

Health Coaching

*Answers to Questions about Health Coaching
By Christina Marshall, President, Totally Coached, Inc.*

Q: What are key coaching questions a wellness professional can ask to find out what the coachee wants or needs and engages the coachee in a more substantial conversation?

A: There's really only one key question, though it has many variations.

It's: "What do you want?"

A variation would be "What do you want that's most important to you?"

And we can look at that light of many time frames, from the immediate moment to looking out over a lifetime. As an Intrinsic Coach, I would say that it's equally important to look at the many questions we ask over and over that are not productive, that make the coachee passive (and therefore put ourselves into situations where our only alternative is the "try harder" approach), and make us responsible for the thinking required to create someone else's behavior change...an impossibility.

A good example are the strictly information seeking questions we ask because we're trying to figure out a solution for the other person. Questions that are information seeking are fine when we need to be diagnostic. Otherwise, they have limited value and, more often, inhibit the results we are seeking rather than enable them.

An example is the question, "What did you do in the past that was successful?" It's a commonly asked question that engages the coachee to produce information. The problem is that, once produced, it's up to health and wellness professional to create solutions with the answer, something we all know doesn't work very well.

Further, because information seeking questions propel the coaching's thinking to go backward instead of forward, it also propels them to think more passively and engage recall rather than new thinking toward the change they want to create.

An Intrinsic Coach would rather ask, "From what you already learned about yourself [about dieting], what is important to keep in mind as we work together toward accomplishing your goals." That gets them working!

"What do you want that's most important to you?"