

# Looking for coaching? Be inquisitive, ask about references

By lifebar

When it comes to selecting a life coach, it truly is buyer beware. Anyone can lay claim to the label, experts say. Interested clients should shop carefully.

The International Coach Federation ([www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)) is trying to bring order to chaos. The non-profit association, with more than 5,000 members, has created a formal accreditation program for the many schools that train coaches. The group plans to set up a credentialing process for graduates of formal coaching courses and provide a referral service for consumers.

Its Web site says it lists "business coaches, financial coaches, relationships coaches, spiritual coaches, life planning coaches, a rock 'n' roll band coach and hundreds of others."

And it suggests, "Since coaches often specialize in various areas, it's a good idea for the prospective client to shop around for the coach with the most experience and combination of qualities they seek."

The Web site says prospective clients should:

- \* Educate themselves about coaching.
- \* Define specific goals to be met through coaching.
- \* Interview three coaches before making a decision.
- \* Ask about experience, qualifications, skills.
- \* Ask for at least two references.
- \* Choose a coach who "feels right." There should be a genuine connection between client and coach.

Other experts caution that although no contract is signed, coaches expect clients to make what they see as a reasonable time commitment, which might run from three to six months, or more.

<http://www.usatoday.com/usatoday/20020806/4336029s.htm>