Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.

Glenn's companies have sold consulting and/or coaching services to dozens of Fortune 500 clients. He's worked with coaching clients all over the world, and directly supervised many coaches and psychotherapists.

Dr. Livingston's companies' previous work and theories have also appeared in dozens of major media like The New York Times, Crain's NY Business, and many more

CHEAT SHEET

8 Ways to Keep Clients Coming Back

A Key Point Summary from the Interview with Drs. Glenn and Sharon Livingston.

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Sharon Livingston, Ph.D.

Dr. Sharon Livingston earned her Ph.D. in the mid 90s based upon predictive research into facial picture sorting. She's since become one of the world's foremost specialists in consumer psychology, group techniques, and finding the "Emotionally Unique Selling Proposition" for any market...

Sharon's the woman many large companies bring in to find out what's deep inside their prospects' heads, often before an idea for a product or service even exists. She's become a foremost expert in emotional response to advertising, and she's worked with over fifty Fortune 500 companies

KEY POINT SUMMARY:

EIGHT WAYS TO HANDLE SESSIONS THAT WILL MAKE YOUR CLIENTS KEEP COMING BACK

One of the most critical factors in creating a successful coaching practice is how you handle and schedule appointments. It's important to create a system that makes your clients feel valued, sets the tone with them, and gives you the structure that works best for your style.

Here are eight tips to help you set up a successful structure:

1. **Give yourself 30 minutes between appointments**. The temptation once your practice gets going is to book people for eight to 10 hours a day back to back. It's a recipe for disaster. You need time between clients to go to the bathroom, listen to your voice messages, write some notes about your last client, and read your notes about your next one. *Always consider each appointment starting five minutes beforehand.*

2. **Use time productively for each client.** In the time before each appointment, Glenn says he does more than just flip through his notes. "I Sometimes I'll review the notes I had written about them," he says. "I'll review their goals and aspirations. I'll review what's worked before with them, If I've given them any

assignments I'll kind of reorient myself to that. Clients will typically say that they don't believe me if I tell them that's what I do. And I'll say to them that I charge for my time, so, I feel that I owe it to them to be working on their goals, even if they are not able to do that."

3. **Understand the difference between being a minute early or a minute late**. Glenn says this principle is critical to your success. The 30 seconds your client has to wait for you can change their entire attitude, he says. "Especially in the beginning, clients are flooded with anxiety if they have to wait. I recommend setting yourself up to answer the phone a minute early, at least in the beginning, to avoid them feeling negative."

4. **Do not be habitually late.** Remember that you are modeling behavior to your clients. If you are frequently late, you're telling them that it's OK for them to be late, too.

5. **Determine how long each session will be.** Glenn says the time for each session depends on personal preference. His sessions are 45 minutes, but he's not watching the clock, ready to end exactly at 45 minutes. Some clients, especially those in crisis, may need a longer period of time. Finances also play into session time. You may want to have hour-long sessions if you plan to charge $200 or more. You can also offer half sessions for those who can't afford a regular full session or for clients who need a quick meeting between their regular appointments.

6. **Make half sessions proactive.** Often clients schedule a half-session, it's because they have a specific problem to contend with. Glenn says he typically does more talking in a half session, asking the client more questions to get to the real problem and possible solutions. Regular sessions are more about listening for patterns in behavior and determining long-term goals for the client.

7. **Don't be too available.** One of the biggest mistakes new coaches make, Glenn says, is to be too available to their clients. New coaches are excited and want to help their clients achieve their goals as quickly as possible. They will make themselves available between appointments or by answering their phone. Being too available sets up an expectation that you will be there whenever the client needs you. That can become a problem as your practice grows. Your clients may become discouraged or disappointed when you are not immediately there for them. It also devalues your service. Your coaching sessions should be viewed as a special time, a time that your client is investing in her future. Always being available makes your time seem less special.

8. **Understand some basic psychology.** Another reason you don't want to be too available to your clients is that you will create a relationship too quickly. Life

coaches have a relationship with each client. One aspect of this relationship, in both psychology and coaching, is transference. Transference is the very human characteristic of placing values on a person based on people we've known like them in the past. Sharon uses the example of a sister who beat the client up. "If the client thinks of me as her older sister, she's going to worry I'm going to beat her up, too." It's best to allow transference to slowly build and for you to have the time between each session to sort out what responses the client has to you are based on the transference or not. Intense coaching relationships, just like with other types of human relationships, tend to fizzle out quickly. You want clients who will stay with you.