

## Differences Between Therapy and Coaching

A session with a therapist, coffee with a friend, an appointment with a coach, or even simply petting the dog can all be *therapeutic* - they provide help and support. Listed below are the classical and historical way to differentiate between therapy and coaching. Good coaching and good therapy probably overlap quite often.

| Therapy  |                          | Coaching   |
|--|--------------------------|--|
| Therapist is in charge. The "mental health professional" diagnoses and sets the agenda | Power                    | The client is in charge. Coach works for the client and client determines the agenda                             |
| "Fix what's broken"  | Function                 | Develops Strengths   |
| Focuses on <u>feelings</u> and <u>past</u> events                                      | Focus                    | Focuses on <u>actions</u> and the <u>future</u>  |
| Heal dysfunction and pathology<br>Improve the "Being"                                  | Purpose                  | Focuses on <u>actions</u> and the <u>future</u>  |
| Core Beliefs   | Depth of Work            | Behaviors and Skills   |
| Explores the root of problems  | Process                  | Focuses on solving problems  |
| The client needs healing   | Assumption               | The client is whole  |
| Works to bring the unconscious into consciousness                                      | Path to Success          | Works with the conscious mind  |
| Works for internal resolution of pain and to let go of old patterns                    | Method                   | Works for external solutions to overcome barriers, learn new skills and implement them                           |
| Therapists deal primarily with <b>answering the question</b> "Why do I....?"           | Questions and Questioner | A coach ask the questions "Who are you? Where do you want to go? and What do you want your future to look like?" |

Sources: Hayden and Whitworth (1995), *The Relationship Coaching Institute*, Sharon House