

Life Coaching

A Manual for
Helping Professionals

Dave Ellis

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Chapter One

The Power and Possibility of Life Coaching

Discovering passion, unlocking brilliance

The purpose of this book is to describe a specific type of life coaching called, “Life Coaching from Falling Awake.” In general, life coaching is a process whereby the coach assists the client to improve the quality of his or her life. Of course, this is a purpose similar to what people receive through counseling, consulting, teaching, ministry, and friendship. The difference is that life coaching provides this partnership without any agenda other than the client’s. This career is relatively new.

In 1996, I set a goal that by the year 2006 there would be 10,000 practicing life coaches. At the time, I thought that was doable but unlikely. Now, it looks like a reality. I also had a goal that by 2001 many people would want life coaching as much as they want a house. I’ve met a few people for whom that is also a reality. For me, having this kind of a partner—someone who is totally committed to helping me achieve what I want in all areas of my life—makes a huge difference. If necessary, I’d give up my house, rent an apartment, or even live in a tent so that I could hire a life coach.

Life coaches assist people to discover what a great life they already have, what they want in every area of their lives for the rest of their lives, and ways to unlock their own brilliance to achieve their dreams. To do that, life coaches usually meet with clients many hours a month over several years, assisting them to achieve the life of their dreams by discovering their passions and uncovering their genius.

By meeting with a life coach, people can create and achieve goals in every area of life. This happens through frequent contact with a

life coach who serves as the clients' full partner in their personal transformation.

Life coaching is not just a collection of techniques—it's a form of relationship that's both confidential and life changing. People usually reveal more to their life coach than to their friends, counselors, or even to their spouse. Through this relationship, clients can move quickly from problems to solutions, from insight to action, from the status quo to completely new outcomes in their lives.

Life coaches provide a service for people who are already happy and successful. Basically, life coaching clients have got life "handled." As a life coach, I am committed to bring these people to that deep, soulful sense that they are free—free from their obligations, their limitations, their fears, and any other obstacles to realize their full passion and brilliance. I don't know of a greater gift that we can bring to people.

Our clients can quickly create the life of their dreams

I think it's possible to learn to be with people in such a way that their lives transform *quickly*. By the word *quickly*, I don't mean in a few days, but I do mean in a few weeks, a few months, and absolutely within a few years. What I offer in this book are ways that you and I can be this way with more people, more consistently.

We succeed as life coaches when our clients feel empowered and valuable—confident, secure, and filled with new options. When clients leave their sessions with a renewed burst of energy, then we know the coaching is working. And when we're skilled in the art of life coaching, clients can experience this in a five-minute interaction as well as in a five-hour session.

You can dramatically improve your ability to be with people, such that in a few months they can authentically report that they won the lottery of life. As a life coach, you can assist people in a short time to authentically say, "Today, I'm living the life of my dreams."

Life coaches trade in miracles

It is miraculous to me what people can create when given the opportunity to solve their own problems without advice—when given the possibility and support to create the life of their choosing.

Life coaching is an amazing career. I don't see any profession that does more for people. For over 25 years, I've coached people and I've received life coaching. From the conversations I've had with my coaches, I've dramatically shifted my daily activities. I've changed how much I delegate, how much I work, how much I spend, how I take care of my health, how I relate to my wife, how much pleasure I experience, how I contribute to people, and much more.

I believe that anyone who receives life coaching can experience this same level of transformation. People can have a wonderful life almost instantly no matter what their circumstances—no matter the state of their health or their finances, their home or their relationships. With a life coach, they can overcome almost any obstacle to a wonderful life. Clients can leave a life coaching session with dozens of viable options for getting past obstacles—including many options that are wildly creative.

Life coaches are unbiased partners who support their clients' agendas and keep bringing them back to a conversation of 1) celebration, 2) dreams (what they passionately desire), and 3) actions (ways they can fulfill their desires). You and I can be life coaches—people with the rare and precious job of keeping that conversation alive.

As much as anything else you bring to a life coaching relationship, you bring the miraculous possibility that your clients can become totally alive. This is a way of being that people very seldom experience. Think about the number of people you meet who regularly enjoy deep intimacy, vibrant health, full celebration, and daily ecstasy. As a life coach, this is what you help clients create. In doing that, you are probably giving as much as one person can give another.

Please let in my enthusiasm about life coaching. On every page of this book, I want to communicate how enamored I am with this new career and how much it benefits people. Opening up to the power and possibility of this new profession can propel you toward full effectiveness as a life coach.

Major benefits of life coaching

Life coaches create value by assisting clients to solve problems. But if that's all that we do, then our clients continually need problems in order to keep working with us.

Efficient problem-solving is only part of the power and possibility of life coaching. When we coach from a larger context, we can bring all of the following benefits as well.

Constant celebration

Life coaches promote celebration and a deep appreciation of life. We encourage our clients to truly see how fortunate they are in every area of life.

Many people go through their life not realizing how wealthy they are in comparison to all of the other people on the planet. Most people don't appreciate how healthy and loved they are. One of the jobs of a life coach is to help our clients wake up to what a great life they have.

A larger vision

Life coaches can bring a vision of people that goes beyond their vision of themselves. When we see others as bigger than they see themselves to be, we empower them. We imagine our clients experiencing profound shifts in their lives and generating projects that will outlast them for many lifetimes. We listen to our clients and take their dreams seriously in a way that no one ever has before.

You and I have the potential to be with people in such a way that their lives are altered forever. When we go beyond what they *have* and *do* to who they *are*, clients can see themselves as creative, intelligent, loving, and generous. That's really how I see my clients, and I don't have to make it up. I ask you to bring this attitude to everyone you coach. And if it happens that you don't see someone this way, then do whatever you need to do so that you can—or get him a different coach.

Inspired creativity

A life coach consistently listens, speaks, and occasionally asks questions in a way that draws forth his client's genius and creativity. For any given problem, clients can generate a long list of great solutions. Often this happens when the life coach simply brings full listening and full commitment to the interaction and just invites people to stay in the inquiry: "Well, what could you do about this problem? Okay, now what else might you do?"

Sometimes life coaching seems like a think tank where clients are constantly creating and inventing new options. Life coaching is about people generating their own answers, not looking outside of themselves for solutions. This process is not about teaching what you already know or about clients acting as students. Instead, life coaching is empowering people to invent something new—to think something they've never thought before and to say something they've never said before.

Expanded possibilities

Our clients can expand their sense of what's possible to be, do, and have during their lifetimes. If people who enter life coaching have a common denominator, it's probably a spark of realization that life can be ten times better than it is now, even if life is currently great.

Part of my job as a coach is to bring forth possibilities that aren't immediately obvious to people, no matter what arena of life we're discussing.

Maintaining appropriate balance in the life coaching relationship

The life coaching relationship is intentionally out of balance in terms of intimacy. The client purposely does most of the talking, and therefore most of the self-revelation, struggling, and self-examination. As a coach, you might do a little of that for yourself as a model to the client, but you are primarily there to facilitate a transformational process for someone else.

This lack of balance in the life coaching relationship happens by design and creates value for the client. Our clients have few people in their lives who are as willing to assist them as we are.

Most other kinds of helping relationships are also out of balance in this way, no matter whether it involves a priest, counselor, physician, or consultant. And although helping relationships are usually out of balance to some degree, there are ways that you can enhance the coaching relationship by bringing it into more balance.

Share

By making time for your own sharing and doing this regularly, you can match some of the client's vulnerability with your authenticity. Learning to share briefly and deeply can help you achieve some level of balance in a way that doesn't take too much time.

Carefully offer examples from your own life

When I coach, I only rarely illustrate a point or explain an option by giving an example from my own life. This is a conscious choice on my part. In giving examples, it's too easy for me to take the floor and steer the conversation away from the client. Also, when listening to my examples, clients might start thinking that I'm brilliant

and really have my life together and that the way to solve their problem is to do it the way I did it in my example. That's not what I want. Instead, I want people to generate their own options, create their own solutions, and leave a coaching session thinking that *they* are brilliant and have *their* lives together.

I know life coaches who routinely give examples from their own lives, and this seems to work. My suggestion is that when you bring your own examples to life coaching, that you do so consciously, carefully, and briefly.

Speak about yourself in a contributing way

When you share or debrief during a coaching session, you can speak about your goals and achievements in a way that contributes to your client and does not sound like bragging.

To begin, ask that your client focus primarily on your excitement and your joy about your life, not on your specific accomplishments. You can even make a request such as, "I want to tell you a little about what's been happening with me, and I don't want to sound pompous or grandiose. Mainly, I'm just thrilled about the wonderful life I get to live, and my purpose is to hold out the possibility that any of us can create the life of our dreams."

Also, give the client an accurate picture of your accomplishments to avoid sounding like you're boasting. For example, "One of my goals is to raise \$100 million to end world hunger, and I am not doing this alone. Many people have taken on this goal with me." When talking about a long-term project, speak about results to date and how far you have yet to go.

Nurture yourself

Please take time to nurture yourself. When you do, you have more to offer clients. Discover ways to balance your life so that you are receiving as much nurturing outside of your coaching

This manual is specifically designed for therapists, counselors and other helping professionals who are looking to add life coaching techniques to their portfolio of skills. Dave Ellis, author of *Falling Awake*, has produced a step-by-step practical guide to turning your natural people-helping skills into a profitable life coaching business.

Life coaching is not therapy, but many of the qualities that therapists possess, and the techniques they use, naturally lend themselves to a life coaching approach. As Ellis advocates a more awakening approach than most authors of life coaching books, this book will naturally appeal to therapists and counselors used to conducting therapeutic interventions. Life coaching is a fast growing profession and many think it will replace therapy as the primary intervention to get people to live more positive, happy and goal-oriented lives.

About the Author

Over the last 25 years, **Dave Ellis** has helped over four million people create a more wonderful life through his workshops, books and life coaching. He is the author of seven books including *Becoming a Master Student*, which is the best-selling college textbook in America. His latest book, *Falling Awake*, is written for the clients of life coaches. He now facilitates workshops, teaches life coaches and is president of The Brande Foundation.

“What an excellent book! Life coaching has grown in popularity during the past few years because of its jargon-free and no-nonsense techniques which are, nonetheless, easy to put into practice. I am positive that the contents of this book will prove to be a valuable resource for professionals as well as giving positive guidance to those seeking personal help.”

Ursula Markham

Founder of The Hypnothink Foundation



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