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Theory, Research, and Practical Guidelines for Family Life Coaching

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This book is dedicated to my family. To my husband, Chris, for constantly suggesting I can do things I would otherwise never dream, let along attempt to do. To my beautiful children, Fiona and Sofia, who give me so much opportunity to practice what I teach. To my parents and my niece Catrina, for the support and love they give. And to my sister, whom I miss terribly. I love you all so much.

To my students, my colleagues, and the families I have served over the years-thank you. This journey is a result of all your generosity, kindness, and wisdom.

You are the ones that give me the passion and interest to learn more and share that information in an effort to improve the lives of all children and families.

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Chapter 1
Introduction: Why a Book on Family Life Coaching?

You may wonder, why another book on coaching? While the field of coaching and science of coaching is growing (Grant, 2011), there is a gap of literature and books designed to educate life coaches dealing with families. This book, Coaching Families: Theory to Practice is a first of its kind, a specific how-to guide for family life coach training.

This book will provide an overview of the theory and practice of family life coaching, the process of helping clients sustain emotional or behavioral changes that help them reach their goals in the realm of family life. This is a new field in the literature on coaching, however the practice of coaching families is not brand new. In fact, family practitioners were writing about coaching well over a decade ago (Hanft, Rush, & Sheldon, 2004). There is a deficit of training materials for teaching coaching practices specifically on family life topics such as parenting, relationships, youth, families with special needs, and so many more. The time has come to offer a how-to guide for those wishing to become family life coaches.

This chapter includes the purpose, audience, organization of the book, chapter outlines, and an article delving into the frameworks of family life coaching. This chapter covers the origins of family life coaching, explains efforts made to promote the fields, and concludes with an original article, A Framework on Family Life Coaching.

Coaching, Where Are You?

If you have turned on the television lately, there is a chance you have seen life coaches featured as specials guest for segments of make-overs and fresh starts, how to make a better life, even on how to clean your home. There is also a growing number of television shows and movies that feature a life coach as the premise or a component of a show's main idea. This is especially seen in reality television shows, where life coaches often come to help ordinary people or celebrities reach

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their goals (see Starting Over, A Life Coach Less Ordinary, Home Rules, just to name a few). Pregnant women hire maternity coaches to help them prepare for the baby (Pregnant in Heels, Bravo TV).

It is not only on television. Coaching is now ubiquitous in our society. Students have success coaches help them in their schools, people with chronic diseases receive access to health coaches, and many health insurance companies now employ preventative health coaches. It seems as if everywhere we look, we see coaches helping with family life issues. The increased attention that has been placed on coaching is undeniable (Garman, Whiston, & Zlatoper, 2000).

Coaching has entered popular culture and is omnipresent. Coaching has been given the golden stamp of approval by the general public and is creeping into our vernacular and everyday experiences. Yet, there is a vast deficit of research, resources, training, or credentials regarding family life coaching.

This book bridges that gap by offering theoretical and practical insights to the field and practice of family life coaching. In addition, this book presents information to help prospective family coaches better understand what family coaching is, what it is not, and how it fits within the fields of family science and coaching psychology.

In my own circle of colleagues and acquaintances, coaching is being used to bring out one's potential. The leaders in my university talk of their coaching experiences as part of their leadership development. In the past year, I've had two leaders of my organization share their experiences of working with an executive coach to help them reach their full leadership potential. When asked, both said they were pleasantly surprised at how effective the coaching process has been for them. My immediate supervisor says, "Having a coach to help you process difficult decisions or organizational change is invaluable. They can help you best see situations from multiple angles and help you avoid blind spots. My experience is that a coach challenges you in a way that makes you a better leader" – Carolyn Dunn, Department Head, Youth, Family, and Community Sciences, NCSU.

Executive coaching has been the driver of the coaching industry movement. While coaching has been found in the psychological literature since the 1930s, its growth in popularity rose during the 1990s as part of the executive coaching movement. The top executive coaches are earning upwards of $3500 per hour for their executive coaching sessions (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009). However, before you get too excited about your high-paying prospects of coaching, I'd like to state for the record that the rate of pay for family life coaches is significantly lower. The average pay for family life coaching is closer to $100/hour (Allen & Baker, 2016). The good news is that families are interested in hiring coaches for family services, and they see it as an investment (Baker, Allen, & Huff, 2015). Many family science practitioners do not consider ourselves business people and most haven't had training in business practices. There is a need for a shift, and this is addressed in the final chapter of this book.

Life coaching is another area of the coaching field familiar to the general public. Life coaches work with individuals that have specific goals or ideas of how they want to improve their lives. Life coaches work with their clients to help them achieve goals that have been identified by the client. I once hired a life coach to focus on my goal of writing.

Before taking on the task of writing this book, I knew I was a writer. I have imaged myself as a writer since, well. . .always. I have fond childhood memories of setting under a big oak tree writing short stories in my journal. When I was a young adult studying to be a therapist, I took a course that taught visualization techniques. One technique was designed for us to find a place in our mind's eye where all is right with the world. The professor said that if we have this image in our mind, we can retreat there when things are emotionally turbulent in order to help us calm down and refocus. I found my peaceful place in my mind back in 1997 and I have found myself returning to that place when I need to refocus. What is this place in my mind? It is a one-room glass house writer's retreat nestled between a white sandy beach and beautiful field covered in wild flowers.

While I believe I am a writer, I was stuck in not writing anything but academic papers. I was not moving in the direction I wanted or needed. I knew it was time to write a book, so I hired a life coach. I worked with my life coach for about 3 months and during that time, we explored my lack of movement in creative writing, and she helped me envision what it would look like to be a writer. We looked at the anxiety I felt when I thought about writing a book, we planned and created action steps together, and although movement was not expeditious, I'm now writing a book. It is an academic book, but it is a book. And if you are reading this, it means actually I wrote it, partly thanks to my work with my coach.

When it came time to hiring a coach, credentials were important to me. I wanted a coach with a high education, a solid coaching credential, and experience. The coach I hired had a PhD in psychology, and had been a practicing as a health coach. She taught health coaching at Duke University and was a scholar and practitioner. She used a standard coaching process where I visualized where I wanted to be, identified action steps to get there, and she helped me with accountability and pointed me towards resources I needed to reach my goals. My hope is that this book, in a small way, will be a catalyst for change and resource for you, much like the coaching process was for me.

This book is designed as a step to help the profession of family life coaching move forward. Credentials, training, expertise, and experience are all important factors when finding a coach, and to date, there is not a systematic approach to family life coaching. This book highlights the movement thus far in the field of family life coaching, and identifies steps that need to be taken to grow this field. This book also offers a theoretical backbone and practical steps for individual's looking to become family life coaches.

The Title of Family Life Coaching: Deciding What to Call the Profession

The term *family life coach* is a new term to both the fields of family science and coaching psychology. The first mention of the term in the academic literature was in a paper I wrote called *A framework for Family Life Coaching* published in 2013 by

International Coaching Psychology Review. The article simply presented the idea of family life coaching as the merge of family life education and coaching psychology and can be read in its entirety at the conclusion of this chapter. There is a distinction between coaching psychology and family life coach. Coaching psychology is a discipline – a broader framework whereas family life coaching is an area within this discipline that also draws heavily from family science.

I came up with the concept and title of family life coaching somewhat by accident. When I first started in my role as Assistant Professor at North Carolina State University, I was tasked with creating a training program as part of our graduate degree that would train professional coaches to work with youth and families. While I came to the role with a strong background in marriage and family therapy and family life education, the concept of *Coaching* was somewhat new to me. I spent the first 3 years training to be a professional coach, and building our academic program. When I did my coach training, the majority of people in my class were master's level family practitioners, most of who were licensed therapists and worked with families or individuals on family life issues. There was a general consensus that coaching families was an up-and-coming approach, and the thrill was that coaching was strengths based and carried less stigma than therapy.

After my training, I continued with our program development, and due to the deficit of literature on coaching families also started researching family life coaches. As my teaching and research agenda's began to take direction, I found myself quite alone. I knew from my training there were other coaches working with families, but I never saw them in academia or among my professional associations of NCFR (National Council on Family Relations) NPEN (National Parenting Education Network), or NASAP (North American Society of Adlerian Psychology). I decided to reach out to those professional organizations, as well as marriage and family therapy (although I didn't get a response from them) and ask for an interest in collaboration to look at the future of family coaching.

To my great surprise, 47 people responded with an interest to be a part of a group to explore the future of family life coaching. We decided to meet monthly, with anywhere from 5 to 15 people joining the calls and the rest requesting email updates. We met monthly over most of 2014, with the end result a plan that identifies current patterns of family life coach training programs and future standards for family life coaches. As a result of those conversations, the Family Life Coaching Association was created.

While in our infancy, the Family Life Coaching Association (FLCA) has a mission to create research-based, globally recognized credentials, training standards, and networking opportunities for family life coaches through five immediate goals.

1. Clearly define family life coaching.
2. Create global FLC standards.
3. Create a nationally recognized FLC credential.
4. Create networking opportunities for FLCA members.
5. Organize the association for structure and sustainability.

Our vision is to elevate and lend credibility to the practice of family life coaching by serving as the collaborative center for the field.

Why do we call ourselves family life coaches? One thing that was apparent from the first meeting and in every correspondence and data collection point since was an issue with what to call ourselves. Some members of the group consider themselves family coaches or family life coaches while others consider themselves parent coaches, relationship coaches, or life coaches. Some members did coaching, but did not even call themselves a coach. The distinction is significant to the group of practitioners engaged in the conversations. The major contention appears to be around the issue of serving individuals vs. families, and serving adults vs serving youth. Parent coaches are clear that they only coach adults, and they do not coach the whole family system. Youth coaches might coach the youth in a school setting, but do not necessarily work with the whole family. There are a wide variety of audiences and topics covered under the umbrella of family life coaching.

The fields of marriage and family therapy and family systems both focus on helping the full family system (Nichols & Schwartz, 1998). To many, the term "family coach" connotes congruence with the term "family therapist". Family therapists often serve a whole family and even when they serve one member of a family, they do so with a family systems perspective. They think about how the work they do with an individual impacts all members of the family system.

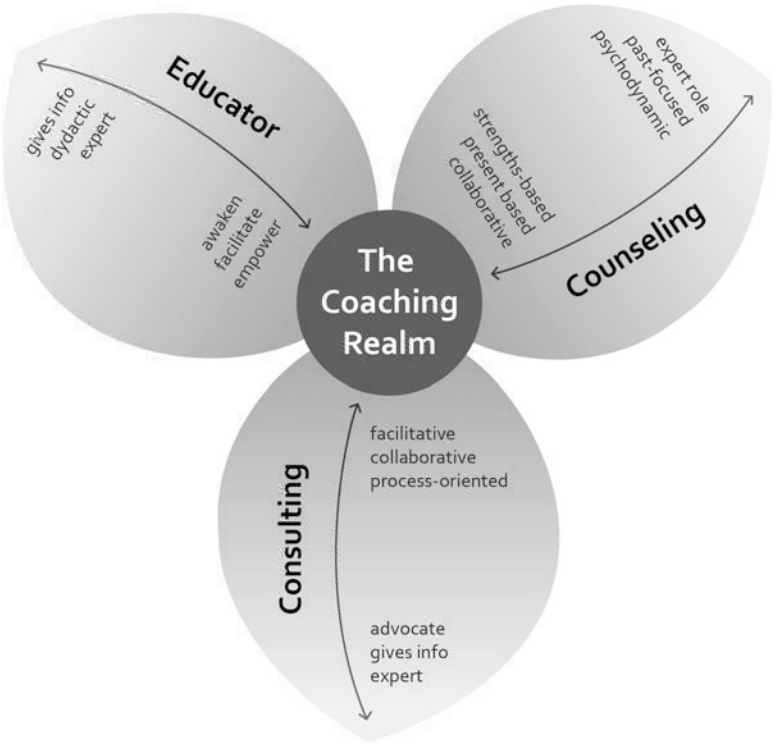
The field of family life education focuses primarily on serving adults, although youth programs are considered a part of family life education (Duncan & Goddard, 2011). Unlike therapy, which typically happens with an individual or family system, family life education if often associated with groups (Powell & Cassidy, 2007). Family coaching might include similar content, but the family life education connotes congruence with group work.

McGoldrick and Carter (2001) were among the first researchers to address the process of coaching in the family science literature. In their article, *Advances in Coaching: Family Therapy With One Person*, the authors describe a process much like what is shared throughout this book. Coaching is a way of addressing individual or familial behaviors in the context of the family system. To me, that is the identity of **family life coaching–working with an individual, couple, parents, youth, or a family to address family-life issues through the coaching process.** By this identity, a parent coach would be a family life coach, even if they only serve parents. A relationship coach would also be a family life coach; an ADHD coach that serves youth would be a family life coach. Family life coach is an umbrella term that identifies professionals that serve clients in family related issues through the coaching process. The identity of family life coaching is in working with a familial entity (individual, couple, or family) on a family life related issue. This is not unique to family life coaching; one of the theoretical underpinnings of coaching psychology and the coaching industry is systems theory (McLean, 2012). Coaches understand that by changing one part of the system, the entire system is impacted.

Family coaching includes working with an individual, couple, or family to address family-life issues through the coaching process.

The strength of this identity is that together, we can begin to form and professionalize the field of family life coaching. If we want to look for a model in multi-disciplinary approaches to professionalism, we can look at both the family life education (FLE) model and the coaching psychology (CP) model. Both groups have multi-disciplinary approaches to what they do. FLE professionals have 10 content areas (NCFR, ND) and Coaching Psychology is for professionals that coach in the business or personal realms (Stober & Grant, 2006).

Still, many ask, what does coaching look like? Members of FLCA have taken the work of Dr. Sara Meghan Walter (2015) to put together a graphic model of family life coaching. Dr. Walter's model began with three core areas: consulting, education, and counseling. The model shows a continuum where coaching practices are represented on one side and the continuum moves away from coaching towards a more didactic and prescribed process of helping families.



Adapted from Walter (2015)

This model helps to visually explain how family life coaching works, but still leaves questions about the coaching process. So when deciding what to call this book, I went back and forth between family coach, parent coach, and family life coach. While the field is still working to have an identity for coaches that serve youth and families, I believe the term family life coach is most inclusive and accurate to the work we do. I want this book to be inclusive of all the coaches

that work with families on family life issues, including parent coaches. Of course the ultimate decision will be determined as the field progresses and professional affiliations grapple with terminology and inclusion.

> "With coaching, families are transformed. It is amazing. I want every parent to have access to this." **Sheryl Stoller, Parent Coach**

Outline of Chapters

This book is presented in three sections: Background and Theoretical Overview (Chaps. 2, 3, and 4); Application and Skill Development (Chaps. 5, 6, 7, and 8); and Types of Family Life Coaching (Chaps 9, 10, 11, 12, and 13).

Part I includes chapters on the background research and theoretical overviews of coaching psychology, family science, and family life coaching.

- Chapter 2 focuses on coaching psychology and provides a historical background of the field of coaching, identifies theoretical underpinnings of coaching psychology with emphasis on the theories most related to FLC as well as current evidence-based practices of coaching psychology.
- Chapter 3 focuses on the field of family science, specifically the field of family life education (FLE). The chapter begins with a historical overview of FLE, its relevance to family science, and a theoretical overview again focusing on theories most relevant to FLC.
- Chapter 4 is the essence of family life coaching theory. This chapter provides the theoretical underpinnings of family life coaching, with suggested evidence-based family life coaching practices. Chapter 4 also provides an overview of the first grounded theory study on the practice of family life coaching (Allen & Baker, 2016) as well as other research helping to form a theoretical foundation for family life coaching.

The focus of Part II moves away from theory and towards the how-to of family life coaching.

- Chapter 5 begins with a clear description and definition of family life coaching and then describes the how-to of coaching families based on the current research of evidence-based coaching psychology and family life coaching. This chapter offers a clear description of the process of coaching families and presents a full transcript of a family life coaching session.
- Chapter 6 focuses specifically on the process leading up to a coaching session, including the paperwork for intakes, and the process of the first meeting. This chapter covers the ethics involved with coaching and provides a case study of the first session.

- Chapter 7 looks at specific coaching models and assessments for use in the coaching process including a case study on the use of assessments.
- Chapter 8 focuses on communication theory and the process of using powerful questions when working with families.

Part III focus on the specific subfields of family coaching, with chapters 9, 10, and 11 focusing on relationship, parenting, and special needs families, respectively. These three populations are the fastest growing fields of family life coaching and each of these chapters includes a case study.

- Chapter 9 covers relationship theory and provides tips on how to apply theory in the work of relationship coaching.
- Chapter 10 covers parent education and parenting theory and provides tips on using evidence-based parent education practices with parent coaching.
- Chapter 11 provides an overview of the literature on working with families that have children that have special needs. The focus of the chapter is on children with ADHD, but covers general approaches to serving families.
- Chapter 12 covers a variety of other fields of coaching, including health, maternity, youth, and life coaching. While those in the field of family science might already be familiar with these concepts, I attempt to connect the information as it pertains to coaching.
- Chapter 13 focuses on the professionalism of the field of coaching, what steps family life coaches need to take to establish credentials and training, and the mechanics and processes of building a coaching business. Trends, including education, training, and credentialing of family life coaches is covered first, followed by the how-to of building a coaching business.

Family Life Coaching Framework

In 2013, I submitted a framework to describe what I considered to be a foundation for family life coaching. This article was meant to be a discussion starter, and boy has it been! I have enjoyed correspondences with so many coaches serving parents and families. Thanks to the generosity of the editors of the International Coaching Psychology Review, I am happy to reprint the article below.

The following article is reprinted with permission from the International Coaching Psychology Review. It first appeared in the March edition of the journal. Allen (2013)

A Framework for Family Life Coaching

Kimberly I. Allen, Ph.D., BCC

The fields of Family Life Education (FLE) and Coaching Psychology (CP) are destined to unite. Historically, the field of family life education has been the primary mode for educating families. Ironically families were never a big part of the conversation in the field of coaching psychology. The field, however, is changing and family practitioners are utilizing the technique of coaching in their work with families. Likewise, the field of coaching psychology has historically catered to individuals, but there is a growing need for coaches to help families. Relationship coaching, youth coaching, and couples coaching are all growing areas of coaching psychology. Although work is happening in the area of family life coaching, there is a vast deficit of information for family practitioners about the practice of and theory of coaching families.

In order to establish a theoretical foundation and evidence-based approach to coaching families, there must first be a conceptualization and discussion of family life coaching. Coaching families has long been an informal methodology used in family practice, illustrating the need for family life coaching to be a part of the national conversation of family life and coaching psychology. This paper aims to present a framework to begin the conceptualization of family life coaching and to generate interests and debate on the role of family life coaching in the arenas of family life and coaching psychology.

Family Life Education

Family life education (FLE) is a field of study and application that involves qualified educators delivering family science principles designed to strengthen familial relationships and foster positive development of individual, couple, and family development (Duncan & Goddard, 2011). In its broadest definition, Family Life Education is a process where a professional provides skills and knowledge that helps families' function at their optimal level (National Council on National Council on Family Relations, 2009). The educational delivery may happen in a variety of settings, but typically occurs in settings outside of the formal education system. Information is delivered to individuals, couples, parents, and on occasion, to whole families. The theoretical foundation of FLE is diverse, having drawn from home economics, social work, family sociology, marriage and family therapy, education, and developmental psychology (Lewis_Rowley, Brasher, Moss, Duncan, & Stiles, 1993).

Although the scholarship of family life education is relatively new, application of family life education by professionals dates back over a century. The turn of the Twentieth century brought a great many changes to families, therefore creating a need for education for women and children (Allen, Dunn, & Zaslow, 2011). Family

life education was formed as a response to those changes with the goal of helping families improve their wellbeing (Arcus, 1995) and continues to provide family science scholarship in applied settings.

Most often, family life educators aim to help parents and couples improve their relationships and gain skills to make their family life successful. Duncan and Goddard (2011) highlight seven principles of FLE: relevancy across the lifespan, based on needs of clients served, multi-disciplinary, varied content delivery platforms, focuses on education, honors diversity, and requires educated professionals to deliver education. In fact, to receive the credential of certified family life educator (CFLE), professionals must show competence in 10 content areas specific to family life (NCFR, 2009) (Table1.1).

Most often, family life education is considered to be a top-down process where a credentialed educator shares information with participants (Doherty, 2000). FLE does acknowledge that the family brings wisdom and experiences to the table, but the emphasis is generally on the expert sharing knowledge with participants, and participants using that knowledge for positive change. This approach has its strengths and weakness. Having an expert that can clearly articulate the evidence-based approaches can provide families with much needed credible information. On the flip side, however, families have little ownership in the process of change. There are varied approaches to family life education, some of which put less emphasis on the expert-model. For example, Duncan and Goddard (2011), identify six approaches to FLE, including the "critical inquirer approach" (p. 17) which bears resemblance to coaching. In this approach, educators utilize questions to help participants move forward and the approach acknowledges that participants have responsibility in their own life (Czaplewski & Jorgensen, 1993).

Although very little is written on using a coach approach to serving families in the family life education literature base, there is some information about the varying domains of practice. Doherty (1995) proposes that there are five levels of family involvement ranging from simple FLE lessons to full on family therapy. He identified differences between FLE and a licensed therapist working with families, and stated that FLE should contain components of imparting knowledge and skills while keeping a focus on the feelings, attitudes, and goals of the families served. Myers-Walls, Ballard, Darling, & Myers-Bowman, (2011) expanded Doherty's conceptualization of family life education by suggesting family case management as a third professional role in family life work. Because of the personal and emotional focus in working with families, family life education involves a relationship, making it unique and separate from other academic subjects or courses

Table 1.1 Family life education content expertise areas

Families and individuals in social contexts	Internal dynamics of families
Human growth and development across the life span	Human sexuality
Interpersonal relationships	Family resource management
Parenting education and guidance	Family law and public policy
Professional ethics and practice	Family life education methodology

one might study. While these one-on-one and group interactions may appear to resemble therapy and often contain elements of relational theory, Doherty stresses the importance of family educators to remain objective and refer the family, when necessary, for additional counseling and therapy (1995).

Though there are variations among service offerings and styles of services in FLE, the primary foci is on factors such as improving the relationship between parent and child in the specific context of the family, reduction in externalized child behaviors, and increasing the family's skills and resources (Gockel, Russel, & Harris, 2008). Family life education can take place across levels of intensity and settings, from basic workshops to more intensive interactions involving in-home services and coaching. Some might even argue that coaching is a natural fit with family life education. Very little, however, is written about the use of coaching with families.

Coaching Psychology

Like Family Life Education, the literature field of Coaching Psychology, or coaching, has experienced rapid growth over the past few decades (Grant, 2011). The roots of coaching psychology come from humanistic psychology (Grant, 2011). As the field grew, so did the theoretical framework of practicing coaching psychologists. Coaching frameworks now include Cognitive/Behavioral, Solution Focused, Psychodynamic, Rational Emotive, and Transactional among others (Whybrow & Palmer, 2006). The field of coaching is grounded in psychological theory, but consists of a variety sub categories. The focus of coaching practices includes executive, personal life, business, performance, leadership, career, team, mentoring, health, and sports. All coaches are not psychologists; in fact, 95 % of coaches are non-psychologists (Grant & Zackon, 2004).

The field of coaching psychology is young, although the practice of using coaching in work with individuals and groups is not new (Grant, 2011). The technique of coaching in psychological practice was written decades ago (see Filippi, 1968), but until recently, there was scarcely any literature about the filed of coaching psychology (Grant, 2003). There is now a theoretical foundation and major serge in research that is truly shaping the filed into a science-based approach to helping others.

The definition of coaching psychology is to enhance the "well-being and performance in personal life and work domains underpinned by models of coaching grounded in established adult learning or psychological approaches" (adapted from Grant & Palmer, 2002). This is done through a partnership with the client. Unlike FLE, coaching psychology leads with the premise that the client is an equal partner in the process and comes to the table with expertise, knowledge, and abilities to create the change they seek. Coaches work with their clients to create change; there is no hierarchy.

Some view coaching as similar or the same as therapy. Although there are similarities, there are also distinct differences (Hart, Blattner, & Leipsic, 2001).

Therapy or counseling is often used with clients that have significant mental issues while coaching clients tend to be more goal directed and mentally healthy (Hart et al., 2001). Coaching works to "enhance the life experience, work performance and well-being for individuals, groups and organizations who do not have clinically significant mental health issues" (Grant, 2006, p. 16). This approach tends to be for people that are the doing well, and express a desire to do even better. Over the past decade, the field of coaching has shifted somewhat to become more than problem solving or remediation; it now has a focus of preparing people and organizations to deal with emerging needs.

Although coaching practices have long been used in therapeutic settings (McGoldrick & Carter, 2001), coaching is, in many instances, a separate profession that utilizes different techniques than therapy. Unlike therapy, coaching deals with the present and future, and views emotions a natural (Williams & Menendez, 2007). Although some professional coaches do utilize a variety of techniques such as mentoring and consulting simultaneously, many consider coaching is separate from consulting and mentoring. Like therapy, both mentoring and consulting identifies an expert model whereas coaching is co-creative and both members form a partnership. Williams and Menendez created a matrix that highlights the differences between therapy, mentoring, consulting, and coaching (see Table 1.2). These differences demonstrate the uniqueness of coaching in relationship to other helping professions.

One major disadvantage of the coaching profession is the lack of unified quality credentialing. Although there are some efforts underway to form a unified accreditation or qualification process such as those with the International Coaching Federation, a rigorous, standard accreditation does not currently exist (Grant, 2006). As such, anyone can call themselves a coach, regardless of qualifications. Of the training programs that do exist, many are "credentialing mills"; that offer a short, expensive training that scarcely provides needed information and skills practice to be a professional coach (Grant, 2006, p. 14). Furthermore, there is a deficit of literature specifically regarding content necessary for quality education in professional coaching (Grant, 2011), as well as a deficit in integrating evidence-based coaching techniques (Moore & Highstein, 2004a, 2004b).

The good news is the literature of coaching psychology is growing, and there is an openness to new ideas, frameworks, and techniques to move the field forward. The world is getting more complex, and models of professional practice are emerging to help people positively respond to change (Cavanagh & Lane, 2012). Coaching psychology is a prime example of a professional rising to meet a unique need. Slowly and methodically, the bar is being raised for professional standards, the literature base is growing, and evidence-based techniques of coaching psychology are being documented. People like coaching and they want to be coached. In fact, the majority of individuals that have been coached say it positively impacts their lives (Fillery-Travis & Lane, 2006).

Table 1.2 Professional distinctions of coaching and other fields

Therapy	Mentoring	Consulting	Coaching
Deals mostly with a person's past and trauma, and seeks healing	Deals mostly with succession training and seeks to help someone do what you do	Deals mostly with problems and seeks to provide information (expertise, strategy, structures, methodologies) to solve them	Deals mostly with a person's present and seeks to guide them into a more desirable future
Doctor-patient relationship (therapist has the answers)	Older/wise-younger/less-experienced relationship (mentor has the answers)	Expert-person with problem relationship (consultant has the answers)	Co-creative, equal partnership (coach helps clients discover their own answers)
Assumes many emotions are a symptom of something wrong	Limited to emotional response of the mentoring parameters (succession, etc.)	Does not normally address or deal with emotions (informational only)	Assumes emotions are natural and normalizes them
The therapist diagnoses, then provides professional expertise and guidelines to give clients a path to healing	The mentor allows you to observe his/her behavior and expertise, will answer questions, and provide guidance and wisdom for the stated purpose of the mentoring	The consultant stands back, evaluates a situation, then tells you the problem and how to fix it	The coach stands with you, and helps you identify the challenges, then works with you to turn challenges into victories and holds you accountable to reach your desired goals

Williams and Menendez (2007)

Family Life Coaching Model

Clearly, family life education and coaching psychology are two strong fields of study that have much in common. The gap, however, is the use of coaching with families as a field of study. The time is right to introduce a theory of family life coaching. Family life education and coaching psychology both have unique qualities and offer a profound impact on the practice of serving families, yet little to no discussion and research has been conducted on the field of using coaching in family life. In a search for the words "Family Life Coaching" conducted by the author of this manuscript on Summon database in May, 2012 only 3 results were found. A similar search of "Family Coaching" yielded only 44 journal articles and of those, none addressed the field of coaching families from a theoretical or applied point of view.

The literature field is bare, yet the work is being done. Although it has never been labeled "family life coaching", there is evidence that family life educators have been using coaching techniques as an approach to helping families for many years, primarily in the field of social work and home-visitation programs. In the past 10 years, coaching has become an integral part of family interventions ranging from health and family education to professional and managerial work (Heimendinger et al., 2007). Often used as a parent education intervention, coaching is a process-