

CHOOSING A MENTOR COACH

Choosing and working with a Mentor Coach is an important step in your ongoing development of competency as a coach. For those of you who are in a position to be able to choose your own mentor, or if you are already working with one, it is important to have a clear understanding of:

- ❖ **The definition of Mentor Coaching (comprehensive)**
- ❖ **What you are looking for in a Mentor Coach (Clarifying Relationship and goals)**
- ❖ **Questions you might ask in an interview**
- ❖ **ICF recommended practices if going for a credential.**

The following is a comprehensive definition of Mentor Coaching, offered by the Association for Coach Training organizations (ACTO), which is an organization populated by various coaching educators, most of which are accredited by the International Coach Federation (ICF).

Mentor Coaching is working with the whole coach learner for what is needed, and what they want to accomplish, in relationship to their journey as a coach.

This may include any or all of the following three elements**:

- ❖ **Professional Skill Competency development**
 - ✧ Coaching competency & skill assessment
 - *A professionally trained, more experienced coach observes actual coaching sessions and provides feedback specifically focused on Core Coaching Competencies.*
 - ✧ Client case/situational support and relating elements
 - *An experienced coach works with the mentee to support with specific client issues and challenges, for the purpose of doing the best (safest and most powerful) job.*
- ❖ **Personal Development**
 - ✧ Assisting the mentee to 'see' them selves in their relationship with their own world and evolve in their understanding, knowledge and experience.
 - A process whereby the mentee evolves from an emphasis on external authority and skills to being more self aware, responsible, insightful and masterful in relating to self and others.
- ❖ **Professional/Business development. (if desired/relevant)**

- ✧ Support with coaching education plans and processes
- ✧ Developing a business (coaching or otherwise)
- ✧ Integrating Coaching into an existing or new business
- ✧ Bringing coaching into an organization

**** Particular emphasis is on coaching competency and related personal growth.**

The categories that reflect this in the world of professional credentialing, have been defined as Continuing Coach Education (CCE) categories by the International Coach Federation (ICF):

ICF Core Competencies (CC)

Personal Development (PD)

Business Development (BD)

Other skills or tools directly applicable to coaching (OT)

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CLARIFYING RELATIONSHIP AND GOALS:

Here are some questions you might ask yourself, prior to setting up an interview with potential Mentor Coaches:

- ❖ What do you want to use your Mentor Coach for?
- ❖ Does it matter whether it is a male or female Mentor Coach?
- ❖ What background would you like your Mentor Coach to have?
- ❖ What do you expect from your Mentor Coach?
- ❖ What area would you like to begin working on with a Mentor Coach?
- ❖ What about you would be helpful for the Mentor Coach to know in working with you?

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INTERVIEWING

Below are some questions/requests you might consider when interviewing a potential mentor.

- ❖ Do you currently have any mentoring spots available?
- ❖ Tell me about your coaching practice (listen for depth/breadth)
- ❖ How long have you been coaching and how many people have you coached?
- ❖ What is your personal definition of coaching?
- ❖ What is your specialty or niche, if any?
- ❖ What is your background, prior to becoming a mentor coach?
- ❖ How many coaches have you mentored and for how long?
- ❖ Describe the characteristics of clients who relate best with you?
- ❖ What other activities/area are you involved in with your business/coaching?

- ❖ Are you an ICF certified coach (ACC, PCC or MCC), and if so, is your certification current?
- ❖ How would you describe your coaching and mentoring style?
- ❖ What is your coaching and mentor coaching format? Frequency? Length of commitment?
- ❖ As a mentor coach, what is the process you use to review and evaluate coaching competency development?
- ❖ What is your regular fee or fee structure for mentor coaching and what does it cover?
- ❖ If I select you to be my mentor coach, what would we start working on first?

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RECOMMENDED PRACTICES FOR MENTEES DESIRING AN ICF CREDENTIAL:**

- ❖ The ICF definition of Mentor Coaching related to the credentialing requirements is:
“For purposes of Credentialing, mentor coaching means an applicant being coached on their coaching skills rather than coaching on practice building, life balance, or other topics unrelated to the development of an applicant’s coaching skill.”
 This falls into the **first** category of the comprehensive definition of Mentor Coaching, Professional Skill Development, and is required work to qualify for a professional credential. Be sure to discuss this during any interviews with potential Mentor Coaches.
- ❖ For Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credential-applicants who are not graduates of an ICF Accredited Coach Training Program (“ACTP”), and for all Master Certified Coach (MCC) credential-applicants, it is highly recommended, but not required, that the credential-applicant seek Mentor Coaching from at least 2 Mentor Coaches from different training backgrounds/ACTPs in order to experience exposure to broader interpretations of the ICF competencies, and to varying approaches to evaluation of the competencies.
- ❖ For coaches who speak a language other than English, which is not yet available among existing ICF Mentor Coaches, it is recommended that the mentee seek an ICF Mentor Coach who speaks the language of the oral examination to be undertaken or already completed by the applicant.

***For details on the requirements, duties, competencies and traits of a Mentor Coach, please see the following documents: “Mentor Coaching: Duties and Competencies” and “Recommended Practices to Be an Excellent Mentor Coach”.*