

Coaching the Entrepreneur With AD/HD

This is the third in a series of articles about entrepreneurs who have AD/HD

Coaching bridges the gap between where you are and where you want to be. An effective coach works with you to transform your vague dreams of entrepreneurial glory into a focused vision that can guide your way. Your coach will help you create short-term, intermediate and long-term goals and to stay on track until you reach them. Finally, coaches help you expand your vision beyond what you thought was possible.

The entrepreneurial coach is one of a growing number of specialized personal performance coaches that includes executive coaches who work with CEO's, writing coaches who help writers meet their deadlines, and personal coaches that help people improve the quality of their relationships and other areas of their personal life. Just as an athletic coach works to bring out the best in a high-performance athlete or a drama coach works with an actor, the entrepreneurial coach works to discover and develop the skills of the entrepreneur. Whether you're developing a business plan or looking for ways to maximize productivity, the entrepreneurial coach is equipped to help.

The AD/HD entrepreneurial coach is even more specialized, combining the necessary skills of an entrepreneurial coach with an in-depth understanding of what it is like to live with AD/HD. This is an important distinction because so many entrepreneurs seem to have AD/HD. Even if you don't have AD/HD, most entrepreneurs still benefit from using a coach who understands the entrepreneurial mindset. To some extent, all entrepreneurs share the same risk-taking, novelty-seeking behaviors that are found in people who have been diagnosed with AD/HD. The AD/HD entrepreneurial coach understands those character traits and can help you use them to your advantage.

Regardless of their specialty, coaches offer strategies to improve your performance, challenge you to go further than you thought you could, and motivate you to be your absolute best. One client compared using an entrepreneurial coach to having "a personal trainer for your brain."

It is also important to remember what a coach is not. A coach is not a cheerleader, although your coach should be an encourager and your champion. Cheerleaders may be great at encouragement, but they are usually short on solutions. A coach helps you find solutions and then encourages you to implement them. Coaches have an objective perspective that allows them to see problems more clearly.

Coaches are not the same as consultants, which are usually hired to solve a specific problem within a company. When a coach is involved in finding a solution to a specific problem, he or she will almost always show the client how those same steps could be applied to other areas as well. Above all, coaches are pragmatic and solution-oriented.

Coaches are not the same as therapists. Therapy focuses on your past; coaching looks to your future. Therapy is about understanding "why" you feel or behave in a certain way, a process that can take years and still be fruitless. Coaching focuses on finding practical solutions to everyday problems. This is an important distinction, especially now that many therapists are now trying to expand their practices to include coaching. Be sure that the coach you hire understands the difference between coaching and therapy and knows that you are looking for a coach, not a therapist. It's also important that the client (you) understands that coaching isn't therapy. The typical coach is unequipped to conduct psychotherapy on his or her patients. Let the coach stick to coaching. If you need therapy, hire a therapist. If you're serious about solution-centered personal improvement, hire a coach.