

## *Client Information and Informed Consent for Life Coaching*

Thank you for choosing **Alice Baland** for your Life Coaching. I am committed to providing you with the best coaching possible. This document and attachments constitute a contract between us. Please read it carefully before signing. To acquaint you further with the procedures and policies of my coaching program, I am providing the following information.

**Coaching and Psychotherapy:** In addition to being a coach, **Alice Baland** is a Licensed Professional Counselor (LPC) in the field of behavioral health (mental health). While there are some similarities between coaching and psychotherapy, they are very different activities and it is important that you understand the differences between them. Psychotherapy is a health care service and is sometimes reimbursable through health insurance policies. This is not true for coaching. Both coaching and psychotherapy utilize knowledge of human behavior, motivation, and behavioral change, and interactive counseling techniques. The major differences are in the goals, focus, and level of professional responsibility. She is also a Registered/Licensed Dietitian (RD/LD).

The focus of **coaching** is development and implementation of strategies to reach client identified goals of enhanced performance and personal satisfaction. Coaching may address specific personal projects, life balance, job performance and satisfaction, or general conditions in the client's life, business, or profession. Coaching utilizes personal strategic planning, values clarification, brainstorming, motivational counseling, and other coaching or counseling techniques.

The primary focus of psychotherapy is identification, diagnosis, and treatment of mental and nervous disorders. The goals of psychotherapy include alleviating symptoms, understanding the underlying dynamics which create symptoms, changing dysfunctional behaviors which are the result of these disorders, and developing new strategies for successfully coping with the psychological challenges which we all face. Most research on psychotherapy outcomes indicates that the quality of the relationship is most closely correlated with therapeutic progress. Psychotherapy patients are often emotionally vulnerable. This vulnerability is increased by the expectation that they will discuss very intimate personal data and expose feelings about themselves about which they are understandably sensitive. The earlier life experiences of psychotherapy patients have often made trust difficult to achieve. These factors give psychotherapists greatly disproportionate power that creates a fiduciary responsibility to protect the safety of their clients and to "above all else, do no harm".

The relationship between the coach and client is specifically designed to avoid the power differentials that occur in the psychotherapy relationship. The client sets the agenda and the success of the enterprise depends on the client's willingness to take risks and try new approaches. The relationship is designed to be more direct and challenging. You can count on your coach to be honest and straightforward, asking powerful questions and using challenging techniques to move you forward. You are expected to evaluate progress and when coaching is not working as you wish, immediately inform your coach so both of you can take steps to correct the problem.

Because of these differences, the roles of coach and psychotherapist are often in potential conflict and under most circumstances, it is ethically inappropriate for one to play both roles with a client, whether concurrently or sequentially. Positive change is difficult enough without having to worry about role confusion. This means that if either the client or the coach, recognizes that if the client has a problem that would benefit from psychotherapeutic intervention, the coach will refer you to appropriate resources. In some situations, the coach may insist that you initiate psychotherapy and that the coach have access to your psychotherapist as a condition of the coach continuing to be your coach.

It is also important to understand that coaching is a professional relationship. While it may often feel like a close personal relationship it is not one that can extend beyond professional boundaries both during and

after the coaching relationship. Considerable experience shows that when boundaries blur, the hard won benefits gained from the coaching relationship are endangered.

**Financial Responsibility:** The services to be provided by **Alice Baland** are coaching or tele-coaching as designed jointly with the client. Coaching sessions will be charged at the rate of \$200 per hour, or \$100 per half-hour. Professional time spent outside of coaching sessions, including, but not limited to, between-session telephone calls or e-mail exchanges, reviewing tapes of sessions, report writing, and reading or reviewing documents, will be billed on a prorated basis rounded up to the nearest tenth of an hour. If Alice Baland, your coach is required to attend meetings outside of her office, you will pay for all time spent in traveling to the location of such meetings as well as any time spent at the meeting. You are fully responsible for all services rendered. Full payment is expected prior to all coaching sessions or coaching packages. Alice accepts Visa and MasterCard. Fees for coaching sessions must be paid in advance by the first day of the month in which they are provided unless an alternative arrangement is agreed to in writing. Collateral services will be charged as used. Services not paid for in advance will not be provided.

**Appointments:** If you need to cancel or change the time of an appointment, a minimum of 48 hours telephone notice is required, by calling 469-737-5455, or another number if appropriate and supplied to you by email in advance; otherwise, you are subject to full charge for the missed appointment. In the evenings and on weekends, you may leave a Voice Message, which will accurately record the date and time you placed the call. **Alice Baland**, your Coach, will do her best to be punctual for your appointment unless she has an emergency call. We ask that you be punctual as well. If you are late, for any reason, you will receive the remainder of your scheduled time, and the session will still end on time. This is necessary so we can accommodate following clients at their scheduled times.

**Insurance Billing:** Insurance will not be billed.

**Confidentiality:** Your Coach, Alice Baland, is ethically and legally bound to protect the confidentiality of all communications. Your coaching records are the property of your coach and shall be treated as confidential. Your records will not be released without a properly executed written consent or in response to a court order. Everything about your coaching will be held in strictest confidence except those situations in which the coach is legally obligated to breach confidentiality in order to protect you or others from harm; if there is an indication that a child or elderly or disabled person is being abused; or, if a client is an imminent risk to him/herself or makes threats of imminent violence against another. These situations are quite rare in coaching practices. If such a situation occurs in the coaching relationship, every effort to discuss it with the client will be made before taking any action.

It is impossible to protect the confidentiality of information that is transmitted electronically. This is particularly true of e-mail and information stored on computers that are connected to the internet, which do not utilize encryption and other forms of security protection.

By signing this agreement, you commit yourself to maintaining the confidentiality of all information communicated to you by other coaching clients and by your coach. It is understood that progress is often enhanced when clients are allowed to discuss their coaching relationship with trusted colleagues and friends. You can have these discussions, but you must in no way share information that leads to the identification of others in the group. If you are ever in doubt regarding what to reveal and what not to reveal, err on the side of protecting the privacy of others, which is a vital and non-negotiable element of such group interaction.

**\*\*\*PLEASE SIGN BELOW TO INDICATE YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE ABOVE NOTIFICATIONS AND THAT YOU ARE CONSENTING TO RECEIVE COACHING BY ALICE BALAND, CERTIFIED LIFE COACH:**

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Client Signature

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Date

