

To whom it may concern
Reference for Life and Executive Coach
November 2017-11-13

It's taken me quite some time to get to the point of being able to write this reference. Weeks, months, in fact. Not because it is so incredibly difficult to write about my life savior as a 'Life and Executive coach', but more so, because my 'journey', no matter how well I have moved on, is still so painful to recall and write about. I know this, having spent the last eighteen months or so, trying to put pen to paper, capturing for 'cathartic' purposes, my journey and 'transformation' therein. Ninety thousand words later, and I'm still writing about the most traumatic period of my life January to August 2016. I'll try to refrain from sounding too dramatic, as I realise now that being divorced, puts me rather into society's 'majority' rather than in its minority category. It seems to be the sad norm nowadays to be a party (I wanted to write 'victim' – but I know too well, from my coach that this word will not serve me) in the breakdown of a marriage. When it happens, it can feel as if your whole world has literally fallen apart in front of your very eyes – the world you once knew flashes by and are no longer there. Your heart cracks - there's such a thing as a broken heart, it's for real, and your soul is destroyed, there seems no point in living anymore, you are simply 'existing', you are not wholeheartedly living. You are lost, scared, lonely and incredibly vulnerable. You were sure that this was never ever going to happen to you, and here you are, living the nightmare. This is how my coach found me back in the March of 2016.

When I started thinking about writing this reference, I decided that first and foremost it would be helpful to jot down some key words as to how I was feeling when I embarked upon the coaching. This is what I captured:

State of disbelief, despair, lost, broken, weak, suicidal, hopeless, sad, disappointed, unloved, fragile, betrayed and extremely vulnerable.

Just for the record, and before reading much further, the ‘shortened’ version of my reference as a Life and Executive coach would be this:

My coach as I frequently told her, must surely be the ‘cousin of Buddha’... I do not believe I will find another human being who possesses so many beautiful and selfless qualities as she possesses. She was made for this role and this role for her. She pours her heart and soul into every word, smile, text, email, Skype, conversation exchanged. I love her dearly, and always will. She was and still is, a ‘rock’ for me. She brought me back to life...she saved my life! She really did save my life, and in just a few months of working together.

I remember the time when I heard from her. She had been alerted as to my situation and subsequently reached out to me, calling me via face-time. Having talked briefly, sharing the key facts, but not being pushed to go into detail, she asked me to sit comfortably on the sofa and to close my eyes. She wanted me to breathe. Nothing more, nothing less, just breathe. She proceeded to walk me through a series of mind and body exercises that would help to bring about a state of calmness. To switch off from reality and to escape into a dream world for a while. This first session together took around forty five minutes during which time, and as I recall quite vividly, I didn’t move a muscle. I listened and responded. It was the first time in three months that I my mind was still and reasonably clear, and my chest rose up and down, with rhythmic breath. It dawned on me that I must have been holding my breath for weeks, months, at that point, no doubt a reflection of the status that I was feeling: dead. And that’s how we got started, on the ‘coaching’ journey together. An appointment was

scheduled, whereby we agreed to meet the following week for approximately one and a half hours.

A calm, fragrant, warm environment, awaited me, along with comforting herbal tea. She greeted me with open arms and a huge smile. I remember falling into her arms, and her holding me ever so tightly, ever so deliberately. It was exactly what I ‘wanted’ and ‘needed’ at that point – thereafter, and many coaching sessions later, I learned to recognise and accept, the subtle differences between ‘needing’ and ‘wanting’.

When thinking and preparing to write, about the ‘coaching’, the following words and phrases are most apparent. These are the ones that have really ‘stuck’ with me and are part of my then and now daily existence. They mean so much to me, so much so that I strive, whenever possible and relevant, to share them with others too. Such simple but meaningful words:

Transformation, Kindness to Self, Kindness to Others, Positive Mindset, Attitude, Acceptance, No judgement, No expectations, Lightness, Heightened Senses, Observant, Awareness, Peace, Mooji, Daily Quotes, Mantras, Just being, Dance with life, Be the Queen and wear the Crown, Dignity, Self-worth, Confidence, Faith, Hope, Spiritual Journey, prayer, gratitude, thankfulness and Empowerment.

And when the above were assembled and compiled together, the overriding message was one of ‘You will get your Life back’... it will take time, commitment, patience and daily practice. You have to do the ‘homework’... That was the message, and that’s what she encouraged and strived for, from day one.

The focus of our first meeting was ‘me’ not ‘us’...which threw me slightly off guard to begin with. I had many preconceptions as to how the coaching would work, the nature of the dialogue, the format etc., most of which were misguided. The coaching wasn’t about ‘saving my marriage’ it was about ‘saving me’. She slowly but surely, and ever so gently, encouraged me to share my deepest thoughts and feelings as to what I had experienced and felt up until that point and how I was feeling in the ‘present’ moment. I would come to learn and love, all that is to be enjoyed and embraced, when staying in the ‘present’. With the confidence and security that my coach provided, I was able to open up, re-live and share with her, my last three traumatic months. She listened patiently, giving me space and time to find the words, to have the courage to speak out aloud about what I had been through and how I was feeling. When I reached a low point, and felt I couldn’t go on, she would share her energy with me, providing fuel and encouragement to continue with my story. The first few sessions were painful, a reality check, an admission that things had fallen horridly apart, and above all the sessions provided me with a platform whereby I could be honest with myself, acknowledging the facts of the matter.

Having shared my story, in its entirety, and my coach having listened to the same, it was at this point that she indicated - given the space I was in, and based on her experience to date - a further ten or twelve sessions would probably be necessary and would serve me greatly. I was committed, finding myself always longing and eager to attend the next session.

I would leave her office after our sessions, feeling as if a weight had been lifted off my shoulders. The load had been shared, the burden no longer seemed just mine, even though of course, I knew it was all mine, part of my journey, this new journey that I was now on. There

was a peacefulness that she brought out in me, that I hadn't witnessed in a while. I was breathing, almost smiling, and for the first time in ages, I looked forward to going home and getting on with life.

I was given some homework, it seemed quite easy and straightforward at first glance – it was simply to 'be', to stay 'present' and to detach myself from the past three months – to let go. It sounded easy, but of course it wasn't and she knew I would struggle. She therefore touched base with me daily, sending me notes of kindness, mantras and quotes that would inspire me and help me to get through the day. She would call me, checking in to see how I was coping and would ask me what 'space' I was in. She knew I was fragile and she took on the role, which I can only describe as that of 'guardian angel'. Her attentiveness during these early coaching days was invaluable, providing direction, guidance and encouragement to consciously and continuously practice and work on myself.

It was during these early sessions, that she started to work intensively on shifting my mind-set and general attitude towards others. She encouraged me to be free of expectations, not to judge and to be accepting of all things – concepts that were quite alien to me. I work in the corporate sector, which is riddled with high expectations, where only the best was acceptable and where one's performance was constantly being judged. The consistency and patience, displayed by her throughout this time was admirable, to put it mildly. She poured her heart and soul into trying to get this message/concept across. She was tireless, relentless and determined to make it stick. And she did, she succeeded, as the message did indeed sink in and remains with me even today, as a daily practice and a way of being. I cherish this learning and strive to share it with those who touch my life, encouraging them to have a similar mind-set and attitude towards life.

Another joyful discovery, shared by my coach, was the art of practicing 'kindness to self' as well as 'kindness to others'. By nature I like to think of myself as a 'giver' and continue to operate in that space, however she taught me that it was okay to be kind to oneself too, to put oneself in the picture and to do things that were at times self-serving and for one's own benefit. As a wife, mother and employee, this was not the norm for me, and at first I struggled to get my head around this. Putting 'me' in the centre seemed selfish, and I wasn't good at being selfish, not having been raised that way. Once again, she was encouraging, convincing, sensitive and mindful in her approach in this respect. Care and love, were dominant throughout and supported every word that she exchanged. It soon became second nature, and is today, for me too not only think about others but to place value and importance on my own existence too.

In essence, my coach was helping me to become a 'queen', standing, sitting tall, wearing a beautiful crown, confidently and with dignity.

My dignity and self-worth were lacking, they were pretty non-existent when we started the coaching, but just a few weeks in, and that all started to change. To begin with, I failed miserably at playing the role of a queen; it just felt arrogant and too egotistic. Yet again, I was removed from my comfort zone. Simple exercises such as sitting with a straight back, imagining a crown balanced on top of my head, shoulders back and relaxed, were all conveyed to me and I was subsequently encouraged to practice, practice, practice. This was my journey, and only what I put into it, I would get out of it. So I did just that, I drove home and sat upright in the car, and then in the chair as I relaxed in the house. I walked tall, and with grace. I observed my posture as I waltzed throughout the office, ensuring it was befitting of a queen. It was a whole new way of being. I was starting to come out of 'hiding', starting to transform....ever so slowly but surely, I was TRANSFORMING.

And then came the gratitude and thankfulness. I cannot even begin to find the words, other than grateful and thankful, that best describe the work and the outcome of such work, that my coach did with me in this regard. We all need a coach like her in our lives to remind us as to how fortunate, lucky and blessed we are. Like many others, I too had probably taken too much for granted and was now paying the price. Giving thanks and praise for all the blessings I had, became a significant part of my practice and played a major role in my overall transformation. She encouraged and reminded me, to think of others when I was battling with my demons, facing my many challenges and jumping over the various obstacles, that were lined up in front of me. Thus far, no one had died. I was still reasonably healthy both physically and mentally, I had a beautiful son, financial stability, friends and family who loved and supported me and I had a future. All truths, all facts, my assertions. I truly did have much to be thankful for, although I would have never known this, without the help, support and repetitive messages and teachings that she shared with me. As part of my daily prayer, I now give thanks for all that I have, and constantly remind myself, during the course of each day, that no matter how challenging things may appear, there's always someone who has more to cope with. Truly blessed, are words I now use daily, towards myself and with those who share my space. I think about my coach's words frequently, as and when I think/speak this way.

There's an abundant supply of 'goodness' that I could share in this reference. There's so many stories that I could tell, so many teachings and findings that were had, so many insights that could be explored, but the most important message here is that she did 'give me my life back', which is what she promised and set out to do, at the start of the coaching, some twelve weeks prior! With her help, I reached a point

of ‘acceptance’ midway through my journey, which in itself was a huge turning point. I smiled and laughed again. There was a newfound lightness in my being and I did simply ‘be’. No longer dwelling and clinging to the past, but rather serving myself by staying very present – not running into the future either – a previous trait that I had possessed. I was strong again, confident and able to make decisions without questioning the same. I moved my life along, leaving my home and the city where I had spent the last eighteen years, in search for new beginnings. I found them, and embraced them with open arms. I successfully made the transformation, within just nine months from the day when my husband told me ‘he was no longer in the marriage and had been seeing another woman’. Nine months, and twelve, maybe fourteen coaching sessions later, tens of texts, many many phone calls, emails, Skype messages later and there I was boarding a plane, ready to embark on a brand new journey.

So who is this amazing Life and Executive coach!

Using my previously tried and tested method of ‘jotting down key words’ to describe how I see my coach, I would say she is:

Selfless, Persevering, Consistent, Dependable, Reliable, Tireless, Generous, Mindful, Thoughtful, Inspiring, Motivating, Encouraging, Patient, Loving and Giving. In summary, my dear dear coach was and will continue to be a Saviour.