



Selecting a Wellness Coach

How is your wellness? That is, how is your optimal physical and mental health? Just as you need to continually invest to grow your financial savings account, you also need to make small daily investments in your wellness account to live your best life.

What would you like to attain to feel really well in your life? High energy? Calm and balance under stress? A positive and optimistic mindset? A fit and strong body? A wellness coach can help you make the changes you most desire.

What should you look for in a coach? Margaret Moore (Coach Meg), MBA, chief executive officer of Wellcoaches Corporation and lead author of the forthcoming *Coaching Psychology Manual for Physical & Mental Health Professionals* (Lippincott Williams & Wilkins), explains below.

How a Coach Can Help

Wellness coaches are energizing in their commitment to help you live your life with high energy, clear focus and a positive and confident outlook. Coaches don't make it easy by giving you answers. Rather, they are skilled partners; they join with you in creating an inspiring vision for your life, together with a pragmatic plan to move you closer to that vision. In the process, they help you dig out your strengths and insights from life's clutter.

Typically, coaching is conducted via 30–45 minute telephone sessions every week or month.

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Qualities of an Effective Coach

What skills does a coach need? Look for someone who

- is a great listener and enjoys your stories;
- fosters self-acceptance and self-respect;
- arouses, engages, energizes and challenges you to reach higher at the right moment;
- has a bird dog's ability to sniff out your strengths, values and desires;
- takes risks and asks courageous questions;
- doesn't rescue you from emotional muck (sometimes you need to sit in it for a bit to energize your desire to change. He or she knows that your life is at stake if you don't take care of yourself);
- is playful when appropriate; and
- knows how to celebrate your successes.

Wellness coaching is not therapy. A therapist treats diagnosable mental disorders. A wellness coach assumes that you are already doing some things well and that you wish to do them better or to develop other aspects of your life.

Training for Coaches

Wellness coaches are practitioners of the new field of coaching psychology that helps people implement the theories of positive psychology, which is the scientific study of happiness and well-being.

Reputable coach-training programs require 6 months to 2 years of training and coaching practice, followed by a certification process that measures core coaching competencies. Becoming a master coach, even for those with natural coaching talent, requires months of training and years of practice.

Over the past 20 years, dozens of life and corporate coach-training schools, as



interviewing coaches

When talking to potential coaches, ask questions such as the following to determine whether a coach is the right fit for your needs:

1. What licenses or credentials do you have, and what type of training do these licenses or credentials entail?
2. What type of background do you have? (Certified wellness coaches come from diverse backgrounds such as personal trainers, exercise physiologists, nurses, dietitians, physicians, psychotherapists and more.)
3. What aspects of wellness coaching do you specialize in? (Different coaches cover diverse areas of well-being, such as stress management, healthy sleep habits, weight management, work issues, family or relationship issues and smoking reduction.)
4. What would be a typical format for one of your coaching sessions? What support would you provide? What would I be responsible for?
5. What do you charge?

well as university programs, have trained more than 20,000 coaches worldwide; in the past 5 years, health and wellness coach-training programs have emerged. ■

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