

Teach or assist you in developing the skills you need to be more effective in the specific areas of your life and business where you wish to improve.

Sincerely desire your success. It is a much more satisfying experience when making changes in your life to have a trusted partner to go through it with you. It shouldn't be "you go and do this", rather, "let's go do this together."

Support and teach you to establish a new mindset that allows you to think differently about situations and circumstances that arise. Most thinking is based on past programming that may or may not be serving you.

"I have had a lot of tragedy in my life. Most of which never occurred." ---Mark Twain

Help you become more organized. Whether it's organizing your desk or your priorities, organization is how we make order from chaos.

Help keep you enthused, motivated, on target, and passionate. Ultimately it's an inside job, but having a partner can make the lows and highs more beneficial. Every experience has a lesson. A coach can help you learn, even from mistakes, so you don't keep repeating the past.

Help you focus on what is working - rather than what is not working. What you focus on grows. Be careful of your inner dialog. Is it helping you, or are you running a program that has you convinced you that you lack value or the ability to reach your goals?

Often clients come to us already having considerable success, but due to ineffective thinking or lack of a process, acknowledge their wins too infrequently, seldom enjoying the most significant benefit, which is greater confidence and appreciation of themselves and their value to others.

Push you to break out of your comfort zone to stretch to new levels of accomplishment. Continually raise your level of commitment as well as comfort in your ability to step out and take on bigger challenges and projects.

Offer a time and space for you to think, ponder, plan, practice, and discuss. Most people are so busy taking care of business, family, and personal issues that they rarely take the time to think strategically about building a better life and business. A great benefit of participating in a coaching program is it allows you the time to focus - guilt free - on yourself.

What should I pay for coaching?

Ideally you should pay what its worth. This is a difficult question to answer because so much depends on you. I know of individual coaching programs that cost \$15,000 dollars per year. If you are earning \$250K or more per year and could increase your effectiveness by 15% and enjoy the benefits every year for the rest of your career, that's a pretty good return on your investment. You can also afford the investment in pursuit of your goal.

There are shorter and group programs that may be more appropriate and affordable for you (A few hours to several sessions) offered through associations or organizations that can cost \$200-\$500 dollars. They won't be as extensive or as personalized, but could be a good way for you to test the process and learn something about yourself. As always there are the extremes at both ends. Most people fall somewhere in the middle.

If you're going to invest more than \$1000 dollars, learn everything you can and talk to people who have been in the program. Prepare questions that you would like answers to in advance of your meetings.

If it is a personal program or large commitment of time or money, be sure to schedule a formal phone or face to face meeting to get to know the material and the coach or facilitator. If it is going to be a long term (several months or longer) period of time you better make sure you like or at least respect the person you will be working with.

Reason: At times you may receive some less than pleasant criticism and frank feedback. Some personalities and organizational styles just don't work together. You aren't looking for a shoulder to cry on, you want results, but you are looking for a confidant that you feel sincerely wants to help you succeed and you believe has some tools and processes to help you do so. *It may come in the form of tough love.* If you have doubts about the program or the person - keep looking until you feel excited and committed to the program and yourself.

So, who needs a coach? Probably most everyone - at one time or another. Even coaches sometimes need coaching. When we find ourselves doing less and less of what we love and more time being consumed by those things we *have* to do; when we're feeling overworked and underappreciated; lethargic about the day ahead of us or confused about where we're headed; when we have ceased to put "who we are" - because we no longer *know who we are* - into every sale, every encounter, and every aspect of our lives; or if we are feeling great and are simply ready to learn something new to help us to be better at a given task - coaching can be an invaluable step toward a better and more fulfilling life and business.

Our motto is: We help business builders collapse infinity to a point: *There are an infinite number of things you could be doing. Our job is to get you to do what really matters, personally and professionally first.*

Have fun helping more people enjoy the benefits of your good work while you create the future you most desire.

Steve Konig is a coach and president of Results Plus, a training and development company based in Cleveland, Ohio. He can be reached at (330) 225-0707 or at skonig@resultsplus.cc. Contact him for a complimentary Preferred Future Assessment or visit their website at www.resultsplus.cc for more information.