



PREFACE

“A lawyer who represents himself has a fool for a client.” It’s a time-tested truism in the legal profession. Could the same be true for self-coaching? Would someone who is adventurous enough to try to coach him- or herself be equally foolish? Should coaching, whether in the business world or in everyday life, be left in the hands of professionals, those whose names are followed by imposing initials that signify that they’ve passed some litmus test of professional respectability?

As someone who has spent more than 20 years leading an organization that coaches hundreds of executives each year, I can hardly be accused of undervaluing the art and discipline of coaching. Coaching is a profession that takes skill, experience, and insight into human behavior. Whether it is designed to deal with problematic individuals or (as I’ve seen with increasing frequency in recent years) to help executives improve their game, coaching requires a deep understanding of how to bring about lasting behavioral modification.

But it is also true that there are millions of people “out there,” both in the business world and in everyday life, who for one reason or another cannot or choose not to avail themselves of the services of a professional coach. A first-line supervisor, buried deep within the organization, may want to improve his game but, alas, management provides coaches only for those who are farther up the ladder. A longtime stay-at-home parent may want to reenter the workforce but can’t afford the services of a career counselor. An overweight individual may be too uncomfortable to wage a public battle of the bulge.



Coach Yourself to Win is written for the vast number of people who want to create a new future for themselves, either by modifying or changing behavior that is hindering them or by adopting new, more productive habits to improve their performance on the job or in their life. One key premise of the book is that the first place to turn to achieve your Intention—your commitment to achieve an end result—is not to some outside agency or program, but inward, to *yourself*. Change is, first and foremost, an *interior* game; you are the star player. Self-coaching is a way for you to undertake the process of self-discovery and self-mastery, enabling you to achieve, as suggested by the subtitle of this book, breakthrough performance on the job and in your life.

A second premise relates to change and choice. Personal change is something that occurs in one of two basic ways: it happens either by chance or by choice. I grew up in Newark, New Jersey, in the 1960s. I had friends who grew up in the inner city, which had some very tough areas. There was a sense among many who lived there that they were at the mercy of larger forces, over which they exercised little or no control. In their mind, personal change was not a matter of choice; it was completely outside their control. Not surprisingly, some of these people never escaped the confines of inner-city Newark.

I certainly do not subscribe to this way of thinking. I believe that, short of deep-seated psychological or emotional impediments to self-improvement (which require the intervention of a psychologist or psychiatrist), most of us are capable of moving from where we are now to a brighter future. We *can* achieve our Intention—the “happy ending” that we desire. But being capable is one thing; having the will is another. In Chapter 2, I point to Intention as the driving force for personal change and the pivot point for the self-coaching process. Without a deeply felt Intention, it’s unlikely that you will be able to break away from your past, no matter how desperately you want to leave it behind.

The third premise of the book sets it apart from most of the “self-help” volumes that you are likely to encounter: *self-coaching*

is not something that you do by yourself. While you are the captain of your future, the journey to a New You requires you to take along some traveling companions. One of the seven steps in this self-coaching process is the enrollment of a team of people—a Guide and a Circle of Support—who know you well, care about your well-being, and are committed to helping you realize your Intention. Their participation will make your journey less of a high-wire act and more of a collaborative undertaking. Think of them as the safety net that will support you as you strive for your Intention.

This book represents a unique undertaking. While many self-help books offer advice on how to improve either your career or your personal life, we bridge the two worlds in order to help our readers improve their performance, whether they are earning their living or living their life. In thinking about adapting the executive-coaching process to your use on and off your job, I asked two questions: “What are the best practices in coaching?” and “How can these be put into the hands of a broad number of people so that they can effectively apply them to a wide variety of concerns, whether these involve careers and professional success or personal well-being and home life?”

The seven-step self-coaching process that you will be exposed to in *Coach Yourself to Win* is an adaptation of the best practices that my colleagues and I have used in executive coaching for more than 20 years. It has been proven to work with one of the most challenging groups of people: high-powered, strong-willed businesspeople whose careers and whose financial and professional success hinge on their ability to change. Their success is proof of the soundness of the process—a process that can significantly increase your chances of fulfilling your Intention.

But self-coaching is more than mastering mechanics. Not everyone is suited to self-coaching, which is why, in Chapter 1, we ask you to evaluate whether or not you are *able, ready, and willing to permanently change your behavior*. Nor can everyone be authentically committed to actualizing her Intention, regardless of



the benefits, or to reaching out to acquaintances for feedback and support. But for those who can, the rewards are many and often life-changing. So, why not turn the page and begin taking seven steps that will enable you to *Coach Yourself to Win*?