



The Life Coaching Handbook

Everything You Need To Be An
Effective Life Coach

Curly Martin

"Absolutely terrific!"

Fiona Harrold, author of *Be Your Own Life Coach*

The Life Coaching Handbook

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An Effective Life Coach*

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Introduction

*‘Life coaching is about transformation –
from a caterpillar into a butterfly’*

Life coaching is about gap analysis that closes the gap between life and dreams.

Life coaching can be compared to motorway maintenance and construction. It fills and removes the ruts of life to build a smooth surface. Then life’s journey takes the traveller to the destinations that they really want to visit, rather than remain in the slow lane of inactivity, drifting without purpose or direction.

If you want to make a difference in your life and the lives of others, become a life coach. This is a profession that brings joy to the client and the coach, and this handbook shows you how you can achieve these amazing rewards.

If you are considering life coaching as a career, this book will be your coach. It reveals how coaching works, how to start and grow your own practice and how to market your services.

If you are already a life coach, this book is your reference guide and reminder of how to build and develop your practice.

The book is in two parts. The first, **The Coaching Process**, covers the fundamentals of life coaching, the important differences between coaching on the one hand and counselling and therapy on the other. It describes the essential basic skills of great communication that are crucial to your success.

You will discover a step-by-step model to help you turn enquiries into paying clients, who are the lifeblood of any practice. The model is designed to help you to talk about your profession in an interesting way to create enthusiasm and desire. There are ideas on one-line conversation openers to help you hook the interest of every casual enquirer.

You are guided through a life coaching session and offered an approach to use during the first coaching call. This ensures that you fully understand your clients' aims and goals and it can be used to help clients identify their individual goals. Use it to make your life coaching process easy and effective.

The second part, **Advanced Life Coaching Skills**, identifies selected Neuro-Linguistic Programming techniques that are particularly valuable within the coaching context. State control, for both you and your clients, is described so that you coach from a peak state that you can access whenever you need it.

Rapport-building skills are extensively covered through representational systems (Chapter Eleven), Milton language (Chapter Thirteen), Meta-language (Chapter Fourteen), Meta-programs (Chapter Fifteen) and metaphors for life coaching (Chapter Sixteen). Chapter Seventeen (Spiral Coaching) covers thinking patterns and how to identify and use them to best coaching advantage. Within the second part of the book there are also different methods that you will use with each different client, and each of the methods described works independently of the others. When developing your practice, you need to be flexible and have the ability to select the model or method best suited for each client-coach relationship. For one client you may decide to concentrate on the Spiral Coaching model's thinking patterns. You may need to develop your relationship with a new client and concentrate on utilising the benefits of representational systems, whereas if you need leverage to motivate a client you could identify his or her Meta-programs. Interestingly, during a coaching programme with a client, you may employ all the different methods portrayed.

Chapter Eighteen contains practical advice drawn from long experience of actually operating a successful practice. This is where you find the "trade secrets" and some valuable marketing information.

The final chapter looks at specialisations within the profession. It identifies the main categories of specialisation and describes how you can use skills from other professions and industries within your life coaching practice.

Use this book as a guide for creating and sustaining your practice. Use it to learn or enhance your skills for working with clients. Use it to start a small, part-time practice that you can gradually develop until you have a client base that will sustain a full-time profession.

Use this book as a resource for coaching yourself towards a more fulfilled life. It will help you to reach the goals you have dreamed of and show you how to remove any beliefs that have prevented you from achieving your desires. To use the book as a personal self-development tool, you should read the chapters in sequence and practise each technique in turn until it is mastered.

Read on to explore the fascinating and rewarding world of life coaching. I should warn you that it is easy to become a life coach. Even as you read this handbook you will begin to think, feel and act like a coach. From there it is one small step to a future as a professional life coach of excellence.

Chapter Seven

Coaching for Results

*'You may get the ingredients and the recipe correct,
but the only true test of success is the finished result'*

Synopsis

Using the I-CAN-DO life coaching model will help you to grow your practice and increase result attainment with your clients. The life coaching chart or matrix will provide a framework for you to coach each client. Charging for missed appointments is part of marketing and image, not just loss of time. Should you make notes during a life coaching session? Deal with a rapport ruiner by using a pattern interrupt. Renewals are the most cost-effective way to build your practice.

Although life coaching has an approach that is personally designed according to the needs of each client, there are several models that can provide a sound foundation. You may like to think of this as being similar to the motor manufacturing industry, where a common framework and design can allow the public to choose from a variety of models from the basic and practical box on wheels to a sleek and sexy coupé.

One of the most useful coaching models is I-CAN-DO, which has been adapted from several sources, including the GROW model by John Whitmore. This is fully described in his book *Coaching for Performance*.

INVESTIGATE
CURRENT
AIMS
NUMBER
DATE
OUTCOME

The I-CAN-DO life coaching model is flexible and easily adapted for applications focused on overall life aims or for setting and evaluating the outcomes of a session. The mnemonic is a perfect fit for the ideal mental approach that your clients should work towards.

At the outset, I tell my clients, I base my life coaching on the I-CAN-DO model. This sets the frame in a client’s mind that the responsibility for the achievement and success comes from them rather than from me.

Here are some simple guidelines to its use and application. You tell your client that you will be using the model, explain that the letter I stands for **investigate**, and continue: “This means that I want you to investigate what is important to you and what you know about how I can help you. Spend some time before our first coaching session thinking about you. When this is done, send me an e-mail or drop me a line with your thoughts, your **current** situation briefly described, and state your overall **aims** in life. To guide your thoughts I will send you a chart. This covers the areas in your life that I want you to consider.”

Life Coaching Chart

Topic	Current situation	Hours per 98-hour week	Future aims
Health What is important to you when you consider your health?			
Wealth What constitutes a wealthy life for you?			
Family What and who are important to you regarding your family?			

continued ...

Topic	Current situation	Hours per 98-hour week	Future aims
Relationships Who is important to you?			
Contribution How important is your contribution to the world?			
Spiritual What is important to you as far as spiritual growth is concerned?			
Career/job What is important to you in your work?			
Playtime What do you do just for fun?			
Lack What other areas in your life require attention?			

Explain that you need an honest and detailed account of the amount of time spent on the topics in a typical week. The 98-hour week allows for seven days, each of fourteen hours. You can be flexible if your client suggests a longer or shorter typical day, but do not be conned: each category must be completed. When you know the time spent in each area, you will have a perspective of client's priorities. The results often reveal serious deficits in one or more of areas, which indicates an unbalanced lifestyle. Once you have received the completed chart, you have finished the first three stages of the I-CAN-DO life coaching model (investigate, define current situation and identify aims.)

Let us now complete the I-CAN-DO mnemonic:

Chapter Fourteen

Meta-language Patterns

‘A coach knows the strengths and weaknesses of language and uses each to great effect’

Synopsis

The Meta-language programmes, like the Milton Model of artfully vague language, can assist the life coach and client to communicate. It identifies when a client is using nominalisations, unspecified nouns and verbs, cause-and-effect statements, mind reading, universal quantifiers, modal operators and presuppositions – by challenging the client to specify exactly what they mean. Meta-language also is a great tool for coaching, especially if you use presuppositions and embedded commands.

Like the Milton Model described in Chapter Thirteen, a Meta-language pattern describes a particular way of using language to create a desired outcome. But that is where the similarity ends.

The Milton Model is deliberately “artfully vague,” to lead your clients into making their own interpretations of what you say. Then they believe that the ideas are theirs and usually commit to ensuring that they achieve their goals.

Meta-language patterns, however, are precise and they utilise both the strengths and weaknesses of language. They also offer a safeguard to prevent you from assuming that you know exactly what the other person means when they use a word.

In Chapter Five you were offered an extract from *The Hobbit* to demonstrate how the greeting “Good morning” could be interpreted in several different ways. When you use Meta-language patterns, there is no such scope for interpretation.

The intended outcome of this chapter is to stimulate your interest in this technique for the coaching process and to show how you can use language to help you achieve results with your clients.

Think for a minute about the way you communicate. There are bound to be occasions when you think one thing and say something different. Consider a situation where you want to tell someone that they are “an idiot” but, because they happen to be your boss, you say instead, “I think you may have misunderstood what I was saying” – even though you are well aware that this is an example of distorting and generalising.

If someone asked you directions to the supermarket and you explained how to get there exactly as you thought about it, the directions would be long and complicated and would probably not make sense to the other person. In your mind you would probably notice Fred’s house, the new neighbours’ red car, a broken paving slab and so on. But you would not mention any of these things to a complete stranger. You would delete, distort and generalise information so that the lost soul could understand you and find their way to the supermarket.

Here is another example of how we change information so that we understand it and so that it matches the way we want to see the world. I rarely go to public houses and so I do not notice them as I pass in my car. However, if I ask for directions, people often include all the public houses en route. As they travel the route in their minds, they are concentrating on the things that interest them.

Nominalisation

Clients will often describe an ongoing process (verb) as if it were a noun (name). They generalise and delete so much information that it is difficult for the coach to determine what exactly is being talked about. This is known as a nominalisation in NLP terminology. Politicians use nominalisations all the time to avoid being tied down on policies. “Law and order,” “education,” “health” and “wealth” are all nominalisations. Companies often adopt nominalisations as company values when they choose words that they

think their shareholders or customers would want to hear: “respect,” “honesty,” “diversity,” “integrity” and “quality.”

Clients will construct sentences according to their way of looking at the world and you can get a clearer picture by a closer investigation of their meanings. For example, if a client says, “The management doesn’t like me,” you need to extrapolate who exactly in the management doesn’t like them, what they mean by “management” and what it is about your client that this managerial person doesn’t like.

Unspecified Nouns

You are not invited to be pedantic and searching just for the sake of it. Your client could avoid identifying a specific person because they are behaving as a victim. Once a client in victim mode has to talk about the person or an action, then they have no more excuses for not dealing with the situation. This example shows the use of “unspecified nouns.”

Always challenge your clients when they do not specify who or what they are talking about. You can spot unspecified nouns when clients use general words like, “they,” “people,” “management,” “the department,” “it” – or any description where you cannot identify an individual person or a specific action.

If, at the outset of coaching, you discussed your client–coach relationship and the methods to be used, these should have included agreement that you had consent to subsequently challenge the client if it was necessary to help them to achieve their objectives. If you did this, your client will accept your challenges even if they create a degree of discomfort.

You must get to the hidden person and the deleted detail in order to create the necessary changes. Continue to ask the questions “Who, specifically?” or “What, specifically?” until your client names the person or the actual position of that person. If they are not prepared to divulge this information you are both attempting to row upstream without oars.

What's it about?

This complete guide to life coaching reveals:

- what life coaching IS
- how to coach yourself and coach others *effectively*
- how to create and sustain a successful coaching practice

Leading you through a comprehensive programme of Advanced Life Coaching Skills, it contains key NLP-based techniques that include:

- State Control
- Rapport-building
- Metaphor
- Meta-programs
- The Meta Model
- The Milton Model
- Spiral Coaching

Who's it for?

The Life Coaching Handbook is the essential guide for prospective life coaches, but it is also designed as a key sourcebook for:

- Training professionals
- Human resources managers
- NLP practitioners
- Counsellors
- The curious

What do experts say about it?

"Curly is, without doubt, a major talent in her field."

Ted Edmondson, Independent Distributor, The Book People

"A book you can dip into time and time again."

Fiona Fraser, Human Resources Manager

"Martin's book is an excellent handbook for novice or experienced life coaches."

Rapport

"If you want to become a Life Coach, or just want to know more about life coaching, then get this book."

Terri Bodell, NACHP

"... an absolute must for all life coaches or anyone thinking of conducting their own style of coaching or self development."

Brian Manship, Waltec Coaching

"For client or coach this book is an excellent starting point."

Emma Nelson, Student Support Officer, University of Leeds

Coaching



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