

The Trend of Coaching: Adler, the Literature, and Marketplace Would Agree

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Abstract

Personal and professional coaches provide a partnership with their clients to help them achieve desired outcomes and more rapidly navigate personal or professional developmental processes. The authors define coaching, discuss the similarities and differences between coaching and more traditional mental health services, and indicate that providing coaching is a viable way for Adlerian therapists and counselors to reach a wider range of clients, further develop their practices, and gain a greater control over their times and lives.

Adler and Dreikurs were eminently pragmatic in their orientation, and both had a strong affinity for helping people overcome the challenges they experience in their everyday lives (Adler, 1979; Mosak & Maniacci, 1999). They were both highly optimistic and pragmatic individuals who emphasized training teachers, parents, and other "lay persons" to assist others in solving (and preventing) problems of daily living. Adler himself highly emphasized the value of public lectures and writing for a popular audience, a unique position in his day (Hooper & Holford, 1988). Like Adlerian therapists, coaches also have the mission of improving the lives of individuals and helping them develop more meaningful relationships with their intimate partners, their community, their work, and themselves and to have a greater sense of purpose and meaning in their lives (Mosak & Maniacci).

In this article, we explore a number of topics to support the claims made in the title. We define coaching, discuss how it is similar to and different from counseling and psychotherapy (which are used interchangeably for the purpose of this article), discuss how coaching is consistent with trends in psychotherapy outcome research and the renewed emphasis on wellness in psychology as promoted by Positive Psychology (Seligman, 1998). We also discuss how coaching is a viable means for traditionally trained clinicians to expand their work or reinvent their practices so they can have a wider impact and have more control over their times and overall lives. Lastly, a brief overview of a multifaceted approach to coaching, called Total Self Mastery, is presented.

Coaching

Coaching in today's fast-paced world provides a way for individuals to speed-up the learning curve in acquiring skills or navigating through personal or professional developmental processes (Silsbee, 2004). Using a coach is like taking a "fast-track" to personal or professional development, which can markedly reduce the learning curve in developing new skills.

Coaching is a method of assisting individuals or groups to improve their performance in some area. Coaching is similar to going to a mental health professional in that a challenge or desired outcome is brought forth. Sets of questions are derived from an initial session. The questions (dialogue) will lead to an understanding of the original supposition and help develop a plan to resolve the challenge or accomplish the desired outcome (Coach U, 2005; Silsbee, 2004).

The collaboration between client and coach creates an alliance that promotes taking action on an original hypothesis regarding what areas need improvement for the client to achieve his or her preferred future. Coaching creates an environment for clients to develop the necessary attitudes, skills, and knowledge to meet their goals (Whitworth, Kimsey-House, & Sandahl, 1998). In coaching, clients are encouraged to (a) get clear about what they want, (b) get clear about the beliefs they need to adopt to fulfill their outcomes, (c) get clear about the action steps they need to take to attain what they want, (d) develop the external supports to facilitate their goal attainment, and (e) take consistent action on their goals.

Brief history of coaching. As a formal discipline, coaching has a short past but a considerably longer history. The discipline of coaching has many streams that have contributed to its formal beginning and continue to be important to the ongoing development of the field. Some of the streams include sports psychology (Gallwey, 1975), financial and life planning (Leonard, 1998; Richardson, 1999), the personal development field (Peale, 1952), motivational speakers and trainers (Robbins, 1991; Tracy & Fraser, 2005), the popular management literature (Blanchard & Johnson, 1983; Covey, 1989), adult education (De Bono, 1990; Greenbaum, 1999), organizational development (Senge, 1990), and the brief therapy tradition in the mental health field (De Shazer, 1985).

Since the mid-1970s, the field of coaching has developed into a more independent discipline. Coaching, while not yet a field with formal licensure, has an emerging and evolving set of training standards. The International Coach Federation (ICF) is a professional association with over 5,000 members and 180 chapters representing 30 countries. The ICF has been key in identifying training criteria and ethical standards of the rapidly evolving field. There are now 32 training institutions accredited through ICF (International Coach Federation [ICF], 2005a).

Coaches. Coaches come from all areas of life. They are traditionally trained mental health professionals, business people, and virtually anyone with a skill set that is necessary for individuals to have to achieve outcomes they set out to accomplish. To be an effective coach, one should possess good communication skills, which include the abilities to create rapport, to listen, and to ask powerful questions to create what professionals in the mental health field know as a successful therapeutic alliance. A coach also needs specialized attitudes, skills, and knowledge in his or her area of expertise. Additionally, organizational skills and developmental skills are needed to promote goal setting and enhance motivation to help the client accomplish his or her goals (Leonard, 1998).

Coaches usually have a strong sense of value they experience from helping others grow and develop. They are individuals who are continually self-developing. Most coaches have a strong sense that coaching is their calling or mission. They ideally have a high degree of personal integrity.

Coaches help clients increase their focus on acquiring desired outcomes (Leonard, 1998) or achieving developmental milestones (Hargrove, 1995). As in the mental health field, there are significant differences in training programs, coaching models, and individual coaches. One example is a contrast between the work of Thomas Leonard (the founder of Coach University) and L. Whitworth and H. Kimsey-House (founders of The Coaches Training Institute). Leonard, who is considered by many as the founder of the coaching field (Richardson, 1999), was highly directive in his approach. He viewed coaches as experts who taught skills and gave advice to help individuals develop a more fulfilling life. In contrast, Whitworth, Kimsey-House, and Sandahl (1998) promoted the approach of creating the right context between the coach and client to help the client access their best solutions. Other coaching approaches (Silsbee, 2004; Hargrove, 1995) promote more of an eclectic approach to intervention in using support, encouragement, direct advice, confrontation, and teaching skills. In our opinion, coaches need to be guides when the client needs a guide and a partner when the client needs a partner. The more proficient coaches are in determining their client's needs and learning style and the more flexible they are in their approach, the more effective they will be.

Coaching and Traditional Therapy

Coaching is not a traditional therapy. Traditional therapy typically involves "providing" a treatment, remedy, and/or "cure" for an underlying problem. Traditional therapy requires professionals trained in the mental health field to discover the hidden determinants that are thought of as "deep

Table 1
Differences Between Traditional Therapy and Coaching

Traditional Therapy	Coaching
Healing model	Persuasion model
Nurturing/supportive	Supportive/challenging
Formal	Equal partnership
No personal disclosure	Personal disclosure
Focus on past and present	Focus on present and future
Insight	Realization
Process	Outcome
Medical model	Resiliency model
Remediation	Development
Problem focus	Solution focus
Psychopathology	Untapped potential
Decrease symptoms	Increase quality of life
Decrease distress	Increase balance in major life areas
Awareness	Expanded sense of possibilities
Weakness	Strength
Rehabilitation	Enhancement
Intervention	Goal setting and attainment
Exploration	Action
Face-to-face	Telephone, video conferencing, etc.

seated" and underlying the outward emotional and physical manifestation of a presenting problem.

Coaching, on the other hand, has a different mindset. The coaching process typically involves a client who wants to achieve more and at a faster rate than he or she previously has been able to accomplish. A coaching client usually has a specific outcome he or she wishes to obtain.

Coaching also differs from traditional therapy in that a coach may not have a mental health credential but does have expertise in his or her specialized area of coaching. The coach will teach from experience so that the client can bypass the pitfalls and not make mistakes that have already been made by others (Silsbee, 2004). As mentioned previously, coaches often assist individuals in navigating through the learning curve or typical development process in acquiring certain skills or accomplishing personal or professional achievements (Whitworth et al., 1998).

As we suggested earlier, the field of personal development and coaching is emerging within the context of today's fast-paced environment. Coaching

has become extremely popular for people who want to achieve their goals and dreams without the pain of working through the perils and pitfalls of doing it all by themselves (Silsbee, 2004).

Coaches usually have excelled in their field of expertise. They have a passion to promote and teach their gained wisdom, and they have confidence that they can help the client in his or her endeavors. Most coaches, like traditional mental health professionals, believe that the service they provide has wide reaching implications from which most everyone can benefit. Some of the differences in traditional therapy and coaching specific to the focus, orientation and practitioner/client relationship are presented in Table 1. As can be seen, the differences between more traditional therapy and coaching are many. However, there are also similarities between the work of traditional therapists and coaches. We also believe that for individuals trained in the Adlerian tradition, the differences between "therapy" and "coaching" are considerably narrower (Page, 2003).

Both therapy and coaching involve a practitioner and a client, while the terminology among practitioners may differ. There are also different modalities (e.g., one-on-one or group) in which therapy or coaching services can be delivered. Both also place an emphasis or value on the relationship as an important vehicle from which change/learning occurs.

Adlerian Psychotherapy and Coaching

Adlerian psychotherapy and the field of coaching share many commonalities. In fact, we argue that training in Adlerian therapy equips one well for work as a coach. Both approaches look at people from an optimistic, holistic perspective, attempting to understand people within their current social field and across all domains of life (Page, 2003).

Both Adlerian therapists and coaches share the perspective that they are most able to help a client when they are able to win his or her full confidence. Both view the practitioner-client relationship as an active co-participation that initially involves aligning goals, and they see the process as one of education and/or reeducation. Additionally, in both processes the more precisely goals are defined, the more rapid and effective the process is thought to be.

Adlerian therapists and coaches advocate hope and a supportive stance with the client. In both, the practitioner is active, interested, noncritical, and respectful, emphasizing a relationship of equality. Both avoid offering simplistic or premature advice yet are open and direct in asking procedural questions. The relationship is seen in both as safe, emotionally supportive, and respectful of the client's current experience. Additionally, a main task in both is exploration with the intent to understand and appraise old stereo-

types (or beliefs) about self and the world and to experiment with feeling, thinking, and acting in novel ways to achieve movement toward preferred future outcomes.

Processes in both Adlerian psychotherapy and coaching ultimately focus on helping individuals live lives that honor their highest priorities. Additionally, both processes emphasize and value improving social relationships and emphasize the development of empathy/perspective taking for, connection with, and valuing of others. In both models, the challenges of daily living and their successful resolution are largely seen as being interpersonal in nature.

Psychotherapy Trends and Research

There has been a major thrust in the mental health field to use empirically validated procedures. Alongside this trend has been a focus on an increased accountability for mental health practitioners to provide treatments in a more cost-effective manner. This has largely been a result of managed care's demands to provide "quick cures" because of the mental health field's historical lack of need to account for what its professionals did within the sanctity of the therapeutic relationship. The field of coaching has benefited from the historical lack of accountability within the medical and mental health fields, and most coaches emphasize issues related to return on investment with the individuals they work with.

In the mental health field, the buzz words and phrases of accountability have included brief therapy, short-term therapy, time-limited psychotherapy, and time-effective psychotherapy. All of this emphasis is a call to the field to be more focused and accountable. Jay Haley (1986, 1996) was correct when he emphasized that therapy (or coaching) is most likely to produce successful outcomes when it is brief, active, directive, and focused on the client's presenting problem.

The psychotherapy outcome literature does suggest that therapies that are more focused are more effective (Reinecke & Davison, 2002). However, it seems as though it does not matter what the specific focus is. For example, in Cognitive Therapy the focus is on cognitions; in Behavior Therapy the focus is on behavior; in Interpersonal Therapy the focus is on attachment style, communication skills, and interpersonal style (Reinecke & Davison).

Clearly, focus is important. However (sit down if you are a traditionally trained mental health professional), not only does it not matter what the focus is on specifically, it does not matter who is "delivering" the focused treatment (Atkins & Christensen, 2001). The psychotherapy outcome literature suggests that seasoned professionals, novices and lay persons all have a positive impact on outcome (Miller, Hubble, & Duncan, 1997). This does not

suggest that the practitioner is irrelevant, as there is another body of literature that suggests that the relationship a practitioner has with a client is of paramount importance (Barber, 2000; Kivlighan, 2001).

While the practitioner is an important variable in the outcome of psychotherapy, the "model" they utilize seems to be less important than the field seems to suggest and training programs seem to emphasize (Miller et al., 1997; Wampold & Bhati, 2004). Countless studies have emphasized the "common factors" of psychotherapy (Frank & Gunderson, 1990; Lambert, 2001; Luborsky et al., 1986; Seligman, 1995). The common factors primarily consist of Rogers's (1951) original ideas about genuineness, empathy, and positive regard as well as an emphasis on hope and expectancy.

The trend of Positive Psychology. The emerging trend of Positive Psychology is highly supportive of and consistent with the coaching movement. Positive Psychology has become a more dominant force since Martin Seligman's presidency of the American Psychological Association in 1998. He (1998) emphasized that "Before World War II, psychology had three missions: curing mental illness, making the lives of all people more fulfilling, and identifying and nurturing high talent" (p. 3). While Seligman did not devalue (nor do we) psychology's focus on curing mental illness, he did indicate that the narrowed focus of the past 50 years has largely neglected the missions of "making the lives of all people better and nurturing genius" (p. 3).

The focus of Positive Psychology is broad in scope. It includes improving the subjective well-being of individuals and their physical health and developing the strengths and virtues of individuals (Linley & Joseph, 2004; Myers, 2004; Seligman, 2002; Snyder & Lopez, 1994). Additionally, the focus of Positive Psychology is on improving society overall. This includes promoting healthy families, neighborhoods, and a socially responsible media as well as addressing larger ethnopoltical matters (Carr, 2004; Compton, 2004; Seligman, 1998).

The focus of Positive Psychology is highly compatible with the emphasis of coaching regarding the goal of helping people develop their strengths and talents. Additionally, like the mission of Positive Psychology, coaching helps individuals actualize their potential and expand their sense of what is possible for their lives.

Coaches (or coaches-to-be): Be aware. While coaching is a way for mental health professionals to expand their practices, Fairley and Stout (2003) emphasized some harsh facts about the practice of coaching:

Seventy-three percent of all coaches make less than \$10,000 in their first year. Only 60 percent of all second year coaches managed to find 10 paying clients. Less than 11 percent of all coaches make more than \$50,000 by their second year in practice. Only 9 percent of coaches make more than \$100,000 a year doing coaching. (pp. 3-4)

Therefore, even if a practitioner has the skills to be an effective coach, he or she may not necessarily become a coach with a financially viable practice. Understanding the trends in coaching and having the necessary mindset of marketing and practice development is a necessary skill set.

Some trends in the field of coaching. The field of coaching has become increasingly specialized. Coach U (2005), one of the major training programs for coaches, has identified 100 coaching specialties. The ICF has many special interest groups which help coaches develop and foster specialty distinctions (ICF, 2005b). The titles coaches use more specifically help them find their client niche and build their unique brand recognition. Some of the titles used in the coaching field include job coach, career coach, executive coach, life coach, relationship coach, business coach, leadership coach, marketing coach, professional speaking coach, and author coach.

In line with specialization within coaching, specialized coaching protocols or curriculums for clients are frequently used in the marketplace. The curriculum allows the consumer to have greater clarity about what they can hope to achieve in the coaching process and the number and kind of sessions that will be involved in the process. This approach serves to keep the process pointed and focused, which accelerates the learning process and helps the client accomplish their outcomes. Much like manualized treatment protocols, coaching curriculums provide the focus as well as the flexibility to be tailored to the individual client's needs, learning style, and circumstances. As suggested above, the curriculums also serve as a branding and marketing tool which helps coaches connect with their target market.

Economist Paul Zane Pilzer (1991) identified adult education as being the industry that will experience the greatest growth in the upcoming decades. This prediction is largely based on the rapid nature of technological development which renders certain job skills obsolete. Clearly within the last generation individuals have become more transient in the work force, which has required a new mindset for achieving vocational success (Pink, 2001). These trends, we believe, will contribute to a continued proliferation of formal educational programs as well as the coaching field. A mindset of life-long learning will be necessary for the most basic level of success in many industries. Coaching serves to meet some of the learning and skill development needs individuals will require for their ongoing personal and professional development and to help create balance in their lives (Richardson, 1999).

Another emerging trend is in the conversations and controversy around formal licensure in the coaching field. While this is beyond the scope of this paper, it is important to note that much controversy exists. This is a developmental issue which is to be expected in a new profession which is working toward gaining a greater level of identity, professionalism, and credibility in the marketplace.

One Coaching Model: Total Self Mastery Coaching Program

The Total Self Mastery coaching program is structured as an easily accessible program that is sequential to the growth of the client. The curriculum has monthly themes that promote individual mastery of those specific areas. The topics include (a) Goals, (b) Personal Development, (c) Business—Career, (d) Organization, (e) Money—Finances, (f) Recreation—Leisure, (g) Family—Friends, (h) Health, (i) Network, (j) Home life, (k) Community, and (l) Spiritual and year-end wrap-up.

The approach of Total Self Mastery involves a multidimensional, multi-sensory and multimodal approach to learning. The more modalities used in the learning process, the more generalization and maintenance of change will occur (Brookfield, 2004; Galbraith, 2004; Greenbaum, 1999; Jones & Standke, 1995; Lee, 1994; McKeon, 1995; Meier, 2000). The modalities include content driven teleconferences, live expert interviews, group coaching with 5–10 other participants, individual coaching sessions to help individuals hone in specifically on their goals and track their progress, e-mail support, and additional prerecorded audio/digital interviews each month with personal development experts.

All sessions are recorded and archived in case an individual misses a session or wants to listen to the session an additional time. Additionally, written materials are provided, as are specialized proprietary questionnaires and session tracking forms to help individuals write out goals and outcomes. There is a significant volume of literature that emphasizes the value of reading self help literature (Gabriel & Forest, 2004; Myers, 1998; Norcross, 2000; Resnick, 2001), the writing process to enhance the learning process (Carroll, 1994), the importance of group support/accountability, and the use of multiple modes in the learning process (Dubois & Vial, 2000).

Furthermore, all group and individual sessions attempt to enhance the learning process through other means that have been suggested in the adult learning literature. They include establishing rapport, creating a positive learning state, creating a desired atmosphere, building a sense of anticipation, energizing learning activities, changing brain wave states via relaxation and imagery, focusing concentration, increasing attention, learning with multiple senses, imagining, being enthusiastic, inspiring, motivating, laughter and fun. Sessions are accentuated theme-oriented units.

Concluding Statements

We set out to discuss the compatibility of Individual Psychology and the emerging and evolving field of coaching. We believe that the field of coaching

is not a passing trend, but one that is here to stay. The field of coaching will likely become more formalized and credential driven, much like the mental health field has become over the years. Also like the mental health field, there will be a continued trend toward specialization in coaching.

We believe that Adler would agree with the field of coaching. Adler was a highly practical man, who conducted brief therapy long before it was "mandated" by third party payers. Adler conducted many brief interventions out of his belief in the resourcefulness of individuals, his belief in the powerful impact new information and experiences can have on individuals, and the power of aligning goals with clients. As I (Davison) learned as an addiction counselor prior to becoming a psychologist, if a horse-stealing alcoholic openly comes into alcohol treatment, the most probable "successful" outcome would be a sober horse thief. We hope for more but are able to do our best work when we are in alignment with our clients, within a therapy or coaching context. Adler clearly embraced the respectful stance of helping individuals accomplish their desired outcomes.

There are a number of shared underlying assumptions between Adlerian psychotherapy and coaching. Both models emphasize the need to work with individuals in a way that is consistent with their styles and manners of learning and processing. Both models also emphasize the importance of a strong working alliance between the practitioner and client as being crucial to a successful outcome.

Adlerian therapy and coaching also both share a clear and direct focus in the work they do with clients. The psychotherapy outcome literature validates the approach of having a clear focus and working within a specific time frame. This approach seems to emphasize a positive expectation of change (or desired outcome) on the part of the practitioner and the client. Having a specific action plan/treatment plan also seems to provide the motivation to keep focused on the specific desired outcome of the client.

Adlerian therapy and coaching also are both largely focused on the present with an orientation toward the future. Within an Adlerian framework, individuals are understood as being goal directed and acting purposefully toward a fictional future outcome (teleology). This is highly compatible with a coaching perspective.

Both Adlerian therapists and coaches focus on practical solutions, expand individuals' senses of possibilities, and help individuals make optimal use of their internal and external resources. Additionally, coaches and Adlerian therapists have an ultimate goal of helping individuals across all aspects of their lives, what Adler referred to as the three primary life tasks of work, friendship/social, and love, and which Dreikurs and Mosak (1966, 1967) later expanded to include one's relationship to self (self task) and one's relationship to the cosmos (spiritual task).

We also emphasized that the overall trends in the marketplace and in the field of psychotherapy are consistent with the field of coaching. While we do not like to acknowledge it as mental health professionals, the literature suggests that while structure is important to outcome, the model and formal credentials of the provider are not related to therapy outcome. However, the relationship between the client and the practitioner has a significant measurable impact on successful outcome. This suggests that coaches with strong interpersonal skills can be highly effective in helping clients achieve their goals.

Coaching is a viable way for therapists to expand their opportunities to have a broader impact, have more control of their lifestyles, and be creative about using new modalities and formats to provide services. The mental health field has been overly shackled to the traditional idea of the 50-minute hour and many other narrow ideas that are not supported in the literature as being superior to other modes and approaches of delivery. As coaches, we believe that coaching is a powerful way to make a difference for clients you would not otherwise be able to serve and in ways that you may have not "delivered" services to date. Coaching is here to stay and is a challenge to mental health professional to be more creative about how to expand their ways and means of delivering services. The field of coaching has much to teach mental health professions. Furthermore, Adler would agree.

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