

TAKING IT PERSONALLY

Gai Foskett knows first-hand how useful it can be to get an outside perspective on a career, a life, and that dream goal.

BUSINESS and personal coach Gai Foskett left behind the trappings of a senior management job for a life focused on helping others to follow their own dreams.

She describes her decision to give up the company car, the salary, laptop and overseas trips as a giant leap, but one she had to make.

"You can't take two leaps over the chasm and I probably would not have done it if I hadn't been working with a coach at the time," Mrs Foskett says.

"I was doing a lot of travel and got to the point of becoming quite stressed, so I had a serious chat with myself.

"I discovered it wasn't the job or the travel. I was creating stress because what I was doing was in conflict with what my values had become. I used to be driven by corporate values, but since remarrying they have changed and become more aligned to peace, harmony and balance."

Before taking on coaching full-time three years ago, Mrs Foskett spent almost 18 years in the financial services industry in Australia and New Zealand, where she held senior manager positions in the areas of sales, marketing and change management.

During that time she encouraged her staff to set career, personal and business goals, and helped them set up strategies to achieve those goals.

Mrs Foskett enlisted the services of a coach while sitting in for a national manager's position for a large



Winning ways: Personal coach Gai Foskett says helping people achieve things they never thought possible is an 'absolute buzz'.

Picture:
STEPHEN WILSON

financial services company.

"What struck me was that I had some fantastic ideas about how to achieve higher levels of productivity and how to make the staff feel good, but at that level there are very few people to bounce ideas around with. There was no one keeping me accountable for these ideas," she says.

"It can get quite lonely at that level because there are fewer people to talk to who have a mutual agenda. I thought I needed a coach from outside of the whole thing to keep me accountable, challenge me and help me put my ideas into action."

Through her research she discovered Results Coaching Systems, which provides a robust coaching and training model that is recognised by International Coach Federation.

Now an accredited Results Coaching Systems coach, Mrs Foskett is also a coach trainer and mentor.

Coaches are trained in core competencies that include active listening, powerful questioning communication, designing actions, managing progress and accountability, planning and goal setting, and

meeting ethical guidelines and professional standards.

Mrs Foskett's clients are based in New Zealand, Australia and Britain. As a result she has clients she has never met, and 60 per cent of her coaching is done by telephone from her PekaPeka home.

She says that having a masters in business administration gives clients in the corporate sector confidence about her business skills.

"People don't need coaching, but if they want a different outcome in some areas of their life it is sometimes a bit hard to make significant changes without the help of someone who is not attached to the outcome," she says.

"Life coaching is like having a mentor, manager, personal trainer, and sports coach, all rolled into one – the mentor who believes in you 100 per cent, the manager to help you turn goals into strategies and actions, the personal trainer who will keep you moving towards your inspiring goals, and the coach to give you feedback to improve your game."

She uses the analogy of a tennis coach who, from

their position on the sideline, can see that a slight change to a player's grip could make an enormous difference to their game.

Mrs Foskett has helped senior executives with health and fitness goals as well as corporate goals.

She has also assisted small business owners to achieve better business results, and even helped an artist fulfil a lifelong ambition to hold an exhibition.

Mrs Foskett works with clients for a minimum of 12 coaching sessions over a three-month period, though many clients prefer longer.

Different coaches charge according to the market they work in, their success, training and their own experience.

Fees range from \$50 per session, though some coaches charge \$300+.

One of the important attributes of being a coach is a willingness to be coached in turn, and the need for ongoing training, Mrs Foskett says.

"If a person is not open to change in their own life, how authentic can they be in helping others create change in theirs?"

Her advice to people keen to invest in training to become a life coach is to remember that they will also be running a business.

"I have seen people with non-business backgrounds go through really good training and then say, 'I'm all trained up, where are the clients?' It is important that they also get some support and training in starting up a business."

But the rewards in the job are huge, she says. "Coaching is an absolute buzz. It is wonderful having people ring you up in a state of excitement because

they have just achieved something they never thought they would.

"Sometimes they are a little in awe with what they discover about themselves and realise how much talent they have.

"It is very moving. I get thanked for that, and all I have done is ask some questions."

For more information phone

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www.coaching.net.nz

Fact file

Name: Gai Foskett

Job: Business and personal coach

Employer: Independent operator

Attributes: Confidence, integrity, good communication, committed to others.