

How to Choose a Professional Coach

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Do you ever walk through the supermarket and get overwhelmed by the number of options? Sometimes the more choices you have, the more trouble you have making a decision. The same goes for choosing a coach. Many clients are overwhelmed when they try to select a coach. There seem to be so many coaches with so many letters after their names with so many specialties and with **so** many different offers... How's one to choose?

Well, the short answer is by narrowing down your criteria, sampling a short list, and choosing based on "fit." Since everyone has a different mix of qualities they want in a coach, and each of us weights each factor a little differently, it's important to whittle down the list of criteria that you want to use to evaluate the different coaches. This could include various things, including:

- cost
- experience
- credentials
- resources offered
- specialties or niches
- location
- gender

Of course, only you know what's important to you. Don't limit your thinking at this point – make the list as long as you need to for now. Once you have a good-sized list, it might be helpful to rank the criteria by importance, and if your list is longer than you'd like, trim from the bottom up as you see fit.

Now that you have a good idea of what you're looking for in a coach, it's time to hand-select only those coaches that qualify (based on your requirements). This list is likely to be fairly compact. If it's too long, get more specific about your list. If it's too short, adjust your list accordingly. And don't be afraid to add one or two to the short list who just draw you in for some reason or another (even if you can't put your finger on it). For example, you might love their website, get a good gut feeling, or just be captivated by the name "Matilda" (!). You may not even know *why* you like the person, but after the work you've done, your instinct is probably right at this point.

By this point, it's likely you'll have distilled the list down to a manageable few (read: few enough to interview or contact to schedule a sample session). The general consensus in the coaching community is that clients should "try on" at least three different coaches' styles before determining who will be "the one." Not unlike when you purchase a car, you should "test drive" the rapport with a coach before you hire them.

The last step is to actually sample (or at least, interview) each coach and evaluate "fit." Some questions to consider after each session:

- Did you feel at ease during the conversation?
- Did you feel that the coach "got you?"
- Did they clearly reflect their understanding of what you were saying *without inserting their own agenda?*



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- ❑ Did you feel both stretched and inspired during the call?
- ❑ Did you feel challenged to step into a bigger vision for your life? Were you excited and confident about exploring the possibilities that lie ahead?
- ❑ Did you get a sense that you "clicked" with this coach, and that he or she has the ability to empower you to realize your highest potential?

Of course, your list could vary a little different based on what you're looking for in a coach.

The coaching marketplace may at first seem to offer too many options from which to choose. But in one regard, when "the world is your oyster," that's a good problem to have. And armed with a good process for narrowing the field, you'll be able to find the perfect coach for you!

Ariadne Moisiades, PCC, CPCC is co-founder of [Coaching Tree](#), where she works with coaches in training, as well as coaches in certification programs. Acting both as coach and mentor, she helps them hone their coaching skills and build thriving businesses. She also founded [Sound Strategies Coaching and Consulting](#), where she works with executives looking to develop exceptional leadership skills and foster a collaborative team environment. In addition, she has completed the Center for Right Relationship's training curriculum in Organization and Relationship Systems Coaching (ORSC).

For more ideas, and to discover how partnering with a coach will expedite the business-building process, [contact us](#) to schedule a twenty-minute **Strategic "Boost-Your-Business" Planning Session** with a Coaching Tree coach.

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