

Should you continue to pursue a career in coaching?

STICKY SITUATIONS GIVES US A WINDOW INTO CRITICAL COACHING MOMENTS. THIS SITUATION GRAPPLES WITH A NEW COACH'S SENSE OF PURPOSE AND CONFIDENCE.

the situation

“All my life people have come to me for advice. I decided to become a coach and attended a well known, accredited coaching school so I could use that natural skill at a higher level for a greater good. With all the joy I feel about a coaching career, I am so discouraged that I am not attracting clients. Is there something wrong with me? Should I take another course? I want to be a successful coach.”

Do you have a sticky situation that you want help with or a different perspective on? You don't have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you a hand. Please send your situations to: letters@choice-online.com



Vicky Trabosh, CDC®, shares: “Work from a place of personal abundance so that you're not exhibiting a needy mentality.”

The question at the heart of this issue is not unique to the coaching profession. All businesses must ask: how do we attract clients? The answer is simple: behavior matters.

I began coaching four years ago. My goal was to replace my six-figure income within a year. To do that I had to sweep clean all limiting beliefs about my abilities. I faced them head on. I looked at the worst-case scenario: I could do a major face plant, fail miserably, and go back to the corporate world. Best case: coaching would bring me the joy, freedom and financial success I felt were available in this profession.

I chose the behaviors that reflected my intent. I asked myself questions to define my strategies and, as an accountant, I did a little math. Who would pay me? (People who would benefit from my unique talents.) How many clients do I want? (Twenty.) How will I coach? (On the phone.) Where is my hunting ground for possible clients? (The world! Actually, North America would do just fine.) So, in a population of around 300,000,000 people, could I find 20 who would be willing to talk with me at my hourly rate? (This one was a serious no-brainer: Yes!)

We all get tangled up in our fears and doubts. You don't have to be a natural born salesperson to get clients. You do have to be a person who declares, shares, and acts like a coach. For that, be who you already are. If you haven't already done it, define and commit to a serious business model. Partner with great people who share your values and respect what you're doing. Work from a place of personal abundance so that you're not exhibiting a needy mentality. And speak from your heart, not from a polished paragraph that isn't you.

You are enough. Do you know that? Do you live that? And what have you told your coach lately about your intention to overcome your concerns and be the great coach you already are? This process may not be easy. But when was 'easy' ever a criteria for greatness? Know that who you are and what you offer is real, meaningful, and needed in the world. Get clear about who you are, and truly, greatness will follow.



Carol Adrienne, PhD, declares: “People will hire you if they feel that you have something they want.”

The tone of your note suggests that you are probably an intuitive/visionary type who sees the goal, but glosses over the steps of how to get there. I have no doubt that you love the coaching process. However, having a coaching practice that brings in a decent livelihood is another thing altogether — and takes some time to pull together. Don’t give up yet!

You obviously have heart and talent for coaching, but talent is not the only skill you need to build your own business. Before, people *were coming to you* — and you were talking with them for free — so you felt no pressure to perform. Now, as a professional, you need to *act as if* you are an experienced coach. You are! You just haven’t been being paid for it. Consider your unpaid advising as your ‘internship.’

My guess is that your lack of clients makes you feel unworthy, and this lack of confidence is communicating to people.

People will hire you if they feel that you have something they want. Right now, your energy is focused on yourself, instead of looking to see what it is that people need and want.

Your ‘problem’ of not having enough clients is causing you to look deeper or in other directions. Not everyone is cut out for the uncertainties of self-employment. See where you can turn your fears into tangible goals. For example, you could take the heat off your financial situation by getting a job that uses your new coaching skills. Later on, you might be more confident about setting out on your own again.

If your intuition is telling you to take another course perhaps you *do* need to add something else to your education, to create a more distinctive niche. If you take another course, make sure you’re not doing it out of a sense of failure. Nothing is wasted — certainly not your coaching education. What does your intuition say?



Craig Carr, PCC, urges: “Take away the assumption that people are attracted to you because you give good advice and look closely at what you are left with.”

Upon first read of your sticky situation I had to take three deep breaths and look for my velvet gloves. I must admit to a touch of irritation that either you were not paying attention, not receiving feedback well, or your school simply missed filling you in on a rather important piece of information about coaching.

More to the point there is nothing wrong with you (or anyone else for that matter) and yes, you should definitely take another course. Actually — and this *is* advice — not just another course but another approach.... with yourself. You see, it’s likely your coaching course did not elevate your ‘advice giving’ to a higher level because that’s not what it was about. You may have missed the point entirely, which will definitely get in the way of becoming a successful coach.

Stop thinking you know what the higher level and greater good is for anyone other than yourself. This may be your biggest hurdle in getting clients to sign up with you. Potential clients will always respond much more powerfully *away from* you and your advice/judgment of them than toward you and your desire to serve humanity.

Finally, take away the assumption that people are attracted to you because you give good advice and look closely at what you are left with. Find out how you are able to establish rapport and trust so readily. Work with a very good coach/mentor who knows how to draw out insightful understanding and will help you lock it into your personality, your coaching and your business. Be persistent on this point and you will succeed.