



Top Seven Benefits of Professional Coach Training

By Tony Stoltzfus, Author and Professional Coach Trainer

When I introduce coaching or do a coaching demonstration for the first time, there is almost always someone in the audience who says, “That’s me! I’ve been coaching all my life and never known it!” If you’re naturally good at working with people, why would you need professional training to coach?

1. Coaching is Different

You’ll often hear the word “coaching” is used interchangeably with “mentoring”, “counseling” or “consulting”. However, these four disciplines are all quite different and have unique purposes and processes. Mentoring is imparting to others the wisdom, insight, influence, etc. that God has given you, while coaching is drawing out of others what God has put in them. In broad strokes, counseling is helping broken people to wholeness, while coaching is helping basically whole people make significant changes and maximize their potential. Consulting is giving expert advice to bring about change; coaching is helping bring about change *without* giving advice.

Because each of these disciplines does different things for different reasons, to really grasp and execute the coaching approach you need to learn a new philosophy of working with people and a new set of techniques.

2. Changing the Conversational Habits of a Lifetime

We’ve all been listening and talking to people throughout our lives. Conversation is a part of being human. And over the years we’ve developed ingrained habits in the way we converse. Coach training is the process of imposing a new level of discipline on our natural conversational habits. Coaches use frameworks called *conversational models* to structure their conversations, and they rigorously practice the disciplines of intuitive listening and asking powerful questions. We’re used to just conversing: coaching is being intentional about every facet of the conversation. Learning these disciplines through coach training can transform even your ordinary, everyday conversations into extraordinary ones.

3. Learn Sophisticated Conversational Techniques

Expert coaching takes ordinary conversation to a whole new level. In coach training, you’ll master a dozen different types of powerful questions and learn when to use each type. You’ll learn conversational models (structured ways of organizing a conversation to get a concrete outcome), how to effectively address blind spots without resorting to confrontation, how to set SMART goals and develop action steps, a solid set of practices for healthy accountability, and many techniques for getting buy-in and for helping people grow while keeping them responsible for their own outcomes. You’ll also learn to see how Jesus interacted with his disciples in a whole new way.

Sound interesting? Look into coach training!

4. Work with a Professional Coach Trainer

Much of the coaching approach is caught, not taught. You watch an accomplished coach at work, compare what he or she did with your own instincts and feelings, and gradually learn how to apply the coaching approach in real life. Coach training is apprenticing with a master.

Coaching is not just a set of techniques. It is a relationship; and because of that the feelings, beliefs, character and confidence we bring to our coaching sessions makes a huge difference in the outcomes. That's why working with a coach trainer is so much more effective than just reading a book or attending a seminar – the interaction between you and the trainer helps you make the internal changes you need to make to coach well.

5. Practice (with Feedback) Makes Perfect

If you set out to coach without training, you'll probably have some areas you do well in, and others where you need to improve. But how will you know which is which?

Many people who enter coach training find that what they thought were their real strengths in coaching are actually the areas where they need a lot of work. That's part of the power of a formal training program: you get the chance to practice in a controlled setting to build your skills, *and* get feedback from a professional trainer about what you are doing well and how to get better. Practice with feedback is the best way to strengthen what you do best and identify and correct your weak areas. A well-designed training environment will give you much more rapid improvement in your skills than working at coaching on your own.

6. Get Great Resources

Coach training is also about resources. You'll get a wealth of coaching exercises and covenants to use with your clients, and learn how to establish key expectations up front to maximize effectiveness. For instance, the TLC professional program provides a 300 page, color printed coaching manual with 20 CDs and over 150 exercises and worksheets you can use with your clients. Having great resources makes your job as a coach much easier.

In addition, you'll gain access to invaluable extras like turn-key coaching workshops you can offer (complete with session outlines, promotional flyers, handouts and more), welcome packets for new clients, coaching business forms, and the business-building resources you need to develop a successful practice. Coach training gives you the tools you need to be your best.

7. Becoming a Coach Isn't Easy

In the course of training hundreds of coaches, one comment I've heard over and over again is, "This is harder than it looks!" As one graduate-level Communications Professor told me after completing a coaching program, "At first glance, this looked easy, but it's harder than it looks. It took the full 22 weeks of the program to really grasp the coaching



model.” Becoming a coach takes time. Coaching with minimal training usually means doing what you already know with a few new techniques frosting the cake. There are so many powerful tools to learn in the coaching model – don’t shortchange yourself by skipping the chance to learn them!