

Major Differences Between Coaching and Therapy*

Coaching	Therapy
Coaching supports the client through the process of reaching a specific desired outcome or result.	Therapy supports the client to reach their full potential or to develop better coping mechanisms for problems in living.
The coach-client relationship is mainly <i>empowering</i> in nature.	The therapist-client relationship is often <i>reparative</i> in nature.
The coach uses their energy primarily to create a milieu focused on action and results.	The therapist uses their energy primarily to bring a quality of witnessing to the client and to create a safe container in which healing can take place.
Coaches and their clients have adult-to-adult relationships. Coaching works much more in the here and now and uses the relationship to enhance focus and outcome rather than as a means to ensure healing.	Many psychotherapeutic approaches are designed to help the child-in-the-adult to heal. Making use of transference to bring unhealed issues into the here and now often results in a power imbalance between the therapist and client.
Coaching is primarily focused on improving effectiveness and performance. The client's history and family relationships are generally only explored if they are relevant to coaching goals and are much less likely to be explored in depth.	Therapy may involve deep exploration of the client's personal history and relationships with family of origin and other key relationships with parents and other family members. These topics may be only tangentially relevant to effectiveness.
Emotions are generally only explored if they arise in the process of moving ahead toward coaching goals. A coach is not expected to have advanced training in working with emotional disturbances.	Working with deep and often intense emotions is common in many forms of therapy. A therapist is expected to be skilled in guiding the client through serious emotional challenges.

*Adapted from *Organizational Consulting: A Gestalt Approach* (1987) by Edwin C. Nevis