

## Enrollment

Enrollment is an essential skill to use in building your business. As mentioned earlier, it is important to practice your coaching skills as much as possible. Whether you are coaching pro-bono or have paying clients, using your enrollment skills will make the process of finding clients much easier. The enrollment process has both “being” and “doing” aspects, and both are equally important.

### The Being of Enrollment

Coaching is a personal business, and so your clients need to be enrolled in you — who you are, what you stand for, how you make connection and establish rapport, your outlook on life. It is also important for the potential client to be enrolled in the power of coaching. You must really believe in the power of coaching and in your skills as a coach, even when they are relatively new skills. If you don't have these fundamental beliefs, your potential clients will not connect with you as a coach.

Imagine that someone is talking to you about the value of a specific diet or exercise plan. You, as the listener, will pick up clues (tone of voice, body language, specific words) that will tell you if the person really believes in the regimen. If they are not genuinely sure of the true power of the diet or program, you will be unsure, too.

When you are a coach, if you are not clearly in the land of believing and enrolling, you will be in the land of convincing. Then the folks you talk to will also be in the land of convincing, and that is a very difficult place to enroll from.

You need to know that coaching works, and communicate that awareness as you enroll new clients. Don't think that “enrolling” means “getting clients.” When you are enrolling, you should remain focused on having the potential client learn more about coaching, and learn more about you. If you are focused on “getting a client,” your conversation will feel more like a sales pitch, in the land of convincing rather than the land of enrolling.

The most important aspect of enrolling is to be authentic. Allow yourself to be real and genuine, and to be however clumsy and awkward you are. Give yourself permission to fail. Focus more on the person you are talking with and less on what you say. Don't worry about being professional, or “cool and calm.” If you are nervous — just say so! Be yourself, let your natural passion and enthusiasm for coaching shine through!

Another critical aspect of the “being” of enrollment is to give up any attachment to the results of your enrollment efforts. This does not mean become apathetic, rather it means to recognize that not everyone you talk to is going to want coaching, and not everyone you talk to will want you as a coach. If you are attached to specific results and allow your Saboteur to tell you that a “No” is a judgment of you as a person or you as a coach, then you won't be setting yourself up for success.

### The Doing of Enrollment

The most important “doing” of enrollment is to be a coach, don't be a salesperson. This means having your attention over there, with the person you are talking with, rather than on yourself and whether you are doing it “right.” If you find yourself wondering “am I doing this right?” you can bet that your focus is misplaced! Notice what is interesting and unique about that person. How can coaching make a difference in their life?

Enrollment can be fun! Play a game with it. Lighten up and let go of having it be significant or serious or “right/wrong.” It can be fun to get into relationship with people, connect with them, learn about them and their lives, dreams, and goals. Talk with them about their favorite subject — themselves! — and how they can use coaching to get clear and go after what gives them joy and satisfaction in life.

Here is a fun game to play: The “No” Game. See how many no’s you can collect in one day. Go for the “no.” Make a game out of getting 5, or 10, or 20 no’s a day. You’ll get some no’s, that’s guaranteed! And along with the no’s you’ll get some yes’s too! In the process you’ll be talking with lots of people about coaching. This will create momentum and a sense of forward movement in building your coaching practice. Set up the “No” Game with a buddy and play it for a month or two. Whoever gets the most no’s is the winner! By getting more no’s (and along with that more yes’s) you’ll be improving your skills of talking about coaching, making connection, and being enrolling!

Keep the enrollment process fresh and exciting, challenging and fun. There will be good days and less-than-good days, just like any activity in life. It will be more effortless and enjoyable if you play full out, regardless of the outcome. A good rule of thumb is “100% participation with no attachment to results.” Following are some specific actions involved in enrollment.

- **Asking:** A great way to enroll someone as a client is just to ask them! It’s amazing how many new coaches will talk enthusiastically about coaching and connect with the listener but then not ask the person to be a client. You won’t get the business if you don’t ask for it!

Make a list of people you know that you think would like being coached, that you’d like to coach, or who you want to tell that you are a coach (i.e. potential referral sources). Pick people with whom you are acquainted, but stay away from your best friend and close family members. Call the people you would like to coach and let them know about this exciting new business you are starting, and what value it could bring to their lives.

- **Claiming:** Claiming is a very special way to have someone become your client. You can claim them, just like you would stake a claim to something you really wanted. Let them know that you think they are terrific, that you are really excited about what they are doing with their lives, and that you want to work with them as their coach. Tell them that you won’t take no for an answer, and that you are willing to do whatever it takes. You can’t do this as a gimmick or technique — you’ll come off looking like a stereotypical used car salesman. Claiming must be authentic and come straight from the heart.
- **The Steps for Enrollment:** These are the basic steps involved in enrollment. Sometimes these steps will occur really quickly — in a matter of a few minutes — other times it will take longer and require multiple conversations. Don’t make up any stories about what it means if it takes a shorter or longer period of time. It only means that you are talking to a different human with a different perspective and life.
  1. Create connection and relationship. This can happen with a friendly greeting, a pleasant exchange, eye contact, and a warm handshake (or hug!). It doesn’t mean that you need to find out the life story of an individual, just make a connection with them and let them know that you are available to them, interested in talking to them and learning more about them and their life.
  2. Learn about them. What goals or dreams does he or she have? What do they want to accomplish in their life? What brings them joy? What change do they want to make in their life? Ask them about their career, their business, and their life. Be a coach! Follow the passion and the emotion to learn more about them. Be curious and let them tell you more about themselves.
  3. Don’t explain coaching, do it! Ask them if they’d be open to being coached a little. If they say yes, coach them on some issue or dream or challenge that they mention. Help them see a new perspective on an issue, or a new way of looking at a situation, or to define one step they can take now to move them closer to their goal or dream. Ask them powerful questions (even just one or two questions can have an impact!) and be over there with them.
  4. Make an offer. Tell them that you are a coach and that you’d like to work with them. However, if you are talking with someone that you don’t want to work with, then don’t

make this offer — it will sound insincere. If you do want to work with this potential client, tell them a bit about how you might work together, e.g., weekly coaching sessions similar to the coaching you both just participated in.

5. Ask for the business. Up until now, you've had a great conversation about their life and coaching. Now is the time to ask them to become your client. Ask them directly and confidently, in your own words. Be authentic and show enthusiasm! Remember that you may get a "yes" or a "no." If you hear a "no" you may want to find out more. The "no" might mean "no, not now, I'm focused on other things" or "no, I don't think I can afford it" or "no, coaching really doesn't interest me right now." Sometimes a "no" answer is really a question in disguise. If so, work with the person to determine the question and answer it.
6. Agree on next steps. A "yes" could be for a sample session or to become your client. Determine what the next steps entail and how you'll handle them. Set up an appointment right then or agree to communicate via email or phone to set one up. Make sure to get the person's name, email address, and phone number! If you agree to specific steps (like sending them an email or phone call), complete those actions in a timely manner.

### **Other Enrollment Tips**

- Practice! Practice! Practice! Just like with your coaching skills, your skills of enrollment will improve the more you practice. Basically, you get good at enrollment by doing it a lot. If you wait until you feel 100% comfortable with the words and the delivery, you'll be wasting valuable practice opportunities. In addition, the more polished and smooth your delivery, the more inauthentic it can sound. The best way to practice is to talk to lots of people, let them know about the power of coaching, and ask them to become your client. You can also increase your confidence by practicing with a mirror, a friend or family member, a coaching buddy, a tape recorder or just by yourself.
- Keep your support network strong. Connect with other coaches that are in a similar phase of business building and create a support network. Buddy with these other coaches to provide mutual support, brainstorm ideas, share triumphs and challenges, and help you stay motivated.