

choice

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Coaching Education in Flux:

The ongoing evolution of
a dynamic field

CAN AN ONLINE INFLUENCER HELP MY KID?

The Situation:

“My kid is graduating college and has found an online influencer who promises to teach them how to start a coaching business. This soon-to-be college graduate believes that this influencer is the real deal. They don’t want me to give them any advice or talk them out of it. When I looked into it, I could not see any evidence of any coaching credentials; however, I don’t want to squash this new graduate’s dreams. What do I do?”



By **Suzi Pomerantz, MT, MCC**

You don’t want to squash their dreams, so find a way to be supportive to your young adult offspring while checking in with yourself and possibly your coach to unpack what bothers you about this. Figure out how to manage your own emotions – especially if they are uncomfortable – so that you can be fully present to your kid without agenda or judgment or criticism.

Ask them what it would look like if you were fully, unconditionally supportive? What support do they need or want? How much or little would they like you to be involved? Ask directly, “What can I do to support you on this journey?”

Chances are they will learn a tremendous amount from the experience. They may actually learn how to start and sustain a successful coaching business. If not, they may learn/experience some powerful personal development or transformation. Worst case, they will learn a lesson about paying online influencers for some random program without properly vetting it through those who are known to have success in the industry.

New graduates are still figuring out who they are as adults. Their pre-frontal cortex is not yet fully developed. It’s your job as the parent and full adult to recognize that this is not a forever decision; it’s merely what they’ve chosen to do for right now, as part of their independent learning about their professional self.

Once your kid feels unconditionally supported, you can then

sprinkle educational tidbits along their journey. For instance, you can find out if the online influencer is ICF credentialed, and if the program is ICF accredited. You can educate your kid about the distinction between coaching programs that ICF has accredited versus the ones that are approved through ICF for continuing education units.

You can be a sounding board and mentor to your kid when they come to you with questions along their journey. You can, with genuine curiosity, inquire how it’s going for them in their program, and what they are finding most challenging or compelling or both. Ultimately, your best role is to be their parent, not their coach, unless they ask you to be in that role and clear boundaries are established. Walk beside them on their journey, and manage your internal dialogue as best you can. Their experience is theirs, and valid, and may be completely different than your experience of our profession.

Take responsibility for your own reactions and biases, and honor the young growing new professional before you by letting them have their own experience. It is possible that coaching education that falls outside of the norms you’re accustomed to (or outside of the ICF parameters) could still be an excellent if different type of education. Different strokes for different folks.

And if all fails, you’ll be there to help them pick up the pieces and come up with Plan B, like you always have.

By Victoria Trabosh, CDC, CEC

You are facing a choice between breaking his spirit and breaking his will. As a parent, your wisdom will become evident years from now, but currently, you risk crushing his spirit. You could ask thought-provoking questions aimed at challenging his decision without directly mentioning the influencer.

Try this: start asking great questions that make your kid pause in doubt that he's absolutely right. A professional coach should provide them with a comprehensive understanding of the coaching business, including the ramp-up time, budgeting, marketing, and how to handle failure.

Show genuine enthusiasm for their dream, but ask tough questions such as, "How long before it becomes financially profitable?" "How are others who have used this program doing?" "What coaching niche did they suggest you focus on?" "How do they advise you to handle networking?" You don't need to ask all of these questions; just choose the ones you know will make this recent graduate think.

That may open the door to a discussion, so be ready with more than one alternative. If you can't break their will and make them open to advice, what kind of coach will they be to others? I know it's tough to consider, but running a business is tough, and they need to be prepared.

It's crucial to remember that influencers amass followers through their relatability. Neuroscientists have unequivocally established that when we perceive someone as trustworthy or an authority, our brains release oxytocin – the bonding and trust hormone. This chemical reaction creates a profound emotional connection between the influencer and their followers. This is the secret sauce your kid is aspiring to emulate.

Another crucial consideration is the cost of the program. I have made the mistake of purchasing programs that did not provide much value, and I paid dearly for it. It's essential that your kid pays for this program themselves, as it will teach them a valuable lesson. If they are emotionally invested in this influencer, they may be unwilling to consider a more traditional, "boring" program.

Additionally, having just finished school, they might be weary of studying, making this look more exciting and other programs seem less appealing. I firmly believe in allowing people to learn from their mistakes, gaining wisdom over time, and offering gentle guidance rather than harsh criticism.

Your adult child is finding their own way. If they are not open to your guidance now, choose to be there to support them when they fail.

By Craig Carr, BCC, PCC, CPCC

This appears more like a parenting sticky situation than a client sticky situation, but fear not; I have an answer! As I am not a parent and have no business wading into this territory, I went to the mountain to consult the sage I came to know in my psychology, Eastern philosophy and Chinese medicine days. I'm talking about the great Oracle, the I Ching, and specifically the fourth hexagram, "Youthful Folly." Stay with me; I think you're going to want to see this.

With a nod to *The Visionary I Ching*, by Paul O'Brien, the Sage offers a few gems to start us through the conundrum, including, "You may offer them your wisdom or advice, but do so only if they are receptive" and "Give up trying to convince others that you are right, as it is exhausting and counterproductive."

Darn good guidance for a coach, too, and an example of why good platitudes live forever. Going deeper, "Allow others to proceed, even into difficult or dangerous circumstances. It may be the only way they can learn, and without learning, no one can succeed. Trying to take care of someone who is unwilling can actually be harmful. Live and let learn."

It sounds like your adult child wants to do this independently, which I'm sure means they will pay the costs, correct? Learning to be a coach is hard, but so is everything else worth learning. In my experience, learning is a factor of commitment, and nothing says skin in the game like commitment.

I know I'm flirting with parental advice, but a mother I know who likes to quote Robin Williams says, "A Mother's place is in

the wrong." There's a good chance that nothing you do will be "right" in the eyes of your child. What I would not do is make this about the credentials of the coach, teacher, marketer or whoever is making the pitch.

What this is truly about is this new grad's discovered passion for helping others. That's a remarkable trait to celebrate, and the compelling narrative from a coaching school could fill a void that college never did. Your child is eager to step out and engage in something that resonates with their identity. They aspire to make a difference.

Who can say if this is the path they've been searching for, if there is disappointment ahead, or if this is the threshold that will transform your kid into someone you barely recognize – in a good way? The key point I want to convey in this non-advice advice is that your role is to provide encouragement ("Go for what you want!"), firmness ("Figure out how to pay for what you want.") and patience (because finding what matters can be a journey). •

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 submissions@choice-online.com and put "sticky situations" in the subject line.