

What is Coaching?

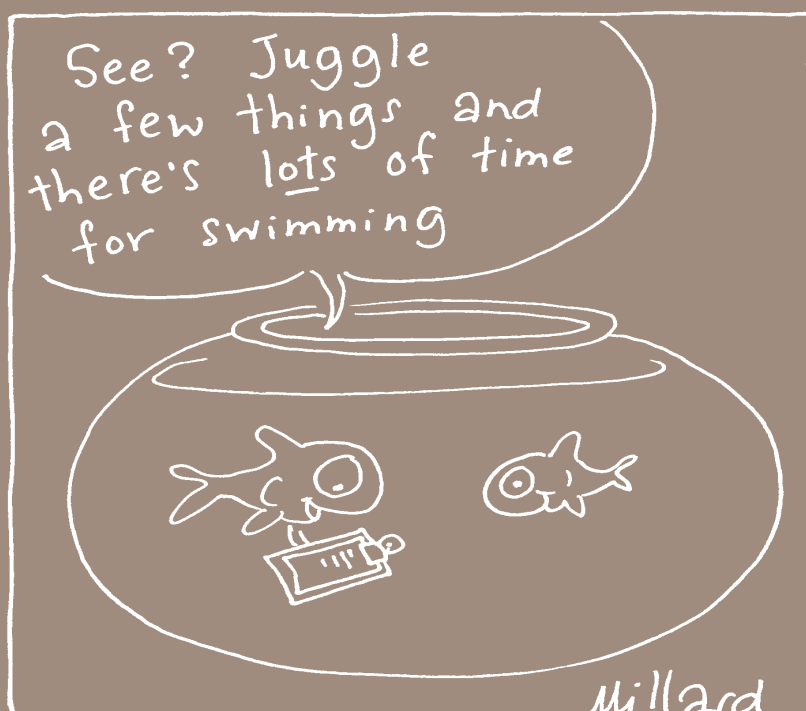
Everyone is familiar with the concept of coaching in sport, and life coaching is similar in principle. Just as Tiger Woods and other world champions like the Australian Cricket Team have coaches, so too can you benefit from the guidance of a coach in your life. By careful questioning and the use of other skills, a coach can substantially assist you to improve many areas of your life, reach your goals and become truly happy.

Coaching, therefore, can be defined as an interaction aimed at helping you to define and then to achieve goals. Coaching can help you improve your performance and move towards greater success. Effective coaching occurs within a problem-solving, solution-focused context. Coaching can be divided into two main streams, life coaching and executive coaching.

Life Coaching at The Happiness Institute is based on the exciting new science of Positive Psychology. Whereas psychological therapy or counselling deals with people who are distressed or who have formal psychological disorders, life coaching is typically aimed at helping clients clarify what they want out of life and then helping them achieve it. Life coaching has a much more positive focus and where therapy aims to help people climb from minus 10 to zero; coaching is aimed at helping people move from zero to positive 10. It is, as we say at The Happiness Institute, more about “playing above the line”.

Executive Coaching is primarily aimed at improving the quality of an executive’s working and personal life. In most cases, the aim is to work towards, and then maintain meaningful behavioural and attitudinal change. This is achieved in a collaborative and supportive environment, structured to ensure the time is used productively and efficiently, but individualised to suit an executive’s personality and goals.

Within this broad framework, executive coaching can occur at many different levels and can involve a range of “interventions” or programs. For some executives, it might involve a predominately personal focus including, among other things, training in effective communication, problem solving, time management, leadership development, and delegation skills. For others, it might also involve working with the executive’s colleagues or team to achieve greater efficiency and productivity.



What are the benefits of coaching?

Although the benefits of coaching are obvious for some, many continue to ask the question “what will I get out of it?” In simple terms, the answer to these questions involves referring back to the first stage of coaching which is goal setting. From a coach’s perspective, the outcomes we help clients work towards vary considerably. So as long as you’re realistic, you can get what ever you want out of coaching. Generally, however, some of the more common gains made during coaching include an increased sense of control; enhanced happiness; improved productivity; better work-life balance; improved relationships; greater positivity; and a clearer sense of life (and career) purpose and direction.

How does coaching work?

After “what’s in it for me?” the next most common question is “how does it work?” Coaching works in different ways for different people and a good coach varies what he (or she) does with each and every individual. Generally, however, the process involves meeting on a regular basis, usually weekly to begin with, and then fortnightly or monthly. During this process, the aim is to (1) generate realistic and achievable goals, (2) develop an action plan, and then (3) to monitor progress and to ensure you remain focused on and moving towards achieving the predetermined goals. These meetings may be supplemented with phone calls or emails. They often take place in the coach’s offices, but can be conducted in your workplace if that is more convenient.

Notably, the role of a coach is not necessarily to tell you what to do but rather, to collaborate with you to explore appropriate options, working towards developing an appropriate array of skills and strategies that will help you make the cognitive and behavioural changes needed to achieve your goals. If your goals are very specific this might take little more than 5-6 sessions. If, however, the goals are more significant or general, then the process might extend over 3, 6 or even 12 months.

How do I find a good coach?

Choosing a coach is like choosing a work colleague. You need to make sure that they have the right qualifications and experience and whether you feel comfortable with them. Whether or not you feel comfortable with a coach is obviously a personal decision, and one that can really only be made after you have met with a prospective “candidate”.

At The Happiness Institute, our coaches are all experienced, tertiary qualified and up to date on the latest research, strategies and findings in positive psychology. We are a member of the International Coaches Federation. We’ve worked with thousands of individuals and many organisations such as Ernst & Young, IBM and Deacons.

Next Steps?

The Happiness Institute’s services can be delivered via many different methods to ensure we cater for most individuals needs. We offer one on one coaching, courses (face to face and on line) and a range of products.

Our website www.thehappinessinstitute.com is a great place to visit with lots of free stuff available. Why not sign up for our free e-newsletter while you are there. It offers hot tips on maintaining happiness and keeps you up to date with the latest research on positive psychology amongst other things.

Please visit our website or call 02 9221 3306 to find out more about how we can help you, your team or your organisation live a better life.

We look forward to helping you achieve your goals!

