On Becoming A Coach:
My Experiences at the
Hudson Institute Of Santa Barbara

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Periodic Review of Coach Training Programs

My Experience at the Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara

Frumi Rachel Barr, Certified Hudson Institute Coach

Frederic Hudson, who earlier created the Fielding Institute, founded the Hudson Institute in 1986 with his wife Pamela McLean. HI, sometimes referred to as the “Harvard” of coaching schools, is a “training ground where leaders and professionals can learn how to sustain resilience, future vision, and renewal within themselves and the environments in which they live and work.”

I am writing as a graduate of the Hudson Institute of Santa Barbara. In order to give you the “context for listening,” I will give you a little of my background and my reasons for choosing HI over all the many options available for a developing coach. I am a veteran entrepreneur, having started and grown a variety of businesses, ranging from manufacturing to selling via infomercial. During a hiatus between my startup ventures, I was invited into two different service companies as a partner – the first was an architectural firm and the second, just prior to my coaching adventure, was a customer relationship management firm. My experience oscillated back and forth from CEO responsibilities to CFO positions.

One morning, the realization that I wanted more came to a crescendo. I knew how to be a CFO and needed some new purpose and meaning for the ‘rest of my life.’ I was introduced to Tony McKeon, a wonderful career coach, to discuss various options including coaching as a potential career and he recommended the Hudson Life Launch program to me.

Having just finished an MBA program, I was very fussy about which school I would attend. I scoured the ICF site looking at all the options. My reason for choosing HI was twofold. Firstly, I liked the adult development approach to coaching rather than the toolbox-of-processes I saw elsewhere. My second reason for choosing HI was because it felt more like a Masters Degree program. I liked the idea of an individualized Professional Development Plan, which catered to what I wanted to learn. As a person who embraces learning as a way of being, I felt the structure of the curriculum and the ability to design my own learning fit with my own values.

History and Philosophy
Of the Hudson Institute

The fundamental premise behind the learning program is that as Western societies have evolved in the twentieth century from stable-state, linear, control-focused organizational forms toward change-state, cyclical, future-focused forms, both individuals and organizations required new competencies for managing long-term effectiveness in a world of ceaseless surprises and possibilities.

Unpredictable change penetrates directly into our lives, and we need to understand how to live and work creatively in a world of flow, which has more options but less predictability and overall safety than the linear world we once knew. Successful individuals in the twenty-first century will require entrepreneurial
capabilities to manage themselves and their many connections effectively from the inside out, anchored in purpose, passion, vision and staying power. HI trains leaders, professionals and coaches to facilitate these qualities in their clients. HI trains individuals to promote these qualities within themselves; and HI works with companies to instill these qualities within the culture and work teams of the organization.

**Description of the Program**

The Hudson Institute’s Coaching Certification program is an eight-month learning program. It offers an opportunity to develop coaching skills within each individual’s particular professional domain. It is a lively learning community which combines:

- Outstanding HI trainers for CIT Leadership (Coach Intensive Training)
- Program Directors for continuous support
- Three 4-day residential training sessions in Santa Barbara
- A challenging training curriculum
- Small learning groups
- An operational manual
- Interactive web-based learning exchanges
- Email interactions
- Individualized distance learning
- Bridgeline telephone meetings and learning sessions
- Supervised coaching

The HI coaching program begins with LifeLaunch - a 4-day intensive and interactive session. In my LifeLaunch program the group of 30 or so people was divided into 4 “small groups.” My small group consisted of very diverse high caliber individuals, ranging from a senior HR consultant to a psychotherapist. Some of the individuals represented companies; others were private individuals looking for their next step up.

The purpose of the LifeLaunch program is to emerge as the author of the next chapter of one’s life. The premise is that we go through several chapters as we progress through the decades of our lives. In the LifeLaunch program, an exploration of the six “maps” of adult life, we learned to design and plan, proactively for several new LifeLaunch experiences through the future decades.

**Six Maps Form the Key Distinction of the HI Program**

**Map 1** is the *Cycle of Change*. The premise is that we are usually in a life chapter or a life transition. Each chapter has two phases, the first is the “Go For it Phase” - when you are all fired up feeling positive with specific goals and a committed attitude, full of dreams and purpose. This is the phase which most people enjoy the most. Sooner or later even if you succeed at reaching your goals, you can become sort of flat, de-energized and reactive. Life has no flavor, no taste – we are in phase 2, the Doldrums. Unfortunately, people tend to remain in Phase 2 longer than anywhere else on the cycle, because they feel both victimized and immobilized by external forces. At this point, there are two choices: improve the script if possible and renew your current chapter of life, or end this chapter and begin a transition toward a brand new chapter. This second choice is called a mini-transition.

Often people either choose or are pushed into a life transition. Cocooning, phase 3, is a detachment from the chapter that wasn’t working and a chance to take stock of life. It is a time to get in touch with one’s core values and feelings. It is a phase of regeneration, and it usually leads to a profound inner renewal of energy, purpose and hope.

Phase 4, “Getting ready,” is the final phase of the Cycle of renewal and is a time for experimenting, training and networking, which result in beginning your next chapter.

Studying Map 1 helps you stay in charge of your life, whether you are in an up phase or a down phase. It helps discover how to tap the cycle of change for designing the rest of your life, and to use change as a major resource for future life design.

Maps 2 - 6 create an understanding of core values, prioritizing roles, getting the most out of each decade of life, defining a learning agenda and finding purpose, vision and a plan for shaping the next chapter of one’s life.

The six maps form the core of the program. The program following LifeLaunch includes three Coach Intensive Training (or CIT) sessions that begin early on a Thursday morning and continue to Saturday evening. All three days are very full of learnings, exercises, fishbowl coaching sessions and lots of practice working through issues. There are both mandatory books to read as well as suggested reading in preparation of these sessions, which take place in Santa Barbra over a three and half day period.

The HI coaching training program is designed to instill a mastery of personal and professional coaching as well as to apply coaching to specific settings and populations of particular interest to trainees. This certification program is based on self-directed learning that combines elements of intensive group learning with distance learning. At the outset of the CITs, each student contracts with HI to produce a portfolio of learnings that includes an individualized personal Development Plan. This plan is the backbone to achieve the learning
and fulfill your expectations of the program. Each individual will get out of the program what he or she contributes to it. Given the business experience and education that I brought with me, I wanted to concentrate on learning coaching skills that would maximize my value to clients. The reason I liken it to a Masters program is due to the intensity and depth of the learnings. I believe I read in excess of 50 books as part of my own individualized program.

**Strengths and Expectations That Are Exceeded**

Part of the experience is being part of a small group, who stay engaged and supportive of each other between the CIT weekends. As it happened, our CIT 2 was planned for Sept. 14th. Some of my colleagues were on route from the east coast and had to turn back due to the events of 9/11. Our CIT was delayed until January and staying engaged was a challenge, which we overcame and learned from immensely.

My experience as a “Plover,” (my small group’s name) was part of living the lessons. We were stronger and more united than ever from CIT 2 right through to the end of the program. I learned how to “lead from behind,” as Frederic Hudson is so fond of saying.

I really got far more than expected both from the learning itself and from the strength of the community. The HI community is a powerful learning community for like-minded people. My cohorts were all of high caliber in education and in life experience. The teaching staff was - without exception - knowledgeable and committed to their students. What more could you ask for?

**What HI Could Do Even Better**

Many of the people in the HI program had never started a practice of their own, let alone a business. While the program concentrated on adult development and coaching skills, what was lacking was a preparation for practice building. Even for me, the veteran entrepreneur, starting a practice was difficult as well. It took me months to settle into doing what I do best, coaching entrepreneurs in start-up or high-growth phases. I initially thought I only wanted to work with people in transition, and only realized months later that when my phone was ringing… it wasn’t from people in transition!

**The HI Certification Process**

Requirement for completion of the Hudson certification program include knowledge content of coaching – demonstrate basic knowledge of definitions of coaching, theoretical constructs and antecedents of coaching as ways to understand the field of adult development and growth. Graduates must be competent in demonstrating an understanding and application of the Hudson Model of Adult Development and renewal.

Requirements further include the completion of the learning outcomes contracted in the Personal Development Plan as well as a presentation to cohorts and the completion of a Portfolio of Learnings.

The final part of the certification is an exam covering the materials learned in the three Coach Intensive Training sessions (CITs).

**Program Cost**

Current pricing for the initial LifeLaunch weekend is $1795 per person. The estimated combined cost of the required courses for HI Certification is $8600. US, exclusive of room, board, transportation, books and required professional coaching services.

**Resources**


Coaching Operational Manual of the Coaching certification program

**Contact Information**

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