

Coaches talk clients to new growth, action, connection

By Cara Lopez Lee

To improve business revenue, advance a career or pursue a new purpose in life, many area professionals hire a coach.

Real estate agent Cherlyn Boyce hired Denver coach Donna Feldman, who helped change her negative thoughts to positive ones. "I was worried I was getting too busy, and Donna said, 'Don't say you're too busy. It's like telling the universe you don't want any more clients.' So I just said, 'It's all going to work out,' and kept getting more clients."

In 1996, Carole Billingham of Estes Park left a career in securities sales to attend CoachU and become a master certified spiritual and business coach.

Spirituality is integral to her work. Like most coaches, she usually conducts sessions by phone. She often begins with a guided meditation, to help clients let go of the day's problems and to focus on goals. Then she asks, "Why do you want to achieve those goals? Why do you want to make a million dol-



Carole Billingham incorporates spirituality, meditation and goal-setting into her coaching.

lars? Why do you want that promotion? If we peel the layers off, it's

not about the money. Usually it's about feeling peaceful."

Happy and prospering

For client Rebecca Baumgartner, Billingham often focused on personal matters, as a way to improve business success. "If your home life isn't good, your business isn't going to be good," Baumgartner said. Since she hired a coach, her income as a California real estate broker increased from \$100,000 to \$700,000 a year.

Coaches offer many specialties. Will Matthews' company, Second-Wind Performance

Results Coaching, primarily works with financial services professionals. Matthews, who is president of the Denver Coach Federation, helped a client who was failing at work create a plan to win a three-month sales contest. "He went from someone who was almost forced to leave the industry to becoming part of an elite group that celebrated a weekend at a high-end resort," Matthews said.

Matthews left a lucrative career in business management to become a coach. "It has become a passion for me, that when I see that someone has amazing potential, I want to be part of that process."

Feldman, a former Jefferson County high school teacher, joined the coaching profession in 2002, adding to the sector's explosive growth. In 1996, at the first meeting of the International Coach Federation, about 250 coaches attended. A 2007 ICF study estimated now there are at least 30,000 coaches worldwide.

Unfulfilled teaching, Feldman switched to business and life coaching

because she loves working with, talking to and helping people. She enrolled in the Coaches Training Institute to become certified.

Listening at many levels is emphasized during coaching schooling. For example, it's what clients avoid talking about that can be as important as what they are talking about.

Asking powerful questions also is key. "What will you do? When will you do it? How will I know? Without those three things, the accountability doesn't happen," Feldman said.

Another way to relate

Dee Funkhouser, a labor market expert at the Colorado Department of Labor & Employment, believes coaching is popular because workplace relationships have changed.

"Coaching is a response to the increased learning and sophistication required on the job, and the reduction

in the length of relationships at work," she said. Today, large companies, like IBM and Verizon, use coaches to enhance employee performance.

Coaching rates vary. A series of three or four private sessions ranges from \$100 to \$1,000. Many coaches also offer workshops and motivational speaking.

Coaching is a fledgling industry, and no license is required. However, the ICF sets professional standards and requires members to receive certification through approved training programs.

Before working with a coach, the ICF suggests learning about coaching, having objectives for working with a coach, interviewing three coaches before selecting one and finding a connection with a coach that "feels" right.

For information on becoming a coach, contact ICF online at www.coachfederation.org or the Denver Coach Federation at www.denvercoach.com.

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