

THE RULES

Advice for leaders who want to
be extraordinary coaches



RICH LITVIN



This is an FAQ for great leaders who want to be great coaches — with a handful of high-performing, high-fee clients.

I am the co-author of *The Prosperous Coach*, a book that has struck a chord in the coaching world. It's sold 70,000 copies, it's been in the top 20 books on coaching for almost 7 years and it still sells 1,000 copies a month. I'm the founder of [Project Kairos](#), a program for coaches who are creating high-performing, high-fee clients. And I'm the founder of [4PC](#), a community of extraordinary leaders.

I've helped thousands of coaches launch their coaching business. And I've helped many of the most exclusive and successful coaches on the planet get to their next level. And all of these questions come from questions I've been asked.

There are many types of coaching businesses. Depending on your business — or what stage you are at in your business — some of them won't apply.

The rules are: I'm going to give no explanations. Just listen to me.



01

I am a successful leader [CEO, business owner, founder, VP or entrepreneur]. Can I be a successful, professional coach?

Absolutely. For most of human history it wasn't called coaching. It was called leadership. Great leaders are *already* great coaches. They know when to nurture people and when to challenge them. They know when to give answers and when to ask questions. They know how to motivate people and they know how to get people to motivate themselves.

Great leaders also know how to sell — products, services, and a vision. When they transition into coaching, they sometimes get messed up because they think they need to sell “themselves”. They don't. It's why I wrote the book, *The Prosperous Coach*. Read it.

02

Should I become a full-time, professional coach?

It's not for everyone. And it's not easy. Don't believe all the crap on your Facebook feed about making 7 figures in 7 days. Most coaches make \$10K a year, or less.

But if you have a track record of success behind you, in another field, you can be a successful, professional coach. The competition is large in number but if you're a top performer, you'll stand out.

03

Should I use SEO?

Nope.



04

Should I use social media marketing?

Nope. It's overused. And it's definitely not how you'll enroll high-performing, high-fee clients.

05

But I see you on Facebook and Instagram, Rich...

That's because the CEO of Mindvalley read *The Prosperous Coach* and asked if he could share it with people. Six years later and he hasn't stopped! If you see me on Facebook, it's because you follow my personal page. I've never placed an ad on social media to enroll clients.

06

Well, then how do I market my coaching?

Don't 'market' your coaching. The most powerful marketing on the planet is word of mouth. Serve people so powerfully that they never forget your conversation for the rest of their life. Repeat.

07

How much should I charge?

Make it up. But whatever you do *don't* charge by the hour.

My first ever client paid me \$10 a month — for 4 sessions! But I was paid in far more ways than just cash. I built my confidence. I gained stories and testimonials. And that was priceless.

10X

Are you ready to 10X your impact **and** your income? →



08

Should I get a coaching certification?

Nope.

Well, if it gives you confidence, then do it. And if you truly believe that you need it to coach in the corporate world, then do it. But you don't 'need' one.

09

Should I quit my job?

Not until you have had your first 20 paying clients. Or you are covering your monthly bills. Preferably both.

10

But *you* quit your job first, Rich...

I also proposed to my wife, 10 days after I met her. Don't do what I do.

11

I have 3 months of savings. That will get me started, right?

Nope. Your first 1,000 days are the most challenging.

12

Should I hire a business building expert?

Nope.

13

Should I start a podcast?

Yep. But don't — for Pete's sake — do yet another interview-style podcast, where you interview all your friends and they all interview you. *Coach people.* And record it. Let people experience your coaching.



14

Should I hire an assistant?

When you have so many clients that scheduling is becoming challenging, it's time for help. Start with a virtual assistant.

But don't hire someone like you.

15

Should I hire my own coach?

Walk your talk. If you're a coach who isn't investing in the best coach you can get, how can you expect your clients to do so?

16

How do I choose a coach?

Use The *Reverse Prosperous Coach Approach*... Find a coach who serves *you* so powerfully that you never forget the conversation for the rest of your life...



Want to build your business with me as your mentor? →

17

Should I give away coaching for free?

If you have just started coaching, then coach your ass off. You are paid in many more ways than just cash. See #7 above. But *never* coach without permission. Don't coach your friends on a night out. Don't coach old colleagues when you go out for coffee. And don't coach your family in a forlorn attempt to convince them you are on the right career path. You will *never* convince them.



18

What if I have been coaching for months but no one is buying my coaching services?

Are you actually making proposals? Read *The Prosperous Coach* again. Still not making any money... Maybe you should get another job. Being a full-time professional coach isn't for everyone.

19

How do I create a great elevator pitch?

When was the last time someone in an elevator asked you what you do?

20

What do I do when a potential client says “I’d love to work with you...”?

Slow them down. **Test the yes.** I never want someone to sign on the spot. I literally turned down the \$100K someone wanted to send me, recently. “Let’s sleep on it,” I said. “If you wake up tomorrow and you’re still a Hell Yes — and so am I — then we’ll make this happen. And if you’re anything less than a Hell Yes, you’ll feel no sense of guilt or obligation. You’ll be a clear no. And that’s perfect, too...”

It’s such a rare thing, to experience someone willing to walk away from your money, that it feels really good to people. If they’re a no, they’ll never forget your graciousness... And if they’re a yes, they’re a much more committed yes...



21

What do I do when a potential client says “I’d love to work with you. But I can’t afford it”?

I’ve had millionaires tell me it was too expensive to work with me. No one has a budget for coaching. (Well, I do. But I’m an exception.) Most people who want coaching will have to at least move money from a savings account. Or they’ll need to do what it takes to *create* the money, first.

I make it my practice to *never* believe the words, “I can’t afford coaching.” It means I didn’t serve them powerfully enough but they are being polite. Instead, I play a game called: “When I serve people powerfully enough, they’ll do whatever it takes to create the funds for coaching...”

I believe that *everyone* is willing to invest in their dreams. That way, my challenge isn’t to find the mystery people who can afford coaching. It is to draw out of people a dream so big that they are willing to do what it takes to realize it. Someone once called me 4 years after I first made her a coaching proposal. “Now, I’m ready, Rich!” she said.

22

How do I get new clients?

The best new clients are old clients. Find a way to serve or astonish a previous client, right now. Gift a coaching session to an old client. Tell a prior client that you run your business by invitation and referral only. Ask them if there’s someone they know who might want coaching — and offer their friend a private coaching session, as a gift from *them*.



23

How do I fill an event?

The same way you create clients. By serving one person at a time.

24

There are so many coaches out there. How do I differentiate myself?

Answer these questions. Put humility aside. It's not bragging if you've done it:

- What were your 3 top professional successes *before* becoming a coach?
- What can people count on you for?
- When you leave a room, what's missing?

Now answer *these* questions — and put pride aside. People want to know how real you are:

- What was your worst failure in your career?
- What was the most challenging moment in your career/life?
- What holds you back the most — and always has?

When you have answered these questions so honestly that you feel *mortified* at the thought of anyone reading your answers, you will discover that you are already different from every other coach on the planet.



I have a track record in supporting coaches to build a thriving practice with a few high-performing, high-fee clients — one powerful conversation at a time. [Learn more](#) →



25

What should my website say?

No one will ever find you by googling the word “coach.” I am a known thought leader in the coaching world and I probably don’t show up on the first dozen pages of Google because I spend \$0 on SEO.

So the purpose of your website is twofold: (1) Does it make *you* feel good? (2) When someone meets you, or they are referred to you, does it match who you are in real life?

The top of the page should start with the word “You...” It should describe your dream client. Their dreams, their fears, their doubts, their insecurities, their gifts — and the dark sides of their gifts.

Then it should say everything in your answer to #23 and #46 (for your dream clients).

26

Do I need a unique and branded methodology?

Yes. It’s your answers to the questions in #24. Nobody cares *how* you do what you do. They just want to know — *Do you get me?*
And — *Can you help me?*

27

Should I go to networking groups?

Never. It’s a group of people looking to sign you as *their* client. Run in the opposite direction.



28

What's the best thing to do for a new client?

Serve them, don't please them. Don't help them get what they 'say' they want. Find out what they really need. And help them create that.

29

Should I hire a marketing company?

Nope. If you want to enroll high-performing, high-fee clients, **connect** with interesting people, **invite** them to a coaching experience, **serve** your butt off and **propose**. Then repeat.

30

Should I write a blog?

Start writing now. **Don't stop.**

31

Should I write a book?

Yep. Write the book you are **scared** to write.

32

Should I build a team?

Later than you think. Sooner than you're ready. Whether they are full-time, part-time or virtual, hire only top performers.

33

Should I scale?

Probably not.

34

I have so many ideas. I want to do them all.

Which one is making money right now? Do more of that.



35

What are the signs of an amateur?

- a. An amateur says they want a six-figure income but is afraid to charge for coaching.
- b. An amateur spends all their time “getting the word out” instead of actually coaching people.
- c. An amateur coaches without permission. They cannot distinguish between impactful coaching and unsolicited advice.
- d. An amateur spends hundreds of hours and thousands of dollars creating a beautiful website, stunning business cards, Facebook ads and Twitter followers.
- e. An amateur has never invested in their own coach. They don’t see the message this sends to their own clients.

36

What are the signs of a professional?

- a. A professional loves selling coaching as much as they love coaching.
- b. A professional charges for the value they create, not the time they spend coaching.
- c. A professional auditions their clients.
- d. A professional doesn’t need confidence to take action. Confidence is a result, not a requirement.
- e. A professional doesn’t care about credentials because the only question clients ever want an answer to is: *Can you help me?*



37

How do I sell my \$27 ebook?

Don't. If you need money, rent out a room in your apartment on Airbnb. Then go coach people. In the meantime, write the book your dream clients need. And find a way to get it into their hands.

38

How do I make 6 figures?

Use The Prosperous Coach Approach: Connect. Invite. Create. Propose.

39

How do I make 7 figures?

Ask me again, once you're making over \$500K a year.

40

When should I say no to a client?

Always. Your job is to audition them, not the other way around. See #20.

41

When should I say yes to a client?

It's counterintuitive — but almost never, if you want to work with high-performing, high-fee clients. Super successful people are surrounded by yes people. Don't be one of them.



Want to know your next step on ***your*** coaching journey? →



42

I am being considered for a speaking gig at an industry conference. The President says she needs to enroll her board and wants some bullet points from me. What do I say?

Let *her* do the talking, not you...

- Ask what her board wants to create most.
- Ask her about the board's greatest fears.
- Ask her about the company's greatest strengths.
- Ask her about the opportunities ahead of the company in the year ahead.
- Ask her about the dangers ahead of the company in the year ahead.

Then go silent.

43

If I don't believe in my client what should I say to him?

Tell him. Then tell him why. And watch how he responds. If he disagrees with you, that's great. That's the kind of determination he'll need to succeed.

44

When should I give up on my coaching business?

The moment you are seriously considering that question. I've had successes and I've had failures. I have made money and I've been in debt. I have been hired by clients. And I've been fired by clients. I've been burned out from working so hard that I've burst into tears in a team meeting. But I've never once thought of quitting.



45

Why didn't the client send the check, like they promised, after we had a great coaching session?

They lied. It wasn't a great coaching session.

46

How do I sign someone famous as a client?

When you know the answers to the following questions:

1. *What's her biggest dream?*
2. *What's her biggest fear?*
3. *What has her wake up at 3am, with tears streaming down her face?*
4. *How does she underestimate herself the most?*
5. *Has she ever experienced coaching before?*
6. *Is she interested in coaching, right now?*

Once I have your answers to these questions, I'll tell you **your next step.**

47

How do I coach someone wealthier or more successful than me?

Remember that everything that got your client to the level of success they're at today is precisely what will hold them back from **their next level of success.**



Want to join my community of high-level leaders and coaches?



48

How long does it take to make your first \$100,000 as a coach?

Assume it will take you 10 years. Too long? Then give up coaching. But before you do, look back 10 years. Could you ever have imagined accomplishing all the things you've done in the past decade, 10 years ago?

Most people overestimate what they will accomplish in one year and underestimate what they will accomplish in ten years.

49

Should I send my clients cards and gifts at Christmas?

Never. I get Christmas cards from my insurance company and my bank manager. They have no idea who I am, so their cards go straight in the trash. Practice Client Astonishment, instead. Call your clients out of the blue, to check in on them. Send them a handwritten letter. Send them a book you think they'll love. Offer them a bonus coaching session. Make them a video message on your phone. Take them to a special event.

50

How do I get high paying corporate clients?

Have you ever worked in the corporate world? Have you been a CEO or SVP? If not, then this may not be your world.

If you understand the corporate world, what's the biggest challenge or pain point you see? Start talking about that and watch what happens.



51

I made a mistake. Should I tell the client?

Yes. Own it. They'll trust you more.

52

Experts keep telling me to find my niche. Should I listen to them?

Only if they've built a practice with a handful of high-performing, high-fee clients, by invitation and referral only.

And stop looking for a niche. Instead, look for a 'need'. You don't need a demographic. You need a psychographic.

53

At my coaching school they told me to never ask "Why?" questions or to lead the client. Should I listen to them?

Nope. Coaching schools are like training wheels on a bicycle. They are designed to keep you safe. Take the training wheels off.

54

Should I tell people I'm a coach?

Almost never! Coaching is a *tool*, not a title. Tell people about *your clients*. Tell them about the *book* you're writing. Tell them about your *counterintuitive beliefs*. Sometimes you're a consultant, sometimes you're a coach, sometimes you're a mentor, sometimes you're a trusted advisor. Sometimes you're a hybrid of all of them. *Don't be a coach.*



55

Isn't coaching some kind of airy, fairy scam?

For some people, almost definitely. But once you experience powerful enough coaching, you'll never ask that question again.

56

Should I quit my day job?

No. Only if you have enough savings to cover all your living expenses for the next 6-12 months. *Aim* to quit your job but don't quit your job. Your job is your cash project, paying the bills, so you can build your coaching business.

57

What should I do when I have doubts?

It's ok to doubt yourself. That's called being human. But listen to the money. Once you remove the emotions, cash is a value-neutral estimate of the impact you're having. It's a result of the proposals you're making. Serve people powerfully and make proposals to the ones who fascinate you the most. The money will follow. The doubts will come and go.

58

Am I charging too low?

Almost definitely.

59

How do I charge more?

Double your rates. You'll only need half as many clients, after all.



Do you want to be a world-class coach? →



60

How do I get clients from speaking on stage?

Too many coaches book speaking gigs, give great speeches and finish them by saying, “By the way, I am *also* a coach. Let me know if you’d like a free coaching session.” Then they wonder why no one calls. If you want coaching clients, constantly look for ways for people to *experience* your coaching. Don’t “speak” on a stage. Find a way to coach on a stage.

61

How do I get in front of more interesting people?

Creatively. And one opportunity at a time. One of my clients books the middle seat every time she flies, so she has twice as many opportunities to meet interesting people. Another client attends conferences in her industry. But she doesn’t attend any of the talks. She sits in the lobby of the hotel and chats to the people who are skipping the talks. Turns out that high performers are most likely to be sitting outside of the main event!

62

I met someone who I would love to coach but I am keenly aware of his difficult financial situation. What do I do?

Stop pretending you know anything about his situation. Let him make that decision, not you. I have a friend whose business was in difficult financial circumstances... until he sold his second home and paid off his debts. I once wanted to hire a coach, where I would need to travel four times a year, to work with him. We had two young kids, so time was a really scarce resource. Four years later, I had the time and I invested in working with that coach.



63

How do I connect with people and turn them into clients? It feels like I'm sending voicemails, emails and texts into the void.

You have to play a long term game. The question to ask yourself is “Who would I love to speak to?” It's not, “Who can I speak to, in order to get them as a client?”

Every day, reach out to one single person. Someone you'd genuinely love to speak to. Be genuinely curious about their life, their business, their relationships, their mission, their challenges. “Hey. Long time no speak. How's things? How's the family? How's the business? What are you up to? What's your current big project? What's your biggest challenge?”

At some point, you may see a way that you can support her or be of service. Maybe there's a book you can recommend or an article you can send her. Or a client you can refer to her. Maybe she is facing a challenge. Maybe she inspires you. Only then do you go to the next step... “Would you like some support with that?” Or maybe, when she asks what you're up to, you'll say, “Well, I have 3 spots left on a coaching program for high level leaders. Do you know anyone like that?”

Reach out to just one person a day. Seem to slow? In 90 days, you'll have connected deeply with 90 fascinating people. That is how you play a long term game.



Want to build a business by invitation and referral only? →



64

I've been coaching for six years and my business doesn't seem to be growing. It's even slowing down. What should I do?

Who are the most fascinating 20% of your clients? Set an intention that within 12 months, you will only accept clients who are at that level. Fire or gently let go of the bottom 80% of your clients. If that's scary — great! As you've noticed, boredom will kill your business, anyway.

65

How do I run my business from the side while still at my job?

I've never met a top performer who couldn't accomplish in 4 days what most people do in 5. Get your boss to let you work 4 days a week, or work from home one day a week. Then create a spot for just *one* client. When that's full, open a spot for a second client.

66

I see coaches on Facebook telling me how to make millions as a coach. Should I buy their programs?

Hell no.

67

But everyone needs coaching. I want to coach people who don't have much money.

That's awesome. Go for it. Just know you'll be like a restaurant owner who says, "Everyone needs food. I want to cook for people who don't have much money." i.e. out of business.



68

How can I run a group coaching program without stressing about a “launch”?

Option 1: Pick a start date — I actually like the fear and excitement that a date on the calendar creates. It gets me in action. But I also make the start date far enough into the future that there’s no stress. I tend to start enrolling for a group program 4 months before it begins.

Option 2: Include a bonus for early sign-ups — This is the same as Option 1 but you tell the first person, “I can’t offer this to everyone who signs up but as you’re the first — and there are 4 months until we begin, I will include private 1:1 coaching, at no additional cost. You’ll get 2 calls a month with me, until we begin.” It’s a lovely incentive to offer the first 2 or 3 people, to get the initial sign-ups.

Option 3: Have a rolling start date — “I am running a small group coaching program for 5 leaders and CEOs. You’re the first person I am talking to — so you will get 1:1 coaching, until we begin. When the second person signs up, I’ll coach the two of you, etc, until the 5th person joins. And then the doors are closed.”

69

How should I use LinkedIn to engage with people who sent me a connection request but no message?

Send them this response: “Hi _____. I’m the kind of person more interested in deep connection than the superficial connection that occur most often online. If that’s of interest, I’d love to know why you connected with me...”

90% of people will never reply. For the ones who do, you just started what could become a really interesting conversation.



70

Should I coach my friends? Friends ask me to coach them but they don't really pay attention to what I say.

Imagine a brain surgeon at a party. A friend comes over and says, "I keep getting headaches. Can you help me?" Someone overhears, and says, "I get a little confused when I wake up in the morning, can you help me, too?" The brain surgeon does not reply, "Sure. Sit down. Let's chat." They say, "I don't know if I can help you. Call my receptionist on Monday morning and book an appointment."

Don't confuse the professional with the personal. Create a really high barrier around your professional relationships. Be more like a brain surgeon: "As your friend, I'll cheer you on and love you, no matter what. As a coach, I bring high flame, intense coaching. I say the things that most people would never dare to say to a friend. That is not for everyone. But if it sounds interesting, let's schedule time for a call."

71

A CEO I know reached out about coaching and he asked about my fees. I was scared of how to respond. What do I say?

Imagine a man you know messaged you. You quite like him. But you don't really know him. His email says, "Let's start a relationship. How much money do you have available as a down payment on a home together?" Would you answer his question — or would you ask him a couple of questions of your own, first?!

You don't actually have to answer this CEO's questions. Your job is to audition him as much as the other way round. Engage him in a conversation: "Hi. It was great to hear from you. Tell me a little more. Why are you looking for coaching right now?"



72

I got an email asking if I do team coaching. How do I respond?

Send this reply: “Let’s chat for 20 minutes next week so I can learn a little about what you need.”



Do you want to be a world-class coach? →

73

I have a new paying client. We did our first coaching session but he still hasn’t sent me the payment for our coaching.

When you coach someone who says they’re in for a paid coaching program but they haven’t yet paid, you know what that’s called? *Charity!* It’s like taking thousands of dollars from your family bank account and literally giving it to a stranger... When was the last time you did that?

From now on, you are never allowed to run your first paid session with a new client, until their first payment has cleared in your bank account. I coach people for no money at all before they become a client. But once they’ve become a client we don’t begin until the check has cleared. I have a personal policy that once someone says, “I’m in” — I only believe they’re in once their check clears into my bank account.



74

I was referred by a friend to speak at a Fortune 50 company. They want to speak with me, first. How do I reply to their email?

You need to turn them from a buyer into a seller. Stop them from auditioning you and start auditioning them: “Thanks for your email. I am thrilled that I’ve been proposed as a speaker because my work is almost exclusively by word of mouth. They are all the testimonials I have ever needed. My methodology is highly personalized, so I’d want to get on a call with you to find out what you need and what would make this an amazing session for your people. I am available to speak on ____.”

75

How do I package high-end coaching?

I know a coach who only ever does 15-minute coaching sessions... Imagine how ready and prepared his clients are for their sessions. I know a coach who only does 2-hour, in-person coaching sessions, at his home... He has clients who fly in from across the U.S. and from far away as Japan. And I know a coach who only ever coaches in groups of 30-60 people at a time.

Me? I coach my clients 2-3 times a month. Plus, I offer them ‘virtually unlimited coaching’ — whenever they need support we jump on a call. My clients are high performers who rarely need it but love that they have it.

What kind of structure would *you* love? Go create it.



76

A company asked me to coach their leaders in exchange for acquiring coaching hours for certification, or to build my network. How should I respond?

“Thanks for your email but I would never dream of making a proposal — pro bono or otherwise — before I had an opportunity to interview the leaders of an organization about what they want to create. Tell me why you are looking for coaching for your leaders.”

77

Rich, what do you know now that you wish you knew when you started your business?

- a. Don't spend more because you're making more. Put aside money for taxes, savings and living expenses, first. Only spend what is left on the business.
- b. Focus on cash flow and profit, not revenue. Who cares how much money you're making, if you're not actually making a profit. [Read the book *Profit First* by Mike Michalowicz]
- c. Don't hire people like yourself. [Use the Kolbe assessment]
- d. Don't try to scale too early — or maybe at all. [Read the book *Company of One* by Paul Jarvis]

Love. Rich

P.S. Do you want to master the skills to *coach* elite top performers?

Do you want to build deep confidence that you can enroll high-performing, high fee clients?



ABOUT RICH LITVIN

Here's the "Official" Bio...

Rich Litvin runs a leadership consultancy for world leaders, based in Los Angeles and London. Ultra-successful people — who you would assume don't need a coach — are the ones who call Rich. His clients have included Olympic athletes, Presidential candidates, Hollywood film directors, Special Forces operatives, serial entrepreneurs, PhDs and Harvard Business School alumni. Rich is the founder of 4PC — a community of the top 4% of coaches and leaders.

A thought leader in the coaching world, Rich is co-author of the highly-acclaimed book *The Prosperous Coach*. It has sold over 70,000 copies and been in the top 20 books on Coaching on Amazon for 7 years. He leads a community of almost 20,000 coaches and consultants. And he has helped train some of the most exclusive coaches on the planet. A scientist by training, Rich has a background in Behavioral Physiology and Psychology. He trained to teach at the University of Oxford and he has a master's degree in Educational Effectiveness & Improvement.

Rich's big picture is to mobilize \$100 Million to educate a million children. His company has helped to build 5 schools in Africa.

He has lived and worked in eight countries and on four continents. Born in England, he still has an adorable British accent and spends his time between LA and London.



Here's the "Real" Bio...

My name is Rich Litvin. I've been bullied. I've been fired. I've struggled financially. I've felt lonely. I've lost loved ones. I've also coached clients who've lost children, had life-threatening illnesses, had miscarriages, been abused, been assaulted and been through bankruptcy.

But I have also been a leader, a coach and an advisor to high level leaders for almost 30 years. I've faced many challenges (in life and business) and I've coached many people through life-changing experiences. And I've been privy to the secret challenges of elite clients, from Navy Seals to multi-millionaires. (Hint: they have the same challenges as the rest of us!)

Oh, and I'm an introvert at heart who is secretly relieved when plans for a night out are canceled!