



The 12-Step Guide To Building An Online Coaching Practice



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Preface

Thank you so much for purchasing *The 12-Step Guide To Building An Online Coaching Practice*.

This book is an extended and more in-depth version of the email sequence you received, or will receive, if you sign up for the Coach The Life Coach newsletter.

Email sequences are great and I'd urge you to set one up for people who are good enough to subscribe to your own newsletter.

However, it's always nice to have material curated and presented in one place for ease of reference.

One of my favorite books on marketing is *Small Is The New Big* by Seth Godin, which is nothing more than a collection of 183 blog posts.

Similarly, the first book I ever had published was a collection of blog posts - and by the way, if you're looking to write a book in the future, that's probably the easiest and least overwhelming way to do so.

There's a lot of information in this book so don't overwhelm yourself by trying to read it all at once. Take it one step at a time.

Having said that, it's not exhaustive. It's more of a starting point to make sure you get the basics in place.

I don't talk in any depth about social media for example. And the reason for that is because it's moving so fast.

Facebook implemented 17 algorithm changes in 2017 alone and that's just one platform.

As such this book would be out of date within a few weeks if I started talking about social media.

The same goes for SEO (search engine optimization).

Whereas I teach SEO on the Coach The Life Coach course because I believe it's one of the quickest ways coaches can separate themselves from the competition - one Google algorithm change could render what I tell you in this book redundant.

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Step 1 – Focus On The Negative

I once posted something in the Facebook support group that created a certain amount disagreement with a few people.

Here's the post in full:

“When starting out as a coach, don't listen to other people telling you that you're a natural and you should definitely do it.

If you do you will be sifting for all the reasons why they're right and only notice information that confirms your belief – this is called confirmation bias.

Instead ask yourself, ‘How can I possibly screw this up?’

Look for every possible reason you could encounter and then be sure you can deal with those before you launch a business”

Most people seemed to be onboard with the spirit of what I was saying, but there were at least three people who didn't think this was sound advice.

I say at least three because they were only the ones who posted. I suspect there were more.

The first person didn't like the idea of focussing on the negative because that will be where your attention is and that doesn't jive with the law of attraction.

Anybody who knows me even slightly knows that I don't believe in the law of attraction, so that isn't likely to influence my opinion.

1995 saw the dot com boom start. It wasn't long before businesses starting to see the full potential of the Internet, were rushing to buy up domain names, start online ventures and reap incredible rewards.

For 5-years stock prices rose and rose at incredible rates as more and more companies got in on the action.

The one serious business flaw that connected most of the new ventures was that few people were pumping the brakes and even fewer were asking, *'what on earth can possibly go wrong?'*

In their rush to get a piece of the pie, business common sense and good practice was abandoned.

Hundreds of businesses were focussing on the positive whilst giving scant regard to the negative. Until that is, it was too late.

And that isn't at all unusual.

There is a litany of companies, that are now ex-companies, because there were focussing on what was going right as opposed what could wrong.

There is a tremendous business book called *'Six Thinking Hats'* written by Edward de Bono.

Each hat represents a different way to explore a new project or idea.

Blue looks entirely at the big picture and the end goal and isn't allowed to consider anything else.

Similarly, white only looks at available information and nothing else.

Yellow looks at benefits, green creative solutions. And red is designed to just deal with emotions and gut reactions

And finally the black hat is tasked with caution and identifying potential problems.

It's not unusual for venture capitalists and startups to have meeting in which the only purpose is to find fault with the project in question.

These types of brainstorming sessions are not negative in and of themselves.

They're a sensible and useful business practice that allows people to share concerns that otherwise may remain buried for fear of being seen as the negative person in the room or challenging authority.

The stories are legion of almighty screw-ups happening because somebody was afraid to speak out and voice concerns.

The one-dollar 'O' ring issue that caused the Challenger Space Shuttle disaster was known to be a potential problem to engineers before the fateful day.

But nobody felt safe enough to be the person that halted a launch that would cost millions of dollars per day.

Quaker lost more than \$1 billion when they bought Snapple because nobody asked, *'But what if the other drink manufacturers just copy an idea that we cannot possibly patent?'*

And Toys 'R' Us failed because nobody pointed out that by signing an exclusive deal to sell online via Amazon meant that when that deal ran

out they would have zero infrastructure in place to be compete with their once partner.

Companies, even small one-person ones, don't fail because people look at what can go wrong, they fail because they don't.

The next argument that was thrown at me was from somebody who said '*perfection is the enemy of execution*' and he went on to say focus on the positives because what you focus on expands in your life.

There are no doubt thousands of stories where people really focussed on one goal or desire that then came to fruition.

This stories are very shareable because they give hope and inspiration.

Who on earth doesn't like the idea that if they are passionate and focussed enough about something that it will happen?

However, there are millions of stories of people who did likewise and nothing happened. We just never get to hear about them unless they involve family or friends.

Leaving that to one side, I never even mentioned, nor thought, about perfection.

I'm a very long way from being a perfectionist.

Looking for potential roadblocks does not mean you're looking for perfection. It means you're planning for all, or as many eventualities as you can.

Finally, somebody said that I may be '*destroying the potential of someone that is a natural*'.

If me telling you to look for potential problems before you start your coaching journey has you deciding not to bother becoming a life coach, then I did you a huge favor.

If your desire and commitment are so tenuous and shaky that me saying that causes you to quit, then you'd have failed anyway.

So thank me because I just saved you a lot of time, money and frustration.

The person then went on to say that it was crazy to *just* look at the downside (my emphasis on just).

That's not even possible and I wasn't saying that.

To be in a position where you start to consider the potential hurdles, you MUST have already thought of the payoff of running a successful practice, otherwise why would you bother?

So that point was moot.

Then I got asked what things a new coach should be aware of - so here are some questions I think every new life coach should be asking herself before you dive head first into coaching.

If you answer 'yes' to all, or most of the questions that are relevant to you, then it sounds like you're good to go and you can switch your focus back onto the positive.

1. Does it take a lot to discourage me?
2. Am I in this for the long haul?
3. If the income from coaching is required to pay the bills, do I have enough savings to last me 6 to 12-months as I build my business?
4. Can I afford to bring in professional help?
5. Do I have a fund of money to pay for unforeseen expenses?

6. Do I understand what is required to start a business in terms of registration, opening a bank account, accepting payments, doing accounts and taxes etc?
7. Do I have the unwavering support of those closest to me?
8. Am I prepared to put in whatever hours necessary as I build my business?
9. Could working more hours strain my most important relationships?
10. Do I have a niche, or know who my ideal client is?
11. Do I have a grasp of branding and understand the importance?
12. Do I have people who I can call that may be able to hire me or refer me?
13. Am I happy to go out and talk to groups for free (or paid if I can get it), to help acquire clients?
14. Are my sales skills sufficient to be able to help people understand the value I can deliver?
15. Can I absorb knock-back after knock-back without a loss of enthusiasm and drive?
16. Will I be comfortable attending meet-ups or even running meet-ups?
17. Will I see any attempts to run events that fail as learning experiences?
18. Can I just start talking to people I have never met about coaching without vomiting with anxiety?
19. Can I afford to hire a competent website designer?

20. If I want to design my own website do I understand design principles, SEO (search engine optimization), online conversion, UX (user experience) and UI (user interface)?
21. Do I have the time to keep on top of changes in the online world so I don't get left behind, or have the money to pay somebody else to?
22. Do I love to write?
23. Do I feel like I have a lot to offer with my writing?
24. Do I have a client avatar that can make writing easier and more focussed?
25. Am I prepared to challenge people's thinking?
26. Am I comfortable with being criticized for what I write or say online?
27. Would I jump at the chance to be interviewed no matter who it was?
28. Am I okay with being on camera for either client sessions or vlogs etc?
29. Will having very few newsletter subscribes just urge me on to work harder?
30. Will I just smile and move on when I see people unsubscribing from my list?
31. Am I okay with selling hard to my list whenever I have a product or service to offer them?
32. Do I believe enough in what I have to offer to believe that selling is more about helping people?

33. Does being authentic come natural to me no matter what the circumstances?
34. Am I fearless about sharing negative experiences that have happened in my life?
35. Do I relish the challenge of building up an online following?
36. Am I prepared to really learn how to use just a couple of social media platforms?
37. Do I know that I have a lot to offer people online, even the people who are never likely to hire or buy from me?

There are a lot of questions above, and some we will cover off later in this ebook, but none should scare you.

If they do, and to the extent that you're no longer sure if coaching is right for you then I'd suggest one final question and one I often ask new coaches who work with me.

On a scale of 0 to 10, how badly do you want to succeed as a coach?

If the answer is between 1 and 7, then quit now because you're not going to make it.

I have enough experience with this to know that when I get a 7 or less from client when it comes to commitments levels it NEVER happens.

If you said 8, then it will be a real tough going because you've left yourself 20% wiggle room and you're not totally committed.

But if you said 9 or 10, then great because it sounds like you're up for the challenge.

It's tough, but like anything we achieve that's tough, it's well worth it.

Step 2 - Know Your Costs

Too many coaches set off on their coaching journey with little idea of the ongoing costs of running an online business.

Of course you're eager to start coaching and helping people, but a little bit of forethought and planning is called for to ensure that your journey is as smooth as possible.

Yes, coaching seems like it has a low bar to entry, and compared to brick and mortar businesses, it does.

However, that doesn't mean there is *no* bar to entry and if you are to succeed there are significant ongoing costs you need to budget for.

I'm going to share with you my average monthly expenditure for my private coaching practice A Daring Adventure at the time of writing, July 2019 - so you can get an idea of what lies ahead.

And bear in mind, these are maintenance costs because I do very little else with that site these days as I get enough clients as it is.

The truth of the matter is that the site is quite old now and could do with a redesign.

However, it's a huge site with hundreds of pages and to get it rebuilt built from the ground up would probably cost the better part of \$10k and it really isn't worth the cost.

Even so, if that site was still my main aim and Coach The Life Coach didn't exist, then I wouldn't bat an eyelid at investing that kind of money because it's my shop window.

My average client spends over \$2,500 with me (and that doesn't include referrals) so a \$10k website would have to bring me in four clients to get my money back over the lifetime of the website (usually 4 or 5 years).

Do I think a great website can bring an extra client in per year compared to a poor website?

I think you know the answer to that one. Of course it can, and then some.

So, let's leave one-off expenditure to one side for the moment and dive into my day-to-day running costs.

There are without doubt short-cuts that you can come up with such as starting a free newsletter account with a company like Mail Chimp (more on newsletters later).

They have a free offering up to 2,000 subscribers, which although I have never used, am somewhat familiar with and seems a good deal.

I use Aweber because even though they are a tad more expensive than the likes of MailChimp and probably no better, moving would not be worthwhile.

If I moved either of my lists to another provider now I'd probably lose around 75% of my subscribers because I'd need people to opt back in again and that is really tough to achieve.

And that is important to recognize as you plan for the future.

Double opt-ins are now the standard so you really, really, do not want to start on any email platform that won't scale easily because migrating a list will cause you much heartache and many headaches as your list disintegrates.

Note: Do not make the mistake of using Gmail, Hotmail or any similar email service. if you do you will soon get flagged for spamming. You absolutely must use a commercial email platform.

Let's take a closer look and see how much I spend every month to keep A Daring Adventure running.

And remember, none of this takes into consideration our most precious commodity, time:

| | |
|---|-------|
| Aweber newsletter | \$100 |
| Zoom video conferencing | \$15 |
| Web hosting (Siteground) | \$25 |
| Transfer Big Files (send recorded files to clients) | \$5 |
| E-junkie (hosting ebooks) | \$5 |
| Design and techie help | \$250 |
| Vonage (worldwide) | \$30 |
| Cell Phone (includes cost of phone that is rolled into my monthly | \$100 |
| Internet | \$80 |
| Amazon S3 (off site storage) | \$5 |
| Ongoing training, books etc | \$100 |

You may notice two omissions.

Firstly, coach training is not included and there is a good reason for that. I have no idea how much you will spend.

In dollar terms, I have probably spent About \$15k on all my training (that doesn't include all the marketing training I have taken)

I'm not saying you need to pay that much. In fact, I'm sure you don't because you can coach competently without spending \$6k on NLP and hypnotherapy training as I did.

Also, practice liability insurance is not on the list.

That's because I let mine lapse a few years ago without realizing it and never renewed.

I know we live in litigious times, but I think insurance is very much a judgment call.

If you're having people come into your home, then I think it's sensible to be covered.

On the other hand, if your clients are dotted all over the world like mine are, then I'm doubtful it's of much value.

And the reason I'm not sure is because coaching isn't regulated.

Therefore, unless you do something flat out illegal I think the likelihood of you needing legal counsel are very slim.

The monthly total above comes to \$715 per month, or about \$8.5k per annum.

That's not a lot by most business standards, but when you consider that the vast majority of life coaches earn less than \$30k per annum it takes on a much bigger role.

And there are significant costs that I will incur that I haven't included because they are sporadic.

I have recently spent over \$1,000 on help launching my book on core values, The Clarity Method.

I'm also in the process of hiring a professional photographer because the photos of me on both sites are about six years old and that will probably be a similar amount.

It is possible for a new coach could start up needing about half that per month. At least to begin with.

However, I'd be hesitant to budget any lower because it's like moving home - there will always be unexpected expenses and one-off costs you forget about, or don't expect.

Step 3 - Implement A Strategy

The aforementioned Seth Godin has penned a dozen or more best-sellers (most of which I have read), has a blog that's followed by tens of thousands of people and given a seminal Ted Talk on getting ideas to spread.

In short, he is probably the most recognizable marketer in the world.

He has a reputation for out the box thinking and marketing with integrity and always keeping the customer in mind.

Back in February of 2013, Seth appeared on the cover of Entrepreneur Magazine. His yellow-rimmed glasses and trademark shaven head was on newsstands across the country.

In other words, Seths appearance in front of his target audience was pure gold for him.

Or was it?

I asked the people in the Coach the Life Coach Facebook group how many extra books do they think he sold in the four-week period he was on the cover.

Guesses varied, but most were between 10% and 50%.

The actual answer was somewhat different.

It was zero.

His book sales didn't rise at all.

Not only that, but no metric he used to measure his business success showed an improvement.

Seth told this story on his marketing seminar which I attended (actually it was so good I took it twice) to explain the difference between publicity and marketing - it struck a real chord with me.

I was working with a coach who was excitedly talking about a book she was looking to write.

She wanted to compile all the best motivational tips and posts she had written for her Facebook followers over the previous couple of years.

I asked her what she was writing the book for.

She said it was to help people – which is a great reason.

So. I asked her what she was looking to get out of it. She responded with pretty much exactly what I expected to hear because I have heard it so many times before from other coaches.

'To get my name out there'

Getting your name out there is not a marketing strategy.

I have over 5,000 followers on Twitter, so my name is 'out there' but it's probably 4 or 5 years since I got a client from that platform.

I've about 5,000 followers/subscribers across YouTube, Pinterest and LinkedIn and I've never had a client from any that I'm aware of.

And yes, I do monitor these things.

Actually, that isn't entirely true. I have had coaches hire me from LinkedIn, but not directly from my profile, but from a coaching group I was once very active in.

But, here's the real kicker.

I have well over 100,000 books '*out there*' and do you know how many clients they bring me each year.

About the same as Seth gained, zero.

Of course, that may be because I'm a poor writer and the content of my books is worthless.

And Seth's books sales may not have gone up because the interview sucked and he came across like he didn't know what he was talking about - but I highly doubt either are true.

It's more likely to be, that putting yourself '*out there*' is pointless in and of itself.

Of course, there is value in people being exposed to you and your material because it can build up a sense of recognition, familiarity and the trust that can come from those things.

However, recognition, familiarity, and trust, are meaningless if people don't fully understand what it is you do, how you can help them, and aren't exposed to a call to action.

It's okay putting yourself '*out there*', unless that is you think that it's a marketing strategy.

It isn't.

A strategy involves engaging people who are your ideal client.

And engaging people involves being active, not passive.

Ask yourself, '*where are my ideal client hanging out?*' And then you can start to figure out a strategy that allows you to help and engage with them.

Of course, to know where your ideal clients hangout, you have to know who your ideal client is, so let's look at forming a niche.

Step 4 - Establish a Niche

If you had asked me when I launched Coach The Life Coach back in 2013, whether I thought having a coaching niche was paramount, I'd have replied *'no'*.

And the primary reason would have been because I had managed to build a successful coaching practice with A Daring Adventure without ever having a niche.

What I did have however, was a strong brand and the *impression* that I had a niche.

I would ask people on the early Coach The Life Coach courses to take a look at the A Daring Adventure site and tell me what they thought my niche was.

Almost everybody would say that they thought my niche was *'helping people to get unstuck'*.

After all, the message of getting unstuck was all over the website.

The main benefit statement on my site said, *'Start Getting Unstuck'*.

And right in the middle page above the fold was the statement *'The Life Coach Who Gets People Unstuck'*

I was clearly the coach who claimed to get people unstuck.

But as coaches, that's what we all do.

To some extent or other all of our clients are stuck in at least one area of their life.

If you weren't stuck, why would you hire a life coach - or any coach for that matter?

You could be stuck in the wrong job, stuck in the wrong relationship, or stuck at the wrong weight.

Procrastination could keep you stuck, or a lack of motivation and/or confidence could be keeping you stuck.

And, as I mentioned I did have a strong brand too.

I was the outspoken coach who (rightly or wrongly) used to swear a lot in his blog (almost always for comedic purposes), loved to use humor and was prepared to admit to not having a perfect life.

I was the coach for people who wouldn't normally hire a coach.

All this had more or less the same effect as having a niche.

I knew that 90% of people who landed on my site would never hire or buy from me - and that was fine.

Similarly, I knew some people thought I was unprofessional, especially when I would write about highly inflammatory topics that were, sometimes only loosely, connected to self development - that was fine too.

My approach wasn't going to get me the most clients, but (and to paraphrase John Lennon) it was going to get me the best and most loyal clients - at least for me.

I had in mind a person who was very down to earth, liked to laugh a lot, wasn't easily offended by people with differing opinions and loved to learn as my ideal client.

That was very much part my client avatar.

Note: You will need a client avatar, but worry not - we'll look at that in the next step.

That was the person I was writing blog posts for, recording YouTube videos for and looking to interact with on social media.

And in many ways it still is. Only now it's somebody who is also deadly serious about building a successful coaching practice and prepared to work hard as well as have a lot of fun.

I made that work for over a decade, but I'm not convinced that I could succeed with that approach now if I was starting from scratch.

I would need a niche.

The coaching space is exponentially more crowded now than it was when I started and standing out is proportionally more difficult.

If you wanted to hire a coach in the Orlando area in 2006 you had three choices that I was aware of - at least online.

Me, or the two other coaches that appeared in searches.

And I was the only one who was on the Tampa side of Orlando. As such, I had almost no competition.

I have no clue how many coaches there are now in Orlando, but it's many scores, if not hundreds.

Standing out is tough.

If you had problems with your heart would you insist on seeing your family doctor.

Or, would you rather see a cardiologist?

Exactly. You want the cardiologist because she's the expert.

You're probably going to pay expert rates too.

By and large, experts get to charge more.

It's no different for people wanting to hire a coach.

If you're struggling with procrastination do you want the dude who calls himself a life and business coach?

Or, would you prefer to opt for the coach who only helps people suffering from debilitating procrastination?

If you have diabetes and want to get fit, do you want a wellness coach?

Or, is the person who solely helps people with Type II diabetes more appealing to you?

And, if you have issues with relationships at work and it's holding you back on your career path, do you want a relationship coach?

Or, would you be more interested in the coach who focuses on building, establishing and improving workplace relationships?

You may be a tad confused now because most coaches think that being a relationship coach is a niche - it really isn't.

And neither is a wellness coach.

They are on their way to being niches, but they are still really broad.

A niche is always a subset of a bigger whole.

As a rule of thumb, the narrower you make your niche the easier it is to market yourself and the easier it is to appeal to your target market.

It's almost impossible to have a niche that is too narrow.

if you think you have gone too narrow, ask yourself this question:

'Are there enough people in this niche that if they knew about me and what I could do for them, would fill my schedule?'

If the answer is yes, then you have a marketing problem not a problem with your niche.

I am currently working with a coach who only works with people who have had organ transplants.

I recently worked with another who only coaches people (or the caregivers) of people who have had TBI's (traumatic brain injuries).

On top of those, I have been hired by people who have the following niches:

- ✓ Attorneys
- ✓ Diabetes
- ✓ Wives of members of the Military
- ✓ Realtors
- ✓ Financial advisors

- ✓ People who are INFJ on the Myers-Briggs type Indicator
- ✓ Ex-Pats
- ✓ Adolescents
- ✓ People with ADD and ADHD
- ✓ Physicians

And they are just the ones that spring immediately to mind.

Ask yourself,

'who do I really, really want to help?'

I had 20-years successful sales experience and would have made a very credible coach specializing in working with salespeople.

But, that misses the tiny fact that I didn't want to work with salespeople.

I think of myself as a business coach who specializes in working with coaches and therapists these days. As such, people who hire me expect to lean on my coaching experience and want advice.

And that's fine, but pure coaching isn't like that.

Prior to working with coaches I worked with doctors, attorneys, accountants and even a rocket scientists from NASA (sadly, no brain surgeon...yet) .

I know next to nothing about any of those fields - but it doesn't matter - they weren't hiring me looking for advice.

So, don't pick a niche because it's easy or purely because you have knowledge of it - pick it because it excites you. Because it gets you bouncing out of bed in the morning and because you can't stop talking about it.

Of course, if your skills and experience align with the niche you are excited about - then so much the better - go for it!

If you're really not sure what you want to do you're better starting off broad and working with a cross section of clients (even if they are pro bono) and narrowing down as you go.

Once you have worked with 20 or more clients you will start to form an idea of which types of clients you look forward to working with. And the ones which have you hoping will cancel at the last minute.

Ask yourself the following question:

'If my phone were to ring right now and the person on the other end had me metaphorically punching the air with delight as they told me of their problems because I knew I wanted to and could help them - what would they be saying?'

They are your ideal client.

Step 5 - Build A Client Avatar

Every time I write a newsletter or blog post for Coach The Life Coach I have in mind the following person.

Her name is Jenny and she lives in California. She is in her early forties, married with two kids and a partner who has a good job.

She is fed up with working in corporate America and missing out on important family time and wants to transfer her skills into building profitable coaching practice.

She is well educated and used to investing in herself financially. She is a hard worker, tenacious and super committed to her goals, but just as importantly - she likes to have fun.

She knows the coaching industry is highly competitive, but has faith that with the right help she can breakthrough the pack and earn a great living whilst having more time to spend with her family.

Of course Jenny doesn't exist - she is a figment of my imagination - she is my client avatar.

Taking the time to build a client avatar is crucial to your marketing efforts and makes producing content so much easier when you know who it is you're talking to.

The reality is that I have worked with coaches as young as 22 and as old as 70. I have worked with almost as many male coaches as female and probably a third are based outside the United States.

Similarly, I have helped people become coaches who were previously stay at home moms and dads and others who were retired.

You get the message. About the only element of that avatar which isn't negotiable for me is the element that says - *'she (or he) likes to have fun'*

To me, life is too short not to want to have fun.

The client avatar is just an outline that will help you deliver a consistent message.

When I'm working with coaches these are the questions that I suggest they start with.

You can of course go deeper than this if you like (and good for you if you do), but I wouldn't move on until you answer the following questions with as much depth as you can.

And by the way, if you know, or have worked with people who you feel are your ideal clients, then ask them if they can spare a few minutes to answer these questions because what they have to say will be pure gold.

Beliefs

What does your audience believe?

What is their attitude towards your product/service and the problems or issues it address?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Feelings

How do they feel?

Are they confident and brash?

Nervous and fearful?

What do they feel about the major issues in their lives, businesses or industries?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Desires

What do they want?

What are their goals?

What change do *they want* in their lives that your product can help them achieve?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Start with your customers or clients fears & frustration wants & aspirations and everything you talk about has to link back to what their desired result is. Their irrational needs is all that they care about, their irrational reality.

You have to know what's important to your customer or client, not what's important to you.

Now ask yourself:

"From my perspective, what is it that my customer needs to hear or learn?"

What are the top 5 things they need to know?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Now what do *they want* to learn or hear? (think like an irrational idealist person who doesn't know any of this stuff)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

Put a value on each of these 5-10 points from 1-10 based on if they heard you talking about them, how valuable you believe they'd find it.

You have to know what's important to your customer or client, not what's important to you. That's how you make a real difference and blow people away.

Step 6 - Buy An Effective Domain Name

Sometime around the end of 2004 and with a view to becoming a full time life coach I bought the domain name, ADaringAdventure.com.

I'd always been a fan of the Helen Keller quote, '*life is a daring adventure or nothing*,' and as I was in the process of embarking on my own daring adventure with my wife, Helen, by upping sticks and moving from England to Florida, it seemed appropriate.

At that time I doubt I could have even told you what SEO (search engine optimization) stood for, never mind how to use it to climb in the SERP's (search engine ranking pages) and acquire more coaching clients.

If I had of known the importance of domain names at that time there would have been a good chance I could have bought a killer one as there were millions more available back then.

Maybe lifecoach.com or lifecoaching.com was available? Maybe not, but even so, I bet lifecoachtim.com, or something similar would have been available that was easier to rank for than A Daring Adventure.

I've hit the first page of Google for the search term '*life coach*' on three separate occasions and each time I knew almost immediately because I got buried with inquiries.

The last time I made it was either late 2010 or early 2011 and it was a lot of fun and an amazing adrenaline rush.

Now however, the competition is so brutal that even if I wasn't more of a business coach than a life coach these days, and knowing what I do, I wouldn't even be attempting it.

For me to hit the first page of the SERP's for '*life coach*' would require an insane amount of work writing in-depth content and building links that would tell Google I was the authority.

It just wouldn't be worth the effort though when I can stay busy using the much easier approach of targeting long tail keywords.

Note: I explain the longtail keyword approach I adopt to massive success on the life course, but it would take too long in this book.

To be able to rank in Google you have to understand that first and foremost, Google is always looking for high quality and relevant information.

As such, it can then serve such information to the people searching so they will continue to come back and not scuttle off to a competitor's search engine.

And it's the relevance element that means I'm effectively starting a 100m race against domains like lifecoach.com and lifecoaching.com with them in fancy sneakers and me wearing clown shoes and carrying a very unhappy Ostrich.

Even though I beat both those domains with a large stick on almost every other significant metric for many years, my domain name will never be as relevant to Google.

They have what are known as EMD's (exact match domains) and for the most part, Google loves them. Hence insurance.com was sold for \$35 million and Privetjet.com was sold for \$30 million.

Short EMD's can give you a massive boost, but Google doesn't look so favorably on longer ones.

People have been trying to game the system by buying domain names like

wherecanbuylevischeapfrom.com

and

whatarethebesthotelsinmiami.com.

They then throw up a spammy low value affiliate sites based around that domain and look to make advertising and/or affiliate revenue.

The problem is, those sites offered very little value to the average Google user even if they did want Levi jeans or a hotel in Miami - because there was no depth of content as they were purely optimized to sell.

On the other hand, if you type in *'life coach* and Google spots a domain called lifecoach.com it squeals with delight and then yells *'winner, winner, chicken dinner'*...probably.

It knows that such a domain will probably yield the results that such a search will require.

The problem these days however, is that almost all the great domain names in terms of helping you with your SEO efforts, have gone - at least as dot coms.

However, there has been over 1,000 TLD's (top level domains) applied for and released by ICANN (the organization that regulates domain names) in the last few years.

But, the jury is out on whether they can be made to work as well.

These are referred to as gTLD's or generic top level domains.

These are ones like dot coach, dot guru and dot expert that may be appealing to life coaches struggling to find a relevant dot com.

They can be really enticing on the surface and maybe they will be wise investments in the future.

But, and you knew a but was coming, even though Google has said it will treat them the same way as it does a dot com, too many of the new gTLD's are being used for spammy purposes.

You don't want to be nailing your domain colors to the mast of a dot guru only to find you're being looked down upon by search engines because so many other people using that gTLD are using it for nefarious purposes. This *probably* won't happen, but it can and you need to be aware.

A ccTLD (country code top level domain) may be an attractive option too, as you can get clever with them and make words.

For example, I could, presuming it were available, go and register www.lifecoach.ch.

The 'ch' is Switzerland's country code and with just a bit of creativity there's a domain that effectively says lifecoach.

However, the problem with this is that the 'ch' tells Google I'm in Switzerland and it could impede on local SEO efforts when the ccTLD says one thing and your ISP (Internet service provider) says something else.

There are some ccTLD's from smaller countries like Tuvalu which is dot tv, Colombia which is dot co, and Montenegro which is dot me that are now treated as gTLD's.

So many of those domains were bought for use outside the countries they were meant to represent, that Google relented and now treats them as standard gTLD's. As such, you can get away with buying them and not killing your SEO efforts.

If this is all a bit confusing let's try and make it easier with one thing you should absolutely do if possible.

Always buy your own name if it still available as a dot com or any country you're in.

If you enter timbrownson.com you will get diverted to coachthelifecoach.com (this is something called a 301 redirect and is very easy to set up).

This doesn't help me one jot with SEO, but it protects me from somebody else buying it and potentially confusing clients or ripping me off. This is a form of brand protection.

Also, if you make it big and get into writing best sellers or being paid high fees for public speaking, then having your name is enough in and of itself.

Tony Robbins probably isn't fretting because he's using his own name.

But, alas you're not Tony Robbins or an internationally recognized coach (yet) and as such the rules are somewhat different.

If your name is already taken as a dot com I'd still try and get the dot net, org, us, co. Or as I said, if you live outside the US, your own ccTLD.

The other alternative is to drop your middle name or initial in the domain.

This will give you something, but unless you brand yourself that way already, it doesn't really help people who vaguely know you and taking a guess at your domain name.

Another option open to you and one that is well worth exploring, if that is, you want local traffic would be something like lifecoachorlando.com

That was available for only \$250 as soon ago as early 2018 when I mentioned it to my list and it was snapped up shortly after.

If I wanted local clients (I don't and actually deliberately go out of my way not to attract them) I'd have been all over that.

Think about what I said regarding relevancy and why when people type 'life coach' into Google they will see lifecoach.com in the results.

Well, now imagine somebody typing 'life coach Orlando' into Google, do you not think Google would love that domain?

Absolutely it would!

Of course having the domain is not enough on its own. You still have to build the site authority with quality content and inbound links, but it makes life a lot, lot, easier.

There is the problem that having your hometown in your URL will make ranking elsewhere more difficult.

Somebody typing in '*life coach Orlandd*' doesn't want to see results containing coaches in New York and Google knows that.

So, be careful when using geographical domain names. They can be awesome if you want local traffic and face-to-face clients, but they can also hold you back on the world domination front.

I see a lot of coaches using domain names like (and I pulled these out of thin air now to make a point and knowing they would be taken) the following:

✓ authenticliving.com (being cyber sat)

- ✓ livethelifeofyourdreams.com (redirects to an Internet marketer)
- ✓ youinspired.com (being cyber sat)

There's nothing fundamentally wrong with any of those as domain names. In fact the first and third are quite cool, especially if that is the name of your coaching practice - but they don't really help with SEO.

Nobody who wants to hire a coach is typing in 'you inspired' into Google unless that is they're high on meth and you probably don't want them as a client in any case.

And anyway I'd not encourage anybody to pay the \$3295 they are asking for 'youinspired' unless money isn't an object.

Similarly, if I'd managed to get timcoach.com it wouldn't have added much benefit other than from a branding perspective and being easy to remember because coach without the life in front of it, is just too generic.

Your domain name is important for a number of reasons as well as SEO.

So let's do a rundown of 10 things to be aware of before you hop online to buy your domain name.

1. Get the dot com of your business name if possible
2. If you cannot get a decent dot com, consider dot net, org, info, coach etc before trying to be too creative
3. Always try and buy your own name as a dot com even if you only use it to redirect to the name of your business
4. If you see your name as a dot coach, buy it, presuming it's not a premium price and then figure out how to use it later (you can always do a redirect)

5. Try and keep your domain as short and easy to remember as possible
6. Don't get too cute with misspellings and making up a new words. Yes there are a lot out there like Tumblr, Bitly and Flickr that succeed, but they offer no SEO benefit and can be confusing to people
7. Do consider including your local city if you only want local traffic and face-to-face clients
8. Be careful using ccTLD's unless Google has said they are now generic
9. Don't be put off by paying a premium price for a premium domain (I'd happily pay \$10k for lifecoach.com). If you're in this for the long haul then a couple of grand may well be a wise investment
10. If you see 2 or 3 that are similar or you're not sure, buy them all if they are the usual \$10 and decide at your leisure

Step 7 - Avoid These Common Website Mistakes

There are a lot of ways you can potentially screw up your website. In this article I take a look at seven of the ones I see most frequently - some are easy to fix.

1. Having An Ugly Website

Most parents think their kid is better looking and smarter than the average kid and get offended when somebody points out otherwise. Website owners can be the same and can get very defensive about their website.

Defensive because they designed it themselves and took great pride. Or defensive because they spent a lot of money on it and don't want to accept that maybe they made a mistake.

The sad reality is that most life coach websites are uglier than Wally the Warthog who just won this years Ugliest Warthog of the Year competition for a sixth straight year.

I have looked at hundreds of sites owned by coaches and could probably count the really good ones on both hands without needing to trouble my thumbs for any further help.

When I started coaching full time in 2005 the *"If you build it they will come"* philosophy generally held true.

Just having a website set you apart from the competition and made you look professional.

That's no longer the case and hasn't been for quite some time.

An ugly, difficult to navigate and/or slow loading website is probably worse than no website.

There is a cognitive bias called the halo effect in which we tend to think that people who we admire for one or more admirable traits, must be admirable in other areas of their life too.

This applies to your website.

If potential clients see a website that looks poorly designed or has spelling or formatting errors, then subconsciously they will presume you're sloppy or careless too.

It took me over ten years to get this message and to stop being so cavalier with my editing!

Think of your website as your shop window if you had a brick and mortar business - because that's what it is.

If it looks cheap and tacky it will only attract cheap and tacky at best, and nobody at worst.

2. Having A Do It Yourself Or Free Life Coaches Website

You're a coach and unless you have design and/or coding experience you should not be designing your own website.

If you do, it will almost certainly look like the website of a life coach designed by a life coach.

Would you attempt to do your own dentistry, hair styling or build your own house?

I have had many people proudly tell me they built their own website just as I was thinking, *"Wow, you really need to fire your designer and rip down that site before anybody sees it"*

You can get a clean looking easy to navigate website on WordPress for well under \$2,000 these days and you can get an amazing site that truly kicks ass for around \$5k.

I change the design of mine about every 4 or 5 years and as such investing between \$5k and \$10k is well worth it.

Similarly, you should probably not be using any website that you or your designer do not host.

Whereas free sites like Wix, Weebly, GoDaddy or Squarespace are getting better, you have little control over design.

Also, SEO is more difficult, and you don't even own your own content in the majority of cases.

Some people have said they upgrade to a paid version of the above for extra features. It really doesn't matter, avoid them if you want to market online.

Even companies that 'specialize' in offering sites for life coaches, should, in the majority of cases, be avoided because they'll be using templates and just dragging and dropping everything.

The net result of this is that all their sites look the same and don't meet you individual needs.

3. Having No Real CTA (Call To Action)

What do you want people who land on your site to do?

You probably answered, '*hire me!*'

That would be the wrong answer.

Well, actually no, strike that, it's a reasonable answer to want that. But you shouldn't be aiming for that because if you do you're going to fail.

What you should be looking to do is to start the process of building a relationship with potential clients.

When people land on the home page of Coach The Life Coach I want them to subscribe to my newsletter like you presumably did.

Of course there is an option for them to contact me directly and some people do, but my main goal is to get them to sign up for the newsletter.

If they do, I can then start to build a relationship by supplying them with high quality content that has value in and of itself.

By doing that, I know there is an exponentially increased likelihood they will hire me in the future or take one of my courses.

I get between 150 and 500 unique users a day to the site and that is way more than most life coaches.

However, I couldn't survive if I was just aiming to get people to sign up for the course immediately without getting to know me, and neither can you.

We're not selling Snickers bars or cheap novelty gifts here and people rarely hire a life coach on impulse, so don't expect them to.

At least buy them a drink before you ask them to get in bed with you.

4. Having No 'What's In it For Me'? (WIFM) Aka A Benefit Statement

Can you look at your home page and honestly say you have clearly articulated the benefits for anybody hiring you in a paragraph or a few bullet points?

If you have any doubt whatsoever get somebody who doesn't know what you really do and ask them.

You have about 3 to 7 seconds to deliver that message before the back button has been hit and your potential client has gone for good.

My home page makes it perfectly clear what I do and who I help.

The people landing on your website don't care about you, they care about what you can do for them.

It's all about them!

In the nicest possible way, presume everybody is stupid and make your service offering blindingly obvious.

5. Having No Picture Of You

We are in the partnership business and not having your picture on your website is fatal, did you hear me?

F.A.T.A.L.

Your potential clients want to connect with *you*.

Not a nice flower, not a beach, a cute dolphin or any other crap stock image you bought for 5 bucks or downloaded for free.

If you are nervous about uploading your photo (and a decent one with you looking welcoming) because of what others may think, you're probably in the wrong job.

It's okay if you're a tad overweight, have lost most of your hair and aren't aging especially gracefully.

Er, wait a minute, that's me!

And try and get professional photographs taken. If you cannot afford a photographer call a few and ask if they are interested in exchanging services - I have done this on three separate occasions with three separate photographers.

For the most part, selfies take on your iPhone look lame and unprofessional. They can work in blog posts, but they have no right to be on your home or about page.

Note: You may have seen that the Coach The Life Coach site has no picture of me on the homepage - that is deliberate because I want a slightly more corporate feel. Ignore what I do.

6. Having Irrelevant Content Not Related To Life Coaching

If you have another sideline business it has no right being on your coaching website, it will just confuse people.

In fact, if you have another site that isn't related to coaching don't even link to it anywhere prominent.

Why do you think I have two websites, Coach The Life Coach and A Daring Adventure?

It would be a lot less work and far more cost effective to have just one?

And the answer is, because otherwise it would confuse people.

Everything on your site should be there for a specific reason - to help people understand that you're a professional coach who can potentially help them.

If you mention any other business that isn't highly relevant, then strip it out because you risk overwhelming people with stuff that means nothing to them, or worse still, confuses them.

I once had a coach I worked with who sold homemade soap and she wanted to sell it on her site.

No!

How do you implement an SEO strategy?

How do you effectively funnel two entirely different potential customers/clients toward wherever it is you want them to go?

And, how do you brand two disparate service offerings on the one site?

The answer to all those questions is, you can't focus.

Focus on the one thing you do best, and that is coaching.

7. Setting Up The Contact Page Incorrectly

Just because somebody has landed on your contact page, it doesn't mean they will contact you.

Firstly, it's possible that they came into the site 'sideways' and landed on that page first.

Secondly, and more likely, they are probably still browsing.

Would it surprise you that some e-commerce sites lose well over half their purchase in the shopping cart?

In other words, people click on an item to buy, put it in the cart and then never go on to complete the purchase.

People are fickle and every additional step in the sales process can cause them to drop out.

That's why companies like Amazon have 1-click buying.

You have not sealed the deal because people are on your contact page so don't presume you have by having just a plain contact form.

Thank people for being there. Reassure them that you are the coach for them. And don't install a ridiculous captcha that a Nobel winning physicist would struggle to understand.

At one stage I was getting upward of 1,500 unique visitors to my website and getting spammed through my website was never a real concern.

Make the next stage of getting in touch with you as easy as possible.

I understand in these times of robocalls that having your telephone number on your site can lead to unwanted calls - but almost half of my client inquires come via my phone so I for one am reluctant to take it off.

Similarly, there is a chance your email may get scraped and sold on to spammers. But, with well over half of web traffic now on mobile devices having a clickable email can make the difference between somebody contacting you or not.

Step 8 - Install Google Analytics

You don't have to use Google Analytics, you can use something like Clicky, but you absolutely do need analytics of some description.

I was working with a client one time who told me he was 'killing it' on Instagram.

He was a Paleo Coach and had about 40,000 followers and was getting lots of interaction with his posts.

Great eh?

Not really, no.

I took a look at his analytics and he was indeed 'killing it'.

But, not with Instagram.

Because you have to go to somebody's profile in Instagram to get to their site and you cannot just click through from a post or image, it's harder to convert followers into newsletter subscribers or potential clients.

He was getting almost zero inbound traffic from Instagram.

However, with about 5% of the followers that he had on Instagram he was getting some serious inbound traffic from Pinterest.

This allowed him to put more targeted effort into Pinterest rather than just throwing up the occasional recipe.

Here's some of the information that a decent analytics program can supply you with:

- ✓ The number of users (visitors) per day/week/month/year you are attracting
- ✓ The number of page views per day/week/month/year you are receiving
- ✓ The number of pages the average person is reading
- ✓ Average time on site (session length) of each visitor
- ✓ Bounce rate (what proportion of people leave the site after visiting only the page they entered on)
- ✓ Where about in the world your visitors are coming from
- ✓ What is the breakdown between desktop, mobile and tablet visitors for any given time period
- ✓ Which social media sites are referring traffic and in what numbers
- ✓ What level of traffic individual pages are attracting
- ✓ Which sites are linking in to you and what is the quantity of traffic
- ✓ Which are your most popular pages
- ✓ Which pages are most 'sticky' and keep people on site the longest

I've only scratched the surface of the surface there because analytics can tell you just about anything you need to know about your site and your visitors, short of their names and addresses.

If you're going to succeed with your online marketing, then you have to know what is working and what isn't.

For example, if you spend an hour a week on LinkedIn, and then when you look at your analytics you can see that you only get about 3 visitors per week from that platform, (and even they don't hang around long), you can either bail on LinkedIn and save an hour of your time.

Or, you can change your approach because it's obviously not working.

Similarly, if the posts you write that you think will attract lots of traffic and interest, don't, then you can try and figure out why.

The real beauty of analytics is that they allow you to do something that is going to be critical to your success and that is test, test, and test again.

I have worked with over 300 coaches and I bet less than a dozen were testing if what they were doing was working on a regular basis.

If you're getting 100 visitors to your contact page per month, but nobody is bothering to get in touch, then you know something is probably wrong with that page, so you can try something else and then compare.

If you are getting 1,000 visitors per month to your home page and only a handful of sign-ups, then that probably tells you that you need to rethink your CTA (call to action) as it's obviously not working very well.

As you begin to acquire data, you will start to see patterns and a feel for what works and what doesn't.

Having this kind of information is critical for so many reasons, but here are a few:

- ✓ Which social media platforms are working for you in terms of numbers of visitors and time on site?
- ✓ What are your conversion rates like for your CTA's (call to actions) and contact page?
- ✓ What should you be writing more of if you want to increase traffic and engagement?
- ✓ On the flip side, what kind of content just isn't working for you?
- ✓ Are people moving about in your site and thus interested in what you have to offer?
- ✓ Is your contact and sales page converting?
- ✓ Is your content engaging and keeping people on your site? (this is known as sticky content)
- ✓ If you have run any guest posts, what traffic did they deliver and what was the quality of that traffic?

Step 9 - Build Your Newsletter List

Your newsletter is, presuming you are to be successful with your online marketing, going to be the cornerstone of your coaching practice.

Even in an age where the average working person gets upwards of 100 emails per day and is looking to delete first and ask questions later - the newsletter is king.

And there is a very specific reason why marketing to your newsletter list is more effective than more traditional forms of direct marketing and advertising.

The banks who mail me literally hundreds of letters every year with credit card and refinancing offers are interrupting me.

The TV network who stop a program I'm enjoying to run adverts are interrupting me.

And the pop-up that blocks my screen just as I am reading something useful is interrupting me.

Not that I'm saying those things don't work – of course they can, and do – just that they don't work as well as they once did.

And even though email marketing may not work as effectively as it once did, it still outperforms the above methods by, according to the reputable Copyblogger, an estimated 4,000%.

And it does so for one simple reason.

Permission.

When somebody signs up for your newsletter they are giving you permission to contact them again, and again, and again.

I'm not against advertising in conjunction with list building – in fact, advertising can be a useful tool in building a list – but the list is paramount.

You cannot build up rapport and authority sending letters out to random people.

You cannot effectively build trust and authority with an advert.

And a pop-up won't have people emailing you to thank you for some valuable advice.

I have been asked many times if it's possible to be successful as an online coach with a strong social media presence and without having a list.

The answer is, of course it's possible.

Similarly, it's possible to run the London marathon wearing an eight-foot-tall mock-up of Big Ben (yes, it's been done), but it's a lot harder.

Social media is important, but it is only one aspect of online marketing and it's seldom enough on its own.

Imagine this scenario.

You start your coaching business and dive headlong into learning Facebook.

You work diligently and strategically and start to build a loyal Facebook following of people who are interested and engaged in what it is you have to offer.

Maybe you start a group as well as a page and that too gets traction. Consequently, your followers rise from hundreds to thousands and then into the tens of thousands.

All is great, right?

Maybe.

Maybe not.

The problem is that you have just built your entire business on somebody else's platform.

If Facebook radically changes its algorithm – you could be in trouble.

If Facebook starts charging – you could be in trouble.

If Facebook gets broken up by a new progressive President – you could be in trouble.

And of course, there are way more permutations than that.

It could be simply that people start leaving the platform in droves.

Think it can't happen?

Ask Friends Reunited (if you're old enough to remember them), MySpace, or Tumblr.

The history books are littered with companies that dominated a niche in the market and now are no more than fond memories.

When you build a newsletter list it is you who dictates how successful, or otherwise, it is.

You're not a hostage to fortune, and Facebook collapsing won't have you heading off to Monster looking for a new job.

A newsletter takes time to build and it can be slow going, to begin with – especially if you don't expedite matters by implementing a guest posting strategy.

However, when you take the time and the trouble to send out high-quality useful information that benefits your readers you will be rewarded by their loyalty.

It's not in the least bit unusual to have people contact me who have been on the Coach The Life Coach list three or four years.

With A Daring Adventure that can be a decade or more on occasions.

Thus, a newsletter list gives you the longevity that you can rarely achieve with social media, blogging, or direct advertising.

Because of spammers and hard sales tactics employed by online marketers, people are more protective of their primary email address than ever before.

As such, when somebody signs up for your list they are effectively saying, *'I trust you.'*

The emphasis is then on you to not abuse that trust.

And you do that by going out of your way to help solve your subscriber's problems.

You may be thinking, *'But wait a minute Tim – if I solve their problems they won't hire me'*

That is a definite possibility – but the flip side is if it's obvious you're holding information back to use as an upsell then they won't trust you and want to hire you.

I'm pretty sure that everything Seth Godin knows is in his blog posts and/or books, but I'd still hire him if I had the final resources.

Similarly, Tony Robbins puts all his material '*out there*', but if you want to work with him it's going to still cost you \$1,000,000 – presuming he wants to work with you that is – so he hasn't written himself out of business.

Don't concern yourself with helping people too much and not getting paid.

The more people you help, the more people there are who will see you as an expert with authority and who they can trust.

And guess what?

People like to hire experts with authority who they can trust.

Step 10 - Learn Sales

Let's face it, sales is a dirty word to a great many people. Maybe even you?

It conjures up images of fat, sweaty men in ill-fitting suits trying to convince you that they're actually about to lose money on the car you're interested in buying because you're driving such a hard bargain.

Or, door-to-door salespeople using high pressure sales tactics whilst adopting slimy smiles and refusing to take no for an answer.

Or even store assistants who would '*ooh*' and '*ahh*' about how gorgeous you looked in the purple and yellow trash bag and the pair of oversized orange clown shoes you've just slipped into.

And if the reputation of salespeople wasn't bad enough, the Internet has bred an entirely new type of salesperson/online marketer, operating from a keyboard and often in anonymity.

They often know how to write sales copy that can make you want to buy stuff that you probably have no need for.

They know how to employ scarcity and time-limited tactics to get you to want something you would never normally want.

They use pop-ups, auto-play videos and will even embed code that stops you closing the page down before a message pops up telling you that you're a special snowflake and you just qualified for further 25% discount.

And they can track your every move online and batter you with advertising messages based upon items you may have previously viewed.

So, it's little wonder that people have a distrust of the entire sales and marketing industry and don't want to be associated with it.

Hell, I worked in sales for 20 years and I'm often left shaking my head in disbelief at the greed, the lack of integrity and the downright dishonesty of many salespeople who only care about the sale.

The problem is however, that no matter how much you may wish to think otherwise, you're already a salesperson.

You're constantly selling something.

Whether it's the value of a well-deserved vacation to a spouse. The importance that your kids eat their greens. Or, your ideas when you debate a friend on some topic you don't see eye to eye on.

At this very moment, I'm selling you the idea that you're a salesperson.

And I'm about to sell you on the principle that if you're selling anyway, you may as well learn how to do it properly and effectively.

Selling is not about trying to force people to buy products and services they don't need, nor want, nor can afford.

The moment you do that, you're no longer a salesperson, but a manipulator and confidence trickster.

Professional sales is about creating win/win situations where both parties benefit.

It is not a zero-sum game and the moment you take somebody's money for something that you know will not provide value for them, you're a thief.

I spent 20 years in sales and underwent literally hundreds of hours of sales training and I know that it's possible to operate with integrity - even if my employers often didn't.

I worked for 3 multinational, multibillion-dollar sales organizations and even though none were particularly ethical, that was rarely an issue for me.

And do you know why?

Because I was selling some of the best products and services on the market.

As such I could sell ethically and know that, for the most part, I was helping my customers run their businesses more effectively.

Sales is difficult, selling something you don't believe in is close to impossible if you're to sell with integrity.

As a coach, the starting point is truly believing that you can help the person who is showing interest in what you have to offer.

If you doubt your own ability and worth as a coach, then you have a problem bigger than not being able to sell.

If that is the case, then do one of two things, or maybe even both.

Keep going with the pro bono coaching and building your skillset.

in other words, practice, practice, practice.

And/or hire your own coach who can help you deal with such issues.

But before you do any of those things check whether the expectations you have of yourself are realistic.

Being able to add value does not mean having to be the best coach in the world.

It does not mean you have to have mastered your craft because coaching is a practice and you will never get to the point where you have every aspect nailed on.

And it does not mean you need to think you can help every prospective client who crosses your path.

You will be a better coach in a year than you are now presuming you're still doing it. And you will be even better still in 5 years.

I was nothing like the coach 10 years ago as I am now, but I was still able to offer value and never had any client complaints.

In other words, you're probably a better coach than you give yourself credit for.

I'm going to presume that you think of yourself as a competent coach who is sensibly looking to improve on an ongoing basis.

Therefore, you have a strong belief that you can help any person who approaches you other than those obviously not suited to coaching and those who don't fit your skillset.

That puts you in a position of having a duty of care to explain the value you bring. if you don't then the people who you would have been able to help may hire a less competent coach.

Sales is actually more technical than many people realize. However, you can be reasonably good at selling with just three skills.

1. You need to be able to build rapport

2. You need to ask great and searching questions
3. You need to be able to shut up and listen

As luck would have it, they are the exact same core skills you need to be a proficient coach. Hurrah!

If you want to sell, don't launch into telling them what you can do for them. Instead, ask questions with genuine curiosity.

Ask people how you can help them.

Inquire about what keeps them awake at night or stops them from fulfilling their potential.

Or, how will they feel in five years if they don't act now?

Or even, what do they think the real cost of not changing is?

Then shut up and listen.

Step 11 - Don't Forget About The Offline World

I don't do any offline marketing whatsoever.

I also don't really spend much time helping clients acquire clients offline - but that doesn't mean I think coaches should ignore it.

The hardest part of building a successful coaching practice is the first year or two.

Many coaches get trained, have a website built and then set off with a rush of enthusiasm and adrenaline.

When the expected clients aren't beating a path to their door they get discouraged and despondent - they start to wonder if they have made a terrible mistake.

Take a deep breath.

This is normal.

Whenever I'm asked '*what's the best way to become a coach?*' I always respond '*slowly*'.

The people who come to me for help that concern me the most are those who have quit their job and need to be earning money from coaching yesterday.

One time a women tried to hire me who had just quit a job in reality that was paying her almost \$200k per annum.

When I asked her what she needed to earn to avoid getting into trouble financially she said '*\$150k in the first year*'.

I'm highly experienced and I know how to help people build successful coaching practices, but I'm not a magician.

Most of what you have read about up to now takes time.

It will take a bare minimum of 3-months before Google starts to take notice of your website - and that's if you implement everything correctly.

A newsletter will probably take closer to 6-months, maybe even 12 to start bearing fruit - again, if you do things correctly.

And building a social media following of people who trust and support you will take months rather than weeks.

The reason I prefer online is because I had 20-years of networking and got fed up with it.

Also, once you have everything in place online it's easier to maintain.

I still get clients from posts I wrote five years ago and more.

Similarly, there are people on my lists who have been following for me longer than that - the same goes for social media.

However, don't get despondent if you need to be earning money sooner rather than later because there is a way to speed up the process.

And that is to take things offline and work in parallel to your online efforts.

Attend Chamber of Commerce meetings, sign up for BNI and even Toastmasters.

Have as many conversations as you can with as many people as you can about coaching and its incredible benefits.

I know a number of coaches who have started Meet Up groups and done really well, so take a look at that option.

Offer to speak for free anywhere you think your target audience may be hanging out.

And if you have the chops for cold calling, pick the phone up and start to call local businesses (presuming they are relevant to your niche) and offer your services.

I have done literally thousands of sales calls over the years and not once did anything bad happen.

And somebody telling you '*no*' or even to '*F off*' is not something bad and tells you more about them than it does you.

It's just an opportunity to move on to the next person who you can benefit and maybe refine your script.

I promise you, you won't die cold calling - but you may get some amazing opportunities.

Step 12 - Hire A Coach

On a scale of 0-10 with 0 being not even remotely important and 10 is crucial to you and your clients' success.

How important do you think to have your own coach is?

You're a coach, or at the very least if you are reading this book, I would imagine have an interest in being one. So I would presume your score is fairly high.

After all, why would you venture into a career that you thought was important to other people, but not yourself?

Imagine asking your dentist how important it is they have help when it comes to working on their teeth. I doubt any reasonable dentist would respond with, *'Oh, I just do it myself - it saves me a fortune.'*

My first coach was an integrated part of my training and it was an interesting experience - as for the most part - we were both clueless.

It wasn't until almost two years later I actually went out and hired a coach out of free choice. It was one of the better professional decisions I have made.

I had issues of my own I wanted help with such as getting more organized and not leaving everything until the last minute.

But, there was more value than that because I got to see a professional coach at work up close and personal.

And probably just as importantly, I felt credible by doing what I was asking other people to do - put their hand in their pocket.

Shortly after, I took the plunge again this time hiring a business coach and that was the real turning point in me starting to successfully build my presence online.

In my early days, I was living in the land of rainbows and Unicorns thinking I had the business element boxed off.

After all, I was getting reasonable traffic, my list was growing, if not spectacularly then at least steadily, and I was filling most client sessions - even if I was hustling a lot and running offers twice per year.

I soon realized I knew squat.

Well maybe not squat, but nothing like as much as I needed to know to truly succeed. I should have been doing so much better.

I wasn't utilizing my list properly, I was being too timid with my offerings, my social media strategy looked like an 8-year-old had devised it after drinking a pot of coffee and eating 2lbs of sugar - and I give far too much of my time away for free.

It was a massive wake up call when I finally realized this approach wasn't sustainable.

Since then I have hired another life coach and on the marketing side of things, a guy who only specializes in YouTube conversion, two more who just do Facebook advertising and a LinkedIn expert.

I currently am working with an Active Campaign specialist (the email platform I use) and have a VA who is far closer to being my coach than a true VA.

I am a coach, I believe in coaching, so why on earth wouldn't I hire coaches of my own?

Coaching works because the coach can see the patterns of behavior and blind spots that the client usually cannot see alone.

Like every other human being, I have blind spots and they needed a light shining on them. I also have gaps in my knowledge that I want pointing out.

Being a successful coach is hard, make no mistake. And that's exactly the reason we need help too.

A coach asking for help either with their business or life, in general, isn't a sign of weakness or lack of belief in their own ability.

It's a sign they truly believe in what they do and understand what coaching is all about.

It's also a sign they are committed and want to be the best coach they can possibly be without cutting corners and thinking they have all the answers

That's why I will continue to employ coaches.

And you probably should too.

You Finished – Well Done!

Of course it's awesome that you have read this far, but that's not enough.

Now you need to implement what you have learned.

Knowledge isn't power.

The real power lies in using that knowledge to full effect.

If you are serious about succeeding with your coaching practice and would like more help, then please visit www.coachthelifecoach.com.

Apart from running courses for coaches I also offer bespoke one-on-one coaching and lots of free help and advice through my newsletter, Facebook group and blog posts.

The very best of luck – now go and kick some coaching ass because the clock is ticking and the world doesn't need any more spectators.

Cheers

Tim
