

Need professional advice? Seek out a coach

Would you like a best friend who is trained to give you good advice?

Welcome to the world of coaching where, for a fee, you can have someone be a sounding board and help you reach good decisions in your personal life and career.



**ED
GORIN**

BUSINESS BUZZ

The program was entitled, "How to Make More Money, Work Less Hours, Be More Profitable and Enjoy Every

Second of It!" (How can you pass up a program like that?)

The setting was the monthly Impact Council breakfast of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce at Toscana Restaurant, and the speakers were three coaches: Pat Morgan of Smooth Sailing, Dr. Steve Liebowitz of Wisdom at Work and Bryan Durocher of Durocher Enterprises.

According to Morgan, there are 40,000 coaches practicing today in 70 countries, and it has become a billion-dollar-a-year industry.

Coaching seems kind of hard to define — not a therapist, not a consultant. They help you sort out your life, focus on your priorities and achieve your goals in your personal life and your career.

Typically, you sign up for one-on-one sessions that may be conducted in person or by phone several times a month, with the ability to call for help when there is a pressing matter before you. Some coaches also offer group sessions, particularly to a business audience.

Who uses a coach? Well, for example, Liebowitz said, he was retained by a dentist who wanted to double the size of his practice.

"We explored if he really wants to do that, and what it would mean to his life. I asked if he likes his life now, and how it would change if he was twice as busy, and if he would still be happy. He needed to confront those issues before making the decision to expand."

Morgan offered a list of reasons people might want a coach, among them, "Many



NEW SEASON UNDERWAY: Lettie Bien, president of the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce, welcomes University of Miami football coach Larry Coker to the group's annual Kickoff Breakfast.



EXPERT ADVICE: Business coaches, from left, Steve Liebowitz, Pat Morgan and Bryan Durocher spoke to the Coral Gables Chamber of Commerce's Impact Council breakfast.

leaders and business people say they don't have any place where they can test, explore, discuss and receive push-back on issues critical to their growth and success. The coaching conversation provides a confidential, safe, open environment."

One of the techniques coaches teach, Liebowitz said, is to be "attractive" rather than "seductive."

"Most people operate in a seductive mode," he said. "We see what others want, and then we try to be that in order to please them. But if you can learn to be yourself, be happy with that, then you function at your best and people feel your

joy and are attracted to you. Let all the masks drop and be the best 'you' that you can be."

Durocher, who does only business coaching, has a national client base and does most of his work by phone and on the Internet. He specializes in teaching effective communication and listening in the workplace.

Not only is phone contact cost-effective for the client, he said, but it also provides a shield of anonymity that allows clients to be more open in what they reveal about themselves. He says he's never met most of his clients in person.

"I'm the only one they can talk to who doesn't want any-

thing from them," he said.

Morgan, although she does phone coaching, says she likes face-to-face.

"This can be a very isolating profession, only meeting clients on the phone, and I really like people," she said.

About 75 percent of people who retain coaches are women, Morgan said, and while she was outnumbered by men at this program, she said about 70 percent of coaches are women.

While there are great male coaches around, Morgan said, "women have a big advantage in coaching."

As coaches, she said, women tend to be more nurturing than men. As clients, women usually find it easier to ask for help. (Be honest, men. We don't even ask for directions when we're lost.)

When a man does seek help, he often finds it easier to confide in a woman than another man.

"But when a woman seeks help, she is far more comfortable revealing intimate details of her life or concerns about her work environment to another woman," Morgan said. So it's a woman's world, all around.

Everybody's prices are different, of course, but you should expect a free consultation. (So, men, you can try this