



Selecting a coach

The ‘industry secrets’ you need to know when selecting a coach

Revised September 2023

monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk



Selecting a coach

It seems that anyone who's anyone has a coach nowadays, and with good reason. Working with a coach can help you plan your career, make good decisions impacting your life, challenge your thinking and overcome obstacles that get in the way of you achieving your dream. The concept came from the sporting profession, people who had a coach were much more successful than those who trained alone. Most really successful people have had coaching or use a coach on a regular basis.

Your success greatly depends on choosing both a good coach and one that's right for you. In this guide we will look at the key considerations when selecting a coach and how to ensure you have a great coaching experience.

As experienced coaches and coaching supervisors, we want to promote the value of coaching and continue to improve the quality of coaching offered. When people and organisations have bad experiences, it's often because they have incompetent and poorly trained coaches. The problem is how do you know how to sift out the good from the bad and the ugly? The good news is it's much easier when you are well informed.

Included in this guide are:

- Criteria all good coaches should fill
- Warning signs
- Finding a good match for you
- Top tips for coaching success
- Useful links

Criteria all good coaches should fulfil

There are some basic elements all good coaches should fulfil. Coaching is an unregulated profession and sadly there are some unprofessional people out there claiming to be a coach so do your due diligence before going ahead. When searching for a coach be sure to check out that they meet these:

They have a qualification that includes face to face training

An online coaching qualification has no value, it's a person to person process so needs a great deal of the training and practice to take place face to face. Ask the coach how many face to face training hours they have had. The number of hours will vary and the more they've had the better but our suggestion is to be wary of anyone who's had less than 50 hours. As a benchmark, all Monkey Puzzle's coaches have over 300 hours of face to face training.

They are supervised for their coaching work

All good coaches should be in supervision. This is not a management process but a supportive one where a more experienced coach (or sometimes group) supports them with their clients, their development and helps them make good choices for their clients. This is all done confidentially so your identity is never revealed. If a coach tells you they are so experienced they don't need a supervisor, don't touch them with a bargepole. This demonstrates either arrogance or naivety - do you really want to work with someone who believes they know it all?

They should be a member of a regulated organisation that has a Code of Ethics and a Complaints Process

Some coaches are members of coaching organisations, some are members of therapeutic organisations and some are members of a modality specific organisation (e.g NLP). The important thing is that they have a code of ethics and a complaints process for both your and their protection.

They should have professional indemnity insurance

This is a very basic thing that should be in place for all professionals working as a coach. If a coach is not insured you have no comeback if there is a cause for complaint, and an uninsured coach also indicates a lack of professionalism on their part.

Warning signs

It is normal to have a conversation with a coach before you start working with them. Some do this face to face, some via video calls or FaceTime, some by phone. This is your opportunity to ask them questions and tell them a bit about what you want to work on. During this and the first few sessions there may be some warning signs to look out for, which might indicate a lack of competence:

- They don't agree a number of hours or sessions with you. Some people have an ongoing agreement with their coach but we would advise against starting out with something open ended.
- They don't offer you a contract, detailing number of sessions, cancellation policy etc.
- They talk more than you do, mostly about themselves
- They tell you what to do or give you overt advice (particularly early in the process)
- They make you feel small in any way (unless self esteem is your issue and you are likely to feel like this about anyone)
- They make inappropriate remarks about sexuality, gender, age, race or disability



**“Look out for
warning signs that
indicate a lack of
competence”**

Finding a good match for you

Now you've done all your basic checks and looked out for the warning signs, you can check whether they are right for you. This is much more subjective and personal. Here are some elements to consider:

Can you be open with them?

It's important you feel you can be open and honest with them, this will give your coach the best foundation for success. Sometimes because of things that have happened to us, we feel more comfortable with some people than others, so it's important to pay attention to this. For example some people feel more comfortable with a coach of their own sex, or prefer someone with a similar professional background, or prefer not to have anyone who reminds them of their parents. These are not silly things, they are important, so think about what type of person might be best for you.

What kind of coaching experience are you looking for?

This varies enormously. Some coaches are very structured and some very free flowing, with some you will know what you are working on each week, some work with whatever you bring along. It's good to challenge yourself a bit but not so that you get distracted by their process or annoyed by it. Likewise, some coaches have particular specialisms like time management, weight loss, relationships or may focus on industry sectors.

Do you want face to face, internet or phone coaching? Or a mix?

This will govern the location of your search. This is all down to personal preference and what medium works best for you.

Top tips for coaching success

Be prepared to change

In order to develop we have to be prepared to change the way we think about things and/or our behaviour. A good coach will pace you through the process and you have to be prepared to do something different as a result of your coaching.

Don't be afraid to challenge your coach

If something they say gives you a reaction or you think they are wrong about something, don't be afraid to speak up. A good coach will not get defensive but curious and work with you to work through what has just happened, in many cases this part of the process can be most powerful and generate important learning.

Prioritise your coaching

Sometimes life happens and you have to move a session, wherever possible though make your coaching a priority. It's a sign you are investing in yourself and care about your own needs. As one of our clients says 'It's the only thing in my diary my PA knows is unmovable!'

Useful links

NLPtCA	www.nlptca.com
Association of Coaching	www.associationforcoaching.com
INLPTA	inlpta.org
International Coaching Federation	www.coachfederation.org.uk
ANLP	www.anlp.org

Ready to learn more?

We provide coaching services to teams and organisations who want their employees to be happier, healthier, more productive and more successful in achieving their goals. We have a lot of free resources on our website, including articles, quizzes, self-hypnosis tracks to help you program your mind for success, and a chapter of Karen and John's award-winning book, "Real Leaders for the Real World". Go to www.monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk.

If you have any questions, or if you'd like to find out more about the coaching services we can provide, please call us on 0117 4501407 or get in touch by email at info@monkeypuzzletraining.co.uk.

We look forward to hearing from you.



**“Working with
a good coach can
help you achieve
your dream”**