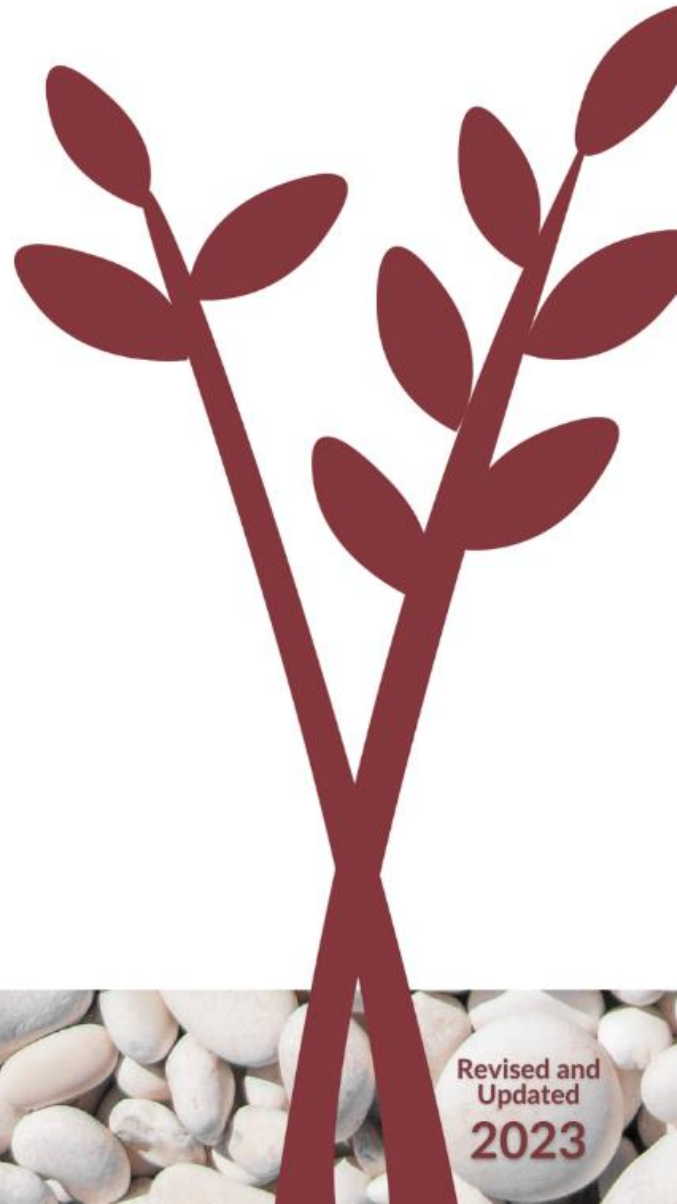


THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO

CHRISTIAN COACH TRAINING

by Linda C. Hedberg, PCC



Revised and
Updated
2023



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The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training

Revised and Updated 2023

LINDA C. HEDBERG



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The information presented on training and professional organizations is, of course, subject to change at the discretion of the coach training organizations and represents the information available at the time this book was compiled. This includes certification or credentialing requirements, for example. The information presented from ICF and any other source is, of course, subject to change and represents the information available at the time this book was compiled. The reader of The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training is responsible for verifying all information of interest directly with the respective organizations.

This book was first published in 2009, making this the 10th edition. It is available at www.christiancoachtrainingguide.com.

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“At least once every week somebody writes to ask me where they can get high quality, Christian coach training. Linda Hedberg’s unique and very practical book gives the answers. Concise, informative, relevant and easy to understand, this valuable guidebook says all we need to know about competent coaching training from a Christian perspective. I am honored to recommend it enthusiastically.”

Gary R. Collins, PhD.

Author, Christian Coaching, Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality

“When I was gathering training hours for my PCC, The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training helped me find just the right one to suit my needs. It is a comprehensive guide to quality professional Christian coach training.”

Michael J. Marx, MBA, EdD, MCC

Author, Ethics and Risk Management for Christian Coaches

“When anyone asks me which coaching school to attend, the first place I send them is the Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training.”

Tony Stoltzfus, Author, Leadership Coach, Coach Trainer

www.metaformation.us

“Thank you, Linda! The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training is truly a gift to the Christian coach field. With its comprehensive coverage, wealth of information, helpful comparison charts and user-friendly explanations. It is the must-have resource for anyone researching Christian coach training schools. I highly recommend your book to all aspiring coaches.”

Kim Avery, Professional Certified Coach and Coach Trainer

www.kimaverycoaching.com

“When I first became a coach, years ago, there was no single place to get the kind of valuable faith-based centers Linda shares in The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training. It took a lot of trial and error to know where to go. It is well worth the small investment for anyone seeking Christian centers of coaching excellence!”

Tanya Smith, Social Content Marketing Strategist

www.getnoticedwithvideo.com



As a coach and mentor to those curious about and new to the field of professional Christian coaching, author Linda Hedberg helps aspiring new Christian coaches navigate choice and create plans for training, certification and starting their own businesses or ministries.

Learn more at www.ChristianCoachingResources.com



Thank you!

I'm grateful for the support and efforts of many old friends and new, for treasured contributions to this project...

to all the coaching education program directors and assistants who have over the years been part of this project

to Tony Stoltzfus for taking the time to simply reach out and connect - resulting in a conversation that ignited the project back in 2007

to Gary R. Collins with appreciation for his inspiration, wisdom and leadership shared with the Christian Coaching community and for support and encouragement of this project from the beginning in 2007. Gary passed away on December 13, 2021

to Rayna Neises for her technical assistance, creative contributions, and supportive input throughout this project. www.RaynaNeises.com

to Laura Brooker for her abundant creativity and generous support

Finally, I'm grateful for Judy Santos, a mentor and friend, who stepped into her joy in Heaven on March 2, 2010. Judy contributed her insight and cheerleading to the first two editions of this book. I miss her very much.

Thank you, Jesus, for being our grace and truth.



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The Word became flesh and
made his dwelling among us.
We have seen his glory, the glory
of the one and only Son who
came from the Father, full of
grace and truth.

John 1:14 (TNIV)



INTRODUCTION

*When I began searching for coach training, **I could have used help.***

Identifying the available training programs was just the beginning. It wasn't easy to compare options because **I found that programs were vastly different.** They were offered at significant price differences. I noticed that programs were delivered differently. Some were live-virtual (over the phone, for example) and others were inperson. The curriculum varied from program to program. Numerous decision-making factors surfaced, and the process actually became complicated.

Fortunately, after doing a lot of research, talking to many people and receiving God's guidance through the process, I found the program that was the right match for me. **Your process can be much simpler than mine was.**

I have created ***The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training*** to streamline your process. I've done the research for you!

The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training will provide you with all you need to jump-start and sustain your process. You will have the **information you need**, consolidated, and organized to facilitate the best decisions you can make - the ones that are right for you.

A reference list of Christian coach training programs is at your fingertips. Eleven decision-making factors are identified to guide you through your process of choosing training that is the best match for you.

Bottom line, instead of spending time and frustration researching and wondering if you've missed a major component, you will have more time to pray about your decision and **focus on God's unique plan for your coach training.**



SECTION ONE: INTRODUCTION TO COACHING

COACHING DEFINED

In his ground-breaking book, *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality* (2001, 2009), Christian leader Gary R. Collins defines coaching as “the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where they are to where they want to be.”

In 2013, members of the Christian Coaches Network International, also known as CCNI (www.christiancoaches.com), identified definitions, distinctions, and competencies of professional Christian coaching. Agreeing with the professional definition of coaching established by the International Coaching Federation (www.coachingfederation.org), CCNI went on to further define Christian coaching.

“Coaching is partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.” (International Coaching Federation)

“Christian coaching is a professional relationship focused on empowering a person or group to effect change, create new awareness, move into action and step into abundant Christian life in business and in personal areas.” (Christian Coaches Network International)



COACHING EXPANDED

Coaching is an ongoing relationship designed to forward a client's goals. The coach provides a structure and process that is dedicated to successfully meeting the agenda that the client sets. A client engages a coach because they desire to change something in themselves or their circumstances. The client believes a relationship that is focused on supporting the desired change will bring the results they want. A coach enhances and optimizes a process for a client resulting in the meaningful, significant change the client seeks.

COACHING SKILLS

A professional coach brings a specific set of skills to the coaching relationship. Basic coaching skills include the following:

- ❖ Establishing trust and rapport
- ❖ Acting as co-equal collaborator
- ❖ Practicing active listening
- ❖ Facilitating new awareness
- ❖ Utilizing powerful questions
- ❖ Casting vision and identifying the gap
- ❖ Identifying resources and addressing obstacles
- ❖ Focusing on strengths

COACHING IN ACTION

A coaching conversation is a specific type of conversation that is not about giving advice. According to Tony Stoltzfus, coach trainer and author of *Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach* (2005), coaching conversations are based on the premise that “the best way to help you change is to create a structured, supportive relationship that helps you take responsibility for your life and make the changes you want to make.” Coaching students can expect their professional coach instructors to train them to avoid advice-giving while helping clients take responsibility to move toward and achieve their own desired change.



COACHING IS NOT

Coaching students can also expect their instructors to train them to avoid taking on un-coachable clients or those best served by working with a professional counselor. Coaching is not counseling. A professional coach works with reasonably healthy, resourceful, capable clients on moving toward positive goals that result in enhancing or optimizing their lives. Unlike coaches, professional counselors are trained and licensed to help clients experiencing emotional and mental health issues. Counselors typically help clients resolve debilitating issues of the past, whereas coaches help clients focus on goals for the future. Coaching is also distinctly different from consulting, spiritual direction, mentoring, discipleship and pastoral care. Please refer to the Life Coaching Comparison Tool on page 6 for a table that clarifies these distinctions.



THE LIFE COACHING COMPARISON TOOL

The Life Coaching Comparison Tool

Presented by Linda C. Hedberg | Christian Coaching Resources | www.christiancoachingresources.com | 763.780.8508

	Life Coaching	Counseling or Therapy	Consulting	Spiritual Direction	Mentoring and Discipleship
Typical Relationship	One-on-One or group in a professional context	One-on-One or group in a professional context	One-on-One or organizational in a professional context	One-on-One or group in a professional or ministry context	One-on-One in a business context (mentoring) or ministry or personal context (mentoring or discipleship)
Focus	Future, vision	Past, pain	Project or problem	God	Teaching by example
Desired Outcome	Action toward meaningful goals	Healing and restoration	Expert opinion and recommendations	God's direction	Personal or spiritual growth and maturity
Training	Professional training and certification available and commonly expected	Professional training and licensing typically required	Training specific to consultant's area of expertise is commonly expected	Professional training and certification available	Not typically expected
Meetings	Often by phone, sometimes in person	In person	Usually in person	In person	Usually in person
Role	Coach is a collaborator who provides structure and process to an agenda set by the client	Counselor provides clinical expertise and facilitates a healing process	Consultant is an expert who analyzes a problem or project and provides reports and recommendations	Spiritual director is a collaborator who prays and listens with clients	Mentor or discipler is a companion who has "gone before" and can lead and advise by example

Though there is certainly overlap in the descriptions of all of the above relationships, it is helpful to identify the distinctives. Ministers involved in Pastoral Care commonly draw from aspects of each of the roles described above.



COACHING BRIEF HISTORY

During the 80's and 90's the field of coaching emerged from three influences - the executive and business consulting industry, the field of counseling and psychotherapy, and the personal growth movement. Thomas Leonard (1955– 2003), known as the “father of coaching,” was influential in the early days of the profession, as he founded Coach U (1992), participated in the formation of what is today the International Coaching Federation (1994), and proliferated his notoriety by establishing Coachville (2000). With now more than 35,000 credential holders worldwide, The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the oldest (established in 1995) and most influential professional association of coaches.

CHRISTIAN COACHING

All of the above is relevant to the field of Christian coaching, but for Christian coaches there is more, of course!

Many coaches who are Christians work in organizations or in their own businesses and do not identify themselves as “Christian coaches.” Often, they will describe themselves as called to being salt and light in a dark world (Matthew 5: 13-14).

Other coaches refer to themselves as “Christian coaches” and make that very clear in their businesses or ministries. Typically, they work with Christian clients and see themselves as providing coaching to strengthen the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-27).

“You are the salt of the earth...

You are the light of the world...”

Matthew 5:13-14 (NIV)

“All of you together are Christ’s body and each of you is a part of it.”

1 Corinthians 12:17 (NLT)



Christian coaches have been involved since the early days of the coaching profession. Jane Creswell, MCC, organized the first Christian prayer breakfast at the 1999 Annual ICF Conference, with about 12 attending.

Here's what Jane says about the annual prayer breakfasts at ICF conferences:

"I actually felt God prompting me to do the prayer breakfast starting in 1998 and I ignored it. And was miserable. So when 1999's ICF conference was announced, I got busy organizing and dealing with lots of rejection. We've had these breakfasts [over the years] even in other countries: Switzerland, Japan, Canada, Spain and Italy. We are usually in some back corner and our signs for the location are often removed from the bulletin board, etc. Even with those challenges, people find us and we pray. God has used this group in different ways each year to pray. "

At the 2011 ICF Conference in Las Vegas, Nevada, Christian coaches met for two breakfasts. Susan Whitcomb, PCC, coordinated the gatherings and here's what she had to say:

"Although the group represented a variety of coaching niches (corporate, executive, global leadership, life, nonprofit, business, ministry, career, and more) from multiple countries around the globe, we shared a common spirit. On the first morning, each person offered a favorite scripture and insight that related to coaching. On the second morning, we individually shared the God-size vision for our work as coaches so that everyone could support one another in praying for that. It was encouraging to see how God has strategically planted His children around the globe to make a kingdom difference. "

The Christian Coaches Network International was founded in 1998 by Judy Santos, MCC (1942 - 2010), with 18 members in the first year. In 2001, Ruth Ledesma published *Coaching by the Book*, in which members of the Christian Coaches Network International contributed chapters. In 2003 the first Christian Coaches Network International conference was held in Virginia Beach, Virginia (USA). The conference attracted members from across North America and included international members from the UK and Germany. Those in attendance represented a variety of coaching niches, church denominations and professional and ministry backgrounds. Subsequent CCNI conferences were held in Seattle, Washington (USA) in 2004 and Charlotte, North Carolina (USA) in 2007. CCNI more recently has also sponsored esummits, including the fall of 2020 and a business development esummit in the spring of 2021.



Well-known author, counselor, and Christian coaching pioneer Gary R. Collins' book *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality* was originally released in 2001 and revised in 2009. Published by a major publishing house (NavPress), this book brought Christian coaching to the shelves of Christian bookstores and began to broadly educate the Christian community about the discipline, practice, and newly emerging field of Christian coaching. In his book, Gary defines Christian coaching as “the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where they are to where God wants them to be.”

Since the early 2000's, Christian coach training organizations have been launched. In 2003, the Christian Track at the Institute for Life Coach Training (ILCT) became the first Christian coach training to be accredited by ICF. Today, many of the Christian coach training programs listed in The Directory of Christian Coach Training Schools on page 44 are recognized by ICF. Colleges, universities and seminaries are now offering degrees specializing in coaching.

Today, classic coaching has moved into local churches, denominations, and ministry organizations.

- ✚ The Navigators, a global para-church ministry organization, offers Life and Leadership Coaching to their constituents. They coordinate a team of ICF trained and credentialed coaches to serve in their ministry. <https://tdc.navigators.org/program/life-and-leadership-coaching/>
- ✚ In 2011, after several years of various successful coaching initiatives, The Assemblies of God organized an internal network of coaches to include professional-level training and certification available for those within the denomination. <http://agcoaching.org/>
- ✚ The Wesleyan Coaching Network supports pastors and lay leaders in the Wesleyan denomination. All pastors are invited to be coached and training is available for leaders to learn coaching skills to incorporate into their leadership and ministries. <https://www.wesleyan.org/ecd/wcn>

FOR MORE RESOURCES FROM LINDA HEDBERG, THE AUTHOR OF THE COMPLETE GUIDE OF CHRISTIAN COACH TRAINING. PLEASE GO TO WWW.CHRISTIANCOACHINGRESOURCES.COM





INTRODUCTORY COACHING RESOURCES

Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality by Gary R. Collins. This is the classic book on Christian coaching - a very informative introduction to the field. Collins' book has been a standard recommendation to prospective and new Christian coaches since it was first published in 2001. The second edition was released in 2009. Available at www.Amazon.com.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) is the oldest and largest professional association of coaches worldwide. Though not a distinctly Christian organization, it has undeniably shaped the profession of coaching in our world. Learn about the profession at www.coachingfederation.org.

Co-active Coaching: Changing Business Transforming Lives (3rd Edition) by Kimsey-House et al. This is a very commonly used coaching textbook. Though not a distinctly Christian book, it is often taught and studied from a Christian perspective. Available at www.amazon.com.

Leadership Coaching: The Disciplines, Skills and Heart of a Christian Coach by Tony Stoltzfus. This book reflects Stoltzfus' experience as a coach trainer and curriculum writer. It emphasizes classic coaching skills and techniques and integrates biblical concepts and a Christian world view. Available at www.amazon.com.

Professional Christian Coaching Today. Since starting in 2015, this podcast has offered more than 300 episodes on a wide variety of topics of interest to professional Christian coaches. Find on Apple, Google or Spotify and online <https://professionalchristiancoaching.com/podcast/>.

The Coach Model for Christian Leaders: Powerful Leadership Skills for Solving Problems, Reaching Goals, and Developing Others by Keith Webb. There are many excellent coaching models, including Keith Webb's model featured in this book. Available at www.amazon.com



SECTION TWO:

CHRISTIAN COACH TRAINING 101

Yes, there could be a class in deciphering Christian coach training. It's truly more complicated than anyone would like. This book exists, and you are reading it - two observations that make the point.

TYPES OF COACHING

In this Guide, we are discussing “classic coaching,” the type of coaching that has formed a new professional field. The new field is reflected largely by the formation of the International Coaching Federation (ICF), which has existed since 1995 and has over 35,000 credential holders internationally. Other professional organizations like the International Association of Coaches (IAC) have since emerged.

Following the typical road to a newly formed profession, many coach training programs have emerged, as have various “camps” regarding the definition of coaching. This is true of both secular and Christian coach training programs. In the general professional community, ICF is the oldest and largest association and has created definitions and standards for the profession. It has also created respected standards for accrediting and approving training programs.

You may have noticed in the Christian community the term “coaching” has many definitions and can often be distilled to mean teach, mentor, or disciple. At a church this author attended, for example, all the children's workers were called “coaches.” Of course, most of these “coaches” were ministering wonderfully and effectively to kids; but this use of the word “coach” is not the type of professional coaching referred to in this Guide.



Because the term “coaching” is prevalent in the Christian community - often used like a hot new term - it can be difficult to distinguish what Christian training is focused on professional coaching skills and practices and what is focused on utilizing some coaching skills and techniques for effective ministry. Some training experiences called “coaching,” are more focused on teaching, mentoring or discipleship. Clearly, learning and applying coaching skills and techniques (or teaching, mentoring and discipleship) can be very powerful in ministry. However, combining the term “coaching” with effective ministry doesn’t necessarily reflect the classic professional coaching referred to in this Guide.

TYPES OF PROGRAMS

Once a list of Christian coach training programs is identified, the differences start to become clear. Some programs focus more on training business professionals and some train ministry professionals. Programs can have various niches or specialties - like career coaching or life purpose coaching. Training for individuals is offered, while some programs can be contracted to train groups. Some programs offer full professional training while others offer exposure to coaching skills.

RANGE OF CURRICULUM CONTENT

Christian coach training programs offer a range of curriculum content. Many are heavier on teaching the integration and application of Biblical and theological concepts. Others support and encourage students to individually or in small groups incorporate their faith and Biblical knowledge. Classic coaching skills are taught and examined more deeply in some programs, while others give skills overviews.

ACCREDITED OR NOT

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) accredits and approves coach training programs. The ICF approval process is lengthy and there is no guarantee that a program will receive approval. Some Christian coach training programs report that pursuing ICF recognition is simply not a part of their vision. Other Christian programs choose not to pursue recognition from a secular organization. You can find assistance with sorting out this decision-making factor on pages 19-20 of this Guide.



Although ICF has been around the longest, is the largest, and currently has the most influence, other organizations that evaluate coach training are acknowledged in the professional coaching community. The International Association of Coaching (IAC) licenses schools that meet their standards for professional coach training. The Center for Credentialing and Education approves schools to provide training toward the Board Certified Coach (BCC) distinction. Since 2013, the Christian Coaches Network International has put a review process in place which recognizes schools that meet their standards. Some programs are recognized by multiple organizations. However, at this time, ICF recognition is most predominant.

RANGE OF REQUIREMENTS FOR CERTIFICATION

Training programs often offer “certification” to their students for completion of certain requirements. From program to program, the requirements vary greatly. These certifications may also be referred to as “credentials.” There is no current standard for the certifications that programs offer. Anyone can offer “certification” and name it what they please. For example, there are several certifications available, each from different organizations, called “Certified Christian Coach.” The requirements for each of these “CCC” certifications are different.

Requirements for the various certifications available may include attending classes (the number of hours widely varies), practicing coaching (again, the number of hours required varies widely), mentor coaching or “being coached” (hours and/or duration of time varies), reading and writing assignments, letters of recommendations, and knowledge and skills tests. Some certifications can be obtained by video training and independent study only (asynchronous training), while others require significant voice-to-voice instructor contact (synchronous training).

Where coaches from different programs have obtained the ACC, PCC and MCC credentials awarded by the ICF, clear comparisons can be made because these coaches have met the same criteria even though they’ve taken different classes. However, it is difficult to determine the relative value of certifications or credentials obtained directly from coach training programs for the reasons stated above. Certifications or credentials awarded to students by training programs may represent stellar training and excellent proficiency - or they may not.

Not every coach needs ICF credentials. You need training that will help you fulfill your unique purposes. You may simply want to gain some coaching skills to enhance your current ministry effectiveness or job skills and you may not need to pursue credentials. Of course, you would likely want quality training whether or not you plan to pursue credentials - and either way you can find information about great training programs in Section 5 on page 44.



SECTION THREE:

MAKING THE DECISION THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU

THE PROCESS

The process for making the decision that's right for you involves prayerfully identifying your mission and vision, and then evaluating the decision-making factors based on your mission and vision.

Step 1: Identify Your Mission and Vision

Step one for making a great decision regarding Christian coach training starts with identifying your calling. Calling is sometimes referred to as “mission” and sometimes as “vision.” Just when you think you’ve got the working definition of those terms down, you will have to think again. “Mission” and “vision” are addressed across a variety of authoritative settings with definitions that are sometimes opposite and sometimes interchangeable, adding up to often times confusing. What school of thought you’re from or what training you’ve taken or what book you’ve read determines how you use the terms.

I’m inclined to say that your calling is your mission. That is, “calling” or “mission” is what you’re going to do. Typically, it’s a broad statement - contained in a sentence (or so) that includes references to the purpose or significance of your pursuit. Statements of “vision” are longer and more detailed and talk about how things will look when your mission is accomplished.



Whatever you call it, identifying your purpose is the first step. What are you called to? What does God have for you to do? What will it look like when you are living your calling? Before deciding to change your career or invest time and money into training, answer these questions. Start by writing down compelling statements that clearly identify your mission and vision. If you are stymied, this is a great time to work with a professional Christian coach to identify your mission and vision.

Why would you start with identifying mission and vision? Why not just “dive in” and “go for it?” Well...because it’s important to know where you’re going in order to get there!

Consider this quote attributed to Yogi Berra, American baseball player: “If you don’t know where you’re going, you might not get there.”

Establishing a new career - establishing a new business - is not easy. In your dark hours (and you know they’ll come) it helps to know where you’re going and why. In those hours you can refer back to your calling - your purpose - the mission and vision statements you’ve written down - to gain the motivation and courage to press on.

You are reading this book because you want to make a great choice regarding coach training. You would like to go somewhere intentionally.

So identify your mission and vision. Ask God to show you the vision of where to go. Then...write that down.

Step 2 - Evaluate Factors Based on Your Mission and Vision

There are many factors to think through when choosing training. Take a look at your vision (which you have hopefully written down) and identify what will get you there. Will you be coaching in business or ministry? Will you be coaching only Christians? Will you be working in a church or corporate environment? Will you have your own coaching business five or ten years from now?

Each factor you consider and the priority of each factor is determined by your mission and vision. Some of the factors discussed in this book will have little or no importance to you. Very many will. Choose the factors you consider based on the vision God has given you.



Continue to commit your vision and the shaping (and reshaping) of your plans to God in prayer and search scripture for guidance. Tune into the ways that you have received guidance from God in the past - through the godly wisdom of others, personal retreat, prayer journaling, etc. If God leads you to work with a Christian coach, do that.

Circulating on the internet for some time was an article that claimed to tell you “the truth about” what training program you should take. However, no one article or person can tell you that. That is for you to discover, as you seek God’s leading and uncover the unique purposes for which you were created. God has shown his faithfulness, sustenance and blessing to Christian coaches who have been trained in a variety of programs. God is able to do the same for you as you step into the calling for which you are made.

Next...
Eleven Questions to Ask Yourself When Considering
Christian Coach Training



THE FACTORS (REFERENCE ELEVEN FACTORS WORKSHEET ON PAGE 30)

1. ASK YOURSELF: IS IT COACHING OR SOMETHING ELSE?

Is becoming a life coach part of the fulfillment of your true calling? Take a look at your passions and values.

- ❖ If you are passionate about helping others heal and resolve debilitating trauma and crisis, then it's likely not coaching. Rather, it's counseling or therapy.
- ❖ If you love analyzing problems in your field of expertise, summarizing your analysis and making recommendations, then maybe it's not coaching. Maybe it's consulting.
- ❖ If you deeply desire to help people identify the presence of God in their lives, then maybe it's not coaching. Maybe it's spiritual direction.
- ❖ Have you looked at the career and ministry options that are similar to coaching and asked yourself which option is truly the best match for your mission?
- ❖ Use the Life Coaching Comparison Tool on page 6 to consider the distinctions between coaching and counseling, consulting, spiritual direction, mentoring, discipleship and pastoral care.

Before you commit time and finances to coach training, make sure pursuing coaching will fulfill your mission and vision.

2. ASK YOURSELF: DO I WANT TO BE THE COACH WITHOUT TRAINING?

Once you are sure that coaching is your calling, consider that it is not absolutely required to take training to practice as a coach. Currently no U.S. states require licensing for coaches - so currently there are no licensing requirements that can help inform your decision about training. Anyone can decide to be a coach and say so. "Anyone" may not have had coach training of any kind.

So, this factor boils down to a question: do you want to be the coach without training? Probably not, since you bought this book. Your vision of your future will reveal whether coach training is necessary to meet your professional or ministry goals. As the author of this Guide, I'm not recommending the "no training" path, but I do want to be clear that it is an option.



3. ASK YOURSELF: IS SECULAR COACH TRAINING AN OPTION?

There are many Christian coaches who have trained in secular training programs and this is certainly an option for you, depending on your vision and how God is leading you.

For example, Dr. Gary R. Collins is highly respected as a Christian leader in both the fields of counseling and coaching. As referenced in his book *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality*, Gary took his coach training at the Institute of Life Coach Training (ILCT) - before there was a Christian track at ILCT. In his book he references several other leaders in the Christian coaching field, including Judy Santos, MCC (1942 - 2010), founder of the Christian Coaches Network International. Judy took her coach training at Coach U, as did Jane Creswell, MCC. Jane is also a leader in the field and has authored, *Christ-Centered Coaching: Seven Benefits for Ministry Leaders*.

It is entirely possible for Christians to complete training from a secular coach training institution and still retain their Christian faith. Many have done so, though this may not be an easy road to take. As with any training opportunity not taught from a Christian worldview, there can certainly be challenges to Christian faith presented in the training. Don't expect or require that your Christian faith will be embraced or celebrated in secular coach training. But if you're prepared to learn coaching skills and practices and don't require this to occur in an openly acknowledged Christian setting, you won't be the first Christian coach that has considered this and gone on to successfully receive excellent coach training while keeping their faith intact.

Only you know where God is leading you, and we know from scripture that God is able to see you through wherever that is.

"I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him for that day." 2 Timothy 1:12b (NIV)

"Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen." Jude 24-25 (NASB)

If you are considering coach training options in addition to the Christian programs listed in this guide, find information at the ICF website (www.coachingfederation.org).



4. ASK YOURSELF: DO I WANT ACCREDITED TRAINING OR NOT?

Please note: Typically, in the U.S. “Accreditation” applies to coach training institutions and programs; “certification” and “credentialing” applies to individual coaches.

Programs are awarded accreditation from the International Coaching Federation (ICF). ICF has been around the longest, is the largest and currently has the most influence. Other organizations that evaluate coach training include The International Association of Coaching (IAC) which licenses schools that meet their standards for professional coach training and The Center for Credentialing Education which approves schools to provide training toward the Board Certified Coach (BCC) distinction. Some programs are recognized by multiple organizations. However, at this time, ICF accreditation is most predominant.

ICF accredited training is transitioning to being identified as Level 1, Level 2 and Level 3. Previously accredited programs were identified as ACTP or ACSTH. If you take training from an ICF accredited program and follow their prescribed course of action you are steps closer to personally receiving ICF credentialing than if you take non-accredited or non-approved training. However, it is possible to obtain ICF credentialing if your training is not ICF accredited by working directly with ICF through a “portfolio” application process.

The portfolio application process is described on the ICF website and requires more paperwork and documentation than the application process available to students of ICF recognized training. However, the portfolio process is certainly a feasible option at this time. Part of the portfolio process includes ICF’s evaluation of the training under consideration, and the approval granted by ICF is, of course, at their discretion.

Go to the ICF website www.coachingfederation.org for a list of accredited programs.

Keep in mind that anyone can create a training program and award coach certifications. So how do you know that a training program is of the quality you are seeking? How do you know that the certification you would receive holds the value you desire? Well, through the accreditation process, ICF offers structure and standards by which you can evaluate programs and determine the extent to which they meet professional standards. Programs not accredited by ICF may meet those standards very well, or they may not.

Also, be aware that as training programs apply for ICF accreditation, the process takes time and the outcome is not guaranteed. Perhaps the program you are considering is in the process of applying for accreditation. Be sure to ask - that is, if ICF accreditation and credentials are important to you.

Information presented here is correct as of the publication date of this book. Please check the ICF website for current information.



5. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT TYPE OF CREDENTIALING OR CERTIFICATION DO I WANT TO RECEIVE?

Please note: Typically, in the U.S., “certification” and “credentialing” applies to individual coaches; “accreditation” applies to coach training institutions and programs.

Not everyone who takes coach training needs to pursue credentials or certification (page 12). But if you’ve decided you will commit to this effort, you likely will want your credentials to have substance and significance.

You’ve probably received SPAM in your email box that announces you can receive a Bachelor’s Degree or even a PhD with no substantial educational requirements. You are invited to just “call the number,” pay the “very reasonable price” and you will be set with letters behind your name. You’ve probably not taken advantage of this offer.

In the same way you’d want a BA or a PhD to have meaning, you probably want a coaching credential with meaning. Deciphering the comparative meanings of the various available certifications and credentials can be difficult. For help with this, please review the discussion of credentials on page 12-13.

Two basic types of certifications or credentialing exist - credentials connected to a professional association and those awarded by a training organization.

Always check
the ICF website
for up-to-date information
on accreditation and credentialing.
www.coachingfederation.org



Credentialing or Certification by a professional organization, such as ICF:

ICF Credentialing - The following is found at the [ICF website](#):

ACC (Associate Certified Coach). Requirements include at least 60 hours of qualified coach training and 100 hours of qualifying client coaching experience. ICF accredited Level 1 coaching education is designed to prepare students for obtaining the ACC.

PCC (Professional Certified Coach). Requirements include at least 125 hours of qualified coach training and 500 hours of qualifying client coaching experience. ICF accredited Level 2 coaching education is designed to prepare students for obtaining the PCC.

MCC (Master Certified Coach). Requirements include at least 200 hours of qualified coach training and 2,500 hours of qualifying client coaching experience. ICF accredited Level 3 coaching education is designed to prepare students for obtaining the MCC.

Please check the ICF website for current information.

Certification through a coach training school:

Many coach training schools offer certifications upon completion of their training programs. The requirements of these certifications vary greatly from school to school. Please refer to page 12-13 for further discussion of coach training school certifications.



It is not unusual for a coach to have more than one credential. For example, a coach may have an ICF credential and the certification they received through their training school. The value of this is specific to the individual. Some coaches report that their clients are looking for specific credentials. Credentials are markers of accomplishment, expertise and credibility, and can provide a sense of personal and professional integrity.

In the 2020 ICF Global Coaching Study, 85% of coaches agreed that clients expect them to be certified or credentialed.

83% of consumers who experienced a coaching relationship reported that it was important or very important for coaches to hold a credential, according to the 2017 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study.

Consumers are more likely to recommend a coach who holds a credential than a coach who does not, the 2017 ICF Global Consumer Awareness Study reports.

Why are credentials important?

Leaders in the Christian coaching field have been reporting an increase over the last few years in Christian individuals and organizations looking for coaches with ICF credentials.

Also, many think that licensing of coaches will become required in the future as the profession matures. So, the training decisions you make now could have implications in the future regarding your ease and ability to gain licensing.

**If my state doesn't require licensing for coaches, why would credentials matter?**

Yes, it's true that there are practicing life coaches who have never had professional life coach training. They may be successful in business, and they may be good coaches, but - they've never pursued training or ICF credentials and they don't plan to.

No, they aren't violating state (USA) regulations at this point. That doesn't mean coaches are free and clear from any possible interest from their state's governing body. In some states coaches have faced challenges - in particular where their work may be perceived as counseling or therapy (just to clarify - that's not a good thing...).

ICF has information available on these issues. You may also want to check with your local ICF chapter to learn what other professional coaches in your area know about these issues in your state.



The following is helpful information for all Christian coaches to consider.

Published in the Journal of Christian Coaching (Summer 2008), an excerpt from the article entitled Professional Christian Coaching: How Christian How Professional? By Christopher McCluskey:

Although there are some within the Christian coaching community who argue vehemently that we should steer clear of any involvement whatsoever with the established “secular” associations (meaning, primarily, the International Coaching Federation - ICF), I am decidedly not of that camp. The truth is that, had it not been for the incredible efforts on the part of hundreds of ICF members and chapters, this profession we are enjoying and beginning to see thrive would already be regulated by the mental health boards in several states! The ICF, and a few other similar associations, have rallied time and again to successfully rebuff aggressive attempts to license coaches in several states. In other words, the only thing standing between our current freedom to practice as professional Christian coaches and regulation of the profession from outside the field has been the often-maligned ICF.

An email that has been widely circulated on the web has this to say in response to the above statement: “IF, and I say IF it came to regulation, someone trained as a Christian Life Coach could practice for remuneration the way that Christian counselors now do...by being ordained.” WRONG. I’ll have to assume the writer of this email is unaware of how many churches have been successfully sued, and often completely shut-down or put into bankruptcy, because of critical errors made in counseling by their ordained counseling staff. Thousands of churches have closed their counseling centers or forced their counselors to establish professional practices separate from the church, in order to avoid huge liability risks.



6. ASK YOURSELF: DO I NEED NICHE OR SPECIALIZED TRAINING?

Your vision may include some specifics that can be addressed by specialized training. For example, you may want to specialize in career coaching and offer your services to the niche market of job seekers. Or if you are planning to coach in an international missions or crosscultural setting, you can possibly benefit from training that is specialized for these applications. There are a variety of niche or specialty training opportunities available.

7. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT TRAINING LOGISTICS ARE IDEAL FOR ME?

- ❖ Coach training offers many delivery methods. What will work best for you? In-person? Online live video training? Group classroom or individual training?
- ❖ What location will work for you? Your office? Your deck? Will you travel for training?
- ❖ What training schedule will work for you? Number of hours per week? Number of weeks or months? Full days or weekend training?
- ❖ Please note: If you intend to pursue ICF credentials, the majority of your training will be required to be live, real-time, instructor-contact hours (synchronous training). This voice-to-voice instruction can be in person or over the phone or internet.

8. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT WILL I PAY FOR COACH TRAINING?

As you calculate the costs of coach training, take the following into consideration.

- ❖ Start by identifying tuition - the cost of classes.
- ❖ Consider the value of what the class offers - including live, real-time, instructor-contact training hours (synchronous training). Real-time instructor contact may be in-person or voice-to-voice over the phone or via the internet. Put simply, how many hours of voice to-voice instructor contact are included in the fee you will pay?
- ❖ Add up other costs which vary from program to program. For example, added costs can include textbooks, mentor coaching, travel and lodging, website set-up, certification processing, etc.



9. ASK YOURSELF: WHAT MAKES A TRAINING PROGRAM EXCELLENT?

Quality or excellence is certainly a factor that you want to consider. The following questions can reveal factors in excellence. Each person going through this process of deciding what makes programs excellent will choose different factors and come to different conclusions. Choose the factors of excellence that matter to you.

- ❖ How long has the program been around?
- ❖ Is the program accredited or recognized, and by whom?
- ❖ What qualifies the faculty to teach coaching?
- ❖ Are the instructors successful coaches?
- ❖ What coaching credentials do the instructors have?
- ❖ How much of the training is voice-to-voice? (synchronous training)
- ❖ How much of the training is independent or self-directed? (asynchronous training)
- ❖ How does the program define and measure success of grads?
- ❖ What support and services does the program offer grads?
- ❖ What else matters to you as you assess quality?



10. ASK YOURSELF: HOW IMPORTANT ARE CHRISTIAN COACHING COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS?

The community of Christian coaches goes well beyond any one training school. Does it matter to you that your training school acknowledges and supports the greater community of Christian coaches?

I first read the word “co-opetition” in a column by Linda Miller, MCC, published in the Journal of Christian Coaching (Spring 2008, page 18 - now Christian Coaching Magazine). Linda is the co-author (with Chad Hall) of Coaching for Christian Leaders: A Practical Guide. In the JOCC article, she describes and calls for a spirit of cooperation, rather than competition, among Christian coaches. She calls this a spirit of “co-opetition.”

Does the school you are considering have a spirit of “co-opetition?” Does that matter to you?

Do you believe that Christian coaches, working together and “holding hands” across bridges will be for the good of the Kingdom of God? Do you want your training organization to help facilitate your involvement in the larger Christian community? Then take these thoughts with you as you consider the culture of the training organization you will choose.

“...growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church. He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.” Ephesians 4:15-16 (NLT)



11. ASK YOURSELF: DOES THIS PROGRAM FEEL LIKE A GOOD MATCH?

- ✝ It's important not to discount the “good match” factor.
- ✝ How does the program “feel” to you? Does it excite you?
- ✝ Do you feel confidence in the integrity of the claims in the marketing materials?
- ✝ What about the spiritual culture of the program?
- ✝ Are you comfortable with or can you accept the spiritual language and expressions used?
- ✝ Does the “culture” feel like a place where you can learn?

Ultimately, this may be the factor that you spend the most prayer time on! Lord, help me be sensitive to your leading as I consider, with you, if this program is the “right fit” for me.

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalm 119:105 (KJV)



SECTION FOUR: TOOLS AND RESOURCES

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Bible Verses for Coaches and Clients	Page 39
Ways to Discern Opportunities	Page 41
Coaching Core Competencies (ICF).....	Page 43

SECTION FIVE on page 44 features a
Directory of Top Christian Coach Training School.

1. Ask yourself: Is it coaching or something else? (p. 17)

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5. Ask yourself: What type of credentialing or certification do I want to receive? (p. 20)

[illegible]

6. Ask yourself: Do I need niche or specialized training? (p. 25)

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This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue or grey ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are approximately 20 lines visible. The paper has a slight shadow on its right side, suggesting it's resting on a surface.

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.

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WWW.CHRISTIANCOACHTRAININGGUIDE.COM



APPLY FOR ICF CREDENTIALS

Not everyone who takes coach training needs ICF credentials (page 12-13). However, if you've decided to pursue professional credentials with ICF this section can help orient you to the basics of applying for these credentials.

Start by familiarizing yourself with the [International Coach Federation website](http://www.coachingfederation.org) (<http://www.coachingfederation.org>), especially the "ICF Credentials and Standards" menu option.

Requirements are periodically revised so make sure to review the site to confirm current qualifications and check there often to stay up-to-date.

At the ICF website you will see that **there are three ICF credentials**:

- ❖ **Associate Certified Coach (ACC)** Requirements include a minimum of 60 coach specific training hours and 100 hours of client coaching experience. Beginning in 2023 ICF accredited training for this credential will be called Level 1.
- ❖ **Professional Certified Coach (PCC)** Requirements include a minimum of 125 coach specific training hours and 500 hours of client coaching experience. Beginning in 2023 ICF accredited training for this credential will be called Level 2.
- ❖ **Master Certified Coach (MCC)** Requirements include a minimum of 200 coach specific training hours and 2,500 hours of client coaching experience. Beginning in 2023 ICF accredited training for this credential will be called Level 3.

Apply for an ACC or PCC through either the ACTP Path, ACSTH Path or the Portfolio Path:

- Prior to 2023, the paths for application for the ACC and PCC credentials were called the ACTP Path or the ACSTH Path. If you've taken ICF ACTP and ACSTH training, these paths are (at the time of this writing) still available to you to apply for your ACC and PCC credential. Check the ICF website for up-to-date info.
- The Portfolio Path exists for students who have taken a required number of qualifying coach specific training hours, when those training hours are not approved as a complete Level 1, 2 or 3 or ACTP or ACSTH training program. Robust documentation is required, among other additional requirements. See the ICF website for details.



RENEWING CREDENTIALS:

All three ICF credentials - ACC, PCC and MCC - are valid for three years and must then be renewed. Requirements for renewal include 40 hours of additional training called Continuing Coach Education (CCE). CCE training is categorized in two ways - Core Competencies and Resource Development. Of the 40 hours of CCE training required, 24 hours must address Core Competencies.

Many of the Christian coach training programs listed in The Guide to Christian Coach Training, here, offer courses including CCE training credit hours.

TIPS FOR SUCCESS:

Get really familiar with [the ICF website](#). The website includes all the information you need to understand credentialing, fulfill requirements and submit an application. Learn the requirements and application process before you get too far down the road, so you can be proactive as you choose coursework, establish coaching relationships, and receive mentor coaching. Contact the ICF directly with any questions you may have.

Confirm your plan to pursue ICF credentials with your training program directors. Let them know before you start or as soon as you decide that you will be pursuing ICF credentials and confirm with them that they have had previous students receive ICF credentials using the courses you plan to take. Find out what assistance they offer as you pursue your credentials. Some offer webinars and workshops and groups to support students through their credential application process.

Keep records along the way. For examples, log your coaching hours, file info on your coursework and document your mentor coaching hours. Ultimately, you'll be submitting records to the ICF in your application process, which is much easier if you've proactively kept your records as you go.

The information presented here is correct as of the publication date of this book. Please check the ICF website to verify current information.



PRAYERS OF A CHRIST-CENTERED COACH

Lord, thank you for calling me to be a coach.

- ❖ Let your unconditional love flow through me.
- ❖ Spotlight my sins that encumber.
- ❖ Mold me into a servant leader.

Before each coaching conversation, I pray

- ❖ for boldness to be your ambassador
- ❖ for the ones I'm coaching to listen to you
- ❖ for your direction, insights, and inspiration to take action.

During each coaching conversation, I pray

- ❖ for guidance from you on what to say and how to say it
- ❖ for wisdom to know when to turn the conversation into a time of prayer
- ❖ for peace when it is time to be silent and let you do all the speaking

And beyond each coaching conversation, I pray

- ❖ for fears of the unknown to be calmed
- ❖ for you to fill in the gaps of what was not said and what was really needed beyond the surface
- ❖ for boldness to take actions that go beyond what we know how to do and outcomes we know we can control
- ❖ for followers of you, Lord, and not followers of the coach
- ❖ for Christian coaches and their global impact
- ❖ for coaches everywhere who are making the ground fertile for the gospel

May You be the one who is glorified in all we say and do.
In Jesus' name, Amen.

Creswell, Jane. Christ-centered Coaching: 7 Benefits for Ministry Leaders. St. Louis, MO: Chalice Press, 2006. Print. Page 137. Used by permission

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BIBLE VERSES FOR COACHES AND CLIENTS

***I came so they can have real and eternal life, more
and better life than they ever dreamed of.***

John 10:10 (The Message)

Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path.

Psalms 119:105 (KJV)

***God doesn't want us to be shy with his gifts, but
bold and loving and sensible.***

2 Timothy 1:7 (The Message)

***His divine power has given us everything we
need for life and godliness.***

2 Peter 1:3 (NIV)

Where there is no vision, the people perish.

Proverbs 29:18 (KJV)

***Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul
and with all your mind.
This is the first and greatest commandment and the second is like it:
Love your neighbor as yourself.***

Matthew 22:37-39 (NIV)

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Delight yourself in the LORD and he will give you the desires of your heart.

Psalm 37:4 (NIV)

The purposes of the human heart are deep waters, but those who have insight draw them out.

Proverbs 20:5 (TNIV)

Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it, and you will find rest for your souls.

Jeremiah 6:16 (NIV)

I am the way, the truth and the life.

John 14:6 (NIV)

God rewrote the text of my life when I opened the book of my heart to his eyes.

Psalm 18:24 (The Message)



WAYS TO DISCERN OPPORTUNITIES

The following was authored by my coach trainer, mentor and friend, Judy Santos (1942-2010). Judy was the founder of the Christian Coaches Network International (www.christiancoaches.com). This continues to be great advice for anyone discerning the many opportunities that coaches can consider. Used by permission.

As coaching for Christians becomes better known, a fertile ground is provided for opportunists.

Sometimes, opportunities arise to be involved in coaching companies, training situations, speaking engagements, media opportunities, etc. Some are great - others are not. Here are some guidelines and things to watch for that may be helpful in making decisions that you will not later regret.

1. Pray for discernment and wisdom as you read. When you hit a red flag, don't waste time reading further.
2. Just because it sounds Christian, doesn't mean it is. Dig. Anyone can use Christian terms and coaching catchwords in the same sentence. Check for substance.
3. Always check the identity of the person heading up the organization. If you can't find the information or have a lot of trouble locating the owner or CEO, consider that a red flag. Who are other stakeholders?
4. Look for contradictions, marketing hype, promises of fame and fortune and unsubstantiated statements. Remember the old saying: "If it sounds too good to be true, it probably is."
5. Consider the qualifications and credentials of the person making the offer. If it's a coaching situation, are there recognized organizations behind this person either in coach training, ICF, accredited university or through a group with credentialed leadership that has an excellent reputation? Does this person have a clear understanding of the legalities, ethics and differences between coaching, consulting and counseling? If you are going to put your reputation on the line, you want to be very certain it is not tarnished by association.



6. Be assertive in asking for references and ways to verify what you are being told.
7. If you are checking a website, follow all the links.
8. Look for empty promises being offered to you and also to the public. Credibility begins with legitimacy.
9. Look through the sales pitch carefully. If they are asking you for money or a substantial amount of time, check carefully to determine competitive value and if there is a wiggle clause. Is what they are offering solid, viable and credible?
10. Guarantees, certification and accreditation are only as credible as the person or organization granting them.
11. Determine your ROI (return on investment). What is the cost, what is the potential payoff? How much of your time is involved? How much financial risk is involved? If it is a media opportunity, what are the demographics? Does the media reach the market that contain your potential ideal clients?
12. Pay attention to how much or little of God's peace you sense around the opportunity. If you still aren't sure, ask someone you trust.



COACHING CORE COMPETENCIES (INTERNATIONAL COACH FEDERATION)

Foundation

1. Demonstrates Ethical Practice
2. Embodies a Coaching Mindset

Co-Creating the Relationship

3. Establishes and Maintains Agreements
4. Cultivates Trust and Safety
5. Maintains Presence

Communicating Effectively

6. Listens Actively
7. Evokes Awareness

Cultivating Learning and Growth

8. Facilitates Client Growth

This reflects the 2019 updated Core Competencies. Coach training schools began incorporating the updated Core Competencies in 2020 and 2021.

For a thorough description of these eight Core Competencies, please refer to the ICF website (www.coachingfederation.org).

For help navigating choices in creating plans for identifying your mission and vision, choosing your training and certification and starting your own coaching business or ministry, learn more about coaching with Linda Hedberg at www.ChristianCoachingResources.com.





SECTION FIVE:

The Directory of Christian Coach Training Schools

TO RECEIVE THE CURRENT DIRECTORY OF CHRISTIAN
COACH TRAINING SCHOOLS



INFORMATION FOR EACH SCHOOL LISTED INCLUDES
PRIMARY AREAS OF COACH TRAINING FOCUS,
ICF APPROVAL STATUS, WEBSITE AND
CONTACT INFORMATION.

USE THE INFORMATION AT THIS LINK TO RESEARCH
WHICH PROGRAM IS RIGHT FOR YOU!

WWW.CHRISTIANCOACHTRAININGGUIDE.COM



About the Author

Linda C Hedberg, PCC, is the author of The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training, a unique resource that features top professional Christian coach training programs and helps Christians make effective decisions about entering the profession and choosing a training program. As an International Coaching Federation credentialed coach, she is a coach and mentor to aspiring and new Christian coaches and provides information and resources at www.ChristianCoachingResources.com.



Since her initial coach training in 2003, Linda has received certifications from three top Christian coach training programs. In her life and leadership coaching practice, Greater Purpose Coaching, she helps those asking “what’s next” align their vision and plans with their unique purpose so they can have more meaning, satisfaction, and joy.

Learn more about mentor coaching for ICF Credentials with Linda at <https://www.christiancoachingresources.com/mentor-coaching/>.

Contact Linda at CoachLinda@ChristianCoachResources.com.



THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO CHRISTIAN COACH TRAINING

The Complete Guide to Christian Coach Training is a primer on the field of Christian coaching with in depth information about accreditation, credentialing, a directory of top schools, the top eleven decision-making factors for the best coach training for your unique purposes, and much more.

“Practical, informative, relevant and easy to understand, **this valuable guidebook gives you all you need to know** about coach training from a Christian perspective.” —Gary R. Collins



As a coach and mentor to those curious about and new to the field of professional Christian coaching, author Linda Hedberg helps aspiring and new Christian coaches navigate choices and create plans for training, certification, and starting their own businesses or ministries.

Learn more at ChristianCoachingResources.com

