

THE ART &
SCIENCE OF
COACHING
PARENTS

*Building a Home-Based
Parent-Coaching Business*

Dr. Caron Goode

Founder, Academy for Coaching Parents International, LLC



The Art & Science of Coaching Parents

BY

Caron B. Goode, Ed.D. NCC, DAPA

Inspired  Living
INTERNATIONAL, LLC

Ft. Worth Texas

817.847.8758

www.AcademyforCoachingParents.com

The Art and Science of Coaching Parents

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Inspired Living International, LLC
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817-847-8758

www.AcademyforCoachingParents.com
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PART ONE

AN INTRODUCTION

TO PARENT COACHING

"Parent coaching, the newest self-help approach for overstretched parents, is catching on for several reasons. It is cheaper than counseling, with many coaches charging \$75 an hour and at least one Internet coaching service charging \$30 a month. It is usually done by phone, letting parents squeeze in sessions without hiring baby sitters or taking time from work. And it is capitalizing on the parental penchant for seeking secrets from pros - the tendency to call in the super nanny depicted on reality TV instead of calling your mother."

Belluck, Pam, "With Mayhem at Home, They Call a Parent Coach," *New York Times*,
March 13, 2005

CHAPTER 1

What is Coaching?

People pay coaches to help them reach their goals by advising, encouraging, and listening to them on a regular one-to-one basis. A coach is a champion, cheerleader and empowerment expert who challenges, stimulates, questions, and holds his or her client in positive regard. A coach takes the side of the clients and helps them set long and short-term goals, and holds them accountable to take necessary steps to achieve the goals from week to week. The coaching process enables people to lead lives that are more effective, and achieve what they want more quickly. Here is what two top coaches say about their field:

You have to have a plan and it has to be a plan that works. You should not settle for the mediocre in life. Coaching helps you set goals. I collaborate with my clients. I am on their side. As a coach, I help and strategize with my clients so they can achieve their goals. Coaching is about personal evolution, vision, what's next, what's now, and moving forward. It's about having standards, not settling for the mediocre in life, but looking and feeling your best.

...Annemarie Brown

Coaching is about listening, empathizing, asking questions and sharing love. It is very personal, very individual and case-by-case. People can turn their problems around. They can be whatever they want. They can have whatever they want. Coaching is about that process. You help them and it is an incredible job.

...Peggy Alvarado

Coaching started in the world of business.

Coaching as a profession is less than twenty years old and started in big corporate business, but also takes its models from counseling and psychotherapy. In 1992 at the first meetings of the International Coaching Federation, there were fewer than 200 members. Today this same Federation has a membership of more than 14,000 working coaches.

Business managers have always been “coaches” in that they help people clarify their goals and choose roles in the corporation that best suit their talents and strengths. Many life coaches, if they do not come from a background in psychotherapy, originally worked in business.

I worked in management for thirteen years in a Fortune 500 company. Human resource management is very similar to coaching. I didn't know I was coaching back then, but I was!

... Peggy Alvarado

Businesses paid the first coaches to guide new hires as they climbed the corporate ladder. A coach could be internal, someone who works for the same business as the client; or external, someone who is hired by the business as an outside consultant. These first coaches were called business mentors. A coach or mentor is an older person with a lot of experience in the same field of the beginner. The coach guides the new hire to set career goals, interact with other people, and choose the right projects to advance themselves. In the 1980s, businesses started routinely to hire and pay for more outside coaches.

Today, a business coach at the top of his field can earn as much as \$700 per hour, or well into six figures per year. Some large corporations

keep coaches on retainer, paying them so much a month to mentor a constant stream of new hires. A new trend is to hire a coach for a specific job, such as “Improve morale in the accounting department within a three-month-time period.”

Because business coaches work with each person on a one-to-one basis and take into consideration each individual’s personality and style, they are very successful in helping people achieve goals and move up in their careers very quickly. A coach expert listens within, has only the best interest of that particular client in mind. The relationship is confidential.

The coaching model was so successful on a business level that a demand arose for personal “life coaches” as well. A life coach or personal coach is a person who helps a client set goals for his or her future, determine steps to reach each goal, and cheer the person as he or she moved toward his or her definition of success. The goals do not have to be about money or career, but can be goals like “To become closer to my husband,” “To make time for painting,” or simply “To have more fun.” Like business coaches, a life coach usually charges by the hour and often works over the telephone instead of face-to-face in an office setting.

The average personal coach charges about \$100 per hour, but the range of fees is from a low of \$25 to a high of \$300. A personal coach at the top of the field can make in the six figures per year range, but the vast majority of coaches earn about \$20,000 to \$80,000 annually.

Coaching gets away from a medical model...

In 1992, Thomas Leonard started the first training institute for coaches. His “Coach University” trained people through teleconferences. In the same year, Laura Whitworth founded The Coaches Training Institute in San Francisco, which provided training through weekend universities. Whitworth’s association, the Personal and Professional Coaches Association, merged with Leonard’s International Coach Federation (ICF) in 1997. Today there are more than fifty training schools and 14,000 coaches. The ICF

certifies coaches, helps them find clients, and develops standards of ethics and practices for the profession.

Yet from the beginning of the coaching profession, there was a lot of overlap between psychotherapy and coaching. For one thing, many people entering the new field of coaching had backgrounds as therapists. Yet in time, coaching has moved away from the medical model.

Parent coaching is an empowerment model.

With psychotherapy and counseling, a client employs a professional with a degree in psychology or medicine. Often the sessions are held at the therapist's office. An insurance company may pay the bill. This is a medical model, in that the therapist has a "practice," is employed to treat people for their mental illness or personality disorder, and is paid by a third party. Psychotherapy is not coaching.

In coaching, the underlying assumption is that the client is well and resourceful and can handle his or her life. In psychotherapy, the assumption is to treat the symptoms and underlying causes.

For example, a client may enter psychotherapy because he gets into fights at work with his supervisors. After a few sessions in which he brings up his past and talks about his parents, the client realizes that he is repeating problems he had with his parents with his boss. In fact, he realizes that he has deliberately chosen a boss who reminds him of his father.

If this same client were to hire a coach, the coach would ask empowering questions and challenge his thinking about handling the boss issues. A coach does not delve into a client's past, but focuses on the present time, issue or goal.

Many coaches do have a background as therapists and are thrilled to switch from the model of fixing symptoms to empowering others to move ahead with life.

I was a licensed therapist, and I like coaching better. In coaching, the client is whole, resourceful, and ready for change. Yet, the model in therapy is that the client is broken.

...Mark Brandenburg

In coaching, the WHY is not important! Coaches deal with the HOW. Coaches intervene all the time with advice, encouragement and expertise!

As Coach Brandenburg said, “As a therapist, I used to only listen and never give my opinion. Sometimes I felt as if I could be replaced by a mannequin.”

Therapy is about looking backwards. Coaching is about working with today. We deal with what is now.

... Jill Herman

Coaches review a client's strengths and focus on them. The medical/psychological establishment focuses on problems and pathology. We look at wellness and not what is broken. If a coach finds a true pathology, the coach refers that person to a psychologist or other appropriate specialist. Troubled persons with long-standing problems may not think rationally and that is why coaches refer them.

In coaching, the model is that the client is whole and wants to achieve goals. He is open to advice and discussion, and looking to the future, not the past.

Coaching clients is for empowerment and fulfillment

The clients who employ psychotherapists want to improve their lives too, but they want to move from a place of unhappiness to a place of health.

The clients who employ coaches are healthy and happy people who want to improve their lives. They want to go from good to better.

...I prefer working with people who are together inside and want to move to the next echelon in their lives. They come from a place of “I can do better, I can be more effective. I am already fulfilled, whole and happy but I want to move to the next level.” As a coach, I am a sounding board. I provide accountability. They tell me their goals, and we set some steps to implement those goals. Then they are accountable to me that they did those steps this week.

...Natalie Gahrmann

Wouldn't the world be an incredibly effective place if we viewed each other as competent and knowing? Perhaps that is an ideal, and this ideal behind the parent coaching movement is the appropriate mindset and intention to help parents fulfill their roles consciously and parent effectively. Coaches have enhanced the concept of mentoring.

Traditionally, a mentor is an older person whom you trust completely. A mentor can be a trusted aunt or favorite teacher – anyone who takes a real interest in your development and success as a person. Human beings have always had mentors. The word “mentor” comes from Homer's Odyssey – Mentor was Odysseus's trusted advisor three thousand years ago in ancient Greece.

Odysseus trusted the old man named Mentor to take care of his household when he went on his adventures. Mentor took care of Odysseus's son Telemachus and his advice saved the boy's life several times.

Coaching may be a new profession, but three thousand years ago, Mentor was working as a coach in ancient Greece!

Summary of Chapter One

Coaching started in the world of American business in the 1970s. A coach works on a one-to-one basis with a client to help that person improve his or her life. Unlike psychotherapists who want to relieve their clients' pain or symptoms, coaches see their clients as whole and resourceful persons. They help clients set and reach their personal goals by keeping them accountable and motivated.

CHAPTER 2

What is Parent Coaching?

As we learned in Chapter One, personal coaching grew out of the coaching movement which started in corporate America in the late 1970s, in which businesses paid people to mentor new hires. As more and more people took training and entered the profession of personal coaching, the profession became more specialized. Thousands of personal coaches now specialize in one area or niche.

- ✚ Relationship coaching
- ✚ Marriage coaching
- ✚ Bereavement coaching
- ✚ Time Management coaching
- ✚ Christian coaching
- ✚ Career coaching
- ✚ Organizing home and office coaches
- ✚ Life Transition coaches
- ✚ Parent Coaching
- ✚ Attention Deficit Disorder Coaches
- ✚ Retirement coaching

.... And many others!

Parent coaching is a branch of personal or life coaching which is climbing in strength as a fast-growing profession.

Who is a parent coach?

A parent coach is a mentor who plays different roles – mentor, educator, teacher, and listener – but the primary role is as supporter and connector for parents who want assistance, help, expertise, empowerment, and confidence. The mottos of the Academy for Coaching Parents International are:

***"to empower and sustain loving relationships" and
"to make a difference."***

The first thing a coach does is establish a loving relationship with the client, who may be a parent, grandparent, caregiver or anyone who has hired a coach to help them better parent or serve as a more effective guardian or caregiver to children.

Parent coaches assist, help, inform, inspire, and educate. They provide clarity, reflection, and reality checks for parental illusion, and support a parent's intuition. They are responsive and responsible as they provide frameworks and structures for conversations around sensitive issues.

A parent coach may serve as a coach for a parent's personal confidence, or is involved with family relationships and parent/child issues. A parent coach is a mentor, not a doctor or therapist. A coach is a friendly person a parent can call with everyday problems. A coach provides encouragement and expertise, coaching and challenges.

Why should a coach specialize?

All human beings are more comfortable working with certain types of people than with other types. An enterprising person, let's-do-it kind of achiever, may not be comfortable with a coach who asks, "So how do you feel?" A goal-setting coach may get frustrated with a client who always asks, "Why?" or "Would you explain that again?"

You want to attract your ideal client, a person you genuinely like and can talk with in a comfortable and easy way. His or her problems should be a fit for your background and training. Some female coaches only like working with women. Some young coaches only like working with young people. The Academy for Coaching Parents International, LLC emphasizes discovering your personal style of interacting with people and the environment, as well as learning the ability to shift your style to accommodate your client's temperament.

Likewise, when you establish a parent coaching practice, your own values and experiences may come into play. For example, if you were a mother who worked outside the home when her children were younger, you will have a lot in common with other working moms. You will be able to address their desire to find more balance in their lives and more personal time for themselves. You will understand their concerns like, *How do I find a good nanny? How do I handle it when my child cries when I leave?* On the other hand, if you were a stay-at-home mom, you will easily understand a mother who needs to find mental stimulation or organize a playgroup with other moms.

Another reason to specialize in one area is that it is easier to develop your skills. If you specialize in parent coaching, you do not have to master all the material necessary to understand other areas of coaching like careers, or retirement or better development of personal relationships. You can concentrate on learning as much as possible about child development and behaviors. For example, you might help parents decipher what is normal behavior for a child of two and what is not.

You might specialize in family dynamics and parenting styles and techniques. It is almost impossible for one person to master all the material available in all areas of coaching.

Your profession becomes more interesting and exciting for you as a person if you are doing something unique to your personality and for which you feel passion. Your clients will sense that you are genuinely interested in their problems, because parenting is a subject close to your heart.

Richard Nelson Bolles is the author of the bestselling book about finding your career called *What Color is Your Parachute?* His books have sold millions of copies and he is the foremost expert on job hunting and career choices. Bolles believes that to succeed and enjoy your work, you must first find your passion in life.

Your passion is an activity in which you lose your sense of time because you enjoy doing it so much, and your passion should become your legacy. Losing a sense of time in an activity that you love is called being in the zone or living in the flow. The secret, Bolles says, is to get someone to pay you to do what you most love doing anyway. Finding your special niche helps you not only love your work, but also to become an expert at the top of your field. Many of the top coaches expressed how much they love what they are doing and if they could do anything in the world, they would do coaching.

Everyone has specific signature strengths that you have all your life. You love this ability, and it energizes you. Learning, teaching and coaching are my signature strengths. The happier you are the more time you spend in your signature strength. You are in the zone when you use that strength – you lose your sense of time. I feel that way when I am coaching someone.

.....Bobbie Burdett

Coaching energizes me. I love it. It is such an opportunity. Where a problem existed, now it is gone. I thoroughly enjoy coaching. Once I am in a session, it thoroughly energizes me and I leave it with more energy. I love what I do.

...Peggy Alvarado

It becomes easier to market your coaching if you specialize.

Many coaches not only specialize in parenting, but just one aspect of parenting.

Peggy Alvarado, a coach who has appeared as an expert on *Good Morning America*, says it is a good idea to limit your field. Ms. Alvarado's specialty is the beginning of parenthood. She enjoys working with mothers of newborns who are facing all kinds of issues such as "How many hours of sleep am I supposed to get?" and "How can I deal with the changes in my relationship with my husband?"

As new coaches begin their careers, they mistakenly think that it is not a good idea to specialize into one or two niches. They think that if they set up their new coaching business for anyone who wants to hire one, they will reach a bigger pool of clients.

Actually, the opposite is true. The more closely you target a certain group of people with specific needs, the more likely you are to attract clients. This is a classic principle of marketing and advertising.

For example, let us review how big companies market soap. Years ago, your great grandmother bought a bar of soap and used it to do dishes, wash clothes, bathe her baby, wash walls, and more. There was one kind of soap for all needs.

However, companies found out they could sell more soap if they made separate soaps for washing clothes, doing dishes, bathing baby or

washing hands and even washing faces separately. Each kind of soap had what advertisers called “a unique selling point.” Baby soap was gentle to baby’s delicate skin. Beauty soap sold to women as a way to moisturize skin and keep it wrinkle-free. Acne soap is for teenagers. Deodorant soaps make you odor-free.

Detergents used in washing machines remove stains on clothes and rinse out without leaving white residue on dark colored T-shirts. Dish soaps cut through grease. There are now special soaps for bathrooms, kitchens, mirrors, cars, and furniture.

The point is that professional marketers know you will attract more business if your product is unique and competes only with the ones in its genre. *The more you specialize, the easier it is to sell.*

You have less competition. Parent coaches do not compete with business coaches, career coaches.

You can come up with a unique selling point. Maybe you are the father of four teenagers – that alone helps to qualify you as a coach for parents of teens!

You can come up with ways only to reach the people interested in your service. In other words, you can develop your own “target market.”

You can market your specialty of coaching parents with teens by speaking at meetings of Teens against Drunk Driving or networking through your high school’s Parent/Teacher Organization.

Particularly on the Internet, you will reach more clients if you specialize. If a mother of teens does a search using the keywords “Parent Coach Teens,” names of coaches who specialize in teens will come up. If she does a search “Personal Coach,” she will hit thousands of competing websites.

Summary of chapter two

People specialize in one area of coaching because it is easier to market and build their business that way. Also, by concentrating on one or two niches only, a coach can better build his expertise and express his or her own signature strengths. Parent coaching is a specialty of personal (or life) coaching, but there are also smaller specialty niches within the field of parent coaching such as working only with parents of toddlers, teens, children with special needs, or with certain types of families, like single parents, immigrants or blended families.

CHAPTER 3

All Aboard the Parent Coaching Express!

Coaching fits with today's lifestyles

Perhaps you are a new mom who sleeps little and has many questions. You read your breastfeeding book while breastfeeding and snuggle with your partner while your new babe is wedged in your arms. You might call your best friend for a quick answer. However, whom do you call if you have a crisis of confidence, need help with scheduling, or find yourself amidst the newness of parenting? Most likely, you will call your parent coach who can guide you spontaneously over the phone. Your parent coach might also have training as a doula or a midwife.

Maybe you are a professional woman who works in corporate America and is the parent of three children. You are short of time as well as resources in your busy life. Your parent coach can help you with staying focused and balanced as a parent and guide your relationship skills with your children.

Perhaps as a corporate executive, you don't see your children as often as you like. While your children miss their Dad, they understand. However, as a Dad, you want the best quality time that is possible with your children. You want to be remembered by your children as a caring and compassionate person who will always be there for them. How do you grow

loving relationships in a brief period? A Parent Coach can show you how to connect with your children in ways that they will remember and respect.

Today's parents are busier than ever.

"One of the great challenges our society faces is balancing work and family. We value work for its role in producing and sustaining economic growth. We increasingly recognize the importance of strong families in building healthy and dynamic communities. But finding a proper balance between the demands of work and the needs of families is difficult. More mothers with children work than ever before. More single-parent households exist. Most people must work to provide for their families but feel torn between the demands of their jobs and the needs of their children, spouses and aging parents. At the same time businesses are finding it difficult to recruit, train and retain skilled workers."

...Mary E. Forsberg

- ✚ Recent studies show that nearly two-thirds of mothers with children under the age of three are now in the work force.
- ✚ 59 percent of women with children under one year are employed and even among married-couple families, 51 percent are dual-earner.

Today's parents are stressed for time

Families with children are busier than ever. They have to handle all the pressures of the workplace PLUS the family responsibilities and homemaking that women in another generation considered to be a full-time job. Is it any wonder that parent coaches said the number one problem mothers want to talk about is stress?

Consider too, that about one-third of American children are growing up in single-parent households. As reported in the 2000 United States Census, more than 20 million children are living with one parent only. The number of fathers raising children without partners is increasing every year. For example, in just the three-year span of 1995 to 1998, this number

increased by 25 percent, from 1.7 million single dads to 2.1 million. In the same period, single mothers remained constant at about 9.8 million.

These single parents do not have a partner to help them analyze and work through problems with their children and often need to consult a parent coach for direction and compassion.

Parents are also lonelier

Just as today's parents are busier and more stressed out than ever, they are also more isolated from family and friends.

Every year, more than 15 million Americans (or 14 percent of the population) moves to a new home, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. This means that families are less likely to live near grandparents, aunts and uncles, other extended family and even old friends. Because the average American family moves every four years, many parents live far away from their extended families. Grandparents are no longer living down the block and available to baby-sit at a moment's notice. Many grandmothers are busy themselves with full-time jobs.

For his best selling book, *Bowling Alone: The Collapse and Revival of the American Community*, Robert Putnam reviewed questionnaires from more than 500,000 people. He reports that Americans are socializing less, even within their own families. They also join fewer organizations and are less likely to know their neighbors and get together with friends than they were 25 years ago. A generation ago, a man might join a bowling league, the Elks, the Rotary, and the Men's Club at church. His wife might participate in PTA, Bridge Club, and volunteer with Scouts and church. Today these organizations are folding for lack of members and volunteers.

Parents are too busy to form networks in their neighborhoods with other parents. Their hours are filled with work, home duties, errands and driving their children to activities.

Annemarie Brown, a coach who likes to work with stay-at-home mothers, says:

Our society says to be independent, but humans desire to help each other and to live in groups. There should be twenty adults who pick up and cuddle that new baby. It takes a village to raise a child. As a society, we need to support our young mothers. Get elder women together and help them. Our society is not a safe place the way it was in “Leave it To Beaver” days. Parents need more help more than ever. If they don’t have family nearby, a coach can help them create a network of “extended family” made up of friends and such. They need help. First, they need to learn to ask for it and be proactive about their needs.

As a society, we need to better support parents. In other societies, parenting is a different ballgame. There is plenty of extended family and support. We are an interdependent planet – we need to help parents. Life is about relationships and being interdependent, not doing it all on our own.

Likewise, Coach Anna Stewart of Boulder, Colorado, also says that one of the most pervasive problems today is that parents do not have any support system or sense of community:

Our society values independence. We put our babies in cribs to make them independent. In other countries like Borneo, South East Asia and Thailand where I have lived, people are interdependent. I saw a beautiful sense of community there.

When a problem does arise with their children, to whom can these isolated parents turn for advice? Advice from books and television psychologists can lead to what coach Natalie Gahrman calls “informational overload.” Today’s parents want practical how-to advice that is directed specifically to their individual problem.

There is too much information available on how to be a good parent. As a coach, I am the filter, and help parents elicit which is the great stuff and to filter out distracting information. The book may have a theory of what to do,

but your coach helps you implement the theory. Each person is different and needs a different plan of implementation

Coaching is about implementation as well as information. The coach can impart wisdom and advice. Coaching may be about providing a role model. Many of today's parents have their closest friendships with their co-workers at their place of employment. Often parents do not want to share intimate family concerns with co-workers. They also feel more comfortable talking about personal concerns in the privacy of their own homes and at their own convenience. Talking over the phone with their personal coach means that busy people do not have to drive to still another appointment.

In addition, some of today's parents do not want to turn to their own parents for advice. They want to raise their children differently from the way their parents raised them.

Even if they are close to their parents and do ask them for advice, many times grandparents do not understand what concerns today's parents. There may be cross-cultural differences among in-laws. Today's toys and other equipment for children are now technological. There are machines that enable a mother who adopts a newborn to breast feed the child. There are systems you can buy such as "Mozart for Babies" that are designed to stimulate a baby's intelligence. Children as young as eight want their own computers and cell phones, and they do not want toy versions.

Grandparents and older relatives may not understand the modern pressures on children and their parents. As noted previously, parents are under more time constraints and stress than ever before. Moreover, their children feel pressured by sophisticated marketing campaigns aimed to entice them to buy inappropriate items like violent video games, sexy clothing and non-nutritious foods. Children have to deal with being home alone and a peer group who experiments with drugs, alcohol and sex in middle school. Parents want HELP! Parent coaching fits neatly into this new demand for help.

Seven Reasons Parent Coaching is Popular Today

1. It is convenient for parents who are short on time. Many clients have more money than time to spend. They like the convenience of meeting over the phone. Parents who work with a coach are usually intelligent and make a fairly high income. Stephen Fairley and Chris Stout wrote in their book, *Getting Started in Personal and Executive Coaching*, that the average person who uses a personal coach is in the upper two-thirds of earning power, with an annual income of more than \$80,000 a year.
2. There is no stigma or embarrassment attached to phoning a coach, as opposed to going in for psychotherapy. If anything, it can be prestigious and stylish to have your own coach!
3. The service is personal and individualized. When parents try to use parent classes or books about parenting to solve problems, they have to wade through a ton of material that has nothing to do with their situation. Research indicates that parents are more likely to implement new strategies when they have support, encouragement and feedback.
4. The service is private and discreet. Your coach can live in another part of the country and you may never meet in public. Many parents like that convenience about coaching.
5. You can work through only one problem or focus on being a more effective parent over time. Parents have a specific question for a coach, such as, "How do I stop my child from tantrums?" When the tantrums end, the parent can end his coaching sessions whenever he wants. It is a paid service, not a medical problem.
6. Parent coaching is a good profession for people who have children because they can work out of their own homes and make their own hours.
7. It is an upbeat and positive experience for clients. Most people enjoy working with a coach and make quicker progress on their goals when they do.

The famous psychologist Carl Rogers once said that using a therapist was a little like buying a friend. Perhaps in this fast-paced world, people need friends more than ever. There is nothing like working through your problems and getting regular encouragement from a person who has a lot of common sense, empathy, compassion and knowledge. That is who your personal coach can be!

Summary of chapter three

Parent coaching as both a profession and a service continues to grow bigger every year. The reason is that today's parents are more stressed and busier than ever, but also more isolated from friends and family. They like the convenience, privacy and efficiency of paying a coach to work through problems and help them reach their goals on a one-on-one basis.

CHAPTER 4

Will You Make A Good Parent Coach?

A good parent coach is someone who can listen actively.

Anyone can appear to be listening to you, and then a moment or two later, that same person cannot recall a thing you said. When someone does that to you, you feel neglected and discounted. On the other hand, when someone really hears you, asks you questions about what you're saying, wants you to clarify your statements so that he or she can really understand you, that is a huge compliment. You feel more alive. You feel that you truly exist for someone else. A good listener affirms your life.

Listening with the heart

A parent coach has to be a good listener. A coach has to be able to listen for the emotional truth behind what each client is saying. After all, when someone speaks, that person could choose to talk about anything whatsoever in the entire world. Why does she choose that particular subject? What are the emotions around the subject? What is the person's history with that subject? Why is this parent having this particular problem instead of some other one? As a coach listens, the coach becomes an "emotional detective."

A parent coach has to learn to listen for narrative. Every client has a story to tell. What is that story? What are the gaps in the story? When you listen to that client, do you hear any themes? Do you feel an undercurrent of

empathy for the parent's emotions? Does a parent repeat the same behavior and reactions again? What is it about behaviors and reactions that make him an individual?

Listening is mostly what coaching is about

What I do is listen – most important, I listen. As I listen, I try to synthesize all the pieces they tell me into a picture. I make a cohesive whole out of the pieces. I piece together a story. I hear the person's story and from that, I can make out patterns in thinking and behavior.

...Bobbie Burdett

You can learn to become a better listener, but you have to have a natural interest in people and their stories to become a parent coach. "Soulful listening," as one author called it, cannot be faked. You have an authentic interest in the other person and a deep desire to help that person work out his problems and make his life better. You have to listen with your heart. To do that, you need "emotional intelligence."

Emotional intelligence

While you can develop your skills as a listener, emotional intelligence is a natural tendency that you have derived from your personal style. In addition, emotional intelligence skills are learned behaviors.

Mark Brandenburg, therapist and coach, says, *"In any field some people are naturally good at it. Certification is important, but you need certain personal traits, such as the inclination and capacity to help other people."*

Are you open to other people? Do people naturally tell you their problems because you like to listen? Do people instinctively trust you, and know that you will keep their personal secrets and never use things told in confidence against them?

Dr. Daniel Goleman, a professor at Harvard University, argues in several of his best-selling books that “emotional intelligence is more important than IQ.” His phrase “emotional intelligence” refers to our capacity to be self-aware yet empathic, to be able to “read” other people, to put ourselves in their place and understand their emotions and struggles. It can even be about our capacity to love and be loved by others.

A good parent coach needs to listen, and needs to have emotional intelligence. A good coach tunes in to other people and their needs. He or she knows intuitively how to help others. A coach is able to motivate and give advice without seeming pushy or bossy. A coach helps a client with problems but does not take over the problems for that client.

Some people are natural-born athletes. They have good coordination, reflexes and strong bodies. A famous saying among athletics is, “You can’t teach speed.” You are born fast.

Emotional intelligence is like that. You can develop your gifts, but to some extent, you are born with a unique style of relating to people. An athlete develops natural gifts by training and practicing; you also can develop your natural gifts by training and practicing.

As a parent coach, you will assist, help, inform, inspire, and educate your clients. You will provide clarity, reflection and reality checks for parental illusion, and support a parent's intuition. A friend might call and say, “I haven’t slept in three days. My child has the flu. I need a reality check on my parenting quotient.”

You will be both responsive and responsible as you provide frameworks and structures for conversations around sensitive issues. These are some of the traits you will need as a coach.

Traits for successful coaches

- ✚ Active Listener
- ✚ Non-judgmental attitude toward others

- ✚ Loving
- ✚ Empathetic
- ✚ Aware
- ✚ Communicates clearly
- ✚ Accepting
- ✚ Congruent in speech and action
- ✚ Able
- ✚ Adjusted
- ✚ Confident
- ✚ Respectful
- ✚ Honest
- ✚ Tactful
- ✚ Humorous
- ✚ Flexible

Within your role as a parent coach, you will need the ability to support your client by listening. You will have to help your client become proactive and achieve

- ✚ Well-being
- ✚ Wholeness
- ✚ Wellness
- ✚ Optimism
- ✚ Resilience

✚ Significance

✚ Connection

✚ Natural Talents

✚ Possibility

✚ Action

An understanding of children and their needs

Although your clients will be adults, you may also be involved directly or indirectly as a coach with your client's children. You should have a genuine interest and love of children. You need a deep respect for children as human beings, because you become an advocate for their needs whenever you work with their parents. You will have to see problems not only from the client's point of view, but also from the child's viewpoint. You understand child development and child behaviors and have knowledge of which parenting techniques will work and which will not, according to each client's style and values.

Business ability is important too

Parent coaching is a business. In order to succeed as a parent coach, you will need the ability to set up and market your business to others. You will have to be firm about collecting payment from your clients, and clear about how much you can be available to them.

You might establish time boundaries, financial expectations and goals for your services. Are you going to set up an "on-call" business that may disrupt your family life, or do you truly have the flexibility to take telephone calls at all times? Although the costs of starting up a parent coaching business are small because you can work out of your home, you still need to know if you will be able to put enough time and energy into it to have a profitable and passionate business. Through personal experience, you develop the ability to avoid the burnout you can get if you take on too many

of your clients' burdens. Your entrepreneurial spirit soars in your desire to make a difference. Albert Switzer once said that the only happy people he saw were those in service to others.

Your parent coaching toolbox

Besides developing your listening skills and empathy with others, you will need to develop some practical resources to offer your clients.

Complete your training courses and get certified. After you complete your training as a parent coach, most coaches like to keep learning new techniques, honing their styles, and continuing their education in the field.

Develop your knowledge of child development and parenting techniques. It is normal for a two-year-old to have tantrums. On the other hand, if a ten-year-old is having tantrums, that child may have anger management issues. If you have personal experience in raising your own children, along with your parent coach training, it will help you gain a feel for normal child development. You may want to keep developing your knowledge by reading good child development books, and keeping some on hand as reference tools.

Likewise, you need to develop your knowledge of appropriate parenting techniques, which you will find in books, by observing others, or continuing with training in specialty niches at the Academy for Coaching Parents International.

Have some reference tools. Third, you will know how to find answers when you are stumped or need to identify strategies. You will need some good reference materials at hand in the form of books and experts you can consult in an emergency. A typical case may be that you and your client have tried various popular approaches to toilet training, but the child has resisted them all. Now is the time to come up with a creative and less well-known technique. You may be able to find this new technique in books or by consulting with an expert.

You'll seek local support professionals. If you are coaching clients all over the country, you will have to learn how to help your clients find the names of lawyers, mental health professionals, pediatricians, psychiatrists, and support groups if certain problems come up.

For example, if you have a client who has a child with Attention Deficit Disorder, you will want to steer that client to the local CHADD group – a support for Children with Attention Deficit Disorder. If you have a client about to divorce, he or she will need a local lawyer who specializes in child custody cases.

Summary of chapter four

The most important part of parent coaching is listening to others in a meaningful way, so that you can help them make sense of their experience and work through their problems. A good parent coach needs emotional intelligence, which is about “reading people,” understanding their emotions, and reaching out to help them. Parent coaches also need good training, practical knowledge of parenting techniques and child development, and the resources to help clients find other professionals in their area. They should also have a love and respect for children.

CHAPTER 5

Know Yourself First

A foundation for the coaching profession

Knowing yourself is the ultimate goal of anyone in any helping profession, and even more important for a new coach or mentor. Knowing yourself means that you are aware of your personal style, and of the strengths, challenges and skills you need to develop to be a leader in your field. Knowing yourself means that you are aware of how you:

- ✚ Perceive and interact with the world
- ✚ Deal with the environment
- ✚ Respond to people
- ✚ Identify your stress levels and manage stressors
- ✚ Manage your thoughts
- ✚ Deal with your emotions
- ✚ Perceive your self worth
- ✚ Clarify your values, and
- ✚ Balance your life

The benefits of knowing yourself are numerous. First, you become clear on what you can offer potential clients and ensure that you attract the clientele you are able to serve best. You learn to manage your life as a model for other to emulate. You identify the skills you need to be the best coach. In addition, you become an aware, motivated individual who learns not to judge yourself, and thereby not to judge your clients.

By acknowledging your gifts, you can identify what you offer a client. By accepting your challenges in an honest way, you help your clients accept their shortcomings. You establish an inner sense of presence that others define as charisma, and that energy of influence is vital for building lasting relationships and ensuring your business success. You can develop a plan for self-growth, that is a plan of personal awareness and acceptance, and develop your skills to perfect your coaching style.

Personal style is your first step

In the ever-changing world of time, fast-paced living, over-commitment and competing distractions for our attention, what remains the same? What internal barometer can we count on? What is our measuring stick for consistency for our behavior and that of our clients? “Personal Style” can answer these questions.

Personal Style defines the four ways through which people perceive and interact with the world. The value of knowing your style is that one program does not fit all people any more than one diet works for all dieters. You can predict how you will react when stressed, what you value, how you make decisions, what motivates you and how to spend your energy and effort for your personal and financial success. In this fast-paced world, you can count on your style as your measure of success.

The renowned Swiss psychiatrist Carl Jung understood that people have a natural approach to life and process information in four primary modes: intuitively, experientially, visually or aurally. Updated research shows that we actually use two or more of these methods to understand our worlds. It is true that we interpret the world as we see it, through our eyes only, through the filters of our family, culture, education, peers, and the impact of stressful or traumatic events. However, research also supports the fact that our personal style is eighteen percent of our personality and we are born with it. It remains predictable through life, and, if you learn to control it, it is your

anchor amidst all life's transitions. Our personal style is influenced, shaped, and molded by family, peers, culture, education, and the environment.

If you understand your innate style to interactions with people and the environment, then you plan for and control your life in a safe, easy way. Your key to successful planning and managing stress and activity as a coach is to know your natural inclination. Then, you can:

- ✚ Design your environment to suit your needs
- ✚ Plan ahead for stressful situations
- ✚ Know where to focus your energy efficiently
- ✚ Plan for the help you will need
- ✚ Be true to yourself and your temperament
- ✚ Use your gifts and talents accordingly

You choose techniques for joyfully interacting in life, strategies that make you feel calmer and happier, or help you think in the optimal fashion. You consider your wholeness in physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual health because you know your responsibility is first to yourself, and ultimately, to your client.

Four styles

At the Academy for Coaching Parents International, coaches use the *Personal Style Inventory* by Consulting Resource Group International¹ⁱⁱ to determine their predominant manner of interaction.

Cognitive Style: Cognitive Christine is a deep thinker and loves learning. If she could be a perpetual student, she would be happy because she loves researching new things. Christine likes to read new information; she considers all options before making important decisions. Part of thinking through all options before acting is asking all the right questions. Cognitive

Christine is an organized person who values one-on-one time with her partner and friends. She enjoys long lunches, discussions about the meaning of existence and romantic dinners. She prefers alone time with friends rather than parties and crowds. Cognitive Christine likes to do things right, even if it means attending to the detail two or three times until she is happy with the project.

If you are Cognitive Christine, your greatest challenges is not to worry and knowing the right timing when making a decision. You can meet this challenge head-on by knowing how to control your thoughts and educating yourself when you need answers. Another tip is to for you let go of that perfectionist streak and enjoy your life while a few tasks go undone.

Preparing for a Coaching Practice: You value information and work well with ideas and abstract information.

- ✚ Use this trait to bring order to your world and stay grounded.
- ✚ Write out all of the questions you can think of about starting and succeeding in a coaching business.
- ✚ Do your homework now and find your answers. This builds your confidence
- ✚ Remember that you like mental stimulation. Pick out books to read in your down time so you don't become bored.
- ✚ You need friends even if you don't like crowds. Have a laptop handy to stay in touch with friends. Schedule time away from "head" activity, indulge your taste buds and fashion sense.

Interpersonal Style: Interpersonal Ian values harmony in his world above all else. Ian is consistent, reliable, and practical. Friends call him predictable. Sometimes Interpersonal Ian is so helpful and caring that people tend to rely on him, even to the point of taking him for granted or assuming that he would not mind if they call on him. Ian's style is perfectly suited for coaching depending upon his ability to balance his service to others with

self-care. Interpersonal Ian has to make a point to talk with his partner about needs for appreciation and intimate conversation.

If you are like Interpersonal Ian, your greatest challenge is to get the help you deserve and to take quiet time for yourself. Otherwise, you could become overly sensitive and overcritical without meaning to be that way. Keep communication open with friends and family to talk through any issues that arise. Let nothing fester within you.

Preparing for a Coaching Practice: Because you strongly value harmony and stability, these special considerations should be included in your planning an entrepreneurial activity.

- ✚ Surround yourself with what is beautiful or familiar. Remember that you appreciate color, harmony in your surroundings, and objects of beauty.
- ✚ Structure and schedule stabilize you and provide feelings of safety. You can ask now for a housekeeper or help with business assignments, or any other tasks.
- ✚ Get the help to reduce your stress.
- ✚ Feeling connected and supported by your partner is the best support you can have. How about leaving every Friday night just for the two of you?
- ✚ Form a mastermind group or alliance with people who you want to maintain your inner circle and talk with them about your business plans. Seek input and respect their feedback.
- ✚ Make a definite plan for positive thinking and cultivating optimistic and grateful attitudes. Serve people who touch your heart, keep a daily gratitude journal or enjoy inspirational reading.

- ✚ Plan for those overly sensitive days when you want to roar at the world. Make a pact with yourself now to join a friend for lunch, savor the touch of a massage, and memorize a stress relief plan when your feel irritation on the rise.
- ✚ When you feel over-sensitive, stay away from the stimulants like teas, coffees or soft drinks. Stay focused in your heart and listen with presence to your clients

Behavioral Style: Behavioral Bob loves the title of the popular book, *Just Do It*. He made it his motto because he values action, achievement, and quick, positive results. Bob does not consider himself successful until a project is finished, no matter how long it takes. Behavioral Bob is a doer who can put a plan together easily, set goals, and make a quick decision and run a household or an organization with strong leadership. Bob is rational, not impulsive like Interpersonal Ian. Bob is not a risk taker. He will enjoy the challenge of starting a coaching practice and developing a comprehensive business plan to do so. Behavioral Bob tends to be a loner and like to be independent in order to control and keep order in his world.

If you are a Behavioral Bob, your greatest challenge will be not to treat your business of developing relationships like another task on your busy schedule, and not to expect your clients to fit your expectations. Rather, develop your interpersonal skills and sensitivity to other's needs. You would be a perfect work-at-home dad because of your focus and your discipline. One of your challenges will be to accept that you cannot control your clients or force your personal agenda.

Preparing for a coaching practice: You respect activity, competence, and value autonomy. You will find joy in business planning, creating intention, bonding with your clients, and finding competent help.

- ✚ Make goals and set timelines for what you would like to accomplish. How will you accomplish your goals with ease?

- ✚ What do you need help with and which people will you trust to assist you?
- ✚ What stimulation like music, reading, or journaling will keep you unstressed, yet focused?
- ✚ Build in rewards so you feel satisfied with all you are doing.
- ✚ Since you are not a risk taker, have a contingency plan for what might go wrong in your new business. You feel safer and in control with a plan B and even a plan C.
- ✚ Train yourself to relax and enjoy your physicality through dancing, breathing, or movement as in yoga or Tai Chi.
- ✚ Pay special attention to, and find time for, involving your partner in your activities, feelings, and desires for a healthy, optimal business.

Affective Style: Affective Alana is a creative and artistic individual who will approach a new coaching business artistically and with sensitivity. Alana deeply feels the changes in her life and finds the support of people she can trust for her new business. Alana can surround herself with happy and positive people as her inner circle of advisors. She must trust them to keep her confidence, but also to provide honest feedback. In fact, she draws energy and strength from others, and can get bored if not the center of attention or angry if others disagree with her. Of all the styles, Affective Alana finds it easiest to stay positive and tends to move away from people who disagree or who don't stay as upbeat as she does. Alana likes entertainment and can make a coaching business fun as she networks, discovers new people and finds how easily she can influence them with her enthusiasm.

If you are an Affective Alana, your greatest challenge to establishing anew business is self-discipline. Like a new child, your business requires your consistency and structure. As people and activity distract you easily, take time for centering and grounding yourself. Find joy in the task-side of

your business. This new business of networking is your discovery of personal strength and values. Savor the richness of new friends and finances.

Preparing for a Coaching Business: You value your freedom to dream and create. You can be a very successful entrepreneur. Keep these needs in mind when planning your coaching business:

- ✚ You thrive on positive people and creating a new business is the time to select such a support team.
- ✚ Have the courage to tell the worriers and advice-givers among friends and family to keep their distance or change their conversations.
- ✚ Work with your partner to create your safety parameters around conversation, money, recreation, and pleasure because these feed your soul.
- ✚ Plan your exercise, focus, and work in well-spaced intervals as you'll resist when you schedule yourself too tightly in a business mode.
- ✚ You'll need touch and reassurance. How can you meet these needs?
- ✚ As much as you enjoy a stimulating conversation, also find time for quiet and calm.
- ✚ You may think you don't need routine, but you do. Plan your business around hours of activity and focus.
- ✚ If it's easiest for you to schedule your routine around your partner or other's needs, then do so.
- ✚ Contain self-judgment and criticism of others; it produces stress in your emotions and body.

If you do not control your personal style, Ken Keis, CEO of Consulting Resource Group International, Inc, says that it will control you by

exacerbating your negative traits. The value of the personal style information is that you can attend to what *you value and need* as you grow in parent coaching skills and confidence. Knowing your style enables easier listening to the inner voice of intuition, which says, “Yes, the activity is fulfilling,” or “No, this is not satisfying at all.”

Embrace what fulfills your needs and consistently is pleasurable, enriching, inspiring and enjoyable. How many times have you asked “*What is wrong with me?*” or compared yourself to someone else who seemed to flow through life while you chug along? Have you envied the creative artist and found the dreamer envied your accomplishments? You can do away with all these misperceptions, questions, and doubt of your abilities through applying the personal style information.

Why? As a whole person, you are concerned with being fit physically, mentally, emotionally and spiritually. It is too much for the mind to balance all of this and be real in the world, embracing the difficulties with resilience. The best antidote for stress and being able to meet your needs is to know yourself. Start with identifying your personal style characteristics and then plan your new business from your identified values and vision.

Summary of chapter five

You have to know who you are and what you bring to the table to offer your clients as a parent coach. Your personal style of relating to the world provides several clues that will make you successful in your business. Personal style tells you how you learn. Are you a visual, auditory or experiential learner? Persons who enjoy other people find themselves to be influential and a strong role model for parents. If you know your values, then you will respect the values of your clients and know how to respond to their style of communicating and relating to others.

Who you are, what you say, and how you show up for your client will set the precedent for your coaching practice and will be the model for how you expect your clients to show up.

PART TWO

PRACTICING THE ART

OF PARENT COACHING

Coaching is an interactive, focused conversation that evolves through sequential steps. The coach initiates the conversation by asking questions, which prompt self-reflection, thinking outside-the-box and examining consequences of choices and behaviors. It is a process of continued learning.

Caron Goode, E.D., NCC

CHAPTER 6

Business Issues at the First Session

First impression, first sessions

Your first session with your client is very important because it sets the tone for all the sessions to come. First impressions are important. If the client feels uncomfortable about confiding in you, the client will either find a new coach or quit the coaching process.

As the coach, you are in charge of the sessions. You have to direct them so that they have a beginning, middle and an end. As the coach, you will come into each session with an agenda, and you have to keep the session on track.

Some coaches offer a free “initial consultation” to explore coaching needs for a new client. Keeping this session to thirty to sixty minutes, your goal as a parent coach is to explain what you do, the liability factors, how to establish a parent-coach alliance, define expectations and listen to the client. You do all this through questions. The client, in answering your questions, will define his or her desires, issues and goals for the coaching services. Offering a free first session is an excellent selling tool because people do not have to risk any money to find out if they can benefit from coaching.

In the next session, you direct the session to complete items on your agenda. You do this as well as build a personal rapport with your client so that he or she will continue the coaching process with you. You have to accomplish these things in the first two sessions.

1. Explain the coaching process and define with your client what he or she hopes to achieve from coaching.

2. Establish rapport and trust by knowing your client's personal style and shifting your attention and communication to their style's needs.
3. Determine the pattern of communication between yourself and your client.
4. Take care of business issues as fees, how payments are made, number of sessions, and time commitments, and if the sessions will be by telephone or in person.
5. Determine client goals and intentions.
6. Establish client willingness, commitment, and a time and action schedule for goals.

Because you have so much to accomplish in the first several sessions, they may last from one to two hours. Many coaches prefer to send their clients a package of papers and forms before the first sessions. Some coaches ask their clients to take a personal style inventory so they have a common ground or base for understanding parenting styles, values and stress levels and parenting strategies. Others prefer to send these forms after the first session. The second way often works better if the client comes to you in the middle of a crisis. Ideally, the client has filled out the forms, returned them to you, and you have had time to read and consider them before the session begins.

The first session can be up to an hour. You have to get to know one another. What is the client looking for? You have to set ground rules. I ask for a three-month commitment, and require a 24 hours cancellation notice. I have certain other requirements, such as I do not allow drug or alcohol influence when we talk.

...Peggy Alvarado

Coaches use general information such as the person's address, profession, e-mail address, FAX and telephone numbers, and time and day preferences for the coaching schedule. Many coaches have spaces on this form for the client's age, educational level, names and ages of family members, and career information.

Next, some coaches ask the client to answer open-ended questions to be answered with short essays. "Why are you in coaching?" and "What issues are you concerned about?" are typical questions. Some coaches ask for more personal information such as "Who are the important people in your life right now?" "What things did you always want to do but never achieved?"

The first session is always an assessment time for the coach and the client. I want to know the client's background. We need to design the relationship. What does the client want out of coaching? It may take two hours first time. We need to set goals and expectations of each other. I have clients sign on for three months. If we don't catch on and see progress, we stop the coaching.

...Mark Brandenburg

I usually take at least 90 minutes at first. I like to use assessments—The Values and Actions Strength Test or perhaps the Enneagram – an ancient Sufi system of nine personality types. I like to determine what the person's primary strategy is – the one he or she uses to survive. Jack Travis has a Wellness Inventory I like to use; it works with Happiness Quotients.

My clients tell me they want to do "X" and I help them formulate goals and an action plan. Then there may be shorter sessions so they can check in and I can see their progress. They can e-mail me. The idea is that someone cares about their success – they have a partner in their action plans. Later I have my clients go back over their original assessments to check their progress. They will score higher on happiness after their coaching.

...Bobbie Burdett

Most coaches send clients a contract to sign. Typically, it is a three-month contract that specifies the person will attend coaching sessions once a week for a certain price.

Finally, many coaches send out a list of policies about their coaching business. You must work out these guidelines in your mind before you start coaching. Are you going to require that all fees are paid before a session? Will you take credit cards? Are you going to allow your clients to phone you any time of the day or night? Are you going to charge every time a client phones or emails you?

It may be hard to figure out all these rules when you first start to coach. You have to consider how much time you want to devote to coaching and how often you will allow your clients to interrupt your personal life. Some coaches believe that clients need to share personal triumphs as they happen, so the coach can affirm it over the phone with a “Wow! That’s great!” Others allow clients to share what happens only in e-mails. Some coaches limit the number of e-mails and phone calls they will take each week and set time limits and hours for telephoning. If a client is in crisis, you may want to have him or her schedule more than one session in the first few weeks. The client would pay for these at regular cost.

The forms in the back of this chapter will help you think through your own policies as you set up your business. You can find similar forms to use on the website of The International Federation for Coaches. Some of these forms seem to limit your legal liability by getting the client to sign away his or her rights to hold you liable if something goes wrong. These agreements usually specify that coaching is NOT therapy and is not held to that standard of practice. Sample forms, liability issues and coaching surveys are also provided through coursework of the Academy for Coaching Parents International. (ACPI)

You should check with your attorney when you compose your forms. The reason is that laws vary from state to state. In most states, coaches are considered unlicensed therapists and there are some regulations.

Summary of chapter 6

The first coaching sessions have full and informative agendas. As the coach, you help the client feel comfortable with the coaching process, set your relationship with the client, and go over business matters. It is often easiest to make up your own business forms with the help of a lawyer, and send them to the client in advance of the first session. Many coaches also require clients to take personality tests during or before the first session.

Sample Coaching Agreement – This is one sample of an agreement, which is not intended to be the only type of agreement. It is reproduced from <http://www.coachfederation.org/> and is used with written permission from the International Coach Federation.

Instructions: Please review, adjust, sign where indicated and return to me at the above address.

NAME

INITIAL TERM = ____ MONTHS, FROM _____ THROUGH _____

FEE \$ _____ PER MONTH, \$ _____ FOR THE PROJECT SESSION

DATE _____

SESSION TIME _____

NUMBER OF SESSIONS PER MONTH _____

DURATION _____ (length of scheduled session)

REFERRED BY: _____

GROUND RULES:

1. CLIENT CALLS THE COACH AT THE SCHEDULED TIME.
2. CLIENT PAYS COACHING FEES IN ADVANCE
3. CLIENT PAYS FOR LONG-DISTANCE CHARGES, IF ANY.

- A. As a client, I understand and agree that I am fully responsible for my physical, mental and emotional well- being during my coaching calls, including my choices and decisions. I am aware that I can choose to discontinue coaching at any time.
- B. I understand that “coaching” is a Professional-Client relationship I have with my coach that is designed to facilitate the creation/development of personal,

professional or business goals and to develop and carry out a strategy/plan for achieving those goals.

- C. I understand that coaching is a comprehensive process that may involve all areas of my life, including work, finances, health, relationships, education and recreation. I acknowledge that deciding how to handle these issues, incorporate coaching into those areas, and implement my choices is exclusively my responsibility.
- D. I understand that coaching does not involve the diagnosis or treatment of mental disorders as defined by the American Psychiatric Association. I understand that coaching is not a substitute for counseling, psychotherapy, psychoanalysis, mental health care or substance abuse treatment and I will not use it in place of any form of diagnosis, treatment or therapy.
- E. I promise that if I am currently in therapy or otherwise under the care of a mental health professional, that I have consulted with the mental health care provider regarding the advisability of working with a coach and that this person is aware of my decision to proceed with the coaching relationship.
- F. I understand that information will be held as confidential unless I state otherwise, in writing, except as required by law.
- G. I understand that certain topics may be anonymously and hypothetically shared with other coaching professionals for training OR consultation purposes.
- H. I understand that coaching is not to be used as a substitute for professional advice by legal, medical, financial, business, spiritual or other qualified professionals. I will seek independent professional guidance for legal, medical, financial, business, spiritual or other matters. I understand that all decisions in these areas are exclusively mine and I acknowledge that my decisions and my actions regarding them are my sole responsibility.

I have read and agree to the above.

Client Signature

Sample Information Form

Welcome to HeartWise™ Parent Coaching by Dr. Caron Goode. I hope that you and I will accomplish wonderful results for you. Please take the time to fill out this form so I can best serve your needs.

Name

Address

Email Address (work and home)

Telephone Number to reach you

Cell phone number

FAX

The best day to have a session is

The best time to have a session is

People who live with me are (give first names, ages and relationships to you, such as Mary, age six, my daughter

My profession is

My educational level is

My place of work is

Some of my hobbies are

COACHING INFORMATION FORM

The reason I am in coaching is

I think a good parent is a person who

In what ways can I improve my techniques as a parent?

What are my strong points when it comes to parenting?

What do I expect to accomplish through coaching?

The parenting concerns I have right now are

Besides covering business issues in the first session, you as the coach, also have to determine what the client's expectations of coaching are. If the client is in a crisis mode, he or she will want to talk about that specific problem instead of the general issues of coaching. This scenario is in the next chapter. However, even if the client is in crisis, it is your job to try to understand two things during that all-important first session.

1. What are the client's expectations of coaching?
2. What style of coaching does the client want you to use?

Understand your client's expectations.

In their book, Adaptive Coaching (Palo Alto, California, Davies Black Publishing, 2003), authors Karen Spear and Terry Bacon classify coaching into four basic categories. On some level, every new client enters coaching in one of the following ways:

Circumstantial Coaching The client comes to you with a particular problem and wants to be coached through it. In parent coaching, the problem may be presented as a crisis in a child's behavior, a parent's lack of self-confidence or the sudden need for information for a health issue or discipline problem. The client perceives coaching as a short-term service that will last until the crisis or problem is solved.

Programmatic Coaching In this case, the client wants to improve a relationship with a child or improve his or her general parenting skills over time. The client may perceive the coach as a person he or she can consult throughout their child's growing years. Coaching is a long-term process. The client will stay in coaching more-or-less permanently. Some clients may want to stop coaching for a time and then pick it up again later on an as-needed basis.

Ask about your client's expectations of coaching. Does the client just want help on a short-term basis? Does she consider herself an excellent

mother who just ran into a problem? Does he already think he's a great dad and the only problem is his child's bad grades? Or is his self-esteem suffering because he is yelling at the children all the time? Why is the person in coaching? What does he expect to accomplish? How long does she expect it to take?

Next, you have to determine if the person understands the process of coaching. Explain that your job is to help your clients reach their goals by brainstorming, motivating and encouraging. It is not therapy. You and the client are not going to look back and analyze, but you will be formulating plans and implementing these plans together. If the person's goals are very vague (*I want to be a better mom*), then you have to clarify that vague goal into something observable and doable, like: *I want to spend an hour each day of special one-on-one time alone with each of my children.*

Your style of coaching

After you determine whether the client's expectations are circumstantial or programmatic coaching, then you have to set your style as a coach. Your personal coaching style is derived from your Personal Style Inventory: behavioral, interpersonal, cognitive or affective. It is best to shift your style to you client's needs and style. For instance, a client with a behavioral personality desires action. He may be ready in the first session to set goals and timelines for what he needs to accomplish. A client of cognitive orientation wants information, and may spend more time talking about what her assessment shows that she needs.

What kind of coach does the person want you to be? Authors Spear and Bacon classify coaching styles into two categories.

Directive. Does the client see you as an expert on parenting? Someone he or she can consult with and ask for specific advice? Directive coaches are people who tell others what to do. The coach acts like a parent, expert, teacher or manager to the client. *The emphasis is on the client asking*

questions and the coach telling the client what to do. Directive coaching is a more modern approach than non-directive coaching. As Coach Natalie Gahrmann said,

The new trend is to tell people outright what you think is best. The old way was to go with their value systems and their timing. The client had all the answers. This is changing and not the way coaches work.

A client who is looking for circumstantial coaching may want a directive approach during a crisis or one-time problem. The client may ask the coach outright for answers and ideas.

A client looking for a programmatic coaching relationship may think of a parent coach as someone to call when a problem arises. The coach is a person of reference, someone with the expertise to give specific advice on specific problems that arise from time-to-time in the parenting process.

The danger of a directive approach to coaching is the coach's own value system comes into play. The assumption is that the client should live life according to the coach's ideas and beliefs. For example, a coach may genuinely believe that all mothers should attend to their newborns rather than use a childcare center. If the client looks up to her coach as an expert on what's best for children, then she may be influenced by that coach's opinion on childcare centers. So, in a sense, the coach makes this important decision for the client.

Non-directive coaching. In this style of coaching, the client is the expert on his or her life. The coach is a sounding board. The emphasis is on *the coach listening to the client and helping the client find solutions based on the client's perspective.* Most coaches, including Coach Gahrmann, prefer this style:

*The client has to own the solution. The client has to generate the ideas.
As a coach, I am a sounding board for my clients.*

In this style of coaching, you act as a friend or colleague. You brainstorm with the person to come up with solutions to their problems. You work it out together. You are not the expert but more like a facilitator or counselor.

I don't approach people as an authority or with a particular belief system. I use a narrative approach. I try to get the entire picture, get clarity on what their issue is, and then make recommendations. However, they are the experts on their lives. I respect that the client knows his life best.

...Bobbie Burdett

I train clients to focus on what they want. I believe they have all the answers already. I advise and support them in what they want to do. The person probably has the solution to the problem within them.

...Annemarie Brown

Parents know when something is off. They need to express the issue to you, a non-judgmental person who will listen and not judge. Is the problem with the parent or kid? Evaluate. Look for solutions with them.

....Peggy Alvarado

“Non-judgmental” is a key quality of this kind of coaching. This coach often approaches clients with a lot of empathy. This coach has faith in the

client to choose among several options, and lets the client freely discuss the pros and cons of each one.

Spear and Bacon interviewed more than two-hundred coaches and thousands of their clients. They found that two-thirds of clients prefer non-directive coaches to directive ones. However, the clients reported that only 22 percent of their current coaches actually work that way.

Your job as coach is to keep the client on track, to keep the sessions moving forward, and to help your client accomplish goals. In that sense, you have to be directive enough to make the agenda work. Most coaches use a combination of both directive and non-directive coaching styles.

During your first session with your client, these are the kinds of questions that should come up: What does the person want out of coaching? What kind of coaching style works best for this client? What are they looking for? Do you want me to be open and challenging? Do you want a more indirect approach?

...Peggy Alvarado

Coaching is an evolutionary process and it needs time. Clarify what your client wants first, their belief system, what they value and what their goals are. Teach how to prioritize to get what they want. Connect to what is important, not what society thinks is important. Your internal goals are what matters to how you feel about yourself.

...Natalie German

Ideally, your client will do most of the talking in the first session, but you are guiding him through your agenda of tasks you need to accomplish.

It may help you to think in terms of a CARE agenda:

Coordinate time

Arrive on time

Renew and dialogue

Energize each other

Care

Amplify feelings

Renew

Ease into agreements

Here is how a typical session may go. A client has come to you with a general goal of “I want to have a better relationship with my teenage daughter.”

First, you may have to discuss how coaching works. We’re going to be working together to improve your relationship with Samantha. I know that I can coach you on that issue.

Second, you ask the client what style may work best. *Do you want me to be confrontational and direct? Do you want advice? Or should we just work together as a team? I can be a friend and counselor, or do you just want a sounding board for your own ideas?*

Then you may want to talk about the problem in general terms. *You are seeking information and clarity. Hmm, Sam withdraws all the time. She’s not speaking to you at all?*

Then the two of you may want to brainstorm together. *You want a better relationship with her. What might help? Let's come up with a few strategies for this week.*

You develop a list of specific strategies that work toward the goal. *Wow, that's a great idea – you both want to see that movie anyway, why not go together? Afterward, you can go somewhere and talk about the movie. I like that idea. That's a really good plan for this week.*

You, as the coach, end the session. *We can have our next session on Tuesday. You can tell me how the movie went. I really think we can work together in helping you improve your relationship with Samantha. Let's spend the week thinking of other strategies that may work with improving your relationship with Sam.*

You may want to end with “homework” for the week. *I am going to send you a form to fill out to help you come up with more ideas to improve your relationship with Sam. But I think we're off to a great start. I really think we can turn this around.*

You have established a rapport with the client. You have set a first strategy to help your client with a problem. You have accomplished your agenda of leading the client into a good coaching relationship.

Summary of Chapter 6

The first session of coaching has an agenda. The coach must determine what the client's expectations are, and what kind of coaching style the client prefers. Directive coaching is about telling the client what to do. Non-directive coaching is about listening and working together on solutions to problems, with the coach as a colleague instead of the “expert.” Circumstantial coaching means the client wants coaching for a specific

problem. Programmatic coaching means the client will use a parent coach on a long-term consulting basis.

Sample homework form

Usually sent in the form of an e-mail.

Last week we talked about

We came up with some ideas and strategies

Tell me which ones you tried

Which ones seem to be working?

What strategies do you want to talk about this week?

Do you have any new concerns?

Please have this back to Coach Tyler at coacht Tyler@quickiemail.com

24 hours before our next session.

CHAPTER 7

The Client in Crisis

Ideally, a client comes to you when things are going fairly well in his or her life. The client is not upset, but very upbeat and looking forward to the coaching process.

With this type of client, you can begin the coaching process by slowly getting to know one another, setting an agenda together, and discussing what the client wants to accomplish through the coaching process. The first few sessions can be leisurely. You can do some personality assessments and discuss how your client wants you to coach him. Does she want you to be confrontational and direct? Or does he want you to be mostly encouraging and non-critical? You can have the client fill out a worksheet before the next session.

However, in parent coaching, some clients will come with a crisis. Some situation is imploding. How does a divorcing Dad converse with his son? A mother phones to say that her son wants to quit high school and join the Marines, and she does not like that idea.

Sometimes the crisis is low-key, but still immediate and important to the client. For example, a child needs to be potty-trained within a few weeks or otherwise she will not be accepted into nursery school.

Both clients want HELP! Both scenarios will impact your coaching process and relationship with your client. If the client is not in crisis, you will be able to set up your coaching sessions in smoother way. If the client is

in crisis, the focus of your first sessions will be about helping the client through the rough spot and then establishing a working coaching relationship.

Mark Brandenburg, who specializes in coaching men, said:

Men have trouble asking for help and calling a coach is asking for help. It is a new field and people don't know much about it. Coaching is good for men because it is in the comfort of home; it is private. However, men don't call coaches until they have a crisis. Men often call a coach when they are on the verge of a divorce. They are no good at picking up a wife's signals that she's tired of the marriage. They are often in shock about what is happening.

Peggy Alvarado said nearly all clients call when something is wrong:

Parents usually call when something is wrong. A crisis implies they may need a therapist, but often it is more that they are at wit's end. They've tried everything. Or someone at school says their child needs outside help so they call me. Usually something's wrong or they don't call a coach.

Let the client talk it out.

In this case, you have to LET YOUR CLIENT TALK. You have to listen. You have to listen actively, yet soulfully, to your client. Take notes. Listen to your client's concerns. Be aware of what the client says and what he or she is leaving out. Don't interrupt. Hold yourself back. Let the client talk. Your client may be extremely upset and become emotional. That is okay. Stay in a listener's role. You may be tempted to jump in with a lot of suggestions and practical information, but it is better to hold back and listen.

When a client is upset and vulnerable, you may be tempted to take over the problem. At this point, remind yourself that you are coming from the coaching perspective, not a therapeutic one. You are a coach and as such, you believe that:

1. This client is a whole, healthy and resourceful person.
2. This client has the inner resources to handle this problem.

Allow the person to vent and talk through whatever is troubling him or her.

Ask questions so that you truly understand what is going on. The first session may be completely about letting the client tell his story and vent emotions. You may do very little talking.

If a problem is truly important and life-changing, you may have to refer your client for psychotherapy.

You and the client may need more than one session to determine whether he or she should continue in coaching. If necessary, schedule more than one session per week in the first weeks of coaching. The thrust of your work will be to calm the person and determine how you as a coach can work with the person's strengths to get him out of the crisis mode. After a few sessions, the crisis may still be ongoing, but the client should feel more in control of his or her life.

They may call in crisis. If so, you have to handle that right away. Empower their balance. A crisis means something is out of balance. Sometimes I have to coach them three times a week at first and then twice a week during the first 90 days.

...Annemarie Brown

More likely than not, however, the client's crisis is not a drastic one. It is part of everyday life with children. These are the kinds of problems that may be worrying your client:

- ✚ My in-laws are planning a two-week visit. Their way of handling children is different from mine because they come from a different culture.
- ✚ My child is bullied at school.
- ✚ My eleven-year-old daughter gets her feelings hurt easily.
- ✚ My teen failed his College Board examinations.
- ✚ My child's kindergarten teacher is picking on him. Every day there's a note from her with a new complaint about him.
- ✚ How do I introduce solid foods to my infant?
- ✚ My teen wants a car.
- ✚ How do I protect my kids from the Internet overload?

Although these problems look very manageable to you, your client may be at the end of his or her rope. In this case, your job is to provide perspective. Sometimes you can use humor.

A woman may cry to me that her house is a mess. I try to get her to lighten up. Why do angels fly? Because they take themselves lightly! This is not that important. This is not United Nations negotiations. It is not child molestation. Your house is a mess, okay, let's laugh. Sometimes my clients and I will laugh maybe three-fourths of a session. Clients need to put things

into perspective. You're not going to die because your kitchen cabinets are a mess.

...Annemarie Brown

Help your client gain perspective on the problem. Take small steps at first. Help your client come up with new ways of solving the problem. This problem did not happen overnight, and chances are the solution will not come overnight either. It may require a series of small steps to solve the problem.

Perhaps we start with just one goal. Something doable, even as simple as cleaning your kitchen cabinets. If your bills are piling up – let's attack them this week. We may set big goals such as "I want to be financially stable," but we'll start with small steps. Let's pay a few bills.

...Annemarie Brown

When a client comes to you with a crisis, remember to help in a systematic way. First, you let her talk. She is crying very hard. She is at the end of her rope. You try to understand her problem, and ask questions if you need more clarification. *Your daughter is 10 years old? She has no friends whatsoever. No one likes her. She's the only one in her class who did not get invited to that party? You really feel badly for her, don't you? It's okay to cry.*

Second, you try to provide perspective. *You said Taylor is in Scouts and has a friend out of state. Maybe she has a few friends after all. Good. Kids can be mean at that age. That girl who's having the party is really mean? She's mean to other kids too, not just your daughter?*

Third, you help your client take a small step in the right direction. *What could you do to make it better? You and Taylor could plan to do something the night of the party. That's a good idea. What else could we come up with?*

Within a session or two, the crisis is over. *Taylor was okay at school the day after the party? The party doesn't even matter anymore. Good. I'm glad Taylor's okay about it.*

Then you have to help the client understand that the crisis is often part of a bigger picture. The bigger picture is what created the crisis. *Taylor has a temper? She's bossy and always wants her own way. We can talk about why Taylor does not make friends easily. Let's look at the big picture.*

The big picture is the subject of our next chapter.

Summary of Chapter 7

Most clients come to parent coaching with a crisis. In this case, it is harder to keep the client to a business agenda and to set goals. The first sessions may be about your listening to the client and getting clarification on the crisis. If the crisis is serious, you may have to refer the client for psychotherapy. If it is part of everyday parenting, your job is to provide perspective, communication and brainstorming to help the client take small steps to solving the problem.

CHAPTER 8

The Client's Crisis Is Part of a Bigger Picture

The client comes to you with a crisis, which may be a symptom of the underlying situation. The problem itself is the likely outcome or effect of other things that are going on in the client's life. The larger concern is what caused the crisis. The bigger picture reveals the cause; the effect is the presenting problem.

A big mistake that new coaches make is rushing to fix or solve the client's problem. This is not the way to proceed. Instead, you work on helping your client calm down, manage emotions, and put things into perspective. Then, your role as listener is finding the larger picture or underlying issues, and to *help your client solve the problem*. However, if he or she refuses to consider the "big picture," new problems and new crises will continue to pop up. Move to cause and solutions.

If you try to solve the problem with your own list of suggestions, it will be the equivalent of a New Year's resolution with similar results. The client has to be motivated to change and fix the problem himself.

Understand your client's perspective and the way he or she approaches life. This is "holistic" coaching, in that you have to coach not only the situation, but also the whole person. This is not psychotherapy because you are not looking to cure pathology. Instead, you will focus on the person's strengths and how they can use those strengths to solve the presenting

problem. You have to understand the client's values, thought patterns and experiences before you can help the person find solutions to the problem or crisis.

My goal is to help clients lead more fulfilling lives. I believe that the way is to understand thinking/feeling processes. If you have a bad feeling, that feeling is connected to a thought. You need to pull out that thought and investigate it. Understand the thought and look at it with a laser. How is that thought connected to your story? You have to have a larger perspective.

...Bobbie Burdett

In the first sessions, you can calm the person down and diffuse the crisis. You and the client can begin to take some small action steps to solutions. However, to coach the person to his or her next level, you have to listen to the person's story and understand the person's perspective.

For example, your new client, Laura, enters coaching because she cannot cope with her two pre-school children anymore. She is crying. You let her talk so she calms down. It is obvious to you she loves these two little boys very much. She thinks her problem is that they are very intelligent and have a lot of energy. You as the coach ask her to describe exactly what is happening.

At this point you do not want generalities such as the boys are very bright and energetic. Ask Laura to describe specifically the behaviors that have upset her and brought her to coaching.

It turns out that these boys are ages two and four. They refuse to go to bed but stay up every night as late as their parents do. They only sleep in their parents' bed and have done so since they were born. They will only eat sweets and they only drink carbonated beverages. They jump all over the furniture and literally have the run of the house. They create messes in every room and refuse to help tidy the house. Laura's husband is spending more

and more time at work because the children are making life unpleasant at home.

Even during this first session, it may be obvious to you that Laura's children are out of control and that she and her husband should have stepped in a long time ago by setting up a reasonable structure and reasonable expectations for the children's behavior. However, you can't just tell her to stop doing what she is doing. "Stop letting your kids take over your house" is like saying *stop thinking about pink elephants!* It won't do her any good. It is a beginner's mistake. Such a mistake denies your client her learning experience.

Listen for the client's emotions or story about the situation.

Instead, you are compassionate. Understand her emotions and feelings about her situation. Put yourself in her place.

- ✚ *It's true that little kids are hard to handle, but you seem really frustrated by this situation.*
- ✚ *You really love that little boy, don't you?*
- ✚ *No wonder you are so tired at the end of the time, and that you feel no one understands how hard you are trying.*

What would it feel like to be Laura? How would it feel to be coping with these children on an hourly day-by-day basis? To help her see the bigger picture, use a metaphor to encourage her perspective shift.

- ✚ *You sound really at the end of your rope.*
- ✚ *Do you feel like a stranger in your own home?*
- ✚ *Your parenting toolbox must feel empty.*

By letting Laura know that you understand her emotionally, you are affirming that her situation is indeed a rough one. You are not being judgmental. You are not attacking her style of parenting. You understand her as a person. Most of all, you are listening to her side of things. This may be all you can do in the first several sessions, but by listening and understanding, she will calm down. She will trust you and the coaching process as a way to get help for herself. You may not be able to come up with a solution just yet, but the two of you eventually will brainstorm strategies for structuring her children's behavior. Having that hope will help diffuse the situation and make it appear more manageable.

In the next sessions, you will listen to her story even as she takes small steps toward feeling better. How about getting a little more time for yourself, Laura? What about you and your husband having a date on Friday night – you know, get a babysitter? Small steps will help but they won't solve her big problem.

The problems she is having now with her children are the result of her experiences in life. You will have to find the underlying cause of the issues by

- ✚ Determining her personal style
- ✚ Defining her values
- ✚ Clarifying her communication patterns
- ✚ Determining her resilience levels and stress-breaking points.
- ✚ Listening to her stories.

You will learn about her through her story. How does she think? How clearly can she shift to solutions? What is most important to Laura and how does that determine her decision-making?

In parent coaching, unlike other kinds of coaching, your client's own childhood will invariably come up. The reason is that most people react to

the way they were reared by either duplicating their parents' efforts, or creating a very different style of parenting because they were unhappy as children. Their children will invariably remind them of themselves as children and bring back memories of their own experience.

Laura tells you that her parents were extremely strict, almost to the point of being abusive. She was never allowed to make any choices whatsoever. Her parents told her exactly what to wear, what to eat, and when to do things. She is determined to let her own children have more freedom. She believes that if she takes an easy-going attitude toward parenting, her children will be spared her own unhappiness.

Each of us has a story inside us. Let's investigate that story. Who would we be without that story? The goal of coaching is to improve our life. But we can set a goal and yet there is ambivalence. You have to understand and get at your ambivalence. You have to do the preliminary work before you can move into action. You have to resolve ambivalence about change. You have to make the change stick. Maintain it.

...Bobbie Burdett

In this case, certain aspects of Laura's story are costing her a lot in her present life. She will be unable to change her behavior unless she gets a deeper view into her problem. Albert Einstein said, "Having a deeper view into a problem is more important than framing the solution. Otherwise you generate a solution to an inadequately-grasped problem."

Think in terms of the client's "Immune System to Change."

Harvard professor and author Robert Kegan believes all of us create “immune systems to change.” These are elaborate and ingenious systems that make us resist the very behaviors we believe we want. We may have a conscious commitment to change, but our unconscious commitment to a hidden agenda works against the change we want to bring about. To Dr. Kegan, the immune system to change always has four parts:

1. The behavior I want
2. The behavior I am doing now
3. The reason I do Behavior No. 2
4. The Big Assumption underneath it all.

The Big Assumption (No.4) has to do with something we are afraid of. Dr. Kegan believes that immune systems to change are actually defense systems we have designed to protect ourselves from our deepest fears.

In this immune system, Dr. Kegan uses an example of a man who wants to be less tense and less of a workaholic on his job. His immune system to change looks like this:

1. I want to relax more and be less tense.
2. I get to work early. I leave late. I skip lunch. I never stop and enjoy life.
3. I feel committed to meeting my boss’s needs. I want to prevent failure.
4. I will be fired from my job if I don’t overwork.

As Dr. Kegan explains, it is almost impossible to change No. 2 habits because they are propping up the No. 3 beliefs. *Getting to work early and working overtime means this man is a great employee, a person committed to serving his boss.* Likewise, in this immune system, the No. 2 behaviors are a

perfect, consistent and brilliant expression of the Big Assumption, No.4. *If he stops getting to work early and working overtime, he believes he will be fired from his job.*

In Laura's case:

1. I want to be a better mom and more in control of my children.
2. I let the children run wild and do whatever they want. I let them insult me.
3. I think it is important for children to experience choices and freedom from authority.
4. I will abuse my children the way my mother abused me if I discipline them.

Laura's underlying fear is that she will follow her mother's style of harsh discipline and her children will suffer. She has no role models to use as patterns for mothering. She only knows who she does not want to be.

When you work with a client, you cannot change certain basic things about the person's personality. Some people are naturally quiet, others are more aggressive. Some people are smarter than others are. Some people have more empathy. People usually cannot change the signature strengths of their personalities. However, they can change any learned behaviors they choose for a different result. These are their belief systems.

As a coach, you can challenge your client's underlying assumptions when you discuss their desire to change their behaviors.

Values and beliefs are different than strengths. You are born with strengths and with a certain psychological type. It comes with our package. But values and beliefs are learned. Sometimes our values conflict with our

strengths. We have to understand what is important to us and align our lives with that to lead to fulfillment.

...Bobbie Burdett

Coaching is not about having people change their religious beliefs or question values from their cultural background. It is not about making your clients over into your own image. However, it can be about having people look at assumptions and fears that are keeping them doing the very behaviors they want to bring to their lives.

Values are important. What beliefs do clients have that may be limiting their behavior? For example, you have a client who needs to go to a five-o'clock soccer game every Wednesday. Yet, she says there's no way she can ask her boss for that time off. This is a limiting belief she may hold. The belief may be mistaken. She should try asking.

...Natalie Gahrman

Laura needs to question her belief that imposing rules and order in a child's life is a form of child abuse. As Laura's coach, you work with her to find a mothering technique that meets her very high standard of allowing the children a lot of freedom and choices, but at the same time makes room for the adults to have some measure of sanity in their own home.

Summary of Chapter 8

A crisis in a client's life usually is part of a bigger picture. While a client may want to form new habits and change bad behaviors, he or she often can't because of unconscious fears and assumptions. The undesired behaviors or habits become defense systems against the person's deepest fears. A coach

cannot plunge in and tell the client what to do without examining the person's deepest held beliefs about his or her behaviors. A belief is not genetic, but a rather learned assumption about the way a person thinks she should live her life.

CHAPTER 9

Coaching a Child Through a Parent

At that all-important first session, you and the client have put the presenting problem in perspective. You, as coach, understand how your client thinks and why this problem grew in her life. Now you and she are ready to coach her through the problem. Think of the problem as a snarling dog in her living room. This dog is not as big and mean as she thinks it is. Together you and she will tame the beast. You and she are not going to concentrate on why it is there, but how to tame it.

The classic model of coaching used in life and business situations has three parts: setting a goal, brainstorming with your client about how to achieve the goal, and then keeping the client motivated and on track in subsequent sessions. Parent coaching by its nature may be about your client's child and your client.

Most parent coaches never meet or talk to the child in question; and some make home visits to assess the home's emotional atmosphere and observe children and parents in the comfort zone. Yet the goal of many coaching sessions will be to get a child to change his or her behaviors. The reason parent coaching works is that the parent has the power to create both the relationship and structure of how parent and child interact. In parent coaching, your goal is often to get at that structure and relationship and help the parent change his side of it. If a parent changes, his child will change too. You model the coaching relationship with the parent, who, in turn, models it with the child.

Parents create structure with a child. Sometimes you have to change structures. A child is sensitive to his parents, and most likely reacting to the structure. How satisfied is the parent with that relationship? As a coach, you have to evaluate based on what parent tells you. There are variations in how parents create structure, discipline children and relate to their children. Sometimes it has to do with their culture. Some parents go the opposite of the way they were brought up. However, if their own experiences were good, they will copy their own parents. Each client is different.

...Peggy Alvarado

If one person in a family changes, the rest of the family has to change in relationship to that person. If the parent can see the bigger picture and recognize fears behind defenses, then the parent can shift his side of the relationship. Then, the entire relationship will change for the better. At first, your client may spend time describing and complaining about her child. As a coach, you have to help your client stop blaming, even though the child is the person acting out and causing the problem. You have to help her get back into balance and gain perspective.

Pointing fingers and blaming others is easy, but the truth is we are each responsible for our own problems. If you're unhappy in your marriage, you're the one with the problem. You're the one who can change and stop criticizing the other person. Look at your own issues. Look at your own stuff.

...Mark Brandenburg

Helping your client become responsible for her part in the problem demonstrates that the problem, like a circle, has different perspectives and it is no one's fault. You are helping your client look at the problem objectively,

and to shift her thinking in order to change her behavior. By changing her part in it, she (or he) can coach or change the child's behavior too.

Sometime parents need a shift in approach to reconnect with heir child in a new way. The disconnect shows that neither parent nor child's needs are met. Perhaps personal styles are clashing because of different character traits. Parents need to shift to see the child's needs. What is working? What is not working? What is getting in the parent's way? Parent and child are both reacting from unmet needs.

Meet parent-child needs by honoring personal styles

Every child has a personal style that has nothing to do with clothes, music or clichés. Personal style is our natural predisposition towards life. It is how individuals approach people, tasks, time, situations, and even stress. Personal style also reflects what we prefer, how we react, and what we value in life.

Every morning, six-year-old Josh and his mom clash. A daydreamer by nature, Josh moves through life at a slower pace than his task-oriented mom does. This is most evident in the morning when meandering Josh and his highly-organized mother are trying to get out the door. This daily struggle highlights their obviously different personal styles.

According to Terry Anderson, Ph.D., Canada Research Chair in Distance Education at Athabasca University, there are four personal style categories: behavioral, cognitive, interpersonal, and affective.ⁱⁱⁱ There are bits and pieces of each personal style in all of us, but individuals typically exhibit one or two that are dominant.

Parents who are able to identify and appreciate their child's personal style, often enjoy easier and more effective communication as a result.

This can be instrumental in helping parents obtain the behavior they want and the harmony they desire.

Identifying parent's and child's personal style

Behavioral: Behavioral people are freedom lovers. They are bold, willful, productive, competitive, unemotional, and self-reliant. Persons with this personal style rarely discuss problems, preferring instead to set goals and act on them. They are independent learners and leaders who enjoy recognition for their achievements. As students, behavioral style children prefer hands-on-learning scenarios that feature real life solutions as opposed to abstract thinking or discussion.

Children who exhibit a behavioral style respond to honesty, fairness, logic, and directness. These children do not appreciate control or direction. Therefore, when giving them a chore or task to complete, outline it, state the benefit or reward, and ask how the child will complete the task and when. It is also important that parents of behavioral-style children work together to establish a unified front or risk having their inconsistencies and authority questioned.

Cognitive: Cognitive people are deep thinkers who often strive for perfection. They value intimacy, respect, understanding, and good relationships. These children take instruction well, and admire expertise and knowledge in others. They are typically well-versed in writing, linguistics and informational topics. Cognitive-style students are also very organized, enjoy working with data, and often excel in mathematics.

Cognitive children respond well when they feel their parents appreciate and respect them. These children are not competitive nor are they motivated by rewards or games. Therefore, when giving them an activity to complete, remember the greatest reward for a cognitive child is your appreciation for a job well done. The best approach for these children is to give them a task and the time and freedom to complete it. Since these children tend to be

perfectionists, be especially careful to refrain from criticism. Chances are if there is a problem, they have already turned a critical eye inward.

Interpersonal: Interpersonal children embrace the role of peacemaker. They are uneasy in the face of arguments, and feel the affects of discourse on a deep personal level. These children are often both highly perceptive and shy. In order to thrive, interpersonal people require honesty and stability in their relationships and in their environment.

Interpersonal style children listen well and are keenly observant. Therefore, modeling positive behaviors for these children is crucial. Interpersonal children respond well to friendly non-threatening communication, and willingly offer solutions to family problems. In this arena, as with completing tasks, these children excel when they are able to track their own progress. Therefore, presenting problems and chores in graduated stages of difficulty helps to ensure a pathway to success that resulting in tasks being completed and the child feeling empowered.

Affective: Affective people are highly creative and artistic. They live comfortably in the world of ideas and are drawn to expressive outlets such as writing. They learn by doing, enjoy variety, and crave attention and acknowledgement for their creativity. Affective people also value friendship, enjoy life and are called visionaries or dreamers.

Affective children respond to affection, conversation, and personal attention. They require creative outlets and often excel in group activities and peer counseling. These children thrive when given structure and positive discipline, and are more apt to rise to the occasion when challenges offer the promise of excitement and fun.

Style Name	Preference for...	Limited with...	Best Learns....
1. Behavioral	Tasks\things	People\social	Independently
2. Cognitive	Data\information	Tasks\things	Visually

3. Interpersonal People\social Ideas\creativity Aurally

4. Affective Ideas\creativity Data\numbers Experimentally

As coach, you ask your client to describe what is going on between parent and child. Often there is a power struggle going on because of style clashes. How can you change the situation? Sometimes just having the client look at the power struggle objectively and understand what it is will change the situation. Also, coach your client about his style, analyze children's styles and find ways to respect and accept the diversity.

Let's say a client comes to you because his thirteen year-old son got a series of bad report cards. At the sight of the last one, Father went ballistic. There was a screaming match with the boy yelling, "But you can't make me! I just don't care! I don't care if I go to college or not!"

Here you have a power struggle that your client cannot win. No one can force a child to study and be motivated to go to college. A father cannot do his son's homework or take his tests for him.

Yet this is an important problem for your client. He is worried that his son will get into the wrong crowd at school. He will hang out with other boys who "just don't care." He knows that his son is intelligent and should not waste his potential. Yet, does the father know the son's learning style? How his son processes information? What school or peer pressures weigh on the son?

The power struggle is not doing any good. Not only does the son get out of doing his work, he is getting a lot of attention from his father by not trying. The son benefits by the power struggle, so this means the father has to drop his end of the tug-of-war rope. He has to realize that the son owns the problem of bad grades. Only the son can bring those grades up.

This father has to figure out how to motivate his son to get better grades. Does the boy understand how much more money he could make

with an education? Give him data on practical things like the cost of an automobile, rent, and utilities. Does the son understand how much fun it can be to live on a college campus in a dormitory with other students? Maybe they could spend a day at a college. Does he understand how boring dead-end jobs can be, especially as a lifetime situation? Show him how janitors, construction workers, waiters, salespeople and other workers have to spend their day to earn their salaries. Let him take a job like that in high school. The screaming has stopped. Rational discussion takes place. Real communication begins between your client and his child.

Notice that in coaching, the focus is on the main issue: motivating the son to get better grades. In this case, the main discussion is not about the father's own achievements as a medical doctor with an advanced degree or that a younger child in the family is getting good grades. The focus stays on the father-son relationship. When your client changes his perspective regarding the power struggles, he can become a more thoughtful and caring parent, someone who is supportive of his child's efforts at school, and not a parent who is demanding a certain result.

This is why parent coaching can be so effective. Parents who enter coaching already have the humility and insight to ask for help. They realize that their child's behavior is often a parenting issue that they have the power to change.

Summary of Chapter 8

A parent coach may help a parent change a child's behavior. However, usually a coach will never meet or see the child in question, and this makes parent coaching different from other kinds of coaching. When a parent has trouble with a child, it often has to do with the structure of the parent/child relationship. Somewhere the needs of the parent or the child (or possibly both) are not being met and there is a disconnect in the relationship. Only the parent has the power to change that structure. If a parent comes to

understand the differences in personal styles, and what his role is in creating and keeping the problem going, then that parent can correct the situation by changing his part in it.

CHAPTER 10

Advanced Listening Skills

As a coach, your main role is listener.

As a coach, you have to develop the main skill or competency of listening. This means hearing the verbal message and feeling the deeper emotions associated with the client's story. Active listening is

- ✚ Eye contact
- ✚ Present awareness
- ✚ Emotional attunement
- ✚ Reflective feedback

In your own experience, you may have noticed that people talk “at” each other rather than “with” each other. Instead of a conversation, you have a series of monologues. Each person thinks about what he is going to say while someone else is speaking. When a speaker finishes, the next person jumps in and talks. No one really listens to the other person. Consequently, there is no real communication among some family members. Thus, your clear rapport and active listening become a model for your client and her family.

In order for communication to take place, someone has to be in the receptive mode. Communication is a two-way process. To listen means to

receive and to understand another person's words. Every human being puts a different meaning on each word. For example, the word "mother" may conjure up a warm and cuddly feeling for some people. However, if a person's experience with his or her own mother was a bad one, the same word may bring feelings of anxiety and dread.

As a coach, you will have to become an active listener. This is harder than it seems to be. You will have to do away with most of your old conversational habits, because coaching is not a conversation or a friendly discussion about your client's problems. You will actively listening, so that you truly understand your client's story, beliefs, concerns, emotions and agenda.

Give the client your undivided attention. Don't interrupt.

During a coaching session, arrange to be free of distractions. If you are using a telephone, buy yourself a good headset so your hands are free to take notes. Don't let anyone or anything interrupt you during that half-hour. Put that time aside so that you can be truly present with your client.

Listen for the client's agenda. Ask yourself what this person wants from coaching. Coaching is not about how you think your client should change his ways or his life. Let the client set his own goals for coaching:

I've come into coaching because I am so worried about my daughter. She seems lonely and withdrawn. All she does is come home and watch television. She's a good student, but she's always by herself.

Don't interrupt with a lot of advice. You haven't heard the story yet. There is a narrative quality to his problem – it will be a story with a beginning, middle and ending. When did the story begin?

My daughter is only eight. She used to be best friends with our little next-door neighbor's girl. They played together all the time and they had

elaborate games. They built houses for their dolls and made up very intricate stories for them. She spent all her time with this little girl and she used to be so happy. That family moved away a few months ago, and now she seems so lost and unhappy.

Let the client lead you through the story. As you listen for the narrative, you are also listening for the client's emotions.

She used to be so happy and carefree. I hate to see her this way. I feel so helpless. I feel so sad that she's so miserable, but I don't know what to do. She's changed so much and is now such a lonely little girl.

Do you understand your client's emotions? Are you hearing the verbal story and the nonverbal story as well? Let the client's thoughts keep flowing without interrupting him, but in your mind, keep summarizing and thinking about what he is saying and what he is leaving out. At this point, your main concern is to "receive" the story. You may want to do some MIRRORING or REFLECTING as a test of whether your listening is accurate.

Give the client a true reflection or image of his own words.

Reflecting or mirroring is a coaching technique. You paraphrase or summarize (reflect back) what he just said to you. If you reflect by repeating his same words like a parrot, it may come out sounding phony and patronizing. If you reflect correctly, your client will realize that you are trying very hard to understand.

You feel sad that your daughter seems so unhappy. You can't think of any action to take (he said he felt helpless).

If your reflection is correct, he'll say something like:

Yes, that's exactly it. I feel so powerless.

If you don't have it just right, he may answer something like:

Well, I don't really feel helpless. I am just very frustrated. I have tried some things and nothing seems to work.

You still don't have the entire narrative at this point. Your client made certain relevant points like this girl have only one friend.

In addition, you do not know if this is a one-time situation or a recurring problem. Has this little girl always had problems socially, since her preschool years, or is this something new? You do not even know for sure if the girl is as depressed as her father thinks she is. It may be a trivial problem for the daughter, one that her father is blowing out of proportion. That's why you have to listen for a complete understanding before offering to brainstorm for solutions with your client.

Allow the client's thoughts to flow freely. Save your questions for later. Determine how your client thinks and what he values in relation to his daughter. You are looking for strengths within your client's personality that he can use to solve this problem. Has he taken any action so far, or does he just worry about things?

Don't interrupt your client's story. Respond very little to what is being said. Let him speak in his own way. If you have to, encourage him to keep speaking by brief phrases like:

What else happened?

What then?

Tell me more about that.

Sometimes, after you ask a question, there will be a silence. Something is happening during this silence – your client is thinking! Let him think. Trust the process. You are a receptor of your client's feelings, thoughts, words and story. You want to get it just right.

Don't start asking sensitive questions early on. If you start asking questions now, you will be leading the agenda and the narrative. First, you have to establish a trusting, warm relationship in which he feels safe enough to confide in you. Let the client lead the discussion and then follow his trail.

In this example, the coach's was well-intentioned, but she jumped too quickly into solutions. She framed and defined the problem for her client, when it is her client's job to do that.

You're saying that your daughter only has one friend. She needs to be more popular. She shouldn't depend on just one person. It's good that this girl moved away. Now your daughter can develop social skills. I

In this coaching response, the woman lead the discussion by making assumptions too early. She is imposing her style of "all kids need friends" and not understanding the parent's or child's personal styles.

Here is another example of how a discussion shifted from being client-centered to coach-led.

Well, many kids this age go in and out of friendships. I'm sure she's okay. --- Coach

Do you think so? You're the expert. But I read her diary and it said that she was thinking about running away. Is that normal too? -Client

Many kids think about running away. That's nothing new. -Coach

Instead of offering advice too early like that coach did, keep reflecting and mirroring until your client affirms his understanding. Create a safe atmosphere by your empathy so that your client feels free to vent emotions.

I am so mad at the way they moved away. They didn't give us any notice at all. They told us a week before they were moving, even though they'd known about it a year ago. That's just so wrong – they didn't think about Carrie's feelings at all! -Client

Before you brainstorm or look at solutions, try synthesizing and summarizing again to make sure your active listening really worked.

Let's see. You said that Carrie and Lynn were friends since kindergarten and mostly played together every day for almost three years. Lynn moved away without giving Carrie much notice. It's only been a few weeks, but Carrie is still sad. She doesn't seem to have much to do after school anymore.

Sometimes it is effective to reflect the story with metaphors and images. Your client will let you know if you are accurate:

Carrie and Lynn were more like sisters than friends, right? They liked wearing the same clothes? Wow, they were more like twins! – Coach

No wonder she's so upset. She's lost a sister. She said she always wanted a sister. - Client

Active listening is a tool that you will use every hour that you coach. You cannot help your client unless you truly understand and receive his or her side of things.

Summary of Chapter 10

Active listening is the most important skill of coaching. A coach has to listen so that he or she understands his client's agenda, thoughts, emotions, and narrative. Reflection, or mirroring, means paraphrasing the client's words as a method of letting the client know you understand his story as well as the underlying emotion. A mistake beginning coaches make is to start giving advice or asking too sensitive questions before they have listened and developed a full understanding of their clients.

CHAPTER 11

Advanced Coaching Skills

Intervention

Your most important skill in coaching is active listening and a second key competency is knowing when to “intervene.” In coaching, an intervention is any action a coach takes during the session. An intervention can be:

- ✚ Words or verbal feedback in the form of questions or statements.
- ✚ Inaction, such as being in silence with a client while she considers solutions.

There are many kinds of interventions, such as reframing, providing positive or negative feedback, using confrontation, using metaphors, and clarifying the client’s thinking through synthesizing, summarizing, and reflecting.

Reframe your client’s words so he thinks out of the box.

One powerful intervention is reframing, which is about giving your client a different perspective by putting his words into a different frame of reference.

Client - All the kids at school pick on Carrie. Kids are just so incredibly mean these days!

Coach: Hmm, you’re saying that there are no nice children at all, not even one, at Carrie’s school? There are just children who pick on Carrie?

Done correctly, reframing forces the client to think about things in a new way, and to examine the assumptions and beliefs he has about the problem. To practice this technique, remain heart-centered, staying out of judgment, and learn to keep your tone of voice pleasant and kind.

In parent coaching, you can often reframe an issue for your client by putting it in the child's perspective.

Client - All she does is mope in front of the television set.

Coach - I thought Carrie told you that she really likes that program on the Discovery Channel and looks forward to watching it at four o'clock every day.

As part of your coaching training, you will learn about developmental stages and appropriate behavior for children of different ages. This knowledge will help you in listening to the parent while at the same time understanding the situation from the child's point of view.

Don't open up issues until the client is ready.

Asking questions helps your client clarify issues and their way of thinking. However, if your client is not ready to talk about a sensitive issue, it is not your job to open up that topic.

Client: What really bothers me is that Carrie is so shy, and I was shy too. I didn't even have a date until I was in college. I don't want her to go through that. I want her to be outgoing, happy, and popular.

If your client moves the problem away from the child's issues and into his own, your job is to make him aware of what he is doing. You proceed slowly and tactfully if it is a sensitive issue.

Coach: It sounds as if you had your own problems with shyness, and you're worried that they may show up in Carrie's life (reflecting). Do you want to take some session time to explore that issue now?

In this way, you are not forcing her to talk about her painful issue. If you just jump in and talk about your client's past experiences, you are taking the coaching session away from working toward his present goals and agenda. It may cost him precious time and money, and not be helpful in solving Carrie's problems. You and he are not here to work through his past traumas, but to help his child in the present. On the other hand, a discussion of his own shyness may clear the air a little, and free him up to accept his daughter's quiet temperament, if that is indeed the case.

When you are coaching, use your intuition about what is most helpful as you follow your client's lead. Let the client lead the way on opening up sensitive issues. Open the doors to the past only as the client invites you to do so, and only if it pertains to the client's goals.

In this case, the client's attitude toward introversion was indeed relevant to his child's situation.

Client: Shy people never have any fun. They never make any friends. I don't want her to be alone the way I was.

Coach: It sounds as if you think all shy people are at a disadvantage. But a lot of our best thinkers and philosophers and scientists prefer to work alone. You told me that Carrie has great powers of concentration and spent two hours working on her Martin Luther King poster. That sounds special for an

eight-year-old. Most young children can't concentrate that long. Some people are thought leaders, not social leaders.

Here you may be helping your client understand that his daughter's introversion can be a healthy personality strength and style, especially when coupled with her high intellectual ability. Perhaps she can examine the assumption that an outgoing personality is always healthier than an introverted one.

Perhaps you and the parent don't have to work from your client's assumption that you need to turn a quiet child into an outgoing one. In general, it is better to move clients forward, toward their specified goals, rather than getting into long discussions of old problems.

Coaching is about the present, not the past. However, coaching is also about having clients understand their underlying beliefs and assumptions that influence their behaviors today. In some circumstances, your client may examine those underlying beliefs.

Ask powerful questions.

Ask open-ended questions that will have your client explaining, describing, and clarifying. Don't ask questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no." In other words, get the whole story. Go deeper.

Coach: Tell me how Carrie acts with her Sunday school friends, you know, the kids who aren't from her school.

Allow for silences as your client thinks through his answers. Wait until the client answers. Don't interrupt; keep the flow going.

After you are sure that you understand the client's situation, then the two of you can work together toward solutions. Most coaches like to come up with a list of five to ten actions that a client can commit to and act on before the next session, and then have the client choose two or three to implement. Brainstorm together.

What would you like to accomplish this week?

Do you have any ideas on how to help Carrie make some new friends?

Again, the client leads the discussion with encouragement from his coach. Be positive and motivating: Inspire innovative thinking.

That sounds like a good plan!

I like that idea!

Sometimes in the course of the brainstorming part of a coaching session, you may discover other underlying beliefs and assumptions that are impacting the problem.

Coach: You mean that Carrie is not even allowed to e-mail Lynn? They never talk on the telephone?

Client: I can't stand the way Carrie cries after she talks to Lynn. I think it's better they just break it off completely, especially since they just moved without telling us.

Coach: Carrie wants to stay in touch with Lynn, but you don't allow Carrie to have any contact with Lynn at all. Is that correct?

Client: That's right.

How would you proceed next using your intuition? The International Coaching Federation literature (see next pages) refers to “dancing in the moment.” Coaches have to listen and act in the session, “going with their guts,” and trusting their inner knowledge as they decide how best to proceed. Depending on the client, a coach may want to respond in a challenging way:

Coach: I think Carrie is in grief for her friend. By not allowing her any contact with Lynn, you're making her problem worse.

Another coach may think it's best to use reframing to look at the client's underlying assumptions about his daughter's life.

Coach: It sounds like you can't stand it when Carrie's unhappy, even for a moment. Yet unhappiness is part of life. Can you help her move through her grief? No one can be happy twenty-four hours a day. No parent can make their child happy twenty-four hours a day.

A third coach may take still a different approach.

Coach: If you don't let Carrie speak with Lynn, you're taking away some of Carrie's control over the problem. You're making her feel helpless.

Client: I don't think I can allow her to speak with Lynn. I am really upset with those people.

Coach: What you have said earlier and what you are saying now contradict each other. It's your anger speaking, not concern for Carrie. You said Carrie wants to see Lynn. That she really misses her. You said Lynn invited her up for a weekend.

Client: You think I should let her go?

Coach: Yes, if you can get comfortable with it. Can you?

By the way, the above examples point out some vital differences between coaching and psychotherapy. In coaching, if a client asks you a direct question and genuinely wants your opinion, respond. In coaching, if you believe that you can move your client forward by calling on his behavior, then challenge her.

In general, you have established a rapport and a feeling of safety with your client before confronting. Your client understands that you are being candid because you care about his problems. A caring person has the courage to be helpful by speaking out, even if there are some unpleasant moments. As covered in earlier chapters, you and your client have

established ground rules about how confrontational your client wants you to be. As you gain more experience in coaching, you will also gain more intuition about when to speak up and when to hold back.

Take time to read the International Coaching Federation's list of core competencies, as you will have to be familiar with all of them to become a certified parent coach.

Summary of Chapter 11

While active listening is the most important skill of coaching, a coach should develop several other techniques as well. Reflecting and mirroring back a client's words indicates to him (or her) that you really understand what is going on. Reframing is about helping the client see things from a new perspective. Asking open-ended questions is a good way of having the client expand and clarify what he has been saying. Confrontations are used wisely. The more experience a coach has, the better he can facilitate the coaching process.

Coaching Core Competencies^{iv}

The following eleven core coaching competencies were developed to support greater understanding about the skills and approaches used within today's coaching profession as defined by the ICF. They will also support you in calibrating the level of alignment between the coach-specific training expected and the training you have experienced.

These competencies were used as the foundation for the ICF credentialing process examination. The core competencies are grouped into four clusters according to those that fit together logically based on common ways of looking at the competencies in each group. The groupings and individual competencies are not weighted - they do not represent any kind of priority in that they are all core or critical for any competent coach to demonstrate.

A. SETTING THE FOUNDATION

1. MEETING ETHICAL GUIDELINES AND PROFESSIONAL STANDARDS
2. ESTABLISHING THE COACHING AGREEMENT

B. CO-CREATING THE RELATIONSHIP

3. ESTABLISHING TRUST AND INTIMACY WITH THE CLIENT
4. COACHING PRESENCE

C. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

5. ACTIVE LISTENING

6. POWERFUL QUESTIONING

7. DIRECT COMMUNICATION

D. FACILITATING LEARNING AND RESULTS

8. CREATING AWARENESS

9. DESIGNING ACTIONS

10. PLANNING AND GOAL SETTING

11. MANAGING PROGRESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY

NOTE: Each competency listed on the following pages has a definition and related behaviors. Behaviors are classified as either those that should always be present and visible in any coaching interaction or those that are called for in certain coaching situations and, therefore, not always visible in any one coaching interaction.

A. SETTING THE FOUNDATION

1. Meeting Ethical Guidelines and Professional Standards - Understanding of coaching ethics and standards and ability to apply them appropriately in all coaching situations

1. Understands and exhibits in own behaviors the ICF Standards of Conduct (see list).

2. Understands and follows all ICF Ethical Guidelines (see list).

3. Clearly communicates the distinctions between coaching, consulting, psychotherapy and other support professions.

4. Refers client to another support professional as needed, knowing when this is needed, and how to find available resources.

2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement - Ability to understand what is required in the specific coaching interaction and to come to agreement with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship

1. Understands and effectively discusses with the client the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship (logistics, fees, scheduling, inclusion of others if appropriate).

2. Reaches agreement about what is appropriate in the relationship and what is not, what is and is not being offered, and about the client's and coach's responsibilities.

3. Determines whether there is an effective match between his or her coaching method and the needs of each prospective client.

B. CO-CREATING THE RELATIONSHIP

3. Establishing Trust and Intimacy with the Client - Ability to create a safe, supportive environment that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust.

1. Shows genuine concern for the client's welfare and future.

2. Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty and sincerity.

3. Establishes clear agreements and keeps promises.

4. Demonstrates respect for client's perceptions, learning style, personal being.

5. Provides ongoing support for and champions new behaviors and actions, including those involving risk-taking and fear of failure.

6. Asks permission to coach client in sensitive, new areas.

4. Coaching Presence – Has the ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.

1. Is present and flexible during the coaching process, dancing in the moment.

2. Accesses own intuition and trusts one's inner knowing - "goes with the gut."

3. Is open to “not knowing” and takes risks.

4. Sees many ways to work with the client, and chooses what is most effective in that moment.

5. Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy.

6. Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities for own action.

7. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions, and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by the client's emotions.

C. COMMUNICATING EFFECTIVELY

5. Active Listening – Has the ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires, and to support client self-expression.

1. Attends to the client and the client's agenda, and not to the coach's agenda for the client.

2. Hears the client's concerns, goals, values and beliefs about what is and is not possible.

3. Distinguishes between the words, the tone of voice, and the body language.

4. Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, mirrors back what client has said to ensure clarity and understanding.

5. Encourages, accepts, explores and reinforces the client's expression of feelings, perceptions, concerns, beliefs and suggestions.

6. Integrates and builds on client's ideas and suggestions.

7. "Bottom-lines" or understands the essence of the client's communication and helps the client get there rather than engaging in long descriptive stories.

8. Allows the client to vent or "clear" the situation without judgment or attachment in order to move on to next steps.

6. Powerful Questioning – Has the ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the client.

1. Asks questions that reflect active listening and an understanding of the client's perspective.

2. Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment or action including those that challenge the client's assumptions.

3. Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility or new learning.

4. Asks questions that move the client towards what he or she desires, not questions that ask the client to justify or look backwards.

7. Direct Communication – Has the ability to communicate effectively during the coaching sessions and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.

1. Is clear, articulate and direct in sharing and providing feedback.

2. Reframes and articulates to help the client understand from another perspective what he/she wants or is uncertain about.

3. Clearly states coaching objectives, meeting agenda, purpose of techniques or exercises.

4. Uses language appropriate and respectful to the client - always non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical and without “jargon.”

5. Uses metaphor and analogy to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture.

D. FACILITATING LEARNING AND RESULTS

8. Creating Awareness – Has the ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information, and to make interpretations that help the client gain awareness and achieve agreed-upon results.

1. Goes beyond what is said in assessing the client's concerns, not being hooked by the client's description.

2. Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness and clarity,

3. Identifies for the client his or her underlying concerns, typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself/herself and the world, differences between the facts and the interpretation, disparities between thoughts, feelings and action.

4. Helps clients discover for themselves the new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, moods, etc. that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important to them.

5. Communicates broader perspectives to clients and inspires commitment to shift their viewpoints and find new possibilities for action.

6. Helps clients to see the different, interrelated factors that affect them and their behaviors, including thoughts, emotions, body and “story” background.

7. Expresses insights to clients in ways that are useful and meaningful for the client.

8. Identifies major strengths vs. major areas for learning and growth, and what is most important to address during coaching.

9. Asks the client to distinguish between trivial and significant issues, situational vs. recurring behaviors, when detecting a separation between what is being stated and what is being done.

9. Designing Actions – Has the ability to create (with the client) opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching and in work/life situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon coaching results.

1. Brainstorms and assists the client to define actions that will enable the client to demonstrate, practice and deepen new learning.

2. Helps the client to focus on, and systematically explore, specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed-upon coaching goals.

3. Engages the client to explore alternative ideas and solutions, to evaluate options, and to make related decisions.

4. Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery, where the client applies what has been discussed and learned during sessions immediately afterwards in his/her work or life setting.

5. Celebrates client successes and capabilities for future growth.

6. Challenges client's assumptions and perspectives to provoke new ideas and find new possibilities for action.

7. Advocates or brings forward points of view that are aligned with client goals and, without attachment, engages the client to consider them.

8. Helps the client "Do It Now" during the coaching session, providing immediate support.

9. Encourages stretches and challenges, but also keeps a comfortable pace of learning.

10. Planning and Goal Setting – Has the ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client.

1. Consolidates collected information and establishes a coaching plan and development goals with the client that address concerns and major areas for learning and development.

2. Creates a plan with results that are attainable, measurable, specific and have target dates.

3. Makes plan adjustments as warranted by the coaching process and by changes in the situation.

4. Helps the client identify and access different resources for learning, including books and other professionals.

5. Identifies and targets early successes that are important to the client.

11. Managing Progress and Accountability – Has the ability to hold attention on what is important for the client, and to leave responsibility with the client to take action.

1. Clearly requests of the client actions that will move the client toward their stated goals.

2. Demonstrates follow-through by asking the client about those actions that the client committed to during the previous session(s),
3. Acknowledges the client for what he or she has done, not done, learned, or become aware of, since the previous coaching session(s).
4. Effectively prepares, organizes and reviews with the client the information obtained during sessions.
5. Keeps the client on track between sessions by holding attention on the coaching plan and outcomes, agreed-upon courses of action, and topics for future session(s).
6. Focuses on the coaching plan but is also open to adjusting behaviors and actions based on the coaching process and shifts in direction during sessions.
7. Is able to move back and forth between the big picture of where the client is heading, setting a context for what is being discussed and where the client wishes to go.
8. Promotes the client's self-discipline and holds the client accountable for what he or she says they are going to do, for the results of an intended action, or for a specific plan with related time frames.
9. Develops the client's ability to make decisions, address key concerns, and develop himself/herself (to get feedback, to determine priorities and set the pace of learning, to reflect on and learn from experiences).
10. Positively confronts the client when he or she did not take agreed-upon actions.

CHAPTER 12

When to Refer s Client

There are three kinds of clients that you will be unable to coach:

1. Clients involved with child abuse.
2. Clients who won't take any action toward solving their problems.
3. Clients with psychiatric or medical problems.

Report child abuse to police or Child Protective Services immediately.

In parent coaching, you may become aware of a situation in which there is child abuse. Child abuse can be physical abuse like beatings and other harsh punishments. It can be emotional abuse such as a parent constantly yelling at and criticizing a child. Child abuse can be very subtle, such as the parent who sets such high impossible standards that the child is stressed out trying to reach them. And, there is also sexual abuse. What is important for you to realize is that there are different degrees and different forms of child abuse.

Sometimes your client is aware that she is a child abuser. Locking a child in a closet for several hours may seem like standard parental procedure to her – after all, her mom did the same thing and she turned out okay. Hitting a child with a leather belt is how you get them to behave – “my Daddy

did it and now I'm a fine upstanding citizen." This will be how they justify their cruelty.

Never take it upon yourself to change a child abuser's behavior through coaching. Coaching is not appropriate for such clients, and you may expose yourself to legal considerations or liability.

Most professionals who work with children are required by law to report immediately any cases of child abuse to the police. Professionals such as psychologists, mental health counselors, psychiatrists, day care workers, teachers, doctors, dentists, social workers, optometrists, school bus drivers, hospital and school administrators and others are usually required to report child abuse within twenty-four hours or face fines and/or jail time.

Recently in Arizona, a kindergartner told her teacher that her father was molesting her. The teacher and principal waited two days before telling the police, as they investigated the problem themselves. Because they waited, they now face fines, prison time, and loss of teaching credentials. By the way, the little girl was molested again during the two days they waited. Their legal obligation was to report the abuse, not to investigate it.

Mental health counseling and psychiatry records are confidential and privileged under the law. However, this privilege does *not* apply if the professional considers the client a danger to himself or others, or if the professional learns about child or elder abuse. The law usually requires them to report it immediately to Child Protective Services or the police. However, mandatory legal requirements of reporting child abuse vary from state to state.

As states begin to license coaches, you will have the same legal obligation to report such cases immediately or face prosecution. If you are coaching between states, your legal obligation may be even more complex. For example, if you live in Illinois and are coaching a client in California, you may be bound by the laws of both states. This section does not constitute

legal advice. You need to consult your own attorney for legal advice in this matter.

You have a moral and ethical obligation to report child abuse immediately. Often you can report it by calling a child abuse hotline anonymously.

Dismiss clients who won't do the work required in coaching.

In coaching, every now and then you will have a client who won't do the work involved to solve his or her problems. It may take you a few sessions to figure out that this person wants to talk and perhaps gain your sympathy. You will observe that she is too lazy or blocked psychologically to implement any plan that you and she have devised in coaching sessions. There may be different excuses: the first week she had the flu; the second week, she had unexpected company; the third week, she forgot the plan, and so forth. Whatever the reason, she won't do the work needed in coaching.

Sometimes this person will be simply unable to change. He will make statements like, "I'm just not a loving person. I can't hug people." Or "I'm not the kind of person who can go to parties. I never go out." Or "I understand why you suggest that, but I could never do anything like that. It's just not me." These kinds of statements often indicate that the person is not a good candidate for coaching.

When you first begin your career as a coach, you may be so happy just to have clients who are willing to pay you that you may have real difficulty letting go of any of them. Nevertheless, you have to learn to be able to fire clients.

I ask extensive questions to get at the truth of whether they can get into action about their problems. If they can't take action, I don't coach them.

... Mark Brandenburg

With this kind of client, you can say, “I’m sorry, but I don’t think that coaching is working for you. We don’t seem to be getting anywhere.” You can offer to have him come back when he is ready to take action. Sometimes just having this conversation is enough to get the client moving forward with his problems.

Fortunately, these cases are very rare. Most people who enter coaching have a good attitude and a willingness to change.

Refer clients with mental illnesses to psychotherapists and medical doctors.

Sometimes as you learn more about a client, you begin to discover his or her problems do not belong in a coaching relationship. The International Federation of Coaching presents a list of the “Ten Top Indicators” that you can use as a reference to identify clients who need to be referred for medical treatment. They are included at the end of this chapter.

The most serious cases will involve potential suicides. The client may talk about death and how easy it would be to end his life. He may express hopelessness and despair. His attitude is “Why bother? What’s the use?”

The ICF suggests that a coach ask questions like, "Do you want to die?" "How would you die if you decided to?" "Are you planning on dying?" "When are you planning on dying?" If your client intends to commit suicide, you need to get him immediately help by calling 911.

In many cases, the client will not be suicidal but is still presenting psychological problems that do not belong in coaching.

When I find real pathology, it is beyond my purview and I refer that person to a psychologist. Deeply troubled people with long-standing problems

often cannot think rationally – that is why they need to be referred. They are beyond my purview.

....Bobbie Burdett

Here are some descriptions of clients who need to be referred from coaching, as pointed out in the ICF guidelines:

- ✚ Clients who are deeply troubled usually cannot think rationally through problems. They will be unable to concentrate or focus during coaching sessions and complain about intrusive thoughts. They are unable to follow through on plans to implement their goals.
- ✚ Clients who are severely depressed will be unable to take action or benefit from coaching. They will have a sense of hopelessness, such as “Why should I bother doing that?” Nothing gives them pleasure. They wonder if life is worth living. They may express guilt that they have survived while their loved ones died or suffered.
- ✚ Others who exhibit inappropriate anger during sessions may have deep problems. They are irritable and jumpy, and complain about everything.
- ✚ Sleeping and eating problems often indicate psychological stress. If your client can’t sleep or is sleeping too much, or if your client can’t eat or is eating constantly – all of these may indicate underlying problems you won’t be able to handle in coaching.

See the ICF guidelines at the end of this chapter for more details.

When you first begin working with a client, look for “big statements” that indicate big problems:

- ✚ I am a drug addict.
- ✚ My spouse is alcoholic.
- ✚ I've been beating my child.
- ✚ I feel so bad I want to kill myself.

Many working coaches will not take clients who are taking prescription drugs or whose children are under doctor's care. This might include, for example, a child with Attention Deficit Disorder who is taking Ritalin, or a client with a prescription for Prozac or other antidepressant drugs. These may be issues you want to determine in early sessions.

Some coaches believe that "flat affect" is a red flag issue. Flat affect means the person never expresses any emotions whatsoever and has no animation in her voice at all. Usually these people are not good candidates for coaching.

Referring clients for professional help

If you have the client's trust, you can gently, but firmly, lead him to a professional. Most coaches feel an obligation to make sure a troubled client gets the help she needs:

I refer Attention Deficit Hyperactive problems; or a person talking about suicide or is in danger because of violent family members or if a child is showing abnormal quick changes such as going from an all-A student to failing. I suggest criteria to them. What kind of therapist do you want? Do you want a man or woman? I talk criteria and that gives them the feeling they are not being "dumped" by me. I really care, and I try to find what's best for them. I actually empower them to make their own calls. If you have developed their trust, you

have to guide them through finding a therapist or the right specialist. You have to do what's best for them.

.... Natalie Gahrman

When you begin your coaching career, you should have a list of mental health professionals who can provide services to clients who need them. If you are coaching in different geographic locales, you should develop your expertise to use the Internet and other references to help your client find the right therapist in the client's area. Above all, familiarize yourself with the indicators that a client needs professional help.

Summary of Chapter 12

Certain problems are beyond the purview of coaching. If you learn about child abuse, you should report it to local authorities immediately, despite confidentiality issues. Some clients are simply "uncoachable" because they will not do the work involved in solving problems. You have to learn to recognize when a client has psychological problems too deep for coaching and then refer them to a therapist. Develop a list of mental health specialists and have your own referral system ready. The best procedure is to walk clients through the referral process so they get the help they need.

TOP TEN INDICATORS TO REFER YOUR CLIENT TO A MENTAL HEALTH PROFESSIONAL^v

1. Is exhibiting a decline in his/her ability to experience pleasure and/or an increase in being sad, hopeless and helpless

- ✚ As a coach, you may notice that your client is not as upbeat as usual.
- ✚ He/she may talk much more frequently about how awful life/the world is and that nothing can be done about it.
- ✚ The client may make comments about “why bother” or “what’s the use.”
- ✚ There will be a decline in talking about things that are enjoyable.
- ✚ He/she may stop doing things they like to do, like going to the movies, visiting with friends, participating in athletic events or being a spectator of sporting events.
- ✚ The client begins to talk about being unable to do anything that forwards their dreams or desires.

2. Has intrusive thoughts or is unable to concentrate or focus

- ✚ As a coach, you may notice your client is not able to focus on his or her goals or the topic of conversation.
- ✚ The client is unable to complete their action steps and isn’t aware of what got in the way.

- ✚ You notice that your client begins talking about unpleasant events during the course of talking about themselves and their goals.
- ✚ The client tells you that unpleasant thoughts keep popping into their minds at inopportune moments or when they are thinking about or doing other things and that they can't seem to get away from these thoughts.
- ✚ Your client tells you about recurring scary dreams that they didn't have before.
- ✚ Your client reports that they have many thoughts swirling in their heads and they can't get them to slow down.

3. Is unable to get to sleep or awakens during the night and is unable to get back to sleep or sleeps excessively

- ✚ Your client comes to their coaching sessions tired and exhausted.
- ✚ Your client begins talking about not being able to get to sleep or how he/she just wants to sleep all the time.
- ✚ Your client may report to you how he/she gets to sleep and then wakes up and can't get back to sleep.
- ✚ Your client tells you how they need to take naps during the day, something they have not done before.
- ✚ Your client reports that they fell asleep at an inopportune time or place.

4. Has a change in appetite: decrease in appetite or increase in appetite

- ✚ Your client reports that he/she isn't hungry and just doesn't want to eat.

- ✚ Your client reports that he/she is eating all the time, usually sweets or junk food, whether or not they are hungry.
- ✚ Your client says they don't get any enjoyment from eating when they did in the past.
- ✚ Your client reports that they are not sitting down to eat with friends or family when they did in the past.

5. Is feeling guilty because others have suffered or died

- ✚ Your client reports that they feel guilty because they are alive or have not been injured.
- ✚ Your client states that they don't understand why they are still here/alive when others have had to suffer/die.
- ✚ Your client doesn't want to move forward with their goals because they don't deserve to have the life they choose, especially when other people have had to suffer/die.
- ✚ Your client questions their right to have a fulfilling life/career in the face of all that has happened.
- ✚ Your client expresses the belief that he/she is unworthy of having a satisfying life.

6. Has feelings of despair or hopelessness

- ✚ According to your client, nothing in life is okay.
- ✚ Your client misses session times or says they want to quit coaching because life is not worth living or they don't deserve to get what they want.
- ✚ Your client moves into excessive negative thinking.

- ✚ Your client says that they can't make a difference or that whatever they do doesn't matter.
- ✚ Your client has the attitude of "Why bother?"

7. Is being hyper alert and/or excessively tired

- ✚ Your client reports that they can't relax.
- ✚ Your client states that they are jumping at the slightest noise.
- ✚ Your client reports that it feels like they always have to be on guard.
- ✚ Your client states that they are listening for any little sound that is out of the ordinary.
- ✚ Your client reports that they have no energy.
- ✚ Your client states that they can't do their usual chores because they are so tired.
- ✚ Your client states that it takes too much energy to do things they normally did in the past.

8. Has increased irritability or outbursts of anger

- ✚ Your client becomes increasingly belligerent or argumentative with you or other people.
- ✚ Your client reports that everyone or everything annoys them.
- ✚ Your client starts making comments about how miserable everyone and everything is.
- ✚ Your client reports that other people in their life are telling them how miserable/angry they have become.

- ✚ Your client reports getting into arguments with people.
- ✚ Your client states that they get so upset they don't know what to do with themselves.
- ✚ Your client reports that they feel like a "pressure cooker" or are "ready to burst."
- ✚ Your client increasingly tells you about wanting to do or doing things that would harm themselves or others (examples: wanting to put their fist through a window; wanting to punch someone; wanting to hit someone/something with their car).

9. Has impulsive and risk-taking behavior

- ✚ Your client reports doing things, such as going on a buying spree, without thinking about the consequences of the behavior.
- ✚ Your client tells you that something came to their mind so they went and did it without thinking about the outcome.
- ✚ Your client reports an increase in doing things that could be detrimental to themselves or others. Examples of this are an increase in promiscuous sexual behavior; increase in alcohol/drug consumption or deciding to get married after knowing someone an unusually short period.

10. Has thoughts of death and/or suicide

- ✚ Your client begins talking a lot about death, not just a fear of dying.
- ✚ Your client alludes to the fact that dying would be appropriate for them.
- ✚ Your client makes comments that to die right now would be okay with them.

- ✚ Your client becomes fascinated with what dying would be like.
- ✚ Your client talks about ways to die.
- ✚ Your client talks about going to a better place and how wonderful it would be and seems to be carried away by the thought.
- ✚ Your client tells you they know how they would kill themselves if they wanted to or had the chance.
- ✚ Your client alludes to having a plan or way they would die/go to a better place/leave the planet/leave the situation/get out of here.
- ✚ If previously your client was engaging, personable and warm, and now presents to you as cold, distant and aloof, tell them what you are observing and ask what has changed. This is often a signal that they have disengaged from living and are silently thinking about or planning suicide.
- ✚ Some questions you might ask your client if you are unclear about what is going on with them or their intentions: "Do you want to die?"
- ✚ "How would you die if you decided to?" "Are you planning on dying?"
- ✚ "When are you planning on dying?"

If you have any inclination or indication that your client is planning on dying/or committing suicide immediately refer them to an emergency room or call 911.

1. Tell your client that you care about them, are concerned for them and that you are taking what they say seriously and that they must get help immediately.
2. If the client balks at what you are saying, gets belligerent or even more distant *and* you become even more concerned about

them, you may need to tell them you will break confidentiality because of your concern for their well-being and that you will call 911. You can call your local 911 and give them the address and phone number of your client, even if it is in another state, and they can contact the client's local 911 dispatcher.

If is important to note that the appearance of any one of these indicators, except for No.10 which must be referred and followed up immediately, does not indicate the immediate need for a referral to a psychotherapist or community mental health agency; everyone can experience a very brief episode of any of the indicators. However, if you see that several indicators are emerging and that the client is not presenting as whole, competent and capable, then it is time for a referral to a mental health professional.

*Prepared by: Lynn F. Meinke, MA, RN, CLC, CSLC Life Coach, Chair:
Life-Personal Coach Committee of ICF*

CHAPTER 13

The Case of the Miserable

Second Grader

Put coaching into action

This chapter and the next one are case studies to help you put coaching in action.

Each case study follows a certain template. For example, in the first session, coach and client establish goals and a timeline in which to operate. From there, coaching follows a form in which each session has a beginning, middle and end. The coach moves each session forward and ends on time with everything accomplished on schedule. During the last session, coach and client should go over the progress the client has made, reach closure and definite conclusion. The client may offer feedback to the coach as to what worked for her and how his process could improve. Remember, these are guidelines for your planning. Your client session flows in time according to client needs and your intuition.

A typical coaching session operates like this:

- ✚ **Beginning of each session.** As the coach, you recap what happened in the last session. As you give your summary, you also make sure that both you and client remember what happened in the same way.

You both have to “be on the same page.” Then you cover any “homework” that your client did between sessions. This should take less than ten minutes.

+ **Middle of each session.** This is the real work of the week and the heart of the session and could run approximately fifteen minutes. The client talks about each action that she took during the week toward solving the problem. She tells you what did and did not work out for her. Together you brainstorm about what new ideas and actions to take in the next week.

End of each session. You should keep an eye on the clock so that you can control the session and that you and your client accomplish each step in a systematic way. With about five minutes left in the session, recap what you both agreed happened during this session. Review the agreed-upon plan for the week. Finally, you should ask your client for feedback. Use questions like: “How do you think coaching is working for you?” “Is there anything I could do to make your coaching even more effective?” These questions are not only important to this current situation, but for you as a coach to improve your skills when you work with other clients.

The case of the miserable second grader

In this case, coach and client were able to solve a problem in just three sessions. The presenting problem revealed some troubles in communication between parent and child, which coach and client continued to work through in subsequent sessions.

First Session – Coach Jessie gets the narrative

Mrs. Millie Donaldson entered coaching because she was worried about her eight-year-old son, Tommy.

Millie: I understand that you were a second grade teacher for ten years, so I thought you would be a good match, because Tommy is in second grade. -

Coach Jessie: Yes, that's true. Now tell me about Tommy. –

He is in the middle of three kids, and he's always been easy-going. Just a great kid. Always smiling and happy and very easy to handle. I never have to correct him much. But lately he's been sick all the time. –

Tell me more about that. –

The first week he missed two days, and this week he's already missed one. School's only been in session for two weeks.

What did your doctor say?

The doctor ran some tests but couldn't find anything. However, he gets up in the morning, and vomits his breakfast, and then he acts sick. I let him stay home, and then usually he's okay by noon or so – I mean, up and out of bed and pretty happy.

Notice how effectively Coach Jessie kept the session about Tommy and did not talk about herself as a teacher. In addition, she first has to rule out any medical or physical problems before she can proceed. In this part of the session, Coach Jessie is trying to get the narrative. What's the story?

Coach Jessie and Millie Donaldson continued to talk for about a half-hour, as Coach Jessie pulled out not only the entire story but also what Millie has tried to do herself to solve the problem.

Millie: My mother lives down our block, and she says I am just babying Tommy by letting him stay home. She said I shouldn't give him anything to eat in the mornings and make him go to school, and then he won't throw up.

Coach: So your mom thinks it's a psychosomatic illness?

Yes. She thinks he's learned how to throw up in order to get out of going to school. So I tried not giving him breakfast, but now he complains his tummy

hurts and his head hurts and he can't see well. But my mom says just send him anyway and he'll be okay. Otherwise, he'll use this as a way to get out of everything else he doesn't like.

But you said Tommy loved kindergarten and first grade, right?

Yes, he did. He's always hated to miss school. He had many friends and loved to learn. I just can't understand what's wrong. What do you think? Do you think I should just make him go to school?

Coach Jesse and Millie Donaldson are now about forty minutes into the first session. They have gone over their coaching arrangement and set up a schedule of payments and meetings. Coach Jesse is sure she understands the perimeters of the problem, but she keeps probing before she starts brainstorming with Millie Donaldson for solutions. She thinks it is significant that Millie asks for her mother's opinion even though their parenting styles are very different. She also keeps in mind the description of Tommy as an easy-going, compliant child.

Coach: Did your doctor rule out allergies for Tommy? I had one student who was always getting sick to her stomach in my classroom, and it turned out she was allergic to birds. We were able to move her seat away from the class parakeet, and then she was fine. I have also had students who were allergic to the carpeting in my room.

Millie: The doctor said he was sure that Tommy did not have allergies. He did scratch tests and stuff. And all his blood work and lab tests came out normal.

It's significant to me that Tommy's stomach and headache problems started when school started. Could there be a class bully? Some other child who is picking on Tommy?

I don't know. Do you think it is school related?

I think we should rule that out first, because Tommy's problems began when school started.

I think so too.

What does Tommy himself say about things? –

He says everything's okay and he's okay with school. He's not a complainer.

Hmm... sometimes it's hard to get that kind of child to complain about anything, even when they're hurting.

Working toward solutions and plans

Coach Jessie summed up everything she knew so far. Then the two of them began brainstorming solutions.

Coach: From what you are telling me, you have a basically happy and well-adjusted son who enjoys his family and home life. Yet he is expressing an unwillingness to go to school, perhaps, by being sick in the mornings. He is telling you that everything is okay there. You told me too that he is not one to complain about anything. You also said his teacher is one of the best and most popular teachers at that school, and that many parents request to be in her class.

Millie: That's right. I requested Miss Sharron for Tommy.

You don't believe that Tommy is suffering from being bullied. And your doctor ruled out allergies or other physical illnesses?

That's right. Now what do I do?

Well, I am still not sure we really know what's going on with your son. He's told you he likes his teacher and he likes school, but obviously

something's wrong. We need to find out what. Let's think about how we can find out more information.

Do you think I should go to the school and nose around?

Do you think that would be a good idea?

Going and observing may be a good idea. How about a teacher conference?

We definitely need more information.

What if I volunteered in Tommy's classroom next week? They let parents come in and you know, mark papers and put up bulletin boards and stuff. I could just be like a detective and figure out what it is that's bothering him. – Millie

I like that idea! How hard is it to get yourself in that classroom?

Super easy. They're crying for volunteers.

Okay, I like that. What kinds of things will you be looking for? -

I have a feeling Tommy acts different there than at home. At home, he's all smiles and love, but I'm going to see how he acts there. I am going to look for any bullies near him. And I haven't given up on parakeet allergies, either!

It sounds like you're going to need some time to find out all this.

What if I stay at least one full day?

I like that idea. Kids act differently in the morning than afternoon. I think you need at least a full day or maybe a few days. If it is about being bullied, the bully probably won't do anything in front of you.

I'll call the volunteer coordinator and sign up for one full day there.

Okay, that's great. I look forward to hearing about your detective work. You're going to spend at least one full day in the class as you observe Tommy, and you're looking out for bullies, problems, even allergens.

Notice how Coach Jessie recaps and summarizes what happened in the session. She makes sure that she and Millie both understand what the required actions will be. Coach Jessie writes out her notes in a legible fashion, but she feels uneasy. She is not completely confident that having Millie observe at school will find the underlying cause of the problem, but she believes it's a good start.

This first session took place on a Tuesday. On Thursday, Coach Jessie e-mailed Millie as follows:

Dear Millie: I enjoyed meeting you and discussing solutions to Tommy's situation. I am looking forward to hearing about the results of your "detective work" at our next session on Tuesday, January 10, at 1 p.m. Best of luck!
Coach Jessie

A few hours later, Jessie received the following email from her client:

Dear Coach Jessie: I'm going to spend the whole day in Tommy's classroom tomorrow! My detective eyes will be all over that room, just like on CSI. - Millie Donaldson

Second session – detective work pays off!

Jessie began their second session by asking how Millie's "volunteer work" went in Tommy's second grade classroom.

It took me about five minutes to figure out what was wrong! It's Miss Sharron!

Miss Sharron is Tommy's new teacher, right?

She's negative and yells at these young children rudely! I can't stand her! I've got to get Tommy out of there.

Wow, you really don't like Miss Sharron, do you? I thought you said she was a popular teacher and you requested her for Tommy?

She's very tall and big and she moves like a robot. There's no joy or warmth about her. She's very wooden. Nobody's allowed to laugh. She creates this awful heavy atmosphere. Think Titanic. The kids can earn the right to play with toys in the back of the room if they finish their work early. But when they play, they are not allowed to talk to each other. They have to pick out one toy and bring it to their desk. Everyone is afraid of her!

Wow, that is so different from your own household, where your kids are happy go lucky! -

Millie continued her descriptions of an efficient but joyless classroom dominated by a teacher who gets academic results that impress parents.

Why do you think Tommy didn't tell you about Miss Sharron?

He just has such a good heart, and he knows he's supposed to love his teacher. I'm afraid I made a big deal of that before school started.

Even when she's a shark?

Coach Jessie hints at the bigger picture – that Tommy is a child who is trying so hard to please his mother by his happy attitude that he does not feel free to communicate unhappy feelings. Nevertheless, Coach Jessie keeps moving the session forward. After all, the goal of coaching was to help Tommy adjust to second grade, and she is going to keep her client on task.

How can we help Tommy with this situation? -

Well, I know my mom would say that you can't always like every teacher. I mean, he's just stuck with her because she is his teacher.

Okay, one idea is to keep Tommy in that class with a teacher he cannot stand...if you take your Mom's advice.

Don't you think he should learn to like every teacher?

What you value for your son is important. What do you want to do?

To me, it's like being stuck with a boss you can't stand for an entire year. I would be teaching him that he has to put up with authority no matter what. I'm not sure that's the best thing to teach him. -

Remember your original instinct. You said, "I've to get Tommy out of there." What about the other second grade teacher? The one nobody requests?

The other one is just darling. He's only in his first year of teaching, but he seems to be trying to make it the best possible year for those kids. I peeked into his classroom and wished Tommy was in there. He used to be a horticulturist so he's going to do a lot with plants. And Tommy really likes science. In fact, Tommy said to me that he'd rather be in Mr. Charles' class.

His current teacher is an old crab who makes him sick. The other teacher is fun and interested in science, and Tommy likes him. Hmm, what a choice!-

In the previous sequence, you saw how Millie wanted to be told what to do for her son. She valued the coach's experience and expertise. Jessie returned the power of choice-making to the mother, where it belongs. Also, Jessie effectively uses reframing several times to bring out the obvious solution to the problem as she knew her client was unsure of herself. Her client did need more information to make an informed decision. In addition, we learned that Tommy also has a story here on wanting to overly please mom, the interpersonal style.

Millie: I guess you want me to ask for the other teacher. But that's hard.

Coach: Why is it hard to ask your principal to change Tommy's class?

After this question, Jessie had to wait through a long silence. She let Millie think and carefully craft an answer.

Millie: I've never made any waves at the school before. My kids have always done well there and I hate to cause trouble. I don't want to get Miss Sharron in trouble.

Coach: You said Miss Sharron was a popular requested teacher.

I don't like to complain about things. The teacher knows what's best. Besides, it's probably too late to change teachers. We're three weeks into the semester.

So all bosses and people in authority know what's best for you, and you should never complain no matter how miserable you are?

Millie has to think that one over, and how her own compliant, non-complaining attitude affects her son's life.

Jessie reassures her that in her ten years as a teacher, many parents request changes for one reason or another. It does not have to be framed in terms of a criticism of Miss Sharron.

Millie: I could say something like Tommy is experiencing school anxiety in the mornings and I think a more easy-going teacher like Mr. Charles would be a better choice for him. I don't have to go into a lot of details.

Exactly! You can be very tactful and positive.-

I'm scared!

Teachers and principals are people too, Millie. I know you can find the courage to do this for Tommy. -

Jessie and Millie ended their second session with a plan that Millie would ask Tommy's principal to change him into Mr. Charles' class. Jessie was surprised to find an e-mail from Millie just a few hours after this session ended:

Dear Jessie: I have an appointment with the principal for tomorrow at 8:30 a.m. I'm so scared! I wish you could come with me! - Millie

Jessie replied immediately: *Dear Millie: I'm proud of you! Just be tactful and positive. I know you can do it!*

Jessie's phone rang at exactly 9:15 the next morning. It was Millie Donaldson.

Millie: Guess what! It only took fifteen minutes! She said there was plenty of room in Mr. Charles' class and moved him right away. I can't believe it! She didn't even ask me why! She said, "You've got three great kids, and we love them! We just want to make you happy!" She was wonderful!

Jessie: You did just great! It took a lot of courage to go in there! Congratulations!

At their next coaching session, Coach Jessie and Millie Donaldson reviewed the progress they had made. Millie decided to stay in coaching to improve her communication skills with her children. She wanted to free them up to tell her negative as well as positive things going in their lives. She did not want them to inherit her fearful attitude toward authority figures.

This client was intelligent and in touch with her emotions, and very eager to do the right thing for her children. She was already a wonderful mother before she entered coaching, but her sessions with Coach Jessie took her to a more effective level. Millie continued to consult Coach Jessie whenever she felt the need for support and advice throughout years as a mother.

Summary of Chapter 13

In this chapter, Millie represented a good parent who became unsure of herself when her personal fear and lack of confidence got in her way. The crisis in confidence in an otherwise happy parent is not unusual; a parent's values clash with

CHAPTER 14

The Case of the Squabbling Siblings

This chapter is a case study of parent coaching in action. Follow along as another good, but temporarily troubled, parent and her coach effectively work through a frequent problem presented in coaching: sibling rivalry.

Mrs. Calley Terrance entered parent coaching with Coach Lauren because she was at her wits' end with her two daughters, Missy and Sissy, ages three and four years old.

First session – a McDisaster!

Calley: I just don't know what to do with them. All they do is fight from the time they get up until the time they go to bed. Yesterday was the worst!

Lauren: Tell me what happened yesterday. It's okay to cry.

Calley: I feel like such a fool – I mean, I can't even handle a four-year-old! Anyway, I took them to McDonalds and I was thinking how much fun it would be because they had a toy the girls wanted, and I could sit down and read the paper while they played in the Play Place. Well, first McDonalds was giving out the wrong toy – it was an old thing the girls already had and not the one on television. Then I let them loose in the play area and I used the bathroom. When I got back, one of the other mothers came up to me and said, "Just a warning – before you put any kids in there – there's two bratty girls who are out of control. We're leaving." I looked over at the play area and

Sissy and Missy were pulling each other's hair and screaming. I felt so embarrassed!

What did you do?

I gathered up our stuff and told them they would have to eat in the car. They got into a huge fight on the way home, this time over who owned a paper plate. Sissy was screaming that Missy had put her feet on her side of the car and that she had stolen her paper plate. I had to pull over the side of the road because they were being so obnoxious.

Coach Lauren listens with some concern. Is this client having a bad day, or is she truly questioning whether she made a mistake becoming a mother? It is too early to tell much of anything, so Lauren allows the time for Calley to tell her complete story. Lauren stays tuned in to the deeper current of Calley's hurt and frustration.

Calley relates that she herself had been an only child and always wanted a big family because she thought having brothers and sisters looked like so much fun. She and Melissa had enjoyed a very close loving relationship before her sister was born. One of Melissa's first words was "Sissy," and even at two- years-old, she liked helping Calley with the new baby.

Calley: The girls look a lot like one another, except Sissy is big for her age and Missy is small. I dress them in identical clothes, and most people believe that they are twins. Once Sissy learned to walk, she began to get into Melissa's toys and then the fights began.

Calley said she tried to anticipate fights by buying the girls each a set of same toys, except in different colors, but they still fought all the time.

Lauren: Let me make sure I understand your concerns Calley. You have two daughters, about a year apart in age. You are more or less raising them

like twins, with identical clothes and toys. They share a bedroom, and pretty much the same schedule of meals, playtime and so forth.

Calley: We don't really have a schedule. Our house is too chaotic for that.

Okay, the main problem, as you see it, is that the girls fight all the time.

They're driving me mad. What's that saying? Insanity runs in families – you get it from your kids.

Well, there's not a parent in the world that hasn't felt that way. But I really wonder if they're not getting along better than you think.

I wouldn't be here if they were getting along. I have to go in there all the time so the big one won't kill the little one.

But there are times of the day when they do play well, right?

Here there is a long pause. Coach Lauren lets Calley think the question, and what she will answer, all the way through.

Calley: I'm more aware of the times they're killing each other, I guess.

Lauren: Maybe that's something we can do this week. What about keeping track of the times the girls get along and the times they don't? Let's look for patterns.

Do you want me to keep a daily record of when they fight?

Sounds like a plan to me. Or, a good beginning anyway.

As this was the first session, Lauren had to cover business issues and other rules. They spent most of the session, almost an hour, letting Calley describe her frustration with their fights and vent her anger. Calley seemed to build high expectations in her mind such as how wonderful it was to have children, how much fun it would be to have a sister, and even how great a fast food break would be – only to later experience big disappointments. Did

Calley need more realistic expectations, especially regarding her children and their behavior?

Second session - relief in the afternoons

Calley did her homework and e-mailed Lauren a chart of exactly when and for how long the girls had their fights. Usually the spats got worse as the day went on, and were especially bad before nap time around two o'clock and before dinner, which was usually around six p.m.

Once her husband came home from work, the household seemed calmer. Sometimes he would take them into the back yard to play on their swing set, and he was the one who read them their bedtime stories.

Calley also noted that most of their fights were over possession of toys or territory. The biggest fight occurred when Missy ran into the den before Sissy's favorite television show was about to begin and turned on a different channel. In that case, Calley thought Missy was being deliberately mean to her sister.

Lauren responded: The television fight again was about dinnertime. Did you know that emergency room staff call that "the arsenic hour" because so many kids get into accidents and have to go to E.R.?

Calley: It's a bad time of day for me too. I'm tired and still have to make dinner, and I don't want the girls messing around the stove.

Lauren: You live right near a high school, don't you? What about getting a student to help you with the girls about an hour a day – you know, during the "arsenic hour?"

Calley: I like that idea. I don't think it would cost too much. We're all tired and edgy that time of day.

Do you give the girls a snack after nap? That might help too.

They firmed up the week's plan of action: Calley would hire a high school student to help an hour a day, and try to take the edge off the girls' hunger with a snack after their nap. During the week, Coach Lauren thought about the case a lot and wrote down concerns for the next session.

Third session - we need two moms!

This week had gone much better. The afternoon babysitter freed Calley up to make dinner in peace. One day she cooked dinner in advance, so that when her babysitter was there, she was able to take a nap herself. That did wonders for Calley's mood and energy level.

Calley: There was only one messy fight – I mean a hair-pulling, rolling-on-the-floor fight. The girls had been coloring with crayons, and they both had the same coloring book. Suddenly Sissy started to scream and cry. Then she tore up Missy's coloring page! Missy naturally got mad back.

Lauren: Why did she tear up her page?

She said hers wasn't as good. Nothing she did was good as her sister's work. So, she tore it up!

I think we're getting somewhere.

Lauren explained that while the sisters were close in age, during the preschool years, even being six month's older could make a huge difference. It sounded as if Sissy was frustrated because the two girls were together all day long and even shared a bedroom. Her sister was more skilled in every way, even language.

Calley: Wow, I never thought of that!

Lauren: Sissy sounds frustrated. She's trying to keep up with her big sister. She can't color as well. She can't cut paper as well. She can't run as fast. You know, Calley, they're not twins but you treat them that way. I think

all the fighting is about being separate. What do you think? You know your girls best.

You think I should get two moms – one for each of them?

Hey, that could work. Realistically though, let's look at it from Sissy's standpoint. She came into the world and everyone was happy Missy had a sister to play with. Even her name is a relationship. They share the same toys and room and they are together all day long. Do you think they could be tired of each other?

Coach Lauren and Calley spent the rest of the session brainstorming about how to give the girls some space. They came up with more than twenty ideas, but decided to implement just three that week:

1. Sissy would be called by her real name, Sarah, pending Sissy's agreement.
2. This week they would not be dressed alike. Each girl would choose her own outfits.
3. Calley would look into a nursery school program for Melissa.

Fourth Session – nursery school to the rescue

Calley was amazed at how well things were going with these small changes. The girls enjoyed dressing differently and let their mother know that a million times a day. Missy took pains with her appearance, but Sarah had an easy-going, tomboyish approach. These differences really showed up the week when they first chose their own outfits.

Calley found a nursery school that had an opening for a four-year-old, and enrolled Missy three mornings a week. She was amazed that Sarah seemed genuinely distraught about having her sister go to school. However,

Sarah perked up when Calley explained that someday she could be a big girl too and go to nursery school too.

Coach Lauren and Calley brainstormed some more, and came up with a new plan for the following week:

1. Each girl would have her own room.
2. Calley would spend some “special time” with Sarah while Missy was at nursery school.
3. Missy would be allowed to skip her nap on the days there wasn’t any nursery school in order to get one-on-one time alone with Mom.

Calley seemed to have many new insights:

Calley: I guess I thought if I treated them the same, they’d have fewer fights. However, I’m finding out that the more I let them be individuals, the less they fight.

Coach: Wonderful insights Calley. What else have you observed?

I think letting them have their own space will help a lot too. Everyone needs to go to a special place of their own when they get mad at someone – you know, so you can cool down.

I think so too.

Happily ever after – sisters in the true sense!

Calley and Coach Lauren found that separating the girls for part of the day worked wonders. Her daughters actually looked forward to seeing each other after nursery school. Having regular one-on-one time with their mother made them less competitive for her time and interest. Calley kept her after-school sitter because she found she loved having a break every day.

Both Calley and her husband watched with great interest as the girls developed distinct personalities. They allowed each daughter to choose colors

and motifs for her new bedroom, and each room reflected a distinct individuality. Sarah chose a Winnie the Pooh motif with browns and oranges, while Missy wanted a princess look. Best of all, Calley began to see them not only as “the kids” or “the girls,” but also as two little human beings, each with their own style of doing things.

Calley became less idealistic about siblings, and accepted the fact that some quarrels are a normal part of having a sister. The family became stronger, and looked forward to the birth of a new baby brother the following year.

Summary of Chapter 14

Calley’s parenting vision included happy children who got along with each other without squabbles just because they were...well, siblings. Her unrealistic vision clashed with her children’s needs as well Calley’s values around building family relationships. Calley made a common parenting mistake, which is believing phrases like... “kids should” or “my kids are...”

Calley’ girls should love each other, not argue and fight. And they should show better behavior. Coach Lauren’s style with Calley was more directive. Sometimes Lauren provided a direction, and at other times, she deflected and reframed Calley’s question.

Lauren was patient in allowing Calley the time to move through her emotions and get to the heart of the story. Lauren also had a good pulse on the girls’ needs for space and individual identity.

Part Three

The Business Side of Parent Coaching

This section is about coaching as a business. In the following chapters, you will develop a focus for your coaching business to attract more clients as well as learn how to create guidelines to run your business. Other chapters deal with marketing techniques such as creating business networks to bring in referrals, and using the Internet to develop your client base. You will also learn how to use public speaking and article writing to build your business. The final chapters will give you an overview of your start-up costs and help you budget for stationery, equipment, and advertising. There are also brief discussions of taxes and other legal issues that will come up whenever someone sets up a business.

CHAPTER 15

Setting Guidelines for Your Business

There are more than 25 million businesses in the United States, and more than 60 percent of them employ fewer than five people, with still another 28 percent employing fewer than twenty. According to the Small Business Administration, most Americans (88 percent) either own or work for small businesses.

Every year, thousands of Americans start their own companies, but 95 percent of them fail within five years. Two-thirds of new businesses survive about two years, and about half survive about four years. Although many of these businesses were making money at the time of closure, their owners shut them down because their businesses were draining them personally or because the money generated was not enough to justify keeping the business going.

The majority of these businesses fail because their owners did not think things through when they started out. In order to be a success at owning your own company, you have to begin by knowing what you want and have specific goals to measure what you think of as success.

You want to develop a marketing strategy to make your business stand out from others, and you have to keep your start-up costs in line with what you can afford to lose in the first few years. Take risks, but don't be risky.

Thriving as a person and as a coach

Most of those who go into fields like coaching and psychology understand that to be a successful person, you have to have success in your personal life as well as business. Success is not always about money, but also about finding a balance between family and business.

When you work out of your house, if you don't set perimeters around your business life, your work can take over your home and family life. Whether you are single and childless or married with children, carve out a personal life for yourself beyond coaching in order to have a life of balance and joy. If you overload yourself, you will not get satisfaction from either one.

Do you want your life to look like this?

You're going to your son's soccer game at four, but you need to be home by five-thirty to take a client call, so you have to arrange for your son's ride home. You can't concentrate on the soccer game anyway because you need to prepare for your client's call. You have a splitting headache because you feel torn between the game and your client. Later, your family goes out to supper because there's not enough time to cook. After dinner, you go grocery shopping. BY nine p.m., you are exhausted.

You actually hate driving up to your own house because it is like driving up to a pile of unfinished work – home is never a place to relax anymore. You are not making much money because you are going out to restaurants and hiring babysitters all the time. You took up coaching because it was work you could do at home when your kids were little, but instead you are constantly yelling at them to leave you alone, be quiet while you're on the phone, and stay away from your room. Your spouse is upset and puzzled by your constant irritability.

That doesn't sound like much fun does it? It can be someone's reality and it is the number one reason why home businesses can fail. So don't let it become your reality. Let's devise a better vision!

You love working at home from the convenience of your home office, which is really a comfortable den, but one corner is yours and holds your computer, your dedicated business line, and your desk. You keep pictures, candles, music CDs and plants around your corner to feed your comfort.

You schedule your client calls at one time during the day for a four-hour block of time when the kids are in school, with dad, in day care, or otherwise occupied. You hold this time sacred so that you can be present with your clients. They pay you \$100 per hour for your time, and you believe in service: listening, suggesting, confronting, sensing. You are finally being paid for doing what you love: networking, talking, sharing heart, educating and helping people lead better lives.

You love people, and people love you. This shows up in the mutual respect you and your clients have for each other and in client referrals. You have more clients than you schedule, and put their names on a waiting list. The waiting list represents clients who would wait for the time to see you, but you are content right now. You have the income you desire and the time you want to be with yourself and your family.

You will grow your business when you are ready!

Put a fence around your family and your personal life.

Before you take your first client, you have to design the perimeters of your business. There are practical steps that will put boundaries between your personal life your business.

- ✚ First, have a separate phone line for your business.
- ✚ Second, make a separate room in your house for your business. Your room should be relatively soundproof and away from the family living area.
- ✚ If possible, enclose your space and have a door you can shut. That closed door will be a signal to your family not to interrupt you.

Some people have solved the “home business” problem by building a workspace that is on their property but separate from their residence. Charles Schultz, creator of the Charley Brown cartoons, used to walk about twenty feet from his home to his studio every day. There are homes with separate guesthouses or “Mother-in-law” quarters that convert into great home offices, provide the privacy, and give the atmosphere needed for work.

Some people simply cannot work at home because of all the interruptions. In this case, it may be best to rent office space. Many coaches rent office space for only a few hours a week to accommodate clients who prefer meeting in person. Or, you may be a coach who provides in-home visits, or you may work from phone calls only.

Where do you want to be five years from now?

It is important to have a vision of your future when you design your business plan and marketing strategy.

How big do you want your business to grow? How much time can you devote to it now, and five years from now? What hours of the day do you want to work now, and once your business is going? Are you going to take phone calls all hours of the day and night? Are you going to take evening clients? In parent coaching, many clients will want evening or weekend appointments. Can you accommodate them? What hours do you want to relax? What hours are for family?

Take the time to write down a schedule of your ideal week, including time for relaxation and taking care of your health. Whether you are single or married, whether your children are in college or toddlers, come up with a personalized design that allows you to meet your family obligations and your own needs to relax and grow as a person. If your best moments come when you are in nature, plan your week so you have that time to spend in nature and to reconnect with yourself. Don't let go of what most satisfies your own soul just because of business obligations.

As a coach to families, people regard you as a role model. You have to model a healthy integration of work and family for your clients. If you don't succeed, how can you expect help others succeed?

In the beginning, you will focus primary energy into marketing and networking, which are usually unpaid tasks to build into your business plan. Fill your heart and mind with optimism as you network and market your parent coaching practice. Your positive attitude and caring are what attract people. The image you reflect when you show up is much more important than any piece of sheepskin.

How you show up for people is how they will show up for you.

- ✚ What is your personal style?
- ✚ What kind of client do you like to work with?
- ✚ Will you work one-on-one?
- ✚ Do you like to offer support groups or teach small classes?
- ✚ Do you prefer working locally by phone or globally via the internet?
- ✚ Can you work with dads and moms, or prefer to specialize in one type of parent?
- ✚ Can you create family meetings and demonstrate a model of family communication?

How you plan for your business will determine its success

- ✚ Develop a budget for your start-up costs, including your time for marketing efforts and networking.
- ✚ Decide how much you can spend on start-up costs, how many hours a week you can spend on your business, and how many months you and your family can maintain without income from coaching.

- ✚ Set realistic goals and expectations. If you keep a regular job for income, you will only be able to devote part-time efforts to your coaching business. It will take longer to build your business.
- ✚ Keep a time-spent diary for at least a week or two. When you make a family budget, you determine expenses not by estimating them, but by writing down everything you spend for a month or two, and then making up a budget using amounts you actually spend.
- ✚ In the same way, to determine how much time you can devote to your coaching business, keep a diary of how you actually spend your time. If you are working full-time, how much weekend and after-work time can you realistically devote to coaching without burning out?

Patsy, a stay-at-home mother, made up her ideal schedule like this.

Patsy believes she can work with this schedule for at least five years, until her youngest child is in high school. At that point, she will be able to coach full-time.

Weekdays:

7 – 8 a.m. Get family off to school.

8 – Noon Coach clients.

1- 3 p.m. Record keeping, marketing, communication with clients.

3 – 5 p.m. Housework and meal preparation.

7- 10 p.m. Family time.

Saturday and Sunday – Family and recreation.

Realistically, Patsy can coach about four hours a day. Allowing for some breaks between half-hour sessions, Patsy’s maximum caseload is six clients per day, or thirty sessions per week. Patsy anticipates childcare

problems during the summer and other school vacation times. She may have to hire help at those times to maintain a high level of service for her clients.

Sam is a school counselor who works from eight a.m. to four p.m. He wants to keep working while he builds up his coaching business to full capacity. His ideal schedule, which includes keeping his sanity, looks like this:

Weekdays

8 AM – 4 PM School Counselor

4 – 6 PM Family time

6 – 8 PM Build coaching business

8 – 11 PM Relax and family time

Saturday

1 – 4 PM Build coaching business

Sundays Free time, family

Sam can only work at coaching about fifteen hours a week in the beginning, which means it will take him longer to build his business. He has the opposite schedule as Patsy – when school breaks for summer and other vacations, he can spend more time on coaching. After six months to a year, he hopes to quit his school job and work full-time at coaching. He intends to coach only until four p.m. during the week, because he enjoys having a long evening with his family.

Allowing two hours a day for marketing and records, Sam will be able to coach from 8 a.m. until 2 p.m. He also wants to coach at least several evenings a week, probably Wednesdays and Thursdays from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. He is aiming for a caseload of about fifty clients per week.

Take the time to do the exercises and develop a time schedule that is perfect for yourself for now and for five years from now.

Summary of Chapter 15

When small businesses fail, it is usually because of lack of planning and design. When you create your coaching business, be sure you have realistic expectations about how much time you can devote to it now and in the future. Develop a schedule for today and five years from now. If you work out of your house, build clear separations between your personal life and your business. Do this by only working certain hours, shutting the business down regularly for personal time, and by having a work place clearly separate from your living area.

CHAPTER 16

Find Your Focus, Find Your Market

Nearly everything written about starting a small business advises you to find a focus and stick to it. There are so many reasons why you should specialize, and these are among the best ones.

1. Your business is much more likely to succeed because you have narrowed your field of competition.
2. You will find it easier to advertise and create marketing strategies.
3. You have a “unique selling point” that makes your business stand out from others.
4. You won’t have to be all things to all people.
5. The more you coach, the more you will learn about your own specialty. You will become a better coach much quicker if you specialize.
6. If you start out as a generalized parent coach, after awhile you will find yourself attracting the same kinds of clients through referrals. If you specialize from the beginning, you can choose your specialty rather than have it choose you.

When you begin your career as a parent coach, decide to specialize in one aspect of childhood and parenting, whether it's a **certain age** (like teenagers) or a **certain situation** (like stepfamilies) or a **certain problem** (perhaps defiance).

To explain why this is so important to marketing, let's pretend that you are at a party and you meet a woman who introduces herself like this:

"Hi, I'm Anne Tyler and I'm a parent coach. I assist parents in the successful handling of school problems, social skills, family adjustments, communication and other similar issues."

The chances are very good that no one will remember Anne or what she does as a parent coach. Her description is too vague and too broad. She will not attract clients this way. Contrast these introductions:

"I'm Ophelia Saverman. I only work with pre-teen girls. I just love that age even though their parents do not! Tweens are emotional times for girls with issues like sex and drugs and living up to many female stereotypes. I think of myself as a "catcher in the rye" for girls in middle school."

You are more likely to remember Ophelia because she sounds committed and passionate about her work. You can tell by the enthusiasm in her voice that she has found something that makes her feel useful and something she really enjoys doing. If a friend of yours is struggling with a thirteen-year-old hottie, you will immediately mention that to Ophelia.

"What do I do? I am Patsy Miller and I coach parents of two-year-olds. If you have a toddler with a tantrum call me. I really enjoy the new independence of these little ones, and how they are beginning to express themselves as individuals."

You may wonder to yourself, “I finally met someone who likes terrible twos!” but you will remember her the next time you meet a parent struggling with a toddler. If you are a parent coach yourself, a school counselor or child psychologist, or anyone who works with children, Patsy has just met a source of referrals. Her name will come up automatically as someone who is an expert on two-year-olds.

When you specialize, you actually turn competitors into sources of referrals!

Other parent coaches and counselors will refer clients to you!

My job is to work with blended families. I find the challenges of blending families fascinating. I like to work with the dynamics between stepparents and children, and often if I get in there early, these families can avoid many headaches.

By presenting himself as a coach for remarried parents with children, this coach generates referrals not only from other coaches and counselors, but also from lawyers, realtors, teachers and indeed anyone who knows someone going through a divorce.

All three of these coaches sound committed and excited about their jobs, and ready to be of help to people. Each one has found something they are passionate about doing. *What they do is about who they really are.* They present themselves as people who have truly found their niche in life. They are humble enough to know they cannot be all things to all people.

By specializing and presenting themselves as experts within a certain realm, they open themselves to a more effective marketing campaign. When a potential client does an Internet search using keywords “two-year-old child,” Patsy’s website will come up. However, if a client searches “parent coach,” Patsy’s site comes up along with hundreds of competitors.

Patsy can target her marketing strategy where two-year-olds and their moms are found – places like childcare centers and baby gym classes. If she markets to parents of children of all ages, her strategy is too broad and costly. She will have to put up flyers at schools, churches, PTAs, Scouts, and all sorts of other places. Which strategy will gain her the most clients the quickest in her field of interest? Specialization will.

Finding your focus worksheets

Before you talk to your first client and before you have your business cards printed up, you need to decide where your focus will be. By knowing and putting into words exactly what you want to do and accomplish as a coach, you will design your marketing to attract your ideal clients. Think of marketing as fishing. Once you know what kind of fish you want to attract, you can use the right lures and bait that are attractive to the fish!

The style of your business cards, the tone of your advertising and even the colors on your website will reflect your focus. You will design your entire business around your focus and your ideal client.

Take time right now to fill out this worksheet. If you can't think of answers right now, think about these questions for a few days and then come back to this work. This is one of the most important parts of designing your business, so take your time. Don't censure yourself – write down what you truly believe and what you truly want to do, not what you think others want or what may go over best. Be yourself.

Finding My Focus

1. When I studied child development, I enjoyed these topics the most (rank in order from most interesting to least interesting to you)

- a. Pregnancy issues and marriage___
- b. Infants and newborns___
- c. Toddlers to age two___
- d. Preschoolers, ages two to four___
- e. Adjustment to school: Kindergarten___
- f. Primary Age Children, Five years to Eleven___
- g. Middle-Schoolers, Ages Eleven to Fourteen___
- h. High School and Early Adolescence, Ages 14 to 18 ___
- i. Young Adults, Parenting College Students___

2. Some of the topics in marriage and family that fascinate me are -

3. One childhood issue that I think is key to a child's emotional development is -

4. In my own childhood, and in raising my own children, some of the key issues that came up were -

5. *True or False:* I would rather teach parents new techniques from the beginning than try to work with those who have established ways.

6. *ANSWER ONLY ONE:*

- a) The reason I would prefer to work with parents of young children
- b) The reason I would prefer to work with parents of school-age children
- c) The reason I would prefer to work with parents of teenagers
- d) I feel most qualified to coach a parent who has (what?) problem

7. *Circle One:* I feel most comfortable working with people

- a. my age,
- b. older,
- c. younger
- d. it doesn't matter.

8. *Circle One:* I prefer working with girls, boys or *it does not matter.*

9. My ideal client is a person who -

10. The child I feel I could help the most is one who-

After you fill out your worksheet, use it to write a one-paragraph description of your ideal coaching business. Just write from your heart and don't censure yourself. Here is an example written by Sam Chaplain:

My coaching business is about helping boys achieve in school and stay focused. It bothers me that boys are not graduating from college in the same numbers as girls, and that their suicide rate is much higher. They are much more likely to be disciplined in school than girls are. So many boys hate school, a place dominated by female teachers. They join gangs, take drugs, and get into dangerous behaviors in high school, and yet girls seem to get all the media attention and encouragement. Indeed, there is a trend to demonize any form of male aggression. I would love to help fathers work with their sons to help them reach their full potentials.

Again, not censoring herself but writing from her heart, Patsy Miller wrote:

I think most women want to have babies, not children. As soon as their kids begin to walk, Mom's ego gets involved – the kid is walking away from her! She really enjoyed that closeness of a baby's complete dependence on her. I also think little ones get frustrated because they cannot put things into words. They know what they want, but Mom does not! No wonder they throw tantrums! I really think two is a crucial time for both Mom and child, in that if she doesn't begin letting go then, she never will. A child has to be himself, even if he's only two years old. I want to help these little ones communicate to Mom, "I love you but I need my space as a person!" And Mom has to accept that mothering has moved into a new area from now on. Toddlerhood is to me the most important stage of being a mom.

After you write your focus paragraph, write another paragraph, this time about your ideal client.

Sam wrote:

My ideal client is an educated middle-aged man who desires a better relationship with his sixteen-year-old son. He used to enjoy being a dad, but his son has moved away from him, as he lost interest in school and runs with the wrong crowd. He wants to guide his son into manhood, but right now they don't communicate.

Patsy wrote:

My ideal client is a middle-class educated woman who feels out of control because her toddler is constantly asserting himself in new ways all day long. She has no ideas about effective discipline because she's been enjoying her baby. She feels guilty and upset by the new problems her child's independence has brought. She is overtired from setting limits and dealing with tantrums.

In the next chapter, you will use these two paragraphs to design your marketing strategy, your logo, the unique personality of your business, and your plan for success.

Summary of Chapter 16

If a new business has a unique focus, it is more likely to succeed because it will be easier to market and attract clients. The focus of the business makes it easier to remember. Competitors turn into sources of referral. Find your focus by writing. Which area of parent coaching interests you the most and who your ideal client would be?

CHAPTER 17

Designing Your Marketing Strategy

Hiring professionals to help you start up

- ✚ If you filled out the work sheet in the preceding chapter, you now have a clear idea of your specialty within parent coaching
- ✚ your vision for your long-term future, and
- ✚ an idea of how much time you can devote right now to developing your business.

You are at a turning point!

It is an excellent time to hire your personal coach to help you start your business. Find someone who has been through the marketing process and not someone who was able to build a coaching business through just referrals. Find a coach who is business-savvy who will help you set weekly goals and keep you accountable through any discouraging times of start-up.

You could also hire a professional graphic artist and copywriter to develop your marketing pieces. If you live in a large city, you will be able to find advertising and public relations companies in the phonebook. These companies can design a logo, stationery and marketing strategies for your coaching business.

You can also hire freelance artists and writers through the Internet by using websites like

www.Guru.com,

www.Elance.com,

www.Sologig.com,

www.getafreelancer.com and others.

You post the details of your job and the amount you want to pay on these websites, and then you choose the best freelancer from those that apply. Another way to get help designing your marketing campaign is to inquire at the business school of a local university. If you are lucky, you will be able to connect with a professor who is willing to use your new business as a class project. Some universities have business students and teachers who mentor new businesses in their community.

If you want to try to do this work yourself, take heart and keep reading!

Treat your business as a person

Your first step will be to create a personality for your company. In law, a corporation is a person who can enter into contracts, sue other people, take the blame for accidents, and otherwise take part in the business world the way human beings do. Think of your business as a person with its own personality reflected in your logo, your advertising, your stationery, and even your phone messages.

McDonalds spends hundreds of millions of dollars annually to create its image as a child-friendly, fun place for families to eat while they're on the go. McDonalds' persona is totally different in the public mind than that of Red Lobster or the Four Seasons.

Each of these three restaurants has an ideal client. Their advertising specifically appeals to that client. These companies spend millions to create positive public images repeated on television, radio and in print. Use these big companies as models as you go about creating your own image. Find your focus, find your message, and then repeat it again in all your advertising and marketing.

For example, the Academy for Coaching Parents International, LLC asked a group of savvy moms, some professional and others who worked from home, to rate a series of mottos for the Academy. They voted on

“The power to sustain loving relationships”

This is how the advisory parents and Dr. Caron Goode saw the role of the parent coach –model and coach others to develop and sustain loving relationships. This went on the website, and people liked it. However, they also made comments like, “That’s a tall order,” and “That’s pretty idealistic.”

After thousands of dollars, marketers’ expert advice, testing mottos and more, Dr. Goode became discouraged and confused. She turned inward to her own inspiration and wrote the story of how the Academy came about at the advice of her business coach.

The brief version of the story is that after their father’s death, Caron’s siblings were cleaning out boxes of letters from their father to the family during World War II. Mixed among the letters was one that Caron’s mother had written to her mother that explained she would come home to help as soon as she could. She wrote it was all right that she was giving up her dream to go to nursing school in order to help her family.

When asked on her deathbed what family circumstances would prevent her from living her dream, Caron’s mother shook her head and simply said, “You live your dreams. Mine don’t matter any more.”

Caron realized after her mother’s funeral that living her dream was not *doing* something; rather she wanted to make a difference. The motto of the Academy for Coaching Parents became, “Make a Difference!” The Internet audience responded and parent coach training was born.

You can listen to other business coaches, marketing specialists and others who will tell you how to run a business. I believe, however, that your

heart, intuition or inspiration can also guide you on the “personality” of your business” its logo, motto, colors and the target market you will serve.

Use your focus paragraphs to design your marketing strategy

Look at your focus paragraph and think about how you can use its ideas to give your company what advertisers call a USP or *Unique Selling Point*. Your USP is the reason clients come to you over your competition. You are offering something no one else is.

Sam Chaplain, as you remember, wrote the following:

My coaching business is about helping boys achieve in school and stay focused. It bothers me that boys are not graduating from college in the same numbers as girls, and that their suicide rate is much higher. They are more likely to be disciplined at school than girls are. So many boys hate school, a place dominated by female teachers. They join gangs, take drugs, and get into dangerous behaviors in high school; I would love to help fathers work with their sons to help boys reach their full positive potential.

As a first step to designing his business, Sam takes his focus paragraph and boils it down to a few sentences designed to point out benefits of his service to his ideal clients. Note that the benefits of Sam’s services provide solutions for dads and their relationships with their sons.

Worried about your teenage son?

Concerned about habits and choice of peers?

Want to turn things around so he can succeed in life?

I can help you. Together we can work things out.

SAMUEL CHAPLAIN

A Consultant for Parents of Adolescent Boys

Using this very short paragraph as a template to find a slogan and a name for his business, Sam came up with

“Ask Mr. Chaplain, A Consultant for Parents of Adolescent Boys.”

He thinks “Mr. Chaplain” sounds caring and concerned, and that it will be associated with positive counseling. He likes the word “consultant” as upscale and therefore in line with his ideal client’s lifestyle. Executives (his ideal clients) are used to hiring consultants. He thinks that at this early stage of coaching, people may think a “coach for boys” is about sports. More businesspersons will understand the word “consultant” than “coach.” Notice how his copy focuses on the needs and benefits to his ideal client. Sam wants to appeal to educated fathers who naturally want their sons to go to college and enter high-paying careers.

When you write your slogan and advertisements, think in terms of your ideal client and what he or she wants from your coaching. An improved relationship with a child? More peace in the home? The end of family warfare? Put yourself in your ideal client’s place. The name of your business and its slogan are very important. You only have a few phrases to capture your client’s interest before he or she stops reading and moves on. Be specific. Be the coach that is ideal for them.

Your logo is the symbol of your business

Many big companies use their name in a certain type style as their logo. Bayer Aspirin and Coca-Cola come to mind. Others choose a picture or symbol, like McDonalds’ famous arches or the MGM lion.

When you chose your logo, choose something that will show up nicely in a variety of sizes. If it reproduces well in black and white, that is even better. The logo is a symbol of your company and needs to appear clearly

whether it's viewed from a distance on a poster or up close on your business card.

Sam wants to attract an upper middle-class, educated man as his ideal client. He uses this logo on his business cards, stationery and brochures. His image is serious, masculine, and portrays "control and being in charge."

Ask Mr. Chaplain

A Consultant for Parents for Adolescent Boys

Phone-555-555-5555 or www.Mr.ChaplainCoaching.Com

- Worried about your son's habits and choice of friends?
- Is your son underachieving academically?
- Would you like your son to confide in you and accept your guidance into manhood?

Tantrums and toddlers

Parent Coach Patsy Miller sees her ideal clients as mothers of two-year-old boys and girls. She wants to design an image that is memorable and playful, projecting the idea that problems with children this age seem bigger than they really are. Her image of a baby in a playpen and an upset little girl seem to cut a parent's worries down to size. She wants to approach clients like an interested and approachable friend. Notice again how her copy, light-hearted but emphatic, is all about the concerns of her ideal client.



Patsy Miller
Certified Parent Coach
Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc.
Phone 577-576-8093
tantrumstoddlers@quickieemail.com

Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc.

Parent Coaching for the Terrible-to-Terrific Twos!

Is your toddler turning you into Wild Woman?

Please give Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc. a call! I can help! I have over ten years experience as a mother of five children – who all survived the terrible twos! I have a degree in psychology and I am certified by the Academy for Parent Coaching. I am ready to coach you through that interesting but crazy period when your kid asserts *himself as an individual* (fancy term for tantrums).

Are you losing sleep because he won't?

Are you and your husband falling asleep during the day because you spent half the night soothing a two-year-old insomniac?

Have you given up going to malls and restaurants or taking car trips?

I can teach you tricks that really work! No more standing in a restaurant restroom so everyone else can eat in peace! No more driving with your child's voice yelling at full volume!

Has Grandma turned into your worst critic? Does your daycare worker complain? Does your child refuse to be toilet-trained?

My name is Patsy Miller and I founded Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc. because I understand your problems. I have successfully coached many other parents through this period. Most of my clients are surprised that after coaching, they can relax and enjoy their two-year-old. You and I will work in weekly half-hour sessions to turn around any problems you have in managing your child. Call me anytime! I promise I can help!

Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc.



Parent Coaching for the Terrible Twos!

ABOUT PATSY MILLER

Patsy understands your problems!

Patsy is the mother of three boys, all of whom went through the terrible twos! If she can survive it, so can you!

Patsy has the Qualifications to help you!

*B.S. in Psychology, Midwest University
Graduate of Parent Coaching Academy 2004
Certified by International Coaching Federation, 2004
Three years as a social worker with the United Foundation
Twelve years experience as a mother of three boys
President, Hearts for Abused Children Foundation*

Patsy's Philosophy of Coaching

I believe my clients know the answers to their problems, and that I just help them discover what they already know. During our first session together, we set specific goals and outcomes for coaching. I provide encouragement and accountability that mothers need to meet the challenges of parenting toddlers. I will help you through such challenges as toilet training, sleep issues, eating fetishes, anger management, sibling rivalry, and separation anxiety. Two-year olds can be the most fun and rewarding time of all for parents. It is the time moms and kids learn to love each other as separate human beings, and this is a new beginning for both! I love these little guys!

Patsy's Coaching Services

*Half Hour Weekly Sessions by phone -- \$50 per session
Intake session is free, and may last up to 90 minutes
Most clients work through issues in about three months*

Patsy Miller
Certified Parent Coach
Tantrums and Toddlers, Inc.
Phone 000-000-0000

Patsy uses the first piece as a poster. The second piece gives more specific information and includes resume data. Patsy uses the second page in place of more expensive printed brochures. In addition, this could be a two-sided flyer to hand out in meetings.

Sam and Patsy will use these designs and images on all their marketing pieces, including their websites, stationery, brochures, posters and business cards. They have found the exact selling points that emphasize the benefits of their services to what they perceive as their ideal client. Now their marketing moves from the creative design stage to the everyday work of marketing and getting referrals.

Summary of chapter 17

Every new business needs a “personality” of its own reflected in its printed material and other advertising. To develop a style for your business, shorten your focus paragraph into a few sentences that can be developed as slogans. Use the slogans to find your logo, a picture or symbol that identifies your company. You will need a “unique selling point” – something about your service that is different from any other business in order to attract clients. Think in terms of your ideal client and your business’s benefits when you write your advertising copy.

CHAPTER 18

Launching Your Business

Let your website pull in clients.

The business of coaching is mostly an Internet business. If your website marketing is effective, you should be able to draw clients from all over the world. Many of the coaches interviewed for this book reported that most of their clients come to them through their website.

People usually pay a professional to design their website. You can ask your designer to use materials you come up with yourself, or you can work the other way, and have your website designer come up with logos and colors you will use later on your business cards, brochures, stationary and invoices. Before you launch your website, look at websites of other coaches, particularly those who are in your specialty. How do their designs work? Which ones do you like the best? Which ones come up more often on search engines like Google and Yahoo?

A professional website writer/designer can help you with things like keyword technology. Keyword technology refers to how Internet search engines work. Let's say you use a search engine like "Google," and you type in the words "parent coaching pre-teen girls." Google searches for those words on millions of websites. The more often those particular words appear, especially in the first paragraphs of websites searched, the more times that website will come up as a "match."

You want to write your copy to include your key words so that your website comes up on search engines. This is called search engine optimization and referred to as "SEO." Some research shows that most

people do not read beyond the first twenty or so sites that come up when they search. If you design your website in such a way that your copy appears after a lot of pictures and graphs, then you are less likely to come up on search engines. You can pay a fee on some search engines to make your website appear.

You also have to pay for domain registration. This means your website gets a name like TwixtGirls.com instead of a series of numbers like 450.985.com. You place this name with a registry company. Your registry company allows other computers to find your website and allows you to send e-mail. You will have to sign a one-to-ten-year contract with a registry for this domain name.

Once you launch your website, you have to keep it up-to-date. Most coaches are constantly adding new offers and information to their websites on a weekly or monthly basis. This is called “website maintenance.” It costs money to make changes to your website.

You also have to pay (separately) for Internet “hosting,” which is a company to store your website and make it available to other computers on the Internet. Usually the better your hosting company, the faster and more easily your website will load.

As noted before, the Academy for Coaching Parents International has connections with a service that provides all of the above as a package.

Your home page is the most important part of your website. It should be attractive to your ideal client, simple to understand and easy to load. If it takes too long to load because of graphics or pictures, you will lose people. Again, some research indicates that if a page takes more than seven seconds to load, people move on to something else. For this reason, you don’t want too many complicated graphics or pictures on your homepage to slow it down.

According to authors Stephen Fairley and Chris Stout, writing in *Getting Started in Personal and Executive Coaching* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2004), your home page is the most important aspect of your website. Focus on the benefits of your service to your ideal client on your homepage. Be as clear as possible who you are and what you do. Your website should have your biography and qualifications, and a list of your public appearances.

Unlike other forms of advertising and media, the Internet is supposed to be interactive between the user and the website owner. Your website is more than a site for reading about you. Your web site is like the Starbucks in a shopping corner. You want people to stop on your site, browse, read an article, and download a Parent-Tip sheet. One great idea is to offer a free coaching session. Have a place where people can leave their emails, and you can contact them for a free coaching session. You may want to have books and products that people can order.

You may write a weekly or monthly newsletter that you offer free to anyone who gives you an email address. Your newsletter will be full of tips and advice for your ideal client, including articles you write yourself or link to newspaper and magazine articles your clients will find helpful.

Don't forget the blog, your web log of ideas, tips, thoughts and inspirations to share with parent coaches and parents. Another idea is a message board for people who have the profile of your ideal client – whether they are mothers of two-year-olds or fathers of teenage boys. Make your website into an interactive community and support group for your ideal clients, with you as the expert moderator.

Have a place for people to post questions that you can answer on your website. Again, ask people to leave email addresses when they post questions, even though their names and email addresses will not appear publicly with their questions.

When you launch your site, remember that you will have to constantly update and maintain it. You want to keep it current and active. People who have seen it before will not keep come back unless there are new things on it.

Networking on the net

The Internet is a great way to market your services by advertising. While you can pay to have your website come up on search engines, there is usually no cost to linking your website to others that are relevant to your business. For example, if you work with mothers of twins, you will want to link your site to other sites devoted to twins like clothing manufacturers, child guidance for twins, support organizations for twins, and so forth. In return, your website will appear on these, and you will get more traffic on your page. The best way to link your website is to perform a search for your own site (example: parent coaches adolescent boys) and then contact the first ten sites that come up. Ask for permission to link your site to theirs.

If you design your website correctly, you should generate email addresses from people who are interested in your services. You can contact these people and suggest they book a free coaching session or otherwise send them information about the benefits of coaching. You have to check your email account every day and keep working with these new contacts through newsletters and offers.

You will want to use the Internet to meet other professionals in your field. Visit their websites and leave friendly emails. These professionals can become sources of referrals for you. Ask if your can reprint their articles on your site, if they want to use yours. Ask them for marketing tips.

Whenever you sign an email, put your website address under your name as part of your signature. In addition, as much as we could network

online, there is still your presence, smile and appearance that send the message, “I’m a coach. Nothing can take the place of personal contact with you.”

Launching your business locally

After you successfully launch your business on the Internet, you need to launch it in your community. At first, most of your clients will probably come from your community.

By now, you have a business name, logo, and the colors and design elements for your business. Now you need to write a press release about your new coaching business. Send a copy to every newspaper, radio and television station in your state. Include local weekly newspapers.

Design and assemble a press kit consisting of your press release, printed on plain paper, and a cover letter and resume on your letterhead stationery, and your brochure, if you have one. If possible, include a black and white picture of yourself. Don’t address your press kit to the managing editor, but rather to a news, lifestyle or feature editor. Your cover letter should be something like this:

Dear Feature Editor:

My name is Ophelia Saverman, and I have been a resident of Cincinnati for more than twelve years. I am enclosing an announcement of my business, Twixt Girls, a coaching service for parents of middle school girls.

I started Twixt Girls because I believe a combination of media images, inappropriate advertising, peer pressure, and overly committed parents are pushing girls to grow up too early. Girls, ages 11-to-14 years are under pressure to be as sexy and silly as their media role models. By age nine more 20 percent of American girls are already dieting! By middle school, many girls feel that they have to act dumb to keep boys interested, drop out of sports because it is unfeminine, and dress like teenage hotties. Their parents are often at a loss, and that is where I can help.

Parent and family Coaching is a relatively new field. It is not psychotherapy, but it is about helping clients set and reach personal goals through encouragement and motivational techniques.

I would be very happy to talk to a reporter at his or her convenience both about the important issue of helping young girls stay focused, and about the exciting new field of personal coaching.

Sincerely,

Ophelia Saverman

Write your press release like a short news story so that the newspaper or broadcast station editor can simply use it as is. The heading should say “FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE.” Try to keep it to one page. At the bottom of the page put some ##s as an indication that the reader is at the end of the piece. Follow the example on the next page.

Don’t be afraid to be a little controversial – your piece is more likely to get printed if you take a stand on an issue.

Send out your press kits and wait about a week. If you do not see your materials used in the newspaper, and if you have not heard back from editors, feel free to follow up with a phone call. If a feature or news editor

says he or she is not interested in doing a story about your business, ask about passing on your materials to the business section editor.

If you are lucky, a radio or television station will ask you for an on-air interview.

Announce your new business to everyone you know

Send out formal announcements of your business not only to everyone you know, but also to every organization or person that may be helpful in getting you referrals. You will probably want to include either your brochure or a one-sheet explanation of your new business along with your announcements. If you can afford it, organize an Open House either at your home or at a restaurant as part of your “grand opening.” There are examples of both kinds of announcements on the next pages.

Summary of Chapter 18

The best way to open your business is to launch it both on the Internet and in your community. To open your business on the Internet, you need to design and load an interactive website of information planned specifically to attract your ideal client. You need to contact everyone who leaves you an e-mail address and continually update your website to keep it current. You also should use the Internet for networking with other coaches and professionals in your specialty. To launch your business locally, send out press releases and formal announcements, and if your budget allows, host an event to celebrate the opening of your business.

PRESS RELEASE EXAMPLE (print on plain paper not letterhead)

Contact Information: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ophelia Saverman
123 Best Way Street
Cincinnati, Ohio 41505
602-555-5555
www.twixtgirls.com

NEW COACHING SERVICES HELPS PRE-TEEN GIRLS

Long-time Cincinnati resident and former psychotherapist Ophelia Saverman has opened a personal coaching business called Twixt Girls for parents of middle school girls.

Coaching is a new field in which a person sets personal goals, Dr. Saverman explained. A coach helps clients reach goals in a systematic way through encouragement and motivational techniques. There are coaches for business success, relationships, weight issues, and most any self-improvement area. Most coaches work in weekly sessions by telephone.

Dr. Saverman said she began to get interested in the concerns of middle school girls as a seventh grade teacher. "I hated to watch young girls change from confident, feisty little girls ready to take on the world into confused middle schoolers with no way to turn. Today's young women are facing a twenty-four hour barrage of crude and overly sexual messages from television, fashion, modern music, magazines and movies that take away their childhood."

Parents often complain that their daughters lose interest in school and go through a "boy crazy" stage. This is where her service, Twixt Girls, can help. "Parents can learn to steer their daughters through the troubled waters of pre-adolescence," Dr. Saverman said. "These years are times of raging hormones and complex mood changes for girls, so it's so important that parents maintain a steady, helpful presence."

For more information on Twixt Girls, visit www.TwixtGirls.com or contact Dr. Saverman at 602-555-5555.

INVITATION TO A BUSINESS OPEN HOUSE

TWIXT GIRLS

A coaching service for parents of girls ages 11 to 14 years

Dr. Orphelia Saverman cordially invites you to attend

An Open House and Dinner from 6-8 p.m.

Thursday, January 31, 2007

The Ironwood Restaurant

222 Ironwood Street

Cincinnati, Ohio 44343

In Celebration of the Grand Opening of Twixt Girls

RSVP 602-555-5555 Regrets Only

BUSINESS ANNOUNCEMENT

TWIXT GIRLS

A coaching service for parents of girls ages 11 to 14 years

Dr. Ophelia Saverman is pleased to announce
The Opening of her new service

TWIXT GIRLS

Personal and professional Coaching
For Parents of Girls 11 to 14 years of age

**Dr. Ophelia Saverman
123 Best Way Street
Cincinnati, Ohio
Telephone 602-555-5555
www.Twixtgirls.com**

CHAPTER 19

Strategies for Marketing and Networking

Stephen Covey in his best selling book, *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (New York: John Wiley, 1990) writes that people spend their time in one of four ways:

Quadrant 1 – Urgent projects, deadline-based projects

Quadrant 2 – Networking, developing relationships, planning

Quadrant 3 – Taking interruptions, mail, meetings

Quadrant 4 – Trivia, busy work, time wasters

If you spend too much time in a crisis mode (Quadrant 1), you will eventually burn out. If you spend too much time in work and dealing with interruptions (Quadrants 3-4), your business lags.

If you spend time in planning your future and marketing, networking and otherwise building relationships with helpful people, your business will only grow better and larger. The most effective people, he says, spend most of their day in Quadrant 2.

This may seem contrary to common sense. Most people have “to do” lists of tasks that they complete one-by-one and day-by-day. They don’t regularly schedule time for networking: meeting people for lunch when there’s no business agenda, sending cards on friends’ birthdays, keeping up with old

friendships, calling on potential clients or sources of client referrals. However, as Covey argues, these are precisely the activities that will make your business become successful.

When you start your coaching business, most of your day is spent in Quadrant 2. Nevertheless, as you take on more clients, you will still need to perform Quadrant 2 activities on a daily basis to keep your business viable. You will still need to spend time planning where you want to take your business in the future, how you can best improve it and otherwise developing a vision.

Someday you may think you are too busy and have too many commitments to take the time and expense of going to a business convention for coaches. Yet, it is at the convention where you meet other coaches who can refer clients to you. It is at the convention where you will learn the latest techniques of your field.

Someday you may think your entire day should be spent with clients. After all, no one pays you to write your newsletter or meet a friend for lunch. Yet these activities keep your business vital and growing.

Marketing is all about networking with people and letting them know you have a worthwhile service. It is about making sure your ideal clients know how to reach you. In the beginning, most of your business time will be spent on marketing and you won't be paid for it. However, even when your business is up and running, you should always remember Quadrant 2.

Go where your ideal client spends his day

Think in terms of the habits of your ideal client. Where is your ideal client during the day? How can you reach him or her? What places does your client frequent? When you start your coaching business, you need to make a list of those places and advertise your business there. Patsy Miller made a list of places where mothers of two-year-olds frequent:

- ✚ Childcare centers
- ✚ Baby gym classes
- ✚ Grocery stores
- ✚ Specialty stores for children like Toys-R-Us and Babies-R-Us
- ✚ Women's gyms
- ✚ Local library Story Hour

She printed her posters on heavy card stock and posted them at each of these locales. If posters were not allowed, she put up a business card. She booked interviews with the owners of childcare centers so she could meet with them and describe her services. She hoped to get booked as a speaker or that the people she met with would refer clients to her.

Sam's list was about places where men frequent. He posted his business cards and left brochures at places like golf courses, businessmen's restaurants, baseball and soccer fields, Men's gyms, Bowling alleys, professional and college sports venues.

Go where your ideal client spends his or her day. Put up your literature in those places. If you want to work with school-age children, go to schools and speak with counselors and administrators. Ask them to refer clients to you or if you can speak about parenting issues before a PTA meeting. Try pediatricians' offices.

Many people in the helping professions like therapy and coaching do not like to do marketing. They do not like to use their superior "people skills" to manipulate people into buying something. However, if you do not believe in the value of your own service, no one else will either. Do not think of it as selling, but rather as explaining to others the value of parent coaching. You can provide a needed and helpful service. Take that attitude and it will make your marketing efforts easier.

Speak at organizations where your ideal client may be

One parent coach interviewed for this book said that she got most of her clients by teaching parenting classes. Many organizations sponsor parenting classes, including PTAs, YMCAs, large churches and synagogues. If you cannot offer a series of parenting classes, offer to do a one-time presentation on your main subject. Childcare centers may want someone to speak on two-year-olds at a parent meeting, for example. High schools may want to hold a presentation for boys and their fathers on improving parent/child relationships.

You can also book speaking engagements at clubs that offer programs at their regular meetings, such as businessmen's circles, Scouts, library discussion groups, and so forth. You can register with a Speakers' Bureau to book such engagements as well.

You may also want to join a few clubs to meet and network with people. Usually the best course of action is to attend a few meetings of different clubs and decide which ones are worth your time.

Whenever you meet someone or are just engaged in a normal conversation, remember that you can bring up your coaching business. It is perfectly okay to tell a new friend "I think I could coach you through that problem. Here's my business card in case you want to call me."

As a professional coach, you will be keeping confidences. It is not okay to discuss private conversations with others casually in public even when you do not use names. Yet, talk about the benefits of coaching enthusiastically. Remember, how you show up for people will be how they show up for you.

Use print media specific to your ideal client

Is there a citywide newsletter for parents? Is your local newspaper planning a supplement on summer activities for children? Does your gym or

spa have a newsletter? Does your local school print a newsletter for parents? Does your local high school print a newspaper and yearbook? These may be good venues to buy advertisements for your coaching business. Some coaches simply use their business cards as a small ad.

You can also offer to write columns for magazines, newsletters and newspapers.

If you don't want to commit to a regular column, write a one-time article about something timely and newsworthy that has to do with your business. For example, if your focus is on school-age children, write about how to talk to that age group about terrorism. In the spring, you could write about children who must deal with separation from parents due to divorce or summer camps. Write articles that present your business as a solution to problems.

Listen to local radio stations. Many of the hosts of local talk shows are happy to interview a new businessperson on the air, especially if he or she has something interesting and timely to talk about. One coach is a regular speaker on a local Christian radio show beamed to women's needs, and she answers questions from troubled parents over the air.

Write a book about your subject and publish it yourself, if necessary. Then sell your book on your website and promote it through your business. A book will often generate publicity on its own.

Advertising and direct mail

In general, big companies use advertising to push for name recognition. Coca-Cola, RC and Pepsi constantly keep their names before the public as soft drink choices. In a small business like coaching, you are not looking for name recognition. Although radio and television advertising is very powerful, it only works if you spend enough money to repeat your message repeatedly. That is often a waste of money for very small businesses. If you advertise,

spend money only on newspapers and magazines targeted to your ideal client. For example, radio advertisements should be heard on programs geared toward parents.

There are companies that sell lists of names and addresses for direct mail advertising. In general, these lists will not be targeted in a specific enough way toward your ideal client. These lists are also expensive. However, direct mail can be a great tool for generating clients as long as your list contains those people most likely interested in your business. Always include a free offer in your direct mail advertising.

You can buy lists of e-mail addresses, but most people delete these ads as spam. Again, most of these lists of e-mail addresses will not be specific enough for your purposes. You are better off developing your own e-mail list through your website.

Conventions and trade shows

There are exhibitions and trade shows aimed at parents, and it can be a great idea to set up a booth and pass out literature. It is a good idea to attend trade shows and coaching conventions or any other venues for mental health professionals and childcare workers. Put your name and business out there and keep networking with other professionals who can become sources of referrals.

A final word

In the beginning, it will take a lot of time and effort to attract clients. Once you get started, however, it will become much easier. Your former clients will constantly refer new ones to you. You can use testimonials from clients on your website. Never get discouraged. Most of the coaches interviewed for this book have built their businesses to the point where they no longer had to do marketing. It can happen to you, too.

Summary of Chapter 19

Marketing includes every effort you put forth to gain clients. It can be as simple as talking about your coaching when you meet new people or writing articles about parenting for your local newspaper. You need to put your name and business before the public constantly. Paid advertising can be helpful, but in a business like coaching, networking with other professionals is usually more effective. Focus always on the needs of your ideal client.

CHAPTER 20

Budgets, Taxes and Legal Issues

One of the best things about starting your own coaching business is that you won't need thousands of dollars to set yourself up. Coaching is one of the few businesses that you can start for a very small cost. You can even start coaching immediately without quitting your regular job, if you want to work only weekends and evenings.

You will incur two primary expenses when you start your coaching business: equipment and marketing. You can control the amounts you spend on these, especially if money is tight in the beginning.

This chapter will give you an overview of about start-up costs based on a variety of budgets.

Start-up equipment

Most Americans own computers, so hopefully, you already own one. If not, you will no doubt want to purchase a computer for your business. You will be marketing on the Internet and conducting business via e-mail. You do not have to purchase an expensive computer, just the best one for the job. If you do not know anything about computers, find someone who does and ask for advice by describing what your business will be. Tell that person that you will need a computer for e-mail, to generate office documents, and perhaps record-keeping.

If you buy from a big company like Dell or Gateway, they will provide support for their products. The greater the megahertz (speed), the more expensive computers become. Also, the computer's capacity for memory (RAM) determines its price. You should be able to buy a system good enough for a

coaching business for under \$500, not counting the monitor. You don't necessarily need a fast computer with a lot of memory for coaching.

Usually, your new computer will come with software you can use to create office documents. You will need that software to compose your letters, brochures and other documents.

A printer, FAX, scanner and copier

Just a few years ago, you would have had to purchase these separately at a big expense. Now you can usually buy a machine that has all four functions for several hundred dollars. You will need a good printer for letters and other paperwork. Lasers are faster and better than inkjet printers, but more expensive. However, keep in mind that if you can print your brochures and stationery at home, you will save money on professional print jobs. However, a color laser printer is expensive – the more colors you add, the more expensive it gets.

Many clients like to communicate by FAX so you may want that function. And e-mail fax services are available via the Internet. You may be able to get away without a scanner and copy machine.

When you set up your office, chose a place for your computer equipment that is not too humid, not in direct sunlight, away from heat vents, and away from electrical appliances that could cause interference.

Telephone equipment is very important.

As a coach, you will be spending a lot of time on the telephone. For this reason, you need to purchase a headset so you do not develop neck problems, and so you can take notes while you are speaking to clients. Your best bet is a cordless phone (not a cell phone) that is compatible with a headset. You want a good reliable name-brand telephone with the best possible reception.

You will need an answering service, voice mail, answering machine. These kinds of services pick up calls while you are talking on the phone, so your clients will not get a busy signal at those times. Caller ID services from your telephone provider lets you know who is calling in case of crisis or emergency.

It may be better for you and your family if you purchase a separate telephone line or cell phone for your business. Separate business lines are not as expensive as you may think. Some can run as little as \$50 a month.

If you want to call your out-of-state clients, you have to get a generous long-distance plan with free, out-of-state minutes. Many coaches pay for the long distance themselves and then charge their clients for it. Others have their clients pay for any long-distance charges by having all clients do the phoning.

Business printing costs

The cheapest way to print business cards, envelopes and stationery is to do it yourself on your home printer. One color printing is the least expensive. Every new color you add will cost you more because you will have to buy a separate ink cartridge for each color.

Your computer probably came with a software program about how to design envelopes and stationery. Do-it-yourself will be a cheaper way to go when you are first getting started.

You can buy pre-cut sheets of card stock for your business cards and run them off on your computer. Each sheet usually has 10 pre-cut cards; thirty sheets run about \$10.

Professional printing costs range in price. There are companies on the web that allow you to design your own cards and stationery by using logos and print faces posted on their websites.

Business cards are relatively cheap to have printed professionally. One-color cards run about \$50 for the first 500 and \$35 or so for the next set of 500. Because it takes a printer a long time to set up the words and pictures on the card, usually the first 500 cards is more expensive than the next sets of 500, because the initial group includes set-up costs. On the Internet, you can play around on websites where you can choose your logo, font style and design your business card yourself, and this saves money too.

Once you have your business card, you can use that design and lettering for your stationery and envelopes. Parent coaching does not generate a lot of mail, but rather e-mail. You can therefore probably get away with printing your own letterhead and envelopes on your home computer's printer. Since business cards are a cheap but effective marketing tool that you can hand out to everyone you meet, they are a necessary investment.

Your information brochure

A four-color brochure can run about \$500 for a thousand, with price breaks after you order more. You can also print them on your home printer, but you have to a quality laser printer. You also must buy a certain kind of paper to do the doubled-sided print job brochures require.

Because parent coaching is a new field that often requires explanation, a brochure about your business is a particularly useful selling tool. A brochure has enough space to describe what parent coaching is, who you are and what service you offer, and your contact information.

If you cannot afford to have brochures printed or if you cannot do the job yourself on your printer, consider making up one-page sheets on your letterhead that describe parent coaching, your biography, and your contact information. Keep your brochure or information sheet with you at all times so that you can give them to anyone interested in parent coaching. Likewise, always carry business cards.

Tax issues

In the United States, the Internal Revenue Services requires you to keep records of your expenses and income for three years after you file your tax return, and for two years after you make a tax payment. You can keep records on a computer, but you must be able to produce legible accounts if the IRS asks for them.

Keep track of every penny you spend on your business and keep your receipts. These are your *expenses*. You must also keep track of every penny your clients pay you, whether it is in cash or by credit card or whatever. *This is your revenue.*

The main principle of any business no matter how big or small is:

Income (or profit) equals revenue minus expenses. You only pay taxes on your income.

Most Americans, no matter how small their incomes, hire professionals to do their taxes. If you hire a service, you still are required to keep records of revenue and expenses.

If your income is less than \$400 in one year, you don't have to file a tax return.

If it is more than that, you have to estimate your earnings, and send tax money to the government every three months based on your estimates. You can download the estimated revenue tax form Schedule SE (Self-Employed) from your tax professional or from the Internal Revenue Service.

At the end of the year you will get a refund or have to pay more, depending on how well your estimates matched up to your real income.

Business expenses can be tricky to calculate. For example, you can deduct travel expenses but not commuting expenses.

Depreciation of equipment is another complex tax issue. Commonly, equipment depreciates, which means you determine the useful life of the equipment and deduct its value over the time it lasts. For example, you don't take off the entire price of your computer the first year you buy it, but instead you depreciate it over time. Say it costs \$1,000, and after one year, it is only worth \$500. The first year's depreciation is \$500, and therefore that figure (not \$1000) is used as an expense. Any item depreciated has to be something that is used only for business and wears out.

The IRS also allows you to take off a percentage of your mortgage and home expenses if your house is used for business. For example, if you have a six-room house and one room is exclusively your office, you can deduct one-sixth of your home expenses. You may be able to deduct telephone line expenses, postage, stationery, advertising and other such business expenses. There are rules for the deduction of retirement plans and medical insurance. However, the IRS rules are complex and you probably will need to consult with a tax professional in these matters. Consulting a tax professional often pays for itself when he or she comes up with deductions you didn't understand or think to include.

The IRS does offer a tutorial for owners of small businesses on their website <http://www.irs.gov> that is amazingly easy to understand, especially when you consider the complexity of taxation regulations.

Incorporation

There are advantages to becoming an incorporated business, which is why so many small businesspersons spend hundreds of dollars to incorporate. Legally it means that your business identity is separate from your personal identity. Your business can buy and sell property, sue and be sued, and even commit crimes! It becomes easier to keep tax records. You can open up a bank account in the name of your business. If a client sues

you, incorporation will not necessarily protect you from having that person get at your personal assets but it often does help.

Incorporation is a legal process that formally establishes your business under your state laws.

Some businesses are incorporated in more than one state.

It is not a good idea to try to incorporate your business through a kit or from a website instead of paying an attorney because it is too easy to make a mistake. For example, you have to choose which kind of business entity you want your business to be: Limited Liability Company, Sole Proprietorship, Corporation? Each has its own advantages.

Summary of Chapter 20

Coaching is a relatively inexpensive business to start, and one you can start on a variety of budgets. Your big expenses will be launching your website and setting up a computer and printer, then costs for stationery and supplies. You can control the amount you spend on advertising. The IRS requires you to keep records and make quarterly payments as a self-employed person. There are advantages to incorporating your business, but it is best done through a lawyer.

Conclusion

Your life is in front of you and you have found your purpose: to make a difference. Parent Coaching can work for you as a home-based business. What matters in your life is where you put your focus...on moving towards what you do want and identifying the inspired actions that will get you there in an enjoyable learning situation and with a community of people who care.

“You have everything you need: a miraculous body, a phenomenal brain, and a vast and powerful subconscious mind. Now it’s just a matter of focusing them in the right direction.” – Marc Allen

You hold your vision and your focus in the direction of your goals and aspirations, living within a much more effective paradigm and a strong support system. You will begin to feel more freedom, life will feel more rewarding and you’ll be making this journey with other like-minded individuals who are as interested in helping you as they are in helping themselves.

Focus on the investment you must make in the next stage in both your profession and personal life before you need to; and then gradually shift your focus of what you learn, including all the new skills gained and new community established, toward those goals.

Does what you read resonate with you? The Academy for Coaching Parents International, LLC offers a unique and unprecedented opportunity to enter the new and growing field of coaching and consulting, enabling you to become the expert in your community.

The Author

Caron B. Goode, Ed.D., NCC, DAPA

Education, psychology, spiritual mentoring, mind-body wellness, business management and professional writing comprise the wealth of experience Caron brings to her mentoring, courses, and books. A stepmother and mother of one daughter, Caron knows firsthand the importance of parenting skills and that nurturing children with joy, common sense and a mind/body connectedness enriches and benefits both parent and child.

Her interest in childhood development began when she taught special education children and later worked as a research consultant at the National Headquarters of Special Olympics in Washington, D.C. Since then, she has worked with children and families in private psychotherapy practice, and has designed empowerment seminars for parents, professionals and corporations, consulted for public and private school programs, conducted research in mind-body approaches to lifestyle, while writing and publishing for professional journals as well as major mass media.

Her expertise has made her a frequent guest expert for media and her articles have appeared in more than 200 publications, including Colorado Parent, Convergence, The Joyful Child, Energy, Black Family Digest and Better Homes and Gardens.

Besides directing ACPI, Caron manages [www.HeartWise Parenting.net](http://www.HeartWiseParenting.net) which provides inspiration and mind-body approaches for parenting the whole child, which includes support for children's physical health, emotions, mental development, and spirit.

Dr. Goode graduated with a Doctoral Degree from George Washington University in 1983 and is a licensed psychotherapist. She recently completed post-doctoral certifications in Mindbody Wellness and Women's Spirituality at

the Institute for Transpersonal Psychology. In addition, she holds the titles of Licensed Certified Counselor, National Certified Counselor, and Diplomat of the American Psychotherapy Association.

Appendix

Resources

<http://AcademyforCoachingParents.com>

<http://HeartWiseParenting.com>

<http://InternationalBreathInstitute.com>

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