



Standard 17 – Case Study

Title: Recognize my personal limitations

Background

Standard 17 says - Recognize my personal limitations or circumstances that may impair, conflict with or interfere with my coaching performance or my professional coaching relationships. I will reach out for support to determine the action to be taken and, if necessary, promptly seek relevant professional guidance. This may include suspending or terminating my coaching relationship(s). What should his ICF mentor advise him to do? What kind of work/life balance is healthy for a coach?

Case study

Hiromi had a very demanding professional and personal schedule. He worked with C-suite Executives and high-end companies. But he also had three active children who were involved in many extracurricular activities. Hiromi never complained; he loved the work he did as an executive coach, and he loved that his children were able to participate in everything that they were interested in trying out.

Hiromi had recently hired an assistant to help keep his schedule organized. With all the obligations from work and personal life, he was afraid he would miss something, and his spouse had encouraged him to hire someone to help. He hired Sun on at the recommendation of his neighbor. Sun quickly caught on to the scheduling platform and even discovered some new updates that made scheduling even easier.

That night at the dinner table, Miya, Hiromi's youngest daughter, informed him that her chess tournament next weekend started on Friday night instead of Saturday afternoon. Hiromi's family had a no-phone-at-the-dinner-table policy, so he made a mental note to inform Sun to update his calendar.

The following Friday arrived, and that morning Hiromi realized that he had never asked Sun to update his calendar. He had a meeting with a new client at the same time as the start of Miya's chess match. Hiromi was so torn as his daughter was going to expect him to be cheering her on from the stands and he had an obligation to meet up with this new client. He had no idea what to do.

Implications for Coaching

- ICF Professionals should be responsible and aware of their own needs and recognize any conflicts or limitations within their coaching relationships —an outsiders' perspective can be helpful when looking at a coach's schedule. **ICF Code of Ethics (2020) Section 2, Standard 17 (Coachingfederation.org)**

- ICF Professionals should have a commitment to excellence—the coach should always be learning and growing in all areas of life. They should also decide ahead of time what their priorities are –do family obligations come first or does the new client come first. Overall, a great coach is one who is well rounded. **ICF Code of Ethics (2020) Section 2, Standard 16 (Coachingfederation.org)**

Possible outcomes or next steps

- **Seek outside support.** A coach in any conundrum may choose to turn to their coach, mentor coach, coach supervisor, training program, or coaching organization for support in navigating tough situations. This process will likely include much reflection and thought on the coach’s side so that this does not happen again.
- **Openly communicate and do your research.** A coach may choose to bring their concerns to the client directly. This allows both parties to discuss and determine the best path forward in a collaborative manner. If it is determined that the coaching engagement will be rescheduled, then set up that time right then so that it isn’t put off for too long.
- **Determine which are more important.** If it is determined that the new client meeting should take priority, then the coach should speak with their children to determine which activities he is OK to miss if necessary. Perhaps some are not as important as others.

Discussion Points

- If you were this coach’s coach, mentor, or supervisor, how would you support the coach?
- If you were in Robert’s shoes, how would you determine what was more important?
- What have you determined is a healthy work/life balance?

Reference

ICF Code of Ethics (2020), <https://coachingfederation.org/ethics/code-of-ethics>