

Executive Coaching: Getting The Most For Your Coaching Dollar

You are wasting your time if your motivation for coaching is that someone else thinks it's a good idea. The only reason to embark on a coaching program is because YOU have CHOSEN to do it, based on a clear choice to raise the bar on your performance for a compelling enough reason that you are motivated to take action. Any other reason will not work and will undermine the best of intentions.

Define Your Mission: Coaching is successful *only* if you and your coach know exactly *where* you are going, *why* you are going there, and you have a *blueprint* for how to achieve success. If your coach can't help you define your mission, you have cause for concern. Keep in mind that the coach is responsible for the "process". You are responsible for getting the most out of coaching by "taking the action" required to meet the goal.

Specify Desired Outcomes: Change begins in the imagination not in perspiration. Before you embark on an overly ambitious change program, develop a vivid picture of where you want to be, what you want to look like and what specifically will be happening inside and outside of you that will let you know you have achieved those changes.

Fearless Inquiry: Accurate selfassessment happens when we are willing to be rigorously honest with "what is" right now ... devoid of spin and rationalization. Ask the tough questions: Who am I? Am I living up to my potential? Where can I improve? What needs to change and why?

Identify Your Performance Gap: Don't begin with the idea that you are broken and need to be fixed. That's antiquated psychobabble designed to keep the

psychiatric community in business! Ask instead: What's missing between where I am today and where I want to be in the future? What steps could I take to begin to bridge the gap?

Design a Plan of Action: Successful change lives in a plan for how it is going to occur. Speculation and intention are just that – psychological musings divorced from the world of execution and behavior change. If you don't have a plan for where you are going, it's like going into war without a clear plan for success. I wouldn't sign up for that mission!

Be Prepared for each Coaching Appointment. Coaching is about you and/or your team doing the work of creating change. Coaching is not an inexpensive investment and can be powerful in creating positive change. Never waste a moment of your time or the coach's time. If your coach allows the time to be squandered, find a new coach who is more results oriented. Take notes during each coaching session and write down your "to-do's". Then, get them done and report the progress to your coach.

Specify an Exit Strategy: Coaching is a professional service that warrants a healthy fee. Such activities should be regulated by value, that is, a measurable change in the client's condition (you), and a time parameter specifying when the service will no longer be needed. Decide before you go in when and how you are going to get out.

Measure Your Progress: Keep track of where you began, how and what change occurred and what needs to happen to sustain it in the future. Measure success in qualitative and quantitative measures. It's worth the time and energy and it demystifies the change process. It lets you know that the changes that have occurred are substantive and not spin.