

A Knowledge Sharing Interview with Wanda J. Campbell, Ph.D., PCC



Wanda Campbell has had a diverse and deeply-skilled career and we were lucky to sit down with her and ask her a few questions about coaching. Following she shares her guidance and wisdom on coaching. A great resource, especially for newer coaches.

Q: *Wanda, please tell us a little about you (current work, past work/schooling/hobbies?)*

A: I came to executive coaching as an “encore career” after spending much of my professional life working with the electric utility industry. For 14 of my 22 years working as an Industrial/Organizational Psychologist, I ran a nationwide employment testing program for the electric utility industry. This provided me with valuable first-hand leadership experience, which ranged from executing a business turnaround, upgrading staff competence, to creating a culture of engagement.

One of the things I am particularly proud of was being able to keep my professional staff employed during the worst recession since the Great Depression. I did this by investing in the development of new products and services. I want to add that my plan went completely against the traditional approach of laying people off, and there was certainly some opposition. As it turned out, having new products and services ready when people were able to buy them again helped my business recover far more quickly than it would have otherwise. So, sometimes going against traditional approaches is a risk worth taking. Once my business had returned to profitability and stabilized, I resigned to begin my training as an executive coach at Georgetown University.

As an executive coach, my target audience is “brilliant, highly analytical leaders who want to enhance their emotional intelligence.” I have coached clients ranging from general manager to president and CEO in Fortune 500 corporations (domestic and international), scientists, university faculty and leaders in non-profits and associations.

It is important to balance our lives, so during much of the year, I like to spend my free time working in my gardens. If it is cold, dark, raining (you got my drift), I like to read and watch movies. I love learning, and most of my reading and much of my viewing time involves opportunities to learn. I have been known on occasion, however, to read and watch programs with no redeeming value.

Q: **Why did you become a coach?**

A: I have been interested in leadership since my graduate school days working with Leadership Assessment Centers, initially run by the Air Force, and subsequently operated by Verizon (then Bell Atlantic). This work made it clear that effective leaders need to be above average on both traditional measures of Intelligence (IQ) and Emotional Intelligence (EQ).

Since that time, I guess I've seen too many "nice personalities masquerading as competence" in the management/leadership ranks. Because I can't make these folks any smarter, I decided to help the bright, motivated folks enhance their emotional intelligence so they can compete more successfully for leadership roles.

Q: What do you recommend to new coaches just starting out?

A: Two things:

1. **Experience.** Get as much experience coaching as quickly as you can and spend some time at the end of each coaching session thinking about what you might do differently the next time. When I went through my coach training, I worked with five pro bono clients, rather than just the required three. I've always found that there are plenty of ways to do things differently!
2. **Education.** Participate in any training that you can afford on a variety of topics so that you can develop a wide range of tools and approaches at your disposal. Supplement that training by reading anything you can get your hands on related to coaching and/or your specialty area (in my case, leadership).

Q: What guidance do you have for becoming ICF certified?

A: Doing Good and Getting the Paid ACC Hours Fast. I recommend the following for coaches working toward their ACC hours:

- Look up charitable organizations that have meaning for you and have people who would benefit from your type of coaching. For executive coaching, look up the charity online, find out who the Executive Director (ED) is and write him/her.
- Send the Executive Director an email that includes your resume and explains your goals and what you are trying to accomplish. Ask for a short telephone conversation.
 - During the call, mention that getting the hours is more important to you than making a lot of money. I took this approach and offered to do the coaching for \$5 an hour, an offer that was readily accepted by almost everyone.
- Another option is to barter coach with other coaches. For me, this coaching often seemed like a different experience than coaching my target audience. By the way, barter coaching is also possible with regular clients.

Q: Working toward your PCC is quite an accomplishment, what would you tell others who are working toward their accreditations?

A: Here are some recommendations that I believe really makes a difference.

1. Keep current on the Certification and Renewal Requirements.
2. Learn what the ICF Global requirements include and attend their free training offerings.

3. Monitor the changes. ICF Global indicated that they would notify members of any changes in February of each year.

Tracking Coaching Hours – this is an important step toward your coaching and one that shouldn't be taken lightly.

1. I have a folder for each client. Client folders are organized by Organization. I have a piece of notebook paper clipped onto the left side that has the client's contact information at the top and each coaching session listed by date and amount of time in the lines below.
2. Whenever I finish coaching for a client, I add the information to my electronic Coaching Log, which is kept and duplicated on thumb drives specific for this purpose and print a copy of the updated log.

Q: What advice would you give those just starting out on their coaching journey?

A: Coach as many different types of people as you can initially. Pay attention to what type of clients you most enjoy and what kinds of issues you enjoy. Likewise, you should also be paying attention to what types of clients and issues you do not enjoy.

There are benefits to specializing. For example, you don't have to be an expert on everything. I think it is also easier to make a name for yourself.

If you want some variety, you can always volunteer or have a special rate for the charity of your choice. My favorite charity pays 10 percent of my corporate rate.

And finally, have fun, learn and know that you are making a difference for someone.