



The Life Coaching Handbook

Everything You Need To Be An
Effective Life Coach

Curly Martin

“Absolutely terrific!”
Fiona Harrold, author of *Be Your Own Life Coach*

Acclaim for *The Life Coaching Handbook*

“A first class manual, and a must for every aspiring coach.
Absolutely terrific!”

– **Fiona Harrold**, author of *Be Your Own Life Coach*.

“Curly Martin’s *The Life Coaching Handbook* is inspiring. It is a must-have book for people and organisations focused on turning visions into reality. Most importantly she has identified techniques which will benefit most individuals when setting goals and targets and provides an holistic and considered approach to every dimension of one’s life.”

– **Mary McEntee**, Supplies Manager, PALL.

“*The Life Coaching Handbook* is a must for anyone considering or wanting to become a Life Coach! It is written clearly, simply and logically with chapter upon chapter of great tips on how to move forward ... it is also a book you can dip into time and time again when you need reminders or advice on specifics.”

– **Fiona Fraser**, Human Resources Manager.

“Curly is, without doubt, a major talent in her field. I found her book, from the standpoint of a small business owner and personal development enthusiast, both inspirational and challenging. Her depth of knowledge is clear, yet is imparted with candour and an appreciation that her readership will be from all walks of life. If her overall aim is to make one stop and think and then take positive action about one’s coaching career or aspirations, then reading *The Life Coaching Handbook* may well be the catalyst which helps many people to take those essential first steps on the journey to their future ... I feel certain that the book will enjoy the success it deserves.”

– **Ted Edmondson**, Independent Distributor, *The Book People*.

“Indispensable. Since I first picked up this book I have returned to it again and again. An excellent sourcebook of new ideas, packed with good advice.”

– **Georg Guy**, Cabin Services Manager and Airline Trainer of Pilots and Cabin Crew.

“The ideas contained in this book are brilliant, applicable to any coach in any field, and to everyone who wants to improve their life!”

– *Carmine De Ieso*, Australian International Tennis Coach.

“It seemed quite a bold statement that the book could guide you to becoming a life coach, but I honestly believe it will. It is clear and concise and very easy to understand and then implement.”

– *Paul Byrne*, Sales Director, *Parity*.

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**To my husband Pete,
my mother and my sisters with love**

Author's Note

Since writing this book in 2000/2001 the life coaching profession has moved from obscurity into the light of the public domain in Europe. Life coaching is frequently in the media, with life coaches enthusiastically producing press releases, presenting reality television shows, and radio programmes all actively raising the awareness of our amazing profession. Blue chip companies and small businesses alike, after hiring life coaches to improve the work/life balance of their employees and reduce work-related stress, have also discovered an increase in performance, motivation and results.

To support my readers, I now offer an accredited life coach training course based upon the principles within this book. You will watch demonstrations and practice the coaching models described here. When you qualify, you join an elite group of achievers and you will be able to declare to your clients that you have trained with a pioneer of life coaching. You can find details of the life coaching diploma course on page 201.

Life coaching is an exceptionally rewarding, passionate, exciting, challenging and enlightening profession and I consider myself blessed and honoured to be part of this life-changing revolution. Join us and make the world a better place, starting with your first client.

*Curly Martin
June 2005*

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Introduction

*'Life coaching is about transformation –
from a caterpillar into a butterfly'*

Life coaching is about gap analysis that closes the gap between life and dreams.

Life coaching can be compared to motorway maintenance and construction. It fills and removes the ruts of life to build a smooth surface. Then life's journey takes the traveller to the destinations that they really want to visit, rather than remain in the slow lane of inactivity, drifting without purpose or direction.

If you want to make a difference in your life and the lives of others, become a life coach. This is a profession that brings joy to the client and the coach, and this handbook shows you how you can achieve these amazing rewards.

If you are considering life coaching as a career, this book will be your coach. It reveals how coaching works, how to start and grow your own practice and how to market your services.

If you are already a life coach, this book is your reference guide and reminder of how to build and develop your practice.

The book is in two parts. The first, **The Coaching Process**, covers the fundamentals of life coaching, the important differences between coaching on the one hand and counselling and therapy on the other. It describes the essential basic skills of great communication that are crucial to your success.

You will discover a step-by-step model to help you turn enquiries into paying clients, who are the lifeblood of any practice. The model is designed to help you to talk about your profession in an interesting way to create enthusiasm and desire. There are ideas on one-line conversation openers to help you hook the interest of every casual enquirer.

You are guided through a life coaching session and offered an approach to use during the first coaching call. This ensures that you fully understand your clients' aims and goals and it can be used to help clients identify their individual goals. Use it to make your life coaching process easy and effective.

The second part, **Advanced Life Coaching Skills**, identifies selected Neuro-Linguistic Programming techniques that are particularly valuable within the coaching context. State control, for both you and your clients, is described so that you coach from a peak state that you can access whenever you need it.

Rapport-building skills are extensively covered through representational systems (Chapter Eleven), Milton language (Chapter Thirteen), Meta-language (Chapter Fourteen), Meta-programs (Chapter Fifteen) and metaphors for life coaching (Chapter Sixteen). Chapter Seventeen (Spiral Coaching) covers thinking patterns and how to identify and use them to best coaching advantage. Within the second part of the book there are also different methods that you will use with each different client, and each of the methods described works independently of the others. When developing your practice, you need to be flexible and have the ability to select the model or method best suited for each client-coach relationship. For one client you may decide to concentrate on the Spiral Coaching model's thinking patterns. You may need to develop your relationship with a new client and concentrate on utilising the benefits of representational systems, whereas if you need leverage to motivate a client you could identify his or her Meta-programs. Interestingly, during a coaching programme with a client, you may employ all the different methods portrayed.

Chapter Eighteen contains practical advice drawn from long experience of actually operating a successful practice. This is where you find the "trade secrets" and some valuable marketing information.

The final chapter looks at specialisations within the profession. It identifies the main categories of specialisation and describes how you can use skills from other professions and industries within your life coaching practice.

Use this book as a guide for creating and sustaining your practice. Use it to learn or enhance your skills for working with clients. Use it to start a small, part-time practice that you can gradually develop until you have a client base that will sustain a full-time profession.

Use this book as a resource for coaching yourself towards a more fulfilled life. It will help you to reach the goals you have dreamed of and show you how to remove any beliefs that have prevented you from achieving your desires. To use the book as a personal self-development tool, you should read the chapters in sequence and practise each technique in turn until it is mastered.

Read on to explore the fascinating and rewarding world of life coaching. I should warn you that it is easy to become a life coach. Even as you read this handbook you will begin to think, feel and act like a coach. From there it is one small step to a future as a professional life coach of excellence.

Section 1

The Coaching Process

Chapter One

Life Coaching Defined

'The first step towards success is knowing what it is that you aim to do'

Synopsis

Life coaching is a career and an ethical profession. The life coach uses the power of commitment to enable their clients to achieve beneficial and measurable results in all areas of their lives. Life coaching is a holistic process that has the power to balance and harmonise life.

Coaching. Is it a new phenomenon or an old profession dressed up to look exciting? Life coaching is one and both at the same time. It uses some of the skills of the old coaching styles combined with innovation. It concentrates on the person's whole life instead of just one area.

Conventional coaching tends to be specific in its approach. This means that the coach specialises in one profession or a single specialised area of expertise. Physical or sports coaches, for example, usually come from within that profession. They have proved their success as a professionally-paid player or athlete. In tennis, the best coaches of the top-ranking players have themselves been tennis professionals.

Football also follows this pattern. In the major leagues the coaches have come from the field of football, literally. These, then, are examples of the traditional types of coach. They design the physical training programmes and coach their clients accordingly. They have expertise and experience in the skill required. Then they endeavour to advise and coach their protégés in this skill.

During the 1980s the business coaches arrived in the guise of management or financial consultants. They are specialists in the

business world who are usually hired when profits are going down. They have a role when companies have been through re-engineering, or a new product is to be launched. They are retained on a temporary basis, for instance, when a company identifies some missing skills that may not justify a permanent addition to staff. Consultants usually spend their time establishing facts, preparing reports, designing the new process or procedure and helping the client to implement approved proposals.

Management consultants contribute at least 75 per cent of the plan of action. The same contribution levels of 75 per cent, or more, are found in the sports-coaching role.

Life coaching is the converse of this: at least 75 per cent of the action plan comes from the client. An expert in a particular field can do life coaching but someone who has no specific knowledge of the skills required can just as effectively perform it. Indeed, some of the most successful life coaches do not have the expertise in the specialist fields of their clients.

Expertise in many trades or professions is not the role of the life coach. Laura Berman Fortgang, life coach and author of *Take Yourself to the Top*, writes, "I am your partner," and adds, "coaching is holistic." Another life coach, Eileen Mulligan, wrote in *Life Coaching – change your life in seven days*, "Life coaches are there to push you to change your life for the better." There is no mention in either book about the need for qualifications or expertise in any given field beyond that of life coaching itself.

So what is a life coach? Some life coaches believe that it is about advising clients. Some believe that it involves guiding clients to find their own answers. A few claim that you must have expertise within the fields where you coach. Spiritually focused life coaches say that it is all about "connection." Life coaches with therapy backgrounds believe that the process includes counselling or therapy.

In reality, life coaching can be all of the above. It depends on the needs of each individual client and the skills of the coach. When you use the techniques offered here, you can develop your own style and proficiencies to become a highly sought-after life coach.

Despite this diversity of approach, most life coaches agree that it is about achieving results. Most people, if asked, “Is there something you’ve been thinking about doing but have yet to start or complete?” will answer, “Yes.” Then they will tell you exactly what it is and how long they have wanted to do it. They may even give you all the reasons why they have not done it. The life coach closes the gap between *thinking* about doing and actually doing.

Clients tend to underperform because there is conflict between their desires and their value systems. They depend on these values and belief systems for guidance, although many, developed in their childhood, may no longer serve them in adulthood. Nevertheless, people still judge and act by these obsolete principles.

Some life coaches seek to address these barriers before working with the client’s desired outcomes. In the long term, any conflict between desires and beliefs should be investigated but, initially, the job of the life coach is to get results – results, results and nothing but results!

A life coach who spends initial time with clients on anything other than results will diminish the impact of the coaching process by converting it from a client-and-coach relationship to a client-and-therapist situation. This is not on the life coaching agenda.

When the life coach focuses on results or outcomes and enables their clients to define and achieve these with ease, then the clients can eventually be guided to examine their beliefs and values. It is not a primary function of the life coach to change the client’s beliefs and values. Although changes in negative or undesirable values and beliefs can accelerate the achievement of outcomes, such changes should be addressed only with care and after a solid working relationship has been developed.

The main role of the life coach is to enable and empower the client. This is achieved using the “power of commitment” as leverage. Once clients agree to an activity they are committed to do it. This commitment is powerfully linked with the client’s identity. The life coach taps into this power.

The power of commitment relies on the social reinforcement of people conforming to who they say they are. It uses the power of honesty. Clients become dishonest if they do not fulfil their commitment to the coach. Humans are conditioned to believe that people who do not fulfil their commitments are not to be trusted. They are seen as shifty, unreliable and devious, as liars and cheats. Clients do not want their life coach to think they are any of these so they will move heaven and earth to achieve the actions, goals and targets that they have agreed.

Guilt is another factor in the power of commitment. When clients do not achieve the goal, they punish themselves with guilt. This self-flagellation gives them far more pain than anything the coach can inflict. Humans usually have a driving need for pleasure and a driving need to avoid pain. The pain-and-pleasure continuum used as a powerful leveraging tool can ensure that clients achieve results. It is a simple process but a highly effective one in getting breakthroughs for the client.

Life coaching helps clients in every aspect of their lives. Unlike sports coaching or business consultancy, it is holistic and considers every dimension of a client's life. This includes business, career, health, social relationships, wealth and worth in contribution. If life coaching concentrates on just one area in isolation, and develops only that area, then the client's life can become unbalanced. When clients overachieve at work but underachieve in personal relationships, the negative effects of their personal relationships can adversely affect their performance at work.

When clients exceed in business success, but ignore their health, they can develop ulcers or serious illnesses. In the cyclical pattern of life, this means that they must take time away from the business and the business may suffer as a consequence. The life coach can advantageously use this effect when persuading high achievers to look to their health and the contribution areas of their lives.

Conversely, if clients focus on their physical body to the extent that they miss or skip work in order to maintain the body beautiful, they may end up with financial problems. Financial problems will cause them to worry and lose sleep. Loss of sleep will have an adverse impact on their body beautiful and this angle can be the

coach's leverage to encourage these clients to focus on financial matters. Life is wonderfully cyclical, which gives the life coach great areas of persuasion when finding compelling reasons for clients to follow through on actions that will lead to achievement of goals in all areas of their lives.

Bringing balance and achievement into the lives of their clients produces rewards for the life coach, too. Helping clients to define goals in each life area and then working to help them to achieve results also brings an awareness of the importance of balance and harmony into the coach's life.

Life coaching is a relationship of interdependency between coach and client. It is a relationship based on honesty, respect and the life coach's unwavering beliefs in the client's unlimited potential.

Summary

- The physical or sports coach specialises in the body and a specific sport
- The business consultant defines problems, provides answers and helps to implement them within the business environment
- Life coaching focuses on results, results and nothing but results
- Life coaching works on all areas and aspects of life
- The power of commitment is the accelerator of success

Chapter Two

Life Coaching Explained

'Life Coaching removes the interference that stands between clients and the achievement of their potential'

Synopsis

It is your job as the life coach to help to identify the interference and remove it. It has nothing to do with giving advice or imposing knowledge on your clients. Life coaching is about removing the obstructions and not adding any new ones. Concentrate on balancing all the areas of your clients' lives. Believe that your clients have all the resources they need to solve their own problems and that it is your job to help them remove the obstacles that prevent this happening.

In the book *The Inner Game of Tennis* Tim Gallwey states that coaching can be outlined with the formula, "Potential minus Interference equals Performance." It is your job as a life coach to help your client to identify the interference and remove it. That's it!

Life coaching has absolutely nothing to do with giving advice, and this can be tough on you when you know the answer. And, more often than not, you *will* know the answer. Your strength lies in allowing your clients to find the answers for themselves.

This is good news for coaches because giving advice is not as easy as it seems. The advice-giving route carries huge responsibilities. If you think you always have to supply an answer, you will become very stressed and burdened with unnecessary troubles.

To ensure that you grasp the importance of this point, let me repeat: coaching is not about *advising* your clients. Many of the most outstanding coaches have little or no knowledge or experience in the areas where they coach their clients. This absence of

knowledge provides a clean sheet for the client to work *with* and *for* the coach and eliminates limiting beliefs about the client's potential or problems. Limiting beliefs are a main component of interference and are covered in Chapter Four.

Also, coaching is not about imposing knowledge or information on your clients. You must master your desire to tell your clients how they should do something. An outstanding coach elicits the answers from the clients as they guide them towards self-discovery. This may sound strange but, if you truly believe that your clients have all the resources they need, then all you have to do is to help them find the best pathway to successful results. Your clients will always be more committed to ideas and plans that they propose for themselves.

So life coaching is simple. All you have to do is to remove the obstructions without adding new ones as you concentrate on helping your clients to gain balance in all areas of their lives.

The obstructions are different for every client and also for every coach. It is these differences that make coaching such fun and such a challenge. An obstruction is anything that prevents your clients from achieving their potential for greatness. The biggest obstruction will be your clients' belief systems. Chapter Four deals solely with matters of belief. Here are some common types of obstructions that you will encounter while coaching.

No clear vision or mission. Your clients don't have a vision, a clear picture of what they want, or a mission statement (a sentence or two about who they are and what they stand for). Successful coaching relies on your clients determining exactly what they want to achieve in your coaching sessions or in their life.

Outcomes obscured. Some clients may come to you with several goals or outcomes. If they do not sound committed to achieving one of the outcomes it is possible that it belongs to their partner or another family member and is not their own. You must help your clients identify what they want and how they will personally gain once their own outcomes are achieved.

What's it about?

This complete guide to life coaching reveals:

- what life coaching IS
- how to coach yourself and coach others *effectively*
- how to create and sustain a successful coaching practice

Leading you through a comprehensive programme of Advanced Life Coaching Skills, it contains key NLP-based techniques that include:

- State Control
- Rapport-building
- Metaphor
- Meta-programs
- The Meta Model
- The Milton Model
- Spiral Coaching

Who's it for?

The Life Coaching Handbook is the essential guide for prospective life coaches, but it is also designed as a key sourcebook for:

- Training professionals
- Human resources managers
- NLP practitioners
- Counsellors
- The curious

What do experts say about it?

"Curly is, without doubt, a major talent in her field."

Ted Edmondson, Independent Distributor, The Book People

"A book you can dip into time and time again."

Fiona Fraser, Human Resources Manager

"Curly's book is an excellent handbook for novice or experienced life coaches."

Rapport

"If you want to become a life coach, or just want to know more about life coaching, then get this book."

Terri Bodell, NACHP

"... an absolute must for all life coaches or anyone thinking of conducting their own style of coaching or self development."

Brian Manship, Waltec Coaching

"For client or coach this book is an excellent starting point."

Emma Nelson, Student Support Officer, University of Leeds

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