



How to prepare for your first life coaching session

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If you are new to life coaching and you have made an appointment with a life coach or are planning to make an appointment, it can be a bit daunting. The first time we try anything can be hard. It can be scary. It can sometimes be easier to just not do anything. For most life coaches, including myself, rest assured that you just need to pitch up. You don't in fact need to prepare anything. Just turn up to the appointment. Most coaches, myself included, will explain how it all works and guide you through the process. So, while I do get quite a few people asking me what they need to prepare, or what to expect, you don't need to prepare anything. Just come as you are. You cannot say anything wrong (this is not a business meeting and you are not on trial), your grammar does not matter, complete sentences don't matter, it is about you being there and the coach then deals with whoever and whatever shows up. If you are afraid, stressed, confused, or in any other state, it doesn't matter. You are not required to perform. To get the best from life coaching, you want to be real. But in fact, as long as you show up, you can show up as you like.

So, you don't need to prepare anything if you don't want to. You can arrive in whatever emotional state you are in, and with whatever is happening in your life at that time. Sometimes it can help the coach if you are not in a good space, as the coach then has more information about you and what you are struggling with, to work with. The more real and authentic you are in coaching the better it works.

However, some people do want to prepare. They don't want to just arrive and see what happens. If that is you, then below are some ways in which you can prepare for life coaching.

1. Everyone can benefit from life coaching in some way, because none of us have perfect lives, and most of us have some life skills we could learn to improve our lives. Don't think your problem is not serious. Don't think you will waste someone's time. If you were thinking of seeing a life coach, then the chances are good that you will get some benefit out of it when you do.
2. Unless the number of sessions and the frequency have been discussed before you make the appointment, that will usually be discussed in the first session. As the client you have some say in this. A certain number of sessions can be recommended, but you also have a say in how often you can attend coaching and what you can afford.

3. In preparing for the first session (which I reiterate you don't have to do for me), you want to think about what is not working in your life and what you want to work on. This can be more than one thing. If you have not done it, then we will do it in the first session. However, if you do want to prepare, then come with some notes you have made around what is not working for you in your life and how you want your life to be different to what it is currently.
4. You can also prepare in terms of thinking about how you want your life to be. What do you want different in your life? How do you want your life to be different? In other words – what does the future – a future that you want – look like. You can also write some notes on this.
5. If you have ever had any coaching, counselling, advice, or therapy, then think about what approaches work best for you. If you know of specific ways in which you learn best, then tell the coach that. If there are methods from your past experiences that have definitely not worked for you, then jot those down as well. The coach will in any event look at what works for you, but if you know how you work best with someone, then let them know what your previous experience has taught you.
6. Remind yourself that coaching, as with counselling and therapy, is not about judgement. When I coach we don't do right or wrong. Obviously if you steal or murder that is wrong, but our sessions are never about that. We work on the principle that you have done what you have thought was the right thing to do in your life, and it is more about does something work for you or not, than if something is right or wrong.
7. Most coaches will also tell you that the process is totally confidential. No one is allowed to see your notes and no coach can discuss you or share any information about you with anyone. If you are unsure, then ask the coach about confidentiality.

It can be quite scary coming for a first session, especially if you are someone who is not very confident or gets anxious. Know that coaches have seen people in a wide variety of situations and are not going to think you are odd or unusual, or a complete mess. They will see you as a normal person going through something difficult, or even perhaps someone who is not particularly struggling at the moment, but wants to work on getting better at doing life. If you start getting nervous or overthinking, then tell yourself to stop. Just relax. If you do find the experience to be horrible or not to your satisfaction, then that is a sign to find another coach. This should be your safe space for you to feel comfortable to talk about anything, and work without judgement and criticism on whatever you want to.