

Expanding Family Enrichment Resources: FFL's Family Life Coaching Course & Certification Process

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Introduction

In January 2013, Elder Robert D. Hales counseled me in a leadership training meeting to focus my work at the Foundation for Family Life on the Proclamation on the Family. I believe strongly in the Proclamation's call to action - pleading with us as responsible citizens to "promote those measures designed to maintain and strengthen the family as the fundamental unit of society." This call stirs our efforts at the Foundation to strengthen families in this part of the Lord's vineyard in whatever way possible. We believe one of the most important and effective ways to do this is through coaching!

The Family Life Center, an entity of the Foundation, was developed, in large part, to serve as a place that provides Family Life Coaching to the community. It has been one of our great desires to provide a training program and implement coaching at the Center. Of course there is a "time" for counseling and a "time" for family life education but we are convinced that as people learn about the impact, power, and self-direction afforded by coaching that "the time for family life coaching" will happen sooner in the course of family evolution and serve as an impetus for change that strengthens families prior to dissolution or difficult counseling efforts.

We invited Dr. Scott Gardner to give our very first Keynote a few years back and to teach us about Family Life Coaching. He had recently completed a deep dive into coaching through his sabbatical that led to some popular classes at BYU. He shared important distinctions about family life coaching based on Allen & Huff's (2014) work.

He taught that Family Life Coaching "guides clients into increased competence, commitment, and confidence regarding a specified goal," that counseling is designed to "ameliorate dysfunction, whereas coaching is designed to stimulate development" (p. 571), and that Coaching differs from Family Life Education (FLE) which focuses on healthy family functioning, providing a preventative approach, and is typically offered through educational materials and presentations. Allen and Huff (2014) said coaching places less emphasis on education and more on awareness, action steps, and accountability" (p. 572).

These are important distinctions! To summarize, coaching leads clients to competence, commitment, and confidence in their desired goals. Rather than resolving dysfunction (counseling) coaching inspires and promotes personal and family growth and development in client-driven areas of interest and need. And, while knowledge and

prevention efforts focused on education are important, coaching promotes awareness, action steps, and accountability.

We believe training a host of people to become Family Life Coaches can significantly impact our community as it helps (a) coaches themselves, (b) families of coaches, and (c) those they serve. Coaches may impact any or all 3 groups and thus warrants a wide-spread effort to train Family Life Coaches.

The Family Life Center has developed a Family Life Coaching Training and Certification process we are unveiling today. We are excited to share key elements of our training and to introduce those involved in the process. While it is important to distinguish between coaching and Family Life Education, we believe coaches need basic FLE knowledge in their coaching efforts. As such, a unique component of our training involves introducing various FLE programs, materials, and perspectives that will be an invaluable resource. These FLE “moments” (at the beginning of each session) simply introduce a topic with resources, links, and leads that participants will add to their coaching resource bank! This asset will increase confidence and competence in understanding basic family life concepts (especially for those without a Marriage and Family Studies background).

Of course, the main components of our training and certification involves teaching, modeling, and practicing various coaching skills that bring out the best in clients and spur them into action. Participants will learn when and how to incorporate various coaching models and methods. Gaining confidence and competence in these skill sets will be the defining outcome of our Family Life Coaches. After completing our training sessions, participants demonstrate their “proof of mastery” of given skill sets and assist their coaching peers in doing the same.

Parker Syphus and Alixandra Duncan will now share the details of our training. Our workshop will provide a live demonstration, answer questions, and take sign-ups. We hope you will join us in our little effort to strengthen family as the fundamental unit of society by becoming a certified Family Life Coach through the Family Life Center!