

Why Is Personal Coaching So Popular?

By Will Craig

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Personal coaching might be most easily described as customized self help books and tapes, brought to life. Coaching is the equivalent of attending a motivational seminar where the speaker only talks about you and how to make the most of your gifts and talents. Coaching creates an environment where you stay positive and charged up-not for a day or two-but week after week.

Ask 10 different coaches why this burgeoning profession is coming into prominence and you're likely to get 10 different answers. If we take a long view of where society has taken us as individuals over the past 100 years, the need for and benefits of personal coaching start to become apparent.

Decline of the Family

At the turn of the last century, we were dependent upon one another for our very existence. In spite of our pioneering spirit-or maybe because of the enormous risks we were taking in blazing trails across this new country-we needed each other for our most basic of needs. As we skip through the subsequent decades and observe the morphic changes of society, we notice a gradual disconnection of the tight bonds previously necessary to survive. The traditional family unit shrinks from the supportive environment of multigenerations living under one roof to the scarce reality of single parents barely able to make ends meet... both financially and emotionally.

The answer to the question "Why Coaching?" could be a simple one. It may be our attempt at partial restoration of the safe environment we once enjoyed as an interdependent family unit.

Sense of Community

Even if multigenerational families under one roof are not the answer in today's society, you'd have to agree the pendulum certainly has swung the other way just a little too far. We interact with grocery checkers, bank tellers, and convenience store clerks without so much as looking them in the eye. We see neighbors who have lived near us for months or even years and we don't even know their names. This conscious disconnect is often justified by the pace of our lives and-ironically-the needs of our family. This fast food equivalent of Family and Community-with fries on the side-is not nourishing our body, nor our mind, much less our soul.

We have read the self help books and listened to the self help tapes. Unfortunately, they have been of marginal assistance, or at best, less than we had hoped. We can pat ourselves on the back at our efforts to improve ourselves and admire those titles stacked in our bookcase. If we are honest, however, we must admit they are now more 'shelf help' than self-help. In the dark recesses

of our mind we recognize, we cannot do this alone.

Fortunate Few

For years, serious athletes, actors, and politicians have all used personal coaches to help maximize their skills and abilities. These professionals are often at the top of their game, yet wouldn't think of 'going it alone.' Many of us are now recognizing the value of this unique relationship and are adapting it to a personal level.

Personal coaches are more than a friend with whom to share problems. They are a sounding board for solutions to the challenges we face on a daily basis. They are mentors in some cases, cheerleaders in others. Part consultant, part family. Coaches unleash the power of partnership. With a coach, we do more than we would do on our own, go further and faster toward our goals, and take ourselves more seriously. We have an accountability partner who shares our best interest and keeps us moving forward. Personal coaching is about taking action and making things happen.

Taking It Up A Notch

Left to our own devices, we can often justify our average existence with the thought we are coping well considering all that the world is throwing at us. A personal coach helps us catch what we need, deflect the unnecessary, and totally disregard the irrelevant. We don't have to do it alone, but we are challenged to take responsibility for ourselves and to take action on our own behalf. Former Dallas Cowboys coach, Tom Landry, sums it up this way, "A coach is someone who gets you to do what you don't want to do, so you can be who you want to be."

The time for personal coaching is now. The reasons are the ones bouncing around in your head at this very moment. The question now becomes, are you ready for the rewards that come with taking the game of life to the next level?

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