



JANET B. MATTS, LLC
 ...enhancing what matters to you

Distinctions Between Coaching/Consulting/Counseling –Therapy

Coaching	Consulting	Counseling-Therapy
Maximize the purpose, passion and talent of leaders at all levels	Enable client to make an improvement or change through a structured intervention or plan	Restore client's personal wellbeing in order to function effectively
Assumes healthy self-responsible adults who are committed to developing their leadership capability	Assumes business issue or problem to be addressed with professional assistance	Assumes painful feelings, lack of self-understanding and dysfunctional thought and behavior patterns
Listening/Supportive Role, questioning and challenging skills critical to process	Advice/Expert Role, change strategy and implementation skills critical to the process	Uncovering/Healing Role, listening and reflective skills critical to the process
Coaching contract based on matching individual and organizational needs & goals	Consulting contract based on key deliverables and responsibilities	Counseling contract based on exploring relationships, problems and behavioral patterns
Agenda created by the client with support from the coach regarding personal and organizational growth	Agenda created by consultant and client regarding the business issue	Client brings agenda to the counselor regarding personal dysfunction
Objectives established by the client with input from the coach, often evolving over time	Objectives established by the consultant and client together	Objectives established by the counselor, by norms of wellness and with some input from the client.
Neutral role, coach not attached to outcomes but to process; the leader defines the outcomes	Business issues addressed/opinion sought, consultant attached to outcomes and process	Neutral role, counselor attached to process but control rests with the client
Relationship based on process expertise and adult development theory	Relationship based on process and content expertise	Relationship based on process and clinical expertise
Enable client to achieve desired personal and professional results	Enable client to achieve desired business results	Enable client to achieve significant personal change
Usually long-term relationship established, which can ebb and flow given where a person is in their own journey	Can be short or long term relationship	Usually long-term relationship, during which client becomes unstuck from self-defeating behaviors.
Presenting Situations: Role transition; Life balance; Performance issues; 360° feedback; Personal leadership effectiveness	Presenting Situations: Business improvement; Process consultation; Acquisition or merger; Teambuilding	Presenting Situations: Depressed moods; Low energy; Apathy; Difficulty concentrating; Irritability; Hostility; Volatility; Fearfulness; Recklessness



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When choosing someone to assist with business or personal problem solving, either for yourself or as a referral, it is important to consider what the best resource is for the issue to be addressed. There are numerous “helping” roles and they all overlap to some extent. However, there are fundamental distinctions as well.

The chart on the preceding page outlines some of the distinctions among three of the most common helping roles that might arise in organizational settings. Most people are familiar with consulting roles; both within the organization and from outside, and can identify the business need and match a consultant to it. Coaching is a newer role for some, one that is a fundamental part of every leader’s responsibility. Some leaders have been coaching for years while others are just beginning to apply their leadership talents in coaching relationships. In addition to this ongoing role, there are times where an internal or external coach may be appropriate to supplement the leader’s role. Matching the coach to the person being coached is a key factor in the success of the relationship. Counseling is distinct in that it is not done by internal resources. Rather, it is best handled by a clinical professional who is outside the work environment. The identification of therapeutic needs and referral to an appropriate professional can be supported by Human Resources.

Following are a few examples of the distinctions from the chart.

Purpose:

Most leaders have more potential to add value than they express in their roles. The **coach** helps the leader discover where that underused talent lies and how to unleash it for personal satisfaction and organizational contribution.

Leaders confront huge numbers of complex problems. The **consultant** helps the leader to work through the problems, offers alternatives for solving them, and often implements changes through planned interventions in the organization.

People sometimes lose their way to the extent that day to day functioning is negatively effected. The **counselor** uncovers the roots of problems with clients and through increasing their understanding and acceptance, helps them restore well-being.

Role:

The **coach’s** role is to help the leader reflect and refocus for the future. The coach does this by active listening, questioning to surface the whole story, and challenging assumptions when the leader has blind spots.



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The **consultant's** role is to help the leader solve a business problem by bringing expertise to bear on the issue, offering advice on strategies and action steps, and often facilitating the implementation of plans through others.



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The **counselor's** role is to restore the client to good mental health by guiding the uncovering of feelings and events, usually in the past, that have resulted in negative behaviors, in order to free the client of their hold.

Control:

In coaching, the leader defines the issues to be addressed and “owns” the outcomes to be achieved. The **coach** leads from behind, providing appropriate structure to conversations, tools for self awareness and planning, and support for the leader's implementation.

The **consultant** is generally accountable for recommending workable solutions and for implementing them effectively. The consultant is hired for advice and opinions, and shares the ownership of outcomes with the business leader.

In counseling, the client has control of what is discussed and revealed. The **counselor** guides the process toward outcomes that are based on norms of wellness and encourages the client to understand the sources of painful feelings and heal them.