

How Coaching is Different from Therapy

Relationship coaching is a professional client-focused service. The individual or couple is assumed to be healthy, powerful, and able to achieve relationship goals with effective support, information, and guidance. There are significant and sometimes contrasting differences between therapy and coaching. These differences better highlight the strengths of coaching.

In short, coaching is a results and goal-oriented methodology. Coaching assumes the client is functional and fully capable of success. Meanwhile (psycho)therapy is a healing profession trained and licensed to diagnose and treat mental, emotional, and psychological disorders. Coaching and therapy can complement each other very well. It could be said that coaching starts where therapy ends, making coaching a good fit for personal growth-oriented therapists.

THERAPY	COACHING
Assumes the client needs healing	Assumes the client is whole
Rooted in medicine, psychiatry	Rooted in sports, business, personal growth venues
Works with people to achieve self-understanding and emotional healing	Works to move people to a higher level of functioning
Focuses on feelings and past events	Focuses on actions and the future
Explores the root of problems	Focuses on solving problems
Works to bring the unconscious into consciousness	Works with the conscious mind
Works for internal resolution of pain and to let go of old patterns	Works for external solutions to overcome barriers, learn new skills and implement effective choices

Adapted from Hayden and Whitworth, 1995