



## Ten Vital Questions to Ask if you're thinking of Hiring a Coach

There are thousands of coaches out there. And choosing the right one for you can be a minefield. Soon, only people who have trained with the best schools and hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct will be able to call themselves coaches. But until then, it's important to conduct your own checks.

The following questions are designed to keep you safe. You want to make sure your hard earned cash will give you the service you need and the results you want. You are advised to interview at least three coaches to make an informed decision.

1. **Who did you train with?** CoachU, Results and CTI (aka Co-Active Training) are the most well-known life coaching schools in the UK. If your coach mentions another academy, check to see if they're recognised on the ICF website (see below). Ask how long they have trained for. CoachU graduates usually take 2 to 3 years to get their qualification. Some coaches are also certified NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Practitioners. NLP techniques are especially powerful when used to resolve matters of the mind. For example, where a client's limiting beliefs or fears are holding them back.
2. **Are you an accredited member of the recognised professional body known as the International Coaching Federation (ICF)?** Ask if they're ACC, PCC or MCC accredited. If they are, they have been examined and met the body's high standards, and they're bound by the ICF's ethical guidelines. Being accredited with the ICF also ensure that the client who isn't happy has a complaints procedure they can rely on. To read the Code of Ethics, go to <http://www.coachfederation.org/ICF/>
3. **Do you specialise in this area? What is your business background?** Many coaches claim to be both life and business coaches. And they may be. But a coach who has specialist experience, knowledge or contacts is more valuable. If you want to fast track your career, might you want to know if your coach had demonstrated this ability in his/her own working life? If you work in the media, you might prefer a coach who understands your profession because either they have worked in broadcasting – or they have had experience coaching broadcasters.
4. **Can you coach me at 7pm at night?** If you want coaching out of normal hours, will they work early morning or in the evening? Some coaches only work 9-5. You will probably pay a premium if you want your sessions to be in person instead of on the phone.
5. **Ask what other services and support do you offer over and above your regular calls?** Can you call them between sessions? Do they offer unlimited email support? And for no extra charge? If you have a big interview you may want a quick confidence booster before you set off. Do they offer free

workshops? Or a programme? If they do, are they relevant to you? Will you get extra value from them?

- 6. Do you offer a complimentary coaching session?** This is vital. Before making any commitment to coaching, you need to be sure that your coach understands you and the problem at hand. That means you feel heard, and safe talking to him or her. You must also feel completely confident that your coach will be able to help you. If the call leaves you feeling cold, walk away. Find another coach with whom you do connect with and trust. But be honest and let the coach know you have found another coach when you do. It's not fair on the coach if you say you'll get back to them when you have no intention of doing so.
- 7. What do you charge?** If all you can afford is a one off session, then don't be talked into a six month deal. Then again if you are serious about coaching, you must be prepared to budget for a minimum of three months for really good, sustainable results. Coaching is an investment that pays amazing dividends emotionally (what price can you put on knowing yourself and what you really want out of life?) and often financially too (you could recoup the cost in your next pay rise). Also be aware that just because one coach is more expensive than another doesn't necessarily mean their service is better. Don't just decide based on hourly rates. See if you get assessments, or other services thrown in and decide whether the package as a whole adds value to you.
- 8. Do you offer a guarantee?** Not all coaches do – and it's no reflection on the quality of the coaching. However if the only thing stopping you is the concern you might not get what you're looking for, why not ask if the coach offers a "no questions asked, full money back guarantee" at the end of the first month? That way there's no risk to you.
- 9. Are you insured?** Like any other professional, a good coach will be insured for professional indemnity and public liability insurance.
- 10. Would you be happy if I called one of your former clients?** Again, a good coach will be delighted to refer you to a past client. Ask about the nature of their issue and how it was resolved. You might also want to ask about the coach's style, way of working, and their overall professionalism.

**You might be wondering how the Career Coach would answer these questions. So as you know, here's what we'd say:**

1. We trained with CoachU, and are NLP Practitioners
2. We are accredited (ACC level) – you can verify this by checking the ICF website
3. We specialise only in careers coaching, and prefer to refer you to other experts if you are looking for say relationship coaching. We have a background in law, media and financial services.
4. We coach before and after normal office hours, and by phone, since most of our clients find this more convenient for them. We also coach on Saturdays.
5. We offer unlimited email support and quick 10 minute calls between main coaching sessions at no extra cost. All assessments are included in the monthly fee
6. We do offer a complimentary coaching session. There is no charge for us to simply get to know each other.

7. Our fees are completely transparent – there are no hidden extras. They are as they are on the website.
8. We offer a full money back guarantee for the first month when buying any coaching programme (ie 2 calls per month or more)
9. We are insured
10. We are delighted if you call one of our previous clients. We have lots of happy clients who have given us their permission to do just this.

**We hope you have found this guide useful. If you would like to send this to a friend or colleague, may we ask that you tell them you got this from [www.thecareercoach.co.uk](http://www.thecareercoach.co.uk)? Thank you.**