

Meet GottaGettaCoach, Inc.

We have a coach in the family. I have always enjoyed cheering for each of our children and their teams. But now, I can cheer The Coach.

Quite a good one too, if I don't say so myself.

No, he did not get the job at Notre Dame or the Minnesota Twins. He is not a sports coach. He also is not a voice coach, a dance coach, a writing coach, etc.

Barry Zweibel, my wonderful son-in-law of 25 years who is married to our Nancy, is now an officially and academically certified PC, or Personal, Career and Business Coach. He has a B.A., an M.A. and now has a CPCC. A man of letters.

Right about now you are saying "Whattzat?" So, from talks I've had with him taking long walks near his happy Northbrook, Ill., home and from his impressive orientation manual, I am about to try to tell you (and me) what he is all about.

First, let me say he is totally and irrevocably serious about this. About a year ago he bit the bullet and packed in what Beloved Spouse and I had considered a pretty impressive management job as the vice president for communications at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. He has been in business for himself as a PC ever since.

It is a bit difficult to pinpoint his target area because his clients could spring forth from a zillion different scenarios. Like someone stuck in their job and hating both it and themselves. Or somebody who is suffering a terrifying loss of self-esteem, such as after being downsized out of work. An employee or even an executive who wants to go higher, but can't get started.

Someone who just plain needs a fresh challenge or a brand new career. Someone on the cusp of taking a chance who can't quite make the leap of faith in themselves. And that is only scratching the surface.

His client might not be one person alone but might well be a major corporation or a small business that has hit a stone wall and needs fresh guidance for some segment of its leadership and staff. They realize they need a fresh voice who can instill new self-confidence and raise the sights of the company and everyone in it.

He already has a few of those, including the giant communications firm Ameritech. No small company, that.

Barry insists he is not a shrink, although I treasure advice he has given me during our walks and



**ARNOLD
ROPEIK**

talks, which makes more sense than some suggestions I have gotten on the medical frontier. However, if people need medication, they have to look elsewhere.

But if they need to talk to somebody who can get them off the dime on which they presently reside, then a PC is what the doctor ordered.

Barry tells me that he uses an ancient technique to get a client started. He often turns an anguished person's first inquiries into a torrent of questions and gets his client to face those questions with clearer answers than he ever thought were possible.

He says a PC helps folks to set better goals and reach them; sees they do more than they would on their own; wants his clients to focus faster and produce better than they might have without him.

I feel Barry is trying to be the factor that breaks the seal of inertia and gets people's momentum rolling. He puts the philosophy of the PC this way:

"That we humans are great, that we're all discovering what we really want and that we can get what we want faster and easier by having a coach who has 'been there' and can help us."

Barry has launched his new venture by working at home. If there is one kid in our family who can shut the door amid all the tumult of family life and focus on his chosen business, it is Barry. I know. On visits to see Barry, Nancy and our two grandchildren, I have opened his office door to tell him something unrelated to his business and discovered he is in another world. He shoots me a fast "not now" look and I back off.

Some day he'll have an office downtown in Chicago, but by conducting the greater part of his business on the phone, he is content to be a home-office PC and spend at least some of his day getting the kids off to school or retrieving them. That's coaching too.

I'm naturally proud of The Coach. He had this dream for a long time and he has the wife and family who want to see him achieve it.

He also had the courage to try.

Way to go, coach, way to go!

Arnold Ropeik is senior editor of The Times.