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Brin in the Coach, I'm Ready to Play

By Susan Dunn

Brin in the Coach, I'm Ready to Play by Susan Dunn, MA Clinical Psychology, The EQ

Coach

I get letters ...emails, that is. Inquiries from prospective clients. They ask the only questions they know how to ask in seeking a coach, admittedly a hard thing to do when you've never had a coach, and their questions reveal as much to me, in this joint-interview process, as my answers reveal to them.

While you're looking for your Ideal Coach, the Coach is looking for his or her Ideal Client.

Here are things I'm looking for in my clients, many of them Emotional Intelligence characteristics. However, since I coach EQ and teach these skills, I'm also looking for the person with low EQ who is eager to learn, "trainable," and ready to commit to do the work.

1. Good Enough Manners

Being courteous on the phone call, or in the email, such as, "I was wondering if you have time to talk now," or "Dear Susan" or some salutation. We are about to enter a relationship, and it needs be one of respect and dignity.

2.The ability to communicate with me in a common language.

At the very minimum, a person must be able to realize she and I can't communicate if she speaks Swahili, and I do not. It's a bad sign when we both speak "English," but they speak a dialect, such as Business-eze, or Psychiatry, and they don't know everyone doesn't speak it. This sort of blindness to social cues is a bad sign ... unless of course they've come for Emotional Intelligence coaching, in which case, we have our work cut out for us.

Example 1: When your therapist says to you, "Okay. What part of 'malignant regression and pathogenic reintjection as a defense against psychic decompensation' don't you understand?"
(Source: New Yorker cartoon)

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Example 2: The client who thinks before he speaks - "I want to ask her about minimizing the census on the QIW Ward. Now how can I put that in plain English?"

3. Empathy ... enough

I received an email yesterday with "coaching" for the subject line, and the body of the email contained this: "What do you do? Lillian."

This is not a good prognosticator—oops, skip the jargon—this is not promising. For one thing, it doesn't pass the Manners Muster.

For another, I do 3 large areas of coaching—Emotional Intelligence, Marketing, and what I call "Helping

People." I call it "helping people" because I like to speak the vernacular (the language `us guys' speak at the water cooler) so I avoid terms like "Personal Life Coach" (does this exclude public life or professional life? There's no such thing.), or "Ontological Coach" - say what?

Now, the prospective client doesn't have to know I work in 3 areas, or that I train EQ coaches, or that I run a Distance Learning School, and in fact in some cases couldn't have known, but they need to know that asking me "What do you do?" is highly unlikely to elicit a response they can use, no matter how smart I am.

Call it a basic understanding of the field., i.e., in seeking a lawyer to do your divorce, you don't need to know what a Public Bonds attorney does, you just need to know a Divorce Attorney does divorces and a Public Bonds attorney does not. That's the way the field "is".

Yes, we coaches have our "elevator speeches" ready, but the savvy client, the one I want to work with, is the one who knows how to ask a question. They write, "I want to XYZ. Can you help me? Is this the kind of coaching you do?"

4. EQ is better than IQ, but IQ has to be there

I received an email from My Ideal Client—NOT! saying: "What's the difference between a Business Coach and an Emotional Intelligence Coach?" One tells who you serve, the other tells what you do. Not being able to grasp that general concept is a clue they aren't "conceptual" enough to be my Ideal Client—YES!

5. Papa Bear, Mama Bear, Baby Bear ... this is "just right"

I like a client who's already developed a good set of tools, i.e., on the introvert/extravert scale, they test toward the middle. On the left–brain, right–brain scale, they test toward the middle. If an individual is an extreme of anything, there will be more work to do. But of course that "balance," is what Emotional Intelligence is all about.

EXAMPLE: An extremely left–brained client will continually be saying, "We weren't talking about that,"

or "That's way off the subject." A coach must gather information that may not appear to the client to be relevant to "the subject." Not trusting the process is part of the client's problem!

6. Certain life experiences

Coaches differ on this, but there are certain life events I've not experienced, or things I'm not (a male, for instance), that I know preclude me working well with a client and I refer them elsewhere.

EXAMPLE: One very savvy shopper had an excellent set of questions for me, including, "Do you think someone who has never been a mother can understand my feelings about starting to prepare for a career after they're gone?"

I replied that no, I did not. Motherhood is one of those things you can't relate to if you haven't been one. She hired me and we're working well together.

By the same token, I think one area where the field of therapy is lacking, is in helping people with corporate careers. Most therapists have not been in the corporate world, and can plain-out give bad

advice. There's a level of vulnerability you can't project in today's corporate environment, and until that changes, to assume that someone cares about your feelings when your mother-in-law is in the hospital, when there's a \$1,000,000 deadline hovering, is not just naïve, it's dangerous.

One life crisis is like another in terms of physiological and emotional responses, and stages of coping, but can someone coach you on your divorce who's never been divorced? Or never been married? It's up to the shopper to decide.

In this case, I think the coach has to be responsible for knowing their own limitations. A lot of training, and lot of experience helping others with the problem, can sometimes fill the gap. I coach individuals on how to parent with Emotional Intelligence, but I don't feel I can coach someone on "how to be a father." The Ideal Client knows that.

7. Perspective

My Ideal Client keeps things in perspective, understanding I can't remember every detail of their situation. She brings me up-to-speed at the beginning of the session, or says, "You'll recall I mentioned last week..." or "Well, I met with Fred. That's my boss."

8. Sense of Humor

9. A Relator

The best coaching will be co-coaching. The results of the coaching will be as good as the relationship. My Ideal Client approaches coaching not as a to-do list, or me as a Master Sergeant, but as a relationship, a process, and something not necessarily fast. It is, in fact, when we "wander" that I get the kind of information that helps me help the client the most. (It's a managed wandering however.)

10. She has an Observing Ego.

IQ gets you through school; EQ gets you through life. EQ is based on self-awareness. Being self-aware means you have the capability to sit back, figuratively, and observe yourself. The client who can say, "I don't relate well to [this type of person] in [this certain circumstance] or [when I'm feeling this way], is leap years ahead of the client who says, "People are hard to get along with," or "Everyone hates me at work and I don't know why."

11. The Learner

My Ideal Client is a lifetime learner. It's the key to Resilience, and the prime is already pumped for growth and change.

12. The one who laughs when I ask, "And how has this been working for you?"

It's often the most important question I ask.

13. The client who says EITHER, "Jacques Louis-David, isn't he the one who painted 'The Lictors Bring to Brutus the Bodies of His Sons'?" OR "Jacques Louis-David? You say he's an artist? Sure. Bring it on!"

14. Looks at my EQ reading list (http://www.susandunn.cc/emotional_intelligence.htm) and says EITHER "We like the same books. Wasn't "Art & Physics" awesome?" OR "Fascinating. Never read a one of them. Where should I start?"

15. The Person who says, "Oh, so you do General Coaching AND Marketing Coaching? Well, that makes perfect sense, because whatever we're doing, we're always marketing ourselves."

16. Someone who is accustomed to paying for professional services to make their life work better.

17. The client who asks "why?" ten times as often as he asks "what?"

18. The client with good timing. I can make a roaring fire out of the lowest flickering embers, but not when the ashes are cold.

©Susan Dunn, MA Clinical Psychology, The EQ Coach™, <http://www.susandunn.cc> . Susan is the author of "Live Your Life with Emotional Intelligence." We offer customized coaching programs, EQ coaching is included FREE with every one-month coaching contract. Check out the EQ eBook Library—<http://www.webstrategies.cc/ebooklibrary.html> . <mailto:sdunn@susandunn.cc> for FREE eZine.

I'll Win It For You

By Staci Stallings

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The game was tight. Archrivals had faced off for three and a half periods in a seesaw battle that was going down to the wire. As the clock ticked down, the two sides traded the lead back and forth. Neither could be assured of victory because with the game so close, anything could happen.

From the sideline, the coach watched his team getting more and more apprehensive as the seconds ticked away. They were missing shots they never missed. They were missing opportunities they didn't miss. Even their body language said, "This is bad. We might lose this one."

With less than a minute left, the coach called a time out. Now he knew that every girl on that court had been over the plays a million times. They didn't need elaborate help to set up a play for a last second win. They needed to calm down and play the way they knew how to play. So when they bent into that huddle, the coach told them something more than a little unconventional. "Go out there. Play the game. Have fun. Do your best, and I'll win it for you."

No pressure instructions. No you have to win this or we lose to our rivals. No anxiety-inducing strategy. Simply, "Go play, and I'll win it for you."

To my way of thinking, that was an audacious statement because in reality, it wouldn't be the coach taking the shot that would win or lose the game. He would be standing on the sideline with no direct control whatsoever. However, this coach knew something about the training these girls had been through, and he knew without a doubt they could do it. The problem was they didn't know they could do it, and so, he let them rely not on themselves for the win but on him.

The amazing thing to me when I really started thinking about this statement is that what that coach told his team is exactly what Jesus tells each one of us: "Go out there. Play the game. Have fun. Do your best, and I'll win it for you."

We think it's all on us—that we have to get everything right, do everything perfectly, or our "win" will never materialize. In fact, we get sucked into this mentality that Heaven may be just out of our reach no matter what we do. However, I think the reality is that Jesus is the coach standing on the sideline having full faith that we can do everything He's trained us to do. We can love just like He's shown us. We can give; we can live—not because we can do it on our own but because He's right there, and He has faith that we have been given everything we need to win through Him.

I'm sure you know the end of the story. When the buzzer sounded, the team who had just gone out, had fun, and done their best was victorious.

One day the final buzzer of your life will sound, and the question at that moment will be this: Did you allow Jesus to be your coach? Did you have faith that He would win the game for you—or are you still trying to win it yourself? It's a question worth contemplating.

Sometimes life lessons surprise you. Princess. Visit <http://www.stacistallings.com/PrincessC1.htm> to read the first chapter.



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