

FINDING A COACH

COACHES DIFFER IN their training and in the quality of the services they offer. The best way to select a coach is to get a recommendation from somebody you respect. If you have a potential coach in mind, try to interview a former client of that coach to determine if the coach has the qualifications you are looking for. The Christian Coaches Network (www.christiancoaches.com) also will give you the names of their members who might be able to help. Because most coaches have a website, go to these to determine if any potential coach is a person you want to work with.

As you look for a coach:

- Think about the level of coach training and experience you want your coach to have. You will discover that of coaches who advertise their services, some are trained and some are untrained. They differ significantly in the quality of their training and in their level of experience or expertise.
- Give some thought to the issues you want to work on in coaching. Is the coach you are considering best able to help with these issues?
- Try to get some indication of the coach's values, worldview, and Christian commitment. To what extent are these important to you?

Most coaches have designated times or days available for phone interviews. For this reason, it is best to either call or send an e-mail message to request time for an interview. This is a mutual get-acquainted discussion that usually lasts around thirty minutes and is free. Unless you feel at ease with the first contact, plan to interview more than one prospective coach. In these conversations:

- Think about whether you feel comfortable talking with the potential coach. Usually it is best if both the coach and the client sense that they could build a good working relationship, so try to find a coach with whom you will be able to work well.
- Listen for passion, authenticity, style, manner, ego, worldview, humor, and attitudes.
- Be aware of the questions the coach asks you and how they are asked. This likely is how questions will be asked if you hire the person as a coach.
- Determine how much training or experience this coach has. Does he or she have skills that would be helpful to your issues? Ask why the person entered the coaching field and the types of situations he or she has coached. Be cautious when the potential coach is evasive about answering these questions or when the coach claims to have the ability to help anybody regardless of need.
- Ask what is included in the fee, if a time commitment is required (like at least three months of coaching), and what options are available. Coaching fees normally are payable monthly, often in advance, for a specified number of months. How can you terminate the coaching?
- If you interview more than one coach, let them all know of your final decision. This is a matter of courtesy.

These are questions that you might ask a potential coach. Keep in mind that if you become a coach, other people may ask these questions of you. They are designed to enable the potential coach and client to establish a compatible and trusting relationship.¹