
Patti Britton (PhD) is a clinical sexologist at the American association for sexuality educators. Some years ago, she developed the "sex coaching" technique described in this book. For Patti Britton, life coaching draws the client into a privileged relationship with the coach by means of proposals for action plans (multiple-action plans [MAPS]). The classical schools of psychotherapy are currently very much against a simplistic idea of superficial and directive coaching, as opposed to a deeper, introspective psychotherapy. Patti Britton makes a clear distinction with the specific aspects of sex coaching which is one field of coaching in the area of intimacy.

The first part of this book is devoted to the link between coaching and traditional psychotherapy with a particular focus on the link between sex coaching and sex therapy. She reminds us of the ten principles of sex coaching:

- sex coaching focuses on change and results, the methods are chosen by the client and not by the coach;
- sex coaching aims at positive strengthening of the client’s dreams, desires and expectations;
- the sex coach is a guide to help the client to overcome his/her inhibitions in thoughts, emotions and behaviour, and helps him improve the likelihood of achieving his desires;
- the client is not a patient. The coach does not use pathological models. The sex coach is a mentor helping the client towards personal fulfillment;
- it is the client who directs the coaching and not the coach. Attention is focused at all times on his needs;
- sex coaching always takes place over short periods of time. It is not a long-term therapy. In some cases, the clients’ problems can be solved in one or two sessions; for others, a few weeks are necessary;
- sex coaching has now abandoned the term "homework" and replaced it with "recommendations for home", the idea being that sex should remain a game;
- sex coaching is still highly experimental. It is a permanent interaction between the client and the coach to try to get as close as possible to the desires of the client;
- the sex coach is a full participant in the coaching process; he represents 50%;
- sex coaching is often a means to contain the emotionalism of the client.

But coaching does not aim at recovering emotions from the past. The objective is firmly in the present and in the direction that the client wants to send his/her future sexuality.

The main distinction that Patti Britton makes between coaching and psychotherapy is that the coach gives instructions, recommendations, but does not make a diagnosis of any sort. He will assess, but not analyse. He works by positive encouragement and feedback. The coaching sessions try to redirect behavior. How is sex coaching different from sex therapy? It is essentially focused on present problems and is forward-looking for the client’s problems (like Rogerian therapies). Sex coaching likes to think of itself as dynamic, with the sex coach playing an interactive role. This distinguishes it from sex therapy where many therapists do not make any active suggestions and are simply there to offer a kindly ear. Sex coaching is a "fluid" process, leaving much room for creativity. It is a form of positive mentoring without paying too much attention to any pathological features. Sex coaching is mainly based on a cognitive and behavioral approach.

This book offers many interestingly described clinical examples, before moving on in the second part to provide specific recommendations for problems experienced by males, females and couples, and for answering questions. This book is a short and direct manual, providing information and training for therapists about this new approach which is of great interest as an alternative to treatments in certain cases.

P. Brenot (MD, MA, PhD)
54, rue de Prony, 75017 Paris, France
E-mail address: philippe.brenot@quidam.net

Available online 17 July 2009