

Date: October 2013
Host: Robyn Logan and Merci Miglino
Topic: New Coach Skills

Welcome

Welcome everyone. It's Robyn Logan here. We've got Merci, the co-host with the mo-host.

Merci: I was letting you do the hospitality and welcoming people. This is Merci Miglino in New York. Welcome, everyone.

Robyn: Thanks Merci, for coming. Welcome to our monthly teleseminar brought to you by International Coach Academy. This month our topic is the skills and attributes of the new coach. The reason this topic came about is because we've been coaching now and training coaches for over 12 years.

During that time, as you can imagine, we've seen lots and lots of changes. In particular I would say in the last three years there's been really high growth in the coaching industry. It's really maturing and growing. We thought we'd look at how the nature of being a coach and the qualities it takes to be a coach has changed over time. That's our topic.

I'm Robyn Logan, CEO of International Coach Academy. Merci Miglino is the Director of Training.

So what do you think about this topic? It's a good one, isn't it?

Blended Coaching on the Rise

Merci: Definitely, and just listening to what people are doing currently and how they're already in HR or in some kind of therapeutic role or they're in

counseling or some kind of human contact, or something about communication skills.

It's interesting that people are adding coaching to an existing skillset, expertise, or competency. I think it's a trend that I've noticed in the 12 years I've been coaching that is not just emerging but has actually arrived. More and more people are seeing the value of it as blended with what they're currently doing.

Robyn: I totally agree. In fact, that's one of the reasons that we decided to have this topic. We were looking at some of the analytics in the business the other day and we came across some old statistics which were very interesting.

When we first began in the year 2000, it was something like 80% to 90% of our students were coming to us and leaving behind their profession to become a fulltime professional coach. They might have been working in corporate; they might have been real estate agents.

They could have been anything and now they're leaving that, doing a career change—often a life change—and becoming a coach. Often the niche that they chose for the coaching was completely different to their background. That's what used to happen.

Merci: That's what happened for me. I can speak to that. Twelve years ago, completely different background. Not that I didn't have some of the skillsets that were very advantageous in coaching but it wasn't like I came from a HR or therapeutic or even a sales function. In sales there's a lot of coaching that goes on. I'm finding it really interesting, this turn of events.

Robyn: Definitely you would be representative of that. A lot of people were also coming because they were looking for work/life balance. They were burnt-out, which I know was your story. You know, working the corporate, getting to work at seven in the morning, getting home at eight o'clock at night, never seeing your kids, that type of thing. At that time we were attracting women between the ages of 35 and 50 who had done this for 10 or 15 years. "I need something that's flexible." We were getting a lot of that.

Anyway, those reasons are still valid and we still get a lot of students like that. But what we've noticed is it's something now like 60% to 70% of our

coaches now are blending coaching with what they're already doing. So they're adding it to either a current business or a current skillset.

Like Melanie, in the funeral business. That's a perfect, perfect example. You're dealing with people at a very stressful and emotional time in their lives when someone has passed on. Really, to have a few coaching skills at that point would be very useful.

So we're finding people coming in order to just do what they do better or even to package up an extra service like an additional stream of revenue. Maybe offering coaching to family members. We're finding that a lot now. It's interesting, isn't it?

Merci: For a lot of reasons even our training has become enriched and enhanced by the influences now. Other therapies and practices and approaches have influenced coaching to bring it to where it is today. Now coaching seems to be influencing frameworks and practices out there in a whole new way.

I think it's really interesting and I think that the people who are enrolling lately are just fascinating to me. They have so much experience and are going to build this in because they see the value of it. It's really different than when it started.

Robyn: Another change I've noticed in the conversation is that the conversation used to be about what coaching is. There was really a lot of attention on what it is and what it isn't. Like, is it therapy? Is it counseling? Is it trainings and mentoring? What actually is coaching?

Now I'm seeing people are still interested in that, particularly if they're new and they're coming into the field new, but the conversation now is more about how it doesn't really matter what it is. It can fit anywhere. It can be very flexible.

Key Skills/Qualities of Coaches in 2013

So we came up with three things yesterday when we were brainstorming about this topic, three of the key skills or qualities that we think a coach in 2013 needs to have. They've probably always needed to have these but it's really obvious to me now that these are the three key things.

1. Coaches need to be highly flexible and agile.

Merci: They need to have agility, yes. When you think about it, the world is asking of us to be more agile in our work. Either it's a question of resources, we're doing more with less, or it's a question of choosing lifestyle. Choosing a work/lifestyle that incorporates three or four different income streams. It suits our values in a number of ways.

So I think they're trending or coming together plus with the onslaught of information out there it's these other kinds of skills that are really helping people promote their way through companies, organizations, or through their own lives. Information is information and it's leveling the playing field a bit. Now it's these other skills, the ability to communicate, to really hear and understand people. It takes a kind of agility. I think that's definitely an important aspect to anybody who wants to really think about coaching.

Robyn: The word "agile" that you used is very interesting. It immediately brings to mind for me agile software development methodology which is a shift that's also happened in terms of project management.

For people who know about IT projects, in the olden days it was like you had an outcome that you wanted; you did the plan; everybody worked out what their jobs were; people went off and did what they were supposed to do and reported back.

Agile software development methodology is a new way of doing it. It really is more about adaptive planning, planning that responds to change. So it's a conceptual framework that really develops the project organically. It's *let's not plan out like we know the future* because we know, particularly with software, things happen halfway through and then the plan's out the window.

So an agile approach is more about responding to change as you go along rather than following a plan. If you think about it in terms of your coaching being about responding to the client as you go along rather than following a plan that you have in your head about what you think coaching is, an example might be like halfway through your three-month coaching contract with your client it becomes really obvious that they need some consulting and you have the knowledge they need.

So you need to respond to that in the moment and be able to have a conversation with them about, "Okay, we're doing coaching but I could also develop this consultancy package and come into your workplace with a couple of subcontractors and sort this whole thing out for you. Would that be useful?" You need to be able to respond and do that and be flexible.

Merci: Yeah. Just think about it. Most of us are so time compromised that if we can get in one person or organization the ability to do several things and we trust that person, we've built a relationship with that person, we definitely want them as part of the team.

Robyn: So I think being really flexible about the service that you're providing to the client, that's what I see the new skill as. Perhaps it was a skill that was always required, really. Coaching is about the client, which brings me to the next skill.

2. The new coach should be absolutely client-focused as opposed to concerned about following rules or sets of behaviors that you have around coaching.

This is sort of segueing from what we're saying. This old thing about coaching being not advice-giving is true. A lot of the students come from backgrounds that were advice-giving and one of the very first things they have to do is unlearn their style of helping clients. Coaching really is about the client coming to the solution themselves. That's the ideal scenario.

But the thing is, if you're client-focused rather than focused on whether you're being a good coach or a right coach or doing proper coaching, then you can be open to whatever it is the client needs, even if that isn't you in that moment.

Merci: We teach coaching. We teach the coaching process sort of like in isolation, you know? What is it to fully enlist the core competencies of coaching as defined by the International Coach Federation?

Many of the people on this call already have competencies in several of these areas because they're ones you develop through life experience. Just listening to the professions and industries that these people are in they clearly have some of these competencies.

It's being able as a coach to pick and choose and to be straightforward and have integrity with my client as to what I'm doing.

"In this case, it sounds like you want coaching."

"In this case, it seems like there's an information gap and I think I can at least propose several options to you."

So I call everything with a coach a coach. So if you're meeting with bereaved families who have to make decisions about purchases, all the conversation and communication you have with them could really benefit from a coach approach. You can take that anywhere, you know?

Robyn: Let's go on to the third one and then we'll open up for questions.

3. A new coach needs to be more aligned in style and skill and presence with artists and inventors rather than consultants and lecturers.

It's a paradigm shift from the telling the client, "I've got the answer," on everything to being a really creative, in-the-moment type person.

Merci: It kind of brings the first two together, Robyn, because like doctors, especially in the States, they're still business people. They have to understand marketing. They have to understand the consumer. So nobody anymore is really allowed the luxury, unless they have expansive resources, to do one singular thing.

What it seems is that the people who are understanding that the world is shifting a bit, they're the people who are experiencing not just success in a traditional way but fulfillment and reward. Part of this comes from Daniel Pink's book, *A Whole New Mind*. He also wrote *Free Agent Nation*.

In *A Whole New Mind* he makes the case that right-brainers, people who have that creative hemisphere, are pulling ahead of the left-brainers. They're slightly pulling ahead and I think anybody who has studied emotional intelligence and positive psychology will understand that. However, what's really interesting is that you can't let go of the left brain.

But it's making people, even in fields like software and accounting, be viewed as creators. So the future belongs to, As Mr. Pink says, a person who has a different kind of mind. Creators, empathizers, pattern recognizers, and meaning makers. Every one of those, in order to be creative, empathetic and

a big picture thinker, are attributes that a coach possesses. We are the pattern recognizers.

We see what people are doing and feedback and observe and question. We do it with empathy. We don't do it with judgment. And we understand what role meaning playing in people's lives. It doesn't matter what they're doing.

I've read this book three times so excuse me if I'm a little enthusiastic. It really just puts a pep in my step that we are on the crest of the future, you know? For 12 years coaching has been trying to say, "We're here, we're here," and thanks to this seismic shift—yeah, it's not fully realized quite yet and maybe not everywhere in the world, but it's here.

Robyn: Daniel Pink, he's not talking about being a coach. He's just talking about basic skills and the attributes required for the next century. It's interesting to me that a lot of our course materials are about that. They're about how to ask a powerful question, how to make a connection, how to spot a pattern, how to listen deeply. Don't listen just to hear the story but to hear what's going on underneath the story. Be strategic. All those things.

As an aside, it's also really interesting when you think about education because I've just been going through this with my son, Rider, at school. He's not very left-brained and he's not very good at his times tables, his maths, pages of sums. He stares at them and they just seem to disappear into the page.

There's been a lot of pressure on me as a parent to really get him into extra classes, getting him into extra literacy, tutorials. Lots of kids his age who have those same issues, the portal things, they're doing extra once a week. I don't know if it's the coaching background or possibly because I also taught adult literacy for many years and I used to teach 17-year-old boys who couldn't read and write a sentence.

I can teach them to read and write. It's a skill like hammering a nail into a piece of wood. Reading and writing, there's a system to it. You can teach it. Adults who cannot read and write can learn to read and write. But what I can't teach them, what's very difficult, is I can't teach them how to learn. That's really hard.

If you don't know how to learn or you've had your ability to learn be disrupted at some point, that's difficult. It's hard for me to improve their confidence and self-esteem. It's hard for me to turn them into lateral thinkers who can be strategic and problem-solve. These things are really hard to teach an 18-year-old.

Reading and writing, that's not hard to teach an 18-year-old. So I look at my son who honestly is just a natural-born leader, he's confident. He can walk into a group of people. He can solve problems, think strategically, look you in the eye, remember your name, listen to you properly, be innately curious about who you are and what you're doing in front of him.

He can do all that; he just can't do 20 math questions. Although I do have to deal with the math things and we are going to get him a bit of extra help, I'm not overly anxious about it because you know what? If I'm going to employ someone tomorrow and they're sitting there in an interview, I want the person looking me in the eye, who completely gets who I am instantly, who can see where our company sits in the world stage, who can understand their position in the role, etc. You know what I mean?

Merci: I'm just a little bit ahead of you as I'm raising a 24-year-old. I had that same experience with education with my daughter. What I'm seeing is that so many of our students also have really mastered the art of the left brain and are now enjoying the balance of left-brain/right-brain. There's this whole other plane.

I guess it's really accessing both sides to have that well balanced. We get this all the time—"I came for this but I got this." It's the expansion of learning that you don't really get in a university setting. I think that leadership, like you're talking about, is this balance. Whether we're introverts, extroverts, it doesn't matter. There is a calling to lead others, to serve others--that's another way of saying it--that requires this. I agree; I think it's an important coaching attribute.

Robyn: You know, with the left-brained students we get, they actually find it challenging at the beginning, don't they? It's like exercising a muscle you've never exercised.

Merci: Or just unaccustomed to learning in a particular environment.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Robyn: All right, let's open up the call and see if anyone's got any questions. Are there any questions at all about what we're talking about? It doesn't even have to be related.

Paul: *I think you've done a very good job in explaining this. For somebody who has worked now for over 40 years in education—I was in Human Resources as a director for 15 years and was in active ministry which I have to tell you practically burned me out. I use the phrase, "compassionate burnout."*

I've taken some time off to really review my life and a lot of people have told me that given my background and my relationship with people—there's nothing that you've mentioned that I have not used in my own work. The ability, I think, is great. You have to be agile. I think you have to be open.

As a therapist you learn very early on that you never actually give somebody the answer or the solution that they have to find themselves. This is something that I did with an exceptional therapist. I stress that also because there are a lot of therapists out there, almost a dime a dozen, and I tell people to make sure that they're in synch with the person you're working with.

I have degrees from Columbia and Harvard and Oxford. I've done all of that business. So I'm listening to this and I'm going, "Okay, now what would the purpose be really of going through another training program? This is not ego speaking; it's just a question.

You know, you've reached 62 and you're looking for something new because you don't want to retire. You listen with great respect to what the both of you have to say because I think you're doing a wonderful job in a very, very changing world. I talked to my mother, who is 87, and she's worried about Alzheimer's and I've been reading a lot about it. She's right-handed and I said, "Start using your left hand." They say to learn a new language, do the crossword puzzles, do a lot of reading. Be conversive.

So what are the additional skills you feel that one will actually acquire that will make you first-rate? This is what I've always looked for. What is first-

rate? I've seen an abundance of schools out there and I wonder what the purpose is of getting a degree from this school when they can't get a job?

I think economically speaking America has to face up to that, too. I was just in Europe. I can't say Europe is doing a better job but I think in many ways with vocational schools, especially in Germany, they certainly are training their people a lot better than we are here.

So what does one need to do? I'm sorry if I'm sounding long-winded but I find this very interesting personally. I have a lot of respect for what the two of you have just said.

Robyn: It's almost like I couldn't have planted a better question, so thank you. I promise to everyone that I really don't know you.

Here's the thing. You mentioned the qualifications. It is a fact that the International Coach Federation qualification is becoming more and more widely recognized and institutionalized and mainstreamed to the point that I was very surprised when talking to one of our graduates who is working.

He does consultancy and coaching for the Defense Force here in Australia. He told me that the Australian Defense Force now only employs International Coach Federation-accredited coaches. Now, I just think that's amazing. That's a government department, you know?

We all know they're slower than the rest so I think it's increasingly the case, particularly in corporate, that they want a fast track to quality. They don't want to have to try you out and see if you're any good. They want to see *oh yeah, you've got that certification*. So a big reason people come to us is for that credibility that comes with a degree.

You and I know, with your background the same as me, that really you can have 20 degrees and still not be able to ask a powerful question or acknowledge a client. So ultimately, it's worth nothing; however, in a marketplace it's worth a lot. And as a school we are also very committed to developing the profession and we want competencies and standards. So we're very keen to support that. So that's the qualification answer.

The other answer about what you get out of it is someone like you who's got two or three degrees, a lot of our students have two, three, four degrees, Ph.Ds., all sorts of qualifications.

What you get out of it is a different style of learning. There is really not much learning like International Coach Academy learning. It's incredibly personal and tailored. It has a coach approach to the learning. So you learn what it is you came to learn, not what we think we need to teach you. That's really important.

The other thing that you benefit from is the immense network we have, a global network of people exactly like yourself, who come from a range of backgrounds and are at a point in their lives where they're looking for a little bit extra. You can get a lot from networking with other people. So that's another powerful part of our program.

Merci: I really like this question, too. You know, it sounds like you're a life-long learner and maybe a seeker of...

Paul: *You hit the nail right on the head.*

Merci: Yeah. So there's many of us. I count myself among them. I am not too far behind you in age. What I really enjoy because I still teach coaching—I'm the Director of Training here. I have my own coaching practice. I am continuously amazed because I'm in the world of *I don't know what I don't know*.

To me, that's the fountain of youth. I don't mean like the kind you put on your face. I mean feeling vital. A friend once said to me, "You're done when you feel like there's no possibilities or surprises left in your life." When you're smart and bright, you have to struggle against that. You know what you know and you're confident. Like you said, it's not ego. You just know. Maybe you learn quicker; you've always been interested in it. You have that hunger and curiosity.

So a lot of our students really do come for that. They come because they want to learn something new. You might walk out with a string of pearls. It all depends on what those pearls are that you're looking for.

Frankly, I started coaching before I came to International Coach Academy as a student. I just leveraged my education background, team-building. I ran political campaigns. I knew how to motivate and enthuse and acknowledge people. But I came because I wanted to be in a community of others who were looking to be told something they didn't know, to live in that world.

I never left. I've jumped around; you name it and I've dabbled in it. I'm a seeker and I enjoy it. What do I have left, you know? I don't smoke. I only have wine once in a while. You know what I mean. I raised a kid. This is what really sets me on fire. It still does. It's still coaching.

The other thing I have to say is this: the International Coach Federation went from "Who's that?" to now being asked of me in the States constantly. Their program of credentialing is rigorous. I just went for my Master Certified Coach which requires 2,500 hours of coaching, so many hours of coach-specific training, and you have to submit recordings. And 7% of the people who apply for this credential get it. Seven percent.

Paul: *That sounds as bad as the California Law Bar.*

Merci: So this is what I like about truth and I know Paul is one with me, being in Los Angeles. You have to understand paradox or you couldn't navigate the city. I'm bi-coastal and I love LA but I know what a world of truths that are different.

On one hand there's a part of me that almost resents this criteria that at times can feel so monumental. But on the other hand, I appreciate it because I know there's a rigor there. It may take me several times to get there but when I do I will have earned something. Not so much in their eyes.

Credentialing is the language we speak professionally. Like Robyn said, at one level it doesn't mean much of anything but in currency in the workplace, it has value. So that's why credentialing, to me, is ultimately wise. I decided to submit my certificate with International Coach Academy to the International Coach Federation and I am now a Professional Certified Coach with them. Everyone here keep their fingers crossed and perhaps even a Master Certified Coach.

Paul: *Thank you very much. Truly.*

Robyn: Was that helpful for you, Paul?

Paul: *Enormously.*

CONCLUSION

Robyn: I think we'll wrap it up now. If anyone does have a question they can email us at www.training@icoachacademy.com. Or they can visit our website at www.coachcampus.com.

Merci: There's a lot there about coaching niches. For example, we have a grief coaching niche; a group of grief coaches that meet once a month. There is health and wellness. There's lots of information on the site about the aspects of coaching that can build on what you're already doing.

Robyn: Definitely. Thanks so much for coming. I hope you got a lot out of it.

END OF AUDIO