

MISSOURIAN

More Americans recruiting life coaches

The practice is for people who are doing well, but aren't meeting their goals.

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As people seek to better their lives, personally and professionally, they are more likely to seek outside help in order to maximize their potential.

That is the main reason why the U.S. has seen an increase in the number of people offering their services as "life coaches."

The practice is more popular than ever, with the International Coach Federation certifying approximately 10,000 coaches.

MU graduate Joanne Waldman, of New Perspective Coaching, has coached many professionals and individuals to sort through career aspirations, plan for retirement or achieve personal goals. She also trains and teaches aspiring life coaches through the International Coach Academy.

Waldman said that while some people seek the help of a therapist or a counselor, "a life coach works with the well, who want to get even better ."

Life coaches are a new option for those looking to advance their well-being. Coaches provide clients with the advice to strive for personal growth. By using the telephone, personal visits or e-mails, clients can coordinate with a life coach who becomes a partner in planning and organizing their future.

Waldman said she has life coaching students in 40 countries across the world. "People are looking for support and guidance from coaches," she said. "They have these values and dreams, and they aren't living them."

Carol Gamm Smith, of Holts Summit, runs Eagle Life Coaching. "It's all about helping people lead better lives, and getting them to take a certain path to enhance themselves," Smith said.

Coaches usually start the partnership with their client by asking extensive questions in order to organize a precise set of goals. Homework is typically provided by the coach at the end of each session. It may include writing in a journal, doing various exercises to further progression, or initiating plans.

“Homework can be anything from career exploration, to getting a passport, to creating a success time line or doing some self-care, like a massage; basically any goals that can move an individual forward,” Waldman said. “They don’t have to be huge goals, sometimes these are small steps to build on toward a larger goal.”

Coaching often takes place over the course of several months, or for some clients until they feel satisfied that their goals have been established or met.

Jessica Omoile sought a life coach after a mentor suggested that she seek help in organizing her many goals and ambitions.

“Life coaching has put my life into focus. My coach has allowed me to discover my full potential,” Omoile said. “This is my life, and I want to accomplish as much as I can. This has been a really important step in my development.”

Although coaching has gained popularity, there has also been some controversy over the credibility of the profession, because the field is virtually unregulated.

“Unfortunately anyone can say they are a life coach, there is no required licensing or certification, although it is available,” Smith said. “You have to be careful because there are quite a few untrained coaches. You should really research a coach before you commit to their services.”

The trend in coaching is still emerging and doesn’t seem to be slowing down. According to selfgrowth.com, there are presently 71 coach training programs listed by the International Coach Federation, with many more schools offering training in this field and growing numbers of students enrolling each year.

“It’s always been acceptable to have an athletic coach, now it’s becoming more acceptable to have a personal coach; and why not?” Waldman said. “This is someone to make our lives better, someone to hold up the mirror in order for us to see what we want.”