

Confessions of a Psychologist-Turned-Coach

By

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Several years ago, I made the daring decision to turn my therapy practice into a life coaching practice—and I've never looked back. I'm going to tell you my story. It'll only take you a few minutes to read it in its entirety, and it's very likely that you may see yourself in it.

These are just a few of the things you'll discover from reading my story:

- Why the coaching industry is booming -- and why helping professionals are the best positioned professionals to dominate this cutting-edge – and lucrative industry
- How my coaching practice went global – and how my income reached new heights
- How you, as a helping professional, can get paid handsomely for doing what you've been doing for years
- How to Practice Psychology's Superior Purpose through Life Coaching

It was the Spring of 1995. I had spent the last 16 years of my life as a clinical psychologist, and I was reflecting on my career. I had what most would consider a successful practice with a steady stream of clients. But something was missing. The passion that had initially attracted me to the mental health profession was nowhere to be found. The truth was, I was exhausted and drained from dealing with problem patients. I was buried under mountains of bureaucratic paperwork, and annoyed by the managed care issues I had to deal with. Burnout was a term too mild to describe what I was experiencing.

I started asking myself...

"Is this really what I expected when I chose Psychology as my profession?" and...

"Am I earning the kind of money I expected to be making after years of keeping my nose to the grindstone?"

My answer was, "Not really."

Quite frankly, my profession had taken more out of me than I bargained for. Although I was earning what my peers would call an above average income, the money I earned seemed paltry compensation for the exhaustion and complicated efforts that constantly punctuated my work. I had dug myself into the "mangled care" hole, and there seemed to be no way out. I resigned myself to joyless acquiescence, and was forced to accept the fact that there was no easy way of changing the way things were in my profession. I even seriously questioned whether psychology was the right field for me.

Then one day, I stumbled upon an insight that gave me an entirely new perspective on my profession. I figured that psychology is not just about pathology, diagnosis, and the treatment of human frailties. It is also the study of human potential and brilliance. Its higher purpose is not to repair what has been

damaged, but to cultivate the genius that resides within the human mind. This is why I had chosen to study psychology in the first place.

I remembered a Chinese proverb I had come across previously:

*The superior doctor prevents sickness;
The mediocre doctor attends to impending sickness;
The inferior doctor treats actual sickness.*
-Chinese Proverb

All of a sudden, the superior purpose of psychology – that which attracted me to the field in the first place -- became crystal clear. When you treat the whole person, not the dysfunction, you unleash the most powerful therapy on earth. When you empower a person and show him what he can do – instead of focusing on what he can't do (weakness) – you can improve his overall mental health and his life dramatically. A less obvious benefit is that the ensuing strength attained by the subject has the potential to prevent a dysfunction or render it inconsequential. By Chinese definition, this is the mark of superior "medicine."

Now, don't get me wrong. I realized, of course, that there would always be fragile, diagnosable, psycho-emotional cases that require pathology, diagnosis, and traditional psychotherapy – and I applaud those who dedicate their lives to that endeavor. However, statistically speaking, less than 10% of the population fall into that category. The rest of the population (90%) for whom psychotherapy is not indicated, could benefit from the wholistic (or 'holistic') approach to coaching because there is no societal stigma brought about by seeing a therapist or being labeled 'dysfunctional.' Furthermore, men do not easily make it to a therapist's office, but coaching offers a paradigm they can more easily accept. Both women and men, who see the value of having a "partner" in designing their future, understand the power of coaching.

Now, I can just hear you saying: What on earth does this 'holistic' approach to psychology have to do with coaching? Read on – and I'll tell you how the simple integration of the 2 disciplines liberated me from the narrow boundaries of my career, and how it can do the same for you.

Tapping Immeasurable Resources of Genius

We all know that psychotherapy deals mainly with emotional/behavioral problems and disruptive situations – and seeks to bring the client to normal function by focusing on his dysfunction. However, this model of psychotherapy had always seemed so limited to me. I said to myself, "There has to be a more sublime, expanded model -- through which improvements could be manifested in people's lives." Coaching made much more sense to me because when we focus on the whole person and set aside our preoccupation with that person's dysfunction, we uncover immeasurable resources of genius in that person.

*"Science proves beyond question that in the wellsprings of every man's mind are unplumbed depths – undiscovered deposits of energy, wisdom and ability. Sound these depths – bring these treasures to the surface – and you gain an astounding wealth of new power."– Robert Collier's
The Secret of the Ages*

Life Coaching: Practicing Psychology's Superior Purpose

Here's where my story really unfolds. Back in 1996, coaching was a fledgling, but promising industry -- with a growing number of enthusiasts. Unlike traditional therapy, coaching entails working with people who already have a measure of "success" in their lives, but who want to bridge the gap between where they are and where they want to be in their profession and their personal life.

I had already been doing part-time executive coaching since 1990, partly to add variety to my practice, and partly to expand my business. Coaching appealed to me because my coaching clients were far from being problematic -- instead, they were functional individuals looking to improve their lives. My job as coach was to help them determine and design the life they want, bring out their own brilliance and resources so that they can achieve excellence and create purposeful, extraordinary lives.

In 1996, I sought specialized coach training, graduated in 1997, and became a Master Certified Coach in 1998. Meanwhile, in my private practice, coaching went from being a part-time endeavor to a full-time career.

My Practice Went Global -- and My Income Reached New Heights

Later, when I switched from in-person coaching to tele-coaching (coaching by telephone), my business experienced incredible, exponential growth! Tele-coaching made my services accessible to the global market -- and you can just imagine my surprise and delight when clients from all over the world eventually sought my coaching services because now, I was only a phone call away.

Now, there were absolutely no geographical boundaries that prevented people from availing themselves of my services! And this was powerful, practical ... and personalized.

The secret behind my coaching success was simple. Somewhere along the way, my fascination with holistic psychology found its way into my coaching sessions with clients. I had gradually begun to integrate the superior paradigm of psychology with coaching. I had found a way to bridge the 2 disciplines into a state-of-the-art coaching method that was unlike any other coaching method available.

Coaching Breathed New Life Into My Career

While all of this was happening, I realized that something amazing was underway. Coaching had literally breathed new life back into my career. Gone was the burnout that characterized my practice years ago. I felt revitalized, energized and enriched by the positive methodology that I employed -- instead of feeling drained as I used to feel with my previous illness-based practice.

I found that I really enjoyed my clients and even developed friendships that would not have been proper or possible in traditional psychotherapy. Furthermore, the psychological fulfillment of helping people achieve personal growth and transformation was extremely gratifying.

As for the financial rewards, top coaches at the time were making \$150 to \$300 or more per hour, and I was happy to be among those who commanded high hourly rates -- all without having to deal with managed care or third party payment.

Best of all, I didn't have to abandon my mental health training at all – but rather found a way to enjoy it and contribute more significantly to other people's lives.

Why the Coaching Industry is Booming

Earlier on, I touched on the exploding industry that coaching has become. There is an insatiable demand for life coaches in today's society -- and understandably so. When your profession consists of extracting the brilliance of others for their benefit, how could you possibly run out of clients? When your practice is one that helps people lead empowered, purposeful, extraordinary lives, why wouldn't the world beat a path to your door?

As with any booming industry, uncredentialed individuals have come out of the woodwork calling themselves coaches. Because coaching certification is relatively new, and no regulatory agency has begun to monitor the industry, practically anyone with minimal (and oftentimes inferior) coach training, can call himself a coach. This is a disservice to the unsuspecting public, to say the least.

The Leading Coach Training "University" for Professionals

Those of you who know me well know that my passion is coaching and I've always wanted to be instrumental in having it permeate all society, not just those with money or the ones at the top of their professions. In response to the increasing demand for specialized coach training, I founded The Institute for Life Coach Training in 1998. It was the first-of-its-kind training institute designed to cater to helping professionals to transition to coaching profession.

We've designed a curriculum that provides the quickest way to translate your skills into coaching skills. I've incorporated the whole person approach to coaching, the superior paradigms of psychology, communication and motivational theories. This model has proven successful in producing results among my own coaching clients, and one of the reasons that ILCT is one of the most recognized programs in the coaching industry.

Because I know that most new coaches worry about how to market their coaching services when they do become life coaches, I've also included a module in the curriculum and developed numerous marketing courses that provides valuable practice-building tips and lessons on marketing easily and effectively. As part of its commitment to supporting its students, ILCT holds free teleconference calls on marketing for its students, as well as other resources to build your practice. And as the coaching field continues to enter new areas, we continue to expand our program, bringing you an in-depth program taught by some of the top experts in the coaching profession.

Because I've been in your shoes, I understand that it's not always easy to train for a new career. So I've made it as easy as possible for you by delivering the training via tele-classes. That means you never have to leave your home or office to attend your training class – we train you by phone in one-hour sessions. What could be easier?

It's about time you got paid handsomely for doing what you've been doing for years.

I believe that psychologists, psychotherapists, counselors – and helping professionals in general – are the ideal candidates and the best positioned professionals to transition into the lucrative world of

coaching. They are the ones who everyone turns to, and have the requisite skills for effective coaching, such as. . .

- Listening and building rapport
- Encouraging
- Facilitating change
- Empathy
- Intuition
- Respect for confidentiality
- Strong boundaries
- Re-framing
- Objectivity and being non-judgmental
- Unconditional positive regard
- Master of powerful questions and inquiry
- Good problem-solving and "possibility thinking"

I also believe that helping professionals, when properly trained, stand to be the most results-producing life coaches anywhere. Those with no previous coach training are equipped to only pan the surface of their clients' potential, whereas a therapist is equipped to dig deeper to the pure vein of untapped human power that lies beneath.

What does this mean to you?

In case you haven't realized it yet, the advent of life coaching has made your skills as a helping professional supremely valuable and marketable. When you consider that helping professionals have the distinct edge in skills and experience, now is the time to get specialized coach training and tap into the lucrative coaching boom before the rest of the industry "jumps on the bandwagon."

I got into coaching while it was still in its infancy, and I am living proof that there are extraordinary advantages when you're one of the first to enter a growth industry. Coaching is still a very young industry, and clearly, if you take early advantage of this growth industry while it is still "virgin territory" you stand to benefit tremendously.

The fact that you've read this far is proof positive that you have the same challenges and the same desires as I did when I got started on my life coaching journey -- that is, to reclaim the passion that attracted you to working with others to make a difference.

The fact that life coaching has become one of the most desirable careers is not at all surprising. When you coach people to discover their potential, you become the catalyst of change, and you empower them in all aspects of their lives. Very few professions on earth could be as noble and rewarding as that. We look forward to working with you on your journey to become a coach!