

10 Questions

to ask a Life Coach

by John Child



who am I and why did I write this ebook?

Hi, I'm John. Over the course of my career I've coached and mentored hundreds of people both formally and informally. I'm an expert in Neuro-Linguistic Programming and I have a passion for learning and for helping people become their best self.



A few years ago I came to some realisations about the coaching industry. I realised that there are many (MANY) people that could benefit from having a great coach or mentor. The problem was in a completely unregulated industry how do you know you are getting the right person with the right experience for you?

The original edition of this booklet was written while I was working as a professional life coach. A few years down the line my company has moved away from this area of coaching to work with growth businesses looking to focus their marketing or executives that want to improve their presentation skills.

The information now presented in this new edition is not designed to lead you to our coaching services (we don't have any). My aim with this booklet is to make sure that if you are looking for a reputable life coach you know the things to look for and the questions to ask. I hope you find it useful.



QUESTION ONE

what is life coaching and what is your focus as a life coach?

Life Coaching is a way of helping you to draw a line in the sand. If something isn't working and you want to find a new way to see and live your life then Life Coaching can probably help you.

Although Life Coaching is relatively new it has already developed a standard toolbox to help you get more out of life. A Life Coach may blend those tools with other methods, such as Neuro-Linguistic Programming, to help you move forward in whatever life area you need to focus on.

What Life Coaching is NOT is a form of therapy. From time to time issues will arise that will need a different kind of assistance. Where these crop up your Life Coach should be able to refer you to someone who can help you.

The bottom line is that a good Life Coach should have a real passion for what they do. If you speak to a potential coach and you don't get that feeling then they might not be the one for you. Find someone you are comfortable with before you sign up.



QUESTION TWO

what experience do you have?

When looking for a Life Coach you will see a lot of different advertising statements claiming affiliation to various organisations or 'trained' life coaches.

The TRUTH is that Life Coaching is regulated on a completely voluntary basis. It's possible to gain a life coaching 'certificate' in a weekend but a great life coach is more likely to have a number of years experience and a folder full of testimonials.

Some coaches are members of professional associations (eg Association for coaching or SET). These organisations include a commitment to ongoing development and as such can be a good indicator of the professionalism of the coaching practice.

Not all good coaches sign up for a professional association. It pays to do a little research. Ask to see testimonials. Ask about their ongoing development. Make sure you can see evidence of proven results.

Most professional life coaches have a website where you can view this information. Taking the time to read through that information can save you a lot of hassle in the long run.



QUESTION THREE

what kind of success do you have and what do your clients say about you?

This is the **MUST ASK** question for anyone looking for, not just a life coach, but for any product or service.

Any good Life Coach will be able to answer this question in FULL and without hesitation. If they don't then dig a little deeper!

Testimonials are a good start - even better is when a Life Coach encourages you to contact previous clients directly to ask them a little more. I have found over the years that if you do a great job for someone they are HAPPY to tell other people about it.



There are Life Coaches out there who won't ask you for formal feedback. How can anyone improve their effectiveness without knowing where and how they can improve.

It's a changing world, which means the coaching needs of people change all the time. If you don't change with them then you risk trying to help people in ways that aren't suitable.

QUESTION FOUR

what kind of services do you offer exactly?

Life Coaches can sometimes be a little 'Woolly' about how the process works and what they will do to help you. If you are like me then you want to know what you are paying for before you part with your hard-earned cash.

Every Life Coach has certain tools in common but they will use them in different ways and some of the best ones will also use more contemporary tools to help you overcome any obstacles to change or progress.

The process can be very fluid and as such you should be asked a LOT of powerful questions by your Life Coach at your first session (be that face to face, email or by telephone).

Once you've gone through this session (which is usually free) your coach will be able to put together a summary of the process you will follow.

Once that's agreed between you the work can begin.



QUESTION FIVE

is life coaching really for me?

The short answer:

If you want to move forward in an area of life and you have found yourself stuck then yes it probably is. At that point you need to begin your search.

The long answer:

Over the years I have heard this question hundreds of times. I always give the same answer – if you are asking the question it means that you already have an area you want to work on. Just like if you are reading this booklet you have something in mind.



Many people find it impossible to move forward alone even though they can see the goal ahead of them.

It's at this point that you may decide Life Coaching can help you.

If you are looking for an empowering solution for a pro-active life then working with a life coach may be the answer.

QUESTION SIX

what is your code of ethics?

In a largely unregulated industry it's very important that you find out exactly what values your life coach operates by. Every good life coach will be able to tell you these straight away.

Values and Ethics to look for include:

Confidentiality - Anything you discuss with your Life Coach is between the two of you and should go no further.

Honesty - If your prospective coach doesn't list this in their values then you should be wary. You NEED a Life Coach that will tell it like it is (even if you don't like it). Part of that is to nurture your talent and be the bad guy when you need it.

Learning - If a Life Coach isn't hungry to learn, how are they going to hear about new techniques that may help you to grow and succeed.

Fun - Improving your life shouldn't be a chore. Yes it can be hard work but it should be a positive and uplifting experience. If you can't have fun with the journey then the destination probably isn't going to be much fun either!



QUESTION SEVEN

what if we hit an area that is outside your area of expertise?

From time to time an issue may arise that is out of the scope of Life Coaching. This may be a side issue or it may be something more obstructive.

Occasionally situations arise that are more suited to therapy than a Life Coaching setting.

Where this occurs your Life Coach should be able to refer you to someone who will be able to help you with your issue. Every Life Coach should be aware that these kinds of issues can occasionally arise and so have names of other professionals to hand.



QUESTION EIGHT

how long will the coaching take?

Different Life Coaches will give you different answers to this question depending on the methods they use and the areas of life you are working on. After the initial consultation your Life Coach will be able to agree a timescale (and a process) with you and you can move on from there.

Some issues will only take one or two sessions while others may take six or seven (or it may be something you sign up to ongoing).

A lot will depend on your commitment to the process (because it will be you doing the work) and your passion to improve your life.

My experience is that I have worked with clients on average between one and six sessions.

A good Life Coach may also allow regular telephone or email contact during your time working with them.

I would expect to follow up a client a few weeks down the line in order to ensure the change work has continued to improve their lives.



QUESTION NINE

what are your fees and what is included?

Every Life Coach will charge you their own standard fee and included in that figure will be various materials and contact methods.

When you ask the question find out EXACTLY what the fee includes so you can decide which Life Coach will offer you the best value.

It's also a good idea to have a list of the services you would like to include. Are you looking for a coach that will work only face to face. Do you think telephone access will help you between sessions? Have the list ready so that you can talk about it with any potential life coach.



QUESTION TEN

how will coaching work for me?

This is the BIG question and you have to answer it yourself.

Your first step is to speak to your prospective Life Coach and ask them the questions you've read about here. Once you've got your answers think about this last question, then ask your Life Coach.

At this point you should both have a pretty good idea about how you will work together and how the process will work for you.

If, after talking through the other questions in this booklet your Life Coach can't answer this final question then find one that can.

So, you've reached the end of my short guide to finding a life coach. I hope you've found it helpful. Taking the time to get the answers to these questions can make the difference when looking for a coach that will challenge and inspire you.

Please feel free to share this booklet with your friends, colleagues or anyone else that may find it useful. If you have any suggestions or comments for future updates you can contact me through our website:

