

# COACHING WORKS!

## *USING LIFE COACHING SKILLS TO MENTOR WOMEN IN THE CHURCH*



*by*

***Joan C. Webb***  
*(Life Coach, Bible Teacher, Author)*

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## Empowering Others (Without Over-Helping)

Life coaching works! People become empowered to courageously move past the obstacles that keep them from making lasting positive changes in their lives. Then they feel free-er to reach out to their families, friends, communities, and the world with the grace of Jesus. Here's what a few have said about their life coaching experience:

- *I've been so afraid of what other people think of me and worried that I might make a mistake that it has held me back. As a result of the relationship I've had with my Life Coach, I've found the freedom God has always intended for me.*
- Coaching helped me achieve my personal and spiritual goals through some very stressful and confusing times.
- *My coach never tried to fix me. She always gave me choices, which was part of the core of my healing.*
- We centered our coaching partnership on God and I've found inner strength I didn't know I had.
- *Coaching provided stability, clarity and direction during a very chaotic season of life.*
- I felt listened to for one of the first times in my life. Consequently I gained clarity that helped me to remain focused on what matters most. Coaching was an investment into my life and my own soul care. I learned to drop my mask and love God more.

### Note to Ministry Leaders

I believe that the skills I've learned in life coaching training and have implemented with my coaching clients can be adapted effectively for use in women's [and men's, actually] mentoring programs in local church and para-church settings. So if you're a ministry leader, pastor, lay staff member or trained volunteer and you want to assist people in your sphere of influence so that they can experience personal and spiritual transformation in their lives, continue reading this mini e-book.

*[Note: To be clear, Life Coaching in its purest form is not mentoring—and mentoring is not life coaching. Yet I've noticed that the life coaching skills and tools (such as "level three listening") do prove effective in church mentoring programs. Life coaching methods encourage people (women and men) to grow both personally and spiritually without unnecessarily telling them how to feel or think or act. Although all the coaching methods, tools and skills can be used with both men and women, to reduce confusion for you the reader, I will refer to the "coachee" as a woman in this e-book.]*

### But Isn't Coaching Me-Oriented?

Life Coaching with a distinctly Christian emphasis is not merely "all about you." It is about becoming the person God created you to be, so that you can live out the good things He planned for you to do. ("For we are God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago." Ephesians 2:10 NLT). It is

about living freely in order to trust and glorify God with your life and personhood. It's not pushing for unrealistic expectations; it is fitting into God's design for you.

## How Coaching Started

About two decades ago, Personal and Professional Life Coaching emerged in the business world. As baby boomers reached middle age, some began pausing long enough to consider questions such as:

- *Is this all there is?*
- *Has my financial success really satisfied me?*
- *I've reached my business goals, but how can I reach my personal, relational, and spiritual aspirations?*
- *What can I do to make a significant difference in the world?*

Women and men, employers and employees, alike started realizing there is more to life than the daily performance grind. Consequently, a few sought a Personal Life Coach to help them develop and stay committed to a more balanced lifestyle. It worked. People's lives changed for the better.

## What is Life Coaching?

Life Coaching provides a "powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance the lifelong process of human learning, effectiveness, and fulfillment."<sup>1</sup> Although some people within the coaching industry rely on what some Christians may call New Age type beliefs to support its philosophy, the basic life coaching structures and skills taught in many coaches training schools/programs coincide with biblical directives for one-on-one mentoring-type relationships. ("Encourage one another and build each other up." 1 Thessalonians 5:11)

My daughter, Lynnette Rasmussen, first introduced me to Life Coaching over sixteen years ago. As the owner of Summit Advantage Training and Consulting in Wheaton, Illinois at the time, she coached her clients from a distinctly Christian perspective. Lynnette contended that the key to understanding personal coaching was this formula: focus + extraordinary action + structure = results.

"I help clients determine what their focus is. Then we decide what action is needed to move toward that goal," explained Lynnette. "The structure is the weekly, over-the-phone sessions that we have, which gives my clients accountability. I love helping people grow and make positive changes in their lives. I am affirming someone's strengths in Christ."

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<sup>1</sup> The Coaches Training Institute, San Rafael, CA 94901, [www.thecoaches.com](http://www.thecoaches.com)

## **Life Coaching Helps People Grow**

I agree with Lynnette. For almost sixteen years I've been a Life Coach and have witnessed incredible growth and freedom in the lives of the people I work with. They gain courage to speak up for themselves and stop relying merely on the opinions or disapproval of parents, spouses, bosses, pastors or friends to determine their beliefs and actions. They stop racing enough to listen to themselves and God and become the persons God originally designed them to be. It happens not as they read a book or hear a sermon or attend a Sunday School class or Bible Study (although these are valid Christian experiences.) It happens one-on-one, as someone listens to them, affirms their story and helps them find the answers that God has placed deep within them. It happens in designed relationship. One by one.

### **One-by-One**

Early one morning as a man walked along the beach, he noticed something unusual. The beach was littered with thousands of starfish that had been washed up on shore and were dying in the sun.

In the distance, he saw a young woman picking up starfish and throwing them back in the ocean, one at a time. When he came close enough to her to be heard above the roar of the waves the man said, "You're wasting your time, you know. There must be thousands of starfish along this beach front. You can't possibly make a difference."

The young woman reached down, picked up a starfish, and gently threw it as far as she could, back into the sea. "I made a significant difference to that one, didn't I?" she said as she reached down to pick up another.

That's how I feel about being a life coach. Coaching works. One person at a time. One changed life at a time.

### **My First Encounter with a Life Coach**

In 1995, I traveled from St. Paul, Minnesota to visit relatives in Chicago, Illinois. I agreed to go with my host to a meeting of small business owners. The evening speaker was a Personal Life Coach.

- She talked about helping people to live more effective and joyful lives.
- She said people sabotage themselves and stay stuck.
- She asked questions like "What is the benefit in not knowing? AND
- How do your "but, but, but" responses protect you? AND
- Are your excuses true? AND
- What is the next most important step you need to take?

- When one of the people in the group responded to a question with “Uh, I don’t know” she said, “What would your answer be if you *did* know?”

I was fascinated. Soon after that I took Life Coaches training and began with one client. Hundreds of coaching hours later, I remain amazed with how the coaching process works.

I say that coaching works, but actually I find the coaching process rather difficult to explain. I try, but it seems it has to be experienced to be fully understood and appreciated. (By the way, life coaching is not counseling. Sometimes a person needs counseling with an effective psychologist or therapist.)

## Coaching Concepts

Life Coaching is based on the following concepts:

- The coach-ee or client is naturally creative, resourceful, and capable.
- Coaching is about the whole life.
- The coach always holds the client’s God-given agenda—goals, dreams, ideas, desires, passions and aspirations.
- A KEY to effective coaching is believing that the coach-ee knows. They have their own answers. Often those answers and solutions have been buried deep within and covered over with the negative messages of others or their own inner bully which I often call the “Saboteur.” That internal sabotaging voice (some call it negative self-talk) wants them to stay in the status quo. A wise Christian coach helps the person to discover what she wants, what she fears, what motivates her, what holds her back, where she sells out, and to listen to God’s voice. The coach’s job is to ask questions, not give pat answers.
- Coaching is about learning, action, and inner transformation and that brings longed-for results.

### A Coaching Client’s Story

I remember when Linda, my first coaching client, told me that she didn’t want to die with all her papers, research, Bible studies and talks piled around her. But she felt stuck. She dreamed about teaching the Bible to women who would not otherwise hear God’s word. Yet previous efforts had been disappointing and she was surrounded by stacks of files and notebooks.

We entered into the coaching process and designed our unique coaching partnership. I asked her questions, we worked together and she found her own answers. Answers that were inside her, but buried deep.

She moved past spending energy and time worrying whether she would be selfish if she didn’t take care of everyone else. The day this truth moved from her head to her heart

we had coached around the topic of her pet. *Really*. Linda talked about needing to care for the dog and take him with her to a family reunion in another state, but she didn't want to. She just knew everyone else wanted her to lug the elderly dog around. As we do in coaching, we talked about options.

One of the options she blurted during our brainstorming session was "Board the dog for the weekend." A light bulb flashed in her mind. That's it. She didn't have to always do what she perceived others wanted her to do. They might not even care what she did. She could ask questions and think of her options in color instead of merely in "black and white" (or either/or.) After that, when faced with a choice or life dilemma, Linda's motto became "Board the Dog!" She felt free. She moved past her people-pleasing and over-fixing ways to do what God wanted her to do.

Several years ago she started a radio program for women, doing five-minute chats explaining how relevant God's Word is to everyday life. She touched thousands of women's lives with the rich material she had in all those files. Linda is *not* going to die with all those Bible Studies crumpled around her! Linda made intentional choices and took actions steps to get past her obstacles and cooperate with God to live out of her spiritual gifts, passions and God-given dreams.

## Model for a Life Coaching Partnership

There are three basic principles in the life coaching model: fulfillment, balance, and process. These tenets adapt well to one-on-one mentoring programs in the church. When a person lives congruently with her God-given personality, talents, gifts, and purpose, *and* stays true to her core values, she naturally experiences fulfillment, balance, and a sense of enjoyment and satisfaction in the process. This is true even in the midst of life's inevitable imperfection and disappointments.

### Fulfillment

Fulfillment enhances the ongoing process of becoming the best version of the person God designed you to be. When you and I (and the person you're mentoring) ignore or neglect God's unique design for us, we put ourselves on a path that can lead to burnout.

Lest you think that burnout only happens to those who work or serve too many hours for too long, consider this definition. "Burnout is the type of stress and emotional fatigue, frustration and exhaustion that occurs when a series of (or combination of) events in a relationship, mission, way of life, or job fail to produce an expected result."

As a result of disappointing or hurtful experiences throughout life, many people develop negative coping methods. These coping strategies and beliefs may have helped manage a person's life at one time, but when they are based on non-truths, they eventually lose their effectiveness and backfire. These lies sabotage efforts to grow.

During the coaching partnership, the coach's work is to help the client become familiar with the behaviors and beliefs that sabotage her efforts to mature. The underlying beliefs of sabotage may surface when a person makes statements such as, "but, but, but..." or "I should", "I always", "I never", "I can't" and the often repeated phrase that we've already mentioned, "I don't know."

### **Fulfillment and the Inner Saboteur**

The inner saboteur (who thinks he's protecting you from further pain) hates positive change and positive change is what the coaching partnership is about. So, the internal negative messages *will* surface. Sample tactics of the saboteur include:

- Keeping us afraid and filled with "What if? questions and "If only" worries.
- Urging us to "Try too hard to make it all just right", relying on perfectionist tactics. When working one-on-one, you'll discover this pops up often. To help you and your mentoree to understand the difference between "trying too hard to make it all just right" and "partnering with God for excellence", refer to the Relief of Imperfection Chart in the Free Resources section of my website. <http://www.joancwebb.com/relief-of-imperfection-chart.html>
- Giving all the reasons why procrastination will be worthwhile. (See the Relief of Imperfection Chart, because procrastination is the kissing cousin of perfectionism. <http://www.joancwebb.com/relief-of-imperfection-chart.html>)
- Convincing us that denying or ignoring our genuine and God-given emotions (whether pleasant or not-so-fun) is the only Christian response to life. When a person accepts this tactic, a little part of her dies each day and she is not able to live or serve authentically as the person God made her to be. Yet people can learn to develop emotional muscle. We don't have to deny our feelings or let them rule us. To help you and the person you're mentoring acknowledge and manage her emotions, use the free resources titled "Feeling Chart" on my website. <http://www.joancwebb.com/freebies.html>

God wants us to expose these reoccurring roadblocks so that we can move forward to fulfill what He has for us. (Remember Ephesians 2:10?) It is a task of the coach to consistently and gently remind the coach-ee of her growth goals, desires and purpose when the inevitable negative pulls of daily life threaten to divert her attention. These goals and desires are established and written down during the design session they have together at the beginning of their mentoring relationship. More about that at the end of this e-book.

### **Balance**

It is evident from scripture that God is interested in *all* facets of an individual's life. When a person is "stuck" in one area, it is likely to have an effect on one or more other life areas.



Balance is about living, experiencing, and growing in all aspects of our lives. Balance is dynamic; it has no goal in itself. The concept of balance helps a person gain perspective and realize that she does have choices *and* the privilege and capability to make decisions. One of a coach's goals is to challenge the coachee to take action steps to achieve personal balance.

Coaching utilizes an effective tool for determining the areas of a person's life that need attention at a given time. This tool is called the Wheel of Life. It is a powerful structure and exercise to use with the person you're mentoring. (Access the free resource at my website. Here's the link. <http://www.joancwebb.com/wheel-of-life-inventory.html>) The Wheel of Life is designed to help one measure her current satisfaction level in specific life areas (or domains) which include:

- Life work (including full or part-time employment or volunteer work as well as homemaker, stay at home parent, caring for ailing relatives, etc.)
- Finances
- Physical well-being
- Friends and relationships
- Marriage/romance
- Spiritual life
- Fun and recreation
- Family life

### **Process**

Process is the ability to live joyfully and effectively where you are right now; to be living in the moment and taking action into the future. I believe that one of the messages that threads throughout God's Word is that God sanctions and approves process. The on-going work of sanctification is the process of spiritual growth and it infiltrates every part of our lives. A Christian coach encourages the coachee to allow herself to fully experience the happiness, the wins, the positive, the joy, the hurt, the failure, misunderstanding, and loss in her life. The practice of process is about learning to live the life Jesus promised when he said, "I am come that you might have life to the full." (John 10:10) It involves allowing ourselves to feel our emotions and experience God, others and ourselves deeply. The Feeling Chart is helpful for this, as well. <http://www.joancwebb.com/feelings-chart.html>

Many of us spend the majority of our lives being concerned about our goals and the accomplishments we produce in life, even those for God's Kingdom work. In so doing, we can actually miss our very lives—and sadly, neglect creating space for getting to experience our Triune God intimately. It is easy for a coach/mentor to be caught in the "results trap." However, one of the objectives of an effective coaching partnership is to focus on the process of living and growing and not merely the reaching of one's goals.

## Skills for the Partnership

The following coaching skills can be effectively adapted for mentoring partnerships in the church or parachurch setting. These skills include:

- Listening
- Intuition/discernment
- Self-Management or Self-control
- Inquiry
- Powerful Questions and Requests
- Accountability

### Listening

Listening is the most important skill a mentor/coach can develop. Without listening there can be no authentic mentoring or coaching. There are three types of listening:

- Level One: Listening To
- Level Two: Listening For
- Level Three: Conscious Listening

#### *Level One Listening*

In the *first level* of listening, the mentor's attention and awareness is on the content of what someone is telling her. The mentor is aware of what is going on inside herself as she listens and then interprets it through her own grid. In level one, the listener hears the chatter in her own head which includes her judgments, opinions and reactions to the content of what is being shared. "Listening to" (level one) is natural and self-focused. Most non-professional listening occurs at this level.

An example of level one listening is this scenario:

- Person sharing says: "Our family went camping to Yosemite Park. It was beautiful, but my husband and I..."
- Listener: "It is lovely there, isn't it? Two years ago we drove across the country to Yosemite and we ..."

Effective mentoring/coaching cannot be accomplished at this first listening level.

#### *Level Two Listening*

The "listening for" or *second level* occurs when someone listens with the purpose of determining what the other is saying beneath the content of their words. There is a definite focus on the person talking, listening for their "agenda" and values and not one's own. During this level a conduit is formed between both partners, nothing else exists around you. Effective mentoring or coaching begins to happen here.

Instead of verbalizing your own ideas, thoughts, experiences and beliefs when a person shares her experience, feelings or thoughts, the listener stays with the story and responds appropriately with a comment such as:

- It sounds like that was meaningful for you. (And then waits for the person to say more.)
- That was a hard time for you, wasn't it?
- Tell me more about that.
- What was that like for you?

### *Level Three Listening*

Conscious or global listening (*level three*) occurs when you are listening with all your senses, your intuition or discernment. There is a soft focus on the environment around you, while you are intently listening to the person sharing. Conscious listening envelops the big picture. The person in level three listening is aware that a baby is crying in the background or that she and the person engaged in a meaningful conversation are standing in a doorway blocking others from passing. This type of listening is required of all effective leaders. Both levels two and three are beneficial for use in mentoring/coaching partnerships.

### **Intuition**

In coaching terms, intuition is defined as "our inner knowing, inner seeing, inner hearing and inner sensing mechanism."<sup>2</sup> Our early educational experiences in school usually teach us to push down our intuition gifts and to focus on the external information we read or hear when making conclusions or decisions. However, intuition is available to us and we can learn to use it effectively in mentoring situations. We need to allow ourselves to pay attention to our "gut responses" and our perceptions.

You and I, as coaches/mentors, can move beyond our fear to be willing to make mistakes, to risk not being right. We might say, "I have a hunch about this..." or "I wonder if..." or even "I could be wrong about this, yet I'm sensing that..." and then share our "hunch" with the other person and see what happens. It might be a catalyst for the person to gain a much-needed insight. Then because we're not leading with our own agenda if the other person says that we're completely off, we can say something like, "I understand that didn't exactly fit for you. Thank you for letting me know. I'd love to hear more. What do mean?"

### **Intuition and Discernment**

You may think that this "intuition" skill reminds you of the spiritual skill of "discernment." I tend to agree. Since I personally do my life coaching from a distinctly Christian focus, I believe it is a Holy Spirit guided process. I choose to silently pray before

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<sup>2</sup> The Coaches Training Institute

each coaching encounter or phone call. In fact, I actually write my prayer at the top of my coaching notes-page. Usually I pray something like: "Lord, please guide each aspect and each interaction of this coaching session. Thank you."

I believe that exercising intuition is different than making assumptions about others based merely on my own experiences, values and beliefs. Some of us who really long to help another have tried to "live" within that person's mind and heart in order to help her grow. So we may presume to know how that person feels, thinks, or what he should do. Through some difficult and hurtful experience I've come to believe that this is not a grace-filled or God-honoring way to help. I can't fix or change someone else's behavior or attitudes. Nor do I have their specific solutions. It's really a great relief to helpers, coaches, mentors and ministry leaders! Me, included! We can temper our pull to over-help by learning another coaching skill called self-management.

### **Self-Management**

Self-management skills are the cornerstone of the coaching/mentoring partnership. The mentor/coach is committed to holding the "agenda" of the one she is mentoring. While it is natural for the mentor to have opinions, feelings, and judgements in response to what another presents to her, it is the mentor's job to monitor those opinions, feelings, and judgments and put them aside in the interest of serving the coachee or mentee.

When someone listens to her coach, she wants to hear herself (her thoughts, desires, needs, perceptions and decisions) reflected in her coach's words. Frequently, mentors have shared seemingly similar experiences to the mentee. However, it is wise to remember to stay with the woman in the moment, and ask God for guidance in determining what or if it is appropriate to share from your common experiences.

In a mentoring situation, if the other woman's agenda is morally or spiritually repugnant or offensive to you, then you may need to share that information with her and reevaluate whether the mentoring partnership will work. However, if the matter is merely a matter of personal preferences, dislikes, church traditions or culture, it is not the mentor's role to share her opinions.

### **Inquiry**

The coaching skill of inquiry is a good transfer skill for mentoring. The Coaches Training Institute defines "inquiry" as the "process of presenting thought provoking questions for the purpose of introspection and reflection." Inquiry is an open question and often reflected on in the time in between the phone calls or meetings. It offers a coachee the opportunity to investigate an area of interest that can deepen her learning about herself and can forward the action toward her goal and vision. Inquiry may include thought-provoking questions such as:

- What are you tolerating?

- What beliefs would you have to give up in order to see your vision come true?
- Who would you have to be in order to succeed at this goal?
- How does fear convince you not to take the next step?

### Powerful Questions

Closely related to inquiry is a two-fold skill set called powerful questions and requests. A powerful question evokes clarity, action, discovery, insight or commitment. Questions might include:

- What do you really want?
- What can you do more of or less of in order to fulfill this goal?
- What does that cost you?

Asking "why" questions are usually not effective and the mentor will want to practice avoiding them. Lou Tice, author of *Personal Coaching for Results: How to Mentor and Inspire Other to Amazing Growth*, writes that it is "easy for 'why' questions to sound judgmental or critical. *Why did you tell your mother we'd come over tomorrow? Why are you in such a hurry? Why can't you do it like you've always done it?"*

Coaches Training Institute literature contends that *why* questions usually evoke the saboteur and a mentor can end up getting a steady stream of "why it won't work" responses. A practical guideline when asking powerful questions is to keep questions down to twelve word sentences, if possible, and use words like What...? Where...? How...? When...? Even asking "What led to that happening? is more effective than asking "Why did you do that?"

(Caution: Inquiry, powerful questions are not effective when used to ask questions intended to manipulate a response. It is most productive when both partners are genuinely curious about what the answer might be.)

### Request

One of coaching's most powerful skills is making a request of the coachee and this can be transferred into the mentoring partnership. A request is made that correlates with the woman's agenda, goals, and immediate objectives. It often naturally comes out of the coaching conversation.

The coachee always is free to choose her response:

- to say "yes" to the request,
- to say "no", or
- to make a counter offer (renegotiate) or

- even to say “I’ll get back to you on that one.” Then the two of you can decide on a day/time the coachee will contact you with their decision.

For example: the follow-up request (assignment) for the week may be: Will you call the job interviewer by 4:00 PM tomorrow? *Or* Will you schedule in a Quiet Time on your calendar for 3 days next week? A request differs from a powerful question because it requires a specific answer (yes, no, renegotiate or later) and action.

### **Accountability**

The need for accountability is one of the major reasons that the coaching industry has grown so rapidly. Many people need accountability (or follow-up) in order to achieve their goals. The Coaches Training Institute's manual reads, "Accountability provides a standard for the client to concretely see what they did and what they didn't do in comparison to what they said that they would do." There are three important questions to use for accountability in the coaching model which can also be used in mentoring partnerships in the church:

- What are you going to do?
- By when will you do this?
- How will I (coach/mentor) know that you have done this?

Accountability can be confused with blame when the person being mentored fails to achieve her goal or do the actions she said she would do. However, accountability in a life coaching partnership does not include blame, scolding, punishment, or any other judgmental response. It is important for the mentor/coach to remain neutral, supportive, and non-judgmental whether the person being mentored accomplished her desired actions/behavior or not. In fact, sometimes it is appropriate for the mentor to compliment or praise the person's failure or mistakes, since the risk it took for the woman to attempt and fail is worth the process of growth.

## **Designing Your Mentoring One-On-One Relationship in the Church**

The person being coached brings the agenda (her personal goals, dreams, life purposes, God-given desires) and the coach commits to enhancing the client's growth and learning. They both empower the relationship. The relationship is consciously designed, not stumbled into. They clarify what the coach-ee wants and what the coach will agree to do. In this partnership the coach does not dole out advice (or even Bible verses at inappropriate times). A coach listens first, asks questions to enhance the learning, encourages, cheerleads, supports, challenges and gives feedback so the coachee/mentoree can find her own answers.

If you decide to use the coaching skills mentioned in this paper to mentor women in the church, it may be helpful to have an initial set-up (design) session that will establish the groundwork for the partnership. This agreement would include:

- Commitment to confidentiality and mutual trust
- Scheduling reliable meeting times.
- Time for the one being mentored to answer selected questions based on her goals and passions:
  - What leads you to want a coach/mentor?
  - What would you need to make this an empowering relationship for you?
  - What is important to you?
  - If you had the continuing services/help of a personal life coach, what would be your five-year goal?
  - What do you believe God is asking you to do?
  - What are your frustrations in achieving this?
  - What are your spiritual/biblical goals?

It is beneficial for the mentor to ask the one being mentored what she wants from her as the mentor. Experience shows that the responses to this question may include requests for the mentor to:

- Be non-judgmental in her responses
- Offer affirmation
- Keep the client/mentee accountable
- Be willing to engage in creative brainstorming
- Offer prayer support

## **Do You Want to Be a Life Coach?**

If someone in a church or parachurch setting wants to become a Life Coach, I do strongly suggest that he or she take advantage of the many sources of Life Coaching Training that is now available before referring to herself as a “Life Coach.”

Still, based on my experience and that of many others, I believe that the same coaching structures, methods, tools and skill sets used for Life Coaching (and mentioned here in this mini-e-book) can be adapted successfully to mentoring people in the church.<sup>3</sup> Of course, practice helps you to become more comfortable with any new skill. To experience having been coached yourself is another invaluable step in successfully employing life coaching skills in mentoring others in a church or para-church partnership.

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<sup>3</sup> As I coach and hone the skills that make the coaching partnership effective, I am reminded that Jesus possessed these relationship skills. Many Bible passages challenge us to develop the types of skills used in coaching and mentoring. I believe each skill or concept can be supported by a Bible story, text, or directive. I have not included only a few here.

## Setting Women Free

Coaching does work. I have seen the one-on-one coaching partnership help set women *free from* what holds them back and *free to become* the best version of the person God designed them to be. It reminds me again of Ephesians 2:10. *For we God's masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so that we can do the things he planned for us long ago.*