



Psychs & The City Podcast – Episode #212 – Life Coaching: What is the purpose of a life coach

Taylor:

We have got a little bit of a topic today, and it's something that I don't quite understand. What is the point of a life coach?

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Well, coaching, it's a lot like training. Having a coach versus a trainer, a trainer can show you the mechanics of things, but doesn't really inspire performance. A coach inspires you to perform at a level that you really can't unless you're being coached. I didn't understand, honestly, the difference until I started training with Francis Benfatto.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

I've been training since I was 13 with these little sand weights that were my mom's. Then as a doctor, I always thought, well, why would I possibly have a trainer? Not understanding the difference between a trainer and a coach, much like most people don't understand the difference between a psychologist and a psychiatrist.

Taylor:

Guilty.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, the difference is med school, essentially. Psychologists are great, psychiatrists, some are good, some are great, but the difference in the training is med school. You go to med school; you learn medicine and you can understand the organ systems and how various things play out and then prescribe medications as part of your treatment. Hopefully, not all your treatment is just simply medication, because medication isn't going to take care of every issue, it can help. In psychiatry, there's no cures, you can lessen the intensity of symptoms so that you can learn how to manage your mind more efficiently. So, in that vein, a coach can inspire you to perform at a higher level of efficiency as it comes to a performance-based methodologies, and then can do a lot of things that you might see in like Simone Biles, the famous gymnast.

Taylor:

Very famous.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

She's very famous. I always think of the Olympics, and I always think of gymnasts because I think they're amazing when I think of coaches. I always see that whole thing. To get to the level where you have such a strong bond, respect, and trust, and desire to perform at a level that honors the effort that your coach is giving to you, it's really an incredible relationship and connection that I don't think I've ever experienced, at least in the settings where I played sports and things like that.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, to have somebody bear witness to you, pushing through your own resistance and pushing towards your best performance in a day, or to go beyond your limits every time that you get together, and have someone create the condition that allows you to Excel, whether it's through cheering you on or giving you a technique when you're ready for it, teaching you the process of validating techniques for yourself so they actually become operational for you so you can trust them. You know that this way of training or approaching things works without fail, it always works, it's always the same thing, it creates such a strong bond that it's really unlike anything I've experienced.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

I've had chums in the military, and family members, and colleagues, and mentors, but a coach really allows you to get to a place that you can't get without their instruction, and guidance, and support. It's an elevated playing field. It's just a different place that you can go that you can visit as often as you want. To have that ability to almost leave this earthly coil and get into this space where you're going beyond what you thought were your limits is really rarefied air, I have to say. It's one of the most compelling things I've ever experienced.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, as luck would have it, training with Francis and performance-based stuff is very similar to performance-based mental processes. So, you can use the same techniques, essentially, to inspire performance in how you approach navigating your day and navigating your relationships, your job, your family, giving you an idea how to most efficiently approach things so that you're not distracted or off the mark, as far as what you're trying to achieve, so that you're constantly reminding yourself, propelling yourself forward in your day in an intentional way, while managing your energy in the most efficient way to get to the highest levels of achievement. That's a pretty fun way to go through your day-

Taylor:

It's kind of like a driving instructor.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

It really is if you think about it. The vehicle's your mind in this case, and you're assuming the wheel of your mind. So, what a trainer might do in that case, or an instructor, they might teach you, okay, well, here's where the gas pedal is. Here's where the knob is for the radio is so you got your beats, or where the settings are for this and that, but then I'm really giving you the technique to drive the car most efficiently. When you have a performance-based coach to work with you in how to manage your mind, you get past the mechanics of that and into the enjoyment of a high-performance pursuit. That's just good, clean, fun. If you're going through your day, basically taking whatever obstacle comes into your path, which there are many, some expected like Zoom and all the rigmarole there or steep obstacles of life. Life is a challenging enterprise, right? If you're able to look at whatever obstacle's coming and not be surprised by it, but know that it's coming, and then be able to convert that in a mindset, allows you to take the obstacle

as a leverage point to push yourself forward towards the things you actually want to achieve.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

It's quite a game changer, because now the things that knock everyone else over, and they never start things or quit things or afraid to do things, you look at as fuel to increase your own capacity. If you have a coach there, they help you get to that rarefied air, that higher playing field, that you just can't do on your own. So, when I go in the day to day to train, the only day that I don't train with Francis is Sundays because he takes a day off to go be with his wife and hang out and things like that. So, on those days, I'll still train. I'll still go over to the old Crunch Gym.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

But even though I'm applying the same principles in training, I never get to that place where you're going so far beyond that it's an entirely different experience. That's because the coaching aspect isn't there. Now, can I still train? Yep. Can I still train in performance-based methodology? Mm-hmm (affirmative). Will I get a good workout? Sure, I'll get a good workout. Mostly because I'm listening to Black Veil Brides and Nicole Scherzinger from Pussycat Dolls, because I'm a nerd, Enrique Iglesias.

Taylor:

The gym?

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Well, it's on headphones, so no one can hear it.

Taylor:

I need to know now, what Enrique Iglesias song are you listening to in the gym?

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Oops, looks like I did it again. No, that's that's Britney Spears.

Taylor:

That's our friend, Brittany Spears.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Bailamos.

Taylor:

Sounds like an Italian meat. What kind of people need coaching? Because I imagine, and again, I think this is just kind of the stigma around it. People, a few years ago, looked at therapy as if it was like you needed a little bit of help, things were at rock bottom, but I imagine it's quite similar when it comes to coaching and life coaching, that it's not necessarily like things are going horribly wrong. It's a case of people need that little bit of guidance or a little bit of a steer in the right direction to get to where they need to be or where they want to be.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Right. So, I think the answer is this, it's a very individualistic thing and it's got to be a good fit. I think much like what you said about therapy, I think therapy can be use very reactively, which is a good way to use it. You're in trouble, and oh my God, I need help. I'm in bad shape and I need somebody to guide me out of this, but it's a very reactive way to go about it. If you use the opportunity with a mental health provider and they provide coaching, you can have a very proactive approach to what you're doing with your life, and not necessarily putting out the fires, but building the runway to lift a higher trajectory. If you have a chance to sit with a trained professional who can help you figure out what you're truly trying to achieve in this life and what has meaning to you, then you can construct a plan where you can put technique into your efforts to basically spend more of the time of your life doing things that are meaningful that allow you to achieve the things that you truly want, versus just doing a bunch of things and squandering your time.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Because at the end of the day, you want to be able to look back at your day and say, wow, I have no regret in how I spent the moments of this day or the moments of my life. You don't want to look back and say, wow, I really wasted my time in endless distraction or just an unfocused approach, because we only have so much time. It's *momento mori*, remember your death. It doesn't mean sit around thinking about death, it means remember that you have limited time in this existence, and so value that time and use it to achieve the things that you truly want to achieve, whether it's your professional endeavors, whether it's how you treat people, whether it's your relationships. All these things can be elevated using a very similar process and technique. Techniques have to

be simple to work, because otherwise, we're going to forget them. You ever see me dancing, you'll see that go horribly awry.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

My girl and I do ballroom dancing, which was one of the smartest things that I ever got involved in with Arthur Murray. They have such a great program of dance instruction, so we started doing that so we have other things to do as a couple other than just going out and things like that. We started doing that, and what would happen when we would start dancing Salsa, and Merengue, and Fox Trot, and swing, and all these things, is I completely forget which dance was which, and I just start doing whatever move and what just happened.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, what I realized, is I'm about to better sticking with Tango or Salsa, or I happen to like the land dances, strangely enough. No, I'm not particularly good at them, but you have to keep it so you have your skillsets and you can employ them over and over and over, and you become very proficient at it.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, even with physical training with Francis, we'll rarely do more than one exercise the whole time we work out. Again, you know that it's slow and controlled movement, so a rep could be anywhere from two to five minutes, a set will take the better part of 15, 20 minutes. We rarely do more than three sets in an hour. So, it gives you a contrast to the tempo. The same methodologies, as far as approaching intervals of your day with a performance-based aspect to it, work best when you employ very simple technique over and over and over.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

You want to basically extinguish choice. Well, once you make up your mind you're doing something, then you're doing it. So, you don't want to have a lot of, well, I could do this way, or this way, or this way, or this way, or this way, because that's just going to distract you. You want to have two or three methods that you use to get the thing done and two or three principles that you're keeping in mind, because otherwise, you're going to get distracted and lost in all of this.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

You have a way to gauge it. Did I basically perform the interval of time now better than the previous one? That's how you can adjust the length of the interval, so that you're getting the maximal efficiency and optimal efficiency of how you're managing your energy. Because ultimately, what you're doing, is you're taking your energy and managing it throughout the day and not letting it spike in any which way so that you tank.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, as you know, I often work 16, 18 hour days. I'm up at 4:00 AM in the morning and training with a Mr. Olympia and all this other stuff. People ask, well, how can you possibly do that and still be energetically correct and all of that and all the Nando's that you eat? It's just simply because I'm never out of the pocket of performance, or if I am, I might get out for a second, and then I'm quickly bringing myself back into center. Because if you approach the obstacles of life in this way, then you're basically converting them into a chance to improve your capacity.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

If you stay in that pocket, you're not really getting tired. It's kind of like that perfect pace for running. You can run forever if you don't spike your heart rate. My buddy and I, Dr. Sanchez Barranco, were lieutenant colonels in the military, most recently. Every year, you do the army physical fitness test. One year, we got up to do it in Iowa, where we were assigned, the Iowa National Guard, and there was a major, some upstart, this major, he just takes off hauling ass. So, we're like, oh...

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

I swear to God, it's just a two mile run to begin. We got about, I would say, a third of the way around, not even, and we were tanked. Both of us were just like, oh my God, because we went way past efficiency. We went into the red zone and blew out all our oxygen and glycogen stores and all that stuff. So, we were staggering through that. It was difficult.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Next year we went in and we went out to DC in October when they do the army 10 miler and I hadn't trained at all. I didn't even bother preparing. I just ran at a good pace and just ran 10 miles, no big deal. It's like, okay, ho hum.

Taylor:

Life is a marathon, not a race.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Yeah. Well, because you stay in the pocket. Okay, so you can do amazing things if you don't bleed out your energy. If you do, doing things that are distracted, that are anger driven, that are frustrating, you can engage things without getting frustrated. You can engage things in a way that you stay very efficient with how you're using your energy. As such, what I found is, if you use performance-based mindset, you're putting effort in, but it's not work. You're putting an effort in, but it's coming back to you. For every one quantitative energy you put in, you get 1.2 back. You get a little more energetic as you go, much like the training with Francis, where there's a huge difference in what most people know as training and training with Francis and progressive performance methodology, is it actually generates energy as you go. So, you're stronger as you proceed through the workout and you're at a max-

Taylor:

Unlimited power source.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

It really is. It's a way to generate energy, and so you basically fill up with energy and then you go off into your day. So, the reason that I train so early isn't to be able to point to, well, look, I get up at 4:00 AM like Mark Walberg and train at a ridiculous hour, it has nothing to do with anything. It's, if you're going to get into a performance space mindset, it makes sense to do it in the beginning of your day when you can use it for the rest of your day. It's not going to help you if you wait until the end of your day to do it.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, approaching performance based thinking is really the key in the ignition to get the whole thing going. Now, there's other things that you need to do, but training in the morning is a great way to wake your body up and wake your mind up for what's ahead. It's just such a vastly compelling and intriguing approach, it's so energetically different from what most people experience, that I think that once you contrast the two things, you're never going to want to go back. There's endless capacity, as far as I see, as far as what we think are our limits and what truly are our limits.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

The reason for coaching and who might avail themselves of it-

Taylor:

Because answered mine.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

It's for everybody.

Taylor:

I think that's the conclusion I came to. I think it's the same when we've had the conversations surrounding therapy. Putting yourself and investing in yourself, and developing these techniques that can really elevate you as a person to get to where you need to be, I can't recommend enough. I didn't know any of this existed until I started working with yourself. It has genuinely changed how I look at things.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Yeah, it generally, what I've noticed, is it gives you this low level excitement for everything you're doing, because you realize anything could be put in this chamber in your mind and transformed into something that will energetically boost you to an elevated state of being. It makes everything fun, because now everything has a meaning and purpose.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

I shared with you the fact that, in the morning, I take out the rubbish and the recyclables every single morning without fail with a big old smile on my face. The reason is because I imbued it with meaning. I have a big enough why as to why I do it. The act itself still has to get done at some point. You got to take the garbage and recycling out, but if you approach it in a way where you've imbued it with meaning, then it actually energetically changes and you feel good about it, and you feel energetically buoyant.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

So, even though I was running a little late, and this and that, and whatever, trying to get out the door, and I looked, and both the garbage and the recyclables needed to go out. I was like, ah, it's always the same thing, the automatic negative thought comes up, the

evil Morgan Freeman narrative of like you can't because you're running too late, you're too tired or whatever.

Taylor:

take out that trash.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Right. To which I grab both. Of course, you've got time. Go down, throw them out, big smile on my face. Because for me, that's a way for me to show my girl that I love her. It makes her life a little bit easier.

Taylor:

Nothing says I love you more than taking out the rubbish.

Dr. Jeff Ditzell:

Taking out the rubbish. Those little things. But because I do it that way, it actually transforms the task into something energetically buoyant. You get your 1.2 back, you put your one in, get your 1.2 back, click in your step, little Jimminy cricket, and off you go.



Dr. Jeff Ditzell's Bio

Dr. Jeff Ditzell is one of New York City's top psychiatrists. He owns his own private practice: Dr. Ditzell Psychiatry and is changing the name of the game when it comes to mental health. Offering top of the line treatments such as Ketamine therapy for resistant treatment depression, therapy, Life Optimization Coaching, ADHD coaching, and so much more.

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