

# What is Spiritual Coac

When life lacks meaning, when achievements seem empty or the promised land is revealed as a wasteland it's time to call your nearest Spiritual Coach, says Spiritual Coaching Tutor Caroline Shola Arewa. By Marie-Louise Cook.

If 'Spiritual Coaching' conjures images of ethereal creatures wafting around in a New Age daze, trailing incense and good intentions, think again. And if you expect to be introduced to your Native American guide at your first Spiritual Coaching session, you may be disappointed as The Coaching Academy's Spiritual Coaching Tutor Caroline Shola Arewa explains.

'It's not about religion, it's not about God or star-gazing or crystal waving, and it's not about the New Age or any limitations. That leads me to what it is ... it's expansion. It's about working with people's purpose and meaning and having a more expansive approach to the work you do.'

'Spiritual Coaching is a partnership to create meaningful change, transformation and lasting success in life and business. It's not only about change: it's about transformation and not just reaching goals but being present with the process.'

'It's really helping people develop the way they work.'

'I think a spiritual perspective can help to deepen our own lives and help us to gain more meaning and purpose and that then impacts on the work that we do, whether that's coaching or any other kind of work.'

'A lot of people are interested in Spiritual Coaching: I'm also involved with the Association of Coaching. Sir John Whitmore spoke recently for the AC on 'The Future of Coaching' and he spoke strongly about the importance of spiritual development for coaches and

our clients. There's a lot of interest in Transpersonal and Spiritual Coaching.'

#### Who comes for Spiritual Coaching?

'I think people who are really reaching a place where they may be facing a crisis of meaning. People who are very successful and have done well in their work and in the world but still feel as if something is missing and they're not sure what that is. Sometimes they've climbed to the top of the ladder only to discover the ladder was up against the wrong wall.'

'It may be someone who's really asking what's it all about? What does it really mean? They might feel like they want to contribute more. They are doing a job that is not as fulfilling as it could be. They may just feel like they want more fulfilment or happiness and are questioning their lives.'

'It's a little different from wanting to go from A to B. It's more about people not being sure if they even want to go to B. It's people questioning everything and going through a crisis of meaning. They may have come to that place from redundancy, from some kind of illness, accident, or bereavement. Often a trigger sends people on that search. It might be a mid-life crisis or what Jung called 'Individuation', the part of development which people may reach in their 40s.'

With 20 years experience in spiritual and personal development, becoming a Spiritual Coach was a natural progression for her, says Shola.

'My work has always been as a change agent, helping people improve their

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lives in various different ways,' she explains. 'I am also a psychotherapist. After 20 years working with people psychotherapeutically, to be honest, coaching is really refreshing because it looks at the future rather than the past or at what's wrong. Although therapy and counselling have a place, it was nice for me to start working in a slightly different way with people. I started doing that in 2001.'

'The main difference with psychotherapy is in many ways we are digging into what's gone wrong... the part of people's lives that has caused pain or anxiety or issues and helping people understand that better so that they can experience life more fully. I think coaching works in a slightly different way in that it's much more goal-orientated and it's very much helping people set goals, plan and create a route to reach that goal rather than focussing on what's not been right in their lives. It's quite a significant difference.'

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### Caroline Shola Arewa

world, speaking on subjects such as motivation, stress and energy. In fact, she is working with ITV to develop a television programme at present. 'I have a few things in the pipeline which I won't go into detail about because I don't want to tempt fate. It's not specifically to do with coaching but is to do with my work in general.'

The invitations to speak and her clients have come as a direct result of having had three books published\*, two of them by mainstream publishers, she says.

'The more people who know what you do and have been positively impacted by your work then the more people they tell... referral is a really important part of it,' she says. 'The main way I've attracted clients is by being published by a mainstream publisher. Publishing, writing - they have been my best way of getting clients because they have longevity and obviously create referrals.'

She has never suffered from a fear of public speaking, she says. 'I was speaking on a stage in front of hundreds of people before I knew that other people were nervous about speaking in front of people. I could have then thought, 'Ooh, I should be afraid of this' but I never did. I really love it. Before I started as a public speaker, I already had experience of running workshops and working with groups and before that, I'd been a yoga teacher and that involved standing up in front of a group and addressing them. All of these things have been a very natural progression for me.'

The invitations to speak at conferences and present motivational workshops from clients such as the BBC, the Greater Manchester Police and PricewaterhouseCoopers have come about because she tells people of the benefits her work will bring rather than trying to sell coaching, she says.

'Coaching is very new and not many people understand how it works. For example, I saw a newspaper heading, 'England's Coach' and I tried to work it out and it turned out to be something about the bus the English team had

As with all of the Coaching Academy tutors, Shola trained with The Academy and now, five years later, is teaching other coaches.

'I could say I created Spiritual Coaching but it's part of a natural evolutionary process that has happened. I call it an OEP - an ongoing evolutionary process. My niche is spirituality and I have become a coach so it was a natural progression for me to create Spiritual Coaching, which is what I have done.'

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'I've seen Spiritual Coaching in the US. I see the development of spiritual intelligence - we've had emotional intelligence and now we are just

getting spiritual intelligence. I feel I am on purpose as I develop this area of work, and it's part of a much larger process and I'm in the fortunate position where I can do that.'

Shola has established a reputation worldwide as a speaker and author on the subject of 'success without stress', an area which she says ties in with Spiritual Coaching. 'It all relates to health and wellbeing and the spiritual aspect is very much part of health and wellbeing and the part that is often negated. When people get totally stressed out and their health is affected, then they can start asking, 'is it worth it? Is this what it's all about?' That takes them to a crisis of meaning and purpose. Spiritual Coaching provides an opportunity for people to connect with and honour their authentic Self and this can be transformational.'

She's been an invited guest speaker on television and radio and has addressed conferences around the

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travelled in and that's still what 'coach' means to a lot of people - a bus. It doesn't mean someone who works with others to enhance their lives.

'When people invite me to speak, they are doing it because they know of the benefits of my work, and they're not interested in me because I am a coach. 'If you're a furniture maker, you don't tell clients that you have a hammer and six-inch nails and some new lovely four-by-two planks. They don't care about that. You do tell them that you can make them a superb kitchen or a wonderful wardrobe. You tell them the benefits. It's the same for us - they don't want to know about the tools we have but they do want to know the impact we're going to have on their life and business. For us to get really clear about that makes a difference.

'There's definitely been a change in people's perception but I still think the whole benefits argument holds up. I do think that sometimes people train and think that clients will be beating a path to their door for coaching and are then quite surprised to learn that's not happening. They have to get out and let people know what the benefits of coaching are. If you have created the perfect mousetrap, people will not flock to your door, unless first they know you have an excellent mousetrap, second they actually know where to find you and most importantly they realise they have mice.'

## FURTHER INFORMATION

Visit Caroline Shola Arewa's websites at [www.creatingease.com](http://www.creatingease.com) and [www.successwithoutstress.net](http://www.successwithoutstress.net). The Coaching Academy's next Spiritual Coaching course will be held as part of the Advanced Coaching Diploma. For more details, email [team@theacademyclub.com](mailto:team@theacademyclub.com). Shola's books are: *Opening To Spirit* (Thorsons, 1999), *Way Of The Chakras* (Thorsons, 2001) and *Embracing Purpose, Passion And Peace*. She has also created two audio programmes, *Chakra Balancing* and *Success Without Stress* which are available from her website.