

THE COACHING AGREEMENT

Welcome to coaching! This document constitutes a contract between us (the “Agreement”). Please read it carefully and raise any questions or concerns that you have before you sign it.

Services

The services provided by Ruth Landstrom, Ph.D., include coaching in person or on the phone on topics jointly decided with you, the client. The purpose of coaching is to develop and implement strategies to help you reach personally identified goals. Coaching may address a wide variety of goals, from specific projects to broad goals of personal satisfaction and life balance. No area of the client’s life is too small or too big to be included in coaching.

Fees and Payment Procedure

Coaching sessions are thirty minutes long for a fee of \$100, or forty-five minutes long, for a fee of \$150. Weekly coaching is recommended in the beginning to allow the work to build momentum quickly. The length and/or frequency of sessions can be adjusted by mutual agreement to meet individual needs.

Feedback

If, at any time, you feel that your needs are not being met or you are not getting what you want out of the coaching relationship, please tell me, so we can discuss your needs and adjust your coaching program, as needed. We will continue to work on the goals that you define unless you want to stop, which we will do whenever you ask.

Call Procedure

The coach will call the client at the pre-arranged time and telephone number, unless other arrangements are made for a particular call.

Cancellations

Please remember that you must give 24 hours prior notice if you need to cancel or change the time of an individual appointment, or you will be charged for the session in full. I will make reasonable efforts to reschedule individual sessions which are cancelled in a timely manner.

Because a group session cannot be rescheduled, you will be charged for all group sessions whether or not you are able to attend.

Termination

Either of us may end the coaching relationship by providing the other with a one-week written notice, which may be transmitted by email or fax.

Confidentiality

As a licensed psychologist, I protect the confidentiality of the communications with my clients, including my coaching clients. I will only release information about our work to others with your written permission, or if I am required to do so by law or by court order. There are some situations in which I am legally obligated to breach your confidentiality. These situations include (1) if I have information that indicates that a child, an elderly person or a disabled person is being abused or neglected, I must report that to the appropriate state agency, and (2) if a client is an imminent risk to himself or herself, or makes threats of imminent violence against another person; in both these situations, I am required to take protective actions. These situations rarely occur in coaching practices, but if such a situation does occur, I will make every effort to discuss it with you.

As you are probably aware, it is impossible to protect the confidentiality of information which is transmitted electronically. This is particularly true of email and information stored on computers connected to the internet (unless you use encryption and other forms of security protection). In addition, if you use a cordless or cell phone, someone with a scanner could hear you talk. I will make every effort to use a corded phone when we talk.

Coaching and Psychotherapy

In addition to being a coach, I am also a licensed psychologist in New York, with training and experience diagnosing and treating emotional and psychological problems. Although there are some similarities between coaching and psychotherapy, there are major differences between them in goals, focus and level of responsibility. I will not conduct psychotherapy with my coaching clients.

As your coach, my job is to help you to take information and skills that you already have and (1) make decisions about what changes you would like to achieve, (2) develop a personal “action plan” in order to make those changes, (3) implement your action plan, and (4) develop strategies to maintain the changes you have made. I will support and encourage you, and help you stay “on track” toward your goals.

You, as the client, set the agenda for your coaching, and what happens in coaching will depend on your willingness to define and take risks and try new approaches. You can expect me to be honest and direct, asking straightforward questions and using challenging techniques to help you move forward. I will expect you to evaluate your own progress, and if the coaching is not working as you wish, to inform me so we can both take steps to correct the problem. Like any human endeavor, coaching can involve feelings of distress and frustration which accompany the process of change. Coaching does not offer any guarantee of success.

Psychotherapy, on the other hand, is a health care service. Its primary focus is to diagnose and treat psychiatric disorders. The goals include alleviating symptoms, understanding the underlying personality dynamics which create symptoms, changing the dysfunctional behaviors which are the result of these disorders, and helping patients to cope with their psychological problems. It is usually reimbursable through health insurance policies (while coaching, at present, is not.)

Psychotherapy patients are often emotionally vulnerable. This vulnerability is increased

by the expectation that they will discuss very intimate personal information and will expose sensitive feelings. The past life experiences of psychotherapy patients have often made trust difficult to achieve. These factors give psychotherapists greatly disproportionate power that creates a fiduciary responsibility to protect the safety of their clients. The coaching relationship is designed to avoid this power differential.

Because of these differences, the roles of coach and psychotherapist are often in potential conflict, so I believe that it is ethically inappropriate, under most circumstances, for me to play both roles with a client. If I am your coach, I cannot be your therapist. This means that if either of us recognizes that you have a problem that would benefit from psychotherapy, I will refer or direct you to appropriate resources. In some situations, I may insist that you enter psychotherapy and that I have access to your psychotherapist as a condition of my continuing as your coach.

It is also important to understand that the coaching relationship is a professional relationship. While it may feel at times like a close personal relationship, it is not one that can extend beyond professional boundaries, either during or after our work together. Considerable experience shows that when boundaries blur, the hard-won benefits gained from the coaching relationship are endangered.

Dispute Resolution

Any controversy or claim arising out of or relating to this agreement, or the breach of this agreement, shall be settled by mediation, which will occur via telephone with a mediator whom we mutually agree upon. The costs of mediation shall be shared equally. If the controversy cannot be resolved by mediation, it shall be settled by arbitration, which will occur via telephone with an arbitrator whom we mutually agree upon. The costs of arbitration shall be borne by the losing party.

Your signature below indicates that you have read the information in this agreement and agree to abide by its terms during our professional coaching relationship.

Client _____ Date _____
Address: _____
Email: _____
Phone: _____

Coach _____ Date _____

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