

## **Eight Tips for Choosing the Best Coach for You and Getting the Most Out of It**

Here are eight tips for selecting the best coach for you so you get the most out of the experience. Pick and choose the ideas that work for you and your organization. You may also have ideas that you want to add. The basic message here is: be your own advocate. It is up to you to get the right coach and get the results you want.

1. **Interview several coaches:** Engaging a coach costs time and money, so interview prospective coaches carefully. Prepare questions ahead of time and know the kinds of answers that will work best for you.
2. **Chemistry counts:** Make sure you feel comfortable with the coach and that your personalities mesh. Listen to your gut. Do you like this person? How do you feel about the coach's answers to your questions? How do you feel about the coach's questions for you? And most important, do you believe you can be non-defensive and open to learning with the coach?
3. **Professional training:** The coach's professional background is important too. Look for someone with a degree in psychology, certifications, and/or experience that is relevant to your needs, and at least five years coaching experience.
4. **Orientation:** Also known as philosophy or approach. How does the coach approach the coaching process? What comes first, second, and so on? Some things to listen for are:
  - *The coaching follows a logical sequence.* The medical model works well—assess, diagnose, treat, discharge. In other words, the coach should work with you to assess your developmental needs, frame them in terms that make sense for you, write an action plan and follow it to completion.
  - *Effective tools.* What tools does the coach use for assessment, development planning, and communicating? What tools does the coach use in order to support learning? Tests? Report cards? Checking in with others? Books? Videos?
  - *Goal setting.* How does the coach set goals? Learning goals are best when acquiring new skills, while SMART goals are best when you already have a degree of competence. SMART stands for: specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-based.
  - *Monitoring and measuring progress.* Ask, "How will we know if the coaching is working? What will success look like?"
  - *Getting others involved.* Coaches often tap others for input about you, your strengths and weaknesses, and your progress.
  - *Homework.* Do you like homework or do you prefer working in the moment? Ask what the coach likes to do.
  - *Termination:* Coaching often begins with an endpoint in mind. Some psychologists say that you begin "termination" of therapy in the first session. When and how does the coach begin the termination process?

5. **Expectations:** Why do you want a coach? Explain your needs or expectations and make sure the coach can help you. Ask for specific examples of how the coach has helped people with similar needs. What did the coach do? How did the coach know the coaching was successful? How would the coach approach things with you?
6. **Referrals:** Good coaches know their limitations. They know if the fit is not right, if there are conflicts regarding values, or if their expertise does not meet your needs. If the coach does not specialize in your needs, what would he/she suggest?
7. **Cost and logistics:** How much will the coaching cost? What frequency, intensity, and duration does the coach work with? Don't assume that less expensive is better. Good coaches cost money because they provide real and lasting value.
8. **Coaches need to learn too:** Finally, ask what your coach has learned in the past six months that has changed his/her coaching approach or style.

Scontrino-Powell has some of the best coaches in the business and they can help you reach your goals. Call or email to schedule a free consultation: 206-841-5132 or [Jevon@scontrino-powell.com](mailto:Jevon@scontrino-powell.com).