

# LIFE COACHING



*As the second largest growing industry in the world next to IT, Life Coaching is becoming a sought-after solution to just about any problem or challenge. Complete Yoga looks at the discipline's various models and the "how" and "why" of its transformative effects.* BY BETH COOPER

The concept of life coaching is not new. While the modern discipline has gained in popularity over the past decade or so, the methodology behind it was sown more than two thousand years ago.

"The famous Greek philosopher Socrates can be called the first coach," says Marc Steinberg, founder and director of training of internationally accredited Consciousness Coaching Academy.

"He was known for answering his students' questions with questions. Socrates realised the importance of each student coming to his or her own conclusion in order to develop confidence and self-efficiency."

The word "coach", explains Marc, originates from 15<sup>th</sup> century Hungary

and refers to the village of Kocs, where fine transportation coaches were first constructed. Their purpose? To transport an individual from where they were to where they wanted to be.

Nowadays, the "coach" concept is a complex and robust industry, addressing the needs and issues of thousands of people, from all walks of life, across the planet.

## ADDRESSING A MODERN DILEMMA

"Life coaching became popular as a result of people's great need for transformation in their lives," explains Quantum Leap Coaching and Training Institute director Jennifer Des-Fountain.

"We all want to be happy and fulfilled in our lives. In the last eight to 10 years, the new millennium has brought massive economic and 'meaning' shifts for many people, creating a need for redefining their lives. We have a growing understanding that our happiness and fulfilment doesn't come from 'what do I have?' but rather from 'how, in each moment, do I want to BE?'"

In essence, a life coach highlights all the possibilities that help to mould and shape this process of self-awareness and self-improvement. Coaching is *not* managing, training or mentoring people and neither is it a form of therapy, Jenny says.

Managing involves making sure people do what they know how to do; training is teaching people to do what they don't know how to do; mentoring is showing people how the people who are really good at doing something, do it, and therapy is the one-on-one intervention that assists us to heal our past.

By contrast, she says, "the coach's job is to help people articulate their dreams, desires

**“The coach’s job is to help people articulate their dreams, desires and aspirations, help them clarify their mission, purpose and goals, and help them achieve that outcome.”**

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"Coaching is a future-focused and forward-moving, sustainable process of exploration and goal manifestation through questioning."

## HOW DOES IT WORK?

Typically, a coach works in partnership with the client (also known as the "coachee") to improve and enhance all areas of his or her life, business and career, says Marc.

"A coach works with the client to define where he or she wants to go and helps develop strategies for how to get there, whether it's about health, finance,



relationships, career, work/life balance or business performance.

"Coaching is based on the fundamental belief that people have within them all the potential resources they need to achieve the things they desire. Awakened these potentials and developing them into skills and powers is one of the higher ambitions of great coaching."

This is why many people are turning to personal or executive coaching, where the fundamental principles and techniques of coaching have been adapted to cater for

executives, entrepreneurs, professionals and people in the midst of growth and change, he says.

## TOOLS FOR TRANSFORMATION

There are countless self-help books, gurus and methodologies available today. What sets life coaching apart – and why has it the potential to be so immensely beneficial?

"The power of life coaching is that it always looks forward," says Verna van Schaik of the Exploration Academy.

"Rather than looking for the reasons 'why not', or into the past for the cause of learnt behaviours, we look forward, stay focused on what it is you want to achieve and then what ▶

WE CREATE OUR REALITY MOMENT BY MOMENT BY HOW WE THINK. THOUGHT IS SO MUCH MORE POWERFUL THAN WE EVER GIVE IT CREDIT FOR.

☞ LIFE COACHING CAN ASSIST US IN RE-AWAKENING THAT SENSE OF JOY AND PLAY – A WORTHY GOAL ON THE JOURNEY OF LIFE. ☞

you would need to let go of, acknowledge or decide in order to make that happen.

“This can frustrate clients, as they are used to their stories of ‘why not’ (and most times, they’re good stories) and are (not used to) listening to other people telling them what to do and when.”

As individuals, we are used to spending inordinate amounts of time and energy trying to ferret out the roots of our behaviour in the belief that once we know this, we can change it, says Verna.

Executive business coach Nicola Slingsby argues that leadership starts from within. Executive coaching, for example, focuses on working with leaders to become more self-aware, so that they’re able to connect with themselves and others more effectively.

“My observation is that leaders who are able to think, feel and act from a grounded and integrated centre are more effective and fulfilled.

“Based on this, they are able to build sustainable relationships, make a meaningful contribution to the business and make decisions from a place of clarity and wholeness, which has a direct, positive impact on bottom line results.”

In a nutshell, says Verna, coaching is about creating new habits of behaving (or

## DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIFE COACHING

**LIFE COACHING** Targets all areas of one’s life, not focusing on business but also not excluding it. Often life coaching is sought in order to review and/or find one’s true north, one’s true calling, one’s legacy.

**BUSINESS COACHING** Coaching on business related matters. Typically on performance improvement, change management and conflict resolution.

**EXECUTIVE COACHING** Focuses on leadership development and empowerment, coaching on entrepreneurial core competencies and life-work balance for the executive.

**SPIRITUAL COACHING** Focuses on the client’s inner worlds, inner discoveries,

*It’s important to differentiate between the various disciplines within coaching, since some people assume that they are one and the same – or professionals label themselves one thing, but teach or do another. Marc outlines the different types of coaching and what they aim to achieve:*

meditative practices and other spiritually related areas.

**HEALTH/WELLNESS COACHING** Coaching on health/wellness matters, i.e. weight loss, blood pressure reduction, stress management, fitness, balance, etc.

**CAREER COACHING** Here it’s all about either coaching on improving entrepreneurial core competencies or helping the client to find clarity, strategy and power to generate a career change.

**TEENAGE COACHING** Taking its cue from supporting and empowering the teenager to answer the question: “What if you could determine how your life’s going to turn out?” This coaching also focuses on helping the teenager to detach from the dependency on parents and develop an empowering attitude for themselves and authorities.

**RETIREMENT COACHING** This coaching focuses on

creating new possibilities of meaning and action for the time after one’s standard working life.

**TEAM COACHING** Team or group coaching is limited to a maximum of four to five participants. If the group is bigger, than usually it becomes more of a training process. Great experience in people dynamics and relationship handling is needed from a group coach. The focus of the coaching process is on the team’s mutually agreed upon goal.

**RELATIONSHIP COACHING** Coaching that focuses on resolving relationship problems, from being a single not finding the right partner to a married couple who have manoeuvred themselves into a seemingly dead end.

*The benefit of any coaching experience is that regular coaching sessions keep one on track and are a powerful means for implementing change much faster than going it alone, explains Marc. 🙏*

being) that support you in where you want to go. Habits have created both the life you have and the consequences you experience when you engage with the world.

To create lasting change, you need to start changing how you interact with the world. A new habit can start with something as small as taking one minute before responding in an argument; stretching that to two minutes and finally, the entire argument!

Certified Martha Beck life coach Betsi Pendry, founder of Come Out And Play, points out that life coaching is like yoga is for the spirit and acts as a powerful de-stressor.

“It’s also like Salsa for the soul, as it’s energising, freeing and can bring back a sense of play, fun and abandon which we often lose once we become adults.”

One of the most insidious aspects of stress, she posits, is that we often think we can’t do anything about it. It becomes “the way things are” and we often believe that we have to adapt to what’s causing us stress.

Life coaching, then, can assist us in re-awakening that sense of joy and play – a worthy goal on the journey of life.

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