

What is Coaching?

Coaching is often compared to these other conversation-based tools:

- Mentoring
- Consulting
- Counseling
- Spiritual Direction

It is important to understand the distinctions between these other types of conversations/tools.

Definition of Coaching – ICF

The International Coaching Federation defines coaching as partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. The process of coaching often unlocks previously untapped sources of imagination, productivity and leadership.

We all have goals we want to reach, challenges we're striving to overcome and times when we feel stuck. Partnering with a coach can change your life, setting you on a path to greater personal and professional fulfillment.

Mentoring and Mentor Coaching – ICF

Mentoring happens when we journey with someone who is more experienced in a specific area and our goal is to replicate the skills they have in that particular area.

“Mentor Coaching for an ICF Credential consists of coaching and feedback in a collaborative, appreciative and dialogued process based on an observed or recorded coaching session to increase the coach’s capability in coaching, in alignment with the ICF Core Competencies.”

[https://coachingfederation.org/search?fwp_site_search=what+is+mentoring]

Definition of Consulting

Consulting is when an expert in a topic area shares their knowledge with another. In this relationship, the consultant is the one selecting the direction of the conversation with the agenda for teaching/delivering the knowledge being the driver. Consultants are often asked to give their assessment and advice regarding specific situations and challenges. In this relationship, the consultant has the ‘power’.

Conversely, in coaching the client selects the topic and the direction of the conversation. The client is seen as the expert of their paradigm. The goals, action steps, timelines and insights are drawn out of the client. In coaching the client is the ‘power broker’ in the partnership.

Definition of Counseling

Counseling is the provision of assistance and guidance in resolving personal, social, or psychological problems and difficulties, especially by a professional. [Google definition] In this type of conversation the client is typically asked to look backwards at something that is hurt or broken in order to process/fix it and be able to move forward. The counselor focuses on emotions and often gives advice and recommendations.

Coaching, comparatively, is more future-focused and solution-focused. Coaching works on distinctive goals and is based on client empowerment to name their way forward - not typically giving advice to the client.

Definition of Spiritual Direction

Spiritual direction is the practice of being with people as they attempt to deepen their relationship with the divine, or to learn and grow in their personal spirituality. The person seeking direction shares stories of their encounters of the divine, or how they are cultivating a life attuned to spiritual things. [Wikipedia]

Simply put – spiritual direction is very specific to contemplating the mystery and experience one has with the divine; a spiritual director, as conversation partner, will attempt to help the person they journey with name how they are hearing God, and will occasionally suggest spiritual exercises to help in this process.

Faith-based coaching centers on using the skills of deep listening and powerful questioning to help an individual name themselves as beloved of God, gifted by God and invited by God into God's work of loving and healing the world. Coaching helps the client live into their God-given potential in life!