

Introduction

This document is designed to help you understand the nature of coaching and how to get the most from our partnership together.

What is coaching?

"Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another"
– Myles Downey.

Coaching is quickly becoming one of the leading tools and strategies that successful people are using in order to enhance their lives further – both personally and professionally – and allow them to lead extraordinary lives.

The coaching relationship is a partnership – **an equal relationship** – allowing you room to move yet being accountable so that you can be the kind of person that you would like to be, to achieve the kind of life and work that you would like to have and to achieve the goals that you would like to meet.

What is my responsibility as your Coach?

- To clarify and encourage you to set the goals that you really want
- To ask you to do more than you have probably done on your own
- To help you to focus better in order to produce results more quickly
- To provide you with the tools, support and structure to accomplish more
- To support you in achieving your **Potential** by identifying and dealing with the **Interference** that may be standing in the way of your **Performance** ($P-I = P$: *Potential minus Interference is equal to Performance*)

How is Coaching different from Counselling or Consulting?

Coaching is not counselling or therapy which tends to focus on the past and look at issues historically nor is it consulting which generally involves coming up with expert opinions and answers. However, if you wish to ask my advice or opinion, particularly relating to work-related issues that reflect my own professional background and experience, I am happy to share my thoughts, neutrally!

Coaching is more action-oriented and solution-oriented and focuses primarily on both the present and future. The “answers” that you are looking for come about through the work done in our joint coaching partnership.

How I coach clients:

As your Coach, I will ask questions, encourage, advise, challenge, make requests and listen for your “essence” so that you are consistent with who you are in terms of your goals, your values and your vision. **My focus will be on you, what you want and how you can best get it.**

You are free to discuss anything you wish – no comment, thought or feeling that you share will be “wrong”. It is not my role to judge you but to support you. However, the coaching relationship is designed by both of us and may be refined by each of us in the giving and receiving of feedback. Although I am totally committed to the process, it still remains your personal responsibility to take action (or not take action) as you desire.

- **I expect your best**

The best results are achieved when you are ready to both **do** and **be** the best that you can be. It is about stepping up to the challenge and giving it your best shot. If there is a sense in which you may not be giving it your best, it is my job to bring that to your awareness so we can work out what you really want to do.

- **I make specific requests**

As the need arises, I will make direct requests such as, “Could you see yourself accomplishing X within the next two weeks?” You could meet the request (“*Yes, I can do that*”), provide an alternative option (“*I can’t do X, but I can do Y*”) or perhaps you might decline altogether. Whichever way you respond though, I will support your action.

- **I give advice**

On occasion, if I have a real sense of a particular direction, and you are open to it, I will make specific suggestions on how to handle a problem or an issue or make the most of an opportunity. If I am not always certain about my suggestion, I will always say so. Regardless, you will need to use your own discretion and judgement.

- **I am open**

If for example I hear a hesitancy in your voice or notice an inconsistency, I will generally ask you about it. Often it is these particular moments that permit the opportunity to resolve something. Irrespective, I will not confront you. It is only my job to highlight the issue and allow you to do with it what you will.

- **I set “homework”!**

Typically, I ask you to work out perhaps two or three goals or actions to focus on between our coaching sessions. If I am pushing you too hard, then it is important for you to say so. If you want to be pushed harder, it is also important for you to say so.

How to get the most from Coaching:

It is important that you benefit significantly from our coaching sessions as well as from the time in between. **Outlined below are some of the things that you can do in order to maximise the value of your coaching experience:**

- **Focus on what you really want**

Coaching works best when you have clear goals that are based on what you really want to achieve. Firstly, it is important for you to consider deeply what you want your work and your life to look like. Secondly, it is important to identify the gaps between the way things are now and how you would like them to be. It is true that many people struggle with this, but the coaching relationship can help you work this through if necessary.

- **Understand that you will develop**

Working with an empathic and professional coach is a definite way to grow and develop. Most clients take on a coach to work on specific goals and much of their time and energy is directed towards this. However, the coaching relationship also may allow you to discover something more about yourself. This is just a natural consequence of the coaching process and you do not need to concentrate on it, but just recognise that it is likely to occur. Accelerated personal and professional growth is the hallmark of coaching.

- **Increase your willingness to step up**

Part of my responsibility is to ask a good deal of you! This is not meant to exhaust you or extend you beyond your bounds, but simply to ask more of you than perhaps you have asked of yourself recently. It is important that you be willing to experiment with fresh approaches and try new beliefs. I will encourage you to be honest with yourself, raise your personal standards and set higher goals. However, you are the best judge of what is right for you. Nevertheless, the more you are willing to grow and develop, the greater will be the benefits from coaching.

- **Come prepared to each coaching session**

To get the most value out of each coaching session it is important that you prepare for each session. I will provide you with worksheets which may be of assistance to you ("*Before your next coaching session*"). Preparing your thoughts does not have to be time-consuming but experience shows that if you spend 10-15 minutes preparing, it has a significant impact on our session together. If it helps, I am happy for you to email me before each session with your thoughts on what you would like to bring to the session.

- **Complete your “homework”**

After each session, you will decide on the actions or goals you want to focus on (*Worksheet “Immediately after your coaching session” will be provided*). I expect you to keep the commitments you make and will work with you to make sure that you are setting worthwhile, realistic and achievable goals. If you know that you have a busy week or two ahead, your “homework” might be as simple as thinking about a new perspective. If you have more time, you might decide to handle a bigger task. Irrespective, I will hold you accountable and encourage you to do your best.

Policies & Procedures:

- **The coaching “Contract”**

Prior to our first session, we will usually have had a telephone conversation to discuss how we will work together, issues of confidentiality, etc, and I will have provided you with a formal quote detailing my costs, the number of sessions you have requested and my business “terms & conditions”. Acceptance of this quote in writing (by email or signature of hard copy) is required before the first scheduled coaching session can take place.

In addition, I will provide you with this document – **“The Coaching Experience – what you need to know”** – as a way of more fully understanding what coaching is about and how to get the most out of it. I will ask you to sign this document as an indication of your full understanding of, and agreement with, the information outlined within. (I would also encourage you to visit my website for additional information – www.ruthmclarenconsulting.co.uk).

- **Cancellations & appointment changes**

Scheduled coaching sessions ought to be a priority. However, should you need to reschedule, please let me know at least 24 hours in advance and I will be happy to rearrange a mutually convenient time and date at no additional cost. Except in the case of an emergency, you will be charged 75% of the session fee for last-minute cancellations or missed sessions.

- **Privacy & Confidentiality**

You can, at any point in the coaching session, declare your preference not to discuss a specific issue by simply stating that you would rather not discuss this issue. As your Coach, I agree to respect this boundary and will not attempt to forward the conversation further along these lines.

As a qualified Coach, I adhere to the professional ethics and guidelines as recommended by the International Coaching Federation. These guidelines are incorporated into “The Coaching Academy” Code of Ethics which can be downloaded from my website.

Confidentiality: I (as Coach) recognise that any information divulged by a Client during a coaching session is private and confidential whether it be of a personal, private or business nature. All information will therefore remain strictly confidential, the exception being where the information is such that a minor, the client or another were in serious or mortal danger. Even then, I (as Coach) would advise the Client that this confidentiality would be broken for this specific reason and no other.

- **How we meet / additional support**

We will “meet” either by telephone or face-to-face by mutual agreement. For telephone coaching, I will ask you to call me on the most appropriate telephone number (either my landline or mobile) at the agreed time. A routine coaching session normally lasts 60 minutes, however you can reduce/extend the length of the individual sessions by prior agreement.

If, between sessions, you cannot wait to share something or you need advice, have a challenge or just want to check something, please feel free to email and I will respond as soon as I can. If required, we can arrange a brief telephone call for this purpose. I may also email you in between our sessions if I have information to share that I feel may be useful to you. I enjoy providing this extra level of service and there is no charge for this additional time.

- **Misunderstandings & Termination**

An important part of the coaching partnership is the Coach’s role in providing challenges and encouraging the Client to push her/himself. However, this must always be done sensitively and appropriately for the individual Client. If I say or do something that upsets you or does not feel right, please let me know. I want to provide you with the service and support you need and believe that honesty and trust are critical for our partnership to thrive. I want to provide you with an open and safe environment, and ask that you let me know if there is ever anything that you are concerned about in our work together so that I can do what is necessary for you to be satisfied.

However, should either of us feel that our coaching partnership is just not working and wish to terminate the “contract”, this should be done in writing and reimbursement of fees for any outstanding sessions will be made.

Our signatures on this document indicate our full understanding of, and agreement with, the information outlined above.

(Coaching Client)

(Date)

(Executive Coach)

(Date)