

## Transitions & Transformations: A Career Coach E-Newsletter

Issue 1 ~ November/December 2010

### A Guide to Professional Coaching

This inaugural issue of the **Career Coach E-Newsletter** highlights the value of coming home to Eastern Connecticut State University, the opportunity to give back, networking and reconnecting with fellow alumni. Today, developing connections or reconnecting with classmates and colleagues has taken us down a new pathway called “social networking” so essential in the world of work. This e-newsletter is just one form of social networking being utilized.

For me, coming home is about the opportunity to give back to the extensive Eastern community through this **Career Coach E-Newsletter**. Post retirement from the CT State University system I made decision to spend time reflecting on the journey I wanted to take into the next phase of my professional life. You see, I knew that utilizing my existing educational background and professional experiences to take on a totally new and exciting life venture was important to my journey. Doors opened when you have a vision of the possibilities, identify goals and create an action plan as the guide. Becoming a certified professional coach, then an advanced personal and executive coach and obtaining membership in the International Coach Federation (ICF) was central to my goal. My vision as a coach had several threads. One was coaching individuals motivated to explore and undertake their own life journey regardless of their stage in life. It also included providing capacity building coaching for non-profit organizations. Finally, I felt passionate about creating a coaching model for underserved college students and coaching them to achieve their dream....graduation. Through this visioning process and developing an action plan, the “Coaching College Students: Setting Goals and Achieving the Dream” model was created and implemented. This is an exciting time in my life. Through this e-newsletter you will find information relevant to your journey in life and to the many places it can take you. Visualize the possibilities and be inspired!

The goal of **Career Coach E-Newsletter** is to provide you with information on various topics that support career or professional transitions. To that end, the topic of this first e-newsletter is on **A Guide to Professional Coaching**. Here, guidance on the field of professional coaching and the benefits of using a coach will be highlighted.

#### What is coaching?

Coaching defined by the International Coach Federation (ICF) “... [is] a partnership with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential” (<http://www.coachfederation.org>).

Coaching is a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build the client’s level of self awareness and responsibility. Coaching involves an ongoing relationship with a focus on the client taking action toward the realization of their vision, goals, and desires by building from client strengths.

### **Who is the client?**

The client is someone who wants to reach a higher level of performance, learning or satisfaction in their life, career, or business or in a leadership role. In coaching, the client is someone who has a desire to change, is enthusiastic about designing a preferred or ideal future, a well-functioning individual with the capacity to take the necessary action steps toward achieving their goals and taking on the challenges that come with this forward movement. The client in some cases can be a group, team or organization all with a focus on change.

### **The Coaching Relationship**

In the coaching process, the coach and the client create an alliance and are considered “thought partners”. The working alliance is built on a foundation of mutual trust and respect. It is a formal relationship and provides the client with structure, support and feedback. The coach does not relate to the client from a position of expert, authority, or healer but instead as a partnership of equals. Often coaches use a variety of assessment tools to increase client self-awareness, to identify client strengths and to uncover potential blind spots. Together the coach and client develop an action plan directed toward achieving target goals which can focus on skills, performance, development, or on the executive’s agenda for those in leading organizations (Auerbach, J., 2001). The coach holds the client accountable toward measureable goal achievement. Coaching is confidential unless specific permission is given by the client or if the law requires release of information. The focus of coaching is on the present and planning for the future in a highly proactive and creative manner.

### **How are coaching services delivered?**

Coach and clients agree on a schedule and the method of contact which can include any of the following access points: in-person, telephone, email, or by Skype. Clients value accessibility and the results achieved throughout the coaching process. The coaching fees are discussed and agreed upon in advance.

### **What are some of the coaching niches?**

- Personal/Life coaching
- Career development or career transition coaching
- Executive coaching
- Education achievement focused coaching
- Wellness coaching
- Retirement coaching

### **What criteria should be used in selecting a coach?**

- Select a coach that has completed coach specific education/training
- Select a coach that has experience in coaching (see types of coaching)

- Select a coach who has/is seeking credentials from a professional organization like ICF
  - Select a coach that adheres to established coaching code of ethics.
- For additional information about selecting a coach see the ICF for “A Guide to Choosing a Professional Coach” and/or to locate a coach in your state click on the “Find a Coach” tab on the ICF website [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org).

In my personal approach to coaching, I engage the client in sharing their personal, career or professional narrative to identify strengths, and work with them to envision their future through passionate thinking. Together, we explore goals and alternatives to achieving their goals, the challenges they may experience and finally focus on implementing an action plan including a timeframe and measurable objectives. Throughout the coaching process there is support, challenge and constructive feedback to help the client transition...or move from one stage of their journey to another. The investment made in working with a professional coach can lead to creative, meaningful and powerful changes.

Future **Career Coach E-Newsletter** topics:

- Career Management: Self-Assessment
- Career Management: Conducting Career Research
- Career Management: Search Tools
- Career Management: Forward Thinking & Planning
- Emotional Intelligence in the Workplace

#### **Career Coaches Last Note:**

Imagine the infinite possibilities of what lies ahead in your life and career as there are in nature...explore and imagine!

To see Imagine8acres: <http://vimeo.com/14092790> or [www.gmaltd.com](http://www.gmaltd.com)

(Thanks to Gervais Goodman, CHRR at Goodman & McDougall & Associates, Millarville, Alberta, Canada for sharing this video).

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Transitions & Transformations: The Journey is Yours!

#### **References**

Auerbach, J.E. (2001). Personal and Executive Coaching: The Complete Guide for Mental Health Professionals. CA: Executive Coach Press.