



## How to be a Life Coach at 25

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I recently received an email from a journalist in the US asking me what I knew about people gaining an online certification for life coaching. And a few weeks back, one of my clients mentioned to me that he'd been approached by a life coach who had "qualified" following a weekend course and some follow-up telephone tutorials. At least, I suppose, that was better than being certified online! But the one that really sticks out in my mind is the time a client told me that he'd received a pitch from a life coach who was twenty five years old. He asked me:

"How can you give advice on what you have never experienced? How could a twenty five year old contribute to the understanding of a fifty year old who is on his second marriage, has seen one business fail, been through four or five high-powered jobs and is at a crossroads in his business and personal life? How can you be a life coach at twenty five?"

You can't! I've been working with clients since 1996, before that I headed up a bank (not a big bank – but a bank nevertheless) and before that I was marketing and product development manager for a couple of life insurers and I've been studying psychology (still studying and, I suspect will always be studying!) since 1992. At many times in my career I've been ahead of the curve (innovating in the financial world, inventing financial planning software) – as a client said to me recently: "When you started talking about quantum physics and how your subconscious works you were 'way out there', now everyone's doing it".

However, I'm not a "life coach", whatever that actually is exactly – I simply facilitate people in gaining an understanding and experience of the fact that we all possess our own inner wisdom and our own inner compass that will, if encouraged through cultivating clarity of mind, lead us towards our life's purpose, towards peace of mind, happiness and success.

That's a fairly hefty statement to make – that we can all achieve our heart's desires if we only let ourselves off the leash to which so-called normal people are unwittingly tethered. The key word in that last sentence is "unwittingly"! Unfortunately, precious few people have ever explained to the normal masses that they live unwitting lives. Years of research shows that normal people live automatic reactive lives. Just stop and think about it for a moment. How much of your everyday repetitive tasks are done without you actively thinking about them? Whether it's a simple task like brushing your teeth (while your mind wanders in all kinds of weird and wonderful directions) or

something more complex, like trying to communicate successfully with your wayward teenage son – or, indeed, a wayward work colleague. How often do you react (and make matters worse)? There's a world of difference between reacting and taking calm, level-headed real action and making matters so much better.

Therein lies the mindlessness of the normal life. Psychology proves that normal people are unable to devote enough of their attention to each task in hand – to the extent that every task in hand is done mindlessly. As a result, the normal everyday life is an unwitting treadmill created out of a subconscious mindset that the normal person is completely unaware of.

If only you could break that mindless, reactive process – then you'd be in a totally different place mentally, you'd be in a place where you were focused and single-minded – the hallmarks of abnormal success.

Many clients of life coaches and mentors develop a dependence on the coach, without realising that they have all the answers they need within – if only they'd pay attention to what really successful people call "gut instinct". You'll notice your very own gut instinct or inspiration (call it what you will) if you break the habitual cycle of repetitive mindless behaviour. Why else would Harvard insist that their executive summer school participants take their notes with the hand with which they do not habitually write?

Break a couple of little habits and you break the biggest bad habit of your adult lifetime – reacting mindlessly. Then you will begin to notice and pay attention to the task in hand, however repetitive that task might be. Then you will begin to experience and appreciate that you do indeed possess your own internal wisdom and your own internal compass. Experience this and you're already on the road to a place where a life coach will be as superfluous to you as tennis coaches are to most of today's top players!!

Start right now. Eat with the knife and fork reversed, shave with the "other" hand, brush your teeth with the "wrong" hand, put the "other" leg into your trousers first, sit somewhere else at the board- or dinner-table. Break little habits and you'll stop being mindless.