

Asking Santa (or anybody else) for career guidance

By Cathy Goodwin

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Cathy Goodwin
cathy@movinglady.com

move to career and life freedom <http://www.movinglady.com>

Karen hired a "mentor" coach to help her business grow. She spent hours working on her website. She played with orange, green, and blue text in helvetica, geneva and garamond type faces. She added pictures. She took away pictures. Karen's coach cheered: "You're doing great!" On a slow week, the coach said, "Clear clutter and learn to dance."

After three months, Karen had a big coaching bill, a multicolored website, an empty house and a sad little business. Karen wasn't uncoachable. She chose the wrong coach.

Every coach works with a model, or template, of human nature that explains what, why and how they coach. We work with models of human nature every day. For instance, Western medicine treats the body as a machine to be repaired; Chinese medicine believes sickness is caused by imbalance that can be corrected by herbs and diet.

Both models have limits. If you break your leg, the Western model makes most sense; if you suffer from insomnia, you might favor the Chinese model.

John's business is hitting a rough patch. Coach X says, "Clear your life of clutter energizing-draining relationships." Coach Y says, "I will teach you mental techniques to attract new business." Coach Z says, "Maybe your business does not reflect your life purpose." Coach Q offers, "I will teach you networking and sales techniques."

Only John knows what he needs. If your website needs an overhaul, you can clear clutter till your house is bare and nothing will happen. But if everyday hassles are draining your energies, you can't focus clearly on the website.

Let's compare four best-selling books. Cheryl Richardson's *Take Time for Your Life* exemplifies the "life space" model: people know what they want and how to get there; they grow by self-care and personal empowerment. Choose Coach X.

Lynn Grabhorn's *Excuse Me Your Life is waiting*, suggests that people will achieve goals when they focus clearly on what they want. Her techniques can help people change their thinking and feeling styles. Choose Coach Y.

Martha Beck's book, *Finding your own true north*, argues that finding your essential self will bring fulfillment. Choose Coach Z.

Finally, a business book like Michael Gerber's *E-Myth* series or Jay Levinson's *Guerilla Marketing* will assume you are perfectly capable of applying sound sales techniques once you learn what they are. Yes -- that's Coach Q.

The key is to be very clear on what you want and to decode what the coach offers before you commit to long-term relationships. Karen got Coach X when she needed Coach Q

Read what the coach has written. Ask if you can buy an hour or two of consultation. Ask directly, "What types of people do you believe you can help -- and why?"

You don't have to be friends with your coach. You don't have to eat lunch together or trade birthday

gifts. But the coach's model of human nature has to fit who you are.

Cathy Goodwin, MBA, PhD

Author 9 Magic Keys to Career Freedom

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