

Why Hire an ICF Credentialed Coach?

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Certification from the International Coach Federation (ICF) is extremely important when considering which coach to hire. It means the coach:

- Has received professional training from program specifically designed to teach coaching skills in alignment with the ICF Competencies and Code of Ethics;
- Has demonstrated a proficient understanding and use of the coaching competencies as outlined by the ICF
- Is accountable to the ethics and standards set forth by the ICF.

The ICF is a consortium of professional coaches and organizations that have joined together under its auspices to shape and govern the profession of coaching. The skills sets, competencies, ethics and standards are a collective agreement between coaches from all over the world who have made the commitment to maintain the very highest standards you would expect from any other profession. The ICF is to coaches what the American Medical Association (AMA) is to doctors or the American Psychological Association (APA) is to Psychologists, therapists and counselors.

Since coaching is a new profession (about 10 years formally) and certification and licensure are not yet required in most states in the U.S. or in other countries, there are many individuals who are calling themselves coaches today. Many who call themselves coaches have not been formally trained in specific coaching skills and are transferring skill sets from other professions into their coaching. Often this results in an inadequate or ineffective coaching experience for clients.

Coaching has its own unique skills it employs and for many coaches "unlearning" old skill sets from other professions has to occur before they can competently pick up the new skill sets used in coaching.

There are three levels of Coach Credential from the ICF. We have briefly outlined the differences below and the basic requirements for each level:

1. Associate Certified Coach (ACC)

- 60 hours of coach specific training
- 250 hours of coaching experience with clients
- Satisfactory completion of oral exam
- Agreement to adhere to the Code of Ethics as outlined by the ICF

2. Professional Certified Coach (PCC)

- 125 hours of coach specific training
- 750 hours of coaching experience with clients
- Satisfactory completion of written and oral exam
- Agreement to adhere to the Code of Ethics as outlined by the ICF
- Continued professional development to renew credential every three years

3. Master Certified Coach (MCC)

- 200 hours of coach specific training
- 2500 hours of coaching experience with clients
- Satisfactory completion of written and oral exam
- Demonstrated leadership within the profession
- Agreement to adhere to the Code of Ethics as outlined by the ICF
- Continued professional development to renew credential every three years

If you are considering hiring a coach, be diligent in asking the coach if they have been specifically trained in coaching skills and currently hold or in the process of acquiring an ICF credential. Don't be misled to think a coach is a competent coach because they have other professional credentials or set high fees. If you want more information on the ICF, the credentialing process or ICF Code of Ethics you can visit their website at <http://www.CoachFederation.org>.