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## How to Choose a Coach

By Moshe Ratson, MBA, MS MFT, LMFT - Founder of [spiral2grow](http://spiral2grow.com)

### GUIDELINES FOR CHOOSING AND KEEPING A COACH

If you are looking for a coach or you are already in coaching relationship, consider the checklist below. This list could also be helpful to assess the ability of the coach to meet your needs and provide you with effective coaching intervention.

#### **Find a coach who:**

1. **Makes You Feel Comfortable:** You have to find a good match for your personality. Find a coach with whom you feel comfortable and is warm and accepting. The coach should create a nurturing and safe environment for coaching, yet is willing to challenge you when necessary.
2. **Accepts You:** A coach should respect you as an individual, your background and your opinions.
3. **Can Be Trusted:** A coach should be someone you have a rapport with and someone you can trust. If you cannot be open with your coach, then you will not get the help you need and results you want.
4. **Is Experienced and Professional:** A coach should be educated, an expert in the field and competent. If a coach breaks appointments often, arrives late, or allows interruptions, consider leaving the coach.
5. **Is Emotionally Healthy:** A coach should feel comfortable with himself/herself and not seem anxious, arrogant or depressed. Look for someone who appears confident and is relaxed.
6. **Is Respectful:** The coach should always be respectful and decent, and never condescending.
7. **Does NOT Guarantee Results:** Regardless of the best effort put forth by the coach and the client, NO ONE can guarantee results. So, be careful when a coach PROMISES you results. However, if after two months you don't see/feel some change, consider replacing your coach.
8. **Is Available for a Phone Interview:** Before a first meeting, a coach should be available to have a 10-15 minute phone conversation so that you can interview him/her and get a sense of his/her style and your comfort level. Also, the coach should be able to accept the idea that clients are entitled to shop around before they commit to any coach.
9. **Provides Coaching Guidelines:** A coach should provide you with a clear policy and guidelines, including confidentiality, a consent form, clients' rights, etc.
10. **Is Patient:** The coach should allow you to explain your problems and patiently listen and not prematurely offer solutions.
11. **Is Proactive and Engaged:** A coach who is too silent or too talkative is not going to be a good fit for most people. If the coach does not promote interactive dialogue, does not answer most questions or pretends to be a "blank screen," consider changing your coach.

12. **Is Open-Minded:** A coach should accept the idea that a consultation or second opinion may be helpful in the course of coaching.
13. **Has a Flexible Approach:** A coach should be flexible in his coaching orientation and fit his/her model to the client's specific problems/needs instead of imposing his/her approach on all patients. A good coach begins with the needs of the client and then moves forward to find the appropriate intervention.
14. **Provides Assignments:** The coach should recognize the important needs of the client to work outside the coaching sessions. The coach should also provide assignments from to reinforce the coaching process.
15. **Is Available in a Crisis:** The coach can be reached by phone or email to briefly discuss the crisis.
16. **Allows a Variety of Participants:** At times, it is helpful to bring your friend/partner, child, parent, etc with you to the coaching sessions. The coach should be flexible in terms of who can participate in sessions as well as the frequency of the sessions.
17. **Maintains Boundaries:** It is critical to maintain clear and healthy boundaries. No business offers are permitted. Any sexual relationship is malpractice. If you feel something is wrong with the relationship or if you feel exploited in ANY way, seriously consider leaving the coach.
18. **Addresses Present Challenges:** While it is important to discuss the background and childhood of the client, the coach must help the client deal with real-present life issues.
19. **Doesn't Make Decisions For You:** A coach should not make your decisions, but rather provide you with the skills and the process to understand your situation, the options available and their consequences to allow you to make the decision.
20. **Is Authentic and Client-Centered:** A coach is expected to be authentic and real while keeping in mind that the coaching is about the client. A coach who reveals too much or irrelevant information about himself/herself is taking the coaching away from being productive.
21. **Conducts Ongoing Evaluations:** A coach should conduct regular evaluations and seek client's opinion regarding the progress of the coaching and revise his/her intervention accordingly.
22. **Is Open to Feedback:** A coach should be open to feedback from the client regarding the coaching process and adjust the intervention accordingly. Coaching can be difficult and, at times, clients may become frustrated with the entire process so it is important to discuss these feelings with the coach.
23. **Communicates Clearly:** A coach should be direct, open and honest and communicate effectively with the client.
24. **Is NOT Eager to Please:** A coach shouldn't be too eager to please. Instead, the coach should challenge his client and be proactive.

**Please feel free to contact Moshe Ratson for additional information.**

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