**Life and Wellness Coaching**

In this article

Just about everyone has a [vision](http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/default.htm) of his or her ideal life. Maybe you've always dreamed of being a successful writer, musician, or corporate executive. But you haven’t made it a reality yet.

Then maybe what you need is a coach. Just like the people who push athletes to greatness in sports, life and [wellness coaches](http://www.webmd.com/balance/guide/life-and-wellness-coaches) push their clients to find success and satisfaction from their job or lifestyle.

**Recommended Related to Mind, Body, Spirit**

[Am I Responsible for My Aging Parents?](http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/am-i-responsible-for-my-aging-parents)

By Jenn Sturiale That whole circle-of-life thing isn't just for cartoon lions and gazelles; we humans are bound to it just as firmly. As we get older, so do our parents and other loved ones. Difficult as it is to consider, they may one day need our help -- just as we once needed theirs. The Rumor: Children should always care for their aging parents Our relationship with our elders can be complex, and sometimes we still carry the burden of familial resentments long past. Our own lives may...

[Read the Am I Responsible for My Aging Parents? article > >](http://www.webmd.com/balance/features/am-i-responsible-for-my-aging-parents)

Unlike in sports, life and wellness coaches don't focus on changing certain behaviors, like correcting a bad golf swing. According to the International Coach Federation (ICF), they develop their clients' overall strengths and abilities.

**What Is a Life Coach?**

These professionals provide the drive and guidance their clients need to improve their careers, [relationships](http://www.webmd.com/sex-relationships/default.htm), and lives. They help clients to:

* Recognize their skills and [dreams](http://www.webmd.com/sleep-disorders/guide/dreaming-overview)
* Refocus their life's goals
* Move past challenges that stand in the way of those goals

**What Is a Wellness Coach?**

They help their clients find the motivation and tools to get to their physical and emotional health goals.

Those goals might include:

* Lose a few pounds
* Eat better
* [Quit smoking](http://www.webmd.com/smoking-cessation/default.htm)
* Lower stress

Unlike a nutritionist or physical therapist, who makes specific diet and exercise suggestions, a wellness coach will help you make better general choices that fit your lifestyle.

**Why Would I Need Help?**

There are many reasons. For instance, you might consider looking for one if you:

* Need some guidance on moving forward in your career
* Want to learn how to take advantage of your own strengths and talents
* Don't know what to do about a major life decision, such as a move or promotion
* Don't have an acceptable work-life balance
* Have a lot of stress
* Aren't as healthy as you'd like to be

**How Do I Work With a Coach?**

First, you'll sit down with your life coach or wellness coach over the phone or in person. The sessions will range from 15 minutes to an hour. During that time you'll talk about what you want to accomplish.

Through the questions your coach asks, together you'll define your goals and the challenges that could stand in your way. Then you'll outline the steps you'll need to take to achieve those goals.

You'll have homework assignments -- things to think about or do between coaching sessions to work toward your goals. You might need to write in a journal or create "action plans" of things you want to accomplish.

Your life coach or wellness coach will offer support and guidance along the way. And your coach will hold you accountable for achieving your goals.

You'll work with your coach for a period of a few months or longer. The time frame depends on how often you meet and what you're hoping to accomplish.

The cost of coaching can vary. According to company web sites, a coaching session can cost from about $100 to $300 an hour or $300 to $1,000 a month.

**What Should I Look for in a Life or Wellness Coach?**

Because you would spend a lot of one-on-one time with your coach, not to mention trusting him or her with your goals, make sure the two of you are a good match. You should be comfortable sharing your life's [vision](http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/ss/slideshow-healthier-eyes) with her. And you should feel strongly that she’ll help you achieve that [vision](http://www.webmd.com/eye-health/eye-assessment/default.htm).

A coach is also different from a psychotherapist, who is a [mental health](http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/default.htm) care professional with training in medicine, [psychology](http://www.webmd.com/mental-health/guide-to-psychiatry-and-counseling), nursing, or social work. If you think that [depression](http://www.webmd.com/depression/default.htm), [anxiety](http://www.webmd.com/anxiety-panic/default.htm), or other mental health problems may be getting in the way of realizing your goals, then you may want to talk with a licensed mental health professional before you hire a coach or while working with one.

WebMD Medical Reference

View Article Sources Sources

SOURCES:

International Coach Federation: "Coaching FAQs."

LifeCoach web site: "How Much Does Life Coaching Usually Cost?"

Exceptional Coaching web site:  "Life Coaching FAQ's."

Kaplan University: "What is Health and Wellness Coaching?"

Life University: "What is a Wellness Coach?"

Reviewed by [Joseph Goldberg, MD](http://www.webmd.com/joseph-goldberg) on September 21, 2016

© 2016 WebMD, LLC. All rights reserved.