

A photograph of two women sitting at a table in a bright, modern office setting. The woman on the left has long, wavy red hair and is wearing a white long-sleeved shirt. She is leaning forward with her chin resting on her hand, looking thoughtfully at the other woman. The woman on the right has short brown hair, wears glasses, and a colorful patterned cardigan over a white shirt. She is also leaning forward, looking towards the first woman. The background is softly blurred, showing office furniture and a window with blinds.

Why Coaches Don't Give Advice or Suggestions

As an [International Coaching Federation \(ICF\)](#) coach, one of the skills of effective coaching is not giving advice or suggestions. Instead, we empower clients to find their own solutions. This approach is critical for fostering true personal and professional growth. Here's why ICF coaches refrain from giving advice or suggestions during sessions.



Coaching is Client-Centered

The foundation of coaching lies in the belief that clients are naturally resourceful, creative, and whole. When we give advice, we inadvertently position ourselves as the experts in the client's life. However, the true expert in a client's life is the client themselves. By focusing on the client's goals, ideas, and insights, we help them tap into their own inner wisdom and capabilities.



Encouraging Ownership and Accountability

When clients develop their own solutions, they are more likely to take ownership of their actions and outcomes. Advice giving can lead to dependency or a lack of commitment, as clients may feel they are simply following someone else's directive. On the other hand, coaching encourages self-accountability, helping clients to take full responsibility for their choices and the paths they choose to follow.

Coaching Skills and Competencies:

- 1 Demonstrates Ethical Practice
- 2 Embodies a Coaching Mindset
- 3 Establishes and Maintains Agreements
- 4 Cultivates Trust and Safety
- 5 Maintains Presence
- 6 Listens Actively
- 7 Evokes Awareness
- 8 Facilitates Client Growth



Facilitating Lasting Change

Sustainable and long lasting change comes from within. When clients come to their own conclusions through the coaching process, the impact is deeper and more enduring. Suggesting a course of action might provide a temporary fix, but it lacks the power to generate the self-reflection and insight that leads to long lasting change and transformation.



Empowering Client's Problem-Solving Abilities

As coaches, we aim to foster independence and confidence in our clients. Giving advice can undermine this by implying that the client doesn't have the tools to figure things out on their own. Instead, powerful questions, active listening, and reflective inquiry empower clients to hone their problem-solving skills, building the confidence to tackle challenges without relying on the coach.



Maintaining Ethical Boundaries

The ICF Code of Ethics emphasizes that coaches should honor the client's agenda, values, and autonomy. Offering advice can blur these boundaries, steering the conversation in a direction that may not align with the client's true needs or desires. By refraining from advice, we respect the client's authority over their life and maintain clear ethical boundaries in the coaching partnership.



Fostering Deep Listening and Reflection

Coaching requires deep listening and reflecting back what the client shares, not offering solutions. This approach encourages clients to fully explore their thoughts, perceptions and emotions. By creating a safe space for this exploration, clients often arrive at insights they might not have discovered had the coach offered a suggestion or advice.



Promoting a Growth Mindset

When clients generate their own ideas, they engage in a growth mindset, seeing challenges as opportunities for learning, growth and development. Advice giving can reinforce a fixed mindset, where clients may feel that they need external input to succeed. Coaching supports clients in seeing themselves as capable of continuous learning and growth, even when facing obstacles.

The goal of coaching

Is to support clients in their journey of self-discovery and empowerment. By avoiding advice and suggestions, ICF coaches create a partnership in which the client is at the center of their own growth and change process. Through this approach, we help clients unlock their potential, leading to long-lasting change.