

FAQs ABOUT LEGAL COACHING



1. WHAT IS LEGAL COACHING?

Frequently throughout an attorney's career, need arises to make changes, some substantial, some minor. A knowledgeable person whose sole purpose is to help you strategize and support you through specific steps to reach your goals is invaluable.

2. WHAT SKILLS SHOULD A LEGAL COACH HAVE?

Any type of coach needs a great deal of people skills, coupled with a thorough knowledge of the area that is being coached. It is also necessary that the coach has a great deal of familiarity with the problems that you will be confronting. Although a "Life Coach" may be helpful in setting general goals, a legal coach possesses specific knowledge about what it takes to increase profits while still getting satisfaction from your work in the legal profession.

3. CAN A LEGAL COACH HELP ME WITH MY PERSONAL LIFE AS WELL?

No one should coach in a vacuum. Your personal life is influenced by what you are doing in your professional life and how much you are gaining, both financially as well as personally from your work. Certainly, you will be working on goals within your personal life as they interplay with what is happening to you professionally. Like having more time to spend with your family or exercising so you'll have more energy, if those are objectives you want to pursue. Balance is important and should be addressed.

4. IS COACHING LIKE THERAPY?

No, although you will be making changes, you will be assisted and directed in setting specific goals and becoming responsible for actualizing the path that you have set for yourself. Unlike therapy, where frequently the goal is to become aware of your behavior and thinking that produce bad results, coaching may unearth some of this, but that is not its primary function. The coach is your guide not your therapist.

5. HOW DOES COACHING WORK?

You will meet with a coach initially to explore what you want to change or do differently in your career. If you are just beginning your practice, then time will be taken to explore how and what it takes to hang out your shingle or join a firm or work for a governmental agency. This may take two or more meetings to begin strategizing your goals.

If you have been in practice but want to increase your business, make a change to a new area of the law, downsize or any other kind of alteration to your professional life, then the initial meetings will cover your needs. At times, it is possible to do all the coaching by phone or e-mail without actually meeting face-to-face. This is often convenient if your Coach does not live nearby. With the advent of technology, there will probably be the opportunity to do a lot more by Webcam.

Once specific goals are set, in the beginning it is necessary to be in touch with your coach at least once a week. This can be face-to-face or a e-mail chat or phone....whatever works for you. You also need access to your coach as particular problems or challenges arise and that should be in your agreement so that you know when to call upon your coach. Later you may be able to space your contacts out to a lesser amount of time but it is necessary to continue updating your goals and doing further strategy sessions until you have reached your goals.

6. HOW LONG DOES COACHING TAKE?

It all depends on what you want to accomplish. Sometimes, it is just a few weeks for a simple change. Sometimes, it takes months or even years when real long term growth is needed. However, the coach can remain on an “as needed” basis for the length of your professional life, since he or she will have the knowledge of where you have been and be of real value to you in wherever your future takes you.

7. HOW MUCH DOES COACHING COST?

Some Coaches charge by the hour. Some Coaches charge by the “project”. As in any other services, the cost is relative to the expertise of the person offering the service.

For instance, if you could be assured that in one year, your solo practice could increase by 50% what could you afford to pay a coach to help make that happen? If you could be assured that you can make a legal partnership run smoothly and minimize the conflicts and maximize the profits, what would that be worth to you? If you could explore how to cut your costs while offering the same high level of service, would that be valuable to you? If you could ease the fear of malpractice while competing effectively in the legal world, how much would your sanity be worth? If you could have better time management so you could work 40 hours a week instead of 60, would you be willing to put some your profits into producing that result?

8. WHAT SHOULD I EXPECT A COACH TO DO FOR ME?

First of all the coach needs to be responsive to your needs. That means helping you to recognize what it is that you want to happen in the time spent with the coach. Next a coach must sign and have you sign a Confidentially Agreement so that you can really explore the issues together and not feel that any part of your business or personal life with ever be shared.

Third, a written agreement should be reached of what the coach’s specific responsibilities will be during your time together and what your reciprocal responsibilities are. Last, your coach should set up a realistic time frame in which to

work. In this way, you will have the security of knowing how much energy you need to put into the coaching relationship.