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## Life coaches help people get grip on goals

### Qualifications to enter field vary

**By Sarah Bradshaw**  
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LAGRANGEVILLE -- Marcy Nechemias of Port Ewen went from skeptical to hooked.

In March, her mother-in-law talked her into attending a free workshop on work, life and balance at the Town of Esopus Library. The workshop was taught by Denise Lewis, a life coach and owner of New You Coaching in LaGrange. Nechemias was reluctant.

"I thought there was no way a life coach could help me," the 31-year-old IBMer said. "Habits become such a part of you that I thought I couldn't change mine."

So when she won the raffle prize, a one-on-one free coaching session, her first thought was "oh, no."

"I think Denise knew I was never going to call her because she came right over and took down my phone number," said Nechemias, an admitted workaholic.

Despite her doubts, she visited with Lewis and became hooked. In December, Nechemias "graduated" from New You Coaching.

"My friends say that I am the happiest they have ever seen me," she said.

Coaches work one-on-one or with groups of individuals and organizations to help bring out their best and achieve the outcomes they most desire. Lewis' mission is to help her clients reach the highest level in life, emotionally, spiritually and physically.

### Few regulations

The field is relatively new. Regulations are few and training can vary.

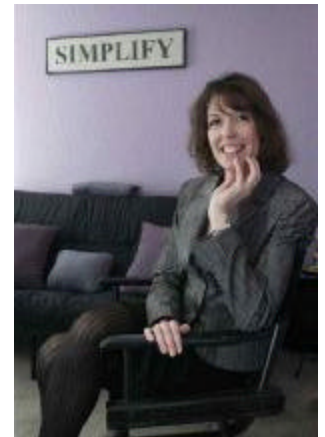
Lewis is a member of CoachVille and the International Association of Coaches. She is becoming a licensed well coach through Well Coaches. She is also a nutrition specialist, tobacco-free facilitator and lifestyle and weight management specialist through courses at different organizations.

In contrast, Ellen Smith, of Ellen Smith Coach in the Town of Poughkeepsie, is a graduate of Coach U and a member of the International Coach Federation. She is working on her professional coaching credentials, which entails 750 documented hours of coaching.

"I am a licensed clinical social worker, and I didn't have to go through all this," she said about the rigorous certification process.

Smith described the training as lacking uniformity.

"There's such a variety of training. You don't need a license," she said.



**Lee Ferris**  
Life coach Denise Lewis sits in her home/office in LaGrangeville last week. Lewis is also a certified nutrition specialist.

Lewis, a Westchester native, has more than two years of experience as a life coach. Previously, she grew up working in her family's retail business. She ran a day-care center out of her home and taught water aerobics in the mid-'90s. She also worked in the medical field as an office manager and systems consultant and trainer. In 2002, she started coaching.

"Everything has been serendipitous," the 47-year-old said about her path to coaching. "I believe we all have a purpose, and things fall into place if you go for it. It's not easy. I've had challenges."

Lewis said her life experiences and challenges are what make her a good coach.

"You have to be a good listener, intuitive and ask good questions that help lead the client to come up with an answer that is within them. We move the client forward," she said.

In addition, you have to be a hard worker. Lewis puts in many hours, whether she is seeing clients, networking or taking care of the business aspects. But she said it is very rewarding.

"People who see coaches don't necessarily have a problem. They are looking to better themselves, for someone to see something they can't see and for someone to keep them on task," she said.

In Nechemias' case, coaching changed her life. She went from working 15-hour days to having enough free time to pursue her hobbies and interests.

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## **Profile**

Denise Lewis

Job: Life and wellness coach, owner of New You Coaching in the Town of LaGrange.

Age: 47.

Experience: More than two years in business.

Education: Took classes at Dutchess County College. Certified as a nutrition specialist, tobacco-free facilitator and lifestyle and weight management specialist. Working on professional coaching certification.

Residence: Town of LaGrange.

Family: Husband, Peter; daughter, Tiana; son, Austin.

## **Job facts**

Life coach Education/training: There are coaching certification and licensing programs, but no regulations as to how much training or education is needed to be a life coach.

Wages: Salaries vary depending on number of clients, type of coaching and business overhead costs. According to the Coaches Training Institute, the average monthly part-time salary for their certified professional coaches with more than one year of experience is \$2,331, and for full-time, \$4,958.

## **On the Web**

- The International Association of Coaches [www.certifiedcoach.org](http://www.certifiedcoach.org) - The International Coach Federation: [www.coachfederation.org](http://www.coachfederation.org)  
- Coach U: [www.coachu.com](http://www.coachu.com) - On the Job stories are archived at [www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/projects/on\\_the\\_job](http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com/projects/on_the_job)