
Life Coaching Skills

Self-Assessment

21 questions · 10 minutes · ICF Core Competencies

Score where you are on each of the 21 skills covered in our life coaching skills guide. Total your score, then read the tier interpretation to see where to focus your development next.

How to use this assessment

1. Make a copy of this Google Doc (File → Make a copy).
2. Read each statement and score yourself **1 to 5** based on how true it is of your current coaching practice.

3. Use this scale:

- **1** — I rarely do this, or I don't know what this looks like.
- **2** — I do this occasionally, but not reliably.
- **3** — I do this most sessions; I'm building the habit.
- **4** — I do this consistently; it's part of how I coach.
- **5** — I do this fluently and adapt it to each client; I could teach it to a peer.

4. Add up all 21 scores (max 105). Look at the tier interpretation at the bottom.

5. Re-take this every 6 months and watch where your scores climb — and where they don't.

About the framework: This self-assessment is structured around the International Coaching Federation's Core Competencies — the most widely recognized framework for coaching practice. The 21 skills below map to the ICF's four competency clusters: Foundation, Co-Creating the Relationship, Communicating Effectively, and Cultivating Learning and Growth.

Cluster A — Foundation

1. Ethical practice. I know the coaching code of ethics I work under and I can name two boundaries it imposes on me.

Score 1–5: ____

2. Coaching mindset. I approach each session curious and open — not as the expert, not as the rescuer.

Score 1–5: ____

3. Scope awareness. I can tell when a client's issue is outside my scope (therapy, medical,

financial, legal) and refer out without hesitation.

Score 1–5: ____

Cluster B — Co-Creating the Relationship

4. Coaching agreement. I co-create a clear agreement with each new client covering what we'll work on, how, and what success looks like.

Score 1–5: ____

5. Trust and safety. My clients tell me — or I can tell from their behavior — that they bring difficult topics to our sessions because they feel safe doing it.

Score 1–5: ____

6. Presence. I notice when I've drifted into my own thoughts mid-session, and I bring myself back without making it about me.

Score 1–5: ____

7. Accountability partnership. I hold clients to commitments they made — not in a punitive way, but I don't let drift slide either.

Score 1–5: ____

Cluster C — Communicating Effectively

8. Active listening. I can repeat back what a client said using their own key words, and I listen for what they're not saying.

Score 1–5: ____

9. Listening to emotion. I notice shifts in a client's tone, pace, or energy and I name what I'm noticing.

Score 1–5: ____

10. Powerful questioning. I ask questions that open thinking rather than confirm my own hypothesis.

Score 1–5: ____

11. Direct communication. I share what I'm noticing or thinking when it would serve the client — even when it's uncomfortable.

Score 1–5: ____

12. Reframing. I help clients see the same situation from a perspective they hadn't considered.

Score 1–5: ____

13. Silence as a tool. I let silence sit after a question or insight; I don't fill the space with my next question.

Score 1–5: ____

Cluster D — Cultivating Learning and Growth

14. Goal setting. I help clients articulate specific, observable goals — not just "feel better" or "be more confident."

Score 1–5: ____

15. Action design. I help clients design between-session actions that are small enough to

complete and meaningful enough to move the needle.

Score 1–5: ____

16. Pattern recognition. I notice when a current issue echoes a pattern from earlier sessions, and I name it.

Score 1–5: ____

17. Self-awareness coaching. I help clients see their own thinking, beliefs, and assumptions — not just their behavior.

Score 1–5: ____

18. Strengths-based coaching. I help clients name and use their existing strengths, not just fix what's broken.

Score 1–5: ____

19. Resilience and setbacks. When a client misses a commitment or hits a setback, I help them learn from it instead of spiraling.

Score 1–5: ____

20. Integration and closure. I help clients summarize what they learned in a session and name what they're taking with them.

Score 1–5: ____

21. Measuring progress. I help clients see — concretely — how they've changed from the start of our engagement.

Score 1–5: ____

Your total score

Add up all 21 scores. Maximum is 105.

My total: ____ / 105

Tier interpretation

21–50 — Foundational. You're early in your coaching practice or you've coached intuitively without formal training. Focus area: the foundation cluster (ethics, scope, coaching mindset) plus active listening and powerful questioning. These are the skills that change every other skill.

51–75 — Practicing. You have a working coaching practice and your strongest skills are reliable. Focus area: the skills you scored 2 or 3 on, especially in Communicating Effectively (silence, direct communication, listening to emotion) and Cultivating Learning and Growth (pattern recognition, self-awareness coaching). These distinguish practicing coaches from masterful ones.

76–95 — Advanced. You coach fluently across most skills. Focus area: the 3–4 skills where you scored lowest. Even one or two skills sitting at a 2 or 3 will hold you back from mastery. Consider working with a mentor coach or peer-coaching circle specifically on those skills.

96–105 — Masterful. You demonstrate the full range of competencies fluently and adapt them to each client. Focus area: not skills, but range. Are you coaching the same kind of client and the same kind of issue over and over? Mastery often plateaus when there's no novelty. Take on

a harder client, a different niche, or pursue ICF MCC credentialing if you haven't.

What to do next

1. **Pick three skills to work on this quarter.** Not 10, not 1. Three is enough to keep multiple growth edges live and few enough to actually practice.
2. **Define what a "+1" looks like for each.** If your "active listening" is at 3, what does 4 look like in practice? (E.g., "I can name what a client isn't saying in 4 out of 5 sessions.")
3. **Practice with intention.** Tell your peer-coaching circle or supervisor which skills you're working on. Ask for specific feedback.
4. **Re-take this assessment in 90 days.** Track which scores moved.

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