

● Patrick Williams, Ed. D., MCC, introduces the integration of coaching and the wellness industry as a viable consumer option.

Coaching and the Wellness Industry: A New Gateway for CONSUMER AWARENESS

Coaching has burst upon the scene internationally in the last ten years and has evolved from an emphasis on executive and corporate coaching for performance and leadership to an awareness that all coaching is life coaching. No matter what the specialization or coaching niche, there is a person and a life within the identified client. An interesting story behind the meaning of the word “coach” is that the origin comes from Northern Hungary in a village named Kocs, which manufactured carriages. They began to be called coaches and were a vehicle of conveyance to transport villagers from where they were to where they wanted to arrive. Coaching today can be seen as a vehicle of conveyance as well.

Coaching today is not presented as a modality for healing or for therapy, but as a vehicle for co-creating a desired outcome, plan, goal, or life design. The ongoing aspect of the coaching relationship uses the power of accountability as cement for the desired goals to stick. Humans are more likely to accomplish more with less struggle with the assistance of a coaching relationship.

At the same time as coaching has gained momentum, the consumer appetite for products and services under the rubric of wellness is also growing. Coaching and wellness education intersect in the way the public (individual consumers and corporations with wellness programs) learns to access the myriad of information, products, and services available to a health conscious public desirous of concepts and strategies for living well. Paul Zare Pilzer writes in *The Wellness Revolution* (John Wiley, 2002,

page 16), “Wellness is the next natural step forward in our destiny and in the advancement of humankind. By extending your years of strength and wellness, you can accomplish those things you really want to accomplish.”

Wellness began as a movement in the 1970s and crept into corporate America as a way to improve the health of the workforce while concentrating on fitness, exercise, and consulting to support healthy living such as smoking cessation, nutrition, etc. Many corporations today continue to have wellness programs. Life coaching or wellness coaching has revealed itself to be the missing ingredient in creating “lasting lifestyle change,” a phrase I borrow from my colleague Dr. Michael Arloski, a longtime wellness advocate. Coaching helps results become sustainable over time. In other words, the accountability and the co-creative conversation that happens with a coach make it more likely that people will make lasting changes toward living well.

The intersection of wellness and coaching, I believe, will come together very shortly as consumers at large become more and more aware of the power of coaching, whether it be in a group or having their own private coach. I am involved with a group of 12 coaches and consultants from the spa industry which is being created to bring the entire spectrum of wellness and better living products and services to a wider audience through spa immersion experiences in people’s homes. The goal of this concept is to train Life Style Consultants in basic coaching coupled with product knowledge and ability to create a home spa experience encompassing mind, body, and spirit in a three-hour “spa party.” For

“Wellness coaching will be in greater demand in the coming years”

those customers who get introduced to the plethora of products and services that are available today for healthy living, they will understand that it is much more than massage and yoga. And life coaching/wellness coaching will be on the menu as a recommended service to ensure lasting lifestyle change.

Wellness coaching and life coaching will be more in demand in the coming years as the public becomes increasingly aware of this new profession and the powerful impact it can have on extraordinary living. Who wouldn't want to have the experience of a spa without necessarily having to pay the price for a week at Mirabelle or Canyon Ranch? This type of consumer education brings the knowledge and application of all things spa to a wider audience in an affordable manner.

the coaching industry. Many are training to become coaches, but few are busy. The adoption of health professionals and others to the field of coaching has been ahead of public awareness. The intersection of coaching with the wellness industry will soon create a demand for the coaching approach to be available in a variety of delivery models...online informative coaching, tele-coaching with an individual coach, in person coaching, and group coaching for people with similar goals. Just as personal trainers, yoga instructors and classes in fitness and nutrition have become popular and accessible, so will coaching for living well and living extraordinarily in ALL areas of ones life.

Life and wellness coaching today are methodologies directed to the whole person, not just physical health, but to all the aspects of living well.

“Life and wellness coaching are methodologies directed to the whole person, not just physical health, but to all aspects of living well”

With total life coaching viewed as a vehicle for personal, professional and cultural change, we in the coaching professions can begin to see the incredible reach coaching can have by a pairing with the millions being spent in the wellness and healthy living arena.

Workplace promotion of wellness coaching and education for the tenets of living well, is one solution to skyrocketing health care costs, especially when coaching is available along with education and training.

Creating an increased awareness of the power of wellness coaching and life coaching to the consumer, also helps fulfill the implied promise of

And if I may be so bold, I also believe that as persons become increasingly aware of healthy choices, and live purposefully, then individual wellness will lead to wellness in families, wellness in relationships, communities and perhaps even lead toward wellness for our planet! It is all interconnected. Better coaching brings better living. ●

Dr. Patrick Williams, Ed. D., MGC, is co-author, with Deborah C. Davis, of *Therapist as Life Coach: Transforming Your Practice* (W.W. Norton & Company).

Photo by David Appleyard

