



UNIT-1 Life Coaching Basics

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this unit the learner will be able to:

- ✓ Discuss the purpose and objectives of life coaching
- ✓ Understand the reasons clients consult with life coaches
- ✓ Understand the primary duties and responsibilities of the life coach

Unit 1

Life coaching basics

The field of life coaching concerns the relationship established between a coach and a client, designed to help the client both establish and achieve relevant goals. Like a coach in the more traditional transportation sense, the life coach likewise helps individuals from all backgrounds reach their intended destinations. Irrespective of their current position and objectives, the client's journey is guided by the support and advice of the life coach.

At its core, life coaching exists to help people build awareness of their capabilities and their potential. After which, it's a case of using whatever resources are available to fulfil this potential and reach for bigger and better things. Life coaches provide support and consultancy across a wide range of personal and professional areas – everything from personal relationships to career development to simply getting more satisfaction out of the smaller things in life.

While a life coach provides consultancy to a degree, they are not considered consultants in the traditional sense. This is because the job of the life coach is not to provide solutions or easy answers. Instead, a life coach will encourage a client to find their *own* answers, empowering them to achieve their goals. Ultimately, the life coach believes that every individual has it within themselves to grow, evolve and become a better version of themselves.

They don't 'tell' them how to do it – they provide them with the support and resources they need to make it happen on their own.

The three primary elements of life coaching are as follows:

- 1. The client.** Each and every client working with a life coach has a unique personality, a unique outlook and a unique idea of what constitutes personal or professional development.
- 2. The life coach.** The job of the life coach is to help the client establish meaningful objective and build the drive and motivation to achieve them.
- 3. The Designed Alliance.** The designed alliance is the understanding and design of the relationship between the coach and the client.

Why is Life coaching so effective?

There are several reasons why life coaching has the potential to be remarkably effective. Primarily, life coaching is effective because everything centres on the client and their objectives. Again, life coaching is about helping clients address their issues and find the answers they're looking for – not to simply offer an easy solution on the proverbial silver platter.

Here are some of the reasons life coaching is considered so effective worldwide:

- A. Dedicated time and focus.** One of the reasons why life coaching is so effective is the way in which it provides the client with the opportunity to focus heavily and exclusively on their development. Rather than fleeting consideration on a random basis, they're able to sit down and dedicate valuable time and attention to improving their lives.
- B. Two minds are better than one.** The life coach is effectively an experienced and empathetic individual to 'bounce' ideas and inspirations of. Consulting with a life coach brings two brains into the agenda for double the benefit.
- C. The mirror effect.** It's often said that a skilled life coach can help you see yourself from an entirely different perspective, one that may give you a better impression of who you really are.
- D. Objectives established.** It can be difficult to achieve anything if you do not decide what it is you *want* to achieve. Goal-setting being an important part of the life coaching process.
- E. Accountability.** Once objectives have been established, it's up to the client to take responsibility for ensuring they are achieved. All of which encourages accountability.
- F. Structure and systems.** Over time, the affirmative actions taken by the client to achieve their objectives becomes second nature. Effective actions turn into structured habits and systems for continuous growth and development.
- G. Fulfilment and satisfaction.** Life coaching isn't only about addressing dissatisfaction and identifying issues. It's also about taking satisfaction in your strengths, your achievements and your potential.
- H. Out in the open.** It's amazing how much easier it becomes to address an issue, once it has been brought out into the open. Simply hearing yourself say something that needed to be said can be enormously liberating.
- I. Privacy and discretion.** Everything that happens at every life coaching session remains 100% private and confidential. The perfect place to discuss issues you might not have the confidence to bring up elsewhere.
- J. A fresh start.** Many clients who visit with life coaches talk of the kinds of breakthroughs that give them a clean slate to work with. After which, the only way is up.

The Designed Alliance

The designed alliance refers to the efforts undertaken by the coach to make sure that the relationship they develop with the client is strong, professional and appropriate. It also involves creating the ideal physical environment for each coaching session, in order to encourage the client to feel comfortable, confident and free to discuss anything they wish. Also referred to as the creation of a “safe space” for the sessions.

These are the elements of a designed alliance:

1. **Same page.** In order for any program of coaching to be successful, it is essential that both the client and the coach or are the same page at all times. Or to put it another way, neither contributor knows more than the other, or is ‘in charge’ of the session. For this same page relationship to happen, the client and the coach must know threethings:
 - A. Where both the coach and client are in the client-coach relationship
 - B. Where the client currently is
 - C. Where the client wants to go and what they want to achieve
2. **Confidentiality.** Confidentiality amounts to confidence – the confidence to talk about anything and everything in a safe environment, which will never leave the confines of the room.
3. **Safe space for ideas and emotion.** It is also important for the coach to create an environment in which the client feels free to express their feelings and emotions. They must know all at all times that the coach is not there to judge the client, but to help them progress.
4. **Safe space for the actual environment.** For obvious reasons, it is essential that the actual environment created by the coach is as comfortable and distraction-free as possible. Even the smallest distractions can have a negative impact on a life coaching session.
5. **Respect.** In the field of life coaching, respect works both ways. And a sense of respect can only be developed if both the client and coach are completely honest with each other and understand the purpose and objectives of the life coaching program.
6. **Magnificence.** This refers to the process of the coach effectively setting the stage for the client to ‘perform’, encouraging the natural emergence of the client’s magnificence. Again, this is only possible in an environment of trust and honesty, where the client feels free and empowered to take risks.

Establishing a successful life coaching relationship

The process of building strong relationships with clients begins at the very first moment of contact. If anything, it's those all-important first impressions that can make all the difference.

A strong client-coach relationship lays an important foundation for everything that follows. There are seven different components of the successful life coaching relationship, which are as follows:

- 1. Description of life coaching.** First and foremost, it is essential that the client has an accurate understanding of the purpose and objectives of life coaching, along with their own requirements and expectations accordingly.
- 2. Limitations of life coaching.** They must also fully understand the limitations of life coaching – i.e. what it cannot achieve the kinds of issues life coaching cannot address.
- 3. Acceptance of clients.** Every life coach has their own unique experience-level and areas of expertise. If a client isn't the ideal fit for a coach, they client should be advised to seek support elsewhere.
- 4. Choosing a coach.** It's also down to the client to ensure they choose a coach they can work with. If they simply do not 'click' with the coach to an extent that encourages and reassures them, they may wish to take their business elsewhere.
- 5. Contract.** The formalities of the 'business' side of the deal should be addressed as early as possible, so that the client understands their obligations and those of the coach.
- 6. Payment.** Costs vary exponentially from one life coach to the next, but in all instances should be clarified at the earliest possible stage with no grey areas remaining.
- 7. Designed Alliance.** The final step in the process is the establishment of the alliance between the client and the coach, as detailed above.

Some Common Types of Coaching

Professional coaching is sought and provided for a wide variety of reasons. Some of the most common types of coaching provided by professionals worldwide include the following:

Career Coaching

As the name suggests, career coaching focuses on helping individuals determine what they want to get out of their careers. Goals and objectives are established, after which a roadmap is developed to work towards their successful achievement.

Group Coaching

Life coaches don't always work with individuals on a one-to-one basis. It's also common for the life coach to consult with larger groups – both in professional and personal contexts alike. Businesses routinely hire life coaches to deliver motivational speeches and work with members of the workforce (in groups and solo) on their professional development.

Peer Coaching

This is an alternative form of job coaching, wherein peers within a group are trained to discuss and explore professional problems and workplace issues with one another; asking questions, offering feedback and generally supporting each other. A coach may be brought in to oversee or facilitate the group.

Performance Coaching

Another popular type of life coaching in professional environments is performance coaching. This is where employees throughout an organization are encouraged to build a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities, along with anything that may be standing in the way of their optimum performance and potential opportunities for improvement. After working directly with members of the workforce, the coach then helps supervisors, managers, business owners and so on create effective training and development plans.

New Leader/Onboarding or Transition Coaching

Individuals recently hired or promoted to positions of leadership may be provided with specialist transition coaching services. The objective being to ensure that the newly appointed leader understands their responsibilities, while smoothing the transition to a leadership role and establishing professional objectives.

High-Potential or Developmental Coaching

If an individual within an organization is identified as having high potential for development and advancement, they may be provided with a specialist course of coaching accordingly. This is the help them build a better picture of their potential and build their confidence to strive for bigger and better things.

Targeted Behavioural Coaching

It is not uncommon for an individual of high value to an organization to be held back by one or more counterproductive behaviours/characteristics. Targeted behavioural coaching can help identify and address such issues, in order to encourage continuous growth and development.

Succession Coaching

Those who specialize in succession coaching help ready senior management candidates for promotion to the highest-level positions within an organization. Succession coaches are required to have a very specialist knowledge base and skills set, with extensive experience in this specific area of professional coaching.

Presentation/Communication Skills Coaching

Anyone who conducts or takes part in presentations, speeches, lectures or seminars of any kind could benefit from this kind of coaching. Along with helping clients become more confidence and self-assured public speakers in general, coaches help clients build a better understanding of how others perceive them, while identifying areas for improvement in their general communication skills.

Personal/Life Coaching

One of the most common reasons for reaching out to a coach is to simply gain more satisfaction and fulfilment from everyday life. A uniquely challenging field, life coaches are often approached by clients who do not know exactly what they want to achieve and have no specific objectives in mind. Nevertheless, they feel a sense of dissatisfaction with one or more aspects of their life and are seeking professional support thusly.

Health Coaching

One of the fastest growing specialisms within the field of coaching, health coaching is more scientific than sociological or psychological. Health coaches take a more practical or hands-on approach to the services they provide, often working with professional athletes and sportspersons. The health coach is therefore required to have an extremely advanced knowledge-base and extensive experience in the relevant sport/activity.

Further Reading:

- ✓ Battley, Susan. *Coached to Lead*. Jossey-Bass, 2006.
- ✓ Canfield, Jack, Mark Victor Hansen, and Lee Hewitt. *The Power of Focus*. HCI, 2000.