

Baby boomers use life experiences to coach others

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After more than 20 years in sales, management and training, including 12 with AT&T, Siobhán Murphy of Babylon was looking for a new direction for her career.

"I knew that my life's calling was something different, and I wound up going to a therapist because I was unhappy about what I was doing at work," said Murphy, 48. "I wanted to work with businesspeople. I wanted to talk to them about everything -- personal development, spirituality, business savvy."

Then she read a Newsday article about the growing profession of job coaching. "As soon as I read it, I knew that was what I was looking for, and I signed up for the training and met people who felt like my tribe," she said.

Murphy took online courses from Coach U ([Click here](#) to connect to coachinc.com.) and is now a certified leadership and career coach. "It was really a place where I could bring all my talents and training and gifts together."

Nancy Massar, 62, of Oyster Bay had worked for IBM for 18 years, mostly in business consulting and instruction.

After taking early retirement in 2002, "I decided to explore the next chapter of my life, and coaching kept coming across the screen in many different ways," she recalled. "My belief in people and my passion for both personal and professional development led me to it." Massar graduated from the Institute for Professional Excellence in Coaching ([Click here](#) for ipeccoaching.com.) and specializes in leadership development and life coaching.

For some baby boomers, coaching has become a second career, offering them the chance to use their life and business experience to help others, and to earn a good living.



The profession appeals to boomers because it speaks to that generation's core values -- giving back, achieving personal growth and being driven by relationships with others, said D. Luke Iorio, 32, president of the Shrewsbury, N.J.-based IPEC's Coach Training School.

"When you put those three together, that's what coaching is about. Coaching is about helping others to achieve, sometimes to overcome a particular situation they're in now; others, they're doing very well but want to go from good to great. . . . Coaching thrives off of working in partnership so the coach and client partner to achieve success."

Experiences help

Murphy's experience proved to be valuable when she worked with Adam Cole, 39, vice president of YES Inc. of [Hauppauge](#), and his sales team to help them expand their furniture and equipment business.

"When you're speaking to somebody in sales, if you don't use the right terminology, they think you're just there to throw some fluff at them," Cole said. "In Siobhán's case, she did know how to sell, she did know how to interact with people effectively."

Bob [Ford](#), 42, a national account executive with Employment Background Investigations in Owings Mills, Md. who was coached by Massar, said her experience was valuable in helping him deal with job and personal issues. "It lends itself to a certain level of credibility," he said. "She's worked with large organizations and has coached large sales groups before."

Coaching can also be lucrative. According to the 2009 Sherpa Executive Coaching Survey, coaches earned an average of \$250 an hour and \$64,000 annually with three years' experience, \$260 an hour and \$88,300 annually with three to five years of experience, and \$335 an hour and \$134,800 annually with five or more years' experience.

Diane Brennan, past president and board member of the International Coach Federation ([Click here](#) to connect to coachfederation.org), which has more than 13,800 members worldwide and provides certification for coaches, said baby boomers have fueled the growth in coaching.

According to a 2007 ICF global coaching study, about 39 percent of respondents were boomers, with another 24 percent older than that age group. The study surveyed 5,415 respondents from 73 countries.

"Coaching tends to be, especially in [North America](#) and the U.S. in particular, a field that many people who already have had careers are attracted to," said Brennan, 53 a former health administrator who has coached for a decade. "The biggest response that I've heard from people in the years I've been involved in coaching is when we learn about this field called coaching most of us say, 'Ah, this is what I've enjoyed about what I've done in my previous work.' "

That was the case for Mitchell York, 52, of [Sayville](#). Following the Sept. 11, 2001 World Trade Center attacks, he was laid off from his job as senior vice president for Ziff Davis Media, where he was publisher of the now defunct Interactive Week.

"I decided not to go back into corporate life. It had been 20 some-odd years, and I decided to do some other more entrepreneurial things.

Helping people

"I wasn't really interested in consulting. I was interested in helping people because it was something I had already done as the head of organizations and business units. The things that always appealed to me most were helping people figure out their own development issues, sales issues, and helping people figure out their own best way to do things as opposed to my telling them how to do things."

York graduated from Coach U and was certified by ICF. In addition to his own executive and career coaching practice, he works as a coach for ClientWise Llc, a training and coaching company in the financial services industry.

Michael Coritsidis, 54, of [Lido Beach](#), whose background is in retail and real estate, is a career and job-readiness coach for the nonprofit group FECS and runs workshops such as a recent employment program at [Freeport](#) Library.

Though not a certified coach, he developed a seven-step coaching program drawing on his on-the-job experience. "When I do consulting and seminars, it's more like a boot camp-type of thing," he said. "I love the idea of empowering people to go out there and accomplish what they have in mind, especially job readiness."

Linda Benison, 51, of [Oceanside](#), who was laid off from her job with a not-for-profit a year ago and attended the [Freeport](#) workshop, said she got some good advice and motivation from Coritsidis. "You need someone to pick you up when you are looking for a job," she said.

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