

Why Seek an ICF Credential?

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Director of Credentialing

What's the big deal about getting an ICF credential? For twelve years as I was coaching, I asked myself this question and never came up with an answer that moved me in this direction. In fact, my coach (an ACC - Associate Certified Coach - at the time) told me that I already was a world-class coach! Fast-forward five years ahead, and I now hold the PCC (Professional Certified Coach) credential and am committed to pursuing an MCC (Master Certified Coach) credential. What spurred this change?

The change was brought about by taking a professional coach training course, where I was encouraged to seek an ACC credential. In taking this training, I began to see that I was not as highly skilled in coaching as I had previously thought.

What difference has seeking ICF credentials made in my life? I've thought about this and have identified several benefits.

First, an ICF credential gave me **credibility** as a coach. My initial motivation was to have the three letters of ACC by my name to demonstrate that I was a bona fide coach. Today, more and more people in the business world recognize and want to work with a credentialed coach.

Second, an ICF credential identifies me as a **professional**. Since it does not require a license, anyone can call themselves a coach and start a coaching business. However, without coach-specific training, one wonders if they really are using a coaching approach, or are they utilizing an approach they learned from another helping profession, such as counseling, teaching, mentoring or business executive experience?

Third, an ICF credential greatly increased my **skill level** as a coach. I have become a much more competent coach in the process of seeking each higher level credential. I look back now to five years ago and realize that I was nowhere close to being a world-class coach!

Fourth, an ICF credential enables me to **serve my clients** more effectively. Coaching is completely client-focused. As my skill level in coaching has increased, I have been better able to stimulate growth and transformation in those I coach.

Fifth, an ICF credential has **made me a better person**. It has changed the way I interact with people. I am less controlling and more open and authentic with others.

Recently, I was coaching a young woman who is very task-oriented, but who wanted to become more people-oriented. I asked her, on a one to ten scale, where she thought I was (with ten being very task-oriented). She indicated a three, with me being quite people-oriented. In reality, I am actually a nine, with a strong task-orientation. However, in learning coaching skills, I have been able to moderate my

task-orientation and elevate my people-orientation, to the point that I was able to relate well with this person.

Ask yourself this question: *“Am I really serious about being a professional coach?”* If so, you will begin the journey toward getting your ACC credential.

If you already hold the ACC credential, ask yourself: *“Am I really serious about serving my clients well?”* If so, you will embark on the path to getting your next higher ICF credential.

I encourage you on this journey!

About Walt Hastings, PCC

Walt has been coaching for 17 years, after serving for 35 years in pastoral ministry. The majority of his clients are pastors, Christian leaders and leaders in the non-profit sector. He is a graduate of Coach U's advanced coaching program, as well as Creative Results Management's CORE training. Walt received his early coach training through CoachNet. He presently holds the PCC credential. With over 4,000 coaching hours logged, Walt will be applying for the MCC credential soon. He is an instructor and mentor coach for Coaching4Clergy and for Creative Results.