



What Coaching Is and Isn't

Sometimes the differences in therapy, consulting, mentoring and coaching can get confusing. Here are the basic roles for each one:

- **Therapists** often focus on healing or on treating mental illness — they can include mental health counselors, therapists and psychotherapists.
- **Consultants** give very specialized advice on specific situations.
- **Mentors** are those with seniority offering advice to someone with less experience, such as a coworker training a newer employee.
- **Coaches** work on helping an individual excel — this can include life coaches, business coaches and executive coaches.

The communication skills used by all these roles are similar – such as asking questions, active listening, and summarizing. Yet there are very distinct differences in their approaches.

Here are some of the differences between life coaching and therapy:

Life Coaching

- Focuses on helping you reach your full potential.
- Motivates and inspires you to achieve more than you believe is possible.
- Helps you clarify goals, identify obstacles and problematic behaviors.
- Assists you to create an action plan or systems to achieve desired results.
- Keeps you accountable by measuring your progress through set key performance indicators and specific behavioral outcomes and goals.
- Enables you to take control of your life and make mindful choices.
- Empowers you to get what you want by thinking and acting resourcefully.
- Poses questions that reveal new realities and opens new opportunities.

Therapy

- Focuses on healing emotional and mental wounds to bring you to a healthier state.
- Analyzes the past as a tool for understanding present behaviors.
- Diagnoses and resolves problematic beliefs, behaviors, relationships, feelings and physical responses.
- Changes self-destructive habits.
- Gives you a sense of how you're presenting yourself to others.
- Offers insight on how your emotions affect your everyday life.

You'll notice, that unlike consultants and mentors, therapists and coaches do NOT give advice. While all of these roles have value, throughout this training, we will be adhering to the ICF Code of Ethics on how to remain consistent in the role of coach.