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Choosing a career counselor

by Lynn Friedman | Nov 15, 2015 | work-life coach | 0 comments

This post, *Choosing a career counselor*, makes reference to another post, *Choosing your career coach*, previously published in *Washingtonjobs.com*, a subsidiary of the *Washington Post*.

You've read a series on [how to identify and achieve your career goals](#). But, you find yourself stymied, unable to follow any of the steps to envision and to pursue your career goals. So, you decide to seek out career counseling or career coaching. But, how do you wend your way through the plethora of career counselors and coaches. Your puzzlement only increases when you realize that neither career counselors nor coaches are licensed – to provide career help – though some may be licensed mental health professionals.

I've provided advice on [how to find a career counselor or a career coach](#). Some of you intuitively guessed that you might not need a career counselor but, rather, your difficulties might respond best to [psychotherapy](#). You asked, how do I know what sort of help I need? How do I know if you need [career counseling or psychotherapy](#) or something else? But if, career counseling is what you are seeking, I'm not the only one talking about how to find a career counselor who can be responsive to your needs. In fact, a lot of credible sources have helpful things to say about this important topic.

In choosing a career coach, the *Wall Street Journal* advises: ask a potential career coach about his level of expertise for your particular challenges. And, be wary of career counselors who charge a large fee, upfront; it's better to work with someone who allows you to commit on a session by session basis. I agree with both tips.

In a piece in *Forbes magazine*, 10 things that you should know about career coaching, Lisa Quast offers similar advice. Quast urges you to look for someone with considerable expertise meeting your particular needs. She advises that you look at your prospective coach's college degree and their professional experience. She asserts: if you have a specific professional goal, find someone who has achieved it. For example, she says, if you want to be a Vice President find a coach who has worked in that capacity.

In my opinion, this isn't always possible or even necessary but I do agree that an important part of finding a career coach is making sure that the career coach has expertise in your area of interest. For example, if you want to publish a book – finding a coach with experience not only in coaching but also in publishing and writing is a good bet – and, this type of background may be far more crucial to a successful coaching experience than having a particular coaching credential.

Quast encourages you to check out your coaches coaching certifications as these MAY reflect the coaches level of commitment to coaching. However, as noted previously ANYONE can call themselves a coach; the designation of coaching is unlicensed. This makes it even more crucial that you evaluate your coach's professional background and carefully assess whether their background is a good match for your needs. In contrast to the coaching arena, career counselors may be licensed in their mental health discipline. That is they may be counselors or psychologists or some other type of mental health professional. Moreover, the [National Career Development Association \(NCDA\) credentials career counselors](#). They have a designation, Master Career Counselor (MCC); and they maintain a list of Master Career Counselors.

Fortune magazine echos some of the advice shared by Forbes. Anne Fisher as senior writer at Fortune appears to concur with Quast of Forbes when she says: "make sure that the [career coach has real world life experience](#)"; she notes that not all career coaches do. Fisher suggests that you choose a coach that is credentialed by one of the coaching organizations. While this may be helpful, I have found that effective (and, for that matter ineffective) career coaches come from all kinds of professional backgrounds. Many are licensed psychologists or counselors. Some have completed the requisite training to become a Master Career Counselor (MCC) with the National Career Development Association. Others have MBAs or are qualified by virtue of real professional experience.

Before embarking on career counseling, it might be helpful to read a bit about it.

Washington DC Career Counselor

Those interested in career counseling, with me, may feel free to call me: 301.656.9650.

