

How to find a coach

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So you've decided you need a coach. How do you go about finding a good one? You want someone who has high-quality coaching skills, maybe someone who has expertise in a particular area, and someone who will work well with you personally. How can you find the right person? Here's a list of things to check for and questions to ask, along with some helpful hints:

Certification:

Start with making sure the coach you decide to work with has proven coaching skills. Currently there are no industry-wide coaching requirements, so anyone can call themselves a coach. By selecting a coach from among only those who have certification or credentials, you will narrow the field considerably.

Research different coaching certifications and what they mean. Some training programs are much more extensive than others; some are Christian in orientation while others are secular. Choose what makes sense to you, and make sure the coach's credentials are current.

Ongoing development

Ask potential coaches what they are doing for the ongoing development of their coaching. A good coach will have a personal development plan in place to help them continue to increase their skills. Beware of coaches who received certification years back and have not continued to develop their skills beyond that original training.

Experience in a given area

If you are seeking coaching in a particular content area, it may be helpful to seek out a coach who works more extensively in that area or even has credentials in that area. For instance, an Natural Church Development (NCD) NCD coach needs not only excellent coaching skills, but a working knowledge of NCD planning and implementation. If your coaching goal is to plant a church, you may be best off working with a coach who specializes in that area and/or has planted a church themselves. Ask about areas of expertise, experience, or interest.

References

Ask the coach for references, and then check those references. Talking with former or current clients can be enlightening and may even give you insight into that coach's personal style. Not every coach works well with every type of person, so take into account the types of people this coach has worked with in the past and the approaches they took with those people.

Here are a few questions to ask:

- How long did you work with coach X?
- What were your impressions?
- What did you accomplish during the coaching relationship?
- What were some of the specific things coach X did to help facilitate those accomplishments?
- What were some of the things you liked best about coach X?
- Where do you think coach X could improve?

Initial conversation

Schedule an initial conversation to talk with at least two or three coaches. Talking with more than one coach will give you a better basis of comparison.

In those initial conversations, talk about the goals you hope to accomplish through a coaching relationship and see if those goals seem aligned with what this particular coach generally values and works toward.

Also pay attention to the interpersonal connection. You may simply feel more comfortable with one coach than another. Pay attention to that intuitive side—it will matter in the coaching relationship.

Another area to ask about in an initial conversation are clear guidelines and expectations. Can the coach communicate clearly what they expect from you and what you can expect from them? Consider the frequency of phone calls and emails, the use of a tracking system, the amount and type of homework, and the duration of the coaching relationship.

Consider a CoachNet Coach Partner

Although there are many quality coaches out there, we at CoachNet have a few coach partners that we feel comfortable recommending. For a current list of coach partners, with pictures and descriptions, visit <http://www.coachnet.org/en/coaches>