



LIFE COACHING

THE ART OF COACHING THE GAME OF LIFE

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Pick a sporting game, any game. Tennis, golf, baseball, gymnastics, boxing, soccer, it doesn't matter what you pick. Now, in your imagination, see people playing that game, having fun, developing their skills, learning about themselves and others, increasing confidence, winning, losing, refining skills, winning as a team, pulling together for each other, and being coached.

Good. Now with that movie in your mind, zoom in on that last statement, "being coached." There you go. Now nudge it a little to the right. That's right. Now zoom in to frame just the coach and the team. As you do notice how the coaching can make all the difference in the world to the team's performance. Yet the coach isn't out there on the field or on the court. The coach doesn't actually *do* anything when it comes to the actual performance of that game. By this point in the process, the coach is in a cheerleading role, a meta-observer role, giving feedback role, and as a leader of the processes.

- So how is it that a coach can make all the difference in the world?
- When we transfer this to business, life, executive coaching, what does a coach actually do?

From *The Inner Game of Tennis* to the latest books on the field of coaching, the idea of having someone who understands *structure and form* over and beyond *content* has been taking the field of sports, executives, top sales performers, and now experts in every field of life by storm. Why? What's the appeal? What's going on with this?

Coaching an Olympic athlete enables us to clearly see that the coach has a very special expertise, not *of* the sport, but *about* the sport. Top coaches are, more often than not, not even in the same

ballpark when it comes to being able to actually *perform* the skill or expertise. When I used to coach gymnastics, the boys would frequently challenge me. “Let’s see you do it!” On strength tricks I’d give it a go, pulling myself up on the high bar and flying over it, but not on the flexibility tricks that involved flying through the air. Not anymore! I did it a couple of times and learned by lesson, paying for it in pain and stiff muscles for several days. Hyet I did not even have to. That’s because being an expert *in* a sport does not guarantee that the expert can coach it. Michael Jordan has demonstrated that for us.

What a coach does actually occurs at a higher logical level. Because it is *about* an expertise, it is at a higher level to the performance. It is at the level of structure and process. The coach has to have expert knowledge *about* the content. This *about-ness* makes the coach’s expertise a *meta*-expertise (“meta” means above and beyond one thing, and *about* it).

So it is with Life Coaching. The Life Coach’s expertise does not lie in the performance as much as in being able to *facilitate the best performance in the client* and empower the client to learn to do the same for him or herself. Life coaching is all about evoking the best in a client, in empowering the client to run his or her own brain, and in using the most cutting edge models for generating top-notch results.

In Life Coaching we utilize a special kind of psychology, not the kind that examines how people are broken and needs fixing. That’s therapy. We utilize *generative* psychology. This is not about fixing people or working on problems of trauma in the past, it is about generating new potentials, new resources, and new strengths. It is a positive psychology that’s focused on creating an orientation in life that aims for excellence. It’s going for gold. It’s seeking to be excellent (not “perfect”) in a particular area, health, relationships, career success, parenting, etc. All of this describes the very special kind of Coaching that NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) and Neuro-Semantics specializes in.

Today *Life Coaching* has come into its own as top men and women in all fields and areas of life know that the difference between surviving, being moderately successful and becoming incredibly successful often lies in the smallest refinements. That’s why they contract with a Life Coach to develop that difference that makes a difference. Today Life Coaches are coaching people in public speaking, negotiating skills, business acumen, relationship enrichment, health and fitness, or a particular excellence that allows their IQ and EQ (emotional quotient or intelligence) to come together in just the right measures to generate a higher level performance.

Life Coaching works by a special form of behavioral feedback. The Life Coach has been trained in how to provide clean sensory-based feedback that allows a person to see oneself as if in a mirror. This brings one to choice points and to the adjustments of one’s frames of mind. Such coaching operates also by a very intense and focused kind of conversation. It is solution oriented conversation. This conversation takes place *in the moment* and yet it has an eye on the future. That’s what makes it so powerful. It is an explorative conversation that is intense, robust, even fierce. It’s not for the faint of heart. The conversation seeks to get to the heart or structure of a situation with eyes wide open and with a non-judgment awareness.

This robust search for patterns with a non-judgment awareness describes a critical factor that distinguishes coaching from counseling or therapy. It takes a lot of ego-strength to be coached. Most people in counseling lack such; they are there, in fact, to develop more ego-strength to face reality. It is also the non-judgment awareness of *just witnessing* and cleanly and clearly perceiving what *is* without judgment that allows one to receive feedback.

When *Life Coaching* takes a *freestyle approach*, it's almost like a stream of consciousness conversation and so follows the mental-and-emotional energy wherever the client chooses. It tracks down (or up) the levels of the mind discovering the Matrix of Frames that make up a person's mental-emotional structure. Master Coach, Michelle Duval says that Life Coaching can also take a *process approach*. When it does, there will be a specific set of experiences that the Coach will put the client through. The experiences are like drills. They facilitate the discovery of resources, the realization of new insights, and the connecting of things for greater alignment and congruency.

In the game of life the ones who win do so because they have learned the skills, discovered the rules, practiced, and have developed the right kind of attitudes. And as with sports, even when you are at the top of your Game, there's always more refinements for greater fun, success, and achievement.

Meta-Coaching

Way back in 1972, Tim Gallaway, a tennis coach, began coaching "*the inner game* of tennis." It was the mental-emotional game that allowed top athletes to play the outer game more effectively. Today this has developed into a new field, Neuro-Semantic Coaching, which specifically focuses on training coaches for *Meta-Coaching*. Neuro-Semantics refers to how we humans get *meaning* (*semantics*) into our very neurology (neuro-) so that they are motor programs and muscle memory. In terms of coaching, Neuro-Semantics provides a Cognitive-Behavioral Framework so that the Coach operates from a tested model rather than a hodgepodge of techniques.

Are you ready to be coached for the game of life? Are you ready to coach others to win at the Game of life and to enjoy the process? That's what Life Coaching is all about.

Author:

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