



## Questions & Answers about coaching: A former client's view.

### **Why would someone as successful as you need a coach?**

No one would ask an Olympic athlete that question, of course, but somehow those of us who are (or want to be) champions in different fields are supposed to be totally self-reliant. When I came to Tracy I had reached a high point of my professional career, my marriage and family were in good shape, and I had recently lost 30 pounds. I even had a good haircut. Rather guiltily, I wanted more from my life: I wanted to complete a creative project that I'd been dawdling on for years, and I wanted (gasp) to enjoy doing it. I wanted to be happier.

### **How do you find the right coach?**

I had had a little experience with being coached in my professional career, so I knew what I didn't need: a lot of emphasis on goals and deadlines (I'm good at those). I went on the web and searched coaching sites, and eventually communicated with three coaches who seemed sympatico. I interviewed two, and settled on Tracy because she seemed adventurous, open to a less regimented approach, and willing to use a little bit of magic. (Turned out this involved delving, via guided imagery, into the subconscious world with its toads, eyeballs, gremlins and wise Fairy Godmothers.)

### **Coaching vs. therapy: what's the difference?**

My guess is: therapists work mainly to repair damage, while coaches work to expand positive potential. Tracy, at least, always seemed to be detecting my strengths and the small successful tactics I didn't know I had. She was less interested in why I was blocked from being happily creative, and more interested in sweeping away obstacles and allowing me to do what came natural

**Do you really need a coach if you have good friends to confide in?** Maybe not if you have a smart friend who will let you talk about yourself for an hour straight at a time without changing the subject. But I don't know anyone who has a friend this good. And coaching, as done by Tracy at least, is definitely a profession with a consistent approach and pretty good empirical basis for what works.

### **What's the process like?**

For me, it was mostly on the telephone several times a month, more frequent email check-ins. Tracy kept the conversation pretty focused on the external and internal barriers to what I wanted to do. She taught me how to experience my emotions through my body. (This was at times scary). I usually had a small list of exercises or mini-goals I was trying to achieve between sessions. These were things like, noticing when I was overheating; getting into an exercise routine right after work; complimenting myself for work well done.

### **How do you know when it's over?**

One day I got an email from Tracy that said "there's nothing left for you to 'get'." The email was in response to a rather ecstatic outpouring of mine. I had achieved a few important goals, including completing a large section of my creative project and getting positive feedback on it from a respected critic. That seemed to trigger a domino effect in which a lot of former barriers and negative thinking just fell away. I was aflood with acceptance and compliments for myself and forgiveness for anyone who had ever offended.