



## How to choose an executive coach

Thankfully, we are now in a world where senior leaders view executive coaching as an investment in their success. Gone are the days when you were told you needed a coach and that was not necessarily a good thing.

Unhelpfully, there are hundreds of coaching niches and thousands upon thousands of coaches out there, and there is no unified code or standard for executive coaching.

How do you know how to choose the right one for you?

Curiously, seeking guidance on this from that most ubiquitous source of information, the World Wide Web, yields a myriad of advice that seems to me to be somewhat skewed towards that particular giver of advice-who-just-so-happens-to-be-an-executive-coach themselves!

Before you read on I have something to declare: I am too an executive coach. However, my advice to you is simple: Use you head, heart and gut to make your choice.

### Use your head

Your coach needs to be able to work with the **outcomes** you are seeking. For example, it's no use selecting a business development coach if you have writers' block. Look for someone with proven experience in the areas you want to work on, evidenced by testimonials, can evidence relevant successes in the real world and over what timeframe that happened. Then understand how they will get to know you, your context and your challenges. This may be someone from the same industry background if that is important to you, or maybe not; sometimes a fresh perspective can be, well, refreshing.

More importantly understand their **processes** for understanding you: for example, are you going to be inundated with psychometric questionnaires (high focus on the coach's process), or simply listened to (low focus on the coach's process, high focus on you)? You might also want to know your coach is in coaching themselves and that they have qualifications and/or accreditation from one of the coaching bodies such as the International Coach Federation, the Association for Coaching, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council or the Academy of Executive Coaching (other coaching bodies are available!) Such bodies have codes of ethics such as requiring coaches to be under professional supervision.

### Listen to your heart

Coaches are there to help you make better choices in whatever you are seeking to change. Different coaches will do this in very different ways; they might work anywhere on a spectrum from non-directive through to directive; from purely accepting you as you are by listening deeply to you, through to confronting your challenges and helping you learn how to learn new ways of doing and being; from gently evoking change within you to robustly provoking you to do things differently.

That your needs will be matched by their process is very important. If you choose an accepting/listening coach, you are likely to have some great conversations, but they might not have much purpose. Choosing a provocative coach may be too challenging. This is a careful balance that just using your head will not resolve. You will only work through this by talking with them or having a sample coaching session from them. Look out for their ability to listen deeply and accept you as you are, go beyond listening by confronting the challenges you have, and help you make better choices.

That coaches must keep your conversations confidential is a must-have. As is building trust between you. The best way to assess the **relationship** you seek with your coach, it is important to meet with them perhaps several times before committing to the contract. If you only use your head, you might miss whether the **chemistry** is right or not.

### Go with your gut

Not all coaching relationships gel. Coaches often hear, "My last coach didn't work out, I should have gone with my instinct."

So yes, use your head and listen to your heart. Ultimately something down inside your gut will let you know you've picked the right coach.

Choose wisely.

Call Jeremy on 07766 420550 to find out more about our executive coaching offer.

*Helping you be the leader you want to be*