

Top 10 Topics To Talk About with a Coach

What You Tell Your Coach Helps the Coach Learn How To Support You

The Win. Wins are the purpose of coaching. When you reach a goal, accomplish a task, or have something wonderful happen, you have scored a win. Share these with your coach. Your coach wants to know. And by sharing with someone who really listens, the win becomes even more rewarding and sets you up for the next one.

A Problem. Life does have its share of problems. The contract was cancelled, an employee left unexpectedly, you caught the flu before your big presentation. Whatever the problem, talk about it with your coach. Just communicating with someone who listens takes away some of the sting. And once you've been heard, the solution (and there is always a solution) can present itself. It is worth sharing even those events which "really aren't a problem, but . . ."

An Upset. Did something happen that really knocked you for a loop? Did someone treat you poorly? Are you realizing that you missed an opportunity? Talk with your coach about your upsets. She is trained to listen to your upset and help you sort out what happened and design a plan to get through it and prevent it from happening again.

An Insight. An insight is like an "a-ha." Basically, because it is a truth that you just realized, an insight helps you realign with yourself and your vision. When you have one, share it. After the insight, results follow, especially when you have been able to articulate the "real" insight with your coach. Your coach will help you in this process. Often, there are a series of insights which are linked and the coach helps put these into perspective.

The Breakthrough. A breakthrough is a combination of an insight, a win, and an alignment with truth. After you've experienced a breakthrough, you feel great, energized, relieved, clear, and ready for action. But a breakthrough without follow-through is just a temporary high. So, share the breakthrough, and be ready to validate it with action.

A Dilemma. "Should I do X or Y?" A coach can help you make a better decision. Talk about your options and get a fresh perspective. Maybe doing nothing is the best choice.

The Shift. You are growing internally all the time, but periodically you really feel it. When you've had a shift, the world looks different, and often your motivations change. What you had once tolerated, you will no longer. The people you just spend time with are often replaced by those who truly inspire you. A shift almost always feels good, but there can be some fallout, like sadness about letting go, resentment for the costs you've incurred before the shift. People may have several dozen shifts during a transformed lifetime. These are turning points worth sharing with your coach.

Your Feelings. Yes, your feelings. Having a challenging day? A great day? A blah day? Tell your coach, tell your coach, tell your coach. Don't try to keep it a secret (your coach will usually know anyway). Your coach will not try to talk you out of it or pep you up. The coach will accept the reality of your feelings and will coach you on what you want to be coached on.

Your Fears. Do you hesitate to take the next step? Get scared? Stop part way? Good, you just passed the humanity test, (and your coach has passed the test, too.) Your coach specializes in helping you to examine and move through your fears so you can create the results you desire.

A New Idea. Do you have a germ of an idea? A concept for that best-selling novel? Figured out how to make money in marketing? Share your ideas with your coach who is a safe person for even your most delicate and sensitive ideas. Your coach won't debate the merits with you. He or she will listen, help you develop them, and take actions that are the most personally and financially feasible ones .

Here are several other rewards and benefits you get from working with a coach:

Financial Results. You are writing a check to your coach each month, so you should expect to create some financial value from working with your coach. Be willing to articulate your immediate and long-term financial goals with your coach and get support in reaching them.

Project Progress Report. How is your new business development plan coming? Or your job search? Or the book you are writing? Include a brief status report of your current projects during your coaching call.

Ask for Advice and Feedback. Your coach is knowledgeable and experienced. Feel free to get the best of your coach's experience by asking for advice and criticism. You can expect that your coach will also take the initiative to offer you feedback when she or he thinks it would be helpful.

A Decision Made. If you've make a significant decision between sessions, be sure to let your coach know about it.

The Value Created. From time to time, you might want to articulate the value and benefits you are receiving from working with your coach. It is also important to discuss any concerns you have about how you and your coaching are working together. Your coach values your feedback, both positive and corrective. And the corrective feedback helps you and your coach develop a clean and strong coaching relationship.

Adapted from an article by Thomas Leonard, 1994.

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