



7 tips to find the BEST mentor-coach for YOU

(and improve your coaching skills)



By Edmée Schalkx, PCC

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Know the reason why you are hiring a mentor coach

When interviewing mentor coaches, it is important you know the reason why you want to hire one. Interview questions are easier to prepare before hand. Be aware of what you want to get out of the mentor coaching, ask clear questions and create a developmental partnership with your mentor-coach

When there is a need for a mentor-coach for ICF certification purposes, the mentor-coach needs to be able to support the coach-client with the process, requisites and answer any questions you have, but the mentor coach must also support the coach-clients development.



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Ask the mentor-coach his/her preferred working style

Mentor coaching is about supporting the coach-client to discover his or her own blind spots. In order to do this, it is important to let the coach-client decide what skills they want to improve and how they want to learn.

Each coach-client has their own unique style of learning, and the mentor-coach's role is to facilitate their awareness of what it is. This enables coach-clients to come up with their own solutions.

As client you need to be in the position to demand the use of recordings, but also create a learning conversation away from recordings when these do not support the growing process.

Mentor coaches should always remember that they are coaches before they are mentor-coaches and that their mistakes reflect upon the coach-client. Supporting the coach-client's growing awareness and discovery requires the mentor-coach to live what they preach and periodically refresh their knowledge of the standards and core competencies.



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Verify how knowledgeable the mentor-coach is about ICF

A mentor-coach is a role model, and as such, should apply the ICF core competencies and follow the ICF ethical standards at all times during dialogue with a coach-client and when giving feedback.

Without a deep understanding of the competencies and ethical standards, the mentor coach can unintentionally mislead the coach-client

To be an effective mentor coach and fully support the coach-client, it is important to initiate discussions about all of the issues and scenarios that coach-clients may face in their practice. These discussions are especially powerful when they can be related back to the ICF core competencies.



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#4

Their certification level needs to be one higher than coach-client

ICF requires that coach-clients be mentored by mentor-coaches holding a higher level certification than that of the coach-client. This means a coach holding a PCC wanting to work towards an MCC can only work with an MCC coach. If the application is via portfolio and working towards ACC, the mentor-coach must at least hold an ACC level of certification and be certified for at least 3 year

The mentor-coach should be willing to share info about own certification level, years of experience and coaching development.



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You should obtain meaningful feedback

The role of a mentor-coach is to help clients discover their blind spots and identify skills that need improvement. Giving meaningful feedback after a session explaining why certain things were successful while others were unsuccessful allows coach-clients to gain awareness and insight that they can use going forward.

A mentor coach allows the coach-client to explain why they chose a particular question in order to gain a better understanding of their thinking. This increases understanding for both parties and ensure that the feedback moves the client forward.

When mentoring a coach-client, it is easy for the mentor-coach to only point out what didn't go well during a conversation. It is important to note that it doesn't stop there. Without explanation as to why something worked or didn't work, the coach-client won't know how to improve. Providing thoughtful explanations allow coach-clients to grow and deepen their understanding of their strengths and weaknesses.



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Recordings & making guarantees

Mentor coaching isn't only about listening to recordings, it is also important to have conversations intermittently outside of the recordings. These conversations create space to discuss coaching approaches, difficult client challenges, and/or provide examples of how each competency can be implemented in the coaching conversation.

Mentoring is a part of the preparation for the coach-client to achieve the credential they desire, there is no way to be certain that the assessors will agree. Therefore, the mentor can only offer an opinion as to the readiness of the coach-client and perhaps suggest which recordings to submit for their final exam, but ultimately, the decision rests with the assessors.

The only guarantee we can make as mentor-coaches is that we will help our coach-clients improve their coaching skills, become more aware of their strengths and weaknesses and provide support in whatever way is appropriate. We cannot promise anything beyond this.



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Find a certified mentor coach

ICF has a registered mentor coach data base people can “consult”. It is advisable to find a mentor-coach holding an assessor position or a mentor-coach with a certification recognised by ICF. Unfortunately, here are many coaches calling themselves mentor coaches without the specific training for mentoring.

Ask the prospect mentor-coach about thier mentor-coach training, philosophy, and if they have success stories to share.



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Conclusion

When considering a mentor coach, remember to ask questions regarding their certification, experience and how will they support you.



[More About Mentor Coaching](#)



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Edmée is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) and a Certified Mentor Coach with over 15 years of broad international experience supporting coaches to prepare for ICF certifications and individuals with their personal growth. Her trademark program, Jumpstart to Success, helps individuals achieve their goals without struggle. She is also the author of the accompanying book, Congratulations! You Hired a Coach.

Edmée works in English, Dutch and Spanish, keeping her attuned to cultural and diversity issues in her practice.

A PCC since 2005 and a member of the International Coach Federation (ICF) since 2000, she used her extensive knowledge of the organization to found the Netherlands' first ICF chapter in 2005 and in the establishment of ICF Europe. Edmée also served as a volunteer for the ICF Certification and Accreditation Work Group, giving her an in-depth understanding of ICF core competencies as well as coaching and mentor coaching requirements.

Contact Edmée



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