

# Counselling Vs Coaching

## What's the difference?

Compiled by Dr Darryl Cross

Therapy/Counselling	Coaching
Deals with identifiable dysfunctions or stress in a person	Deals with a healthy client desiring a better situation
Deals mostly with a person's past and trauma, and seeks healing or finishing off "unfinished business"	Deals mostly with a person's present and seeks to help them design a more desirable future
Looks for underlying causes of behaviour	Looks for observable behaviour
Helps patients resolve old pain or hurts	Helps clients learn new skills and tools to build a more satisfying successful future
Focus on feelings as a pathway to heal pain	Listens to feelings as a pathway to take action
Doctor-patient relationship (the Therapist has the answers)	Co-creative equal partnership (the Coach helps the client discover their own answers)
Assumes emotions are a symptom of something wrong	Assumes emotions are natural and normalises them

The Therapist diagnoses, then provides professional expertise and guidelines to provide a path to healing and recovery	Coach stands with the client and helps him or her identify the challenges, then partners to turn challenges into victories, holding the client accountable to reach desired goals
Progress is often slow and painful	Growth and progress are rapid and usually enjoyable
Guarded or cautious communication	Open and clear communication
Alliance designed by the therapist	Alliance designed jointly

**Example** of a counselling response in comparison to a coaching response to the statement, *“I can’t get my reports done on time. I’m always late.”*

“How does that make you feel?”

“How often does this occur?”

“When was the last time this happened?”

“Why? What happens that you’re always late?”

“When have you ever managed to get a report done on time?”

“What would need to happen to get one done on time?”

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