

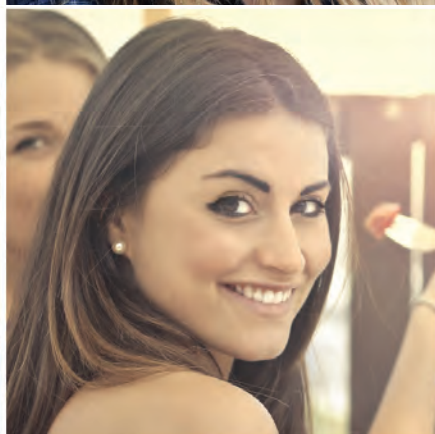
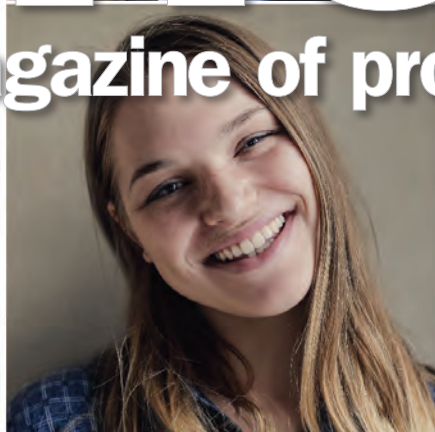
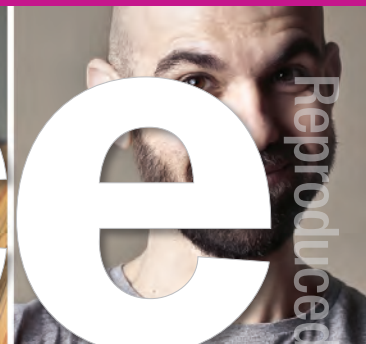
choice

the magazine of professional coaching

Coaching Across Generations

What we need to know about generational differences

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Coaching is Ageless

Young people shouldn't be discouraged by lack of experience

Eleven years ago, when I was two years into building my coaching practice, my 20-year-old daughter decided to become a life coach herself. The concept thrilled me and I knew it was a profession that would suit her talents and abilities well.

The admissions people for the program she considered joining asked her age, then discouraged her by saying people might not be willing to hire someone so young since her experiences were limited. They then added perhaps there was a chance if she wanted to work with teenagers or preteens. This led her to believe that maybe when she was older she would have more to offer as a coach; thus her enthusiasm was quenched and she chose to move in a different career direction.

Was this the best advice to give a young person considering coach training? As a professional coach trainer now myself, I often reflect upon this moment and feel saddened at the limitations that were projected onto my daughter. In sharing this personal story I ask you to truly consider the coaching profession as ageless. Coaching does not require us to have any personal experience to understand where clients are coming from or to support them in where they are going.

Lifecoach.com describes life coaching as “a synergistic relationship between an accredited life coach and a client designed to tap into your full potential. Just as Olympic athletes wouldn't think of training without the added insight, objective perspective and enthusiastic support of an athletic

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coach, many of today's most successful business leaders, professionals, executives, entrepreneurs and CEOs use the services of a life coach to take their lives, careers, or businesses to the next level.”

So if it were true that a 20-year-old could only coach people younger than herself, then only Olympic athletes could coach future Olympic athletes. By the same token, a coach of CEOs would require experience as a CEO themselves. This comparison could go on and on.

The coaching profession is ageless because it is based on awareness, acceptance and awakening to what more is



possible. Experience and knowledge come from the client, not from the coach. As coaches we set the atmosphere for exploration (after all, those who saw the vision to create NASA and go to the moon were not astronauts first). The coach position is one of curiosity, openness, acceptance, an air of wonder and expansiveness. In one of the best coaching books to this day, *Co-Active Coaching*, by Davis-Black Publishing, coaching skills are described within five contexts: Listening, Intuition, Curiosity, Action/Learning, Self-Management. There is no context in which a coach requires personal experience or knowledge.

If experience is required to see, then creating would not exist without a previous creation. Our clients are creators and artists with their own lives as their canvas, and we as coaches are there at their side to provide guidance, to shine a light from various angles and to spotlight specific areas. As I see it, coaches are like lighthouses. The lighthouse does not go out to sea; it remains solidly standing on the shore for those who need assistance in navigating the shoreline.

There are many ways to describe a coach and to outline what a coach does. Having personal experience or previous experience is not a requirement. I coach men and I am a woman. I coach CEOs, mortgage brokers, financial managers, and I am none of these things. I coach clients who are older than myself, and many who are wiser, with more varied experiences than I am ever likely to have.

What is required to be a professional coach is curiosity, openness, willingness, skills and a glowing enthusiasm to shine a light for others on what they are not able to see for themselves. I still have the enthusiasm, energy and passion for this coaching profession I chose to pursue. Coaching is ageless and I am thankful for this profession that makes me feel younger every day as I support others in bringing their light to the world. I encourage young people to pursue a career in coaching regardless of past experience, because having what it takes to be a great coach has nothing to do with age. ●