

Focus on Management: Psychotherapy and the Nature of Coaching

Psychotherapeutic tactics may be useful in the coaching of corporate executives so long as the parameters of the training remain within the context of business rules and goals. For example, a manager seeking individual coaching is not looking for emotional healing or relief from psychological pain, but rather he or she wants to achieve a higher level of performance or satisfaction. The coach's task is to support the executive in taking actions that will move him or her toward their goal, to overcome whatever hesitancy may be inhibiting progress.

Delivering Service

The delivery of service to busy executives must be according to an arranged schedule and can be conducted in person, by telephone, or even via e-mail. The executive must be free of the constraints of a rigid schedule, yet he or she must benefit from momentum of a progressive treatment, so as to remain committed to improving the very skills that instigated the initial coaching sessions.

The Relationship

A proper relationship for coach and client is that of partner. The coach does not relate to the client from the position of an expert, authority or healer. The relationship is one of equals who together develop the focus, format and desired outcomes of their collaborative work. The client does not relinquish responsibility for creating and maintaining the focus and format, just as the coach does not take full responsibility for them.

The Results

Coaching is designed to help clients improve their learning and performance, thereby enhancing their quality of life while improving performance. Clients work with their coach to address specific challenges they wish to overcome. The results, while varying with each client, most often lead to a level of liberation for the client and increased management effectiveness.

Time Frames

Coaching concentrates primarily on the present and the future, as opposed to traditional psychotherapy for emotional healing, which may focus on past events and their impact on the present. While coaching may use certain information about the client's past to understand where he or she is at present, it does not depend on resolution of past issues to move the client forward.

Emotions

A coach assumes the presence of emotions and emotional reactions to life events, and that (to a certain degree) clients are capable of expressing and handling their emotions.

Coaching, again unlike traditional psychotherapy, is not aimed at healing emotional pains.

Advice

A coach may at times offer advice, opinions and suggestions, yet the client is always free to accept or decline what is offered and has the ultimate responsibility for action and advancement. A coach may also make a request of the client to promote action toward the client's targeted outcome.

The Relationship to Psychotherapy

Coaching honors the clients as the experts in their respective professional life. The professional coach seeks to partner with the clients in their struggle with their individual, professional and organizational challenges. Coaching does not take the place of psychotherapeutic work.