



## The Enduring Value of Being Coached

By Barry Zweibel

Good coaching, I submit, is a lot like reading a good book - no matter how much you enjoy it, or how much value it provides you with, there comes a point when the story ends. So whenever someone starts working with me as their coach, I know that someday they'll stop working me as their coach - no matter how much value they derived, no matter how much progress they made. But, like a good book, good coaching also has a way of 'staying with you' even after you've finished. People like that about coaching. And I think it's one of the more compelling reasons to hire a coach in the first place. But therein lies the rub. For if you've never been coached, how can you possibly know about the enduring value of being coached? Hmm.

So here's what I'm thinking. Let's skip ahead - to the end of the coaching story - and look back. That way you can know now, some of the realizations that would probably occur to you later, if you were working with a coach. So imagine you already hired a coach and have been working together for a few months now. What lessons are you likely to have learned by already? What insights are starting to percolate? What about this notion of enduring value? Consider the following 'aha' list and its probable short- and long-term impact on you and those around you:

### **1. Just because it isn't easy, doesn't mean it's impossible.**

Know this: not being able to do something is quite different than not knowing how to do it. People who have been coached understand this distinction and use it - regularly. They've learned to see that the things that tend to give them the most trouble in work (and in life) are not things they're unable to do, but things they just haven't learned to do well yet. (Emphasis on the word 'yet.') From there, it's a short hop to realize that very few things will stay impossible for long if you approach them as opportunities to learn something new and different.

### **2. Patience and persistence work hand-in-hand.**

Most people understand that just because something hasn't happened yet doesn't mean it won't ever happen. But people who have been coached tend to realize that some of the best opportunities are the ones they create for themselves. So in addition to learning how to take specific, targeted, and

measurable steps forward, they've also come to understand that tenacity goes a long way to help make good things happen sooner.

### **3. Sometimes more important things have to happen first.**

Self-development work is an interesting business in that it often takes us to places we don't initially intend, or expect. People being coached come to appreciate this and even look forward to the serendipity of sidebar topics and tangent conversations pointing to broader, more unifying lessons. Some insights and discoveries can only percolate indirectly and coaching clients know that if something surfaces, it's usually worth a look-see.

### **4. Aha! moments will follow their own timetable.**

A lot of coaching is about planting seeds, but it takes more than just wishing for those seeds to flower. It also takes time, nurturing, and a bit of pruning, too. But how beautiful those flowers can be when they finally do come into bloom! To relate this to coaching, I recently heard from a former client of mine - a CEO. He just inked a major deal for his company and wanted me to know that the he was able to significantly improve the terms of the agreement by applying the Lessons Learned from a coaching conversation we had ... six months earlier! How's that for an Enduring Value?!

### **5. Just because it's over doesn't mean it's over.**

But ultimately, coaching is not just about making changes in your business or personal life. It's about sustaining those changes. So just because your work with a given coach or mentor happens to end, it doesn't mean that your work is finished. To increase the sustainability and stickiness of change, people who have been coached know that they must continue to attend to those changes over time, with or without a coach. They know - and accept - that sustainability is what it's really all about.

In the short-term, coaching gives clients the structures and language to address the issues, challenges and opportunities they're facing. Longer term, though, it's about people learning to better help themselves – to create their own enduring value. I applaud those who have stepped up to be coached because it shows that they're truly interested in taking an active role in creating a better future for themselves. That's BIG stuff!

Don't you just love a happy ending?!

#### **About the Author**

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