



What is Coaching?

What image comes to mind when you hear the word “Coach?” I think of my high school field hockey coach, Ms. Baldwin, who was full of spunk. She had long blonde hair, wore tight black athletic pants, and had different color high-top Reeboks to match every outfit she owned. I picture her running up and down the grassy field holding her whistle and shouting “tips” from the sidelines. The best was when she would literally jump two feet in the air when we scored a goal. Ms. Baldwin embraced all the characteristics of a true “Coach.”

Coaches believe in you and have your best interests in mind when they guide you along. They also remind you of the techniques and drills you should practice on a daily basis. Unfortunately, after many of us leave our high school or college sports behind, we no longer receive that kind of support on a regular basis. **Take a minute to imagine your performance with the support of an ally who would remind you of your strengths, guide you through important decisions, and cheer you on.** The field of Career Coaching blossomed in the early 1990s as pioneers in the field, such as Tomas Leonard, recognized the impact of using the techniques of sports coaches in the workplace.

A Career Coach can give you direction and help focus you in a profession. She can guide you to a career that complements your passions and interests and helps identify your career goals and then creatively lead you toward them. Career Coaches listen to what is being said and what is not being said. For example, a client once claimed she wanted to quit her job because of an overbearing boss. Having worked with this client on establishing clear personal boundaries, she realized *she* needed to change the aura she emitted so as not to attract yet another micro-managing supervisor.

Have you ever been *highly* motivated about a life change, but then quickly lost momentum? What conclusions can you draw from that experience? For example, you decide a career change would be refreshing and fulfilling, and you begin to look for a new job with gusto. You attend a couple of networking events, and even update your resume But then for some reason, you don’t take action. You convince yourself that your current job isn’t all *that* terrible, but deep down you know you could do more. Perhaps fear of failure or, yes, even fear of success is blocking you from taking action. These are the moments when hiring a coach can really help you get back on track. Working together with a Career Coach is a great way to receive objective feedback, push yourself to the next level, and really live out your ambitions.

My clients experience a sense of awe when they discover the power that comes from being aware of their needs, values, and interests. People begin to feel a sense of purpose when values are clarified, needs are satisfied, and passions are realized. Positive results often create a domino effect, and as you make strides in finding fulfilling work, your finances improve, your relationships become stronger, and your health regenerates. Like my field hockey coach, Ms. Baldwin, I practice with my clients, watch their plays, and then make suggestions as to how they can “win!”

Coaching usually takes place through scheduled telephone sessions and email correspondence. My clients benefit from various personal and career assessments and completing fieldwork. I combine career assessments with personal development assessments because good coaching is holistic and focuses more on the person than the specific career goal. It is important that the coach you choose is right for you in order to reap the full benefit.

Increasingly, military spouses are starting to put energy into their own goals while they continue to support their service members and families. Hiring a coach may allow spouses to focus on their dreams, position themselves as they move, and prepare for life after the military. As the Military Spouse Coach, I empathize with the challenges they face, and I assist in creating and maintaining a strong vision for each client.

I had a client who was happily married and raising three children. She was proud of her sacrifice, but had unidentified ambitions of her own. She was discouraged with her resume and had no clear career path. While she didn’t notice it, she had a lot of unique skills: For instance, she learned Japanese when she

lived in Japan and helped organize events at her children's schools. After several coaching sessions, I encouraged her to give a book talk about Japan at a local school. While she was initially hesitant, she leaned into the discomfort and gave the talk. Not only was the school impressed with her presentation, but they asked her to consider teaching there.

As a result of this positive experience she signed up to become a substitute teacher, and eventually applied to college to gain certification in teaching English as a second language—a career she plans to pursue full time when her children are grown. That sound you heard was me jumping two feet in the air!

Krista Wells is a professional career coach; she ensures that her military spouse clients consistently reap the benefits of her proven expertise in dealing with career and life transitions. Through powerful support and encouragement, her clients achieve greater balance and fulfillment, and embrace military life with passion!

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If you think you could benefit from the support of a Coach, these great coaching resources offer more information: The **International Coaching Federation (ICF)**, www.coachfederation.org, explains coaching in more detail and provides a list of qualified Coaches. I received my training from **Coach U**, www.coachu.com, a global leader in Coach training. The Coach U webpage also offers a comprehensive list of Coaches. If you are looking for a Coach in a specific area, go to **Find A Coach**. If you would like to work with me or have any questions, feel free to write: Krista@militaryspousecoach.com.

