



## **This Coach Provides Guidance in the Game of Life**

*By Ann Russell, Associate Editor, The Towne Courier*

Most of us reach a crossroads in life at some point. We may manage to sort through the confusion, make a clear decision and move on. Or we may need a little help.

Char Brooks makes a living by helping people figure out what they want. She isn't a therapist, a career counselor or a financial planner – although she does make referrals to those professionals when her clients need their guidance.

Char Brooks is a life coach. “A life coach is a person who helps you determine what you want to do in your life, based on your values and interests, and helps you access your brilliance,” said Brooks. “A life coach helps you design a life that's in accord with your dreams and goals.”

Brooks can give support to clients in making choices about careers, relationships, clutter control, weight management – “anything you want to improve.” She does her work entirely over the phone. Each client has a 45 minute phone session once a week.

Clients prepare for their sessions by filling out a form in which they detail their successes of the previous week, tell what challenges they met, what they're grateful for, what they didn't get accomplished and how they want to use the coaching during the present session.

“Clients get to talk to themselves out loud and hear themselves think,” Brooks said. Although life coaching can be done in person, the phone situation provides a degree of anonymity. Brooks said clients may say more on the phone than they would face-to-face with the coach.

Brooks said she asks questions, listens intently, reflects back what she hears, and verifies her understanding of what the client is saying during a session. She and the client determine what the “home work” assignment will be for the coming week – what the client wants to accomplish between sessions.

Brooks has been a life coach for about a year. She has 15 clients, who use the phone and the internet to communicate with her. Her clients live all over, including in Cleveland and on both coasts. Although each client's needs are different, they typically use a life coach's services for about 12-18 months.

Life coaching is not a new profession. It arose in the 1980's. The head of the Institute for Life Coach Training, the school that Brooks attended via the internet is Pat Williams.

## This Coach Provides Guidance in the Game of Life, cont.

A therapist who became disenchanted with managed care, Williams felt that coaching was a viable way of motivating people to make changes in their lives. No state license is available for life coaches, but certification is available. Details are posted at [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org).

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