

EXPERT GUIDANCE ON CRITICAL COACHING ISSUES. THIS SITUATION DEALS WITH A COACH'S ROMANTIC FEELINGS TOWARD HER OWN COACH.

“I have a crush on my coach!”

the situation

“I’m a 45-year-old newish coach with three kids in a very good marriage. However, I have developed crush-like feelings on my own coach. I’m finding the whole situation very difficult – I keep wanting to bring it up in our coaching sessions as it’s affecting me greatly. I also have a feeling that it might lead to other more important things to explore in my life. Yet I feel very embarrassed and worried. Will he think I want a relationship with him or that I am a stalker? Does this mean my marriage with my husband is in trouble? (I do have a very good relationship but why would I be having these feelings?) So what should I do? The coaching has helped me make great strides and I’m scared if I admit these feelings to my coach he won’t want to coach me anymore or he will think I’m crazy! Please help!”

Are you grappling with a sticky situation?

You don’t have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you some different perspectives to consider. Email your situation to: editor@choice-online.com and put “sticky situations” in the subject line.



Victoria Trabosh, CDC®, is an international speaker, trainer and facilitator with 30 years of large corporate and start-up business experience, in addition to coaching top executives worldwide. She is also president of the Itafari Foundation, which helps the people of Rwanda.

While I know how difficult it is to admit these types of feelings, they’re very valid in a relationship where you’re sharing your deepest thoughts and emotions with another human being. In your mind you’ve crossed over from a close professional relationship to an intimate one. And I don’t think you’re overstating your dilemma. A crush is often the first step in seriously pursuing an emotional affair. As anyone will tell you who has ever had their partner in an emotional affair with another person, it is crushing to the partner outside of the emotional relationship.

I do not recommend telling your coach about this. You put him in a position of trying to deal with your emotions and if he too has feelings, it could spiral. I doubt that’s the case, but you never know. It’s important to be aware that this can happen to the strongest of marriages, in the most innocent of ways.

I have three additional recommendations:

1. Cut ties with this coach and find a woman who can serve in this role as your coach. You will need to be in integrity on this as a coach yourself or you will likely attract male clients who find themselves in the same predicament with you that you find yourself facing with your coach.
2. Explore your relationship with your husband to enhance your marriage or seek counseling for yourself or as a couple. Clearly something is unsettled in you and there’s no shame in that. But it would be a shame if you don’t figure out what’s going on with your husband and you in a powerful proactive way.
3. Define the language of your coaching sessions to make sure you are being personal but not private. It’s exciting to work with someone on your deepest issues but never forget you’re paying this person to listen and listen well. Don’t forget this is a business relationship, not a private one.

You’re at a crossroads in your relationship with your coach and your husband, but most importantly, with yourself. I speak from experience when I say: you can say no to this crush so that you’re available to change the world in the ways that are most valuable and important to you. This is a serious distraction that takes up a tremendous amount of emotional energy. I recommend using that energy in a positive way to better yourself through self reflection and awareness. You can do this – you can say no to a surface feeling/emotion so that you can say yes to your deepest self.

Thank you for sharing what many of us have experienced. I hope you choose to take care of yourself by examining your life – not this feeling.



Craig Carr, PCC is a senior trainer for the Coaches Training Institute (CTI) and a coach committed to the conscious development of personal potential. Craig's specialty is working with entrepreneurs and investors who are designing new relationships with their businesses or jobs.

In a well-designed coaching relationship, not only is each person responsible for speaking up about what is and isn't working, but also the dynamics that occur are a source of change in the client's life. It's a tricky business if a client projects romantic love onto a coach and even trickier if it's felt as the real thing to be acted upon. If the coach isn't aware of the romantic feelings, or if the coach is aware and lets it persist, the situation can become trickier still. Worst (and most rare) is the case of the coach who encourages and misuses such attraction.

So I have to ask you: Do you trust that this coach does not have a repeating pattern in which women fall romantically in love with him? If your gut feeling is 'no,' then my advice is simply to run the other way as fast as you can because you have not been empowered by the coaching and this will not end well. Let's assume, however, that best intentions and trust exist. The key to freeing up your situation is in your sense that important things are being exposed for exploration. For a moment, truly sense that

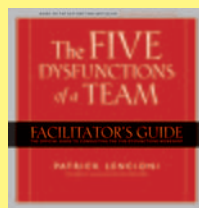
importance and allow yourself to step back and see other thoughts as story made up to create a life-movie that feels alive and thrilling. This is not a bad thing or even uncommon; it's just dangerous. Your challenge is to take that thrill and aliveness and turn it back into the coaching relationship itself. It will take courage to raise the bar and speak your truth, but let coaching be the ground for exploring danger. Make it very clear to yourself that your coach is a mirror with whom you explore your life and your patterns. He may not be up to it in the way you need and that's a risk you have to take.

Finally, DO NOT see this person outside of the coaching parameter for quite some time, as the power of seduction between you may be greater than you imagine. You MUST put a stake in the ground and make a commitment to do no damage to your family. Without that stake all may be lost including your opportunity to truly expand your knowledge of what it is to be a fulfilled Being. Congratulate yourself for pushing your edges, and be kind to yourself if you stumble.

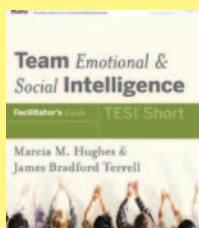
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Carol Adrienne, PhD is an internationally-known author, intuitive counselor and life coach whose books have been translated into over 15 languages. As a master numerologist, workshop leader and life coach, she has helped thousands of people eliminate negative patterns, providing them with life-long tools for creating the life they want to live.

From your description of “crush-like feelings” for your coach, it sounds to me that you are deep in a psychological process known as “transference.” Transference is common in therapeutic situations, and is not a pathological condition. Transference happens when we project feelings (in this case positive) onto someone else, seeing them in an enhanced light. Since we are receiving our coach’s undivided attention, it’s almost as if we are re-creating the early ties we had (or wish we had) with our caregiving and loving parents.

Your intuition has rightly been urging you to bring up your feelings in a session. I suspect that your coach already knows your feelings, but has chosen not to bring up the subject as a resource to be explored.

Carl Jung and Sigmund Freud considered transference a necessary component in healing. By recognizing feelings, talking about them, and staying with the tension, we are able to grow and gain new insight. A skilled coach understands that his client’s feelings are a result of the trust, sharing, and working

relationship between the two people. He certainly wouldn’t be likely to jump to the conclusion that you are a stalker!

It sounds like you are making good progress with the coaching. These growing feelings could be arising as an indication that you are ready to handle some deeper issues than those that brought you to coaching.

You mention that you are afraid these feelings might indicate that there is trouble in your marriage. You say you have a good relationship, and you probably do! However, your question could mean it’s time for a heart-to-heart talk with your husband. A quiet getaway on the weekend could set the stage to let him know how much he means to you, and get back in touch with common goals and desires.

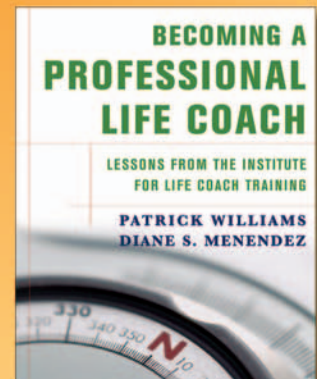
Your worries that your coach will react badly or won’t want to coach you anymore are unfounded. If he should react this way – which I doubt he will – then this is not a coach who is truly grounded and matured in his practice. ●



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