



How to Select a Life Coach

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Life coaching is an investment. And when you are deciding which stocks to buy or where to invest your money you do your research. You don't just pick the first name that pops up. You don't just go with the first person someone suggests unless they have had a great experience with that person. If you pick your investment wisely, then, as with the stock market and other investments, you can get a considerable return on your investment.

What you want to consider in choosing a life coach:

1. What is the background of the life coach? Life coaches come from a variety of backgrounds, but generally you want someone with an understanding of the psychology of human beings and how they learn and grow, you want someone with a knowledge of success principles and how to achieve success, and you want someone with empathy and good communication skills.
2. You want to know what the qualifications are of the coach. You also want to get an idea of how much time they spent studying coaching and if they were required to do any practical work in the process of getting certified as a life coach. You can often find this information on their website, or you can ask the person directly.
3. You want someone who is successful in their life. Or, at least you want someone who knows how to be successful. You would not pick a financial advisor who was bankrupt or in a huge financial mess (I hope). If you pick a swimming coach for your kids, you are going to pick someone who knows something about swimming. So, you need to pick a life coach who knows how to do life. That means they must be reasonably successful in life. Someone who has their life falling apart, is very unhappy, and failed all the time is probably not a great choice.
4. Having said that, let me also say that the better life coaches have life experience. When we are very young, we are usually quite naïve and stupid. We may think we know a lot, but life is a great teacher. And any person who has life experience has failures as well as successes. Often very good life coaches are people who have gone through hardships and challenging times. Who better to help other people get through their tough times than someone who has been there and knows what it is like, and has crawled out the other end.
5. A good life coach needs to do two things. One – they need to have empathy and be supportive. You want someone who will listen to you and get you. You also want someone who will challenge you. While often techniques from psychotherapy are used when appropriate in life coaching, you are not viewed as a person who is ill. In the same way that sports coaching is about getting you to be really good, and even exceptional if that is what you want at some sport, life coaching is not about helping you create a mediocre life. Life

coaching is about helping you do life very well, no matter what the external circumstances may be. You want someone who is supportive, and who will challenge you to be your best. And who knows how to do both at the same time. This is a delicate balance to achieve.

6. You need someone who you will feel comfortable with. In order to progress your life in the direction you want to, you need to be able to share a lot of information about yourself that you may not feel comfortable sharing with everyone. Coaches should subscribe to a code of ethics that includes confidentiality, and you should be able to ask coaches for the code of ethics they subscribe to. But, despite confidentiality, there are going to be people you are not comfortable sharing your difficult moments with. Sometimes you need to have a chat to the coach first before you know whether you will feel comfortable with them. If you need that, and it is not offered, then ask for it.
7. Your coach needs to listen to you and focus on you. This is not about what is going on with them. The session is about you and only you. You are not paying for a session for someone else to be the centre of attention. This can be quite difficult for some to detect because many people who attend coaching are themselves empathetic and caring and will often want to know that the coach is doing well. Be polite and answer questions appropriately, but the client is the focus of the coaching session.
8. While a coach will provide you with tools and techniques and methods to help you achieve your goals in life (and goals can include feelings you want to change as well as behaviour and results you want), you are going to learn about how to do your own coaching. Coaching is not just about helping you solve a problem. It is also very much about helping you realise the inner knowledge and skills and resources you have to help you succeed in life, and how to access and use these effectively. To this end, life coaching should help you feel more empowered and more capable to handle whatever comes your way. Coaching should help you solve challenges in your life, but it should also move you up a level in terms of the way you handle life.

All coaches will tell you that you get out what you put in. So, your coach is not going to do everything for you. You need to approach coaching with the mindset that what you put in is what you will get out. And what do you need to put in? You need to be real and honest about yourself. You need to do the actions. You need to speak out if something is not working for you. And most important, in this busy world of ours, you need to make the commitment to giving time to the process.