



# POSITIVE ACORN

## THE POSITIVE ACORN WAY

Positive Acorn is the industry leader in providing training in positive psychology coaching. Our training is grounded in the latest science and is aimed at developing great coaches. Positive Acorn is an accepting and inclusive place to learn.

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# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY



Although scholars have discussed happiness and other positive topics for thousands of years, the formal positive psychology movement didn't start until the late 1990s. The then-president of the American Psychological Association, Martin Seligman, argued for the need to pay attention to positive aspects of human psychology. Since then, academic journals, conferences, grants, and other scientific infrastructures have been established to help support empirical investigations.

Today, positive psychology stands apart from earlier positive philosophies because of its emphasis on science, which means that it emphasizes empirical study over anecdotes or opinions. Researchers use a wide variety of methods to investigate topics such as optimism, resilience, courage, love, and meaning in life. Positive psychology is also an applied science. We endeavor to use the results of scientific studies to improve life. Positive psychology can be used in education, work, romantic relationships, and other areas of life.



# WHY POSITIVITY?



In a world full of poverty, violence, and political problems, it may seem naïve to focus on the positive. Although these are pressing concerns, life is not characterized solely by adverse events. Appreciating the many legitimate positive events can be helpful in personal wellbeing and strong relationships. Developing strengths and learning from successes can also be helpful.

Among the most intriguing and counter-intuitive results from positive psychology research is the idea that happiness doesn't just feel good; it is good for you. A wide range of studies suggests that feeling mildly pleasant positive emotions can lead—causally—to improved immune system functioning, a greater willingness to be social, and a rosier outlook on the future. Positive emotions have also been linked to wearing seat belts, lower smoking rates, and increased volunteering. Several studies have examined work outcomes, and feeling upbeat is associated with better customer and supervisor evaluations, higher income, and helping colleagues. These studies suggest positivity is a worthwhile focus because it can enhance health, relationships, work, and community wellbeing.



# THE DARK SIDE



Just because positive psychologists advocate focusing on the positive does not mean we ignore the negative. There are many instances in which people are encouraged to focus exclusively on positivity. This thinking leads to adages such as “There is no such thing as failure; there are only opportunities to learn.” Although these sentiments can be inspiring, it may be helpful to remember that there are legitimate negative experiences in life.

People are equipped with a palette of emotional experiences ranging from the unpleasant, such as guilt and sadness, to the pleasant, such as joy and contentment. Many people are deeply skeptical of so-called negative emotions because they are painful. Feelings, however, serve an important purpose. Sadness signals that life isn’t going your way and encourages you to conserve your mental resources temporarily. Guilt lets you know that you have violated your moral code and that a course correction is called for.

Although nobody wants to feel stuck in negative emotions over a long time, it is helpful to experience and learn from all feelings. The “positive psychology 2.0” movement emphasizes this point, recommending that people concentrate on the positives but also accept the inevitability and occasional usefulness of negatives.



# POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY COACHING



Although positive psychology started in the late 1990s, it wasn't until 2004 that it was first applied to coaching by Harvard-based psychologist Dr. Carol Kauffman. In 2007, in the first book ever published on the topic, Dr. Robert Biswas-Diener similarly suggested that positive psychology and coaching are natural bedfellows.

Coaches work as facilitators, helping to tease out the best motivation and performance from their clients. The results of positive psychology research can inform this work. For example, studies have shown that hopeful people outperform others academically and in sports. Researchers distinguish types of hopeful mindsets by grouping them into beliefs about personal effectiveness and beliefs about creative solutions. Coaches can use this template to listen to their client's specific language and ask powerful questions about both of these ways of thinking.

Dr. Anthony Grant, a coach and researcher from Australia, conducted studies into the efficacy of coaching. One intriguing piece of research examined the question of which is a better approach: a problem focus or a solution focus? Dr. Grant found that people who focused on solutions during coaching were happier, felt more self-efficacy, and took more steps to achieve their goals than those who focused on dealing with and overcoming problems.



# WHAT IS COACHING?



COACHING	THERAPY	CONSULTING
Coach is facilitator	Therapist is expert facilitator	Consultant is expert
Coach asks questions	Therapist asks questions and educates	Consultant advises
Emphasizes insight and action	Emphasizes insight and action	Emphasizes learning and action
Healthy clients	Clients in distress	Organizations
Focus on growth, identity, and performance	Focus on pain, support, and healing	Focus on policy, culture, and efficiencies



# GETTING CERTIFIED

At Positive Acorn, you will be on course to two distinct certifications: Our in-house positive psychology coaching certification and certification from the International Coaching Federation (ICF).

## Certified Positive Psychology Coach

Positive psychology coaching looks like other forms of coaching in standard coaching skills. In addition, positive psychology coaches use scientific insights and empirically validated assessments to inform their practice. Therefore, any positive psychology coach needs to have two distinct but related skill sets: one in coaching competencies and another in positive psychology science. Finally, responsible coaches emphasize ethical practice, and our training offers opportunities to discuss ethical codes and common coaching dilemmas. Earning a Positive Acorn certification as a Positive Psychology Coach requires successful completion of one of two tracks:

### FOR NON-CREDENTIALLED COACHES

Coaching Skills Course  
Applied Positive Psychology

### FOR ICF CREDENTIALLED COACHES

Applied Positive Psychology Course

## Associate Certified Coach (ACC)

Positive Acorn provides Level 1 training, which means that our full program meets the International Coaching Federation's (ICF's) requirements for training, mentor coaching, and evaluation of your coaching at the ACC level. The ICF is the world's largest professional body of coaches, and its certification is widely recognized and respected. People who complete our program only need to apply the ICF, accumulate 100 hours of







practice, and take the coach knowledge assessment to qualify for the Associate Certified Coach (ACC) certification.

Some students intend to pursue something other than certification. Often, they work as leaders, educators, therapists, or other professionals. They want to learn coaching skills they can apply to work and may not intend to coach clients. We are happy to work with you whether you want to launch a career as a coach or use coaching skills in your current capacity.

### POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY IN COACHING SESSIONS

Positive Psychology  
skills overlaid on the  
coaching session:

Strengths    Courage    Curiosity    Happiness    Hope  
Development

### THE COACHING SESSION

Skills:

Agenda    Powerful Questions    Brainstorming and Planning    Accountability

Themes that form the  
focus of a positive  
psychology coaching  
session:

Goals and Motivation    Values    Relationships    Emotions

### ETHICS FORM THE FOUNDATION OF ALL COACHING SESSIONS



# THE POSITIVE ACORN APPROACH



At Positive Acorn, we devote serious attention to creating high training standards. Dr. Robert Biswas-Diener, co-founder of Positive Acorn, is one of five members of a task force established by the International Positive Psychology Association to make recommendations regarding the credentialing of positive psychology. As a result, we think carefully about ethics, skills, foundational knowledge, and cultural literacy. You won't find copyrighted phrases (e.g., "Empower Yourself Level 2 ©"), nor will you find us pushing a proprietary coaching model. Instead, our training is designed to be "model agnostic," meaning that it fits well with almost any approach to coaching and can be used in management, education, and—in some instances—psychotherapy.

Positive Acorn is a Level 1 ICF-accredited coach training program built on two simple principles: First, we want to use the most effective teaching tools possible to enhance learning. Most of us spent years in school and developed intuitions about how learning occurs. Research reveals that many of the most popular strategies— rereading, highlighting, cramming—are ineffective. Our instructors keep abreast of developments in the science of teaching and learning to make certain students benefit from proven techniques such as spaced practice, anticipation, and interleaving.

Perhaps the most visible aspect of our commitment to effective instructional design can be seen in our use of the "flipped classroom." Traditional classes have a lecture with a short time for questions and answers at the end. Then, students are sent to do homework, where more active learning occurs. The flipped classroom reverses this





process. Real-time classroom interaction is the best place for active learning. We pre-record our lectures so they can be listened to or watched at the learner's convenience.

The second principle that guides the Positive Acorn approach is research. We pride ourselves on the most up-to-date approaches to positive psychology. Our instructors are not only consumers of this science; we create it! We are at the forefront of positive psychology intervention and cutting-edge topics. Rather than focusing on concepts such as gratitude and mindfulness freely available elsewhere, we prefer to focus on new approaches to strengths development, courage enhancement, and other emerging topics.

Positive Acorn offers training via distance; students can connect to class from anywhere in the world using a virtual classroom. Expect to interact with peers from around the globe, including Asia, Australia, Europe, and North America. We record these live sessions for students who might not be available to attend in person. Our PowerPoint lectures, materials, readings, and other resources are available to students on our private website. Our support staff is also available to help students troubleshoot technical difficulties.

Finally, we recognize that coaching is a skill. People learn skills differently than they learn knowledge. At Positive Acorn, we give people ample opportunity to practice coaching and receive feedback. We have created a wide range of activities to allow novice coaches to experience each coaching skill. In Coaching Skills, one of our weekly sessions is dedicated largely to experiential learning, practice, and feedback.



# WHY CERTIFICATION?



ICF ACC Certification is proof of both a solid knowledge base and skills competency. It is a sign to employers, colleagues, and clients that you have invested effort, connected to peers in your field, and have a background in ethical practice. Of equal importance, a certificate helps to distinguish you from other coaches who may have attended less than reputable or low-quality training programs. Certification also reflects the fact that you have been formally assessed. We use high standards for assessing skills and learning. Positive Acorn is not a “certificate mill.” When students need additional support, we gladly offer comprehensive feedback and work with them to create a plan to develop their skill set. Although we have high standards for learning, we give each student the individual attention they need to succeed in our program.

## CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS AT A GLANCE

### REQUIREMENTS FOR POSITIVE ACORN'S LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE

- Complete the Coaching Skills Course
- Complete the Group Mentoring Course
- Receive 3 Hours of Individual Mentor Coaching\*
- Pass the Performance Evaluation

\*Mentor Coaching can be completed outside Positive Acorn

### ICF REQUIREMENTS FOR ACC CREDENTIALING

- Submit Level 1 Certificate
- Log 100 hours of coaching experience
- Take the Coach Knowledge Assessment
- Pay Application Fee

## BONUS COURSE FOR CERTIFIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY COACH DESIGNATION

Applied Positive Psychology Course

Course price : **Free** for those enrolled in the Level 1 course package. An additional 36 credits!

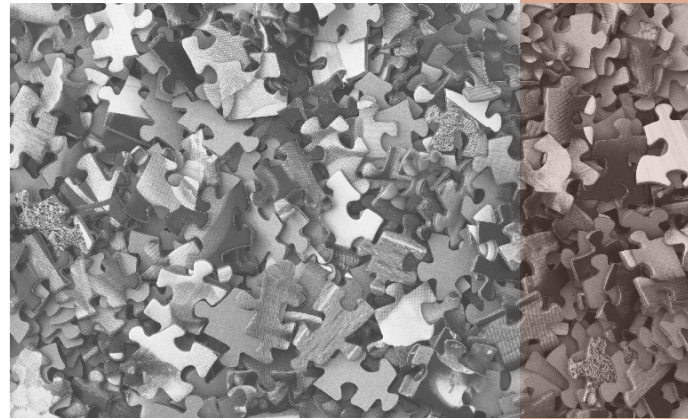
[Credly Positive Psychology Coach Badge](#)





# THE PROGRAM SPECIFICS

## The ICF Level 1 Package



This credential track is appropriate for people with little or no coaching experience and working coaches. This track confers the training credits that the ICF requires for their ACC credential (Associate Certified Coach). People who register for this program also have the opportunity to accumulate some of the coaching hours for ACC certification (see inset).

People who are already certified coaches can earn ICF credits for renewing their credentials.

**Course 1:** Coaching Skills

**Course 2:** Group Mentor Coaching

**Total Credit Hours:** 62

**Total Price:** \$5,300

### Partner Practice:

Those registered in the ICF Level 1 package will participate in partner practice. We will provide contacts with fellow classmates. It is up to individuals to schedule their partner practice sessions; we recommend setting a regular meeting schedule to maximize the number of hours you accumulate and to solidify your learning.

### BONUS COURSE FOR CERTIFIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY COACH DESIGNATION

Applied Positive Psychology Course

Course price : **Free** for those enrolled in the Level 1 course package. An additional 36 credits!

[Credly Positive Psychology Coach Badge](#)





# THE LEVEL 1 PATH TO YOUR ICF ACC CREDENTIAL

There are two parts to the process of becoming an International Coaching Federation credentialed coach:

1. Receive a Level 1 certificate
2. Apply for the ACC credential through ICF.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR POSITIVE ACORN'S LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE

- Completion of Coaching Skills Course
- Completion of Group Mentor Coaching
- Receive 3 Hours of Individual Mentor Coaching\*
- Pass the Performance Evaluation

\*Mentor Coaching can be completed outside Positive Acorn, provided mentors meet the ICF mentoring criteria.

### BONUS COURSE FOR **CERTIFIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY COACH** DESIGNATION

Applied Positive Psychology Course

Course price: Free for those enrolled in the Level 1 course package. An additional 36 credits!

## ICF REQUIREMENTS FOR ACC CREDENTIALING

- Submit a Level 1 Certificate from an Accredited Coach Training Program
- Log 100 hours of coaching experience
- Take the Coach Knowledge Assessment
- Pay Application Fee





# PRICING ESTIMATE FOR ACC CREDENTIAL

There are two parts to the process of becoming an International Coaching Federation credentialed coach:

1. Receive a Level 1 certificate
2. Apply for the ACC credential through ICF.

## REQUIREMENTS FOR POSITIVE ACORN'S LEVEL 1 CERTIFICATE

- Coaching Skills and Group Mentor Coaching Courses- Package Cost \$5,300.
- Receive three hours of individual mentor coaching\*. This amount will vary by mentor. \$1,050.
- Performance Evaluation- \$375.

TOTAL ESTIMATED COACH TRAINING COST: \$6,725

\*Mentor Coaching can be completed outside Positive Acorn. We believe that mentees should be free to find individual mentors who fit them well, speak their native language, and live in a time zone convenient to them. Positive Acorn will provide a list of individual mentor coaches to participants in our Level 1 certificate package.

### BONUS COURSE FOR CERTIFIED POSITIVE PSYCHOLOGY COACH DESIGNATION

Applied Positive Psychology Course

Course price: Free for those enrolled in the Level 1 course package. An additional 36 credits!

## ICF REQUIREMENTS FOR ACC CREDENTIALING

- Submit a Level 1 Certificate from an Accredited Coach Training Program
- Log 100 hours of coaching experience
- Take the Coach Knowledge Assessment

Level 1 Path Application Price:

ICF Member: \$175 USD; Non-Member: \$325 USD

