

**THE HONEST, INSPIRING & MOTIVATING GUIDE TO**

# DEFINE YOUR PROFESSIONAL IDENTITY ABROAD



**THE WORKBOOK FOR THE  
MODERN & AMBITIOUS  
EXPAT PARTNER  
BY KATHARINA VON KNOBLOCH**

Hello you!

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I am glad you found this guide and start your journey to find your professional identity during your time abroad as the Expat Partner.

Moving to another country and diving into an entirely new environment is a fantastic journey, and it is totally up to you how you approach this challenge and what you want to accomplish.

This guide will help you to see all different aspects of moving abroad as the Expat Partner and will prepare you for this step. This guide is full of inspirational stories, coaching tools, and guidelines to support you.

I would love to learn more about you and your very own story. Get in contact via my website or social media! It's my motivation to empower you by connecting you to others and by sharing all the great stories I learned along the way.

Thank you for your trust and congratulations on your bravery for going this challenging, exciting, and transformational path.

*Kate*

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# LET'S START THIS JOURNEY TOGETHER

<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2. THE BIG PICTURE OF EXPAT LIFE</b>	<b>9</b>
2.1 THE DUAL-CAREER COUPLE	10
2.2 THE EXPAT CARE PACKAGE	13
2.3 EXPAT STATISTICS	15
<b>3. FINDING YOUR OWN PATH</b>	<b>22</b>
3.1 WHAT TYPE OF EXPAT PARTNER ARE YOU?	22
3.2 THE DEFINING NATURE OF WORK	27
3.3 BECOMING CLEAR ON WHAT YOU ARE LOOKING FOR	36
<b>4. POTENTIAL ENTRY POINTS TO THE FOREIGN JOB MARKET</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>5. ESSENTIAL PREPARATION</b>	<b>86</b>
5.1 WORK ON YOUR STRENGTHS COMMUNICATION	87
5.2 DESIGN A COMPELLING ELEVATOR PITCH	93
5.3 BUILD-UP A NETWORK FROM SCRATCH	98
<b>6. APPLYING FOR JOBS ABROAD</b>	<b>103</b>
6.1 LINKEDIN AS A JOB SEARCHING TOOL	103
6.2 INCREASE YOUR VISABILITY ABROAD	112
6.3 PUTTING DOWN CULTURAL BARRIERS	118
6.4 MASTERING THE APPLICATION PROCESS	123
<b>7. THE FEAR OF CAREER SUICIDE</b>	<b>128</b>
7.1 THE FAMOUS CV GAP	129
7.2 HOW TO STAY UP TO DATE WITH YOUR SKILLS	135
<b>8. COACHING FOR EXPAT PARTNERS</b>	<b>138</b>
<b>9. TEMPLATES &amp; EXERCISES</b>	<b>149</b>



## COACHING FOR EXPAT PARTNERS AND CAREER CHANGERS

I was never interested in coaching and was quite confused about the trending term “lifestyle coach”. However, I was always interested in self-improvement and was striving to become a better person let it be in work life or when it comes to health and travel. When I moved abroad and experienced the rollercoaster of change, I was in need of coaching like never before but did not know it. I had no idea, how coaching could help me, nor was I aware that my thoughts have been circling around the same questions again and again without me changing my perspective to find a more suitable solution.

Fast forward one year later I trained to become a professional coach, and I am convinced that coaching will empower other Expat Partner worldwide who paused their career to join their partner on his mission abroad. In this chapter, I want to share with you how coaching can help you in this situation and how you can start with your own journey of self-improvement. But first, let's start with a bit clarity: What is coaching?

### WHAT EXACTLY IS COACHING AND WHY IS IT TRENDING RIGHT NOW?

Primarily coaching is a dialogue between a coach and a client with the aim of helping the client obtain a fulfilling life. It's a conversation in which the coach will use profound and thought-provoking questions to trigger something deep inside the client. The two most essential skills of a great coach are, therefore “powerful questioning” and “active listening”.

Coaching blends the learnings from psychology, business, philosophy, spirituality and even sports together.

At the moment the coaching market is developing very fast worldwide, and the most important institution is the International Coaching Federation (ICF). The ICF regulates the market, defines the elements of a successful coaching session and is THE institution when it comes to coach certification. If you consider becoming a coach, I can highly recommend to check out which courses the ICF approves of, to find a high-quality training environment.

## THE ICF COACHING DEFINITION:

**"Professional coaches provide an ongoing partnership designed to help clients produce fulfilling results in their personal and professional lives. Coaches can help people to improve their performances and enhance the quality of their lives."**

**"Coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approach to individual client needs. They seek to elicit solutions and strategies from the client; they believe that the client is naturally creative and resourceful. The coach's job is to provide support to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the client already has."**

If you are like me, this still might sound a bit abstract. Basically, a coach:

- \* Offers support to discover the answers within you
- \* Helps you clarify your values (something most people would not do alone - it needs specific triggers and a personalized sequence of questions)
- \* Helps you create a plan for how to achieve what you really want
- \* Is a sounding board for new ideas
- \* Offers support in making life-changing decisions
- \* Challenges you to expand your views beyond your perceived personal limitations
- \* Offers direction
- \* Offers Acknowledgment - that's a big one for Expat Partners!
- \* Offers Encouragement



The reason why I want to become a coach was that coaching is no training that is put upon you, but it is more a joint journey together. The client always sets the tone for the session, and the coach is never leading. Also, I love that coaching acknowledges the fact that the client is resourceful and that the solution for your own personal problem is already within you, but you can just not see it YET. This might sound spiritual, but it is similar to reading through this workbook. The aim is to give guidance and inspiration, trusting that you have anything it needs to be successful already but that you have not found your way yet to create action.

Some effects of coaching you have to experience by yourself before you can recognize its power. An example for me was the power of acknowledgment. As an Expat Partner who was struggling with decreasing self-esteem and raising doubts if I am good enough for the foreign job market I was not thinking about the things I already accomplished but was just focused on everything I was failing in. Hearing back from a neutral person like a coach my accomplishments so far and being acknowledged for that is, therefore, a big step to get back your confidence. At the same time, it is so powerful as coaching is never about giving compliments but just mirroring back the reality.

## THE VALUE OF COACHING

Coaching is no recent discovery. Historically, there have always been coaches such as in the priests, shamans or respected persons in the community that served as a sounding board and guidance. However, coaching is getting more and more attention nowadays as specific social developments such as longer lifespan, less traditional jobs, a more entrepreneurial marketplace and more lifestyle choices besides the norm lead to a growing and evolving coaching demand. However, the biggest reason for the field's growth is that it works.

**The ICF (International Coach Federation) revealed in a recent study of 2014 how clients perceived their coaching:**

- \* **80%** saw improved self-confidence
- \* **73%** saw improved relationships
- \* **72%** saw improved communication skills
- \* **70%** saw improved work performance
- \* **61%** saw improved business management
- \* **57%** saw improved time-management
- \* **51%** saw improved team performance
- \* And of those surveyed, **99%** indicated that there were "somewhat or fully satisfied with their coaching experience" and **96%** said they would do it again

## THE PHILOSOPHY BEHIND COACHING

The underlying philosophy behind coaching is that we are resourceful and creative with energy, wisdom, ability and genius waiting to be set in motion. We can create the life we want faster and more easily by partnering with a coach who helps us utilize these resources to facilitate change and realize our potential.

## WHAT COACHING IS NOT

To get some clarity about coaching it also helps to explain what coaching is NOT. As the coaching profession is developing very quickly many different forms of blended coaching are emerging. Coaching in its purest form should not be mixed up with therapy, mentoring or consulting. A coach is focusing on the future while a therapist tries to resolve problems from the past. Moreover, I guess we can all agree on the fact that it also needs more medical training to become a therapist.

Pure coaching is also not the same as mentoring as it is not based on the coach's experience in life, but 100% focused on the client. It is also not to mix up with consulting as a coach does not go into a session with a clear agenda on the outcome and does not want to educate the client on a particular matter.

However, blended coaching forms as a mix of mentoring, consulting and coaching are emerging and make coaching very interesting to Expat Partners. Let's get into how coaching and especially blended coaching can help you in your journey of finding your professional identity abroad as an Expat Partner.

## BLENDED COACHING FOR EXPAT PARTNERS

In my very own coaching model, I added a bit of mentoring in my classes. I myself have learned so much from other Expat Partners and their vision of this journey and it helped me tremendously to gain perspective and realize there are certain patterns which are playing a part in every Expat Life no matter your personal background and character. Therefore, I offer a coaching style that has the agenda of the client first but I am more than happy to mentor from my own experience if my client is asking for it.

### A SIMPLE COACHING EXERCISE TO SHOW YOUR UNUSED POTENTIAL

#### Exercise:

*Join all 9 dots with four straight lines, without taking pen from paper.*





Most of the people read the instructions to this exercise as: "connect the dots with four straight lines without taking the pen from paper, within the square formed by the outer dots." As you might have noticed, there is no solution within this framework. The solution is to think outside the box. That is the only way to succeed in this exercise and in challenging life situations that bring along a lot of change. As an Expat Partner, we are very focused on everything that is not working in the beginning. Maybe our work permit is rejected or is delayed,

maybe you try to apply, but you receive no feedback at all, maybe you are not feeling confident in the foreign job market to apply at all. In our daily lives, we are always the special stranger, and easy tasks can become a big hassle. Therefore, we are very centered on these problems without realizing there is a playing field of possibilities outside the box we have drawn for ourselves.



**"THE FRAMES OUR MINDS CREATE DEFINE -  
AND CONFINE -  
WHAT WE PERCEIVE TO BE POSSIBLE."**

**BENJAMIN ZANDER**

The goal of my coaching style is to discover together which underlying beliefs are holding you back from discovering this area, which thoughts are holding you back and what mindset is giving you more self-esteem. Coaching also offers you a development plan, a sparring partner and someone who can keep you accountable for your actions to reach your defined goal. Imagine I would have told you from the very beginning to use the whole piece of paper to connect the dots and don't mind any restrictions or frame. In that case, you would have come up with the solution yourself. The only thing I did as a coach would be to change your perception and to broaden your view to the potential options out there so you can make a better decision for yourself.



## YOUR FIRST STEP INTO THE COACHING WORLD

If you are considering coaching, lookout for a coach that resonates with you. The coaching philosophy itself is really open, and it allows you to train either CEOs with leadership decisions on the one hand or mothers with postpartum issues on the other end. There are no general restrictions. That being said, most coaches specialize in a specific area and equip themselves with a particular toolkit to help a really distinct type of client. This is most of the time driven by personal experience and interest. In my case, I focus on Expat Partners as I am one for myself. I have been there - I have experienced all these ups and downs and specific tools during my coaching training were just jumping right at my face saying, please use me while others just are not as relevant. Therefore it can be beneficial to pick a coach with a similar background.

## MAKE USE OF A FREE DISCOVERY SESSION

All the coaches I met so far, myself included, offer 15-30 minutes discovery sessions in which you can gain a feeling for the atmosphere and the coaching style. Make use of this free opportunity to answer all the questions you might have and to gain a better understanding of the joint journey ahead.

Also, check with the HR department of your partner: Many companies support coaching within their Expat Package to help you find your way abroad!



## CHOOSE INTERNATIONALLY

The internet makes the coaching profession 100% location-independent. There is no need for a physical place to meet, but most sessions are over the phone or via video call. I experienced both forms of coaching, physically in an office and via the phone without video. In my opinion, coaching sessions over the phones can be really intimate and can get more profound as you as a client are more focused and less distracted by facial expressions or gestures which can be really misleading. Coaching is about your development, and it is not about getting the blessing of a coach for a certain action. It is about YOU, YOUR values and YOUR priorities and coaching via phone can help you focus on that if you tend to seek appreciation of others to start.

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