



What Is Life Coaching?

I am often asked, 'What is Life Coaching?'

The Elevator Pitch

The nearest analogy I can draw is that it's a massage for the mind.

Why the massage analogy?

As with physical massage, Life Coaching addresses the knots and tensions which restrict our ability to function at our best. Sometimes massage is gentle, relaxing, soothing and mood-enhancing. At other times, massage is more vigorous (such as a sports massage), requiring more rigorous work with a client to address an issue.

If the problem goes deeper, then [counselling](#) or [psychotherapy](#) may be a preferred option.

So, why is life coaching not counselling?

The aim of counselling is to offer non-judgmental, empathetic support for people going through personal difficulties. This may be directive or non-directive, depending on the approach used, and the main aim is to create a safe environment where difficult issues can be talked through. Counsellors often work with the client for some time, utilising [therapeutic disciplines](#) to help the client through their difficulties.

Life coaching, on the other hand, looks at where someone wants to be on a particular personal, career or developmental path. Goals may be identified, outcomes explored with skills, learning or resources brought together either in terms of recognition or as part of a developmental or iterative plan.

I've worked with clients who have tried coaching and have then realised that counselling is a better option for their current situation. I think that's a good thing. I've worked with clients who have previous or current experience of counselling and integrate coaching alongside this. I've also worked with clients for whom coaching is not aligned with counselling or any other therapy, and it's about maintaining focus, having accountability and regular points to review what's going on in their personal, business or career pathways while they sound out their next steps.



Incorporating Life Coaching

Life Coaching can be tailored into a host of personal and professional situations.

The benefit of working with a life coach can be one or many of the following:

- *Perspective* – stepping outside our usual situation and observing it from a neutral space
- *Modelling* – defining and exploring frameworks which embody what we want
- *Integration* – seeing what works for us and how we can integrate these to improve upon our current situation. Think: facets of ourselves, our skills, our connections and support networks
- *Feedback* – this comes in two ways; what we experience and what we say about our experiences. A good coach will play back your own words and engage you in what you now know from your experiences
- *Accountability* – a coach can be an independent resource to check in with and monitor progress
- *Ownership* – taking action is an integral aspect of being in control of our options and outcomes
- *Focus* – placing what's important back in sight
- *Purpose* – re-setting the “what matters” barometer so that what you do makes sense and has meaning
- *Chunking it down* – when the vision feels too big or the outcome feels far away, life coaching can help with focusing on a few steps at a time to maintain connection and progress

[Michael Laffey](#) is a qualified and experienced Life Coach focused on helping people to achieve the mindset and goals they desire. Michael is available at both our [Hove](#) and [Lewes](#) practices.