



Intrinsic Coach™

Interview

Inside This Intrinsic

Coach™ Interview:

Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D.,

Board Certified Diplomat in

Clinical Social Work



Susan Walsh, Ph.D., a Board Certified Diplomat in Clinical Social Work, has a full-time private practice in Chicago. In this interview, she talks about how she integrates Intrinsic Coaching™ into her professional practice as a psychotherapist and how Intrinsic Coaching™ informs her Health Coaching services. Dr. Walsh describes the clinical usefulness of the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology and explains how Intrinsic Coaching™ is in harmony with social work's professional values. Dr. Walsh's web site is www.healthcoaching.ws.

Jodi Sivon, M.Ed.

Jodi Sivon, M.Ed. in Community Health, BA in Exercise Physiology, CHES, and certified by ACSM, ACE, and through the Cooper Institute, is an Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor for Totally Coached, Inc. and Manager of Health & Wellness for Cuyahoga Community College's Metropolitan Campus. As Intrinsic Coach™ Mentor, Ms. Sivon trains new coaches in the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. As Manager of H&W for Cuyahoga Community College, Ms. Sivon manages the campus H&W Center, designs, promotes, and implements all campus wellness programs, and serves as a resource and coach for healthy lifestyle choices for over 450 full-time employees and 6,000 students.



Q Susan, tell me a little bit about your professional background as a psychotherapist.

A I am a licensed clinical social worker with a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago's School of Social Service Administration. I've been in full time private practice since 1984. Prior to that, I worked and taught at Northwestern Memorial Hospital and Northwestern University's Feinberg School of Medicine and also taught at the University of Chicago. In addition, I have been a consultant to the Rush Center for Women's Medicine in Chicago. That's a capsule summary of my professional background.

Q As a clinical social worker, how did you become interested in the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology?

A Early in 2003 I was planning to add health coaching as a new service in my practice. At that time, I learned that WELCOA had published an issue of their journal that focused on coaching. It featured Christina Marshall and Totally Coached. I read that issue and felt that the viewpoint Christina Marshall was expressing was in harmony with my own thinking about people. I noticed a real consistency between the value system of Intrinsic Coaching™ and the core values of social work. Because of that, I contacted Totally Coached, Inc. and, thereafter, participated in the Intrinsic Coach™ Development Series.

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Q Could you share your thoughts about how Intrinsic Coaching™ relates to the values of social work?

A Social workers have a commitment and responsibility to our clients to promote their well being. And, social workers respect and support the rights of clients to self-determination. In our work, we assist clients in their efforts to identify and clarify their goals and continuously seek effective ways to help them accomplish their objectives. We always look for valuable ways to answer, “How do we relate to our clients in ways that promote their well-being and help them come to know their goals and find constructive paths to meet them?” So, in two ways I have found the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology really helpful. First, the three C’s of Intrinsic Coaching™, choosing to regard the client as capable, creative and complete, are really about recognizing and supporting the dignity and worth of each person. And the “What do you want?” is about supporting self-determination. In addition, this powerful question can help the client discover his or her deepest personal motivations and open up new areas for personal exploration. The coaching methodology that I’ve learned through Totally Coached, Inc. is a very direct way of trying to get at these important personal concerns.

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Q So, professional social work values and ethics that recognize the dignity and worth of the person parallel the Intrinsic Coaching™ choice to regard the client as capable, creative, and complete.

A Yes. Because social workers usually work with people who have personal problems and concerns, are unhappy, or are not coping as well as they would like, it’s easy for social workers to have the idea that we need to prescribe what is best for our clients. To have that insidious state of mind can really poison our ability to be helpful. So, to make that conscious choice to regard our clients as capable, creative and complete is really a good vaccination against the tendency to believe that we, the professionals, need to know what’s best for our clients. The conscious choice to view the client as capable, creative and complete is a concrete tool that it is very helpful as we work together with our clients, moment by moment.

Q Does viewing people as capable, creative and complete empower them?

A Yes, and that is what social workers want to do. When I think about integrating the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology into my practice, I think of it as a map that can provide a shorter, straighter road to practicing within my value professional system.

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Q Could you explain what you mean by shorter, straighter road?

A Shorter, straighter road means a more clear way of getting to the client’s deepest personal goals. It provides results by moving the therapeutic process forward.

Q What benefits have you seen as a social worker as a result of integrating the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology?

A My outlook as a therapist is optimistic and future-oriented. The Intrinsic Coaching™ approach has been a good new way for me to open up, with the client, areas for our therapeutic work.

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That very powerful question of “What do you want?” is something that, for most clients, is very hard to answer. Many people have lived lives governed by ‘shoulds’ and by what others want or expect of them. “What do you want?” is something many people have never considered or valued, nor has anyone, who cared for them as children, valued that for them. So for me to ask “What do you want?” and for me to really care about how that client explores his or her answer, opens up a whole new world for people to think about. But it can be very, very tough to think about. What that question facilitates for clients is thus seeing what’s getting in the way of their thinking about what they want. That question “What do you want?” helps identify, for both therapist and client, what work needs to be done to drive through that sticky wall that keeps a person from knowing what they want and going for it.

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Q Can you offer some examples?

A I think of various people I’ve worked with in my practice and the results I’ve seen. Over time, clients have come to trust themselves. As a result, they have changed careers or earned a promotion. They have decided to marry or divorce, or to finish college or graduate school. They have made a myriad of other positive transformations. Meanwhile, they have become less fearful or depressed. Most importantly, they have come to know the power of their own personal strength and motivations. People come out of that simple and direct inquiry process making exhilarating discoveries of what is really important to them and what they want to do with their lives.

Q That must be very powerful for them when they find those answers to what they really want.

A Oh, yes. It’s very powerful. And of course, they bump into sticky walls along the way, and go backwards or run in place for a time. And, so, the therapeutic work continues. But that question opens up an enormous area for work with people. And with the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology, it is all about the process of personal discovery. When the client hits his or her sticky wall, together we learn from it to move forward. The learning and discovery that takes place through the process of the therapist and client thinking together is the therapy itself.

Q You recently started a new service of health coaching in your practice. Could you talk a little bit more about this service?

A If anyone is especially curious about what I’m doing with health coaching they can have a look at my website www.healthcoaching.ws. Health coaching, for me, looks a lot like my therapy work.

But the client’s goals are often more specific and, of course, relate directly to health issues.

With health coaching, the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology is palpable. Let me give you an example concerning a client’s weight loss. One of my coachees

is a young man, a wellness professional. He had been obese his entire life and needed to lose about 120 pounds. When I met him I had just finished the Intrinsic Coach™ Development Series. I started our first meeting by asking him what he wanted and he gave some very interesting answers. In addition to losing weight and improving several health status measures, he wanted to stop buying his clothing at “big man” stores. And, importantly, he wanted to be able to walk up and down the stairs when he went to sporting events. He wanted to sit with his friends – he’d had seats with these friends for many years – seats that required him to take the stairs. He was so heavy that he couldn’t do it anymore without serious discomfort.

At our second meeting, during which he committed to working together, he said, “I just have to tell you, I was really worried that you were going to tell me what and how to eat. I’ve spent my whole life being told what to do about my eating and I just couldn’t tolerate being told what to do by a health coach.” During the next six months he lost nearly 50 pounds. When people noticed and asked him what diet he was on, he told them, “I’m not on any diet. I’m just trying to make healthy choices about what I’m eating.” And that’s how he’s doing it — his own personally chosen way.

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What’s interesting about the way he uses his coaching time each week is that he tells me about the healthy choices he has made about eating the prior week. He says I went here... I ordered this, I ordered that. I chose this, I didn’t choose that... I chose this but only had two bites.’ And he talks about the challenges he had making those choices and how he addressed those challenges. Our time together is about sharing, every week, what he’s done that week to move toward his goal – to make healthy choices. And it’s wonderful!

To his frustration, this young man never had any inkling

about why he overate. But, through the health coaching relationship, he had his first insight about it. He discovered that he overate to calm anxiety. He actually experienced it – the anxiety and then the eating to calm it. That was very powerful to him and also something he could then use as a cue for the future to say, “Uh-oh, I’m getting anxious; I’d better watch out. I’m going to get a bottle of water.”

Q It sounds like he identified why he overate because he was so in touch with himself and with what he truly wanted.

A Exactly! By paying close attention to his desire to make healthy choices, he observed that anxiety immediately drove him to an unhealthy choice – a choice to overeat. He was able to make that connection. It was in that very moment that he didn’t make a healthy choice that he made his wonderful discovery. And so he was living right in the moment in a way that he never had before.

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Q That is a wonderful example of Intrinsic Coaching™. It sounds like health coaching is very rewarding for you. What do you find is most rewarding to you as an Intrinsic Coach™?

A Health coaching is very rewarding. I am really enjoying it. What is most rewarding both in health coaching and as a therapist is something I made reference to earlier. Intrinsic Coaching™ offers a new approach to helping people discover what is important to them, to recognize what they really want for themselves and to find and travel a path that will fulfill their personal goals in constructive ways. I’m really very grateful to have acquired the skills of Intrinsic Coaching™. These skills have opened up wonderful new opportunities for me and for my clients.

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Q As I listen to you talk, you're demonstrating how much you care as a therapist and a coach and how important it is that you're developing a trusting, safe environment for clients to communicate with you to move forward. What a great gift you can give to your clients!

A Thank you! It is such a pleasure for me!

Susan F. Walsh, Ph.D., Board Certified Diplomat in Clinical Social Work, has 30 years practice as a psychotherapist. Serving adults with a wide range of personal concerns, Dr. Walsh helps them reach their maximum potential. Dr. Walsh also has over 15 years of experience as a teacher, supervisor, and consultant to physicians and other health professionals. She practices in Chicago, IL.

Who is Totally Coached, Inc.?

Totally Coached, Inc. is a Scottsdale, AZ based company that founded the proprietary and uniquely effective Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology. Reaching internationally, the Intrinsic Coaching™ methodology enables “Thinking better. Together.™” for benefits that extend across the workplace and beyond the organization’s walls to create healthier lives, healthier organizations, and a healthier world.

To be an Intrinsic Coach™ like Social Worker Susan Walsh, Ph.D., contact 480-515-5220 or totallycoached@totallycoached.com.

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Live a better world.™